

The Herald Of Christ's Kingdom

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A Sense of Urgency

Editors' Journal

But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.—Romans 8:25

As we approach the year 2000 we hear more and more of expectations for the "new millennium." Men everywhere are waiting eagerly for a better day. We join them in that wait but with the real expectation that that better day will truly come. That is why we continue to pray "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The events that have been happening in the world around us portend that the time is near for the full establishment of that kingdom. With joy we watch the papers, combing them for every additional indication of the fruition of our hopes.

"Seeing," says Peter, "that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Pet. 3:11). What a sense of urgency it should create in our lives to be faithful to our consecration vows!

Realizing that each day on earth could be our last, how we need to follow the prophet's advice, "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12). This preparation need not be in fear or dread, for we serve a God of love. But it should be in all reverence and recognition of the highness of the standards he expects from us.

A Sense of Urgency

"A sense of urgency" forms the theme for this edition of **THE HERALD**. Several articles deal with this theme from a variety of scriptural perspectives.

Focusing on the year just past, the article, *Nearer Than When We First Believed*, shows how each year that passes not only brings us chronologically one year nearer the kingdom

but each year finds prophecies of the establishment of that kingdom being fulfilled before our very eyes.

In *The Creation in Travail*, the author likens the sense of anticipation that all the world shares with the feelings of a woman in travail, delivering her child.

A Strait Betwixt Two examines a difficult scripture in which the apostle Paul expresses the desires of his heart while in prison in Rome as to whether it would be better to die and be with the Lord or to stay and continue his work among the early churches. The author takes a close look at the translation difficulties in this text in the book of Philippians.

Perhaps the most anticipated event of all times is the second advent of Christ. The impact this should have on the Christian life in creating a sense of anticipation and urgency is examined in *Our Lord's Return—A Sense of Urgency*.

Urgency and anticipation have a common foundation. They are based on hope. The author of *The Hope* looks at the Christian's expectations and their scriptural premises in depth, analyzing the various aspects of the biblical hopes.

The net effect of all these impending events is to make the true Christian more conscious of his spiritual responsibilities and more energetic in the Master's service. This forms the theme for the article, *Consuming Zeal*.

Our regular "Echoes from the Past" feature reprints an article from some fifty years ago by a frequent contributor to **THE HERALD** of that time, T. Holmes of England. In a six-part series he examined the zeal of service that dominated the life of the Apostle Paul. This article, number five in that series, deals with Paul's experiences while under house arrest in Rome. It is entitled, *As Always, So Now*.

The "Verse-by-verse Bible Study" feature is along the same line, treating the 42nd Psalm, a hymn of anticipation. The title is taken from the first verse of that Psalm, *As Pants the Hart*.

Another aspect of zeal is personal responsibility, a theme that is examined in *No Cross—No Crown*. Practical ways are suggested to help the Christian in individual cross bearing. The many temptations which slacken zeal are also treated in depth.

Along with all of you, we continue to hope and pray for the imminence of that kingdom. Only then will we reach the goals we have been striving for these many years.

Nearer Than When We First Believed

Now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.— Romans 13:11, 12

David Rice

The introduction of a new year always reminds us of the advancing nearness of our goal. We who live near the threshold of the third Christian millennium have every reason to take up even more fervently the sentiments of our text written so long ago.

Jesus himself said of us, who are living near the climax of our hopes, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). The saints during the age were admonished to "watch" for the end of the age and the return of our Master (Matt. 24:42; 25:13). All the more should we, who have lived into that blessed time, be alert to the unfolding developments which mark the swift advance of the kingdom. Thus we rouse ourselves, trim our lamps, and look expectantly for our entering in with the Master (Matt. 25:7-10).

What Have we Seen?

We have seen a great deal—though all has taken more years than we collectively supposed. In Israel seventy years passed from the original settlement of Petach Tikvah until the nation of Israel was established. Through successive conflicts Israel has enlarged her territory. Jerusalem was retaken in 1967, and it became the capital of Israel again in 1980. In the 1973 Yom Kippur war Israel successfully defended her territory and retook the Golan Heights. For the last two decades Israel has gradually moved to peace with one or another of her neighbors, and recently she reached accords with the Arab populations of Gaza and Jericho, and with Jordan.

The recent stunning news of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin showed how sensitive still is the volatile situation. It is unlikely that the alternating gyrations of tension and tranquility will ease soon. But most who observe the prophecies agree that, as circumstances unfold, the progress of events will take us to a time of greater peace before the climax breaks, which will introduce Christ's rule following the last, and severest, convulsion (Ezek. 38:8-23).

It is not altogether surprising that this process, following the declaration of the Jewish state in 1947, should also consume something on the order of seventy years or more.

In the Church

The momentous preparation of the church for the Lord's return and the harvest of the age had its beginning with the resurgence of the Scriptures following Papacy's 1260 years of

dominion. This is alluded to in Revelation (10:11; 12:11, 12), and is shown by the great rain ending the three and a half year drought in the days of Ahab.

This was a precursor to, and stimulus of, the Adventist movement, which gripped the Christian world in the early 1800's. In America this movement was most markedly demonstrated in the Miller movement; and the time prophecies therein embraced though reformed and adjusted, still form the core of the time prophecies used today. But as the shepherds and wise men of the First Advent looked for our Lord thirty years before Messiah began his ministry, so those pastors and wise students of prophecy (Dan. 12:10) expected our Lord about thirty years before he appeared as earth's anointed King (Rev. 11:15).

Since then the blessed testimony of God's plan of the ages has nourished and strengthened the saints and been the chief tool of the great harvest work—the sickle in the hand of the Lord of the harvest. The message spread far and wide through Christendom, especially in the early twentieth century, through the humble and earnest labors of those who took up the cause.

Shall we now abandon this cause, ease our labors, and slack our hand? Paul's counsel is just to the contrary. All the more should we put our hand to the plow, put our force into it, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"—his mind of persistent devotion to the work of the Lord—and "make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14), which is the great detour and siphon which draws away the labors and interests devoted to the Lord.

Similarly, the closing days of Elijah were not the most momentous or spectacular, save for his final departure. Elijah had learned at Mt. Horeb that the work of spreading the still small voice of the Lord's influence was not chiefly through the flame and spectacle he had recently experienced in his confrontation with the priests of Baal. It was rather through the patient teaching of godliness. Evidently he learned the lesson and devoted himself to nurturing faith through the school of the prophets in his closing years. That is still our privilege today.

In Christendom

The spirit of ecumenism continues. It was not until 1947, seventy years from the call to "come out of her my people," that the World Council of Churches began to function. In the years since, the influence of Papacy has both declined and surged. But one experience common to all the large churches of Christendom is a realization that the forces against them make strength through union an attractive expedient. This is neither inherently evil nor inherently good—but the claims that they either independently or united represent the cause of Christ is misplaced, and the endeavor to bolster any such claim through a united front is doomed. Christ's kingdom will be manifest in Israel at the hands of their restored prophets of old, not through Christendom with their false hopes, false views, and false ambitions.

Many brethren, this writer included, hold that the climax of ecumenism has not been reached. The weakness of the Christian churches drives the cause forward as they grasp for greater stability and wider influence. It is implied in Revelation 16:13, 14 that a crescendo will just precede Armageddon, and the process could continue many years before maturing.

Sanctification Still our Chief Work

If we knew that tomorrow or next week or next month would bring the consummation of our hopes, would we not redouble our efforts to be more kind, more helpful, more honest, more pure? Therefore the approach of our hopes does impact our mental and spiritual fortification to do better. Paul includes all these points in the passage of our theme text. He reminds us that love is the brief comprehension of God's law (vs. 9, 10), He counsels us to "walk honestly, as in the day," keeping pure from the world and its affinity for the impure (vs. 12, 13). The wisdom from above is still first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easily entreated, merciful, and fruit-bearing, without wrangling or hypocrisy (James 3:17).

Each of these pleasant graces should be our pursuit. And each fresh evidence we are nearing our goal should intensify our longing for these. As a bride is consumed with final preparations, seeking to the last moment to increase her beauty and appeal, let it be so with us in our final opportunities to prepare for our loved one beyond the veil.

The Creation in Travail

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 firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. —Romans 8:18-23

Michael Brann

As we enter another new year perhaps we all are reminded of the question, Will this be our last one? Will this be the year in which we may find the answer to the prayers of all of the Lord's people for the establishment of his kingdom on earth? Will the church be completed? Will this be my own personal last day on earth?

Many are disinclined to set any further dates for such things, but we are convinced that such a time will indeed come and end the reign of sin and death, which has plagued mankind for over six thousand years, and usher in a new era of everlasting peace, joy and eternal life for all the obedient. The question remains, When shall these things be?

Is it close at hand or shall we expect it to be delayed further off into the future? We will not put forth any specific date, but merely suggest that the scriptures seem to point to our day as that time.

In Romans (8:18-23) the Apostle Paul makes reference to a time when all of mankind shall be delivered from this bondage of corruption into a glorious liberty. He expresses that time in terms of the pain and labors of a woman about to give birth to a child. (vs. 22). This illustration is more than a mere surmising on the Apostle's part, for he declares most emphatically "For we know" this to be the case. In one sense, mankind has been in travail for 6,000 years.

Labor Pains

Ever since the fall of Adam in the garden of Eden mankind has been laboring to bring forth to a birth, that is, to the time when their dark night full of pain, sorrow, sickness, and death will end and a time of rest ensue.

If we carry out this illustration of labor pains prior to the birth, we would see that towards the end the time span between the pains is quicker, the pain is more intense and it lasts longer. These aspects seem to generally apply to world conditions as we have seen them develop over the last hundred years or so. As people today are made more aware of news

items, both locally and globally, many ask the very question, "What is this world coming to?" It is probably true that each succeeding generation may lament "the good old days," but now it seems to be approaching its furthest boundaries of evil.

Extremes of depravity seem to be reaching the youth of today at younger and younger ages. The sheer numbers of our population guarantee that evil is more predominant now than at any other time. Now there are nearly six billion people infected at the same time with the disease of evil, sin, and death.

According to United Nation experts, even natural disasters are increasing. Over the past 30 years, the number of such disasters (defined as a natural event causing death, injury, or destruction on a large scale) has risen an average of six percent a year. Between 1963 and 1967 there were 89 disasters with death tolls of 100 or more people. Between 1988 and 1992 there were 205 disasters!

Besides such facts, added to the words of the Apostle Paul, we have our Lord's words found in Matthew 24:21-22, "For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."

As we witness the climax of God's timetable in regard to his permission of evil, we are naturally experiencing the pain and misery about us. As Paul states "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23).

Above this, however, we are also in full expectation, standing on our spiritual tiptoes as it were, waiting for our deliverance, the completion of the body of Christ!

What a privilege we have to know the purpose of God as it is now revealed to his people. What a hope we have, not only for our own selves but additionally in knowing about his plan for all mankind. As we see the final chapter of this great time of evil, let it inspire those who are truly his with the hope that after the soon deliverance of the church, this dark night of sin and evil are to give way to the golden age of deliverance for the world!

During our Lord's last night on earth, he gave some parting words of comfort to his disciples, most likely intended for his saints at this end of the age in particular. He says in John 16:20-22, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

We travail and pain together with the world, but we are expecting that pain to end with the birth of the new order or age, the time when the last of the church members are

gathered to the Lord in heaven and the kingdom of God is ready to be fully established on the earth. That joy will be so magnificent and transcending that we will nearly forget the sorrows we have experienced.

