

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me"—John 5:39.



These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"—Acts 17:11.

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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WHEN WAS THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED?

The denominational world constantly emphasizes the "millennium" or thousand years reign of Christ upon his throne upon earth. As long as I can remember they have been prophesying this event with every world incident between nations. In this is somehow "fulfilled" the prophecy which forecasts the coming "great tribulation" and the coming of Christ for his "one thousand years" reign upon earth. They do not all agree about the order of these events, and not necessarily what each event means.

The word of God is the only competent authority to determine the accuracy of prophecy and fulfillment. We shall appeal to this inspired historical data relating to this broad subject.

To understand when the kingdom was established, if it has been established, we must go to the prophets and learn from them where and when it was to come. If the predictions of the prophets have not yet been fulfilled, the kingdom is still future. But if the New Testament shows the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament men who were moved by the Holy Spirit as they spoke, the kingdom is now present, and we do not look for anything regarding the kingdom yet to come.

Prophecies Of The Kingdom

When was the kingdom of prophecy established, if it has been established upon earth? Some have claimed that it began in the days of Abraham when God made His promises to him. This is obviously not

true because the prophecy concerning the kingdom had not been made and Christ had not received a kingdom.

Many strongly contend that the kingdom was established during the days that John the Baptist was upon earth. Jesus made the statement that none was greater than John the Baptist, but he that is least in the kingdom is greater than he (Matt. 11: 11). This is to say that John was not in the kingdom. He lived and died before the kingdom was established.

Besides this, John the Baptist preached, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3: 1, 2). After John was put in prison, he was never released (Matt. 14: 3-12). Jesus came preaching, "the kingdom of God is at hand..." (Mark 1: 14, 15). The kingdom had not come when John was beheaded. John was dead before the kingdom was established.

The kingdom could not begin before the death, resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

The promise was made of a Messiah who would save the people. "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4: 4, 5). Jesus came at the right time for a definite purpose. The blood of the lamb of God had to be shed in order to make both Jew and Gentile one in Christ (Eph. 2: 13-16). By his blood Christ reconciled all unto God in ONE body "by the cross." The one body is the church (Eph. 1: 22, 23; Col. 1: 18, 24). Our redemption, the forgiveness of sins, is through his blood (Eph. 1: 7). The church is purchased with his blood (Acts 20: 28). The church could not have been established before Christ gave his blood on the cross.

The kingdom could not have been established before Christ ascended to the Father to receive the kingdom of prophecy. He could not ascend until he was raised from the dead. He gave his life in fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God, and he must be raised from the dead before he could ascend to the Father and receive the power he now has.

Christ told the twelve just before he ascended into heaven that they should tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Luke 24: 49;

Acts 1: 8, 9). After he said this he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. Daniel saw night visions in which "one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7: 13, 14).

The kingdom or church could not be established until the power came. Jesus said unto the people and his disciples, that there were some of them standing there, "which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9: 1). If we can know exactly when the power came, we know exactly when the kingdom came. Just before his Ascension, Jesus told his apostles to "tarry ye in the city of Jerusa-lem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24: 49).

Luke was the inspired writer of both Luke and Acts. He addressed both to "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1: 3; Acts 1: 1). Acts begins where Luke leaves off. "The former treatise" most surely refers to the gospel of Luke (Acts 1: 1). Christ commands the eleven not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father (Acts 1: 4). Verse 6 gives the account of the eleven asking Jesus if he was now ready to "restore again the kingdom to Israel." He replied, in effect, that it was not any of their business what the Father put in His own power. Then he said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8).

We have the right PLACE and the right TIME: Jerusalem and Pentecost. That is where the power came and when the power came, that is where and when the kingdom of Christ began upon earth according to prophecy and fulfillment. That is the time when and place where the church had its beginning. Acts 2 is the account of that power beginning its work and in the last verse we read, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2: 47). All of these passages give evidence that the kingdom of heaven began on Pentecost following the Ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father. That means that Christ is now on his throne and his kingdom now exists.

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Publications

The Instrumental Music Question

This large volume contains not only debate notes on the subject by Wallace, a review of debates of significance on the issue, also by Wallace, but also includes material from M. C. Kurfees, Adam Clark, Don H. Morris, Moses E. Lard and John L. Girardeau. This is a monumental collection of material ever needed in the continuing battle to preserve pure worship.

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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A BLOSSOMING COURTSHIP

For several years now there have been "unity forums" in which men from the conservative Christian Churches and some from the institutional Churches of Christ have met, at first to discuss differences and more recently to ignore them and engage in a blossoming courtship. The most recent one was labeled "Restoration Forum VIII" and was conducted at the facilities of the Garnett Church of Christ in Tulsa, Oklahoma on November 7-9, 1990. The Winter, 1991 edition of ONE BODY, published by Don DeWalt carries a summary of what took place and speaks in glowing terms of the growing cordiality and cooperation between the two groups.

William Pile wrote his summary under the heading "They Had a War and Nobody Came." If he correctly assessed the affair, there was no war to it. The following excerpts are reported in Pile's article.

Bill Humble (a capella), speaking on "Who Are These People" said "at times we have been so committed to Biblical authority that we have become dogmatic and legalistic. We've sometimes been such defenders of the letter of the law that it has overshadowed the cross. Today we have a better balance."

Dennis Randall (a capella) said "Most issues dividing us are peripheral. While we debate them, the world is going to hell... I Believe both groups are right **and** wrong."

Boyce Mouton moderated reports of cooperative efforts between instrumental and non-instrumental groups in "worship, sports activities, campus ministries, breakfasts, prayer meetings, camps, Bible translation, welfare, etc."

Rubel Shelly (a capella) said "Our triparted hermeneutic (command, example, necessary inference) is not inductively Biblical." He also said "Our 'everybody can understand the Bible alike' sermons were a bit arrogant." Pile commented, "Perhaps his most startling statement was this: 'I reject the religious patternism with which I grew up.' "Well, that is startling, not only to me, but to a man of the Christian Church reviewing it. On the music question Shelly said "Against this background, I can recommend a capella music. Linguistically and historically I think we have a case for a capella music. Do I have a biblical case for it? No."

Pile summarized the change in these forums. He wrote "The Forums have moved from exercises in academics, logic, and polemics, to exercises in love, grace, and relationship. We spent far more time as brethren

than competitors... Argumentation lost to amiability. Being right gave way to being real. It was as if everyone now sees unity (the issue for which we assembled these eight times) as no longer the real issue, but a byproduct of our fulfilling the Great Commission. Obviously, everyone felt quite relieved."

Well, **relief** is not the emotion this editor feels. I am **sad** to see how little conviction some of those who have participated in these gatherings have. No wonder the instrumental participants are ecstatic. They have had to give up nothing. They have their instruments **and** concessions from men who formerly opposed them with vigor, concessions to the end that those who opposed the instrument were just too legalistic in the first place, that had it not been for poor hermeneutics such a blunder would not have been made, and besides all that, the opposers had simply fallen for outdated "pattern theology."

We would like to serve notice on those in the Christian Churches that there are still a number of us who believe we can make a biblical case for singing in public worship and who are prepared to show that playing is without divine authority, hence iniquitous. Further we yet believe that those who practice "iniquity" (lawlessness) will be lost (Mt. 7: 21-23). We love these who are caught up in sin. That never has been an issue. But we hate the sin and stand ready to contend for the faith and to oppose any departure from the New Testament pattern. As it was with Moses when he was about to make the tabernacle, even so must we "make all things according to the pattern" (Heb. 8: 5). To "go onward" and "abide not in the doctrine" is to forfeit the approval of both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Jno. 9-11).

These false worshippers and their sweethearts have made another "date" to sweet-talk each other. This one will be Forum IX set for November 6-8, 1991 in Portland, Oregon. Don't be surprised if we hear wedding bells before this courtship is over. The whole thing is being treated as just a lover's quarrel. The hugging and kissing to make up is well advanced.

