

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

God's solid foundation stands firm. 2 Tim. 2-19

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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.

Matthew 5:15

From The Editor's Desk.

“Time and tide wait for no man” is an old saying to indicate to us that some things are inevitable and outside the control or manipulation of man. But it is not so with God, for the creator of “time and tide” is indeed able to stop and alter as He pleases. Scriptures has a few examples of God’s sovereign power at work in holding back time and tide. Perhaps as an exercise in broadening scripture knowledge the reader may like to find those occasions in scripture. A clue – read the Old Testament.

This month there is an article by Bro. Merle Ruth, “*Correcting a Faulty View of Divine Providence*”. This article is in similar vein to the one in the April issue by Bro. Clair Weaver entitled: “*The Providence of God*”. It is hoped that these two articles may help us to think and ponder upon how we view or respond to the things that happen in our own lives and the lives of those around us. Are they ordained of God or ????

How we look at this issue will affect how we respond to others who have events in their lives such the accidental death or otherwise of family or close friends, the occurrence of large scale natural disasters with thousands and sometimes tens of thousands suddenly being taken out of this world into an eternity of either heaven or hell. Can we give a scriptural response? Can we give witness to a hope beyond these things? Can we have peace in our own lives? Can we say when tragedy strikes our family or me personally that all is well with my soul?

I believe that this verse applies to all of our life in Christ Jesus, including those times when we are asked to take up our cross and follow Him, even if events and tragedies beset us and those whom we love or are called to minister to.

1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

JvL.

MINISTER'S CORNER.**The Supremacy of the Word**

Brother Eby Burkholder, Centerville Mennonite Church.

We want to focus a few minutes on the supremacy of the Word, especially 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God. Historically Anabaptists have been Biblicists.

If we study some of the history and debates of the Anabaptists with the reformers and the Catholics, they always stood firmly on the Word of God. They said that the Word of God is the final answer and they will not detour from that.

On the Lord's Day and at other times we meet to worship the Lord. Our thoughts and activity also centre around the Scriptures. That is studying the Scriptures. Most of our service surrounds this in Sunday School, and the preaching service. We are Biblicists. We live in a day of gross and extensive departure from the faith, not so much the knowledge of the Scriptures (the factual knowledge) but the application of it into life. People begin to read the Scriptures to see what they can find and then they change the Scriptures to suit their lives.

The opposite is the way it should be. As we read the Scriptures, we should allow the searchlight of the Scriptures to shine in our souls. We should be ready to make the changes and the alterations that are needed to conform to God's perfect will as revealed in the Scriptures. Read 2 Timothy 3:10–17. The first part of this passage talks about the perilous days and the marks of those days in which we live. Notice verse 8. It talks about the "Jannes and Jambres," that were in conflict with Moses.

They resisted truth. Then, in verse 10 there is a "but." "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life." Paul is comparing or contrasting his life with the life of these apostates in Moses' time. His life is patterned after the Scriptures. He could recommend that people follow his example. Notice the two components of his life. They knew his doctrine. That is what he believed. They knew his way of life. Belief and life, belief and application always go together. This is important for ordained people especially, but it also a needful element of every Christian's life to be sound in doctrine and in our manner of life. Our manner of life must "line up" with doctrine, that is, with the Word of God. It is possible to begin to do things

because other people do it and in that process not bring ourselves into conformity with the Word of God. We know that in the end the Word of God will be the judge. Not “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18). In the end we will meet the Scriptures as the judge of our lives. Certainly, it is important that we honour the Word of God today and intend to live by it. Verse 17 says that we “may be perfect.”

Through the Bible, God is calling us to a life of holiness — not sinless perfection but perfect in motive. In other words we are saved and have the work of Christ that is availing for us. His righteousness becomes our righteousness and we are saved and live according to the Word of God. Notice verse 13. This verse focuses on verses 1–9. I believe it is another mark of the end time. “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” Verse 13 is separate from the marks of verses 1–9. I think this is especially emphasizing the religious apostasy in that people. They will be out to deceive. That deception comes through misapplication of the Scriptures. That is in this context of verses 14–17.