With the thought of such things on the present horizon, what shall we do who have been called out of darkness into his marvelous light? Let us do simply as is suggested to us in Hebrews 12:1-3: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

Urgency, Not Desperation

A sense of urgency is quite different from a sense of desperation. Rather than serving the Lord from an attitude of "I must or else," let us focus on an attitude of "may I participate?" or "Is there still time for my little sacrifice to be added to the ones acceptable to the Lord?" Our hopes and expectations may not hinge so much on what we did yesterday or what we will do tomorrow, but rather, what we are presently doing for the Lord. Am I seeking today to do what the Lord wills? Am I willing to be what he wants me to be today?

May the Lord bless us as we seek to be pleasing to him until the day of our personal and the church's collective deliverance.

A Strait Betwixt Two

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.—Philippians 1:21-24

Homer Montague

An overview of events near the latter portion of the Apostle Paul's ministry, commencing with his visit to Jerusalem at the close of his third missionary journey, is chronicled in Acts beginning at 21:17 and continuing throughout the succeeding chapters of the book. These experiences help to furnish a context from which to better understand several epistles Paul wrote while he was under protective custody in Rome.

When Paul arrived in Jerusalem, some Jews from Asia accused him of telling them not to obey the law of Moses. Furthermore, they charged that he even brought gentiles into their temple. This inflamed some of the people against Paul and they were ready to kill him. When the captain of the Roman soldiers was informed he rescued Paul from the angry mob and gave him permission to address the throng.

Paul told them the story of how he had formerly persecuted the followers of Jesus, but subsequently had been converted to Christianity. His hearers listened to him attentively until he mentioned that he had preached this gospel to the gentiles as well as to the Jews; then their anger was kindled against him. They charged that he was not fit to live and the chief captain ordered that Paul be taken to the castle and scourged with the whip until he confessed what evil he had committed.

As preparations were being made to carry out this order, however, Paul declared that he was a Roman citizen. Since it was a violation of the law to whip a free Roman, he was placed in prison for his protection.

The Plot

Meanwhile, a band of Jews vowed they would neither eat nor drink until they put him to death. Paul's nephew overheard this plot and communicated it to him. Arrangements then were made to send Paul under guard to Caesarea where Felix, the Roman governor of Judea, was in charge.

Felix kept Paul in prison though he allowed him a great deal of freedom. He was convinced that the apostle was not guilty of any evil deeds. Festus replaced Felix as governor. He inquired whether or not Paul was willing to stand trial in Jerusalem, but instead, the apostle exercised his right to be judged at the court of Caesar in Rome.

After being shipwrecked en route, Paul and some other prisoners stayed for a few months on the Island of Malta, and then sailed for Rome. He spent two years there, teaching all who came to him about Jesus and Christianity. Many became believers as a result of this ministry. While awaiting trial to see whether his fate would be death or a release from house arrest, he testified as to his appreciation of the brethren's prayers on his behalf; at the same time expressing joy for the privilege of serving Christ (Phil. 1:19, 20).

A Common View

In analyzing the meaning of our theme text, many commentators have suggested that Paul was in a quandary for the following reason: If the continuance of his life resulted in advancing the cause of Christ among his hearers, it would be a good thing. Conversely, should the apostle die, he would depart and be with Christ in heaven. This would be a preferable alternative. Nevertheless, in order to serve the church, he was willing to tarry in the world a while longer instead of experiencing his reward.

Since the King James Version and several other biblical translations seem to favor the foregoing argument, it would be appropriate to determine whether or not the overall scripture testimony is in harmony with such a view.

Some pertinent considerations in this connection relate to the nature of death as well as the time of Christ's second coming. We will examine each in turn.

Both the Old and New Testaments describe death as the state of unconscious sleep. Some texts which support this understanding are as follows: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10); "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2); "These things saith he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead" (John 11:11-14); "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. 15:16-18).

Paul's View

The divinely inspired Paul surely had a clear understanding as to the meaning of the foregoing scriptures and, therefore, contrary to the common interpretations of Philippians 1:23, could not have expected that his departure in death would have resulted in immediate union with Christ in heaven. Like all others who preceded him in death, he, too, expected to "sleep" until his resurrection (John 5:28, 29 RSV).

The Bible also clearly testifies as to the object of Christ's second coming. A few of the scriptures which relate to this subject include the following: "And if I go and prepare a

place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3); "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8); "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1).

The first two of these scriptures indicate that at the time of Jesus' second advent, his footstep followers, or church, would be gathered to him and share in the heavenly kingdom which he would receive. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

The third citation above illustrates that another purpose of Christ's return is to provide a period of judgment or trial for the remainder of the world so that ultimately there will be a restoration of mankind to the conditions of human perfection which originally existed in the garden of Eden before Adam's fall.

Since the Apostle Paul understood that his life of faithful service could not be rewarded until our Lord's second advent, he could not have expected to go to heaven and be with Jesus immediately at his death.

A Time Lapse

Concerning the time of Jesus' second advent, we find these words in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4,

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

Not only did the apostle teach that the day of the Lord would not come until after the apostasy had occurred, but additionally, in 2 Timothy 3:1-7 he described the perilous times which would be associated with the last days. When Paul penned his epistle to the Philippians, although he was not certain whether his house arrest in Rome would ultimately lead to his acquittal or execution, it is apparent from his writings that if his portion should be death, he did not expect to be with Christ in heaven immediately because he believed and taught that the second coming of Christ would be a future event beyond his lifetime.

A Translation Problem

Turning again to Philippians 1:23, we quote from the King James translation: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."

The same verse is rendered as follows in the Emphatic Diaglott: "I am indeed hard pressed by the two things: I have an earnest desire for the returning, and being with Christ, since it is very much to be preferred."

The most significant difference between these two translations relates to the Greek word *analuō*, which is rendered "depart" in the King James version and "the returning" in the Emphatic Diaglott. In Vine's Expository Dictionary, under "return," we find the following: "*analuō*, 'to depart' in Philippians 1:23 signifies 'to return,' in Luke 12:36 [it is] used in a simile of the 'return' of a lord for his servants after a marriage feast." *Analuō* (Strong's 360) is found only in these two New Testament texts. In Luke 12:35 the context demonstrates the propriety of rendering it as "return" instead of "depart." It would seem, moreover, in view of all these reasons, Paul did not expect to depart for heaven immediately upon his death. Philippians 1:23 therefore does not relate to Paul's departure at his demise but rather to the returning of Christ at his second advent to claim his church.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

Paul's Zeal

Viewed from this standpoint, the whole tenor of Philippians 1:21-24 can be harmonized with scriptural teaching. Verse 21 suggests that the apostle's life was totally consumed in serving Christ; but if he were to die, it would have been a personal gain for him to have rested from all the rigors associated in being spent while carrying out his sacrificial course (2 Cor. 11:23-30). In verse 22, Paul reaffirms the privilege of fruitful activity for the Lord if he continues in the flesh. However, having yielded himself to God's will, he has no personal preference as to whether that should be his portion or, instead, to be relieved from toil by the sleep of death. This was the "strait betwixt two" that is spoken of in verse 23. Nevertheless, the apostle continues by expressing a desire for a third option—neither a life of suffering nor a release in death, but for the return of Christ because he knew that he then would be resurrected and rewarded for his faithfulness.

The Apostle Paul's unflagging confidence in a future resurrection from death as the basis of his hope to be with the Lord at the second advent is well supported by other scriptures. It is for this reason that he wrote in Philippians 1:23 that being with Christ was "far better" than the other two alternatives, even though he would have to wait in the sleep of death for such deliverance.

Surely, the apostle's state of mind when he penned these words was, "I will neither murmur nor repine at what the Lord's providence may permit, because faith can firmly trust him, come what may."

The Lord's Return—A Sense of Urgency?

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.—Mark 13:33

Michael Costelli

The Lord's return has been the subject of many intense discussions, provoking thoughts and even extreme conflict among the Lord's people down through the Gospel age. Understanding of this subject has varied. Some envision an instantaneous event with all earth's inhabitants watching, while others expect a gradual ushering-in of the Lord's spirit causing man's eventual conversion process. Nevertheless, the Lord has promised his faithful followers that he would personally return into the earth's atmosphere (1 Thess. 4:17) for the express purpose of receiving his church unto himself (John 14:3) and taking them home with him and establishing his kingdom on earth. Initially, this idea produced doubt and confusion, especially with Thomas, as to the manner and purpose of this action (John 14:5).

After the brethren discussed this subject and later when the holy spirit came upon the early church, it became clearer in their minds and hearts. We learn of this as we read the apostle's description of his return and the associated activities (2 Peter 3:10-13).

New Testament epistles clearly record the single-mindedness of the early church concerning the promised kingdom of the Lord. One of every thirteen verses in the New Testament refers to it. In 1 Thessalonians, one of every seven verses deals with the subject and in 2 Thessalonians, one of every three. James refers to it in James 5:7, 8; Peter in 2 Peter 3:10. The early church believers were motivated by hope as well as by faith. Hope, more than faith, seems to have been the outstanding feature of the character. This is not to say that they possessed one more than the other; but together faith and hope formed the bulwark of their aspirations and energized their daily activities. They referred to it as a "lively hope," "that blessed hope," "this hope," "one hope," "our hope," "the hope of our calling," and "the hope set before us." The evidence is that it dominated their very lives and completely filled their hearts. Since the early church was motivated to an obvious urgency about the Lord's return, it is worthy of our thoughtful consideration.

Urgency

What is urgency? What do we think of when the word urgent comes to mind? The dictionary lists as synonyms these words: "compelling," "important," "momentous," "impulsive," "enthusiastic" and "overpowering." Urgency prompts a response consistent with the thought producing it. For example, if one lives in a portion of the country prone to hurricanes, he is generally familiar with weather reports of the incoming storm. With our modern technology reporting such storms, we can respond in a relatively calm manner as compared to a sudden warning of days gone by. However, since a hurricane generally is unpredictable, there is a measure of uncertainty as to its location and intensity of strike, thus we still feel a sense of anxious urgency about our response. We

begin to take care of business depending upon whether we are preparing for the storm's direct hit or an evacuation of the area.

Anxiety can also produce similar feelings. We feel a need to quickly change our surrounding conditions or our perception of them for our continued well-being. However, the Master instructed us well regarding this subject (Matt. 6:27-34). We should place all our care with and dependency upon our heavenly Father. In that case, any sense of urgency regarding the anxious thought is relieved by the believer's peaceful repose in his constant care and vigilance. We should not be anxious about the Lord's return, but anticipate it with a sense of urgent confidence.

Urgency and anxiety are related in opposite ways to the concept of hope. Hope is described by the use of synonyms "to pose," "deem likely," "believe," "be assured," "feel confident," "anticipate," "be prepared for," and "make plans for."

Whenever hope has been measurably exercised by focusing on a desirable end result, the populace have usually risen to a higher capacity. On the other hand, where hope is crushed by the denial or removal of the heart's affection, history has shown a resultant subservient, cast-down civilization.

The scriptures tell us that ". . . hope deferred maketh the heart sick." In other words, we say we are depressed. Depressed people are usually inactive and misdirected. Hope deferred is the antithesis of urgency. Conversely, the scripture continues, "when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life" (Prov. 13:12). Much is written and said about the subject of depression in our modern society. Except for medical cases, many have become depressed or lost hope because they have become ignorant about God's promises. Simply put, the world needs the Lord and his righteous kingdom. The modern educational and societal processes have systematically crowded out the hope of the Lord's return as well as any semblance of its righteous rule in our present civilization, causing man to become heartsick and sin-sick.

