



**BETWEEN
FRIENDS
AUGUST
2018**

**THE MYRTLEFIELD
TRUST**

DEAR FRIENDS,

The 21st century has brought with it many advancements in technology. These have in many ways made our lives more comfortable and more efficient, and yet many of us continue to feel we are too busy. Our workload doesn't seem to have decreased significantly. We often wonder why we have to go through the day-in-day-out slog of life. Wouldn't it be better if we could work less and do more things that we enjoy? In his series on *The Book of Judges*, David Gooding gives us a perspective on work which we may not often consider. He says:

Daily work is the school where I learn to seek the rule of God, the kingdom of God, in my life. I have learnt in the Bible that I ought to be honest. Learning it in my study is one thing—where shall I practise what I have learned about the need for honesty? 'You will go to work,' says God. 'If you are not inclined to do so, I will give you a stomach and make it get hungry and then off to work you will go!' In its disciplines we learn to behave honestly, justly, compassionately, unselfishly and caringly for other people. As we work through the hours of the days and the years, the rule of God begins to form in us a Christian character.

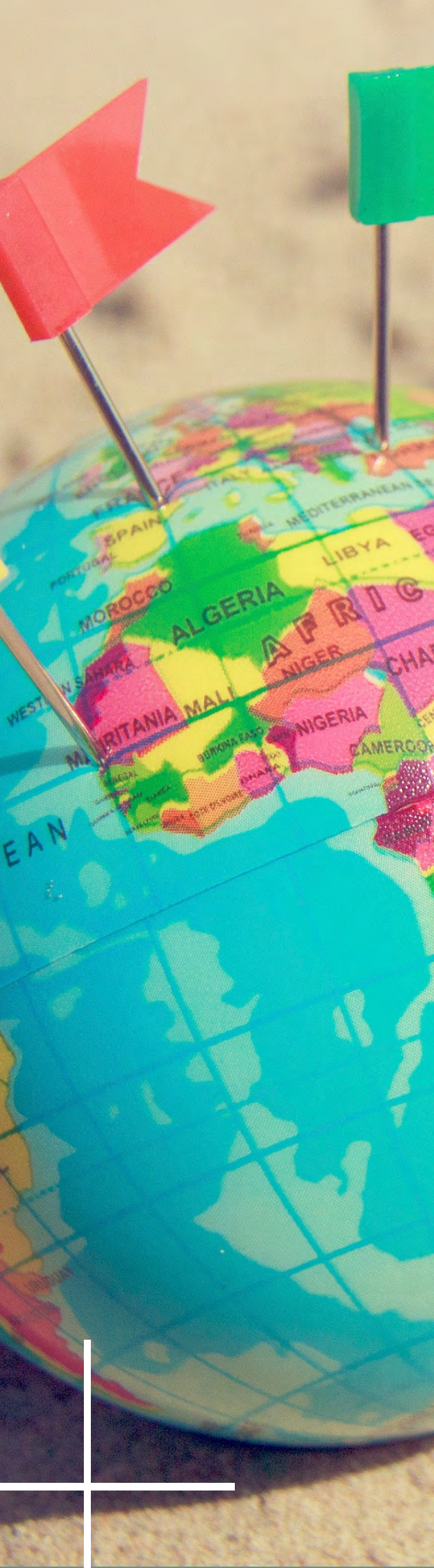
It is a wonderful thing to know that our daily work serves a dual purpose. It doesn't just help to feed ourselves and our families, it also provides the opportunity for us to be further conformed to the likeness of our Lord.

Since our previous newsletter in January 2018 we have been busy furthering the work that the Lord has put before us. The following pages will detail something of what we have been involved in over the last few months.

Let us take an opportunity at the beginning of *Between Friends* to thank you for your part in this work. Your continued support through prayer, generous donations and sharing our publications allows us to keep going.

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I have used Dr Gooding's books for Bible studies in our church for more than 20 years. There is no better material in the world, as far as I know. Thanks to our Lord.