In our day there are different types of apostasy. There is massive, extensive wickedness — people who do not claim to be saved and Christians. However, probably the greatest threat to us is those that are out to deceive and that teach the Word, but do not teach it in its entirety. Notice verse 14. We need to know of whom we have learned these things. This is not only speaking of a factual knowledge but it is talking about the applications of life. Those who are applying the Scriptures, be sure that their life and doctrines are in accord with the Word of God. When we come to church, we are confident that our preacher’s message “lines up” with the Word of God. We are thankful that in the Anabaptist heritage it has been that way. That does not say that it is guaranteed to be that way, but we are grateful that the Holy Spirit works through the lives of ordained people and brings a message of truth to the people. Then we need to test that again by the Word of God. Verse 10 says, “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life.” Verse 13 mentions some other things about Paul’s life. “But. . .” in contrast to that — false teachers — “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. (14) But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; (15) And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation

through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (16) All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Notice verse 14 again. It is not only learning the Scriptures for factual knowledge, but it is learning to apply the Scriptures. In our teaching and preaching we are so much teaching the factual knowledge of the Scriptures, however, with that goes learning in application. We are certainly glad for this. This is one reason we object to the radio because of the deception that is propagated through the air by false teachers. It is not so much, or only what they say but what they do not say. It is something that we need to continue to think about and have conviction against the radio. Also, we need conviction against tapes by Protestant theologians who do not “ring clear” to the Biblical Anabaptist faith and practice. That would have equal threats and dangers to radio preaching. In Mennonite history many people have been led astray by radio preaching. That is not a threat in our setting but there are other threats that we need to be careful about.

We need to apply verse 14 always, “knowing of whom thou hast learned them.” That hinges back to verse 10, “thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life.” We need to evaluate the message — weigh it in light of how people live and the application they are making to that in life. Notice in verse 15 the value of childhood instruction. Today, in our worship services we have many children, for which we are glad. We value the impressions that are being made upon the lives, upon the minds of children. Again, it is not only teaching them the factual knowledge but they learn the most about the Scriptures as they look at the life. Again, it is in this context, “fully known my doctrine, manner of life.” Children learn most about the Bible by what they see in the home. “that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures.” It certainly makes it important that parents are this right example. Paul was this right example to the Church. Parents need to be the right example in the home. Children learn their impressions of God from their parents. As the father is, so in a child’s mind God is. That makes it very important that we are Bible believing and practicing parents. Notice yet again verses 16 and 17. The Word of God is God breathed. It is breathed by God for a specific purpose that it can be profitable for doctrine as to teach the principles of God for reproof, conviction of sin, for correction, and to redirect the course. If an airplane or a ship is off course only a

degree, the further they go the further they will be off course. The Word of God is for redirecting and correcting of the course. That happens in the preaching and the teaching of the Word. It is for instruction, for nurture, that we may be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” That word *furnished* is an interesting word. It means, “complete and ready for service.” I thought of it like in a house. When a house is fully furnished, there is a kitchen table, beds, and everything that is practical. If you move into the house and that furniture is missing that house is not very useful. The Word completely furnishes our life so that we may live according to His will and move out into Christian service. May the Word of God be that for us.

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SNAPSHOTS.

Brief excerpts from selected Anabaptist publications.

From: “Separated Unto God” by J.C.Wenger.- Sword & Trumpet 1990.

Putting the Kingdom First

Both recreation and culture have a significant place in the family life of the Christian home, but neither of them is central. Neither is work central, although every child needs to learn to work. The center of the Christian home is the Lord Jesus Christ, His Word, and devotion to Him. Christians are not living to seek primarily their own happiness, nor even the happiness of their own family. They are here to serve Christ, to live for Him, to deny self, and to put His kingdom first in their lives. But the one who thus loses his life for the sake of Christ shall truly find it. Happiness comes not to those who seek it selfishly but to those who in the renunciation of self for the sake of the kingdom of God find their life.

Luke 9:23-25: *“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. [24] For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it. [25] For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?”*

In other words, happiness cannot be achieved by aiming at it; it is the satisfying by-product of living a spiritual life, of being separated unto God.

THE GARDEN OF MY LIFE*Bro. Kevin Ensz, Kansas.*

Tonight I surveyed my flower garden. It is a small place I call my own. Much thought and planning has gone into its preparation and arrangement. Countless hours of toil have been invested in it, carefully cultivating, propagating, and caring for the variety of plants found there.

My garden contains prized perennials from my mother's garden, including the daylilies that rise on slender, graceful stems to show their beauty but for a day, then they fade away to be replaced by another blossom the next day. Kind friends have lent their beauty to my garden, also, in gifts of cuttings and shoots, transplanted from their gardens to proliferate in mine.