If you speak with a consecrated Christian who joyfully anticipates the appearance of his Lord and Savior, you will find one who is not depressed but is daily energetically and urgently involved in the affairs of his Lord. "This lively hope" actuates the hopeful as to its reality and fulfillment through the holy spirit, "the earnest of our inheritance." Jesus said "peace I leave you, my peace I give unto you not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Jesus knew upon his departure from this world that the hope of his return had to be made alive daily in the hearts of his followers or else they would soon lose hope. Therefore, he provided a down payment or an ". . . earnest of our inheritance"—the Father's holy spirit in his physical absence. The fulfillment of prophecy, the outworking of God's plan, when rightly understood by the instruction of the holy spirit, daily renews our hope so we believe and trust more deeply.

We rejoice to see events such as the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and their emergence as a Middle Eastern power and influence. These signs indicate to us that

our heavenly Father is performing in the manner which Jesus explained would accompany his return.

Scriptural Sense Of Urgency

Our Master declared in Revelation 22:12, "I come quickly . . ." Here the word "quickly" (Strong's 5035) indicates "without delay" and "by surprise." Our Master's return is on time and not delayed or advanced in schedule and will accomplish all intended activities.

Jesus instructed his followers that he needed time after his departure from earth to accomplish those things necessary to implement the divine plan both in heaven and on earth (John 14:3). Our minds can only speculate as to the logistical preparations, but our hearts can rest in our Father's ability to do all things right for us and others and in complete compliance with his divine economy.

An urgent watchfulness is enjoined upon all his believers by his warning in Mark 13:35-37. We have come to learn that this watchfulness is accomplished primarily with the eye of faith. The word watch in this scripture (Strong's 69) means "to chase sleep" or "be sleepless." We know in the natural order of things that if we feel some sense of urgency about a matter, we generally cannot sleep or if we do sleep, it is at best only incomplete.

Conversely, when one senses no feeling of urgency or is lethargic, he generally sleeps more than he should. It is our Lord's intention that we not sleep in regard to his return but that we are up and doing his business as we should; redeeming the time (Eph. 5:16). The Master knew the tendency for his church to be overcome by present crises, causing them distraction from the eternal and preoccupation with other more transient matters; hence his warning.

Peter, James, and John, at the time of the Lord's agony, were not able to "watch one hour" (Mark 14:37), causing the Master to issue his prompt warning to us that "we watch and pray" or we would enter into temptation. Being a human being, although perfect, he was thoroughly familiar with the travail of the flesh and its ability to compete with the spirit for dominance in the believer. What about us in our crises? Are we sleeping?

A good application of scriptural urgency is observed in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). The wise virgins planned for the present and the future: "they took for themselves oils in their vessels with their lamps." By contrast, the foolish virgins "took no oil with them." Both wise and foolish virgins slept and at midnight the cry went forth "behold the bridegroom; go ye out to meet him." Wisdom focuses its attention upon things of the future and of eternal value while folly considers only the present and transient.

As the account continues, the time came when the bridegroom tarried and the virgins slept. Our Master did not appear as soon as was expected, and thus it has been through the entire Gospel age. The church fell into a slumbering condition and at midnight (the

end of the Gospel age) the cry went forth, and his presence was recognized with the bright and filled lamp of faith energized by the holy spirit.

Proper Response Of Spiritual Urgency

Upon the bridegroom's appearance, the admonition was to "go ye out to meet him." Going out to meet him means living our daily lives for Christ. This meeting of him is an intensely personal one in which our all is called into action and consumed for him. Are we fully consecrated and dedicated to serve him at any cost? Are we ready for his appearing? Can we honestly answer the question of meeting him face to face? How blessed we will be if we can heartily respond "even so, come Lord Jesus." This is what the Lord's return is all about.

Do our hearts exult in the consideration of Jesus' words of John 14:3, "If I go away I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

As we look about us, we see most of society living as if "all things continue as they were from the beginning" (2 Peter 3:4). The day-to-day routine of mundane existence has dulled the spiritual senses of many to the extent that their hope is gone and life is less than eternally significant. Most are grabbing all they can get while the getting is good and are not listening to the Master's many instructions to feed his sheep and to love one another.

Our Lord knew that in our present time there would be the greatest tendency to become distracted with lesser things; thus, the need for watchfulness should be more urgent than ever before (Luke 21:34 RSV). Paul admonishes us in Romans 13:13, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying." Similar to the Master's warning, Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:6, warns us "therefore let us not sleep as do others [foolish virgins]; but let us watch and be sober."

Therefore, since we have been blessed with an understanding of his presence, let us go out to meet him. With a spiritual urgency in our hearts and remembering all of the Lord's benefits towards us, let us reject being overcharged with the cares of this world as are the foolish virgins, and live in eager, joyful anticipation—a daily living in the joy of his appearing!

The Hope

Now faith is assurance of things hoped for . . . —Hebrews 11:1

R. E. Evans

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version.

One of the most difficult problems with the translation of the Bible into English is the inability to properly indicate the emphatic nature of some Greek words. In the nineteenth century Benjamin Wilson and Joseph B. Rotherham attempted to resolve this problem in their respective translations by introducing special markings. To this writer's knowledge, little attention has been given this problem since their efforts. In this article the notation used by Wilson in his Emphatic Diaglott (placing emphatic words in uppercase) will be followed in a limited way.

The Apostle Peter gave an instruction that all who follow Jesus should seek eagerly to obey: ". . . sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, . . ." (1 Peter 3:15).

To be ready always to respond to a question concerning the hope of a Christian requires preparation. It requires a clear understanding of the makeup of that hope—its essentials, its characteristics.

God provided the Bible so that those he calls may have this needed understanding —so they may come to a full knowledge of the hope of a Christian (Eph. 1:17,18): ". . . because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel. (Col. 1:5). "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have [the] hope" (Rom. 15:4). So, to have the hope, to be ready always to give answer, it is necessary to turn to the Bible—to search the scriptures daily as did the noble Bereans (Acts 17:11).

Essentials of the Hope

Christ Jesus: The Apostle Paul in his greetings to Timothy made manifest the basis for the hope. "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and Christ Jesus our hope" (1Tim. 1:1).

The hope rests in Christ Jesus. It is through faith in him we have access. ". . . through whom [Jesus Christ] also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2).

So, the hope of the Christian is founded on the work of Jesus. It is through our faith in that work that we rejoice in hope—the hope that reveals the glory of God.

Resurrection of the Dead: Following his arrest in Jerusalem, Paul attempted to divide his accusers by detailing the crux of this hope. "But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope[,] and [namely, (*kai*, Strong's 2532)] resurrection of the dead[,] I am called in question" (Acts 23:6). [For text editing see Rotherham; Vine under 'hope']

The hope, then, is directly related to a resurrection of the dead. In his appearance before Felix, Paul restated this hope. "having hope toward God, which these also themselves [Paul's accusers] look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15).

So, to Paul, the hope was to be realized by a resurrection both of the just and unjust, a resurrection of all of the human race (1 Cor. 15:22)—the just and unjust.

Abrahamic Promise: Later, during his appearance before King Agrippa, Paul again spoke of this hope. "And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king! Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?" (Acts 26:6-8).

The hope of the resurrection comes from the promise God made to Israel's fathers—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4). To be fulfilled, this promise requires the awakening from death and the restoring to life of all families of the earth.

Work of Church: The Apostle also wrote of the hope in his epistle to the Romans. "The Spirit him[*it*]self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: 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 with him" (Rom. 8:16, 17).

The church, those who are the children of God are joint-heirs with Christ of the promise God made to Abraham. Paul continued in verses 20 and 21: "For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God"

The human race has been subjected to sin and death (Rom. 8:2) since the disobedience of Adam (Rom. 5:12); yet, there has always been the hope of deliverance (Genesis 3:15).

Having established that there is this hope for humanity, Paul, as he continued in his epistle, turned to the work of the church. "For in [the] hope were we [the church] saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth?" (Rom. 8:24). [For text editing see a Greek grammar on dative case]

As joint-heirs with Christ the church is being developed as a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5), a priesthood to be used of God to deliver the human race from the bondage of corruption. It is for this hope the church is called. For this hope the church is saved!

New Covenant: In his second epistle to the Corinthians, Paul asserted: "Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech" (2 Cor. 3:12).

The phrase "having therefore such a hope" refers back to verse six: "who [God] also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; . . ." (2 Cor. 3:6).

Thus, Paul indicated the church's hope is directly related to the ministration of a new covenant. It is through the New Covenant the hope will be fulfilled (Heb. 7:19, 22). As the ministers, as the priesthood (1 Peter 2:5), of that covenant, the church with Jesus as its Head will fulfill the promise—the promise that is their inheritance.

Characteristics of the Hope

Only the Called Know: Paul made it manifest that only those whose eyes are opened by God and who are called by him know of the hope. ". . . having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling," (Eph. 1:18).

All who are called of God to participate in his plan of salvation as members of the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23) will have the eyes of their heart, their spiritual eyes, opened. They will be enlightened of the hope, for it is the hope of the calling of God.

Only One Hope: As Paul continued in his epistle to the Ephesians, he gave another important characteristic of the hope. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4).

There is only one hope of God's calling— not two, not three. Some think of the church's hope as being glory, honor, and immortality (Romans 2:7), but can three such egocentric goals be the hope? No! There is one hope—the hope based on the promise.

A Future Hope: Another characteristic of the Hope was given by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. "If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

Unlike some who believe in immediate compensation, instant reward in this life, the Apostle Paul declared if our hope is for this life only we are most miserable (KJV). So, the hope is not for this life. It is a hope for the future.

A Better Hope: A fourth aspect of the hope is given in the epistle to the Hebrews. ". . . (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God" (7:19).

The hope is a better hope than that given by the law. The law made nothing perfect. It provided only the forgiveness of sin. The better hope will provide the release from sin! It will make perfect!

The Faith

The Promise: As stated in the theme text, the faith of the Christian is to be centered on the hope. "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

This is a common theme in Paul's epistles. ". . . if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister" (Col. 1:23).

The faith is belief in the hope of the gospel, a hope founded on the promise. "But the scriptures shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before [the] faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. . . . But now that [the] faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. . . . And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:22-29).

As heirs to the promise made to Abraham (Gal. 3:8), the Church's hope is to bless all families of the earth, a hope to be fulfilled through the New Covenant—the covenant for which Jesus was the surety (Heb. 7:22).

The Salvation of Souls: The Apostle Peter wrote of the faith in a similar manner. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us {again} unto a living hope [hope of life] by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, . . . receiving the end [aim, purpose (*telos*, Strong's 5056)] of your [the] faith, {even} the salvation of {your} souls. Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of [for] Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (1 Peter 1:3-11). [For text editing see Diaglott interlinear; Vine under 'end.' Words in {brackets} above not supported in the Greek text.]

Peter declared that the end, the purpose, of the faith is salvation of souls, the salvation of the children of Adam in the Kingdom of God—the hope for which the church is developed. It is belief in the glories of this hope that makes the church willing to experience the sufferings for Christ.

". . . And he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:15).

Those in the faith no longer live unto themselves! Their purpose, as a holy priesthood, is salvation of souls. Their goal is to bless all families of the earth. As joint-heirs with Christ, they were begotten for the hope of life for all humanity through the resurrection of the dead (1 Peter 1:3)—a resurrection made possible by the ransom given by Jesus.

