

IV. A CONCLUSION

CASE STUDIES FROM
ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The following case studies come from ministers across the country. They are selected as experiences through which some have travelled. They all, in one way or another relate to sufferings that people encountered. Many of these were people who were "Christian" and "Church-goers". The case studies are listed, not in their entirety, but with the general sweep of the situation. Attention has been given to particular type problems and sometimes the reaction or action of the counselling ministers.

In the survey forms ministers were requested to indicate situations in which, from their view point, these were "the sufferings of the righteous."

Many of the ministers spoke of regular counselling situations only; others referred to those in which an obvious "suffering of the righteous" was observed. It was the attempt of this author to glean from the experiences of ministers from across the country, from all "name brands", information with reference to the type counselling done, the attitudes of both counselor and counselee and to, in some manner, catalogue the input into some kind of helpful form.

Hence, the following few pages are devoted to the statistical conclusions and then the next section of pages are devoted to actual quotes from the survey. The reader may read these and try to catch the surge of emotion that brought these people to their minister.

They are meant to be a kind of "Job-Today" in contrast with the writings of the "Job-of-Yesterday". The survey is based upon questions which were mailed to various ministers in the mainline denominations across the country. The questions were sent to every state in the continental United States and of those reporting 20 states were represented.

The survey revealed that from these 20 states the various areas of the country were equally represented, that is, the same % came from states considered "southern", "western", "mid-western" and "eastern".

The minister's background revealed that the average number of years in the ministry were 16 1/3. The oldest being in the ministry 43 years and the youngest 2.

It was interesting to note that the total number of years in higher education after 4 years in college was 3.4. The survey revealed that 60% had attended a school of higher education after college. The most years being 8, the least 0.

On the form there was a place to indicate number of soul or major case studies a year regarding "suffering of the righteous", etc. Excluding the one reporting 350-400, and excluding the ones that reported 0; the average number of case studies a year registered 16.

The survey indicated 4 major type concerns of counseling for provisions for "other". They were listed as:

1. personal illness;
2. death in immediate family
3. one directly related to a national/local catastrophe
4. marital problem
5. "other" _____

It was interesting to note that the percentage ranked in this category listed death and marital problems as the same.

In the category 5. ("other") and explain: The following were listed: Draft, Mental illness, Children, Suicide, Drugs, Alcohol, Fear of Death, Family of prisoner of war, Vocational, Drop out of school and financial. Of these "others" that were indicated by the ministers, the most ranking at the very top who did check "other" with the same % were: Sex, Children and Suicide.

Provisions were made in the survey for ministers to indicate that which they suggest to patients. The areas of recommendation included:

1. music;
2. work;
3. secular reading;
4. divorce;
5. travel;
6. hobby;
7. meditation;
8. separation;
9. Bible reading;
10. volunteer work;
11. attendance in Church and
12. "other" _____

In the "most important item I suggest my patients to use" they were to choose 3, listing their choice as 1, 2 and 3. To me it was astonishing to note that of those who DID check a priority of 1, 2 and 3, in the list 76% suggested their patients to use the Bible. Again, many did not indicate 1, 2 and 3. But of those who did, the Bible registered 76%. 71% chose Church attendance and the next highest possible eleven choices went to volunteer work (36%).

One must remember that these ministers represent a vast educational background; they represent extreme ministries; they represent those in the ranks of ultra conservative (whatever that means) to modern liberal (whatever that means). They represent the right and the left wing groups in denominations. This speaks to me. The Bible has not been forgotten. It stands, still, today as a help to people who are in trouble.

It was shocked to compile this figure of 76% of ministers recommending the Bible, because it has been my opinion that by observing ministers in all denominations that the majority are getting away from the basic teachings. This is not to say that all ministers do not use the Bible with whom I am acquainted. Many do place the emphasis on the Word of God as once was placed, at least in my framework of thinking.

In some groups I would expect this to be listed, but from all

groups, it was a revelation. Within four days of the dictating of these words, a group of men and women asked for helps where by the Bible would speak to them. I mimeographed a paper for them - where they could go to the Bible and find answers to particular problems in which they were engaged. Part of the paper will be found in "Biblical Helps" to the end of this volume.

Ministers were asked to check their priority in 1, 2 and 3 and the following statistics were revealed. Most outstanding.