There are also many plants—and these I watch with special joy—that I have started from seed. I have carefully tended the little seedlings, separating and transplanting them when the time was right, hardening them off, and then joyfully spreading them throughout my garden to show their beauty all summer. The vinca, I know, will withstand summer's heat and drought. The marigolds are a sunshine of yellow beauty sprayed along the front edge of the garden. The patch of white Shasta daisies that have finally established themselves and have returned to cheer the garden with their endless blooms are the product of last year's careful seed cultivation. The black-eyed Susans of several years ago have scattered their seed all over the garden and are filling many previously empty spots. The moon flower plants are small and tender, yet I know that by summer's end they will have formed huge plants, producing dozens of beautiful white trumpets which lend a soft perfume to the garden every evening.

Yes, my garden provides many joys. Yet tonight as I stand back and survey my garden, I see imperfection. There are gaping holes in the backdrop of trees that frame the garden, and I am brought back to the reality of the devastation of last winter's ice storm. These trees and bushes once formed a graceful mound of green behind my garden. Now brown, dead branches still hang high in the cedar where the heavy snow of spring bowed them down until they could no longer withstand the weight. I know that if I walk through my garden, I will find empty spots where last year's Indian blanket mostly died out. I am keenly aware of the scattered daisy plants that are turning brown for some unknown reason, their pure white petals curling and shriveling into oblivion. I have seen where the bugs have

chewed and tattered the leaves of a hibiscus.

I know that the bleeding heart plant is missing because the dogs chose to dig a hole where it was growing. There is an area where few plants will prosper because of soil conditions. I know that if I am not diligent this summer, the spider mites will destroy the marigolds that are so cheery today.

But tonight mostly I see the holes in the tree line, the imperfection I cannot repair. They are the scars that my garden bears. Though, with the passing of time, the holes may diminish in size as the trees next to them continue to grow, these trees will always bear the scars of their untimely and asymmetrical pruning by Mother Nature.

Then I lift my gaze above my garden, and I am awestruck with the beauty of the eastern sky as the sun eases itself down behind the western horizon. The fluffy, scattered clouds are a beautiful pink against a deep blue twilight sky. I see the beauty only the Master Gardener could have created, and I marvel. He knew that my garden would grow in imperfection, and He planned something better—something that I could not make—something that would surpass all the beauty of the finest garden in existence. He created a backdrop so beautiful, so unique, so unsurpassed, and so exquisitely perfect that it cannot help but bring my thoughts to Him. Tonight I ponder how much of this is like the garden of my life. My life is one I have carefully planned. I have spent countless hours dreaming of and selecting the features that I thought would produce the most beautiful garden imaginable. It contains relics of my past, hopefully some beauties my mother imparted to me and some graces gleaned from friends. And those seedlings that I tended with such care, those ideals that I claimed as mine and held to as things of value that would surely bring the Designer's touch to my life, they are there, too.

And, yes, I realize, the holes are there also. Tonight I see the holes. There is the empty place where once stood the idea that I could live my life without hurting others. That was taken away in a moment by the icy storm of tragedy in my life. There is the limp, hanging, dead, brown belief that I had my life under control—that I was at the helm. And there is the empty spot where my lifelong, nearly spotless driving record has been wiped into oblivion. I see the imperfection and blight of another's life stained with sorrow too deep for human words to express, of someone else's dreams for their lives withering away like the pure white petals of my diseased daisy

plants as a result of my actions. Although they were unintentional and beyond understanding, yet, oh! so painfully real.

As I slowly meander through my garden of life, it seems all I see are the failures, shortcomings, and empty places where there should be something of value. Everywhere is the seemingly endless wondering what life is really all about and why I can't seem to get a grasp on it. Holes—empty holes, which were once filled with beautiful pieces of the garden of my life.

But wait! Above my garden tonight was the beautiful signature of the Master Gardener. Oh, can it be, is it possible (oh, joyful thought) that behind the tangled, straying branches of the garden of life, behind the holes that are so painful to view, the wounds that are so deep, could it be that God is painting His colors for the world to view? Would God actually be so good as to let others see Him and His glory instead of focusing on the blighted, imperfect garden displayed so openly here below?