Hold Fast: Paul, in his first letter to Timothy, stressed the importance of the faith. "Deacons in like manner must be grave, . . . holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (1 Tim. 3:8, 9).

Then, in 1 Timothy 1:19, he warned that those who do not hold fast to this faith are lost; "holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 1:19).

Not only did some shipwreck in that day, Paul indicated a falling away would be evident in the latter times as well. "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in latter times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1).

In the closing words of his letter, before encouraging Timothy to fight the good fight of the faith, he again pointed to those who had erred. "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on {the} life {eternal} [of the age (*aionios*, Strong's 166)], whereunto thou wast called, . . ." (1 Tim. 6:10-12). [For text editing see Greek grammar on suffix '-ios'; Rotherham; Diaglott Appendix under 'age.' Words in {brackets} not supported in original Greek text.]

Let us not be led astray and become shipwreck. Let us fight the good fight of the faith. Let us lay hold on life of the age—the life to be restored to the world in the Millennial age. It is this hope that emerges repeatedly in the epistle to the Hebrews. ". . . but Christ as a son, over his house; whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our [the] hope firm unto the end" (3:6); "And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fullness of [the] hope even to the end" (6:11); "that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us" (6:18); "let us hold fast the confession of our [the] hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised" (10:23).

The charge, being ready always to give answer . . . concerning the hope, makes it imperative that we know and understand the hope. Only with such knowledge can we hold fast the confession of the hope. Only with such knowledge can we insure we are not led astray from the faith. Let us make Paul's prayer for the Romans the fountainhead of our Christian walk. "Now the God of [the] hope fill you with all joy and peace in [the] believing, that ye may abound in [the] hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13).

Only in the faith, only in the believing of the hope, can we be filled with joy and peace. Let us all lay hold of the hope set before us!

Consuming Zeal

For zeal for Thy house has consumed me. And the reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on me.—Psalm 69:9 NASB

Carl Hagensick

Zeal has always been the hallmark of the true servant of God. It was zeal that motivated Noah to build an ark and warn of an impending flood when there had been, as yet, no rain on the earth. It was zeal that stirred the Old Testament prophets to give their stern messages despite the opposition of those in authority. It was zeal that prompted Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in just fifty-two days. It was zeal that moved the Apostle Paul to endure a litany of hardships to preach the gospel of Christ. And the highest example of zeal was Jesus himself who, as the Son of God, yet without a place to lay his head, was so completely consumed in just three and a half years that he had not strength to carry his own cross.

All true Christians hold these and other examples before them as an ideal of developing their own personal zeal. Many start out as red hot flames, only to cool down in a short time. How does one obtain this kind of zeal? How is it maintained? Can it be regained once it has slackened? These are the questions we want to probe in this lesson.

The Origin of Zeal

Zeal begins with a deep love of the cause to which one is devoted. The prophet Jeremiah illustrates this well in verse nine of chapter twenty, "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

Such zeal arises spontaneously, as in the case of Isaiah, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (6:8). It is the instinctive reaction of a grateful heart for what it has seen or heard. The "good news" of the Gospel is too good to keep to one's self. It must be shared. As one popular Christian song puts it, "we want to pass it on."

In concluding his Divine Plan of the Ages, Charles T. Russell wrote, "Whoever comes in contact with truth, realizing its character, has thereby a responsibility with reference to it. It must be either received and acted upon, or rejected and despised. To ignore it does not release from responsibility. If we accept it ourselves, we have a responsibility toward it also, because it is for all the household of faith; and each one receiving it becomes its debtor, and, if a faithful steward, must dispense it to the other members of the family of God. Let your light shine! If it again becomes darkness, how great will be the darkness. Lift up the light! Lift up a standard for the people!" (p. 349).

It is one thing to have a knowledge of truth; it is still another thing to acknowledge it. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). In the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3-9, 18-23) Jesus describes four different reactions that would come to those hearing his words. Some, like seed sown by the wayside, would never take root and truth always remain an interesting curiosity. Others, like seed in stony ground, would quickly take root and just as quickly cool. Still a third group, like seed cast among thorns, would soon find their love for the truth giving way to the cares and allurements of this world. Only that sown in good ground would eventually produce fruitage. But even here the fruitage would vary, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundredfold.

The Foes of Zeal

This parable well illustrates three of the greatest foes of zeal—idle curiosity, lack of personal application, and love for the things of this world. There is that mind which is curious for anything new but relishes it only for the intellectual stimulation it provides. Such never find true zeal. These are like those on Mars' Hill who, after hearing Paul, said, "we will hear thee again of this matter" (Acts 17:32). Such are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7).

Still others are content with a surface knowledge of the Lord. They thrill to know that he has a plan for all and to learn of the resurrection of the dead. Here the zeal is quenched by a lack of resolution to take truth in a personal way, applying it to a change of heart and life style. The old adage, "use it or lose it," applies to things of the spirit also.

The third enemy of zeal is the dilution of the hot waters of truth with the pleasures of this world. Often these earthly enjoyments are harmless and may even be educational but do little to build up the spiritual man. Christianity grew so rapidly during the time of the apostles largely because they were totally involved. They had a cause which blotted out all other interests. "I am determined," exclaims Paul, "not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Again, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

Single-mindedness is, then, the key to the building of zeal in the Christian character. This singleness of purpose is born out of true belief. This belief is not only the acknowledgment of the truth of a fact but the burning desire that it be accomplished and as quickly as possible. Such was the mind-set of the apostles and prophets of old and such must be the mind-set of all true Christians today.

Maintaining Zeal

"Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord" (Rom. 12:11 RSV). The Moffatt translation of the middle phrase words it, "maintain the spiritual glow." Maintaining fervor for any cause over the long haul is always difficult, even more so

when the cause is as ephemeral and faith-based as is the Christian cause. One must believe, really believe, whole-heartedly believe in the truths of the Scripture to maintain their early zeal.

The early Christian church started out with a large amount of zeal. But as time went on and friction developed in their midst, the zeal began to flag. The message to the church at Ephesus pinpointed this weakness, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4).

Unto the next church, the church in Smyrna, is a similar warning: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). How true to the Christian are the words of King Ahab to Ben-Hadad of Syria: "And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off" (1 Kings 20:11).

As a fire is only maintained by feeding it new fuel, so the Christian must continually study and restudy the basis for his hopes, the Word of God. Constant vigilance in proclaiming the truth helps one maintain one's zeal in desiring its consummation. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" (Matt. 5:15). Not only does the bushel restrict the circle of the light, it also deprives the fire of necessary oxygen and soon the flame dies out. If we speak of the things we believe only within our innermost circle, we will not only be refusing to spread the word but we will soon find what light we did have flickering dimmer and dimmer until it is extinguished.

One hot coal, left alone, soon cools. It is only when coals are grouped together that they retain their heat, each warming the other. This is the lesson the apostle communicates to us in Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Regular attendance at meetings for fellowship, study, and testifying to the Lord's dealings in our lives is an excellent stimulant to zeal. Even controversial discussions, when one is rightly exercised by them, stimulate zeal by creating a desire to search more and more deeply into the Word of God to find the answers to troubling questions. Hebrews 10:24 gives the reason for our constant assembling together: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."

At no time are the temptations to a lessening of zeal more prevalent than in the last stages of the Christian church. It is for this phase, the church at Laodicea, that the Revelator reserved his sharpest criticism. The main weakness he finds in this church was the spirit of "lukewarmness" (Rev. 3:16). It would be far better if their zeal were "hot" in his service. It would even be better if he were "cold," not even professing himself as a Christian, than to claim to be "hot" and act "cold," thus becoming "lukewarm." Now, as never before, we need to seek to obtain and hold on to the consuming zeal which Jesus experienced.

Regaining Zeal

Despite our best efforts, most of us at one time or another feel a loss of zeal. It may be the routine of life or some disappointment with self or others, but for whatever reason we are not as enthused about the Lord and his truth as we used to be. Is there a solution?

Memory can be a great help in regaining zeal. Many times marriage counselors, when approached by a couple falling out of love, will suggest that they go back in their minds and remember what it was about each other that made them fall in love in the first place. Paul suggested a similar remedy for the slackening of a Christian's zeal, "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used" (Heb. 10:32, 33).

Most who have made a consecration will recall a certain euphoria that went with that decision. They were thrilled with what the Lord had done for them and they wanted to show their appreciation by doing something in return. They were not trying to buy God's favor but merely showing a response for the goodness they had received. Perhaps that is why Peter calls baptism "the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter 3:21).

A second remedy is by diagnosing the cause of lack of zeal. It may be the long wait for kingdom hopes. As the wise man says, "hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (Prov. 13:12). It is this cause that produces the great skepticism amongst some over the Lord's return. Peter describes them as scoffers, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:4). If that is the case, let us seek to estimate time as God estimates time: "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years" (v. 8). When we were children we had the same problem. Days of waiting seemed so long. As we age time rushes by faster and faster. Spiritually we are still children and need to adapt to God's standard of time-keeping.

Another cause of flagging zeal is the burden of day-to-day responsibilities. As Martha of old, we are "cumbered with much serving" (Luke 10:4, 41). Responsibilities of a spouse, family, a home, and a job, are all taxing. They were no less so for those of the early church. We need to constantly "redeem the time" (Eph. 5:16), to buy back minutes and hours from earthly cares to serve the Lord. The secret, much easier said than done, lies in the setting of priorities and the establishment of specific habits of laying aside sacred time for the Lord.

Still another cause of loss of fervor are disappointments we may have with ourselves or with others. If we are discouraged over our own inability, we can be comforted with the thought that the Lord will judge us, not upon our works alone, but on our sincere intentions to do right. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12). If our disappointment is with others, or with conflict between brethren, we need to develop trust that the Lord is

the one in command. Our responsibility lies with how we live our lives. We must be content to let others be responsible for how they live their lives, leaving the final judgment of both in the hands of a loving and knowing God. Calm and Tempered Zeal

At times we sing the words of a familiar Christian hymn:

*With calm and tempered zeal,
Let me proclaim thy plan;
And vindicate thy gracious will
Which offers life to man.*

Zeal is often equated with a wild fanaticism. It need not be. As the hymnist writes, our zeal can be "calm and tempered." These terms speak of a discipline behind zeal. One that speaks not from an emotional outburst but from a settled conviction. Iron only becomes tempered when it is submitted to cold water after being heated. So we need to have our zeal tempered by constantly exposing it to use, both "in season" and "out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2).

With such disciplined zeal we can valiantly serve the Lord both now, and if faithful, as zealous servants throughout eternity.

*Who could faint while such a prospect
Urges on to faithfulness.*

As Always, So Now

According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.—Philippians 1:20

T. Holmes

In those days of waiting, while Paul dwelt in his own hired house in Rome, he had pondered deeply on the reasons why God had sent him there. He had not lamented his life as a prisoner, nor wasted his time because his environment was restricted, nor considered his cause as lost. He had spoken of Christ to Caesar's rude soldiers, and won their affection to himself, and their allegiance to Jesus. No circumstances could release him from the "charge" to proclaim the gospel; therefore chain, or no chain, no loss of liberty could fetter his tongue, nor bind his earnest spirit. He had done in Rome, handicapped though he was, as he had earlier done at Antioch, at Ephesus, at Corinth, at Jerusalem. "As always, so now" he had redeemed the time and used every moment for his Master; and as elsewhere, here, in the Imperial City, there was "fruit" won by his labor.