1. Bible Reading
2. Somewhat a tie between Bible reading and Church attendance
3. Church attendance.

There was a definite merging between area one and area three.

The following breakdown might be helpful.

33% chose as # 1 referral- Bible reading
 9.5% chose as # 1 referral- Volunteer work
 14% chose as # 1 referral- Church attendance

33% chose as # 2 referral- Bible Reading
 14% chose as # 2 referral- Volunteer Work
 23% chose as # 2 referral- Church attendance

9.5% chose as # 3 referral Bible reading
 14% chose as # 3 referral- Volunteer work
 33% chose as # 3 referral- Church attendance

As mentioned earlier, provision was made for "other". I list them for the reader. Self understanding, books and various material on special needs; further counseling by others; develop mutual interests; learn to listen; communication; understanding; conversation in depth.

As a number 1 referral the following were listed:

self understanding

books and material onsubject
 communication
 understanding
 learn to listen

As a number 3 referral the following were listed:

conversation in depth
 develop mutual interests

BUT listed in "other" which reoccured numerous times was prayer.
 "Prayer" was listed in all three positions - 1, 2, and 3. 55% of those
 ministers who indicated "other" either in position 1,2, or 3, chose
 prayer as that which they would suggest their patients to use.

Following are some sample case studies. I have quoted from the
 ministers as they have fed back to me information which I thought
 helpful or beneficial.

State: Montana
 Denomination: United Methodist
 Case study: Mental illness

The minister writes: In October of 1970 a young couple who had
 been married 1½ years came in for counseling. She was the sole support
 of the home. He had flipped in and out of numerous job, schools, and
 correspondence courses. The minister visited in three sessions and
 arranged a MMPI test at a local college. Before the tests were re-
 ported she filed for divorce and was seeing another man.

Tests results indicated that the married male suffered schizoid
 problems from compulsive struggles he wouldn't admit to consciously.
 He called desperately for help in December, 1970. Later in the month
 he indicated readiness for voluntary commitment for early work up on
 his case. That night papers were completed by the local mental health
 agency and in two days he took a bus for the state hospital on a
 voluntary commitment. His return is anticipated in several weeks for a

continual outpatient care.

The minister writes: "Concerning the suffering of the righteous, aren't we all the righteous, at least in our own eyes? Some sufferers do have guilt feelings that might lead them to deny any righteousness. This young man (case above) would not qualify as among the legally righteous for he was not one commonly kept in the judicial law or even Christian disciplines of the community of faith - but he knew what this meant. When desperate he knew trust might be found and he came to me. Reinforcement to search for help and healing was vital and in his continuing search he will receive."

State: The District of Columbia
 Denomination: American and Southern Baptist
 Case Study: Death

This Baptist woman was married to a Catholic. He is financially irresponsible. They lost a son with leukemia one week after the second son was born. They are afraid to love the son for fear he will be lost. He refuses to let the wife use the pill even though she wants no more children. The son's death is very dominant in the tangle of relationship.

The minister writes "A saintly older member lost her husband. A year later her sister died following a terrible bout with cancer. This older "saint" virtually praises God for His goodness, but in so many ways she cannot love or forgive God. This is quite a spiritual problem for her. She forces herself to continue the religious forms. She is getting better somewhat. My work with her has been informal-conversational.

State: Not indicated
 Denomination: Church of God (Anderson)
 Case Study: Mental Disorder

A husband and wife attend this one's church. They have been to various marriage counselors and are now seeing a physiologist. The minister feels he is not a professional in this particular matter, but as their pastor they want to talk with him. This they do. As a result of this encounter he writes: "I would hope that people would not have to suffer guilt, condemnation, and the like from other church people who do not understand or who are themselves neurotic. I would like to know how to deal with neurotic people who make church work and growth difficult through misguided and disruptive tactics."

It is certainly true that in the Church there are "rigorous people" suffering at the hand (and tongue) of other "members". In the place where one would think such would not be had - such is found.

State: Not indicated
 No postmark due to precancelled stamp.
 Denomination: Four Square Gospel
 Case study: Children-Marital problem

The people involved in this case study are the husband, wife and three children, all minors. The husband refuses to accept responsibility as the head of the household with its financial obligations, occupations and goals. The family has a tremendous financial obligation which cannot be met.