A comment from a recent correspondent

110+

Over the last year people from over 110 countries have visited one of our websites to download books, transcripts or audio files. We continue to be greatly encouraged at the number who continue to benefit from the teaching of David Gooding and John Lennox all across the globe.

THE QUEST FOR REALITY AND SIGNIFICANCE

In the last newsletter, we announced a new series by David Gooding and John Lennox, *The Quest for Reality and Significance*. This series consists of six volumes covering a variety of topics. The production of these books has now been completed with book one already out and the remainder to follow throughout 2018 and 2019. We have included the series preface at the end of this newsletter.

From the series description:

We need a coherent picture of our world. Life's realities won't let us ignore its fundamental questions, but with so many opposing views, how will we choose answers that are reliable? In this series of books, David Gooding and John Lennox offer a fair analysis of religious and philosophical attempts to find the truth about the world and our place in it. By listening to the Bible alongside other leading voices, they show that it is not only answering life's biggest questions—it is asking better questions than we ever thought to ask.

Os Guinness writes about the series:

Clear, simple, fresh and highly practical—this David Gooding/John Lennox series is a goldmine for anyone who desires to live Socrates' 'examined life'. Above all, the books are comprehensive and foundational, so they form an invaluable handbook for negotiating the crazy chaos of today's modern world.

BEING TRULY HUMAN

AVAILABLE NOW

We released *Being Truly Human*, the first volume of *The Quest for Reality and Significance*, on 6th July 2018. So far, the feedback from the book has been both positive and encouraging. One reader commented 'I've just finished [*Being Truly Human*] and loved it. I've been recommending it to my family and friends'. You can purchase a copy at any major Christian bookshop or through all relevant online retailers.

Readers of this newsletter can get a copy for £5 off the retail price by using the discount code: THX18GMFH30 at the checkout of the 10ofThose.com website. If you do purchase a copy, please remember to leave a review as this helps us make more people aware of the books.

NEW RESOURCES

TRANSCRIPTS

Over the last few months, we have released 14 new series of transcripts bringing us to a total of 102 series, covering 18 Old Testament books, 16 New Testament books and 12 topics areas. The new transcripts are listed below:

- [The Wonder of Worship](#)
- [End of Age Challenges](#)
- [The Nature and Practice of Worship](#)
- [Problems Related to the Old Testament Canon](#)
- [God's Programme and Provision](#)
- [The End Times: Encouragements and Challenges from Bible Prophecy](#)
- [Ephesians: A Bird's Eye View of the Major Movements of Thought](#)
- [Key New Testament Themes](#)
- [Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel: The Gospel of John](#)
- [Major Themes in Revelation's Six Sections: The Book of Revelation](#)
- [Love: 1 John 4:7-21](#)
- [The Restoration of Israel](#)
- [A Proud Tyrant Brought Down and The Suffering Servant Exalted](#)
- [A Christian Response to Pagan Philosophies and Religions](#)

CHARTS

We have added a new type of resource to our website, called *Myrtlefield Charts*. These have been developed over a number of years and were distributed at talks David Gooding gave in various places publicly and privately. The charts are not meant to be the last word on any particular book, and may not cover it in its entirety. They are offered publicly to help Bible students, preachers and teachers to stimulate further thinking about the Bible, so that its message may be understood.

We currently have charts available for ten books (Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, 1-2 Chronicles, Matthew, 1-2 Corinthians, Ephesians and Revelation) with many more to follow. We have attached a sample chart at the end of this newsletter.



47

This year we began re-editing and making available a number of videos of David Gooding's teaching. We currently have 47 video talks available through our website and YouTube with many more to come.

977

There are currently 977 audio files from over 150 series available for download on our website. Last year users downloaded audio files over 6000 times

FRENCH

KEY BIBLE CONCEPTS

Key Bible Concepts is being translated into French. We are finalizing plans for publication so that we can make this book available in French-speaking countries around the world including Quebec and Francophone Africa.

ALBANIAN

WINDOWS ON PARADISE

Just a few decades ago President Hoxha declared Christianity illegal in Albania. It is encouraging for us to see *Windows on Paradise* now being published and distributed in this country. The work has been coordinated by believers in Albania.