Tonight it is the cry of my heart that He is doing that in His infinite love, in His matchless compassion and desire to bind up the wound in my heart. No, I don't deserve for the world to look beyond the marred garden of my life, but God knew that it couldn't be perfect. He knew that the icy winds would take their toll. He knew that the weights of this world would at times break down the best of my intentions for perfection. He knew, and tonight I know, that He had prepared something better for the world to see. Oh, that my garden would fade from view so that the whole world would see Him, and Him alone, etched in the vast, endless skies of time and eternity.

Yes, I believe that God is good enough to do that for me. And so, with a lighter heart, I return to the garden God has given me to tend. By His grace, I continue to cultivate, to remove the unsightly weeds that would hide the flowers. I will remove from view, to the best of my ability, the spent blossoms of yesterday's sorrows so that the blooms of today's joy can be visible to those who walk with me. I will accept the fact that some beauties are only for the day—they will be gone tomorrow. I will continue to anticipate the first beautiful blossoms of each stage of life into which God leads me. I will continue to plan carefully, with the help of the Master Gardener, how to fill the empty spots where yesterday's ideals grew.

I will continue to tend the diseased areas of my life, listening to the advice of the Master Gardener, patiently trying to find the remedy that will

cure the ills. But I will endeavor to accept defeat graciously when, after every attempt possible, I find that I must accept the death of another ideal. I will accept that some plants just do not grow in my life. God never intended them to, and although they are graceful and beautiful in the gardens of others, they simply do not fit the scheme of mine. I will accept the fact that some blossoms will be imperfect. I am, after all, human. I will welcome with joy the unexpected volunteer plant that suddenly appears in my garden to add its rewards to my life.

And I will lift my eyes to the holes in the tree line. I will allow myself to remember for a brief moment the icy storm that caused the holes, but then I will look beyond them; for through these holes, I see God. I see His infinite love that has been there to carry me through every dark hour. I see His providence that has spared me from so many things that could have been worse. I see His people who have reached out to me in compassion and care in overwhelming proportions, restoring my faith in humanity. I see the opportunity to leave a word for the dearest Friend I have ever known. I see vividly that God is ultimately in complete control of the events of my life.

Yes, I will look through the holes in the tree line, which will always remain, and see something exquisitely more beautiful than all the things that once grew there. And I will know that God is there—eternal, timeless, unchanging, and greater than the vast heavens that were spread out in their glory tonight.

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CORRECTING A FAULTY VIEW OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

Bro. Merle Ruth Annville, PA

It would be interesting to know how God views our attempts to "explain" the so-called tragedies of life.

How do we console the survivors when a mother falls asleep at the wheel and is killed as her car slams into a tree? What do we say when a much-needed father falls from a scaffold and is crippled for life? How can we comfort that young, recently married husband when an icy road claims the life of his new bride?

In the wake of such sad happenings, those who stand by do have an obligation. We are to "weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15).

God comforts us so that "we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble" (2 Corinthians 1:4). And He surely wants us to do better than those who miserably sought to comfort Job. This article is a plea to weigh well our words lest we make God responsible for inflicting all such hard-to-bear pain.

With the best of intentions, some people go so far as to say that with God there really are no accidents. Along with this mentality commonly goes the idea that everything that happens, however tragic it may be, must be interpreted as the direct outworking of the will of God

In their letters of condolence, well-meaning people may include poems such as the following:

Things don't just happen to those who love God;
 They are planned by His own dear hand;
 Then molded and shaped and timed by His clock.
 Things don't just happen—they're planned.

Another similar poem entitled, "It Didn't Just Happen," includes this verse:

Things don't just happen to the children of God,
 The blueprint was made by His hand,
 He designed all the details to conform to His Son,
 So all things that happen are planned.

With the best of intentions, thoughts such as these are shared for the supposed purpose of helping those involved to reconcile their concept of God with the loss they have suffered. But does the sharing of such ideas actually accomplish that purpose? This writer is fearful that it may do the opposite. It may create in the human mind a different kind of God from what we really have, a hard-to-love kind of God, a planner of tragedies.

As already indicated, people who subscribe to this mistaken view of divine providence somehow feel that what we commonly call an accident is easier to bear if we view it as a divine appointment. Furthermore, they draw support for this idea from Hebrews 9, where death is said to be an appointed occurrence. Apparently, they then conclude that every dying

person is keeping a divinely-arranged appointment. But that is an over-drawn deduction. True, because of sin, "it is appointed unto men once to die" (Hebrews 9:27). However to infer from this that God also decrees the time and manner of every person's death is reading into that passage more than it is meant to convey.