Meanwhile, ask for the old paths and "walk therein."

CHANGES AT FLORIDA COLLEGE

BOB F. OWEN resigned as President of Florida College a few months ago and MELVIN D. CURRY also resigned as head of the Bible department. COLLY CALDWELL has been named the new President of the college. Ferrell Jenkins has been appointed head of the Bible department and Buddy Payne will serve as vice-president and acting dean. The many who have been served by the college over the years owe a debt of gratitude to Bob F. Owen for his many years of faithful service to the school and its patrons. His wife, Janelle, has stood faithfully by his side in all these years. Many young people, now scattered around the globe, have benefited immeasurably from the work of this devoted couple. Melvin Curry has brought scholarship and devotion to truth to his work. His character and competence have blessed the students who passed under his influence over the years. Both Bob Owen and Melvin Curry will continue in different roles for the college. Bob will work in fund raising activities and Melvin will continue

to teach.

Colly Caldwell is ideally suited to the work of president of the school. He is prepared for it educationally, from the standpoint of administrative experience, and is well known and appreciated by brethren over the country for his able work in preaching the gospel. His convictions are sound and his life is beyond reproach. He, too, is blessed with a devoted wife, Linda, who stands beside him with grace and dignity. I believe the school will do well under his leadership and commend it to parents who want to send their children to college in a wholesome environment.

Ferrell Jenkins has long been known for his scholarly work. He is an able preacher and teacher and the author of several books. His convictions are strong and we can only expect good from his efforts. His wife, Elizabeth, has taught in the business department for many years. We wish all of these men and their families well in their new assignments.

Our readers have benefited much from the excellent articles written by Colly Caldwell. We hope he will still be able to find the time to submit additional material for your study.

DONNIE V. RADAR AND THE NEXT THREE MONTHS

We have asked Donnie V. Rader to edit the paper for the months of June, July and August as he did so capably last year. He has consented to do so. I know of no brother in whom I have greater confidence than Donnie. His love for the truth is evident, his work is careful, his spirit is fair to all concerned, and his expertise in layout is a great asset. The July issue will be another "special" to be entitled "Whatever Happened To Common Decency?" It will be a great help for trying problems of our time. It will be the kind of material which ought to be in the hands of Christians everywhere. Look elsewhere in this issue for an advertisement giving subjects and writers along with prices.

Our schedule of work is full to overflowing all the time and this kindness on his part will give us a little slack to attend to our meeting work with a little less pressure. We look forward to the three issues to be edited by brother Rader and thank him in advance for his faithful help.

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SATAN'S KINGDOM

QUESTION: *Our Lord Jesus said, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matt. 12: 25). How is the kingdom of Satan divided against itself and when shall it be brought to desolation?*

ANSWER: Jesus was responding to the sinister thoughts of the Pharisees who had said (not in presence of Jesus), "This fellow doth not cast out devils (demons), but by Beelzabub the prince of the devils" (v. 24). To show the absurdity of such reasoning Jesus states an universal experience that a kingdom, city or house (family) divided against itself cannot stand. This being fully realized and unquestioned by all men, Jesus logically concludes, "And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand" (v. 26).

The import of v. 26 is not that Satan *could* not cast out his own evil spirits, but rather he *would* not. The passage does not suggest that Satan is divided against himself, as indicated by the querist, but it implies the opposite — that he is working in unison to accomplish his ends.

If Jesus were casting out devils by the power of the Devil, then there would be division in the kingdom of darkness and Satan would be bringing about his own demise. Desolation would be the result. This is when, hypothetically, it would be laid waste. Parenthetically, Jesus' argument constitutes an incidental but strong argument against sectarianism (cf. 1 Cor. 1: 13).

MOUNT ZION

QUESTION: *Does Zion in Isa. 2: 3 refer to heaven or earthly Jerusalem?*

ANSWER: Zion in Isa. 2: 3 refers neither to heaven nor earthly Jerusalem, but rather it denotes the kingdom or church which is the spiritual Zion of the messianic age. The prophet said, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established..." (v. 2). Mountain in this verse signifies government (cf. Jer. 51: 25) and house is the church (1 Tim. 3: 15). In this context Isaiah stated, "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (v. 3). This Zion is the city of truth (Zech. 8: 3).

The *Zion* of Isa. 2: 3 is the *Mount Zion* of Heb. 12: 22-23 wherein the author writes, "But ye are come unto Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem... To the general assembly and church of the

firstborn..." The Hebrew Christians had already come to Zion by virtue of their citizenship in the kingdom of heaven. "For our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3: 20, NAS).

Homer Hailey commented, "The word *Zion* came to be used in prophecy to refer to the spiritual Zion to come, that is, the dwelling place of God among His redeemed people where they find security and peace... Zion, as the mountain of God's house and people, was the place from which the law would go forth and from which the people would be ruled by His word" (*Isaiah*, p. 47).

George Robinson, commenting on Micah 4: 1-5, a parallel passage to Isa. 2: 2-4, said that it is "a picture of Zion, destined, he sees, to become the spiritual metropolis of the whole world (cf. Isa. 2: 2-4)." C. F. Keil wrote, "Zion is the source of the law and word of the Lord, from which the nations draw instruction how to walk in the ways of God, to make it their own, take it to their homes, and walk according to it" (*Minor Prophets*, Vol. 1, p. 457).

It was upon Mt. Zion where Jehovah would set Jesus as king (Psa. 2: 6), resigning over the inhabitants of spiritual Zion from which his law had proceeded (Micah 4: 7). A sure foundation would be laid in Zion (Isa. 28: 16), the sons of strangers would build the walls and the gates shall be open continually (Isa. 60: 10-14). This is the city to which all nations will flow in order to be taught the way of the Lord and to walk in his paths.

In several places *Zion* is used in a literal sense. Originally, it was the old Jebusite stronghold which was captured by David (2 Sam. 5: 6-7), making it his capital. Later, it came to stand for the enlarged city of Jerusalem, including Mt. Moriah, the site of the temple. However, in Isa. 2: 3, as well as several other passages, Zion has a spiritual connotation as already noted.

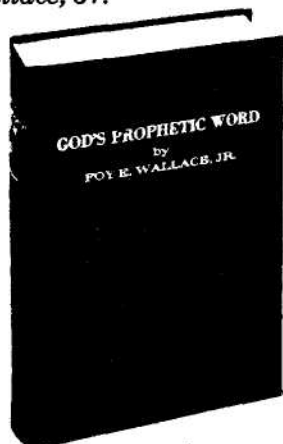
Though we have come to Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem in one sense, in another sense, it is still sought after as Heb. 13: 14 suggests. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Abraham looked for this eternal city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11: 10).

GOD'S PROPHETIC WORD

By Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

A compendium on the Abrahamic Promises and the Mosaic, major and minor Davidic Prophecies, consisting of a complete exposure and refutation of the multiple theories of premillennialism, including a review of the claims of British Anglo-Israelism, and the Judaistic system of Seventh Day Adventism.

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GIVING THE LORD OUR LEFTOVER TIME

When it comes to money and material things, most of us understand the Lord's work can require sacrifice. If a thing urgently needs doing and we lack the surplus cash to make it possible, many good brethren will dig down deeper and do without things for themselves in order to get the Lord's work done, perhaps selling off possessions to raise the necessary funds, as the early disciples did (Ac. 2: 45; 4: 34-37). When the collection plate is passed, we know the Lord deserves more than a simple look in our wallets to see if there is anything we can "do without." Parents and preachers have taught us to adjust our living standard to the needs of the Lord's work, rather than vice versa. We don't always do as we should, obviously. But most of us know what the word **sacrifice** should mean, and we feel guilty when we ignore our conscience concerning financial sacrifice.