GERMAN

THE QUEST SERIES

A German publisher, CLV, is currently planning to translate and publish the full *Quest* series. Several of our publications are already available with CLV and we look forward to seeing this new series in German as well.

CHINESE

ONGOING TRANSLATION

Key Bible Concepts is currently going through a mandatory vetting process by the state church before it can be published. The translation of *True to the Faith* will begin shortly. Please pray that the remainder of this project will progress quickly.

OTHER PROJECTS

SIM PASTORS BOOKSET

An exciting new opportunity arose this year in partnership with Serving in Mission Zimbabwe. A number of missionaries are working on a project to bring high-quality Christian resources to pastors in that country. We were approached by an SIM representative who asked if they could include various Myrtlefield House resources in their project. We are excited about this partnership, which means that ten of our books, along with a selection of video and audio files, will be distributed to several thousand pastors in Zimbabwe.

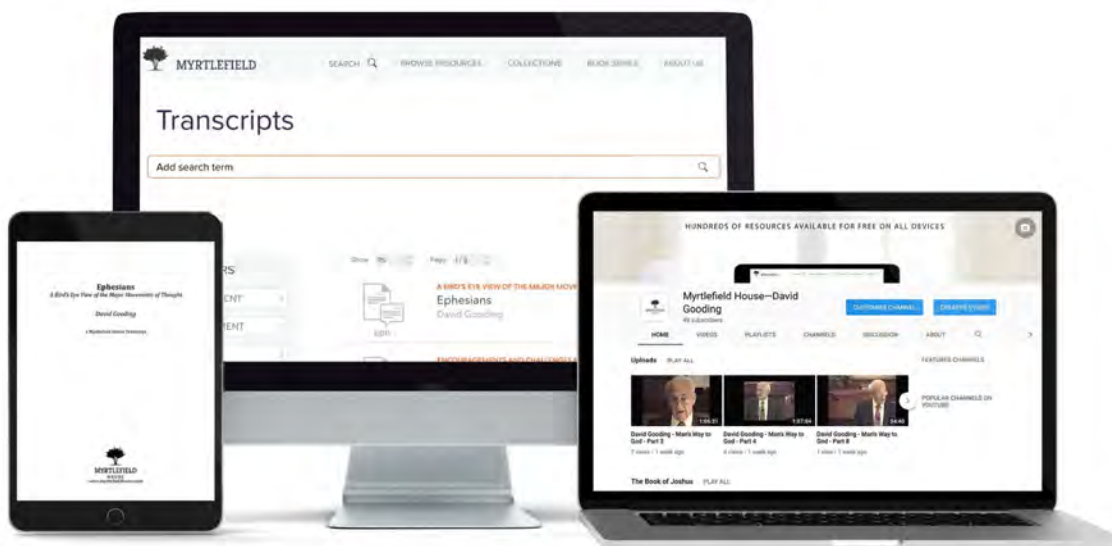
'THE END TIMES' BOOKLET

We are always looking for new ways to make the teaching of David Gooding available to those who would benefit from it. The topic at Northfield Bible Weeks 2018 provided an opportunity for us to publish a new type of resource. Our growing library of transcripts is available for download on our website, but many people still prefer to read in a more traditional format. We decided to produce a collection of three transcripts with a common theme—the end times. A small number of these were printed and they sold quickly at the conference. At the time of publishing this newsletter, some are still available through Ards Evangelical Bookshop.

KINDLE EDITIONS

Most of the titles in the *Expositions*, *Encounters* and *Discoveries* series have been available on our website in PDF and/or e-book format for some time. Several readers have requested the inclusion of these books on the Kindle store. So far we have made six titles available, with the others to follow soon.

The Quest for Reality and Significance will also be made available on Kindle a few months after the release of each title.



THE QUEST FOR REALITY AND SIGNIFICANCE

SERIES PREFACE

The average student has a problem—many problems in fact, but one in particular. No longer a child, he or she is entering adult life and facing the torrent of change that adult independence brings. It can be exhilarating but sometimes also frightening to have to stand on one's own feet, to decide for oneself how to live, what career to follow, what goals to aim at and what values and principles to adopt.