As he waited for his trial, he thought over its possible results and had settled in his heart that neither acquittal nor death should make the slightest difference in his intention to "magnify" his Lord. Imprisonment had not arrested his labor; it only had turned it into other channels, for during this period he penned the deepest and most spiritual of all his letters. This season of restricted travel gave him time to meditate and work out the deeper implications of fellowship with the Lord. Hence those "prison letters," as they are called, written during that time—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians—set forth a range of thought that reaches to greater heights and depths than are to be found in any of his earlier letters. From these prison days came forth those priceless treasures of Christian thought and doctrine which have enriched God's people throughout the whole Gospel age, and which are of such inestimable value to us today, in the fuller light of this harvest time.

How often the Lord has had to allow some similar thing for others of his followers to give them time to meditate and consider. Sometimes it has been a bed of sickness, or an accident, which has served as prison walls, and has restricted the goings and comings, in order that we may take time to ponder the ways and purposes of God, and life thereafter has been the richer and sweeter for it. Let no one hastily chafe at God's restrictions, as he brings him out of the rush and bustle of life into some quiet place apart. God will enrich him there and enrich and deepen his contact with himself, and the Master, and all holy things.

While Paul had no preference to express as to the result of his trial, he seems to have had some slight presentiment that he would gain a favorable victory and be set free. Whether someone in Caesar's household was working behind the scenes on his behalf, and had

communicated to Paul that the prospects were favorable to him, we do not know. But certain it is that he said, "I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith, that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming again" (vs. 25, 26). But he would have them know that if he were set free, then for him "to live was Christ" and that by his labor he would win more "fruit." If the four walls of his house no longer constituted his cell, then, "as always, so now" again he would go forth as Christ's evangelist and missionary.

Woe Is Me If I Preach Not the Gospel

Paul looked out upon the world of men, and saw them dying and steeped in sin. He saw the whole creation in fetters, and heard its hopeless groans. He heard of its deep inarticulate discontent, and of its disappointed longings. He knew "the whole creation groaned and travailed together . . . waiting for deliverance" from its fetters of vanity and sin. And he further knew his own breast cherished a secret all men needed to know; one which, if known and heeded, would set them free and heal their wounds. He saw his kinsmen bound in chains of ritualism and tradition, throwing to the winds the greatest opportunity the hand of God had offered, and it lay on his heart as the burden of a great sorrow. For them too his bosom held a secret, which they all needed to know and accept. It was as if a fire burned in his very bones—a white-hot glow, kindling an energy which had driven him over land and sea, to seek for such who would hear the story he had to tell.

He knew a God of love, a living God of infinite and tender compassion, and this God the heathen nations needed to know instead of their idol and demon gods. He saw himself as the channel—the messenger—between that fountain of eternal goodness and the wide, deep need of the heathen mind. His deep sense of that need gave him no rest day or night. Out among them were some rare souls who were "feeling after God, if haply they might find him" (Acts 17:27), but they knew not where to search nor how. God had an invitation for them, but how could they hear without a preacher? "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16), said this fervent missionary heart. It required in a born Jew a tremendous act of self-subjugation to go to these gentiles, "dogs," and tell them that God had provided for them a Savior, and would accept such as would willingly respond just as readily, and on the same terms, as any born Jew. But Paul did not shrink therefrom, nor even account such services distasteful. It was according to his Master's desire, and so he went gladly, whole-heartedly.

His fervent heart contained a secret, which, if the Jews had accepted, would have changed their whole outlook and spared them the age-long agonies they have endured in their enemies' lands. Paul had learned that the "Christ" for whom the Jews had been waiting was to be a "spiritual Christ." Up to the moment when he saw the glorified Jesus on the Damascus way, he, like all his Jewish kin, had looked for an earthly Messiah; a Messiah in the flesh to reign on the earth; a Messiah to restore and occupy his father David's throne and reign from David's city. But the glimpse of that glorious heavenly being arrayed in light, brighter than the noon-day sun, who still called himself "Jesus of Nazareth," had been the beginning of a new revelation. He learned that "Christ" was to be

more than a man. "Though we have known [and expected] Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him so no more" (2 Cor. 5:16). Christ Jesus having appeared on earth as a man, and having been "cut off" (as Daniel said of the Messiah) was raised from the dead a glorious spirit being to become the image of his Father's person. Paul carried this precious secret to all who had ears to hear, and well had it been for his "kinsmen according to the flesh" if they could have received and embraced it too.

Another phase of Paul's "Christology" was that the Messiah was to be "multi-personal." This, too, was a precious thing to Paul. To realize that all upon whom came the spirit of God, as a begetting and enlightening power, were also "anointed" by that spirit and thereby "Christened"—made a member of the Christ—was a most amazing and energizing thought. For the long-expected Messiah to be a company of individuals with Jesus of Nazareth as their Lord and Head was such a profound secret that neither prophet nor seer in Israel had ever dreamed of it. Yet that is what Paul had learned and sought to teach to others. "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17)—"christened" by the anointing spirit of God—but, before there is anything to "anoint" there must have been a new creature produced or begotten. This great truth then, that the Messiah was to be spiritual and would be composed of members of a company who, having been baptized into Christ, cheerfully accepted the privilege to "suffer with him." Then under Jesus' headship they would constitute his body and reign with him; this is the good news which galvanized the heart of the apostle to undertake his indefatigable labors and service on behalf of his Lord and his brethren.

This urged him on over land and sea, by day and night, seeking those, both Jew and gentile, who would believe the good news. Those who did believe the "good news" are they between whom Paul said there had been an enmity—a middle wall of partition which prevented their fellowship and association together. But by the cross of Jesus this enmity was done away and the middle wall of partition broken down (Eph. 2:14). Jew and gentile met and coalesced on common ground into "one new man" They had been "accepted in the beloved" by the God who had sent Paul (and other messengers) seeking such souls. "Accepted in the beloved"—all self-interest and self-identity surrendered and sunk in the larger "identity"—all yielded to "Christ."

Oh! How inspiring are the words of this faithful courageous soul. "As always, so now . . . to live is Christ." For Christ he had given his best years, and for Christ he would give those that yet remained. All the best things life had offered he surrendered willingly for the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil 3:8)—all the powers of a first-class brain he brought, "in Christ," to the service of the brethren.

It is not as though these believers for whom he ventured so much were the great ones of earth or the saintliest among men. He understood and set out the position very fully when writing to the brethren in Corinth: "Be not deceived," he says, "neither fornicators nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves . . . nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God, and such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Paul's Self-Sacrificing Zeal

Had he taken the place amongst his own kinsmen for which his natural gifts equipped him, he would have consorted with the great and the rich—he could have been courted and flattered by all the elite in Jewry. No place of honor, save only the priesthood, would have been inaccessible to him. Into the gilded palaces of her princes, or into the stately schools of her tutors, he could have won his way and left his name to an adoring posterity as one of the greatest of Jewry's great sons. But all these glittering prizes for which men pine and strive he cast from him as refuse, as worthless tinsel, in order to seek and win the weak, the poor, the halt, the blind, the maimed—the very riff-raff of the nations. No matter who it be, runaway slave or erstwhile thief, so long as they accepted the good news of his Master and laid themselves at his feet, he loved them and taught them and spared not time nor strength, till "Christ be formed" in them (Gal. 4:19). From the lowest depths of humanity—rough, coarse, uncouth, illiterate, repulsive—they had come and he taught them to hope and believe that God could make them suitable for his purposes. He saw the saint in every uncouth slave, the jewel in every rugged countryman. Like Michaelangelo, viewing the marble, said, "There's an angel in that stone, I shall get him out one day." And so it was, wherever he went, in high places or low, he went seeking precious souls, whom the Lord would give him as "fruit" for his "labor." Like his Lord and Master, times without number, he was scorned and reprov'd by proud, callous enemies for receiving and consorting with sinners but that mattered then, so long as he could reach sad hearts where Christ's comfort could meet the deepest need. In very truth, for him to live had been "Christ."

When it might have been easy to lay aside his burden and enter into his rest, he said, "to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Phil. 1:24). "So now, as always," should it be again that when his feet were free to leave the thronging streets of Rome he would hurry on to Philippi, or Ephesus, or some other provincial place, where dwelt those children of faith whom God had delivered into his care.

Paul was not only the missionary and evangelist, he was also the pastor and shepherd of these scattered sheep. Here again we see his diligence and constancy in service. If in the evangelistic service we see the indomitable pioneer, always reaching out to newer and still newer fields, we see in the pastor the tender watch-care of a mother. Night and day he watched them, sometimes with tears: soothing and consoling when suffering; checking and curbing when wayward; admonishing and warning when refractory: always giving himself to weariness and peril and death that they might live. No nursing mother could be tenderer than he. But no shepherd could be more valiant and daring when danger threatened the fold. The "care of the churches" was no light duty for any to carry lone-handed, without having the multitude of severities from without, but in spite of the manifold dangers which surrounded, he could say, "Who is weak, and I am not weak: who is offended and I burn not?" (2 Cor. 11:29). Who is weak or justifiably offended among you and I make not his case my own, he asks.

Every suffering heart, therefore, found him sympathetic and helpful, whether a single sheep or a local flock; and as he sensed and ministered to their need, he bore their welfare

and interest to the throne of grace with unceasing earnestness. Scarce one letter came from his pen but that he says he was "always in every prayer of mine, making request for you" (Phil. 1:4)—as a faithful under-shepherd shouldering the exacting burden, yet not forgetting to speak their names into the ear of the Great Shepherd of the sheep, to ask guidance and comfort for every one in his extensive fold. As a rule it is when the faithful pastor feels the sense of the increasing load of care thrust upon him by the brethren's need becoming too heavy to bear alone that he turns to the Lord and seeks for himself the succor and strength and energy which none but Christ can give.

Can we think that the Lord did not know how to develop that pastoral spirit in his chosen under-shepherd? Would Paul have besought the Lord so often or so earnestly with tears had it not been for "the care of the churches"—his intense concern for his brethren? Could he have stood the strain of all the petty squabbles, the little jealousies, the uncalled-for strife if it had not been that he knew where comfort was to be found? Yet, as surely as he found comfort in the Lord, straightway he opened the chambers of his heart to others and "comforted them with the comfort wherewith he had been comforted of God" (2 Cor. 1:4). And this he did through years, not days; this he did when he himself was sorrowing, as well as when he was rejoicing. It was needful for the sake of the sheep, that snares and dangers should abound, else they would stray and miss the way. How manifestly needful, then, the shepherd's care, courage, and alertness all through! "As always, so now" henceforth, as Paul went forth from mighty Rome, he would share the same care and courage and alertness till his days be done! What an advantage it gives to be possessed of one objective!

"This one thing" is a lifetime's task; a whole lifetime's task; a lifetime's whole task! It leaves no surplus for anything else. Christ Jesus will not share his throne with any rival. It is safest and best, like Paul, to run through life on a "narrow gauge," for in very truth the Christian life is a narrow way. Then the things we do today we shall repeat and enjoy tomorrow and say, "As always, so now."

Editor's Note: Bro. T. Holmes of England was a frequent contributor to these columns in the 1940's. The article above is a reprint of part five of a six-part series on the life of the Apostle Paul from THE HERALD of August, 1943.