The wife is independent; she is resourceful and has good abilities. Financially she is able to earn more than the husband.

The minister writes: "The husband has been bothered his entire life by deep depression, guilt, fear and still reacts as a child. However, there has been much improvement recently. The wife comes from

a very strict Roman Catholic background and her parents are very successful and influential. She has, however, rejected his background as far as being faithful to her new found faith.

State: Tennessee
Denomination: Southern Methodist
Case Study: Marital Problem

The husband in this case is unfaithful. To get even, the wife has become unfaithful. He then was unfaithful again. The problem was whether to divorce which was against her convictions, to separate, or try to keep the home together for the sake of the children.

The minister advised after careful questioning that she separate. Later he asked to be reunited and now they are living together again.

(This minister, case above, is one of many who obviously does not hesitate to, when the condition merits it, recommend separation. I for one have on several occasions, but this is very contrary to many ministers in the traditional role.

State: Utah
Denomination: American Lutheran
Case Study: Marital

This situation involves the children leaving home. Because of this a marital problem has been presented because the parents are not faced with learning to communicate with each other. Before they communicated through their children. The father was very passive, the mother very aggressive and domineering. The type that demanded her husband fit her mold... "act like a man"...etc.

The minister spent many hours in trying to make them see each other as persons instead of objects and people in need of mutual respect.

State: California
 Denomination: Nazarene
 Case Study: Marital

The man and woman were members of the Church. They filed for divorce. The wife was the one who filed for this divorce. The man had much difficulty in reconciling the situation as to the Christian ethics involved.

State: No indication - pre cancelled stamp
 Denomination: Southern Baptist
 Case study: Suicide

A young lady with three children, whose husband was very understanding, and a good provider developed serious trouble. At the time of her last child birth she began thinking about suicide, refusing to accept the responsibility. She did not want to take care of the children, love her husband, or cooperate with anyone. She started on dope, now she is in a very sad case.

The minister writes: "I haven't reached her. A psychiatrist hasn't, nor have two hospitals been able to help. She is getting progressively worse. Actually, she has tried to take her life and she has threatened her children." "I don't know if this case could be classified among the righteous, but she is a member of the church. I doubt her religious experience has depth."

State: Illinois
 Denomination: Unknown
 Case Study - Drug Addict

From 1966 through 1970, A prominent family lost an outstanding boy in a car accident right after high school graduation. The pastor writes: "I became their pastor six weeks following this tragedy. The mother talked very much about their loss and seemed to carry it more

openly. The father kept it mostly to himself, however at times, he would mention it. My contact with this family was mostly on the casual basis, conversation, etc. in regard to the sorrow.

"The man is the lay leader of my church - he was deeply involved in helping me get acquainted with the Church, and building a ministry here. I look back and realize that I probably did not minister to them as directly as I would again. We were in contact several times a week on some basis. His therapy, I believe, was in his work with the Church. We were in communication much about many things. His wife also kept busy as choir director, etc. I believe that much of the help they received was by keeping involved in community and Church activities. They had strong personal disciplines, great faith, and commitment to God."

Comments from various
ministers who responded-

"Most people that counsel with me are not Christians. They are usually not well acquainted with me to begin with. I usually present Christ to them during the first few sessions - this of course releases them from guilt and the bondage of sin. Then, however, we attempt to get to specific problems that are the root of their suffering. To the Christian, I attempt to evaluate their spiritual condition, but perhaps go to work on the specific problem more rapidly than with the non-Christian."

"To the non-Christian, Christ is the best solution I can give them and a foundational beginning."

"I am inclined to feel that suffering falls into several distinct patterns - especially as to cause..."

1. physical suffering because of body failure
2. accident because of lack of judgment or carelessness on someone's part
3. Satan's attacks to defeat or hinder an individual
4. I believe God uses these experiences to teach us some things but in most cases I don't think He causes them."

State: California
Denomination: Church of the Nazarene
Case Study: Marital

This family was a non-Church family. The minister's name was obtained through the yellow pages by the husband. The family had moved to their new home from back east where they had previously had marital problems. The basic problem seemed to be in the husband's insecurities which reflected in his attitude that his wife did not give to him proper respect. Also, she devoted too much time to her family and visiting the neighbors when she should have been at home.