How are such decisions to be made? Clearly much thought is needed and increasing knowledge and experience will help. But leave these basic decisions too long and there is a danger of simply drifting through life and missing out on the character-forming process of thinking through one's own worldview. For that is what is needed: a coherent framework that will give to life a true perspective and satisfying values and goals. To form such a worldview for oneself, particularly at a time when society's traditional ideas and values are being radically questioned, can be a very daunting task for anyone, not least university students. After all, worldviews are normally composed of many elements drawn from, among other sources, science, philosophy, literature, history and religion; and a student cannot be expected to be an expert in any one of them, let alone in all of them (indeed, is any one of us?).

Nevertheless we do not have to wait for the accumulated wisdom of life's later years to see what life's major issues are; and once we grasp what they are, it is that much easier to make informed and wise decisions of every kind. It is as a contribution to that end that the authors offer this series of books to their younger fellow students. We intend that each book will stand on its own while also contributing to the fuller picture provided by the whole series.

So we begin by laying out the issues at stake in an extended introduction that overviews the fundamental questions to be asked, key voices to be listened to, and why the meaning and nature of ultimate reality matter to each one of us. For it is inevitable that each one of us will, at some time and at some level, have to wrestle with the fundamental questions of our existence. Are we meant to be here, or is it really by accident that we are?

In what sense, if any, do we matter, or are we simply rather insignificant specks inhabiting an insubstantial corner of our galaxy? Is there a purpose in it all? And if indeed it does matter, where would we find reliable answers to these questions?

In Book 1, *Being Truly Human*, we consider questions surrounding the value of humans. Besides thinking about human freedom and the dangerous way it is often devalued, we consider the nature and basis of morality and how other moralities compare with one another. For any discussion of the freedom humans have to choose raises the question of the power we wield over other humans and also over nature, sometimes with disastrous consequences. What should guide our use of power? What, if anything, should limit our choices, and to what extent can our choices keep us from fulfilling our full potential and destiny?

The realities of these issues bring before us another problem. It is not the case that, having developed a worldview, life will unfold before us automatically and with no new choices. Quite the opposite. All of us from childhood onward are increasingly faced with the practical necessity of making ethical decisions about right and wrong, fairness and injustice, truth and falsity. Such decisions not only affect our individual relationships with people in our immediate circle: eventually they play their part in developing the social and moral tone of each nation and, indeed, of the world. We need, therefore, all the help we can get in learning how to make truly ethical decisions.

But ethical theory inevitably makes us ask what is the ultimate authority behind ethics. Who or what has the authority to tell us: you ought to do this, or you ought not to do that? If we cannot answer that question satisfactorily, the ethical theory we are following lacks a sufficiently solid and effective base. Ultimately, the answer to this question unavoidably leads us to the wider philosophical question: how are we related to the universe of which we form a part? What is the nature of ultimate reality? Is there a creator who made us and built into us our moral awareness, and requires us to live according to his laws? Or, are human beings the product of mindless, amoral forces that care nothing about ethics, so that as a human race we are left to make up our own ethical rules as best we can, and try to get as much general agreement to them as we can manage, either by persuasion or even, regretfully, by force?

For this reason, we have devoted Book 2, *Finding Ultimate Reality*, to a discussion of Ultimate Reality; and for comparison we have selected views and beliefs drawn from various parts of the world and from different centuries: the Indian philosophy of Shankara; the natural and moral philosophies of the ancient Greeks, with one example of Greek mysticism; modern atheism and naturalism; and finally, Christian theism.

The perusal of such widely differing views, however, naturally provokes further questions: how can we know which of them, if any, is true? And what is truth anyway? Is there such a thing as absolute truth? And how should we recognise it, even if we encountered it? That, of course, raises the fundamental question that affects not only scientific and philosophical theories, but our day-to-day experience as well: how do we know anything?