As Pants the Hart

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.—Psalm 63:1, 2

A verse by verse study in the 42nd Psalm

Nothing whets the appetite for God more than a life of hardship and trials. Prosperity diminishes man's need for God while opposition and persecution strengthen it. King David of Israel was one who could testify to these facts. He had experienced both sides. As king and conquering warrior he knew the accolades of the crowd—"Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Sam. 18:7). But as a refugee from the wrath of Saul and later put to flight by the almost successful rebellion of his son Absalom, he knew the depths of discouragement. David was a complex man. He combined the warrior-like qualities of a great military man with the gentle nature of a poet. His reflective qualities earned him the praise of God as "a man after mine own heart" (Acts 13:22). The thoughts of his heart are preserved for us in the book of Psalms.

The Title of the Psalm

For the director of music. A maskil for the sons of Korah (Title).

Unlike other portions of the Bible where superscriptions are inserted at the whim of the translator, the titles of those psalms which bear superscriptions or subscriptions are part of the inspired record. The annotation "for the director of music" suggests that the psalm was meant to be used in temple service and was to be assigned to the group of singers known as "the sons of Korah."

In preparation for the temple services David had divided the singers into twenty-four courses, with one noted director from the three descendants of Levi over each of three sets of eight groups (1 Chron. 6:31-53). The three leaders were Heman, a Kohathite (v. 33); Asaph, a Gershomite (v. 39); and Ethan [otherwise called Jeduthun], a Merarite (v. 44). The singers led by Heman were called the "sons of Korah" because they were his lineal descendants.

In fact, Heman had two noted forefathers —Korah and Samuel. Heman descended from Samuel through his son Joel who "walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment" (1 Sam. 8:3).

In this simple illustration we see the mercy of God, overlooking the gross misdeeds of the forebears to honor the heart devoted to his service.

The word "*maskil*" is derived from the Hebrew *sekel* [Strong's 7922], which is frequently translated "understanding." Psalms so marked were designated as "teaching psalms," or

"psalms for instruction." The forty-second psalm is an excellent example of a "teaching psalm," where the lesson to be learned is that in times of distress the only reliable help is in seeking the Lord.

The Search for God—Verses 1 to 3

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

Anyone who has visited the arid Negev wilderness in the area of En Gedi where David was holed up in his flight from the wrath of Saul can well imagine the imagery he uses here. He pictures before us a young hart, or deer, in flight from a hunter. After the long chase he enters the green oasis of En Gedi, panting from fright and the rigor of flight, hot from the searing sun overhead, longing for the cooling, refreshing waters of the streams that tumble into this narrow valley.

In this graceful creature of the wilderness David sees a simile to his own experiences. He, too, has been wearied from the flight and distraught within from the continuous pursuit of his king. He, too, longs for refreshment, not the refreshment of En Gedi's cooling streams, but the more lasting refreshment that comes from a knowledge of the favor of God.

There is a similarity in imagery between this and the sixty-third psalm, a psalm which the title informs us was penned "in the wilderness of Judah," probably the last of the wilderness psalms. David's life, like the scene around him, was "a dry and thirsty land, wherein is no water."

We are told that while men can go for long periods without solid food they will die of dehydration if they are without water for only three days. David felt that he could only bear up a short time without a knowledge of his relationship to God.

He had been feeding on the tears of discouragement, now he sought to wash them down with a refreshing draft of fellowship with his God. His feeling of estrangement was heightened by the taunts of his enemies, "Where is your God?"

His desire for God was not merely a reassurance of his presence but also an invitation to approach him in prayer and lay out his trials before him—"when shall I come and appear before God?"

Have we ever felt the same way? Has the road at times become so dreary and discouraging that we feel unable even to pray? Like Esther of old said of her husband, "I have not been called to come into the king these thirty days" (Esth. 4:11). We cry, like Job, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the

right hand, that I cannot see him." We unfortunately at times lack the faith to take the next step; "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:8-10).

These seasons of spiritual drought in our lives are not without value. We need such experiences to feel that deep heartfelt longing which caused David to write the words of this Psalm.

A Soul Poured Out—Verse 4

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

In sharp contrast to present experiences, David recalls earlier, happier days. It is here and in verse six that we get the impression that this Psalm was written later in David's life, perhaps in the flight from Absalom, noting the similarities with his earlier flight from Saul.

The "house of God" at that time was in a private residence, in the home of Abinadam (1 Sam. 7:1). Yet even here it was attended by festive crowds. From this verse we learn a great lesson about the worship of ancient Israel. We discover that it was not a time so much for solemnity as it was a time for the outpouring of joy. The two words translated "multitude" in this verse bear out this thought. While the first word means simply "a throng, or mass of people," the second word describes a loud and jubilant festive procession.

This is further emphasized with the words translated "a voice of joy and praise." Strong's Concordance defines the word for joy as a "shrill sound," usually referring to a joyful outbreak. The word for praise contains the thought of "extending the hand" and is thought to refer to a choir, or it could even be descriptive of such Jewish round dances as the "*hora*."

Worship was not looked at somberly, but joyfully, in appreciation of God's protective care and generosity to them. Where religion envisions a stern and harsh God praise can be evoked only by a fear of the consequences if it is not given. Where God is viewed as a God of love, joy predominates in his worship service.

This joyful worship was reflected when Ezra read the law to the people of Israel upon their return from Babylon, "Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Neh. 8:10).

In order to afford to go the long distances to the feasts of the Lord, the faithful Israelite was to lay aside a special tithe for this purpose. The laws of this tithe are given in the fourteenth chapter of Deuteronomy. One of the provisions was for the turning into cash

of the tithe and taking the proceeds to the place where the festival was to be held. We read of this in verse twenty-six: "And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household."

The house of the Lord is more a house of smiles and good-hearted laughter than it is a house of tears. While sobriety is always encouraged, so is a cheerful heart. Rather than continual remorse for the sins of the past, there is the lightness of heart that comes from the certainty of their forgiveness.

Depression Defeated—Verses 5 to 8

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

Here we see the two faces of David; his abiding spirituality and the weakness of his human nature. Even though David knew by personal experience that God was with him and there was no real cause for depression, yet he was experiencing that very depression. While discouraged by his present situation, he points to the one antidote for all depression—hope.

To hope is to firmly grasp the future. Thus hope requires faith: faith in the reality of the future which God promises; that it will not only be better than today but that it will also show the purpose of today's hard experiences. In a similar vein, in the sixty-third Psalm, while fleeing Saul in the wilderness of Judea, he pens these words: "Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips" (vs. 3-5).

The New American Standard version translates the last phrase of verse five, "I shall again praise him for the help of his presence." This conveys the correct thought of "countenance." It is as though God had turned his face away from David, leaving him to suffer his afflictions, but David retained the confidence that God's face would once again be turned back toward him, that he would continue to have God's abiding presence in each and every experience.

The geographic descriptions in this passage relate more to David's flight from Absalom than to his seeking to escape the wrath of Saul. He fled Saul in the wilderness of Judea, encamping near the oasis at En Gedi. It was when Absalom made his move to seize the kingdom that David fled northward to Mahanaim and was met with a caravan of supplies

from Amman, in Jordan (2 Sam. 17:24-29). Mount Hermon and the nearby hill of Mizer were still further north, in what is today the country of Lebanon.

The metaphor changes in verse seven from that of an arid desert to a boisterous sea. Perhaps that is why this Psalm forms the basis for the prayer of Jonah while in the belly of the fish (Jonah 2). The change of illustration teaches us that regardless of the cause of our turmoil, whether it be the aridity of prolonged hardship and separation from God or being caught up in the turbulence of life, we are still wisest to leave the outcome to a loving heavenly Father, confident that he is too wise to err.

The obvious contrast between God's abiding care in the brightness of our daytime joys or the depths of sorrow's dark night is a comfort to all of his people. Yet the lesson is even stronger. The word translated "daytime" in verse eight (*yowmam*, Strong's 3119) is better translated "daily." Not only can we count on God's loving kindness, his mercy, day and night, but every day, "daily."

Yet, in the contrast between "day" and "night" there is also a rich lesson for the Christian. Our nighttime hours are a good opportunity to reflect upon our daytime experiences. They provide time to thank God for his daily leadings. They are not merely reflections of the evening, but "songs" in the night, songs of praise for God's loving kindness. These expressions of thankful praise continue despite the hardships of the day. As David expresses elsewhere: "The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments" (Psa. 119:61, 62).

Hope is the Answer—Verses 9 to 11

"I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy. As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

The thought of God being David's "rock" is that of a fortress or defense. Note the synonymous phrases he uses in Psalm 18:2, "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

God is always the "rock" in the Old Testament, while Christ is the "rock" in the New. This fact is not a proof of the concept of the trinity. Instead, it merely shows the essential oneness in purpose and work between the two. This dual analogy shows how God provides his strength to man—through his Son, his "right arm." The very fact that Jesus' name was to fulfill the prophecy that his name would be "Emmanuel," God with us, demonstrates that it is through Jesus that God operates as a stronghold, a "rock," to bring deliverance.

Rather than ending on a negative note, the closing words of this Psalm are upbeat. David clearly states his trials—the feeling of desertion by God and the sarcastic reproaches of his enemies—but immediately rebuts these negative feelings by countering his negative feelings with the antidote of hope. It is because of this deep-seated hope that David can continue to praise God, even while going through the rigors of flight from mighty foes. His God has become "the health of [his] countenance," maintaining the ruddy glow of an optimistic man, and not the gloomy disposition of one defeated in spirit.

The word "health" in this closing verse is the Hebrew *yeshuwah* (Strong's 3444), usually translated "salvation." It is the Hebrew word from which the name Jesus is derived, meaning Savior. David's hope has become his salvation, saving him from the downcast countenance of a defeated man, giving him the true optimism of one primed to continue faithfully on in the struggles and hardships that lie ahead.

"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?"—Romans 8:24

No Cross -- No Crown

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.-Luke 9:23

Homer Montague

The word "daily" in this text, seems to emphasize a special dimension to crossbearing. It is a continuous activity, not merely something we engage in for a couple of days a week.

From a historical Christian perspective, when we think about cross-bearing we are reminded of the crucifixion of Jesus, which proved to be the end of his faithful three-and-a-half year journey.

From Jordan

Jesus bore his cross from Jordan to Calvary. It began when he presented himself in baptism as a fulfillment of Psalm 40:7, 8: "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

The secret of the Master's success in overcoming was that he denied himself and accepted with joy the Father's will as his very own. He engaged in every cross-bearing activity God provided for him and ultimately he poured out his soul unto death on a literal cross at Golgotha. His familiarity with the scriptures made him keenly aware that Isaiah 53:12 was a picture of his own crucifixion, finding its fulfillment in Mark 15:27, 28: "And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors."

Jesus knew that the faithful daily carrying of his cross would ultimately result in crucifixion. Although such may not be the portion of his footstep followers, each who faithfully follow God's will instead of their own must bear the cross of activity in the Lord's service unto death, no matter where it leads, if they would gain immortal life. Bearing a cross involves sacrificing the natural inclinations to exercise self-will with which each of us is born and, instead, daily laying down our life in the performance of God's Will.

Fully Spent

The Master's carrying of his cross cost him everything for three-and-a-half years. He engaged in teaching, healing, walking dusty roads, preaching, and answering questions. At the last supper, as an example of love, humility, and service, he washed the feet of his disciples. He had been totally spent. His last night on earth, from the time of his arrest until morning, was a painful season of exhaustion and suffering for the Master. He was viciously treated and subjected to all types of indignities, including beatings and other physical buffetings. It was not this experience alone which made the bearing of his literal cross so heavy, but rather it was the accumulated effects of his being totally consumed and spent in doing God's will. As an example, notice the testimony of Luke 6:17-19: "And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue [vitality] out of him, and healed them all" (Luke 6:19; 8:46).