Consequently it had resulted in a separation. The man was acting childish by crying, whining and then beginning to come home like a small punished child. However, at the same time, wanting his same demands that his wife stay home, giving him her undivided attention and ignoring her family.

Said the minister: "In counseling the righteous, I urge the scriptural admonition of turning affliction into glory. Example: Using it as an opportunity to the world that Christ makes a vital difference in our lives - using affliction as a way to earn the right to witness.

State: California
Denomination: Lutheran
Case Study: Children-Robbery

The police informed the woman that her 18 year old had been arrested for armed robbery. She called her pastor and prayed and had a consultation - later a visit to the jail. He counseled with the 18 year old and promised to post bond for him and visit his mother. She was relieved to hear that her son was physically well.

The son was released and beautifully begged his mother's forgiveness. The mother gladly accepted her son back. The pastor was then called in to determine what to do next. They prayed and then got legal advice. The son was involved strictly for the excitement of the robbery. Actually, he drove the get-away car, but stole nothing himself.

The minister writes that scripture warns that bad company ruins good morals. The emphasis was placed on acceptance through repentance.

About the situation, he writes: "This involved a Christian mother, a widow with 5 sons. Her son's involvement deeply hurt her. Here is a case of a righteous woman suffering deep hurt feeling that she must have failed her son. How does she cope with this? We tried to suffer with her. We thanked God that no one was injured in the robbery. We spoke of the unfailing and unending love of a Christian mother for her children. We spoke of Job's faith which was severely tested and yet 'though He slay me, yet will I trust Him'. We encouraged deeper commitment to her role as a Sunday School teacher.

State: Florida
 Denomination: Lutheran Church in America
 Case Study: Death

An 8 year old child developed leukemia in late 1968. This minister's ministry to the family extended until his death in October, 1970. The ministry included helping the parents avoid either guilt or hostile feelings toward God. Also included was the loaning of sermons of Pulpit Digest to the family. With this were exhaustive visitation during the hospitalization, seeing the family follow through by joining the Church. The minister spend the last 12 hours of the child's life with the parents in the hospital and giving them a copy of the funeral meditation.

The minister writes: "The spiritual maturity of the parents grew enormously so much so that before the child's death, they asked me to go with them to the mortician and make all funeral arrangements in advance. The boy himself was a brave uncomplaining little boy whose patience and suffering inspired and encouraged all who visited him."

State: California
 Denomination: American Baptist
 Case Study: Death

A Christian husband and wife lost the eldest of 4 children at 16 years of age by drowning in a mountain river. The body was not found until six months later. Added to the tragic loss was the tension and suspense of searching for and not finding the body. It was discovered later by rangers by accident. The entire family though sound Christians were deeply shaken by the suddenness of the event. The boy was just emerging into young manhood and had great potential. It took almost a year for the family to become adjusted to this fact of death.

The minister writes: "It has been my experience after dealing with quite a number of 'suffering' cases that experiences usually strengthen or deepen the faith of those involved if they are committed Christians. If they are only nominally Christians or have little or no faith, they tend to become discouraged and dissociate themselves from the Church and the Christian fellowship - the very situation that could give them the help they badly need."

State: New York
Denomination: American Baptist
Case Study: Death

The minister writes that just last week one of his deacons died leaving a wife 54 years of age. There were no questions of "why" on the part of the wife. As she said: "He had served faithfully and now God wanted him home."

State: Mississippi
Denomination: United Methodist
Case Study: Illness

A young teacher with his wife and 3 children experienced a real dramatic experience. The minister does not indicate who was burned, either the wife or one of the children. Nevertheless he was unable to return to his teaching. He had to quit teaching in the middle of the term. The result was he was hospitalized. He ultimately lost the use of his limbs and had to use a wheelchair. He was a veteran of war - and due to so many experiences he now lost the use of his speech. This young teacher is experiencing sorrow.

State: Michigan
 Denomination: American Baptist
 Case Study: Marital

After 16 years of marriage, the minister writes, "This mother and father of three children felt a fine marriage had become intolerable for both. The major factor seems to have been two serious automobile accidents in which the husband was involved which resulted in some physical injury and considerable personality change. This is complicated by the wife's jealousy, suspicion and extreme emotional dependency on her husband."