The part of philosophy that deals with these questions is known as epistemology, and to it we devote Book 3, *Questioning Our Knowledge*. Here we pay special attention to a theory that has found wide popularity in recent times, namely, postmodernism. We pay close attention to it, because if it were true (and we think it isn't) it would seriously affect not only ethics, but science and the interpretation of literature.

When it comes to deciding what are the basic ethical principles that all should universally follow we should observe that we are not the first generation on earth to have thought about this question. Book 4, *Doing What's Right*, therefore, presents a selection of notable but diverse ethical theories, so that we may profit from their insights that are of permanent value; and, at the same time, discern what, if any, are their weaknesses, or even fallacies.

But any serious consideration of humankind's ethical behaviour will eventually raise another practical problem. As Aristotle observed long ago, ethics can tell us what we ought to do; but by itself it gives us no adequate power to do it. It is the indisputable fact that, even when we know that something is ethically right and that it is our duty to do it, we fail to do it; and contrariwise, when we know something is wrong and should not be done, we nonetheless go and do it. Why is that? Unless we can find an answer to this problem, ethical theory—of whatever kind—will prove ultimately ineffective, because it is impractical.

Therefore, it seemed to us that it would be seriously deficient to deal with ethics simply as a philosophy that tells us what ethical standards we ought to attain to in life. Our human plight is that, even when we know that something is wrong, we go and do it anyway. How can we overcome this universal weakness?

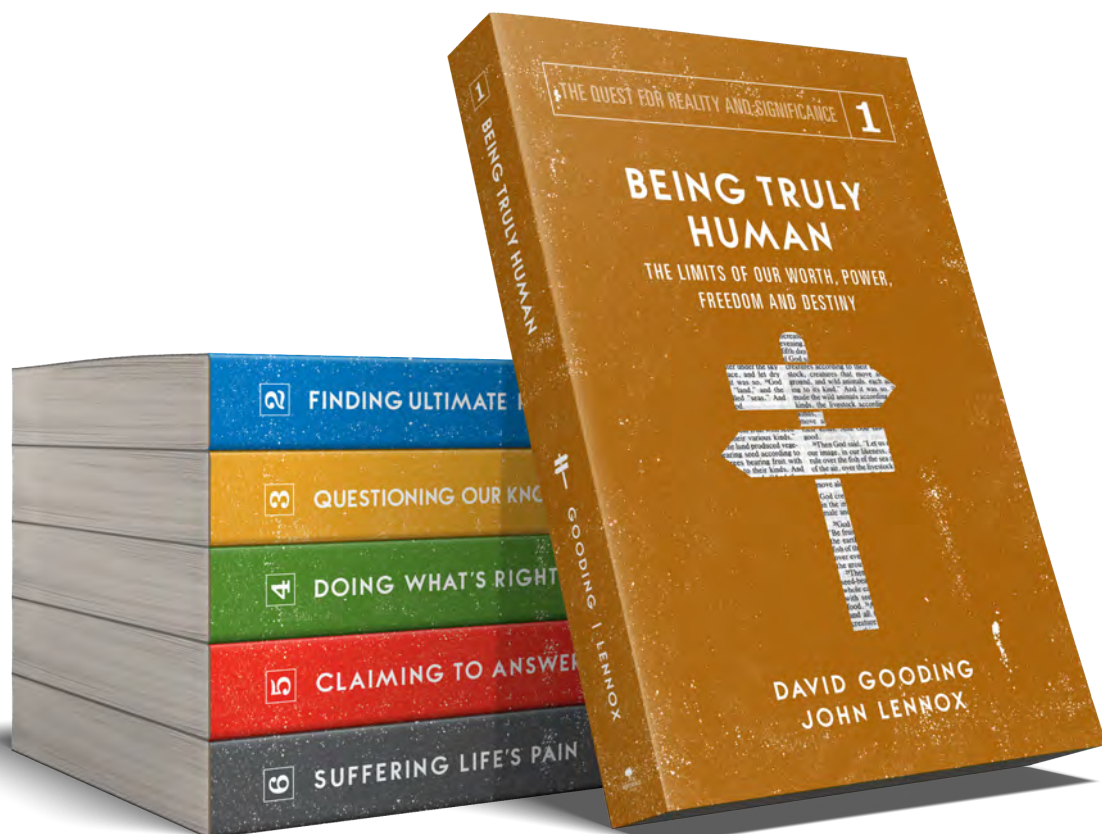
Jesus Christ, whose emphasis on ethical teaching is unmistakable, and in some respects unparalleled, nevertheless insisted that ethical teaching is ineffective unless it is preceded by a spiritual rebirth (see Gospel of John 3). But this brings us into the area of religion, and many people find that difficult. What right has religion to talk about ethics, they say, when religion has been the cause of so many wars, and still leads to much violence? But the same is true of political philosophies—and it does not stop us thinking about politics.

