



new wine

SEPTEMBER 1973

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

GOD'S RICHES ARE MAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

STEWARDSHIP IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER
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WORLD OF DARKNESS DO WE NEED TO KNOW?

Dear Brothers:

In a time of great need our Lord Jesus freed me from conflict through an article in *New Wine*. I was deeply involved in the occult — born into witchcraft, had married Satan in my high school years, and was preparing for a child for sacrifice. By our Lord's grace He lifted me out of hell. Though already delivered of the above, I was having great difficulty in maintaining peace. I cried with joy as I read the "Rulers of Darkness" — it comforted and ministered to me.

May God bless you. It deeply touches me that there are saints that are aware of this world of darkness and willing to be led by the Holy Spirit in ministering the power of the Word for deliverance.

In His Name,

Linda
North Carolina

Dear Sirs:

I am praying with all my being that God will stop such ministries that dwell on doctrines of demon possession, for example. It is so heartbreaking to see the Body of Christ being ripped apart by deception and false teachings, especially when there is truth mixed in with a lie.

I'm praying for Christian Growth Ministries and its teachers that God will purge out the bad and multiply the good and true.

In Jesus' Name,

M.M.

Dear *New Wine*:

Please continue to send your monthly publication. I enjoy your teaching on deliverance. Being a very controversial subject, a great deal of pressure from critics is usually par for the course. Please don't apologize to anyone for teaching the truth. Your magazine has become a necessary guide to thousands amidst a "watered-down Bible generation."

Thanks. God bless.

B.S.

HERE, THERE, EVERYWHERE

Sirs:

"Chapel" is a group of junior high and high school students who gather at our high school every morning. We use your magazine sometimes and we learn a great deal about God and Jesus. We ask you to pray for us and our outreach to the students of our school.

P.W.
Paintsville, Ky.

Dear Sirs:

Your magazine came to my hand given to me by some missionaries here who had been



receiving it. My son of nearly sixteen who was converted about two years ago really enjoys it. There are not many Christians in this village — about six of us, but we have meetings in my home every week.

There is a church we have discovered near here in Santander who believe in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and have the gifts operating but it is the only one of its kind that I know of near here.

I just wanted to tell you how much we like the magazine and would like to continue receiving it.

Yours faithfully in Christ,

Mrs. D.M.H.
Santander, Spain

Dear Sir:

Several months ago we were introduced to the Charismatic Renewal by the priest aboard the *M.S. Skyward*, that comes to Cap Haitien every Monday.

Father has shared his copies of *New Wine* with us. We like them very much and find them very helpful. He suggested that we write to you to ask if we might receive a regular copy in our monastery. We are cloistered Carmelite Nuns in the city of Cap Haitien, northern Haiti.

We ask God to bless you and the work that you are doing so faithfully. We will pray for you and your associates, and we humbly ask that you pray for us, your sisters in Christ.

In His Spirit,

Sr. M.L.K., o.c.d.
Haiti, W.I.

Dear Sirs:

We thank you very much indeed for con-

tinuing to send us *New Wine*. It has been a great blessing to us spiritually.

We are missionaries and have been working here in Colombia for 35 years. In some ways we are out of touch with teaching in the U.S. By this we mean deeper teaching such as is put forth in *New Wine* and find that this feeds our souls.

Once again, many, many thanks. We pray for you that the Lord will continue to use you in His service.

Sincerely in Christ,

J.F.
Colombia, S. America

WATER BAPTISM — ALL WET?

Dear Editor:

It doesn't seem right, after receiving *New Wine* for several years, to write a critical note; especially when I am thankful to God for the spiritual nutrition the articles have given.

My criticism is pertaining to the article on "Water Baptism" by Bob Mumford. It does not have a unifying effect on the Body of Christ. As a charismatic Lutheran, I have recently enabled our people to appreciate the anabaptist theology of baptism as a testimony of faith as over against the Lutheran viewpoint of baptism as a manifestation of God's grace. Both positions have scriptural support. What we need is an appreciation of the two positions as fellow members of the Body of Christ rather than that which embraces only adult immersion.

We in our fellowship praise God for you and for the way His Spirit is at work renewing His Church.

In Christ,

Rev. R.W.E.
Omaha, Nebraska

FAVORITES!

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

My favorite section in *New Wine* has been the editorials. That's where I turn first in every issue. God blesses me by showing me that He is saying the same thing to you as He is to us.

Next to the editorial, I enjoy the Forum. A few times I've asked the Lord a question and the next day our copy of *New Wine* will come with the answer in the Forum.

The Forum on Marriage Relationships in the March '73 issue was a great help. My husband and I have been married a year now. The Lord has shown us how we need to study His Word and seek His face concerning marriage as we both come from "out of order" families.

Praise God for *New Wine*. May He continue to bless all the staff richly with His precious treasures.

By His grace,

E.B.
Charlottesville, Va.

Editorial

ON SPIRITUAL BLINDERS

On occasion letters received from the readers of *New Wine* reveal how an article which brought life-changing help to one person so angered another that he demanded his name be removed from the mailing list. How do we account for such contradictory responses? Why does that which proves to be liberating truth to some seem heretical to others?

As stewards of the ministries God has given we must remember that even the most spiritually sensitive among us have some blind spots. Maturity in one area of Christian life or experience does not insure automatic appreciation for the many other things God is doing in the church today.

The kind of new truth most of us have difficulty with is truth which may expand certain limits we have placed on God and which challenge our human assumptions we have long labelled as orthodox theology. Most charismatics recognize the blindspot which prevents some devoted Bible-believing Christians from accepting the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit. It also follows that Christians who have experienced the ministry of deliverance understand how a similar blind-spot prevents others from comprehending how a born-again Christian could need deliverance from evil spirits.

What are we to conclude from all this? Simply that God alone can open blind eyes, whether physical or spiritual. Jesus once prayed,

I thank thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight. (Matthew 11:25-26)

In our eagerness to avoid error and guard against gullibility let us not forget that true Christian maturity requires a childlike dependency and openness to the *continuing* illumination of the Holy Spirit.

new wine MAGAZINE

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FROM CURSE TO BLESSING.

by Derek Prince

Blessing! What a welcome word that is to our ears. The thought carries especially rich meaning when we consider it as "the blessing of God." However, the word *curse* which is so completely opposite in meaning causes us to shrink and turn away at the very suggestion. We are going to investigate these two words in the light of Scripture and apply the teaching to our own lives, particularly in the area

Walking in God's Blessings
Should Be A Way of Living.

of financial and material provision.

Our first Scripture is Galatians 3:13-14:

(13) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

(14) That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Here we have presented the two opposites — blessing and curse. They are related to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. You may ask: Why was Jesus made a curse? The answer: That we might receive the blessing. This is based on the statement of Deuteronomy 21:23 — “. . . for he that is hanged is accursed of God.” When Jesus was placed on the cross, He was officially declared to be a curse.

This unfolds the great basic truth of the atonement. Jesus, the Son of God, on the cross by the divine will of the Father, and by His own choice, took upon Himself all of the evil that was due by justice to the fallen sons of Adam — that, in return, every son of Adam who believes in Jesus might receive all the good that was due to Jesus by divine eternal right as the Son of God. All the evil came upon Jesus that all the good might be made available to you and me.

Isaiah 53:6 tells us: “The Lord hath made to meet together upon him the iniquity of us all.” “Iniquity” I interpret as “rebellion with all of its evil consequences.” The Father made all the evil consequences of the combined rebellion of Adam and all his descendants to meet together upon Jesus on the cross. In return, all the good that was due to Jesus by divine eternal right was made available to us. What took place on the cross was a divinely ordained exchange. This is the central message of the Bible.

PERFECTLY PERFECT

In the year 1942-43, while a soldier in the British army, I became sick in Egypt and eventually spent one

year in the hospital. During about the seventh month of that period, I had three visitors. One was a lady Brigadier in the Salvation Army. (Her husband had died and she had automatically taken his rank.) She was a Spirit-baptized Salvationist, which was a rarity in those days. Taking the journey with her from Cairo was her American co-worker, a lady from Oklahoma. They had conscripted a British soldier to drive the car and had set out on the 100-mile journey to the hospital where I was a patient.

