

he should deserve to lose his home, his children, his wealth and health while other people get to keep all those things. . . .

Job's solution is to reject proposition (B), the affirmation of God's goodness. Job is in fact a good man, but God is so powerful that He is not limited by considerations of fairness and justice. What about the anonymous author of the book? What is his answer to the riddle of life's unfairness? . . .

Let me suggest that the author of the Book of Job takes the position which neither Job nor his friends take. He believes in God's goodness and in Job's goodness, and is prepared to give up his belief in proposition (A): that God is all-powerful. Bad things do happen to good people in this world, but it is not God who wills it. God would like people to get what they deserve in life, but He cannot always arrange it. Forced to choose between a good God who is not totally powerful, or a powerful God who is not totally good, the author of the Book of Job chooses to believe in God's goodness.

2. In Margaret Clarkson's book, Destined for Glory, Clarkson asks (pp. 6-7):

Why is there such suffering in our world? Why is evil so strong? If God is all-powerful, why does wrong seem so often to triumph? If God is not only powerful but good, why does He allow pain to afflict His creation?

That God is, indeed, both good and powerful is one of the basic tenets of Christian belief. Therefore there must be an answer to the problem of pain, and it must be a Christian answer. But it is not an easy question, and it does not admit of any easy answers. Surely Christians, of all people, ought to be able to speak peace to our aching world. Yet what do we find today? Most Christians seem to be as baffled as anyone else by the enigma of suffering. Few of us have learned to triumph over it in our own lives. We speak to the question with a diversity of voices.

Some answer with humanistic philosophies, much as the world does. Some assume a fatalistic attitude, or a stoical one. Some refuse to face the issue. Some resort to a Pollyannaish attitude; others take refuge in a pie-in-the-sky escapism and never really come to grips with the facts. Many see their answers in counselling, psychology, or a variety of self-help theories.

Some think that Christians are exempt from trouble in this world and preach inviting but unsubstantiated doctrines of instant health, wealth, and happiness in Jesus. Some teach that physical healing is a part of the Atonement, and that anyone who is sick is either lacking in faith, out of God's will, or harboring some secret sin. Others seek