Our Most Precious Possession. But there is something else that must often be sacrificed in doing the Lord's work — **time** — and I suspect that our frequent unwillingness to make **this** sacrifice may be a worse problem, if only because we are not as honest about how sinful it is. Money is valuable, of course, and we would like to have as much as possible. But time is in some ways an even **more** precious commodity to us. Philanthropic organizations, all say that the typical American would much rather write a check to support a worthy cause (and be "done with it") than donate even a little **time**. In the Lord's body, for every one person who has a problem about giving his money, there are at least three or four of us who have a problem about giving the thing we are most covetous and selfish about: our time.

Who can deny that we hang on to our time and activities with a tighter stinginess that we do our money and possessions? It has gotten to the point where, if the Lord's work conflicts with any of our precious activities (or even sometimes with **rest from** our precious activities), we will hardly even consider giving up the activity as a **sacrifice**. It would be simply out of the question. The thing is "ours" and we are not going to part with it willingly. Our rule of thumb seems to be that if anything has to "give," it should be the services and work of the congregation. Scheduling conflicts are virtually always resolved at the expense of the Lord. We may still now and then sacrifice the **having** of certain things for the Lord — but very few of us will let the Lord stand in the way of **doing** something we want to **do**. One would

think that spiritual matters are the only "optional" things we are involved in.

A Critical Problem. It is a plain fact that we do with our calendars and datebooks precisely what we have always said was sinful to do with our checkbooks: give the Lord nothing but what is "left over." Like the Jews of old who brought the "lame and sick" (Mai. 1: 8, 13) for their animal offerings (their "spare" livestock), we insult the Lord by giving Him our "spare" time. If the Lord needs an hour or two, that is fine—unless we have **anything** else we could possibly be doing. It begins to look as if the Lord gets our time only when there is **absolutely zero else going on.**

Am I exaggerating? Ask your elders. Ask them how hard it is anymore to do even a little thing like setting the times for services of the church. Ask them if they have been able to please the folks who think an "expedient" time is one that involves the least possible interference of church services with anything else. Ask them how often they hear complaints about services running overtime. Ask them about the unrelenting pressure they are under to cut gospel meetings shorter and shorter and shorter. Ask them about the nearly impossible demand to find dates for gospel meetings when nothing else is going on that would "conflict." Ask them how often they hear about the importance of getting children to bed early on school nights — often from parents who will take their children completely **out** of school for other "important" activities.

Ask your elders how many who are asked to take care of some job or responsibility in the congregation seem to be mainly concerned about how little time they can spend doing it. Honestly, ask your elders if they do not get the distinct impression that many members of the body nowadays are not motivated by these overriding concerns: How can we constantly whittle away at the Lord's work and keep it from intruding on our schedules? How can we keep it from conflicting with anything else we want to do? Above all, how can we keep the church "convenient?"

The truth is, the real work of the Lord in all ages has tended to encroach on busy schedules, just as it has tended to eat away at large bank accounts. Those who consider time and money as resources to be spent on self have never been more than a hindrance to heaven's cause. But we live in a busy age when time seems especially short — the variety of things to be involved in is mind-boggling. If we do not get a fresh grip on the concept of true **sacrifice** in the matter of our time, we are going to lose our souls and, with them, everything that ever mattered. Jesus said, "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Mt. 16: 25). Can there be any doubt that, by withholding our "schedules" from the Lord, we are refusing to give up our lives for Him, one day at a time? He **never** let Himself get involved in anything that was so important that He could not lay it aside at any moment to serve our needs. If, in return, we give Him only the leftovers of **our** time, is hell not too good for us? Think about it the next time the Lord needs you for anything... and you "can't make it. "

MUSINGS

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THE THIEF OF TIME

It has been properly said that "procrastination is the thief of time." Procrastination simply means the practice of postponing or putting off until tomorrow, or at least until later on, that which should be done today or now. In the movie "**Gone With The Wind**" you will remember that Scarlett O'Hara practiced that philosophy. Do you recall how, when she was faced with a decision, she always would say, "Well, I won't think about that now. I'll think about it tomorrow. "

There are some things, of course, that may be postponed and indeed should be because there is no urgency required or the thing under consideration may be of no particular consequence anyway.

People are prone to put off a lot of things. Some put off going to the doctor or dentist. Some put off paying their honest debts. Others put off doing good deeds. One could go on and on with such a list.

The most serious postponements, however, have to do with spiritual matters. Some so-called Christians postpone or set aside their duties and responsibilities to God and man. They plan to visit the sick tomorrow. They will encourage those who are weak in the faith later. Some will seek to recover the backsliders when they get around to it. Wives and husbands neglect each other but they are going to do better—tomorrow. Parents are going to have a closer family life — eventually. Children away from home plan to call or write their aged parents — when they have caught up on a few things. Many of these elderly people watch for the mail each day in hopes that there will be some mail from the children. Often they are disappointed and have to come back into the house with a handful of bills and advertisements. But no word from the kids. They will write someday.

Some people have heard the gospel of Christ time and again. They believe it, they say. They are going to obey it, like Felix, at a more convenient season. One wonders how many tombstones could accurately bear the epitaph: "**I plan to obey the gospel — later on. "**

My friend, spiritual matters are not trivia. We must not take them lightly. Many need to make a decision now about their souls. Paul said, "... behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation..." (2 Cor. 16: 2). How true this is. Many would agree that this is so but not be moved to action. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1: 16). Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. (Heb. 5:9).

Please do not trifle with your soul's destiny. To do so is to face an eternity of remorse and regrets. Act on your faith, repent of your sins, confess Christ, be baptized into Christ, be faithful unto death. Heaven will be yours. This you will never regret. Use the time you have **now** to do the will of God.

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**CHILDREN OF DIVORCE AND
SPIRITUAL LIFE**

**T. Doy Moyer
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A child who goes through the trauma of divorce is going to be affected in many ways. The child will likely have trouble with building and maintaining strong relationships. Furthermore, evidence shows that the tendency of this child to divorce his own spouse is greater than those whose families stayed intact. A child is hurt deeply by a divorce, and often ends up losing respect for his own parents. When a child loses respect for parental authority, he soon loses respect for all authority, including God's. The most serious problem that can stem from a divorce has to do with one's relationship to God.

Odds are not very good that a child of divorced Christians will be a faithful child of God himself. The bitter child might even blame God for the divorce and show a manifest bitterness toward the church. As Job's wife wanted Job to "curse God and die" for the suffering he had to endure (Job 2: 9), so the temptation is there for a child to feel the same. He may feel that he has been mistreated by the church, and that if "this is what Christianity is all about, then I don't want any part of it." This is one reason why it is so important for members of the church to pay special attention to children going through a divorce. Ignoring them will be the worst thing you can do to them.

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10: 17). A child raised in a Christian home is taught the principles from God's word on how to live. Parents are to nurture their children, teaching them God's word in order to instill that faith within them (Eph. 6: 4). However, if the child is hearing one thing from the parents, yet seeing another, he will learn to distrust not only what the parents say, but also what the Bible says. Faith will be replaced by doubt, and the child might despise the things he has been taught. It is not surprising then that such a child may not amount to much as a Christian. Probably most of the rebellion we see in today's youth comes from children who have unstable family situations. We must realize that there is a direct correlation. These rebellious children are seeking for help and acceptance. They don't know what it means to feel safe, secure, and loved. Many reject God because they have never been shown what being a true Christian is all about. If his parents are divorcing when they have been telling him to obey God, he may feel as though the Bible contains principles that really don't work in life. Thus, he will not have faith.

Commitment is everything in our service to God (Lk. 9: 23). From whom do we learn about commitment?

Children need to learn it from their parents, as they strive to follow Christ. Yet, what does divorce say to a child about commitment? Remember, that child may not understand why his parents are splitting up. It makes no sense to him. Instead of learning the devotion and commitment that he needs to have in order to "bear up" under the hard times, he learns to "quit" when the going gets tough. After all, this is what his parents have taught him by example.

