

R 2

in the Scripture and on which people can argue and fight and they are not in any way advancing the cause of Christ by so doing. We are serving the Lord by carrying out the work He gives us to do and part of that work is to come to understand the truth which He reveals to us in His Word, but the truth which He reveals is not given in order that we may know all truth. It is given in order that we may direct our lives. Thus when the Thessalonian Christians began to be discouraged about the people who died, they said, "they're dead and gone, they won't have the joy of greeting the Lord. They will not take part in the blessed occasion of greeting the Lord when He sets up His kingdom and the apostle Paul wrote and he said, "Do not sorrow over those who have died. The Lord is going to, not cut them out of the same privileges that we who live will have, but," he said, "I am going to explain to you something of the details of it." He is not explaining it in order to satisfy their curiosity, and to understand something of an exact timetable of it, he is giving it in order that they may in their practical life have a very important thing of their attitude, that when a person dies they don't say, "Oh, what a shame. He's lost out on his chance to greet the Lord," that whether we live or whether we die we are the Lord's and will share equally in the great joy of His coming. We who live will not precede them who have died, but as he says, suddenly we will all be changed and the dead will rise incorruptible and they and we together will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and then as soon as we meet the Lord in the air, he says and then the Lord with us will immediately go to the right ten miles and then to the left three miles, or the Lord will then stop right where He is for a time, or the Lord will go over to this particular section of the sky to perform certain things or the Lord will then immediately be sent to earth. He doesn't say. He says, "So shall we be forever with the Lord," and that doesn't mean that we are going to stay right immediately in the presence of the Lord's physical body all the rest of eternity but it does mean that we then and the dead who have been raised together begin a phase of Christian experience surpassing