The Salvation Army Brigadier obtained permission for me to get out of my bed and to sit with the three of them in the car. She said, “Let us pray.” As we did, the Spirit of God came down upon the lady from Oklahoma and she received a very powerful utterance in an unknown tongue. Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, she, and we, and the car began to shake. That stationary car, with the engine not running, was shaking and rattling as if it had been traveling at 50 miles an hour over a rough road. I knew that this was God!

When the interpretation of the utterance came, there was one passage in it which I have never forgotten. It is as fresh to me today as it was 30 years ago. “Consider the work of Calvary: a perfect work, perfect in every respect, perfect in every aspect.” Remember, at this time I was sick and the doctors were not being successful in healing me.

As I meditated on this interpretation, the Holy Spirit reminded me of one of the last utterances of Jesus on the cross: “It is finished” (John 19:30). In the original Greek this is the perfect tense of a verb which itself means to “do something perfectly.” It could be translated, “It is perfectly perfect,” or “It is completely complete.”

Yes, what Jesus did on the cross was absolutely finished. It was perfectly perfect and completely complete. No matter what particular area of need you may have, your need was met by the death of Jesus on the cross — *perfect in every respect*. No matter from what point of view you approach

it, it is all-inclusive and all-sufficient — *perfect in every aspect*.

There is not a flaw or an omission in the finished work of Christ on the cross. God showed me then that if I could understand and receive by faith what Jesus had done on the cross, my total needs — for spirit, soul and body — for time and eternity — were finally and permanently met! The same is true for you!

GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

In Galatians 3:13 — 14 we saw that Paul refers to “the blessings of Abraham.” God’s original promises of blessing to Abraham are found in Genesis 12:1 — 3. In verse 1 God states what He first requires Abraham to do: “Get thee out of thy country, and from they kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee.”

The first requirement for blessing is a faith step. God does not show us the land of His provision until we first step out into the unknown. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Do not attempt it, for it cannot be done. When God speaks, take the faith step in obedience and the blessing will follow.

In verses 2 and 3 God unfolds in seven successive phases the blessings which He has in store for Abraham. Verse 2 contains four blessings: (1) “I will make of thee a great nation” (2) “I will bless thee” (3) “I will make thy name great” (4) “Thou shalt be a blessing.”

In the original Hebrew the last phrase is very emphatic. It is in the imperative form: “Be thou a blessing.” God does not bless us merely that we may be blessed. His purpose in blessing us is always that we, in turn, may be made a blessing. God’s blessing is never terminal in our lives. The first phase is to receive the blessing, but the ultimate purpose is always that the blessing may be transmitted through us to others.

An excellent illustration of this truth is provided by the comparison between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The former is sparkling,

fresh and abundant with life. The latter is absolutely dead and nothing can live in it. Yet both are fed by the same river — the River Jordan. Where is the difference? The Sea of Galilee receives and gives out. The Dead Sea likewise receives, but it does not give out. This pictures our part in the matter of blessing.

Do you sometimes cry out, "Lord, bless me . . . bless me!" Yet after praying like this you still feel so dry and barren. Could it be that you have missed the purpose of being blessed? You are blessed that you might be a blessing.

Remember, Jesus told us: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). This in no way means that it is not a blessing to receive; but the greater blessing comes from having received and *then giving*. God's word to Abraham was, "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing." In other words, "The purpose for which I will bless you is that you shall be a blessing."

In Genesis 12:3 God unfolds the last three phases of His promised blessings. These deal with the relationship of others to the man whom He blesses: (5) "I will bless them that bless thee" (6) "I will curse him that curseth thee" (7) "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

God's blessing will always bring both friends and enemies. There will be those that bless us and those that curse us. However, the man whom God blesses does not need to fight for himself. God says, "I will curse him that curseth thee." In other words, "Let me take care of the opposition." In Romans 12:14 Paul says, "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not." It is our business to be a blessing — even to those who curse us.

God's blessings come to their climax in the seventh phase: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." When we follow the path of faith and obedience, we become the channel of a blessing which has no boundaries. It flows outward to all men, and onward from generation to generation.

In Genesis 24:1 we see the practical outworking of God's blessing in

Abraham's own life: "And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham *in all things*." The phrase, "well stricken in age," is an unfortunate translation. It suggests that Abraham was hobbling about with a cane. The Hebrew says merely that he was "advanced in years."

God had blessed Abraham "*in all things*." This is the scope of God's blessing. It is all-inclusive. It takes in every area of our life: spiritual, physical, material, financial, home, business and everything else. This is the blessing purchased for us by the death of Christ on the cross, to be appropriated by our faith. Let us not settle for less!

GOD'S BLESSINGS

In Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, we find Moses presenting two alternatives to the Israelites — God's blessings and God's curses. It is important for us, as Christians, to know the things that are considered blessings and those which come under the heading of curses. Some Christians talk about sickness and poverty as if they were blessings. But God says most emphatically that neither is a blessing, but a curse. Let me tell you that if you need either sickness or poverty to make you more holy, then you are not very holy to begin with. Also, if you feel sickness is a blessing placed upon you by God to make you holy, you are in error to go to a doctor to get rid of the "blessing."

The first 14 verses of Deuteronomy 28 describe the blessings which God places before His people. Verses 15 through 68 spell out the many curses which will follow those who "do not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments . . ." We will begin with the blessings:

(1) And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

Derek Prince was converted from philosophy to Christianity while serving as a soldier in World War II. He has since devoted his life to study and exposition of the Bible. Currently, he and his wife, Lydia, live in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

(2) And all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee . . .

To me, this second verse paints a wonderful picture. You do not have to go out and run after blessings. Blessings will run after you and they will run faster, and they will catch up with you and overtake you! I really believe that. I have proved it in my own life. If you travel in the right direction at the permitted speed, God will exceed the speed limit and catch you up with His blessings.

(3) Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

(4) Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

(5) Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

(6) Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

(11) And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. (12) The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

(13) And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail: and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath.

How vividly God pictures these blessings! Consider just the last verse: "And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail . . ." What is the difference between the head and the tail? The head makes the

decisions and the tail follows. When you are walking in the blessing of God, the initiative is with you! You are not under the pressure of circumstances or people or finances. You are the head and, as such, the decision-making end of the body. You need ask yourself only one question: What is God's will? When you have ascertained that, you decide accordingly and you act out your decision.

The last verse continues, "And thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath . . ." This reminds me of a little dialogue I once overheard between two Christians. Let us call them "Brother A" and "Brother B." The dialogue went as follows:

Brother A: "How are you doing, brother?"

Brother B: "Oh, not too badly — under the circumstances."

Brother A: "What are you doing down there, brother? You should be living *above* the circumstances, not beneath them!"

Accept the fact that all God's blessings are rightfully yours through the death of Christ. Then take the initiative over all your circumstances and appropriate your blessings by faith.

GOD'S CURSES

The balance of Deuteronomy 28 lists the curses which will come upon God's people if they do not "hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God . . ." We all need to study this list carefully. In so doing we may discover that we are actually enduring a curse when we should be enjoying a blessing. Here, we shall just look at one or two of the curses:

(29) . . . thou shalt not prosper in thy ways . . . (*Failure to prosper is a curse.*)

(47) Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness of heart for the abundance of all things; . . .

God wants His people to serve Him with gladness and joyfulness of heart for the *abundance of all things*. This is the will of God. It is the level on

which He desires that we live — when we are obedient.

However, if His people — through disobedience and unbelief — fail to live on that level, see what God sets before them as the alternative:

(48) Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things . . .

Note that phrase, "thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee . . ." If the Lord sends your enemies against you, you have to serve them. There is no way out. You cannot escape except by repentance and obedience.

Also, note four conditions that will come upon the disobedient, every one of which is a curse: hunger . . . thirst . . . nakedness . . . and want of all things. Put them all together and you have, in my judgment, *absolute poverty*!

EXCHANGING POVERTY FOR WEALTH

We have seen already that on the cross a divinely ordained exchange took place. Jesus became a curse for us, that we might receive the blessing. We shall now see how the New Testament applies this exchange specifically to the area of financial and material provision.