People are constantly struggling with their faith. Even when Jesus was in the flesh, his own disciples struggled with it (e. g. Jn. 20-25-29). There were occasions when Jesus told them that they had "little faith" (Mt. 6: 30). Many will have a hard enough time struggling with faith. It's hard enough being young and growing up. It is much worse for a child who also has to live with divorce. Furthermore, how often does it happen that both parties in a divorce remain faithful to God? Anytime a divorce takes place, there is sin involved somewhere by one (or often both) of the people. Divorce has never worked wonders for a person's faith. Imagine how much it can hurt that impressionable child who has been putting all of his trust in the two people who have more to do with his shaping than anyone! If he sees his own parents showing lack of faith in God and His word, what do we expect to see from him? His relationship with God will indeed be affected.

Commending you to

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Marshall E. Patton

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THE LOVE OF GOD—ROMANS 8—(NO. 4)

The Father's Sympathy — Suffering and Hope — Vs. 17-25

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." This text gives us assurance of our loving Father's sympathy in the midst of the trials we are called upon to endure in this life. He not only sympathizes, but has provided that which sustains us until the final redemption of our bodies from all the evils of this present world.

Suffering With Him

Based upon the fact that we are children of God (v. 16), the first verse of our text affirms that we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." The apostle then introduces the theme of human suffering and shows that our ultimate glorification with Christ is conditioned upon our suffering with Him. Indeed, it is true: "The Way Of The Cross Leads Home." While there is suffering that is common to life in this world, that referred to here is "with him." This is suffering experienced by virtue of our relation to Him and because of our stand for and defense of the truth. Paul in another place put it this way: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3: 12). Jesus also, without equivocation, said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because I have chosen you out of



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the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15: 18, 19)

Salutary Effect

The apostle goes on the show (v. 18) that no matter how great the suffering here, it does not begin to compare with the magnitude of the glory that shall be ours "in the sweet by and by." In fact, Paul teaches that such afflictions even have a salutary effect upon our lives: "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4: 17). Whether our afflictions are common to life in this world or because of our suffering "with him" they are "light" and "but for a moment" compared to the "weight of glory" that is "eternal" received at last by the faithful. Besides that, they are working for us. This is what James had in mind when he said, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (Jas. 1: 2, 3). Afflictions beget within us a deeper sense of our need for and dependence upon God. They drive us to the word of God, to prayer, and build into our character virtues necessary for entrance into heaven. Peter also speaks of their salutary effect: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1: 6, 7).

"The Whole Creation Groaneth"

In verses nineteen through twenty three the theme of human suffering is amplified. Admittedly, these are difficult verses. Even after years of diligent study, I set forth my convictions with measured caution.

The brief over-all view is simply this: It is the lot of all mankind, as long as he tabernacles in the flesh, to experience suffering — intense groaning. However, those in Christ have something to sustain them and to look forward to that the man of the world does not have, namely, hope — hope of immortal glory! This involves laying aside this mortal tabernacle and being "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" (2 Cor. 5: 2) — a house in which we can no longer know the emotions of sorrow, pain, suffering, or any of the bodily imperfections of this life.

Every "new creature... in Christ" (2 Cor. 5: 17) longs for this transition (v. 19) — a transition in which shall be clearly manifested a sharp **contrast** between those of the "new creation" (2 Cor. 5: 17 — marginal reading — ASV) and those who are not (v. 19). This manifestation shall then be not by way of simple declaration only, but by way of ACTUALITY! All mankind shall see and know it.

Difficult Words

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in understanding these verses grows out of determining the meaning of the words "creature" (KJV), "creation" (ASV), and "whole creation."

Since Paul says that the "creature" (KJV) or "creation" (ASV) "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of

God" (v. 21), these words necessarily refer exclusively to the children of God. The expressions "corruption" and "glorious liberty" draw a contrast between present suffering in a mortal body with future glory in an immortal body. Who or what else has been promised such liberation? This is corroborated by the fact that the word "creature" in Rom. 8: 19, 20, 21 and in 2 Cor. 5: 17 is translated from the same Greek word. The latter reads: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Again, we find the verb form of the word "creature" in Eph. 2: 15: "For to make ("create"—ASV) in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." Thus, a Christian is a "creature" of God—a "new creation... in Christ." The church of God's "creation" of both Jew and Gentile.

Verse twenty two shows that not only **God's creation in Christ**, but also the "whole creation" (the whole human race) suffers in the here and now. These two groups are contrasted in the next verse by the use of the words "they" and "ourselves."

I see no reason to include in the expression "the whole creation" the animal and vegetable kingdom — the lower order of creation — with a view to such, along with the earth itself, being renovated so as to be an eternal abode for the righteous, as per materialists, including some premillennialists. Such would demand making figurative language of our text arbitrarily. Such action is wholly without justification.

The First Fruits of the Spirit

The "first fruits of the Spirit" enjoyed by "ourselves" (God's creation in Christ) is the same thing Paul referred to as the "earnest of the Spirit" by which we are sealed (2 Cor. 1: 22; Eph. 1: 13, 14). The word "earnest" is used here in the same sense as "earnest money" or a down payment on a piece of real estate. Such is a guarantee that the balance on the property will be paid in due time. Such is a seal or guarantee of the genuineness of the transaction.

Since we who are in Christ have already received multiple promises made by the Holy Spirit, namely, "all spiritual blessing... in Christ" (Eph. 1: 3), such serves as a guarantee that future promises will be fulfilled in due time. What better assurance does the Christian have of that grace to be received at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1: 13) than that grace that has come unto us (1 Pet. 1: 10)? Not one promise of the Holy Spirit made for the gospel dispensation has failed — "all are come to pass"! Such is a down payment on those of future glory — "the first fruits of the Spirit."

Hope

The infinite love and sympathy of our heavenly Father is clearly seen in the grace he gives to sustain us through every trial in the here and now (2 Cor. 12: 9) and the **hope** set before us "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast" (Heb. 6: 19). This is an anchor that every soul on earth needs. We all have problems to solve, difficulties to face, and burdens to bear that would crush us to earth in despair, but for the fact we have hope. Even hope in this life is wonderful. We endure today because we hope for a brighter tomorrow. However, by comparison hope in this life only leaves man a miserable being (1 Cor. 15: 19) Here the

Christian has something of inestimable value that the man of the world does not have. He can lift his eyes and by faith look over the Jordan of death and face the world to come with joy, courage, hope, and faith.

Because of this hope we can "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" (Heb. 10: 23). We can stand steadfastly, endure patiently, and fight on courageously. We can resist temptation, deny ourselves, bear our burdens, nurse our sick, bury our dead, and gather up the shattered pieces of a broken life and build again — ever pressing on "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 14). No wonder Paul said, "We are saved by hope" (v. 24).

Using the

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

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Huntsville, Alabama 35805



A TRIP TO HONG KONG, INDIA, AND ENGLAND

On Jan. 8, Darrel Haub, Gerry Sandusky, and I left the U. S. with plans to preach for a month in India with stops in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. We spent about a week in Hong Kong. The Jordan Park church in Huntsville has had fellowship with Jeff Kingry for several years, both in Vermont and China. It was profitable to visit the Kingrys and the Robert Smalls and to be involved in some small way in the work there. Those who receive reports from these brethren are aware that the most encouraging progress in Hong Kong has been among the Filipinos. Jeff, Robert, and the Dale Smelsers (who were in Shenyang at the time of our visit) have been making periodic trips into the People's Republic of China. Reports of the work there seldom fail to bring tears to the eyes and joy to the heart.

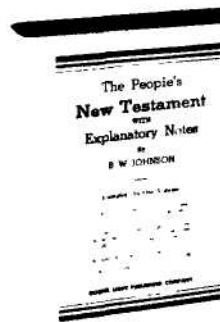
We arrived in Hyderabad, India Jan. 16. Ed Brand joined us a few days later. Our plans for evangelism and teaching the brethren were largely aborted because of the unrest occasioned by the Gulf war. The agitation between the Moslems and Hindus which John Humphries recently reported was unabated at this time. But the war in Iraq which began shortly after our arrival made the situation even more explosive. There was also an acute fuel shortage that made traveling impossible had it been advisable. The American embassy advised us to leave if possible. The same counsel was given by several others who believed that our presence at that time was dangerous for us and for those associated with us.