Another commonly misinterpreted passage is Job's divinely inspired observation with regard to the length of a man's life span: "seeing his days are determined" (Job 14:5). Does this mean, as some have concluded that God predetermines the exact length of each life? More likely it simply means that God put an approximate limit to the average length of a life span. This conclusion agrees with the psalmist's observation: "The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10). At the most, a man can exceed only by a small margin the approximate, God-placed limit. There are ways, although none are acceptable, in which one can, by his own volition, shorten his life (Psalm 55:23), but there is no way in which one can lengthen his life indefinitely.

Among those who die young, accidents are a big contributor. From the very beginning, God foreknew that accidents would be inevitable. Being our Creator, God foreknew that we would sometimes err in our judgment and commit fatal mistakes (Exodus 21:33). Being the originator of the law of centrifugal force, God foreknew that now and then a wood splitter's ax head would fly off its handle and accidentally injure or kill the man's co-worker (Deuteronomy 19:5). Being the author of the law of gravity, God likewise foreknew that without some sort of protective barrier around their flat roofs, the place to which they often resorted, there would be many injuries among the Israelites. He therefore instructed that safety measures be taken to prevent people from falling from those roofs (Deuteronomy 22:8). God's purpose was for the prevention of accidents because He would not suspend the law of gravity every time someone fell. Neither would He prevent every occurrence of a fall (2 Samuel 4:4).

Although God can intervene to prevent an accident, He many times chooses not to intervene. In fact, such intervention may represent the exception rather than the rule. When a tornado roars through town, more often than not the houses of the righteous and the wicked alike are destroyed. This relentless impartiality of natural law appears to be in view at the end

of the Sermon on the Mount. There Jesus paints a graphic picture of the storms of life beating upon both houses, the foolish man's house and the wise man's house. For reasons known best to God, He does not exempt His saints from the common woes of life.

In addition to foreknowing that there will be accidents, God has foreknowledge of every particular accident before it occurs. Does knowing that it will happen make it happen? God likewise foreknows how and when you will die. Does that foreknowledge determine how and when you will die? When that foreknown time arrives, does God make you die? Or does He allow you to die? The parting wish of the patriarch Jacob was "Now let me die" (Genesis 46:30).

Is there then a difference between foreknowledge and foreordination? Indeed there is—a vast difference. Is this not where the confusion lies? Some of our expressions betray the fact that we confuse foreknowledge with foreordination. God foreknows a great deal that He does not foreordain (plan). True, God has the prerogative and the ability to foreordain when He chooses to do so. For example, salvation was foreordained by God. According to God's purpose, Jesus died in a foreordained way and at a foreordained time. Repeatedly, Jesus spoke of His approaching hour. Unlike the death of Jesus, your death and mine will most likely come about by what we might call natural processes. Possibly death by accident could be included in that category since it has become an almost commonplace occurrence.

In the opinion of this writer (Merle Ruth), the idea that God engineers every experience that comes into one's life, including the time and manner of his death, is without Biblical support. Most likely it is one of our borrowings from either Calvinism or fatalism. John Calvin promoted the theory that every event in one's life was decreed by God. The common label for this is predestination. Supposedly, your life is programmed by God. Although we generally disassociate ourselves from Calvinism, it appears as though this idea now and then slips through the filter. It may be too that we have rather innocently allowed fatalism to color our philosophy of life. Fatalism is the philosophical counterpart of Calvin's predestination. The thoroughgoing fatalist takes in stride everything that happens on the basis that it was predetermined by fate and is therefore inevitable. Both Calvinism and fatalism fail the Biblical test because they make human choice a matter of little or no significance. If my whole life from start to finish is already

programmed for me, why be concerned about right choices? Why even be careful when driving on the highway? Furthermore, these systems of thought, Calvinism in particular, make God directly responsible for all the "bad" things that happen to even godly people.

In the wake of a tragic accident, the almost inevitable question is—why did God allow it? Although we might wish for more and better answers to that question, it is a relief to be relieved of the necessity of viewing God as having made it happen. And it is comforting to know that God is great enough to use for our benefit every pain-inflicting experience that comes our way, even that which He Himself does not send. Such experiences may actually give God the opportunity to do what He otherwise could not do in the lives of the sorrowing survivors. For we are given the blessed assurance "that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). Having a promise like this eliminates the need for having all our questions answered.