In II Corinthians 8:9 Paul says, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

What are the opposites presented here? Poverty and riches. Ask yourself: When did Jesus become poor? Was He poor during the three-and-a-half years of His earthly ministry? I would not say so. He may not have had much money, but He had some. The group had a "bag" and they gave to the poor, (see John 13:29). They were not receiving from the poor, but giving to them. In any case, you do not need to carry a great deal of cash to be wealthy. Many wealthy men carry very little cash. A credit card

serves the purpose. Or some men only need to sign their names.

We may sum it up by saying that, during His earthly ministry, Jesus just used His Father's credit card. Would you say that a man was poor who could feed thousands of people from five loaves and two fishes? On another occasion Jesus needed money to pay taxes, and He sent Peter to the Sea of Galilee for it. Peter caught a fish, and took the tax money out of the fish's mouth. Which is easier — to go to the sea and take the money out of a fish's mouth, or go to the bank and withdraw the money from a savings account?

Let me ask again: When did Jesus become poor? On the cross, when He took the poverty curse. In Deuteronomy 28:48 curse is summed up in four expressions: hunger, thirst, nakedness, want of all things. On the cross Jesus literally endured all four. He was *hungry* — He had not eaten for nearly twenty-four hours. He was *thirsty* — one of His last utterances was "I thirst." He was *naked*. Let no pretty religious picture of the crucifixion deceive you. The soldiers had taken away all His clothes and divided them among themselves. He was in *want of all things*. Bereft of family and friends, He was wrapped in a borrowed burial linen and laid in a borrowed tomb. In this way Jesus totally exhausted the poverty curse on our behalf.

In II Corinthians 9:8 Paul goes on to present the other aspect of the exchange — the blessing of abundance: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work . . ."

In the Greek, "every" in the last phrase is really "all." Reading the verse this way, we see that there are five "alls" and two "abounds." How could language say more in one sentence? "God is able to make *all* grace abound toward you; that ye, *always* having *all* sufficiency in *all* things, may *abound* to *all* good work(s)."

This is confirmed by Paul's declaration in Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The source of supply is God's "riches in glory." The channel is "by Christ Jesus." The level of provision is not mere "sufficiency," it is abundance."

The difference between sufficiency and abundance may be illustrated by the following simple example. Suppose that you need \$15 worth of groceries and you go to the store with \$10. You are shopping out of *insufficiency*. But then suppose you go with \$15. You are shopping out of *sufficiency*. Finally, suppose that you go with \$20. You are shopping out of *abundance*.

God provides us with abundance not that we may hoard it for ourselves, but that we may use it for "every good work." We must not be like the Dead Sea, always receiving but never giving out. We must be like the Sea of Galilee, both receiving and giving out. In this way our spiritual life is kept pure and fresh. This is the true "blessing of Abraham." We are blessed that we may in turn bless others.

In both verses, II Corinthians 8:9 and 9:8, the key word is "grace." Where does grace come from? The answer is given in John 1:17: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Grace has only one channel — Jesus Christ, only one basis — the cross; it is appropriated by only one means — faith.

SOWING AND REAPING

To enter into God's abundance, we must understand and apply the law of sowing and reaping. In Galatians 6:7 Paul says, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is a general law that applies in every area of life where we can speak of "sowing" or of the use of "seed." Invariably like reproduces like. A man begets a man, and a monkey begets a monkey. If we plant an apple pip, an apple tree grows. If we plant an orange pip, and orange tree grows. A monkey never begets a man (contrary to some popular theories!), and an apple pip never produces an orange tree.

In II Corinthians 9:6 — 7 Paul applies this law to our financial dealings: "But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and

he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give . . ." The context leaves no room to doubt that Paul is speaking here about giving to the Lord's work and to the needs of others. He calls giving "sowing," and declares that the measure in which we "sow" our money by giving determines the measure in which also we shall "reap" by receiving.

Let us apply this in a simple and practical way. If you sow nickles, you will reap nickles. If there is a sixty-fold increase, you will reap \$3.00. If the increase is a hundred fold, you will reap \$5.00. Always you reap in terms of what you sow. Sow nickles and you will reap nickles; dimes and you will reap dimes; dollars and you will reap dollars. If you sow in units of ten dollars or a hundred dollars, you can count on a proportionate return.

This language of sowing and reaping suggests the pattern of a farmer working for a harvest from his field. Such a man does nothing at random. He first chooses the best and most suitable soil. Then he carefully prepares it. Finally, at the right season, he sows the type and quantity of seed which will give the maximum yield, without waste.

As Christians, we need to be no less careful and practical in our giving. First we should look for "good soil" — Christian operations and ministries that are sound in their doctrine and spirit, effective and fruitful in their out-working. To these we should devote much prayer and intercession. Then we should offer as much as God indicates will be blessed and used by Him to bring forth an abundant harvest.

Unfortunately many Christians are unwise and impractical in their giving. We should not give on the basis of habit or tradition, nor on the prompting of impulse or emotion. There are unscrupulous men who systematically exploit this emotional, impulsive type of giving on the part of Christians. To respond to the appeals of such men is often an unwise use of our money. We

need to seek God earnestly for the most effective ways in which to sow our money. What would you think of a farmer who had good seed and walked down the street scattering it in the gutter? Would he expect to reap? Of course not!

Do you carefully consider and pray over the money that you sow, seeking the means whereby it will yield the greatest possible harvest for the glory of God? You should. The Bible says that every one of us will one day give an account of himself to God (Romans 14:12). The word used denotes primarily a financial account. We are going to have to account for what we have done with our money. For some, this could prove embarrassing.

BRING THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE

In Genesis we studied God's promises of blessing to Abraham, and in Deuteronomy we heard Moses set before Israel the blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience. In Malachi 3:7 — 10 God again confronts Israel with issue of blessings and curses, together with the personal decision that this demands. Twelve centuries after Moses, God reproves His people for their long record of disobedience and unfaithfulness in the matter of giving:

(7) Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts, But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

(8) Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

(9) Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

(10) Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

"Tithes" denotes the first tenth of
(Continued on page 30)

GIVEN
TO

HOSPITALITY



"Come on over!"

"Stop in soon!"

"Hurry back!"

"Please stay with us when you come East!"

Such casual remarks as these, when they come from a sincere and warm heart, can bring about life-changing experiences in countless lives. Sociologists and psychologists tell us that one of the great problems of our age is a feeling of *alienation* — of not really belonging anywhere. Yet Jesus commanded us to love one another. Why is it, then, that even born-again Christians so often feel they have no one they can go to or with whom they can share their heartaches and problems? Are not these functions the glad privileges and responsibilities of love?

Jesus said to the early church, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." *Love* is the great, aching need of our age — yes, even within the true church of Jesus Christ. It is a sobering truth to realize that love is to be our only recognizable credential. Why is it so hard for us who have been ignited by the love of God to release it and show it to others?

Perhaps the answer to this question lies in a modern distortion of the role God intended for the Christian home. Most of us would readily agree that home is the place we are to be loved and learn to love. Why, then, are some

so inept and indeed so starved for love, who come from Christian homes?

Although the problem is a complex one, it becomes very much simpler once we accept the concept that love is *to do* rather than just *to talk*. The Lord Jesus Christ could not have made this point any clearer than when He said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." Love means action. Love means doing what will please the loved one, not what will please myself. Walking in this light the Lord has given them will thoroughly revolutionize any Christian family.

Today the world wants desperately to know whether we who profess to know Christ are real or not. Ironically enough, many a believer these days is

TRY GIVING
YOURSELF
AWAY

by Pat Brooks

doubting his salvation and wanting desperately to know whether he, himself, is real or not! God's Word has a perfect answer for this dilemma in I John 3:14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, *because we love the brethren*. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

The brethren are other members of



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Out! In the Name of Jesus, presents their background and ministry.

God's family. No wonder so many are doubting their experience with God, since they have never yet embarked with Him on the adventure of loving His people in a practical way.

Home is the place for family love. Although church may be the place we gather to worship and pray, it is hardly the place where most of the mundane, humble service Jesus pictured in John 13 takes place. No, He washed the feet of the disciples after they had supper together. Home is the place where we usually eat, and it is over meals and after them that most families are together. If this is true for the natural family, should it not be even more effective for the family of God?