We were able to conduct several classes and services around Hyderabad. Also several thousand dollars of needed relief was given to suffering brethren.

With some difficulty we left India Jan. 26 for London. Ed and Darrel returned to the states a few days later. Gerry and I opted to stay in England until Feb. 21, working primarily with Derek Daniell in Tunbridge Wells. Several classes were taught there and in Canterbury and London. Much literature, ads, and correspondence courses were distributed house to house and in the open mall area. Some good contacts were made. One lady in Canterbury was baptized who was responsible for some other contacts there.

Derek and Margaret Daniell are native Britons. They and their large family are deeply spiritual, committed, untiring workers in the kingdom. Derek drives forty miles to Canterbury twice a week to teach a class there and to bring people to worship in Tunbridge Wells. He drives to Kentish Town in London, another forty or so miles, on Wed. nights to teach a Bible class there. Gas is about \$3. 20 an American gallon. Everything seems to be about twice as high in and about London as it is in Huntsville, AL. This good man has lost a great deal of his support. He is having to wash windows to supplement his income as he gives as much time as possible to the work of the kingdom. I never heard a word of complaint from him so I want to complain on his behalf. If you would like to correspond with Derek Daniell, his address is: 34, North Farm Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 3XD. U. K His telephone: 0892 23864.

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"He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him. Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby" (Eccl. 10: 8, 9).

"He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears" (Prov. 26: 17).

Those two passages should account for our subject title, and I don't think we had to stretch either the context or our mental faculties to find congruity and conformity between the two.

Solomon did not say that we should never dig a hole, clean out a briar patch, move rocks, or chop wood. He simply tells us to be prepared for the fringe benefits of such endeavors. A certain amount of risk is necessary, and the same writer says that we can spend too much time observing the clouds and the wind (Eccl. 11: 4). But the fellow who purposely takes a dog by the ears has no excuse whatever.

Anyone who has not been warped across the shin bone or alongside the head by a ricocheting stick of wood has not explored all the possibilities of instant and abiding pain. He who has never held a snapping dog by the ears knows not the meaning of dilemma.

There are many deadly snakes in the world, and many more that can scare you half to death. In our country, the rattlesnake is probably the most prolific and notorious, which some folks are said to be as mean as.

The person who would unnecessarily subject himself to the aforesaid dangers is devoid of good common sense. And yet, most of us have done it a few times, and some have done it several times. Some keep right on doing it.

I speak of giving heed and attention, either by initiation or by bidding God speed, to "foolish and unlearned questions" and such like (2 Tim. 2: 23).

I've done my share of grubbing sprouts, cutting wood, and killing copperheads. I am no stranger to, yet not a connoisseur of, that commodity called controversy. And, though not alone, I've probably engaged in more than my share of controversy, partly because some others avoided their fair share of the burden in that department.

But, though Florida is said to be populated with innumerable rattlesnakes, I have not encountered any live ones to date. I have seen a couple of dead ones, and

pictures of others, and I'm sure there are thousands more out there in the boonies, swamps, and palmetto thickets.

But I attribute my scarcity of association with this reptile to the fact that I just haven't gone out of my way to hunt them. On the contrary, I have done a pretty good job of avoiding the known habitats of rattlesnakes.

Years ago, a young preacher complained to me that brethren had taken him to task for preaching that a candidate for baptism need not understand that baptism was necessary to the remission of sins. He had cleaved the wood and broke the hedge, and he didn't get any sympathy from me for the consequences which he suffered.

Some preachers will take a dog by the ears in the pulpit, in a Bible class, or in some publication, just for the sake of being different, or trying to appear scholarly or profound. Some may have a pet position and want to test the reaction of brethren by throwing their hat in the door before entering the room. Then they will cry discrimination, persecution, harassment, or even crucifixion. Some may just break the hedge in ignorance, with no desire or intent to aggravate a serpent or take a dog by the ears.

All the same, the dog or the snake may not know, or care about the motive.

Don't misunderstand me. There may be scriptural topics which have been ignored or swept under the rug for too long. Consequently, someone has to follow the example of Samuel and hue the Agagite doctrine or practice in pieces (1 Sam. 15: 33). Or, there may be "no small dissension and disputation" over something we didn't introduce in the first place (Acts 15: 1, 2).

But whether your effort is justified or is simply an exercise in meddling with strife better left alone, be ready to dodge the flying chips, rattlesnakes, and snapping dogs inherent in such activity.

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOB "My Witness and My Redeemer"

By way of introduction we are reminded again that Job was an Old Testament patriarch living hundreds of years before Christ. Even so within the Old Testament there are types and shadows which look to the New Testament for the anti-type and substance. These references within the framework of God's eternal purpose to redeem lost man are a pointing to the Christ and the revelation of the plan of redemption. At times these references are glaring, at other times they are subtle, but in either case the ultimate aim is Christ. This series is the examining of some of the questions of Job, some of his statements, which point to answers found in Christ and the gospel.

"And now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high" (Job 16: 19). These words occur in the 2nd cycle of the three cycle controversy between Job and his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. The first cycle has attempted to account for suffering on the basis of personal sin. The friends have argued Job's predicament is the result of personal sin. Job has protested. Eliphaz's second address is essentially the same. He sums up, only the wicked suffer. Indeed it is true that the wicked suffer, however, it is false to conclude **only** the wicked suffer. Job reaffirms his innocence and reproves his friends like this, "I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all. Shall vain words have an end? or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?" (Job 16: 1-3). In other words, are you to continue in your vain repetition?

With the continuing affirmation of innocence in face of his friends' accusation Job's statement is "Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure" (16: 17), we are challenged by the statement "my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high" (v. 19). Our man amid misunderstanding, in face of bewilderment and perplexity in this manifest a consciousness of one who knew the truth about him, one who was able to attest truth. As he ponders his troubles there is the acknowledgement of his personal sense of inability to plead his case with God. He is beset by longing, his eyes pour out tears, his heart pleads his case, yet God does not hear as when a man pleads with his neighbor (cf. 16: 20-21).

Let us not be too hasty in our indictment of Job. Stand in his shoes and understand his predicament. Amidst turmoil, filled with anguish, listening to good men talking of his experiences, yet ignorant of facts,

even so indicting Job of sin. Is it any wonder that he should feel alone and forgotten. Of course subsequent events and fuller understanding on Job's part proved him wrong in a number of instances, but not concerning his "witness." It seems as we reflect upon Job's opinion he has concluded God is not acting in his behalf. Sometimes even we lose sight of the fact that God is always on the field, governing activity. To us, in our weakness and anxiety, as with Job, it is as though God is doing nothing. This is Job's experience at the moment.

In the midst of this Job makes two affirmations. One, "my witness is in heaven." "Witness" or "watcher" conveys the idea of one who sees and knows. His friends had failed him because they did not know all, they simply **thought** they did. Theirs was an attempt to account for Job's experience by a partial and incomplete philosophy. Job declared there is one in heaven watching, understanding and knowing all. Second, "And He that voucheth for me is on high" or "my record is on high" (KJ). There is one able to vouch, bear witness to truth in Job's behalf. This reflects a consciousness of the ultimate tribunal in heaven. But he seems to immediately recoil from this affirmation as he again speaks of sorrow and anguish and bemoans the fact he cannot reach this watcher and voucher this "witness and recorder." In him we are reminded that the knowledge and perception of the best of friends is incomplete when compared with heaven. With Job there seems to be the growing conviction that his only hope of justice is with heaven.