The minister states: "I have taken seriously the concept of the role of God's suffering servant in Biblical history (Israel, the Christ's Church). From this comes the understanding of one of the most primitive of Christian truths, the redemptive work of the suffering one."

State: No indication - pre cancelled stamp
 Denomination: Seventh Day Adventist
 Case Study: Marital

In this case the husband had a wife who through fits, kicking, hitting, scratching and breaking things. With this was cursing, etc. This was done every time she found he spoke to another woman - under any circumstance. This made life miserable for this Christian gentleman. On several occasions the minister discussed the good points and bad points and possible corrective measures. Finally the minister told that the decision was his to make. After carefully weighing the fact, and prayerfully, he decided to stick it out.

State: New Mexico
Denomination: Presbyterian
Case Study: Death

The minister writes regarding a mother of 6 who died after a long cancer illness. He talked with the children who were between 17 and 7 along with her husband. One month later the father died. He had then to break the news to the others, one by one, all 6. His method was a direct statement of such followed by comments on the power of God to direct and keep them. His counseling became later relevant to their future home and helping them to leave the community, friends, etc.

The minister states: "As far as the righteous 'whomever they may be', are concerned, I strive to point out that God creates us all as unique human beings unequal in every way except in His love. Each of us must strive to serve the purpose which He has given to us by correct use of our talents, etc. When sorrow strikes, we must face this as part of our life and as far as possible use our grief as a witness to our faith and trust. Normally I counsel residents of this community and can communicate with them constantly as the months go by. Suffering is a perfectly normal human attribute and has nothing to do with 'sin or punishment'".

State: Unknown to pre-cancelled stamp
Denomination: Presbyterian U.S.A.
Case Study: Child With Family Problem

An 8 year old meets with the minister. His parents are involved in a separation. As the result of much hostility between the two parties the boy has developed a unique form of loneliness. He feels that no one cares about him, especially his father. As a result, he does not trust men. The basis of his first meeting was to give him a male figure so he could identify with a man.

The minister writes: "It seems to me that we ministers are the only authorities in the field of mourning. Here is our uniqueness. The other areas of suffering such as illness, divorce, and family difficulties, we are either competent or free enough from our other ministries to adequately handle them as professionals. It seems to me that we should have enough background to know when to refer and to whom to refer whether it be a physician, family counselor or psychiatrist. This ability to refer is a very important area of our ministry with suffering."

State: Texas
Denomination: Church of Christ
Case Study: Morbid fear of death

The woman in case is 25 years old and has a morbid fear of death. She was withdrawn and after several sessions of just listening, and studying what the Bible said of death - that she need not fear it - she was helped. She became a Christian and no longer fears and no longer is withdrawn.

The minister stated: "I try to show the sufferer how His problem can draw him closer to God. If pain and suffering bring us closer to God we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. The scripture I use most often use for such situations are Romans 8:26-39; Philippians 4:4 and 2 Corinthians 16-18.

State: Washington
Denomination: Free Methodist Church
Case Study: Marital

This was the second marriage for the woman and the third for the man. In the home the oldest ran away which brought the home into focus. The minister related to the husband on a trip to pick up one of the boys. The suggestion was made to come in for some counseling. After 8 weekly sessions were set up, including exploratory conferences, diagnostic testing and assignment of the book, "Games People Play" much tension was aired. Over a 3 month period tensions were reduced, and constructive adjustment was begun.

The minister writes regarding the suffering of the righteous: "Quite frankly I've come to believe that much of the suffering of the righteous is self induced. Christians are refusing to open life to the dynamics of growth available in a vital growing relationship to a personal Saviour. They easily accept the stereotype of religion traditions and become frustrated when they can't live by standards of the past. Hypocrisy which comes out of a fear of knowing ourselves is being known by others is part of our sickness. Pharisaism is not dead."

AN EPILOGUE

One thing is certain - suffering is common to all. Charles F. Banning writes, "Among the parables that Chinese teachers use is the ministry of a woman who lost an only son. She was grief stricken out of all reason. She made her sorrow a wailing wall. Finally she went to a wise old philosopher. He said to her: 'I will give you back your son if you will bring me some mustard seed. However, the seed must come from a home where there has never been any sorrow.' Eagerly she started her search, and went from house to house. In every case she learned that a loved one had been lost. How selfish I have been in my grief she said. 'Sorrow is common to all.'"