Someone has said that "home is the place, when you've got to go there, they've got to take you in." Anyone born of God is a member of His family, and the unsaved often find spiritual birth in a believer's home. Thus, a Christian home should be open to the people our heavenly Father wants brought there, those who want to get to know His Son better.

My husband and I came to see this truth soon after we were saved, fifteen years ago. I remember calling the church and various social agencies that first Christmas in Christ to find a needy family to have dinner with us. Many seemed surprised, even shocked, at the request. Why spoil a "family occasion" with outsiders?

A year later, Pastor asked for a show of hands from those who would like to entertain a speaker during the forthcoming missionary conference. My hand shot up. What a pleasure it was to have Tom Burns, from Upper

Volta, with us for a few days. Talking with him, eating with him, musing and praying with him opened up a whole new world of thought for Dick and me. Missions became more to us than lights on a world map.

More than any other one thing, that first visit of a missionary in our home turned us on a path that led to foreign service ourselves, for a few years. We tried to entertain missionaries as often as possible, and were always blessed in different ways by their presence.

Once the blessing came in a disguised form — a real trial. A young missionary couple arrived with two very sick children who had been sick for several days. They could have stayed at their mission home, not far away, and I remember wondering why they chose to come to our home under these circumstances. After all, we had young children too, and one of them had just gotten over a serious case of measles and was quite weak.

A few days after they left, our Johnny (the ex-measles case) came down with earache and swollen glands, and a very high fever. Our pediatrician was out of town and could not get to us for nearly two days, during which time Johnny got much worse. When the doctor finally saw our little boy, he saw that he was dehydrating rapidly, and told me to get him to the hospital at once, for the outcome was uncertain. I slipped to the floor on my knees, weeping all the while, and pouring out my heart to the Lord.

In those nightmare hours that followed in the hospital, I wondered over and over again whether the "open home policy" was the right thing, after all. I was surprised at the deep resentment I felt for the thoughtless young couple whose children had had ear infections, and it occurred to me that I must forgive them, or perhaps my prayer would reach no higher than the ceiling. I did, and later that night turned Johnny over to the Lord, to take or to leave with us, as He so chose. At that precise moment the crisis was over. The little one began to breathe normally, and fell asleep.

After this incident, Dick and I began to wonder about opening our

home so freely to others. I searched the Scriptures to see what they really had to say about this. After all, if it was foolish and unsafe to have our home "available" in this way, we had better find it out before we adopted a life-style out of step with God.

My answer was found in the little phrase I stumbled on one day in Romans 12:13 — "given to hospitality." I remember being riveted to those words, my eyes and mind stopping here, and turning them over as I might a cantaloupe to see if it were ripe enough to eat. What does it mean to be *given* to something, anyway? Why, it must mean a habitual pattern, an almost unconscious response, a leaning that way with one's full weight. The New American Standard Version Bible calls it "practicing hospitality"; Beck's paraphrase says, "Eagerly welcome strangers as guests."

In a flash of insight I saw that Satan had been the source of all these doubts. The evil one had made a studied attack upon our moving out into the sunny land of an open house for Jesus with his discouraging clouds of doubt. Our "please do come!" had almost been metamorphosized into a "sorry, too risky."

From that day to this, our home has been open to all whom the Lord sends. In the early years (and this is an excellent way to get started), we sought them out: international students, servicemen, missionaries, visiting speakers, new people at church. Now they seek us out: people with needs, problems, or heartaches, or sometimes special joys to share. Two verses after that golden nugget on hospitality; we are told to "rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15, NASV).

A word of warning is in order, however. A Christian home must not become a haven for freeloaders who would turn it into a rescue mission. The whole purpose of making the streams of living water available through our homes is to send those who drink from them back to their places of responsibility refreshed, and more effective in their own homes for Christ.

There are Christian communes which are set up for mass living, but all of the successful ones have strict rules about contributing to the welfare of the group. ("If anyone will not work, neither let him eat." II Thess. 3:10, NASV). Scott Ross's "Love In," near Ithaca, New York, requires all members not earning wages toward the support of the commune to put in a full day's work on its construction and remodeling, every day.

I once knew a committed Christian who admitted that she gave up entertaining altogether, "for it almost always involved food." She got such a complex about this that she would refuse to accept any dinner invitations because she felt that she would one day have to reciprocate. Another dear sister in Christ feels alienated from their college-age son; yet the suggestion that they open their home to other young people and thereby create a climate in which he might feel more at home and communicate with them better left her shaking her head. "Oh no, we couldn't do that," she said, "yet we're so lonely."

Many women who will read this probably have the same negative feelings as these dear women, or at least are afraid their cooking abilities or budgets will not be equal to the task of caring for those the Lord might bring to them. Experience has taught us that God amply tends for the ones He sends!

One recent weekend we had a total of eighteen guests, among them six precious "Jesus kids" from northern New Jersey. Throughout the three days we saw God's hand of provision, and we did it all with only five dollars more than our usual food budget. Two different friends dropped in with garden vegetables, and one out-of-town guest brought tomatoes and also lots of homemade cookies. I had gone to a day-old baked goods store and picked up sweet rolls, hamburger and hot dog rolls, and bread. I got frozen hamburgers and hot dogs, some ground beef, and a meaty soup bone. When I got home from shopping, I made a big pot of soup which simmered all day while I did other things.

Friday night we had a pot luck supper, before a sharing time and prayer meeting. In this way, other Christian friends in the area were blessed by the fellowship of the visitors, and since everyone brought a dish, it was much easier for me. On Saturday we had the hamburgers and hot dogs for lunch, and the soup for supper.

Sunday mornings we keep uncomplicated around here, because of church. The standard menu is juice and cereal. While the guests ate in shifts, I made spaghetti sauce and partially prepared the spaghetti. It was just right to serve when we ate at noon, and the long distance travelers were able to get off by 1:30 in the afternoon.

It is not the quality of the *menu* but the quality of the *fellowship* which counts most in God's open homes. It is not the Martha-scurryings before an ostentatious feast which make for the Lord's blessed presence at a meal. Rather, it is the Mary-time, spent at His feet, listening to His Word, and waiting on Him in the hours before the activity begins. Then, if Jesus is Lord during the meal itself, most conversation will naturally center on Him. These are the times when He feeds His people the bread of life, so that we walk away from the simplest meal with banquet memories.

Perhaps the most glorious reason for seeking this kind of climate in our homes, however, is that the Lord Jesus can work in such an environment. It was in the simple home at Bethany, where the Lord had eaten many a meal and slept many a weary night, that He performed His greatest miracle. Just a short distance from that house He gave the divine call, "Lazarus, come forth," and stood with the thunderstruck onlookers as a shrouded man, dead four days, came forth alive from the tomb to rejoin his family.

On this memorable weekend we were very aware of His presence with us, and I believe He was at home here. Each meal ended with a sense of expectancy that He had more to say to us, more to do with us. And we were never disappointed. After the simple

supper of soup, served by candlelight, one visiting couple announced that they wanted the joy and release in the Spirit the rest of us had found. We went into the family room together, and there the Lord liberated these dear ones from evil powers that had long oppressed them and set them free to praise Him in a new way. Their faces were utterly transformed before our eyes.

On Sunday, soon after the spaghetti dinner and after one carload had already left, one guest casually mentioned his trouble with backache. That same glorious sense of expectancy came upon us. Ed Moore, our guest, sat in a straight chair and put his feet out, while my husband measured the difference between them. One leg was about 3/4 of an inch shorter than the other. Dick said, "Thank you, Lord, for lengthening this leg and healing this back," and we all saw it grow out even with the other one.

Suddenly Ed said, "Say, I wonder if the Lord will do the same thing for arms! I have one arm an inch shorter than the other, and always have to get a jacket altered when I buy one."

"Yes, the Lord does the same thing for arms," someone said quietly, while we all smiled and waited.

"Hold your arms straight out from the shoulders. Then bring your arms together three times, keeping your eyes closed as you do, so you cannot force them to match," Dick said.

Ed brought his arms together three times, and sure enough, there was about an inch of difference between them. He opened his eyes and held his arms just slightly apart, as we all began to praise the Lord. We watched the arm grow out until it was even with the other one, and then it stopped.