Reprinted by permission from: "The Eastern Mennonite Testimony"

The following is a short Devotional by Bro. Paul Siegrist given at a Driver Education Course, Richland Mennonite Church, PA. May it be a reminder and inspiration to all of us to live a Christian witness wherever we are, in whatever we do.

Romans 13:1–7 has some instruction to the Romans which applies to us as well. *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. (2) Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. (3) For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same: (4) For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. (5) Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. (6) For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending*

continually upon this very thing. (7) Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

It is quite clear in this passage how we should relate to the powers that be, to the higher powers. I think we understand them as the civil authority — those whom God has ordained. God has placed them there that they would be able to give direction to mankind. I would like to give three reasons why we are to be subject to the higher powers.

1) Verse 2 says, "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." So, first of all if we resist those who are in civil authority, we are in essence resisting God. Who of us would want to be found fighting against God? It mentions "They that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Now, I believe that this is perhaps slightly different from the wrath that is mentioned in verse 4. We will notice that in a bit. Certainly, we understand that God's blessing cannot rest upon those who do not honour and obey the civil authorities that God has placed there. Of course, we understand the exception that if they would give direction that is not according to God's will then we do "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Nevertheless, for the most part we are thankful for the direction that we have in many areas of civil relationships and relating to others. Where do we relate or come in contact more with others than on the road, we might say?

2) The Scripture says that we are to be subject in verse 5, "Ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath." We must be subject for wrath. The end of verse 4 says, "He is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Therefore, we want to be law abiding so that we do not need to suffer the normal consequences that are placed there for those who do not obey the law.

1 Peter 4:15 gives perhaps a little clearer and shows us how serious it is if we would suffer for evil doing. "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." We see that it is not honourable at all to need to suffer, to pay a fine or to make good for what we have done wrong. Verse 16, however, mentions, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." Certainly it does not bring honour and glory to God if we suffer for wrong doing. In contrast, it does bring honour and glory to God if we may need to suffer for doing that which is right.

3) Verse 5 says, “Ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” There is where a lot of it applies to us. There are some, of course, who may feel that as long as no-one sees what we are doing and no-one would get us into trouble, then it does not matter so much what we do. Sometimes, even if so many people are not following the directions given by the law, then perhaps we might be tempted to think that it really does not matter. Certainly it is a blessing if we can “for conscience sake,” be law abiding. In relation to obeying laws, one help that I find is that it often helps if we can think of a logical and good reason why a law was given. Sometimes we might be tempted to think, “Well, now we have enough good sense in ourselves that we would not need to give a lot of attention to the details of this or that law.” However a law is made should certainly be tempered by that thought. It ought to make us more careful drivers. There are the passes we might be inclined to make at the brow of a hill or at the end of a broken line. Finally, there is no place for foolishness or risk taking because there are enough things that can happen without doing that.

May I yet leave with you; Revelation 22:21, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

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THE LORD, HE IS GOD.

By Bro. Denis Horst, Ohio.

Do you believe in God? Who is He? Where is He? What is He? How do you know? What evidence can you present?

These are very elementary, basic questions for the majority of those who read this periodical. Yet all people, even we who profess and give evidence of a knowledge of God, do well to meditate on these questions occasionally, for our own personal benefit, for the benefit of those whom God has given into our care, and for the benefit of the lost and seeking around us.

DO YOU believe in God? Defined broadly as a supreme being or deity, the vast majority of humanity would answer yes, from the American Indian praying to the Great Spirit, to the Moslem kneeling to address Allah.

When defined more clearly as the "one true, eternal and almighty God, who is the Creator and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible," some will answer; "Yes", but give no evidence of truly believing. A comparative few will say; "Yes" vocally and by their lives show proof of a daily walk with and belief in God. In which category are you? Psalm 14:1 says, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

Who is God? The human mind can only partially grasp who God is. Our language cannot fully describe Him. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33) "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection, It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea" (Job 11:7-9). 'And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14).

God is an infinite being, limitless, beyond measure, without beginning or end! Yet a being who sees the sparrow fall, numbers the hairs of our head, and is touched by the feelings of our infirmities. God created man in His own image and appeared in various forms to men in Old Testament times—as a burning bush and as a still small voice, yet a voice able to shake the earth. "And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake" (Hebrews 12:21). God loved us enough to send His only Son to die for us so that we might live!