Having been prompted toward deeper considerations by these things of Job, what is the abiding truth concerning our "witness and redeemer?" Christ alone satisfies this need, for He had entered into "heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9: 24). This passage declares there is one who stands in the presence of God, knowing perfectly and acting in our behalf, one who stands before God, vindicating the sinner. All that Job felt the need for spiritualizes in Jesus Christ. He has entered into heaven itself, is our Witness, our Recorder, our Mediator. By the atonement process he has made grace available, thus we may stand before God forgiven and approved. Judgment of friends, self approval will not suffice to this, it is God and he alone that must approve.

In that continuing second cycle of speeches, from the answer of Job to Bildad, there is another challenging statement, "I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19: 25). Bildad has argued that suffering is found only in the dwelling of the wicked. The implication being, Job is wicked. Job acknowledges his afflictions are from God and says his friends have no right to add to them, all the while denying their charge. In the midst of this gloom our cry breaks forth and in the very next sentence Job obviously sinks back into his gloom. He has previously declared my "witness is in heaven," here he goes further by adding his witness is his redeemer. It is impossible to read this statement without a consciousness of Christ. Try to grasp Job's understanding. Ours is an insight through incarnation. But what of Job? He seems to have momentarily caught the music of eternal things, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin

worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19: 25-27). However, the light fades immediately as he is heard to say "my reins are consumed within me" (i. e. "source of life"). What did this mean to Job?

"My redeemer" is an expression which must look to the Son of God for full interpretation. "Redeemer" is the Hebrew word "Goel" meaning next of kin, another, to defend my cause, avenge wrongs and so acquit of wrongs. Much like the relation of Boaz to Ruth. Note Job does not just say his redeemer existed, but, even though I die, he lives. He declares that in death he yet had a kinsman, one through whom he would be acquitted, and vindicated. He declares a consciousness not simply of the fact of a redeemer but a conviction that he would see him. Job is testifying to an awareness of continuity of life beyond death. For a fleeting moment our man has the widest outlook as he seems to grasp the truth concerning himself and God. We have heard him ask, "If a man die, shall he live again" (Job 14: 14)? Now, he rises to affirm the answer. Not only live but see God and my living redeemer. Are these things true? They certainly are as every true believer holds tenaciously to the words, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7: 25). Jesus Christ is our witness and our redeemer. God be praised.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN ME!

Norman E. Sewell

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Of all the experience of this life, death is perhaps the most difficult. Until this past year I had lived without death touching very close in my immediate family. Losing an aunt or an uncle is just not the same as losing someone you have been really close to for many years, whether physical family or spiritual. But within the past year or so all of that has drastically changed.

How often have we read David's statement in the 39th Psalm which says, "**Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am**" (v. 4)? But do we often stop to recognize just how frail we are? Just a few months ago I lost my father whom I thought would surely live many more years. Nothing could have prepared me for the shock of it, but somehow we do get past death and go on to remember with love those who have gone on ahead of us. Recently I participated in the funeral service for an uncle that I had actually

grown up with. We had been more like brothers than uncle and nephew. Yet suddenly he was dead and he was younger than I was. I did in fact think, "It could have been me." As I was preparing for his funeral I was thinking of what seemed like the untimely nature of his death and I remembered something David had said to Jonathan as he was hiding from King Saul. David said, "**As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death**" (1 Samuel 20: 3).

I guess we have all had our "close calls"; those near accidents which could have been so deadly. Sometimes these too help us to think just how frail human life is, and that at times there really is "but a step" between us and death. And now comes the conflict in the middle east, with hundreds of thousands of American men and women sent to defend the cause of freedom. And all of us either are related to, or know personally some of these men and women. Some of them are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Its easy for us to see and to think that there may be for them "but a step" between them and death. We rejoice to see this war coming to a close with as few casualties as there are. But the point is still the same; we are frail with only a few years to live here on earth, and there is but a step between us and death. Though Moses spoke long ago of "**threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years**" (Psa. 90: 10), yet many never reach even that age.

As we ponder these frailties that we all come to see as we grow older, we also come to understand better Solomon's statement in Ecclesiastes chapter 7. Solomon wrote: "**It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting**" (v. 2). It seems to contradict human nature to say that, yet this is what Solomon said. His reason for saying this is also given: "**for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.**" This is the end of all men, to die. The Hebrew writer said, "**And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment**" (Hebrews 9: 27). Since it is to be my end as well, it is important then that I recognize this frailty in myself and prepare for it. This is much more than just picking out a burial plot, or deciding about and paying in advance for your funeral. These things CAN BE DONE by someone else after you're gone. But what they cannot do for you, or for me, is to prepare for the judgment for us. This isn't news; we all have known it for a long time. Have you laid it to your heart that there is but a step between you and death, or that "it could have been YOU?" If we will indeed take it to heart when we go to the house of mourning, perhaps we will prepare for that time when it WILL BE us.

Seeing our friends and family precede us in death is not easy for we suffer the pain and disappointment of knowing that we will see them no more in this world. But what a joy it is, even in the midst of sorrow, to know that the one who has gone on was a Christian, and, as far as any of us can know, faithful to Jesus our Saviour. What a joy it is to be able to say, "I'll see you over there," fully believing that all of the faithful will "**meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord**" (1 Thess. 4: 17).

At the same time how sad it is to see Christians (so-called) who hardly even know what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. We can only hope that these who take

such a casual attitude toward living as Christians and serving God day by day will indeed have time yet to think, "it could have been me," and to prepare for eternity.

THE NEW NAME! WHY?

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Acts 11: 19-30 is the lengthy text for this article; but I wish to call attention to that part of verse 26 that says, "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." This verse has been used by some as a fulfillment of Isa. 62: 2—the new name by which God's people would be called. Others have contended that the name "Christian" was not the new name, but was given in derision, there in Antioch. It is not the design of this effort to even try to settle that argument; rather, to ask and discuss the question—Why were they called Christians? If they were called Christians" by God, why? If they were called "Christians" in derision, why? There must have been some reason(s) as to why this name would be used in reference to the disciples. I believe that the answer to this question is to be found noticing the characteristics of these disciples. What kind of people were they? Let us see!

THEY WERE A TAUGHT PEOPLE. Verse 26, says that "much people" were taught. Jesus had said, "And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," (Jno. 6: 45). The "Great Commission" cannot be overlooked here (Matt. 28: 18-20). People were to be taught, baptized, and taught further. Indeed, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10: 14). The opponents of Peter and John were grieved because "they taught the people" (Ac. 4: 2); and the Colossians were to be rooted and built up in Him, "as ye have been taught" (Col. 2: 7). To the Ephesian elders Paul said, I "have taught you publicly, and from house to house." Being TAUGHT is a fundamental requirement of one who would be a follower of the Lord. Do you think these people would have been called "Christians" had they not been taught?

THEY WERE AN OBEDIENT PEOPLE. Verse 21 relates this by saying, "A great number believed and turned unto the Lord." God's people today simply cannot be as Israel of old, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. 1: 21). These disciples at Antioch were, "Doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (Jam. 1: 22). Perhaps we see here what Isa. 65: 1 prophesied, "I am sought of them that asked not for me' I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." Do you think these disciples would have been called "Christians" had they not been obedient?

THEY WERE A PEOPLE WITH PURPOSE. That purpose is clearly stated in verse 23, to "cleave unto the Lord." The word "cleave," in the original, meant, "to join fast together, to glue, to cement." In our text it carries the thought of "to abide with." So, these people "cemented" themselves to the Lord. They did not try to see how close to sin they could get, but, how close to the Lord they could get. They truly practiced the teaching of Jas. 4: 7-8, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts ye double-minded." Do you think these folks would have been called "Christians" had they been without this purpose?