"Praise Jesus!" Ed shouted.

Yes, praise Jesus, for He is doing these wonderful things all over the world, today. He is straightening out His body, the church, and getting it ready for His return. He needs homes where His body can function as it did in the first century, homes where He is welcome to bring in His friends and family and do His work. Homes that are *given to hospitality*. ☞



A High Altitude Look at the Christian Life.

LIFE ON WINGS

by
ERN
BAXTER

Since the beginning of man's record of himself, the challenge of flight has captured his imagination. The conquering of the air in our own generation has produced a wave of awe and romance unequaled in the annals of man's existence. Somehow the ability to fly has epitomized the longing of man to rise above the natural limitations of earthbound mortals and soar into the realm of the supernatural.

The spiritual longing of the world, the rise in the occult and mystic practices, are the evidence of humanity's hunger to know and move in the spiritual universe. Our world has become a spiritual vacuum, and man is dying of spiritual suffocation. God has made provision in His Kingdom for man to have this spiritual need met, and yet how few believers ever find the satisfaction of knowing fully what God has allotted to them.

How can a man break into the realm of the supernatural in his walk with

God? In one form or another this question seems to be one of the pressing concerns wherever I travel. We *talk* about what God is doing — but *living* in that divine presence is another matter. Rather than embarking on a heavy dissertation, I want to use a beautiful illustration thought up by the Author of the Word of God — the Holy Spirit.

(28) Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding.

(29) He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

(30) Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

(31) But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:28–31)

The Bible is an intensely practical book. The Holy Spirit has ransacked the universe for every conceivable image, illustration, and parable to impart the truth of the ways of God to man. Daily activities, interpersonal relationships, the things of nature, and the parts of our bodies; things with which we are intimately acquainted, are captured by Him to describe some aspect of the divine mystery.

THE EAGLE

This passage speaks of the eagle. As the lion is the king of the beasts, so the eagle is the king of birds. The Holy Spirit has likened us and our God-ward aspirations to the aspiration of being like the eagle.

As I watched the eagles in the Columbia Basin near Portland, I began to understand why they have represented throughout time the God-ward thrust of man: power — freedom — beauty — the lord of his environment through his ability to master the air. They move in regal splendor, for they are born as kings. As the eagle is born with the divine right of kingship, so we

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come from the new birth with the inherent potential of soaring into the very presence of God, Himself. The fact, however, that eagles are so equipped, does not necessarily mean that they will ever get off the ground.

Deuteronomy 32:11 has some interesting information about eagles:

As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovering over its young, spreading its wings to catch them, bearing them on its pinions.

All eagles begin as eaglets and before these unseen-ly, squalling fledglings take their place with royalty, they must be trained in the ways of the king of birds. This little verse is the Flight Training Manuel of student eagles and earthbound Christians.

Picture with me two little eaglets snuggled cozily in a down-filled nest, high on an eerie ledge on some remote mountainside. (Christians often find themselves born into equally precarious circumstances.) Everything is just wonderful; mother eagle sallies forth daily and brings back choice tidbits for those ravenous appetites. During the cold, mountain nights she settles over the nest and the eaglets snuggle securely under those warm, soft wings and look out at the stars not very far away. They are newly born and baptized in the Spirit. Hallelujah!! Life is wonderful and being a Christian sure makes life easy — no more problems! God knew what He was doing when He thought up this arrangement!

One day Mom begins to act very strange. Rather than landing on the nest she hovers momentarily, beating the air with those great wings. As Junior watches her, he thinks, "Mom sure has powerful wings!" That is exactly what Mrs. Eagle wants Junior to know.

Then she does something downright crazy. She grabs a piece of the nest and drops it over the side of the cliff. Then she returns for another chunk, and another, and another. The little eaglets are beginning to think Mom has lost her marbles! By now the framework of the nest is pretty shaky and that nice soft down that made Junior feel so secure is at the bottom of the canyon. Nest life is becoming a standing-room-only situation on what is left of their home.

Can you see what the mother eagle is doing? She is preparing her young for the first stage in eagle training. After our Lord received the Holy Spirit and the declaration of His holy Sonship, the Scripture says that He was *led of the Spirit* into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. I have written in the margin of my Bible at this point, "Is this standard operating procedure?" I believe that God's *modus operandi* is to begin to confront us as soon as possible with the necessity of maturing into something other than nest-bound believers.

Paul told the Corinthians that he could not talk to them as mature men because they were as babes. He did not say they *were* babies, but that they were *like* babies. When a baby slobbers its pabulum down its little chin and milk runs into its little ears, we all laugh and think it is cute. But when a twenty-one-year-old man slobbers his food down his chin, then he is *like* a baby and this is sickening. God does not mind a Christian going through the pabulum stage; it is a part of growing up. But it is tragic in God's eyes when we never grow out of infancy.

Interestingly enough, the discomfort of our bewildered eaglets has been deliberately caused by the one who loves them most. How often when we have a streak of trouble do we cry out, "The Devil is attacking me!" Are you positive it is the Devil? Maybe the One who loves you most is stirring up your nest.

Like many believers, the little eagles conclude that standing on that windy ledge is at least tolerable and they can

make the best of it. But dear old Mom has more in mind than just a nest stirring. She catches one of the little fellows in her powerful beak and nudges him toward the edge of the ledge. The poor little guy wonders what is happening now. His little heart is beating faster and faster, and as he is pushed closer to the edge he thinks, "NO, it can't be!" *But it is!*

With one final push he starts to plummet toward the bottom of the canyon — he is sure this is the end. Then out of nowhere there is a swoosh of Mom's mighty wings and Junior is heading for the safety of the ledge on her powerful back, quite relieved. The first time God kicks us out of the nest and catches us before we hit bottom, we gasp, "Oh, thank heaven! I was sure God had let me down that time."

Back on the ledge our would-be king is just getting over being dizzy when Mom starts pushing again. "Not again," he moans, as he starts his second tumble. "What if Mom doesn't make it this time?" But she does. Several trips later Junior begins to get the feeling that Mom is trying to get a point across. Between rides he suddenly remembers Mom's huge wings hovering over the nest. He looks at his own straggly wings and thinks, "I wonder if . . . If she does that again I'm going to give mine a try!" Rest assured he gets another chance. Mom will not stop until Junior finds the gumption to try his own wings.

Little eagles are gangly creatures, wobbling shakily on untested wings. But each desperate plunge brings a little more mastery of his wings. One day he spreads those wings and rather than falling, he finds himself rising up and up and up, riding the mighty air currents far above his ledge home and the nest that confined him. No longer a fledgling begging for tidbits, he is learning to become one of the eagles — he will be a king.

Ministers and evangelists often make becoming a Christian like being born on a satin pillow with a cordon of angels wafting us through life and depositing us at the foot of the celestial throne. Only after we are well settled in our nest do we learn that God

is more intent on the production of character than the provision of our comfort. We have made God our celestial Santa Claus and if we do not get everything we want we stomp saucy little feet and open our mouths and scream for the goodies. But because He is our Father, and not Santa Claus, He will box our saucy little ears and tell us to "hush up." He will not tolerate our spoiled ways, but will *force* us into situations that will *require* us to mature and learn to use the wings He gave us. He wants us to become eagles. God never built a nest you could walk out of — they are all designed to fly away from. Some Christians have been over the cliff so many times that they enjoy the ride and could care less about learning to fly. They will never get one inch higher than the nest where they were born.

KINGS

The Bible land knew two types of eagles: the Golden Eagle and the Imperial Eagle. The Golden Eagle speaks of us as partakers of the divine nature and the Imperial Eagle speaks of us as kings. In the Scripture, the two go hand in hand.

Our divine right is to reign as monarchs in our own lives! The circumstances which confound and befuddle the world become launching pads to new heights in God. Satan and his henchmen become the snakes which an eagle bisects with a slash of his mighty talons or drops from dizzy heights to be crushed on the rocks below. This is our inheritance.

Some years ago I was managing a campaign in Cleveland, Ohio. Upon departing the city for a few days, I told one of the committees, "Get a plot of ground where we can pitch a tent for about three thousand people and we will take care of the expenses later."