Following His Steps

As cross-bearers, our lives must also be spent in God's service, even though we cannot literally heal others. However we should be constantly engaged in serving the interests of the Lord, the truth, and the brethren. This will cost us time, resources, and our physical strength.

Sometimes we hear that the Lord's people today do not really experience any persecution as they did in past times. Perhaps in this country some of the forms of persecution are not as physically painful as in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, if we believe that in this country we will get into the kingdom on "flowery beds of ease," we should interpret such feelings as a wake-up call to be more faithful and energetic in that which we have covenanted. If we make this our first priority, it must result in opposition from family, friends, and those in the work place who see our activities and hear our expressions and feel that we are too extreme.

Cross-bearing requires persistence in the Master's service. It requires discipline to make heavenly service the number one priority in our lives despite the fact that we have other mortgages and earthly obligations to which we must attend.

Some feel that because we have liberty in Christ there are no set rules and there is no hierarchy where someone tells us what we must and must not do. Therefore we might ask whether that means that God would be just as pleased whether we are diligent about our sacrificial life or not. It is very easy to slow down our pace, to slacken up, to get a little weary of the daily taking up of our cross. The degree to which we love God and are zealous will impel us toward putting on self-restraints against those tendencies that would distract our attention from doing the Father's will. The more we engage faithfully in his service, the greater will be the reinforcement from God's holy Word as to the course that

we must follow in keeping our sacrifice on the altar. Hebrews 12:3 reminds us, "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

Redeeming the Time

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15, 16). None would argue the fact that we live in an evil day. If we allow our minds to dwell upon the troubles around us without refreshing our minds with the prospect that God's promised kingdom is the solution to what ails mankind, we miss an opportunity for strengthening our resolve not to get sidetracked by things over which we have no control. How much more a blessing we will be to ourselves and others by pointing to scriptures which confirm our understanding that all these conditions will soon be a thing of the past and that the glorious antidote for evil is the millennial reign of Christ. This type of redeeming the time is most profitable.

Aside from things that are inherently evil, there are many other things that are proper and right which provide an allurements for us to expend more time than we should. We could become more rounded through concerts, art galleries, fairs, theater, engaging in discussion groups, and participating in charitable activities where there is an interaction with others over social issues. There are sporting events and a whole host of leisure time activities that are pleasing to the flesh. It would be very easy to spend much of our effort and time enjoying these things. We need to ask the question, To what extent is God's holy spirit directing us to participation in these activities, and to what extent should we say, "I think I will use my time for spiritual pursuits." Although we have liberty in Christ and are not under a bishop or cardinal or other recognized earthly head, we must look to the scriptural principles to discern what God's will is for us as revealed in his Word.

I rather suspect that the Apostle Paul did not have too much leisure time. Speaking of himself, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." I would infer that if Paul had been spending his time pursuing comfortable leisure pursuits he would not have gotten into all that trouble, he would not have experienced all that persecution. I am not suggesting that any of us pattern our lives exactly like the Apostle Paul, but he did exhort us to follow him as he followed Jesus.

And what about Jesus? In John 2:1-11 we find him attending a wedding. Because he loved mankind and endorsed the divine institution of marriage he accepted such

invitations, particularly when it gave him an opportunity to manifest the wonders of his Father and illustrate the blessings of his coming kingdom.

There are many places where Jesus is spoken of as "sitting down to meat." He received many dinner invitations and accepted them from various individuals. For instance, in Luke 7:36-50, we are told of his dining at the home of Simon, a Pharisee. The narrative continued about a harlot, who also knew the Master, coming to him. She brought an alabaster box of perfume. She washed the Lord's feet with tears and dried them with the hair of her head and then anointed them with the sweet fragrance which she had brought. Simon challenged Jesus as to whether he knew what type of woman she was. The Lord knew his heart and gave him a story of a creditor who had two debtors, one who owed a large sum and one who owed a small amount-you know the story. Jesus ended by commending the woman and rebuking Simon who, as host, had not provided water to wash the feet of his guest. Yes, Jesus went to dine but, as always, he was alert to use the experience to give lessons in discipleship.

The Handiwork of God

The Bible tells us that often Jesus went off to commune and pray to the heavenly Father in private. Whether he retreated to a mountain or went off in a garden, we are convinced he appreciated the handiwork of God. Many of the illustrations in his parables-wheat and tares, sheep and goats, birds of the air, lilies of the field-showed he was conscious of these things and that he enjoyed discussing the wonders of nature which he appreciated.

Often Jesus went to the temple. Today many people of the Jewish faith speak of going to the temple. They go for special occasions, such as Bar Mitzvahs and weddings. The Rabbi frequently makes reference to their Jewish heritage. In Jesus' day there was a lot of reading and teaching from the scriptures in the synagogue. When Jesus went to the temple or the synagogue he also expounded on the scriptures. Many things he said offended the scribes and Pharisees and ultimately led to his crucifixion.

In summary, the Master, in seeking to do his Father's will, went wherever he could, particularly among the nation of Israel, because he came to save the sheep of that lost house. All his energies were directed to teaching his Father's plan. He was totally consumed.

The Lesson for Us

The lesson for us is that we have promised to do God's will to the best of our ability and discernment. Putting aside the responsibilities of work and providing for those dependent on us, we should also bear our cross to the greatest extent possible, redeeming the time, and focusing on those activities which keep us involved in the service of the truth.

There are many potential distractions all about us to keep us from bending our energies toward maintaining a sacrificial course-good things, things pleasing to the eye, pleasant to the flesh, and things which a natural man has every right to do.

Perhaps the simplest guide is to ask ourselves whether the experiences we would like to participate in enhance the new creature or whether they are merely satisfying to the flesh. If they are designed to promote the growth and development of the new creature, we are sure they will gain God's approval. Master who, Our freedom in these decisions is expressed well in 1 Corinthians 10:23, 31. We quote from the New Revised Standard Version: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

An illustration by Benjamin Barton describes it well: "I often think of this perfect love like a driver, and the flesh like his horse. The horse may be a little treacherous, it may get balky and so on, but you would not blame the driver, but the horse. But the driver should always be on the alert. If you find sometimes your flesh is going wrong, and the new creature has hold of the rein, and if the flesh gets a little contrary and gets frightened by an automobile and jumps to one side, do not blame it on the new creature, but blame it on the flesh. Learn to whip the flesh. Do not let the flesh have its own way. Do like a brother who had quite a little experience with a balky horse. It got balky and he said, 'I will fix it.' He took off the traces and tied the horse's tail and fasted it to the single tree and made the horse pull the buggy for a half mile that way. He said his horse did not balk any more. Learn to crush the flesh under the new creature, so that if the time comes that you have got some opportunity for service, the flesh will say, 'I do not like to do that, but I am afraid. I had better do it because I know that if I do not, the new creature will tie my tail up and make me do it. I had better do it whether I like it or not.'

The Way of the Cross

The way of the cross was opened up by the in submission to the divine will, bore his cross daily in giving his life for all of mankind. For three and a half years his ministry caused a continual drain on his vitality with regard to his public ministry of preaching, as well as his miracles of healing, all of which sapped his physical strength. Surely he was touched with a feeling of our infirmities and he bore all the sickness and pain of those he relieved. His attitude is well expressed in John 4:31-34: "In the meanwhile his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

An invitation has been extended to a select group of individuals during this Gospel age to be of the little flock, the bride of Christ. Those who hear this call are admonished to walk even as he walked in carrying out the death baptism of Romans 6:3. May we always remember the admonition of Revelation 2:10, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

News and Views

Western Pilgrim Trip

From mid-August to mid-September, Director and Editor Carl Hagensick visited brethren in the south and west. He was accompanied by his wife, Sr. Marge, and three European sisters. During the month-long trip, he visited with brethren in Canton, Illinois; St. Louis, Missouri; Gassville, Arkansas; Broken Arrow, Oklahoma; Dallas, Fort Worth and La Mesa, Texas; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Chino Valley, Arizona; Fresno and San Mateo, California; Medford, Grant's Pass, Salem and Portland, Oregon; Carson and Seattle, Washington; Spearfish, South Dakota; Prairie du Chien and Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Huntsville, Alabama. Pilgrim trips such as this are meant to give spiritual comfort to isolated brethren. Carl noted in his report to the board, "The needs of the isolated were more manifest than ever. We especially enjoyed seeing the providence of the Lord in the cases of several who were either new to the truth or who had been out of contact with the brethren for years." Anyone desiring to be included on such a visit, or who knows of those that could benefit from such a visit, may contact the secretary of THE HERALD.

Pyramid Books Available

In the September/October News & Views, we reviewed *The Great Pyramid. Its Secrets and Mysteries Revealed*, by Piazz Smyth. In the review, we mentioned the difficulty of finding the book today, since it was written in 1880 and republished infrequently. Since then, we were contacted by one of our readers and notified of a bookseller who had a number of copies of the edition published by Gramercy books. We wrote the bookseller and were able to obtain the 25 copies that remained at a cost of \$9.95 each. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy may order it from the News and Views editor as long as the supply lasts.

Readers Speak Out

EDITOR'S NOTE: We request that letters to the Herald be brief, contain the name and address of the writer, express a response to an article, describe an activity, or be of general interest to readers. It is our policy to reprint letters in their entirety if possible; however, we may edit letters for clarity and brevity. Although the views expressed by readers may not be the views of the editors, we reserve the right to submit letters to the editors for their approval before reprinting.

Dear Brother Caudle,

I direct these few lines to you as the Secretary of THE HERALD. I know anyone who seines in such capacity likes to know just what results from their "labor of love," and I bestir myself to write you a few lines again--pressures upon time are so great today that we repeatedly "put off" little duties to "tomorrow," and so often "tomorrow" never seems to come.

The articles in THE HERALD are always enjoyed but perhaps I should mention two that proved of special interest and appreciation to myself, so much so that I have taken photostats of them and passed to some who I felt would be interested in reading them. They are *Gathering of the Nations* in May/June; and *Bearing the Grievs of Others* in July/Aug. The last one was very much appreciated by myself. The two poems included in the article further enhanced the sentiments expressed.

Truly we are living in "Grand and Awful" times, and we have to be exceedingly thankful that we are counted worthy to be amongst those who are being "sealed in their foreheads" in the midst of it all. My humble prayers for all is that they may be kept faithful to the end and daily continue to grow in grace and to know the love of God indwelling. God is love. Have not all proved it so.

-W.A. Smith, Australia

Dear Friends,

I am sending (\$20) to renew my subscription. I love the magazine cover and the fact that you are now putting it in a plain wrapper. The articles in the September/October issue were excellent, especially on the 8 differences between Bible Students and fundamentalists' teachings. You correctly state that Titus 2:13 refers to Jesus. Luke 1:32 says of Jesus that he shall be great, but not as great as Jehovah who is supreme over all. Yes, we Bible Students are unique, no one else has the truth that we have. Now it is true that Jesus was divine from the time of his creation, but he did not have the full measure of divinity until his resurrection. Colossians 2.9 says: "in him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Here the word Godhead means divinity and this was after his resurrection. In John 1:1, which reads, "the Word was a god" could just as easily read "and the Word was divine." (Jesus was divine in the sense that he was God-like.) Jehovah says "let him who has my word speak my word in truth" (Jer. 23.28). I wish (also) to comment on the manner of Christ's going back to heaven and returning again. Fundamentalist Christians read into this 'like body.' The manner of Christ going and coming to the earth refers to the person of Jesus. Manner in Webster's refers to behavior, there are those with good manners and those with bad manners. Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Thus the same loving Jesus who was here at his first advent will return in like manner at his second advent.