THEY WERE AN ASSEMBLING PEOPLE. Verse 26 shows them gathering in a teaching assembly. Early Christians assembled regularly (Act. 20: 7), and steadfastly (Ac. 2: 42). The thought of Heb. 10: 25 was precious to these disciples. Can you imagine any of these people willingly being absent from any of their services? I cannot! It would seem that their thirst for Truth was never satisfied (Matt. 5: 6). We have every reason to see them as being glad when someone suggested an assembly (Psa. 122: 1). Do you think they would have been called "Christians" without that interest in assembling?

THEY WERE A CHANGED PEOPLE. Verse 21 shows that change being wrought. This change, no doubt, was obvious to all. If they were called "Christians" in derision, it would serve to compliment them; for, their change was so obvious that even their enemies thought they should be called after the One whom they followed. They were now new creatures (2 Cor. 5: 17), and they would act like it. Their hearts had changed; they now believed in the things of God. Their lives had changed; they had turned to the Lord. I suggest that this is a case of genuine repentance (Ac. 17: 30). Could anyone possibly suggest that they would have been called "Christians" without this change?

THEY WERE AN IDENTIFIED PEOPLE. They were "called Christians" (v26). Whether by derision or by God, it set them apart from the world; and, this was ordained of God (Rom. 12: 2). You may be in the world; but, if you wish to be identified as one of God's own, you must keep the world out of you (1 Jno. 2: 15; 1 Pet. 4: 4, 16; Jas. 4: 4). Would they have been called "Christians" had they not been thus identified?

THEY WERE A BENEVOLENT PEOPLE. We see this in verses 29-30. The only force applied in this matter was the force of their convictions; being Christians compelled them to be charitable. They "determined" and "also they did it." They knew that talk was cheap, and that only actions counted. We see in them "A peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2: 14); we see in them a people who were taking advantage of every opportunity which they had to do good (Gal. 6: 10). The principle taught in the parable of the good Samaritan was not wasted on these disciples. Without this benevolence, do you think that they would have been called "Christians?"

THEY WERE A LORD-CENTERED PEOPLE. The Lord Jesus was preached (v20), a great number believed

on the Lord and turned to the Lord (v21), they would cleave to the Lord (v23), and many were added to the Lord (v24). They had "clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal. 3: 27-NAS). They simply would not think of trampling under foot the Son of God; they were clothed in Him. They knew that they were not their own, but that they had been bought with a price; and, that they were to glorify God in their bodies (1 Cor. 6: 19-20). How do you see these people in regards to Matt. 6: 33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God?" Were they respecting this principle, or something different? We ask, once again, do you think that these disciples would have been called "Christians" had they not been Lord-centered?

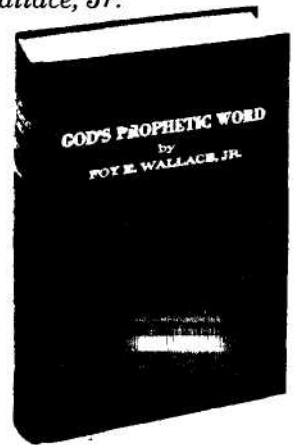
Does the above give you any idea as to why these people were called Christians? Would not the same be essential for us today? If not, why not? There is an eternal principle of God that we need to vividly remember—There is no respect of persons with God (Ac. 10: 34-35; Rom. 2: 11). Ac. 8: 22 tells us what Simon was told to do; but, it was recorded so that each of us might know what to do when we sin-repent and seek God's forgive-ness. And, dear reader, it is a sin to ignore the character-istics which God expects us to develop.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

“. . . They rehearsed all that God had done with them . . .” — Acts 14: 27

Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109

OLIVER WATTS, Box 895, Craig, CO 81626 — Kenneth and Madge Underwood drove 1300 hundred miles from their home in Owensboro, Kentucky to attend the funeral of Vera Hockett Watts in Craig, Colorado on March 15. Those three, with Vera's husband, Oliver, and with the Bill Fiske family and others, worked together in the 1940's to plant the gospel in that Colorado Town.

WALLACE H. LITTLE, 520 Mary Esther Cutoff, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548 — The Northside church had Don Patton of Dallas, Texas here in March for a series on Evolution and the Bible, strengthening our faith. We had many visitors, some from 60 miles away as well as visitors from the community, some attending more than once and some every evening. Several studies have resulted from this with more anticipated. Most of our local visitors had responded to our advertising. Brother Patton's subject had wide appeal.

TOM WHEELER, 2407 Stewart St., Johnson City, TN 37601—After two years with the Brookmead church in Johnson City, TN, we are moving April 1 to work with the River Bend church near Florence, AL. The River Bend church is working and growing. Mildred and I look forward to our work with them.

LECTURES IN KANSAS CITY

The Vivion Road church meetings at 2026 N. E. Vivion Rd., Kansas City, MO 64118, announces a lecture series for June 24-27, 1991. Speakers will be: Leslie Diestelkamp (Evangelism); Bob Owen (Biblical Interpretation/Biblical Authority); Larry Houchen (Edification/Benevolence). For information concerning video tapes, audio tapes and accommodations for out-of-town visitors, write to the church at P. O. Box 28478, Kansas City, MO 64118. Phone (816) 452-3684.

MIKE HUGHES, P. O. Box 2481, Corinth, MS 38834 — After three years with the Central church near Corinth, we will be moving June 11 to work with the church in Piano, IL. While in Corinth six were baptized into Christ. Our new address will be: 418 Lee St., Piano, IL 60545. Phone (708) 552-8735.

CEDAR RAPIDS/WATERLOO, IOWA AREA — We are trying to establish a sound congregation in the Cedar Rapids/Waterloo, Iowa area. We have five Christians with their families presently worshipping. If you live in the area, we would welcome you to meet with us. If you know of someone in our area, we would appreciate the chance to contact them. Any help or support in this effort would be appreci-

ated. We presently meet in our homes. If you wish to contact us, please call Larry Brown (319) 396-1703 or George Mantica (319) 234-1988. If anyone would be willing to go and work with these brethren, please contact: Jack Gay, Tampa, FL (813) 985-1612.

FRANK D. BUTLER, 1509 Raby Ave., Shelbyville, TN 37160 — Gary and Laura Allen own a fishing and hunting lodge in Nestor Falls, Ontario, Canada, about 70 miles north of International Falls, Minnesota. The Aliens and another family which drives from Emo, about 50 miles away, meet in the lodge every Lord's Day for worship. Nestor Falls is in a remote area of central Canada, with very few permanent residents, mostly native Indians. For their own spiritual edification, and in an effort to reach other Christians who may live within driving distance, and also to generate some interest in Bible study with residents of the area, the Aliens have set aside two weeks in August for that purpose. During the weeks of August 11-17 and 18-24, they are reserving their cabins for Christians, their families and friends. I will present a special series the first week and Ray Ferris will teach a series the second week. The mornings will be spent in Bible study at the lodge. The afternoons are free to work to invite others to study and to enjoy the handiwork of God walking in the woods or fishing in a glacier lake, while at the same time helping a small group of Christians in a remote area of central Canada. If you are interested, why not give the Aliens a call. You may write them at Allen's Crow Lake Lodge, Box 250, Nestor Falls, Ontario, Canada POX 1K0. Phone 1-807-484-2628.

RONNY MILLINER, P. O. Box 960, Colonial Heights, VA 23834 — Recently we witnessed a couple return to the Lord. Then we rejoiced at the conversion of a Catholic family with whom we had been studying. Then tears of joy were shed as a sister who had left the Lord and returned to the Baptist Church, was restored. We now have twenty members. We have outgrown our present meeting place and are currently searching for larger quarters in which to meet. I hate to mention the fact that I have lost \$1050 a month over the past few months which I desperately need to replace. An individual is temporarily helping with \$350 a month but I need to relieve him of this burden as soon as possible. For a list of references or further information, please contact me at the above address or call (804) 526-6434.