When I got off the plane upon my return, the chairman met me and said, "We have a wonderful place for the tent."

"Wonderful," I said. "How much did you have to pay for the land?"

"Fifteen hundred dollars a day."

"What!" I gasped. (Back in those

days fifteen hundred dollars was like fifteen thousand today.)

We had decided not to make a big thing of money, so there was little we could do but trust God. After the first day and a half we were five thousand dollars down — a rather awkward place to be.

That afternoon I preached on Romans 5:17: "We reign in life by one Christ. . . ." As I finished I said, "Now as you meet one another for the next few days, address each other as 'King so-and-so.' You may address me as 'King Baxter.'"

That night I was handed an envelope addressed to "King Baxter." I opened it and read a delightful note: "Dear King Baxter, My wife and I have a feeling that our fellow king has a need. Out of our royal treasury we wish you to accept the enclosed check for \$5,000." I may not always have it, but there is money in the royal family.

MOUNTING UP ON WINGS

The writer of Proverbs said that among those mysteries of the universe which were too hard to understand, one was the "mystery of an eagle in the air." The symbolism of this passage is the Christian's inexplicable potential which is like the eagle's, who can fly higher than any other bird and never wiggle a wing. What do I mean by "wiggle a wing"?

Did you notice that the Psalmist said that eagles "mount up," and not "flap up"? Eagles were not made to go flapping about — they were created to soar high and free. Eagles learn to fly without struggling because they understand the air currents. An eagle will perch on a rock and wait, testing the winds. When the right wind is blowing he lifts into the air with a royal scream. Herein is one of the eagle's secrets in being able to mount up — waiting. Those that wait, says the Scripture, will be the ones to mount up. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. . . ." This is the key to public worship as well. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and you hear the sound thereof, and you know not from whence it comes

nor whither it goeth, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." A Christian should fly without effort because he understands the secret of the winds.

I was once in a public worship service being led by a minister friend who had every natural gift for leading worship — voice, musical talent and personality. The worship was good, but it was not what the Spirit wanted. In the back of the auditorium a man kept raising his hand as if he wanted something quite urgent. Finally the pastor acknowledged him, "Yes, Brother." The man started singing a fine old chorus, "Glory and Honor. . . ." All he wanted to do was get a chance to ride an air current that had been blowing on him for some time. That meeting took off and we rode that breeze of the Spirit all evening. There is a breeze in every meeting if we have the patience to wait for it. If we do not, then we join the crowd that says, "OK, let's whip it up, Come on, now. . . ." No thanks, it is easier to soar than to flap!

HIGH FLIGHT

Something in an eagle demands he fly higher than all the other birds. He often flies well beyond the view of the naked eye.

He rises past the crows on the telephone wires who screech, "Cawwww, Cawwww, stop and we'll give you the latest on the Sunday school superintendent, Cawwww, Cawwww."

But the eagle calls back, "I'm not interested! I'm going up beyond the clouds where I can look full into the face of the sun."

Even though an eagle flies high into the blinding sun, he is equally adapted to dark mountain valleys. He has two sets of eyelids. With his earthly eyelids he can see perfectly well at ground level, or he can roll down his heavenly ones and play in the glaring glory of the sun.

Christians must know how to walk on the earth as well as fly in the glory. It is possible to become so spiritual that we cannot see reality in our daily lives. Never become so spiritual that you will not provide for your family,

love your wife, play ball with the kids or take out the garbage.

"Take out the garbage! I'm a son of God!" you may object.

Friend, with what dignity a son of God can take out the garbage!

As the eagle mounts high above the clouds, he sails those great air currents into the very presence of God. You I are not fashioned for the dirt and pollution. We were not born to be dirty crows on a telephone line. We are appointed to the pure worship of God, to climb into the rare atmosphere of the Holy of Holies.

Some ask, "How far can I go, Baxter?"

"Enoch walked with God and was not because God took him." That eagle flew high! One day he flew so high that God said, "Enoch, it is closer for you to come on up than to go back."

How high? A wonderful man of my congregation, whose job it is to care for beautiful, prize-winning horses, drew me aside after the service one morning. He was a very timid and gentle man; he spoke apologetically as he said, "Pastor, one of the horses in my charge is very sick and not expected to live. Do you think . . ." his voice trailed off before he finished.

"You wonder if I believe God can heal your horse, don't you?" I asked.

He admitted that that was what he wanted to know.

"Do you believe that He can?" I questioned.

"Yes, Pastor, I do," he answered.

I took his hands and together we asked God to reach out and heal that horse.

I am one of the few pastors that I know who has a picture of a horse hanging on his wall. People can tell me, "I don't believe that God heals horses!" They can let their horses die — God healed this one.

How high? George Mueller was once told by a captain of a ship on which he was a passenger that the ship could not make New York on schedule because of a dense fog that had set in. "We'll see about that," said George Mueller. As George Mueller prayed the fog lifted and the boat hastened toward

his waiting appointment in New York.

People can say, "I don't believe that God lifts fogs!" They will stay in a fog, but God lifts fogs for people that have the faith to have fogs lifted.

God has made us eagles like Himself and He wants us to fly! All the experiences which we become so excited about — our conversion, our baptism in the Holy Spirit, the spiritual gifts — are but a part of our introduction to the supernatural life that demands us to become God-like because we are partakers of the divine nature.

The eagle is purposed for the high places — Obadiah 4 states that it sets its nest "among the stars." If we find ourselves unhappy and frustrated, if Christianity does not become what we hoped, then it may be that we have not comprehended God's calling to nest high. We are created to live in a divine atmosphere, and we will die if we dwell in a polluted world.

How high? My answer: How well do you understand the air currents? How thoroughly do you know the moving of the Spirit of God? Perceiving the Spirit of God is more than a subjective feeling. It is minding the things of the Spirit. It is right conduct, obedience to the Word of God, knowing the will of God and doing it. The Spirit and Word are inseparable. If you do not allow the Word of God to rule your life, but allow sin into your life, then you cancel your ability to ride the air currents. You have become a flapper. You may shout louder and LOUDER, sing harder and HARDER, pray longer and LONGER; but you will not rise an inch, you are flapping your wings in dead air.

NECESSITY OF FREEDOM

An eagle free in his natural habitat is a very clean bird. If, however, he is placed in captivity he becomes one of the dirtiest birds in the world. In like manner, a Christian who has become captive and lost the freedom of the Spirit of God, will become "a dirty bird." Do you know what the deepest bondage is a Christian can fall into? Allowing himself to digress into religious forms which are not accord-

ing to the Word of God. Religious bondage is not just ecclesiastical ceremony, it is most often that which was once full of life but is now part of "the way we do things." It is God confined to your system. "Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage." Paul was speaking of the bondage of religious form. The wine of the Spirit is always new, and if we try to place it in old wineskins, the skins will burst, and both will be lost. In all the world there is nothing more cruel and dead than a bunch of religious people who have lost the anointing.

What is there left after the anointing departs? We are told in II Kings 6 that in the siege of Samaria that all the people had left to eat was asses' heads and doves' dung. It is not very pretty is it? This is God's view of what remains after His anointing is gone. Asses' heads typify human wisdom without God, and doves' dung is all that is left after a dove flies away.

When you come into the presence of God, you can rest assured that it will not be because of your PhD, or because you have memorized the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation. We come to live in the presence of God by knowing the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. Understanding the movement of the winds is the only way we will ever find the altitude to dwell in the presence of God. It makes no difference if you are a Doctor of Philosophy, or a garbage collector, you stand on equal footing in God's economy. Can you understand what I am saying? Otherwise Christianity is reduced to a philosophical system that is likened to asses' heads. It is merely human wisdom without divine content. Twenty-eight hundred times in Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, he says, "Let us assume." This is human wisdom without divine content.