Then there are many religions, and they all claim to offer their adherents help to fulfil their ethical duties. How can we know if they are true, and that they offer real hope? It seems to us that, in order to know whether the help a religion offers is real or not, one would have to practise that religion and discover it by experience. We, the authors of this book, are Christians, and we would regard it as impertinent of us to try to describe what other religions mean to their adherents. Therefore, in Book 5, *Claiming to Answer*, we confine ourselves to stating why we think the claims of the Christian gospel are valid, and the help it offers real.

However, talk of God raises an obvious and very poignant problem: how can there be a God who cares for justice, when, apparently, he makes no attempt to put a stop to the injustices that ravage our world? And how can it be thought that there is an all-loving, all-powerful, and all-wise creator when so many people suffer such bad things, inflicted on them not just by man's cruelty but by natural disasters and disease? These are certainly difficult questions. It is the purpose of Book 6, *Suffering Life's Pain*, to discuss these difficulties and to consider possible solutions.

It only remains to point out that every section and subsection of the book is provided with questions, both to help understanding of the subject matter and to encourage the widest possible discussion and debate.

David Gooding
John Lennox



SAMPLE CHART

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR SECTIONS OF GENESIS

BY DAVID GOODING

I. The First Creation Story (1:1–2:3)

- A. Creation, not all at once, but in a progressive series of creative acts: *and God said* (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). Creation by the word of God.
- B. Not only creation but organization (1:4–5, 7–8, 9–10, 14–18, 26–28).
- C. Creation as distinct from subsequent maintenance and development (2:1–3).
- D. The pinnacle of the series: man, made in God's image, to be God's 'viceroy' (1:26–29).

II. The Second Creation Story (2:4–4:26)

The Generations of A. The Heaven; B. The Earth (2:4)

- 1. Unifying theme: the ground (2:5–7, 9, 19; 3:17, 19, 23; 4:2–3, 10–12, 14).
 - a. Man's substance: out of the ground (2:5–7; 3:19).
 - b. Man's function: to till the ground (2:5, 15; 3:23).
 - c. The curse upon Adam: *cursed is the ground for your sake; . . . till you return to the ground* (3:17–19, 23).
 - d. The curse upon Cain: *cursed are you from the ground*: Cain forfeits his *raison d'être* (4:11).
- 2. Descriptions of what life means: man's 'basic materials' (2:7), function, employment (2:5, 15), aesthetic sense (2:8–9), moral sense (2:9), ability to sin and moral responsibility to God (2:16–17), relationship to animals (2:19), faculty of language (2:19–20), man-woman relationship (2:18–25), music (4:21), metal-work (4:22).
- 3. The meaning of 'life' and 'death'; the fall, its effect and consequences; sacrifice and the values it protects.

III. The Third Creation Story (5:1–9:29)

The Generations of A. Adam (5:1–6:8); B. Noah (6:9–9:29)

- A. The development of the human race from Adam: its constitution (6:3), perversion (6:1–6), the nature and effect of its destruction by water (6:13; 7:23).
- B. The new beginning for the human race in Noah (6:9), the new mandate (8:15–9:17); Noah's indiscretion (9:20–29).

The section ends with the death of Noah (9:29).