ROBERT W. TRASK, SR., P. O. Box 1505, Chiefland, FL 32626 — I have been preaching for about 12 years. During that time I have provided most of my support through my secular business. After much prayerful consideration, I am closing my business in order to devote full time to preaching duties and will begin this about July 1, 1991. The church at Manatee Springs is slowly growing, continues to be at peace, and is in complete agreement with my decision. If you can help with my support, either on a one-time or continuing basis, I would be grateful. A list of references will be supplied upon request. This is a big change for me and my family, so please keep us in your prayers.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES — Felipe Catolos reports the beginning of a new congregation at Caggay, Tuguegarao, Cagayan which meets in his home every Sunday and Wednesday. Six were added last month.

SPAIN — Efrain Perez writes that two more have been baptized and two restored at Badalona (Barcelona area). Recently two of the local brethren preached and did well. Average attendance now is 48. In January a trip to the Canary Islands resulted in eleven baptisms and the establishment of a new congregation which met first on January 20, 1991 with 16 present.

ECUADOR, SOUTH AMERICA — Ruben C. Amador of Houston, Texas reports one baptized at Judiway in Houston and tells of a trip to Ecuador. Since his trip last November, seven were baptized there. The country is going through rough and dangerous times and his most recent trip had to be cut short.

PHILIPPINES — Through the teaching of Bert Enostacion and Cris Sarceda, on November 29, 1990, Celestino E. Bautista, Jr. renounced his association with the institutional brethren. Since that time he has been working with Roger Salviejo in personal work and public preaching. Ten have been baptized from their labors. Twenty others have turned away from liberalism. He, along with others, reports a continu-

ing unstable situation both politically and economically.

Reynaldo E. Corsino writes of a good meeting in Feb., 1991 in Centro, Lasam, Cagayan. Speakers included Andrew Gawe and Rody Gumpad. Eight were baptized.

Domie A. Jacob of Sagat, Cordon, Isabela wrote and included pictures of a number of baptisms. On Dec. 9, five were baptized and four families restored at Diffun, Quirino. Then on Dec. 28, four more were baptized at the same place. At Der-an a gospel meeting was held with Eusebio Balliao and Fernando Balbin as main speakers and eight were baptized. On January 13 four more were baptized at the same place. A lectureship is planned for April 24-26 at Urdaneta, Pangasinan with several speakers, including Carl McMurray from USA.

MEXICO — Enrique Cisneros of Naco, Arizona reports a meeting in March, 1991 in Naco, Sonora, Mexico in which two were baptized into Christ.

SOUTH AFRICA — While Paul Williams and wife were away from Eshowe visiting in Johannesburg, local brethren did the preaching and teaching and baptized two. The brethren have decided to purchase a new tent since the old one was badly damaged by wind. We understand also that Gene and Betty Tope have decided to return to South Africa for a few more years of work. They have already spent 20 years in that field and have been in this country for the past few years preaching in Virginia and Florida. We published a book, TRAILBLAZERS FOR CHRIST written by the Topes about their first 20 years of work in South Africa. It is a thrilling little book which sells for \$2.95 (plus postage).

Sakkie Pretorius also writes from Nelspruit in South Africa where they are meeting in his home while trying to locate a suitable place to rent. These appear to be scarce and expensive. They are often crowded for space. Two were baptized in December. One of those baptized was a young man who is a fourth generation of families which have served the Lord faithfully and taught their children/grandchildren the truth. He wrote "We can only thank God for those men who came here 40 years ago to plant such healthy seeds to produce a crop of Christians four generations deep."

The Vesta via church in Birmingham has supported him since 1983 but must attend now to pressing expansion needs in the local work. They have asked Sakkie to replace the \$2,000 a month support they were supplying and that will not be easy. Brethren, these good men must be allowed to continue their gospel work. Who can help?

ARGENTINA — Carlos Capelli reports two baptisms at the Jose C. Paz church in Buenos Aires. The woman baptized and her brother travel 60 km for worship each Sunday. They have started a new radio program on Saturday AM 7:30 to 8 on a powerful FM station (98.9).

CHINA—The most recent report from Jeff Kingry, Robert Small and Dale Smelser who are working out of Hong Kong, is nothing short of thrilling. Their most recent trip to Shenyang in Manchuria resulted in seven more obeying the gospel. Each new convert (as well as older ones) is at great risk from the repressive government. In Hong Kong, four more Filipinos have been baptized. The work of Bert Enostacion from the Philippines has been outstanding. He was only able to remain for one month. The brethren have been encouraged by the presence of Dan and Jeanie Clendenning, Christians who are business people and who have been a great blessing in several nations where their work has taken them. April 1, Dale and Marlene Smelser left to begin their work in Prague from which point they hope to follow up some leads for teaching in the Soviet Union. If you do not receive the Kingry China Report, you might want to request it from: Ken Guthery, 7402 N. 56 St. #895, Tampa, FL 33617. I think it stirs me as much as anything I have read in recent times.

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

CAMP WAMAVA IS A "MISSION EFFORT"

The March 15, 1991 issue of STAND, bulletin of the church in Annandale, Virginia, contains an article entitled "The Camp WAMAVA Missionary Society" written by Floyd Chappellear from which the following information is gathered. The church there received a letter from the camp including these excerpts:

"Camp WAMAVA needs your help! Now, more than ever before, this mission effort (emphasis, fdc) is depending on the financial

support of ALL of the local congregations. "

"First every member of the board of directors believes camp WAMAVA to be an important missionary effort of the churches of Christ. "

"Brothers and sisters, camp WAMAVA belongs to the churches of Christ in the Washington area... The camp's continued existence depends on the consistent support of the area churches. "

"Please make Camp WAMAVA a part of your missions budget beginning with 1991. "

The church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 15) but it is not the pillar or support of youth camps functioning as missionary societies. The only unit through which "church" work may be done is the local church. It operates under elders, served by deacons, not under a board of directors. Christians have a right to run a camp for young people, but they have no right to claim it as a work of local churches nor to solicit churches for support.

CHANGING TIMES

A recent article in the Louisville Courier-Journal reported on a recommendation from a Presbyterian task force that gays be ordained and that the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) ease restrictions on sex outside marriage." The report said "What matters ethically is not the sameness (or the difference) of the gender of persons in relation, but rather the quality of their relationship." Noting that the majority of Presbyterians would not accept this yet, the task force said they had to speak out for "sexual justice. "

I suggest that you read Lev. 18: 22; Lev. 20: 13; Rom. 1: 26-27 and 1 Cor. 6: 9-10. Homosexuality is not a matter of personal liberty, it is a matter of SIN.

CANADIAN REACTION TO ITEM

In our March, 1991 EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS column I wrote about Keith Thompson's review of a book by Rubel Shelly in which the reviewer recommended Shelly's book for both private and class study,

and then commented that this would contribute to "a further weakening of conviction among them." Brian V. Sullivan of Wellandport, Ontario and John F. Maddocks, Jr. of Jordan, Ontario wrote and said my item might be "a little misleading." They said "Faithful brethren do not take their cue from the Gospel Herald, or from Keith Thompson's book reviews. "

Indeed, there are a number of brethren throughout Canada who are not in agreement with the doctrinal positions of those who publish the Gospel Herald. The management and staff of that journal are generally associated with the institutionalism which has come among brethren both in the USA and in Canada over the past 40 years. When I wrote the item in question, it never occurred to me that anyone would associate brethren who are not a part of this institutional movement with those who are. Brethren Sullivan and Maddocks stated "there are faithful brethren still standing firm and upholding the truth of Christ in this land." We thank God for that, commend these worthy brethren and others like them and pray for success in their work for the Lord. I look forward to a gospel meeting May 19-26 with the good congregation at Jordan, Ontario. This will make 26 times over the last 30 years that I have preached the gospel in meetings in Ontario. There are good and deserving brethren there (and all across Canada) who could use financial help in their work. While all of us are excited about the opening opportunities in eastern Europe, Asia and other fields, there is much to be done in the great nation across our northern border, a nation which exceeds in land size the USA. Faithful men there have been spread too thin and over the years many of them have worked with inadequate income.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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