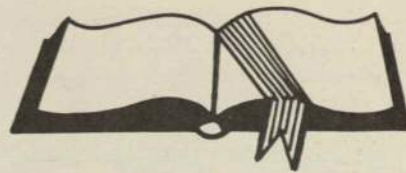
Doves' dung represents what is left after the Holy Spirit has departed. All over the world and in every segment of religious life we find edifices, remembrances, and practices that serve as monuments to a time when the Holy

(Continued on page 19)

BIBLE

STUDY

by Howard Coffey



EZEKIEL

SYNOPSIS — Ezekiel, one of the five books of the major prophets, was written by one of the foremost prophets, a priest, and the son of Buzi. Ezekiel was taken captive, together with King Jehoiachin and approximately 10,000 of his fellow countrymen, by Nebuchadnezzar in the first Babylonian deportation of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

At the age of thirty, in the fifth year of the captivity, he began his prophetic ministry to "the house of Israel," and prophesied for twenty-two years exclusively in Babylon. Jeremiah and Daniel were his contemporaries: Jeremiah in Jerusalem, and Daniel also in exile in Babylon.

The exiles were not treated as slaves, but as colonists. They were permitted to occupy offices in the government where they could and did rise to the highest positions. They increased in number and wealth. They were given religious freedom; and it is believed that synagogue worship began during this period. This marked a new era for the Jewish people — idolatry ceased during the exile, genealogies were preserved, and the sacred Canon (revised and enlarged) came into prominence and was held in great reverence.

It was in this setting and under these circumstances that Ezekiel lived and ministered. He lived in his own house on the river Chebar in Tel-abib, where his wife died in the ninth year of the captivity. The elders often came to him to inquire of the Lord, although many times they were not sincere in their inquiries. To this the Lord said, "They hear what you say but don't pay any attention to it! But when all these terrible things happen to them — as they will — then they will know a prophet has been among them" (33:30–33 L.B.).

An outstanding sign that God gave

to Ezekiel was that he would not be able to speak anything except what the Lord would give him to say (3:26,27). However, on the day that Jerusalem would fall, a refugee would start on a journey to Babylon to tell him the news, at which time God would restore the normal use of his voice as a sign to the people that He was Lord! (24:25–27). The promise was fulfilled: "In the eleventh year of our exile, late in December, one of those who escaped from Jerusalem arrived to tell me, 'The City has fallen!' Now the hand of the Lord had been upon me so that I could speak again by the time the man arrived" (33:21,22 L.B.).

An uncertain tradition states that he died a martyr at the hands of fellow exiles who refused to believe his prophecies.

The principal thrust of the opening prophecies of Ezekiel concern the downfall of Jerusalem because of sin and rebellion. The first six years of his ministry were dedicated to warnings of impending judgment, which occurred at the time of the destruction of the city and the temple by Nebuchadnezzar eleven years after the first deportation. This was due to King Zedekiah's evil before God and his rebellion against the Babylonian king.

The second set of prophecies concern God's pronouncements against the foreign nations around Jerusalem who rejoiced at the fall of Jerusalem and laughed at God's inability to defend the city. God declares to them that sin was the reason for judgment and that they, too, would perish because of corruption.

There was a difference, however, between these foreign nations and Israel. God had a covenant with Israel, and He would honor that covenant, restoring Israel and bringing into being her final glory. The city would be called Jehovah-shammah (the Lord is

there). The latter part of the book covers this restoration.

OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION — Call of Ezekiel — Ch. 1–3

- A. He sees God's glory (1) (Other visions of the glory of the Lord: 3:12,13; 8:1–4; 10:8–22)
- B. He is called (2:1–7)
- C. He eats the Word of the Lord (2:8–3:10)
- D. He is appointed as a watchman (3:11–27)

II. JUDGMENT OF JERUSALEM — Ch. 4–24

- A. The symbol of the tile (4)
- B. The vision of the burning vine (5)
- C. The vision of the profanation of the temple and the consequent slayings in Jerusalem (8 & 9). (Those who were to be saved were those marked because they "sighed and cried," interceded for the abominations [9:4].)
- D. The parable of the great eagle (17)
- E. The kingdom promised to Messiah; "I will overturn, overturn, overturn the kingdom, so that even the new order that emerges will not succeed until the Man appears who has a right to it. And I will give it all to him" (24:1–4)
- F. The allegory of unfaithful Judah and Israel (23)
- G. The parable of the boiling pot (24:1–4)

III. JUDGMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONS Ch. 25–35 The promise of a true Shepherd, Messiah, in reproof of the faithless shepherds of Israel (34)

IV. RESTORATION OF ISRAEL — Ch. 36–48

- A. The valley of dry bones (37)
- B. The prophecy against Gog of the land of Magog from "the distant north," believed by most students of the Word to be Russia (38 & 39)
- C. The detailed vision of the temple, the land, and the city (40–48, cf. Rev. 21:9–22:2) The purpose of the detailed vision: "... describe the temple I have shown you to the people of Israel. Tell them its appearance and its plan so they will be ashamed of all their sins" (43:10 L.B.)
 - 1. The Temple: "... this is the place of my throne and my footstool, where I shall remain, living among the people of Israel forever" (43:7 L.B.)

2. The Land: Both the tribes and the prince shall have their portions: "Two special sections of land shall be set apart for the prince — one on each side of the holy lands and city . . . thus shall be his allotment" (45:7,8 L.B., see also 48:21, 22)

3. The City: "... the name of the city from that day shall be, the Lord is there" (48:35)

DANIEL

SYNOPSIS — The book of Daniel, written by the prophet Daniel, is the fifth and last book of the major prophets. Daniel was among those taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar in the first Babylonian deportation. He was of royal descent from the family of David. His career at Babylon was very similar, both in position and in the manner in which God used him, to that of Joseph in Egypt. Through divine wisdom he was given the interpretation of dreams and direct prophetic visions. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joshua (the high priest of the restoration), Ezra, and Zerubbabel.

Because of his rank of nobility and his healthy and handsome appearance, he was one of those chosen to be educated and trained for civil service in the king's court. This flattery, however, did not ensnare him in the compromising position of being a partaker of foods contaminated by paganistic rituals. Even in this test, his faith that insisted on simple, uncontaminated fare, gave him, together with his three companions, a victory that became the index of his whole life. His life became one of consecration and devotion as a man of God, a statesman, and a prophet — a life that was equaled by few, if any. His character was immaculate in the midst of a pagan, idolatrous, polluted and oriental court. He maintained his honor, piety, and faith to the extreme of even facing martyrdom. His stand for God and righteousness did not hinder him in achieving the highest government posts under the Babylonian and Medo-Persian dynasties.

He lived through the whole period

of the seventy-year captivity. It is believed that he presented to King Cyrus the prophecies concerning the King's role in the return of the Jews to Judea, which may have inspired Cyrus to permit the Jews to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-5; II Chron. 36:22,23; Ezra 1:1-4).

It was in the third year of Cyrus' reign that he received his final prophetic vision that culminated the revelations he had been given regarding his people, the Jews, and the relationship of the Gentile nations to them (Dan. 10, 11, 12). Daniel said of it: "It concerned events certain to happen in the future: times of great tribulation — wars and sorrows, and this time I understood what the vision meant" (10:1 L.B.). The angelic messenger said, "... I am here to tell you what will happen to your people, the Jews, at the end time — for the fulfillment of this prophecy is many years away" (10:14 L.B.).

The book of Daniel may be divided into two parts: six chapters relating to historic events during his life, and six chapters of his prophetic visions. The historic section is also important prophetically because it contains the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's inspired interpretation. The prophecies give a sweeping view of the Gentile nations and their relationship to the Jews in regard to the setting up of the everlasting Messianic kingdom (7:13,14). In this sense he is the prophet of the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:14), showing forth the power and dominion of God over all nations and powers, as the One who rules in the affairs of all men.

His prophecies also relate to the end times: the manifestation of anti-christ, the great tribulation, the return of our Lord, the establishing of His kingdom, resurrections and judgments. These are New Testament truths, amplified especially by the Apostle John in Revelation. Although the Church is not mentioned, Daniel gives this tremendous introduction to the New Testament revelation of things to come.