There are various kinds of sufferings. Some are bitter and usually lead one (if that one lets it) to destruction. Sometimes even suicide is the result. The other kind of suffering is a glorious kind which will lead an individual to victory - ultimately to "heaven".

It is Jesus who changes our course of direction relative to suffering. This is why it is so important to know our Lord. This is why Christians must read their Bible because contained therein is the answer to so many questions and problems. His truth becomes our truth.

We are told that we will suffer. Becoming a Christian is certainly no guarantee that suffering will pass us. Yet, when we do suffer, there is a kind of identification with Jesus. This process is a two way experience. The spiritual depth of Jesus (for He was God) becomes for us a capacity for witness. When He says "I will never leave you," He means just that. In fact, there is nothing through which we are asked to pass (or forced to by various external circumstances) through which He has not already passed. This includes death.

There are various ways or attitudes that one can project when

confronted with suffering. The main thrust is to find or rediscover God in suffering and through suffering. One attitude is that nothing can be done about it. Another is that something can be done about it. Still another avenue of approach is to resign one's self to the fact that God through us can accomplish something that perhaps might not have been accomplished any way else.

Some concluding observations on the Job of Yesterday and Today.

- As in the case of Job and with some of the "case studies", prosperity (in some fashion) was restored. One school of thought, and this seems to refute the rest of the book of Job: Righteousness is rewarded always in the life by prosperity. I can not buy this. "Prosperity" in whatever way so identified comes to many.

- This course of action by God was probably taken for the benefit of the four friends. His "peers" now see his and their error. Suffering is NOT due to sin. If Job had so died such a doctrine would have become the fixed norm.

- The author lets the reader into a secret that was unknown by Job and his friends, namely, Satan was the initial cause of the sufferings.

- There is no answer to the questions or solutions for the "suffering", be it of the body, mind or soul, except in the PEACE of His presence.

- A solution to our life is not found in this life.

- At the beginning and throughout Job's suffering there were two questions: (1) Does Job serve God for nought? (2) Calamities were the consequences of sin.

- In the first division, the speakers try to get Job to

confess-his sin. In the second division, a picture of the fate of evil men is portrayed.

- The book gives evidence of the PATIENCE of God, and the ENDURANCE of man. Thus Job is a walking civil battle.
- God will always stand beyond and above all men's ideas, traditions, hearsay, and wisdom.
- Job received all when he surrendered all. The Will of the Almighty God is for us to magnify and glorify Him.
- The great grace of God. Hear Him say, "My grace is sufficient for you."
- The story of the suffering is not so much for us to see the underserved suffering of the innocent but a higher purpose, namely, what is the meaning of faith.
- Job withstands the test and thereby becomes a more useful servant of God than he would otherwise have been.

There is indeed the "ministry of the storm". I once read words of this nature. We were going through a great furniture factory when our guide, the superintendent, pointed out to us a superbly grained and figured sideboard in the natural wood. "I want you to observe the beauty of the oak," he said. "It is the finest selection of timber of its kind, and the secret of the intricate and beautiful graining is just this: that the trees from which it was taken grew in a spot where they were exposed to almost constant conflict with storms."

What a suggestive fact. The storm beaten tree develops the closest and finest and most intricately woven fibers. When it is cut down and the saws lay bare its exquisitely figure grain, the cabin-

maker selects it as the material for his finest work. So with the human life beset by testings and trials. It is through the storms and the winds and the trials that strength is given and thus one is beautified. We need the trials. We need the stress of life to give character for without such character cannot be developed into its strongest and most beautiful form.

"It is not always true that physical suffering interferes with man's consciousness of God. There are persons who have gone through intense suffering and like as gold in the furnace is tried and purified seven times in the fire and their faith has emerged all the stronger the pure and the more indomitable."¹

Trials oftentimes make an individual stronger. Their dependence upon God is greater as a result of such an encounter. However, when, say a group of 10 people are compared in going through a similar situation, they will all see and react differently. This is due to the life situations. Suffering, however, cruel, is here to stay. It is here and this has been told to us in the story given in the Genesis account. Perhaps no greater attempt has ever been made toward trying to find a solution to this problem at hand and the working out of some kind of theology that is found in the ancient Jewish literature. In this we find the accepted notion that suffering is directly related to sin and this is explained elsewhere in this work.