IV. The Rise of the Hebrew Nation from Among the Gentiles (10:1–25:11)

The Generations of A. The Sons of Noah (10:1–11:9) and of Shem (11:10–26); B. Terah (11:27–25:11)

1. Nimrod and the great and famous cities: Babel, Erech, Accad, Calneh, Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, Resen (10:9–12). The building of the city and tower of Babel (11:1–9).
2. The call of Abram, the promise to make a nation of him, and the purpose of it: *in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed* (12:1–3; 18:18; 22:18).
3. The promised seed (12:7; 15:1–6; 18:10–18): the birth (21:1–7), sacrifice (22:1–19) and marriage (ch. 24) of the promised seed. The covenants made with Abram and his seed, of inheritance (15:7–21), and later of circumcision (17:1–27).
4. The three major areas in Abraham's training and testing:
 - a. Chs. 12–15: The choice between 'goods' and 'life'; the denial of Sarah, the choice of Lot, the capture and recovery of Lot, the ministry of Melchizedek, justification by faith and the covenanted inheritance.
 - b. Chs. 16–19: Faith in the promise or the works of the flesh? The taking of Hagar instead of Sarah and the birth of Ishmael; the covenant of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith; the renewal of the promise; Lot's experience in Sodom, its destruction and Lot's rescue.
 - c. Chs. 20–24: The search for security; the second denial of Sarah; the birth of the promised seed, and the expulsion of the bondwoman and her son; Abraham's oath granting security to the Philistine and his son; justification by works and God's oath granting security to Abraham and his son; the purchase of a burial-ground for Sarah; the second 'calling-out' from the Gentiles—a bride for Isaac.

The section ends with the death of Abraham (25:8–11).

V. The Maintenance of the Hebrews' Vision and their Development into Israelites (25:12–35:29)

The Generations of A. Ishmael (25:12–18); B. Isaac (25:19–35:29)

1. The pre-natal struggle of Esau and Jacob; Jacob's election; Esau despises and sells his birthright (25:20–34); Isaac's struggle to maintain himself in the land, his denial of Rebekah, the fight for water, the renewal of the promise (ch. 26); Isaac's blessing of Jacob, Jacob's deception, Esau's anger, the nature of blessing (ch. 27).
2. Three periods in Jacob's life:
 - a. In the land of promise (25:19–27:34).
 - b. Out of the land among the Gentiles (28:1–31:55).
 - c. Back again in the land (32:1–35:29) but still attended by many difficulties in his relations with the surrounding tribes.

3. The subject-matter of Jacob's training: leaving home to make a future for himself; the vision of the house of God and of the gate of heaven; marriage-deals; the birth and naming of his children; the need to amass capital; trade-secrets, their use and abuse; the jealousy and anger of the Gentiles; Jacob's flight; problem of reconciliation with Esau; wrestling with the angel, the vision of the face of God, Jacob becomes Israel; the abuse of religion by Jacob's sons.

The section ends with the death of Isaac (35:28–29).

VI. The Development of Israel's Sons into a Nation. They Become a Blessing to the Gentiles Through Joseph the Saviour of the Egyptians and of the Hebrews (36:1–50:26)

The Generations of A. Esau (36:1–8, 9–43); B. Jacob (37:2–50:26)

1. The welding of Jacob's twelve sons into a nation. Unlike what it was with Abraham and his sons, it was not a question of taking one of Jacob's sons and discarding the rest, but of taking all twelve of his sons and welding them into a cohering nation. At first the brothers' treacherous jealousy against Joseph and his dreams of administrative supremacy, and the irresponsibility of Judah (ch. 38)–head of the tribe destined to bear the royal sceptre–and his mercenary attitude (37:25–27) threatened to divide and scatter Jacob's sons before they could be developed into one nation. But they are preserved, re-united and made a blessing to the nations through Joseph's innocent suffering and Judah's readiness to suffer vicariously (44:18–34).
2. Jacob's rediscovery of Joseph, and his recovery of his sons Simeon and Benjamin. The preservation of the twelve sons and their families, the beginning of their multiplication into a nation in Egypt, and the maintenance of their prophetic hope in their future destiny.

The section ends with the deaths of Jacob (49:33–50:13); and of Joseph (50:26).