-Louis R. Balderson, Callao, Virginia

Editor's note: Bro.- Balderson sent two letters. This is a combination of the two.

Bible Student Activities

The brethren serving the fair in Los Angeles this past summer reported great success. They passed out 11,407 booklets. After running out of booklets during the week-long fair, they took orders for the most popular booklets: *How to Study the Bible*; *How God Answers Prayer*; *Why God Permits Evil*. With the orders and subscriptions for magazines, there were 15,007 pieces of literature distributed in witnessing for the Lord.

Editor's note: We are collecting witness ideas and experiences for reprinting in a "Witness Activity" section of the News and Views, which will commence as soon as a number of ideas are collected. If you have a particularly successful activity, please send it to the News and Views editor. Similarly, if you have a particular activity or idea for witnessing to God's plan, please submit it as well. We will try to include new and fresh ideas as a help to readers who desire new ways to spread God's word.

Around The World

Israel

The Jewish National Fund is developing Gan Yaldei Yisrael to celebrate the 3000th year of Jerusalem's history. Located in the Jerusalem Peace Forest overlooking the Old City, Gan Yaldie will be a unique educational site featuring eight milestones of Jerusalem history: The Bible; The Return to Zion; Yearning Prayer and Hope; Jewish Life Beyond the City Walls; The National Homeland; The Rebirth of the State of Israel; United Jerusalem; The City of Peace.

-JNF and Jerusalem, Jewish National Fund

About 10,000 members of the Islamic Movement attended a "Jerusalem First" rally in Kafr Kasseem to demand that eastern Jerusalem be made the capital of a Palestinian state. The village streets were decorated and the participants dressed in holiday clothes and sang songs of Jerusalem.

-Jerusalem Post, September, 1995

Palestinian Authority chief Yasser Arafat has established a secret company to purchase property in Jerusalem before talking with Israel about the future of the city. In a 'top secret' letter obtained by the Jerusalem Post, a senior PA official says the firm has been given an initial \$15 million to buy land in eastern Jerusalem and the Old City. The letter was written August 7, 1994. Finance Minister Mohammed Zohdi Nashashibi, who wrote the letter, says, "the goal of the company is to firmly plant our feet and enlarge our presence in an effective and strong manner" in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem Post, September, 1995

Jordan's Arab Potash Corporation and Israel's Dead Sea Bromine have signed a memorandum of understanding to form a \$50 million bromine project, the first major Israeli Jordanian joint venture since the two countries signed peace accords one year ago. "This is definitely a fruit of peace," said Mr. Suleiman Hawari, managing director of Arab Potash. "Before the peace we couldn't even talk to each other. Now, in the Dead Sea, we have great opportunities to cooperate with Israel." The memorandum of understanding calls for the construction of a bromine plant on the Dead Sea which will provide 25 thousand tons of bromine annually.

-Financial Times, 10/13/95

There is a significant change in Israel's perception of what constitutes national power, according to Efraim mbar, director of the BESA Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University in Tel Aviv. "Once we viewed power through the barrel of a gun. Now, we want economic power because we see that as being what's important strategically." After 38 years of activity in Africa and Latin America, the Foreign Ministry's Center for International Cooperation is working in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The government is angling to establish Israel as a leading economic player in the region. It believes it will be able to influence more strongly the way the Mideast is shaped. David Kimche, a former director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry and now a businessman, says, "After decades of Israel being considered a pariah, known more for military than economic might, we can look at the area where we belong. We are finally part of the Middle East."

-Wall Street Journal, 10/25/95

Editor's note: With the death of the Prime Minister Rabin, Israel will be holding elections early next year to determine its new leader. The following is given as a help to readers in order to understand the current makeup of Israel's ruling body, the Knesset.

The parties in Israel can be divided into three unofficial groups. The first group is made up of liberals (centrists and leftists) and conservatives (centrists and right wings). The second group is very religious, and divided by geographic origin -- Ashkenazi (Eastern European) and Sephardic (Spain, Portugal, England, the Americas, North Africa)-or politics-the Zionists and non-Zionists. The third group comes from the Arab population and is communist, pro-PLO, or pro-Israeli. Due to the mass immigration of Russian Jews, a new party has surfaced, chaired by former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky. It is the Immigrants Party. With 560,000 Russian Jews now in Israel, they could be a threat to the reelection prospects of the Labor party. The ruling coalition, the Labor party, has 44 seats in the Knesset. It favors agreements with the PLO and the Jordanians. The two Arab parties side with Labor. The opposition party is the Likud, With 32 seats. It was formed from the Revisionists Party before Israel was a nation. The revisionists favor strong defense and no compromise with Arab ,Palestinians.

-Israel, My Glory (October/November, 1995)

Christendom

The Vatican Library has given its blessing to a lucrative licensing project that could put its official seal on everything from luggage to bed linens. Companies will be marketing a host of products inspired by the Vatican Library's collection, which includes more than a million books, 100,000 prints and drawings, ancient timepieces and scientific instruments. It also includes such coveted works as maps by Archimedes and the original handwritten manuscript of Dante's *Inferno*. "Can you imagine? I never would have thought it-the church is not supposed to be so worldly," says Jack Trout, president of Trout & Partners, a Greenwich, Connecticut marketing-consulting firm. The Vatican Library is counting on a significant windfall: over the first five years, licensing revenue is projected to average about \$5 million annually, then to jump to at least \$10 million to \$20 million annually for the next 15 years. "The Catholic Church is a marvelous marketing vehicle," says Weston Anson, chairman of the Trademark- and Licensing firm which evaluated the potential.

The Church of England faces one of the most radical organizational reforms in its history after the report from a commission appointed by its two archbishops. A council would take over the supervision of the general synod's boards, councils and other subcommittees. If established, the new national council could mark the most radical reform in the church since the creation of the general synod in 1970. The critical issue is not the church's central institutional structure, but the readiness of England's 1.1 million regular churchgoers to meet more of the cost of their own worship and ministry. At the moment barely one in three regular worshippers makes regular donations toward the maintenance of the 10,000 full-time clergy.

-Financial Times, 9/22/95

Crossing The Threshold of Hope was written by Pope John Paul II as a series of written exchanges with Italian journalist Vittorio Messori. In one chapter, John Paul asks, and finally declines to answer the issue of the existence of hell. "The problem of hell has always disturbed great thinkers in the Church. Can God, who has loved man so much, permit the man who rejects Him to be condemned to eternal torment? And yet, the words of Christ are unequivocal. In Matthew's gospel He speaks clearly of those who will go to eternal punishment. Who will these be?" the Pope asks. In the end of his book, he finds it hard to fathom eternity without a hell. "Isn't final punishment in some way necessary in order to reestablish moral equilibrium in the complex history of humanity? Is not hell the ultimate safeguard of man's moral conscience?"

-Scripps Howard News Service, date unknown

The Nations

The World Bank has a new vision for resolving the debt problem of the world's 40 poorest countries. The proposals mark a fundamental shift in World Bank policy on debt relief for its most impoverished borrowers. The new facility created by the bank would pay the interest and principal on the debt as it comes due. The plan would require debt relief from the world's richest nations and produce continuing economic support from major contributors. The belief is that the plan would help nations such as Africa, which is on the brink of international bankruptcy as well as social chaos.

-Financial Times, October, 1995.

Australia tops the list of the World's richest countries. A new World Bank study has found that, on a per capita basis, the U.S., Germany, France and the U.K. do not make it into the top 10 wealthiest nations. Their places among the elite are taken by Iceland, Denmark and Qatar. The study measured not on the basis of the flow of income, as in gross national product, but according to the stock of assets, including natural capital such as land, water, timber, gold and minerals; produced assets such as machinery, factories, roads and railways; human resources as measured by education and nutrition; and social capital measured by human organizations and institutions. Australia and Canada emerged as the two richest nations in per capita terms. The remainder of the top ten were Luxembourg, Switzerland, Japan, Sweden, Iceland, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Denmark.

--Financial Times, 9/18/95

Book Review

A Woman Rides the Beast, by Dave Hunt. 544 pages. Harvest House Publishing.

On March 29, 1994, American evangelicals and Catholics signed a joint declaration titled "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium." The purpose of the document was to reverse the effects of the reformation and form an alliance to accept each other as Christians. (News & Views reported on this in the **May/June 1994** issue). The document urged each side to stop aggressive proselytization of each other's members. John White, former president of the National Association of Evangelicals, heralded the document as a "triumphalistic moment" in American religious life after centuries of distrust.

While the 25-page document acknowledges that there are some key differences between the two faiths, it does not attempt to specify which of the two faiths is correct. It merely recognizes them. It is interesting that the theological differences between Catholics and Protestants were once considered to be so great that millions died as martyrs rather than to compromise them. Whereas Roman Catholicism was once the official state religion

and the practice of all others was prohibited throughout Latin America and Europe, that appears to be no longer a barrier to cooperation. The extent of persecution of non-Catholics throughout history was not even mentioned. The Protestant leaders who signed the joint declaration apparently imagined a spiritual partnership with Catholics to win the world to Christ. In a way, that document declared the Reformation and its impact null and void.

Dave Hunt wrote *A Woman Rides the Beast* "to present vital, factual information which throws essential light upon the whole question of Catholic/Protestant relationships." Indeed Hunt's book is a well-documented treatise on the activities of the Papacy since its inception in the fourth century after Christ. Researching historical documents, Hunt presents the activities of the Papal system from its early days through both World Wars. While his treatise is far too broad to review adequately one chapter is notable. In "The Slaughter of the Serbs," Hunt details how the current Croatian conflict sprang from World War II activity where records show that the Catholic Ustashi, with priests and bishops participating in a modern-day Crusade, tortured and put to death between 700,000 and 900,000 in two dozen concentration camps throughout Croatia. Many were Jews, but most were Serbians of Orthodox faith who were given the choice of conversion to Roman Catholicism or death. Both in Yugoslavia and the Ukraine, massacres continued throughout 1941. Fitzroy MacLean, Britain's military liaison, described the "bands of Ustase roamed the countryside with knives, bludgeons and machine guns, slaughtering Serbian men, women and little children, desecrating Serbian churches, murdering Serbian priests, laying waste Serbian villages, torturing, raping, burning, drowning. Killing became a cult, an obsession." The Croatian violence of our day then comes as no surprise as the cry of rights and freedom from persecution springs from the "shout" of I Thessalonians 4.

Hunt's historical documentation is extremely interesting. His prophetic interpretation is not, and Bible students should be cautioned against putting too much credence in his apocalyptic interpretations. Those not familiar with Revelation and its interpretation should avoid the few chapters at the end discussing the rapture of the church and the personal appearance of anti-Christ. However, those who can gloss over these parts will find the book extremely useful as a supplement to current Bible Student publications concerning fulfillment of both Old and New Testament prophecy regarding the revelation of the wicked one in the last days.

Because of the sensitive nature of the book, it has been removed from open shelves in some religious bookstores' however, the store will normally provide a copy on request.