Where is God? First we see Him in heaven: "For God is in heaven" (Ecclesiastes 5:2). In Acts 7:55 we read that Stephen looked into heaven and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. In various scenes Revelation places God in heaven, on the throne.

In the past God was on the earth in the garden of Eden and in the tabernacle. Presently He dwells in the heart of every true believer. "As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them" (2 Corinthians 6:16). "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

What is God? God is a Spirit (John 4:24). As such, we realize that God is not bound by the laws of nature, being the very Creator of such laws. God is light. 'And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light" (Revelation 22:5). God is love (1 John 4:16). He is also a rock, a shield, a refuge, a helper, a judge, and much more.

How do we know, and what evidence can we present to a skeptic that there is in reality a holy being to whom we are accountable? Let us be careful not to fall into the error of deism (belief in the existence of a God on purely rational grounds, without reliance on the Scriptures). Surely sound reasoning and the study of the actual physical evidence around us should lead to a definite conclusion that there is a supreme being. But a Scriptural belief in God requires a certain amount of faith and the recognition that we cannot ever explain what God is, based entirely on physical fact. Neither should we err on the other end and conclude that God is such a mystical being that mortals can never understand or know anything about Him.

As a person sees in nature the evidence that there is a God and seeks Him, the Spirit and the Word will bring further revelation. That belief in God is not compulsory but voluntary and this short span of time called our life should not cause us to take an attitude of indifference about the matter. Here are some evidences of God's existence.

1. Life itself as we see it springs forth and develops. Whether it be human, animal, or plant life, it speaks of an almighty Creator. Where does life come from? Man can analyze its physical substance, but where is life itself? Man cannot duplicate it. The only satisfactory conclusion is that there is a God.

2. The order in the universe, from the planets revolving around the sun to the atom testify of their Creator. How else can it be explained? It is not reasonable to say such order came from nothing. We therefore conclude that there must be a God.

3. The human race the world over generally seeks to worship a supreme being. Many of these beings are counterfeits, to be sure, but does it not seem foolish to say it just happened that way? Can there be a counterfeit without there first being the real thing? Surely there is a God, and knowledge of Him

4. The tremendous forces of nature turn men's thoughts to God. Earthquakes, volcanoes, and storms cause men to cry out; -Surely this is the hand of God!" "Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19).

5. The Bible, quick and powerful, has stood the test of time. It stands alone in literature. Men have tried and tried to destroy or discredit the Holy Book, all to no avail. One interesting example of this is the attempt to discredit Daniel's account of Belshazzar. For years no trace of Belshazzar

could be found in Babylonian records. Critics used this to discredit the Book of Daniel, only to discover in 1853 an inscription that confirms the Bible account of Belshazzar, his feast, and the manner in which Babylon fell. There are many more examples like this that the reader may search out. The way the Bible was written and preserved down through the years, and all fits together, gives evidence of a Providence far beyond human intelligence.

6. God can also be seen in the changed life of a sinner who comes to Him and yields his heart and life to His control. Such a life gives evidence of God's power to give men new life within that springs up to everlasting life. Many have been the individuals who, resisting all other evidence, when faced with this evidence, at last yielded and said, "There is a God!" "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God" (I Kings 18:39).

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Openness

Lord of immortality, before whom angels bow and archangels veil their faces, enable me to serve Thee with reverence and godly fear. Thou who art Spirit and requirest truth in the inward parts, help me to worship Thee in spirit and in truth. Thou who art righteous, let me not harbour sin in my heart, or indulge a worldly temper, or seek satisfaction in things that perish.

I hasten towards an hour when earthly pursuits and possessions will appear vain, when it will be indifferent whether I have been rich or poor, successful or disappointed, admired or despised. But it will be of eternal moment that I have mourned for sin, hungered and thirsted after righteousness, loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity, gloried in His cross. May these objects engross my chief solicitude! Produce in me those principles and dispositions that make Thy service perfect freedom.

Expel from my mind all sinful fear and shame, so that with firmness and courage I may confess the Redeemer before men, go forth with Him hearing His reproach, be zealous with His knowledge, be filled with His wisdom, walk with His circumspection, ask counsel of Him in all things, repair to the Scriptures for His orders, stay my mind on His peace, knowing that nothing can befall me without His permission, appointment and administration.



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