"Such is of you which the Old Testament offers of the origin of sin and suffering in the world. God is good and the world was good until sin came, but henceforth 'curses the ground for thy (for example, sinful man's) sake.' In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life, thorns also and thistles shall he bring forth to thee...In

the sweet of thy face shall thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground.' And upon women was pronounced the penalty of painful childbirth together with thoroughly oriental status of sex and equality and sex disability."²

F.C. Grant states: "Suffering is not a good, but an evil in itself. This world and the Church recognize this. The Church with its hospital and modern world with its modern research and the noble efforts of the scientists to preventure and cure of disease. Suffering is bad and cannot be good in its elf, but the suffering of hero and mat'tyrs are glirious for they are suffering for an end in view."³ This statement will meet with various schools of thought. Whether it should be purchased or not is up to the reader.

The following scriptural references are found in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. "Suffering belongs to the discipline of all the Christ's followers. Romans 8:17, 2 Cor. 1:7, Gal. 3:4, Phil. 3:10, I Thess. 2:2, 2 Thess. 1:5, 2 Tim. 2:12,13, Luke 2, James 5:10, I Peter 2:10ff, I Peter 3:14,17; 4:1-13,16; 5:10."

Such suffering is called a suffering for God's or Christ's sake. Jer. 15:15, Acts 9:16, Phil. 1:29, 2 Tim. 1:12. This fellowship of suffering unites us with saints of God at all times. James 5:10 who is indeed outspoken on this indicates that it is a fellowship with the Lord himself. Phil. 3:10 uses this discipline more and more according to character."⁴

Perhaps the most accepted definition of suffering in the sense in this paper is "to allow" or "to give lead to". This gives new slant toward suffering. A second definition is to experience; to go through

to endure. If one takes this first definition to heart, I am persuaded that a new attitude will emerge.

Often times our situations prove almost too much for us. We feel that we are just too burdened down. Yet, I wonder, if at times, we do not need this. I recall a report made by a Dr. Lambie, medical missionary formerly of Abyssinia. He had forded many swift and bridgeless streams in Africa. The danger in crossing such a stream lies in being swept off one's feet and carried down the river to greater depths or if not that, being hurled to death against the hidden rocks below.

Dr. Lambie learned from the natives the best way to make such a hazardous crossing. The man about to cross finds a large stone, the heavier the better; lifts it to his shoulder and carries it across the stream as "balast". The extra weight of the stone keeps his feet solid on the bed of the stream and he can cross safely without being swept away.

The application is that while crossing the streams of life, we need the balast of burden-bearing, a load of affliction, to keep us from being swept off our feet.

BIBLICAL HELPS

The Bible has always stood the test and it has been the Book of inspiration for many throughout their lives. People have turned to the Bible for help to get inspiration; people have turned to the Bible for courage. So it is that God has used most effectively His Word commonly called the Canon of Scripture to help His children.

The following scriptures do not in any means cover all He has to say about the suffering of the righteous, nor do these scriptures cover all He has to say about certain problems, nor are these all the scriptures that one could use for a particular need. In fact, for some, the scriptures listed might not even give help. However, in my opinion, the scripture found helpful by this writer are listed.

When all else fails, God's Word still speaks and says at the proper time what the greatest of all counselors can say. Many people who are going through a very trying time not only commit scripture to memory which helps, but they actually write a scripture on a card and put it in their wallet or purse. In the course of the day they refer to it. One person said: "When I feel really depressed as a result of what has happened to me; when I feel like giving all up and saying 'what's the use', I reach into my purse and I pull out that little card of help. When I finish reading it, I usually get charged up with words from on high - words that keep me going hour by hour."

The 23 areas listed are areas in which the righteous have been found suffering.

WHERE TO LOOK IN THE BIBLE

When one is:	Old Testament:	New Testament:
Affraid or fearful	Psalm 34:4	II Timothy 1:7
Tired	Psalm 95:1-7	Matthew 11:28
In sorrow	Psalm 40:42	I Thessalonians 4:13-14
Bearing a grudge	Leviticus 19:18	Ephesians 4
Frustrated	Psalm 40	Hebrews 12:1-3
Facing a crisis	Job 28:12-28	Matthew 6:25-34
Wanting to find joy	Proverbs 16:20	John 15:11
Sick or in pain	Psalm 41:2-4	James 5:1-15
In temptation	Psalm 13:1-12;23,24	I Corinthians 10:13
Having friends to fail	Psalm 27:9	Romans 12:14,17, 19, and 21
Bored	Psalm 103	Ephesians 3:14-21
Worried	Psalm 46	Matthew 6
Staying awake at night	Psalm 4	Matthew 11:25-30
Affraid of death	Psalm 23	2 Corinthians 5:1
Feels rejected	Psalm 43	Colossians 1:9-15
Feels God is "far away"	Psalm 46:10,11	John 14:16
Having guilt feelings	Psalm 55:16,17	II Corinthians 5:17
In need of courage	Joshua 1:9;Psalm 27:5	Philippians 4:13
Leaving home	Psalm 121	Hebrews 11:8-16
In need of inward peace	Isaiah 26:3	Philippians 4:6,7
In trouble	Psalm 46	Mark 11:23
Feels weary	Psalm 60:11, Job 5:19,20	Matthew 11:28-30

SOME POETIC AIDS

IF NONE WERE SICK OR SAD

If none were sick, and none were sad
what service could we render
I think if we were always glad
we scarcely could be tender
Did our belief never end
our patient ministrations
Earth would grow cold and miss indeed
its greatest consolation.
Did sorrow never grief our heart,
and every wish were granted,
Patience would die, and hope depart,
life would be disenchanting.

-unknown

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

"When George Matheson was entering upon a promising career, a doctor said to him you had better see your friends for soon darkness will settle upon you and you will not see them anymore. Matheson was to become totally blind. He was engaged to a beautiful young lady. He told her of the calamity which would soon befall him and gave her permission to break the engagement. She did. The great sorrow deepened his devotion to God. During that soul-refining trial Matheson gave to Christ's Church a hymn which will inspire others whom God in unceasing wisdom, has chosen to go through the 'furnace of affliction. Psalm 48:10". - W.B. Knight

"O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths is flow
May richer, fuller be.

O joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise not in vain,
That more shall tearless be."

BLESSED BY ADVERSITY

Many times the adversities of life turn out to be blessings in disguise. This realization came to an unknown Confederate soldier over a hundred years ago. No one knows where he was when he wrote these words. Perhaps on the battle field, or possibly in a hospital recuperating from battle wounds. But wherever you are at this hour, the words penned by this soldier will speak to your heart.

I asked God for strength, that I might
achieve,
I was made weak, that I might learn

humbly to obey.
 I asked for health, that I might do
 greater things.
 I was given infirmity, that I might do
 better things.
 I asked for riches, that I might be happy.
 I was given poverty that I might be wise.
 I asked for power that I might have the
 praise of men,
 I was given weakness, that I might feel
 the need of God.
 I asked for all things, that I might
 enjoy life,
 I was given life, that I might enjoy all
 things.
 I got nothing that I asked for - but
 everything I had hoped for,
 Almost despite myself, my unspoken
 prayers were answered.
 I am among all men, most richly
 blessed.

You know, my friend, these words are just as true today as they
 were over a hundred years ago when the unknown Confederate soldier
 wrote them.

IN HIS STEPS

The road is too rough I said
 Dear Lord there are stones that hurt me so
 And He said, Dear child, I understand
 I walked it long ago
 But there's a cool green path I said
 Let me walk there for a time
 No child, He gently answered me
 The green road does not climb
 My burden I said is far too great
 How can I bear it so
 My child He said, I remember the weight
 I carried my cross you know
 I said, I wish there were friends with me
 Who would make my way their own
 Ah, yes, He said, Gethsemane

Was hard to bear alone
And so I climbed the stony path
Content at last to know
That where my Master had not gone
I would not need to go
And strangely then I found new friends
The burden grew less sore
And I remembered long ago
He went that way before.

-unknown

SECTION IV Footnotes

1. F.C. Grant, The Practice of Religion, page 140.
2. F.C. Grant, The Practice of Religion, page 149.
3. International Bible Standard Encyclopedia, Vol. 5, p. 2870.