OUTLINE

I. HISTORIC SECTION — Ch. 1-6

- A. Personal history of Daniel (1)
- B. Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2)
- C. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (3)
- D. Personal testimony of Nebuchadnezzar (4)
- E. Downfall of Babylon under Belshazzar (5)
- F. Daniel saved from martyrdom in the lion's den (6)

II. PROPHETIC SECTION — Ch. 7-12

- A. Daniel's vision of the Beast's kingdoms (7) (Corresponding to the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream cf. Ch. 2)
- B. Daniel's ram and goat vision (8) (Corresponding to the second and third kingdom: the silver and brass of the image, the bear and the leopard of the beasts)
- C. Daniel's vision of the seventy weeks (9) (70 weeks of years or 490 years in which God was to deal with Israel; 69 weeks or 483 years from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the rejection of Messiah, which was literally fulfilled; the 70th week yet to be fulfilled at the time of the presentation of the man of sin, anti-christ)
- D. Daniel's last great vision: Introduction (10)
- E. Daniel's last great vision: Development (11)
 - 1. War between Egypt and Syria, the kingdom of the South and the kingdom of the North (11:1-20)
 - 2. A prophetic description of Antiochus Epiphanes, a type of anti-christ (11:21-35)
 - 3. A prophetic description of anti-christ, typified by Antiochus Epiphanes (11:36-45)
- F. Daniel's last great vision: Conclusion (12)
 - 1. The great tribulation (12:1)
 - 2. The resurrections (12:2,3)
 - 3. The last message to Daniel (12:4-13)

(Continued from page 16)

Spirit brooded in divine presence, dispensing His beautiful gifts. The Holy Spirit was forced out — He was unwanted because He threatened the structure of ambitious ecclesiastics. But when He was gone, the forms had to be maintained for the people's sake. The Pharisees wanted to keep the form, but not Jesus; He was too unpredictable and disruptive.

Many of the rites and ceremonies in the traditional church are what is left of something that was once spontaneous and full of life.

Often when I am under a strong anointing I will begin to chant my message. Once in a service in Phoenix I came under an unusual anointing and began to chant. After the service a young Greek Orthodox English Professor from the University of Arizona rushed up and began to greet and hug me after the custom of a Middle Easterner, saying, "My Brother, where did you learn the Gregorian chant?"

"The what?" I asked.

"The Gregorian chant," he insisted. "I know priests who have studied it for years trying to master it as well as you have."

A little bewildered and embarrassed I had to admit that I was not even sure what the Gregorian chant was.

"Then where did it come from?" he questioned.

"Oh, I think I *can* tell you that," I answered. What had once been done quite naturally under the anointing of the Spirit of God was now carried on as part of a church rite, void of the spontaneity of the Spirit. I do not mean any of these things disrespectfully, but at one time when hands were laid on heads for confirmation and the words were uttered, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," something happened. Now, it often is empty hands on empty heads. It is the tradedy of doves' dung. All we have left is a memory of a beautiful bird. The Christian must know the freedom to ride the wind into the face of the sun.

WHEN EAGLES DIE

Every eagle will have his down time.

He may be sick or molting, but he never panics. He finds a rock and sits there letting the healing power of the sun do its work. If you find a low place in your life, do not start running around trying to find God — for the people will say to you, "Here is Christ, there is Christ," and it will bring frustration. David said, "I waited patiently on the Lord." God often has a work to do and all we are asked to do is wait. There will again come a time of mounting up on wings, but the waiting must come first.

Every eagle knows when his time for death has come. He finds a high rock where he can watch the setting sun and settles down to wait, and then dies watching the sun.

There is only one picture on my study wall and it is that of my saintly, maternal grandmother. As a very young child Grandma took over much of my rearing. My earliest memories are that of toddling up to the picturesque little picket fence in front of her home on a Saturday morning looking forward to all the delicious smelling goodies that she took from the cavernous depths of her vast old-fashioned oven. How I loved her.

Because of the religious confusion that was in our home, I walked in rebellion as a teenager, but Grandma never let go of me. She was living in our home by that time, and I can remember well stumbling into the house at three or four o'clock in the morning and seeing her light shining under the door. I could hear her sobbing, "Oh, God, oh God!" Even though I usually felt like kicking the door down, I knew that it meant something.

The time came when God got me. I had dissipated my life until I was a moral, physical and spiritual wreck, before He found me. Using what musical talent I had, I set out in the Lord's work and soon found myself in the ministry.

Grandma ended up moving with us to Vancouver where I had my first important charge. She came to every service and sat in the front row and just smiled at me. (I don't think she

ever heard a word I said.) She was saying, "You answered, Lord, you answered." She was nearly eighty and had the most beautiful white hair you ever saw.

Every day for four hours, Grandma would sit in her old rocker and rock out an anthem of praise and supplication to God for me. Her prayers sustained me in a way that I was to realize only after she was gone.

Grandma always lived alone — she was too independent to live with us. One day when I was visiting her for a meal she suddenly said, "I'm going home."

"Home?" I asked, "Home where?"

"I'm going home to be with the Lord," she replied like it was something quite ordinary.

"Oh, Grandma," I objected, "don't do that!"

"Yes," she insisted, as though she and the Lord had talked it over and it was all settled.

A little unsure of what to make of it, I asked, "What are you going to do?"

Quite positively she answered, "I am giving notice on my room, I will go back to the prairies to spend Christmas with the children, and then I am going home."

That is exactly what she did. With Christmas only three months away, she went back to the prairies for the holidays, wrote her Christmas cards and put everything in order. When she was ready she called all the children together and did all the decent things one does when one dies. She called for the pastor and had him read her favorite psalm (she was two verses ahead of him by memory) and told everyone good-bye. When she had attended to everything she turned her face toward the sun and slipped into the presence of God.

Grandma was an eagle. She died as eagles die, looking into the sun. Somehow I think this is how saints were meant to step into eternity.

There is great reward in God for those who will dare to be eagles and learn to soar into what God purposed us to be. 🦅

Learning How to Enjoy Your New Spirit



Second of Four Articles in Series
THE RESTORATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL

A FREE SPIRIT

by Charles Simpson

Restoration — whether you think of restored physical health . . . that old chest you found in Grandmother's attic . . . or a 1910 automobile — you are presented with challenges. But when you apply the process to yourself and couple it with the work of God, that makes the prospect downright exciting! At least, that is the way it affects me. The concept of being restored into the image of Jesus Christ, God's Son, is the most stimulating possibility man can ever face.

Restoration in the life of a believer in Christ Jesus is a continuing experience. Like all experiences, it must have a beginning. How does one become a believer and launch out into renewal? Jesus told one questioning man, Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:3). Further light on that question is given us in Peter 1:23: "Being born again not of corruptible seed . . ."

Now there is no birth without a seed. The Word of God is the seed necessary for spiritual birth. Then there must be an activating force to give life to that seed and this is the

work of the Holy Spirit. The third ingredient for birth into the spiritual realm is the faith of the individual. Yes, just as it is in the natural realm, entrance into the new world of the spirit is a "happening."

After the happening, what? Again, we find similarities to the natural realm. A new life demands attention — breathing and drinking must become part of that life; nutrition — the establishing of a proper diet is of prime concern; freedom to develop and grow to maturity is essential! None of these necessary ingredients are accomplished instantaneously in either sphere.

Let us consider the three time elements of the salvation/deliverance/restoration process by looking at II Corinthians 1:10. "Who *hath* delivered us, who *doth continue* to deliver us, and who *will yet* also deliver us." Do you see that restoration is constantly going on — past . . . present . . . future?

This continuing process might be clarified this way: I, at my new birth received a new spirit and can say, "I *have been* saved." Also, I can say, "I *am being* saved." This refers to my

soul (emotions, will and intellect) which is being changed into the image of Jesus Christ. Finally, I can state, "I *shall be* saved," looking toward that time when I will receive a glorious body like that of Jesus Christ. Paul used these words, "And the very God of peace sanctify you *wholly*; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23)

Here we find an important word — sanctify. It represents a part of our continuing salvation process and means "set apart." As we are set apart by God for His purposes, we are made into the image of His Son — restored!

We also need to cultivate God's understanding of the three-fold constitution of man — spirit . . . soul . . . body, particularly the distinction God draws between spirit and soul.

Spirit is that life or breath (literal translation of the word spirit) which God has placed within man. It is the focal point of our "new birth."

Soul encompasses the intellect, emotion and will of man. The word

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mind is often used almost interchangeably with soul.

Body, of course, is evident to all of us as the container of both spirit and soul.

Today we find God's people showing increased interest in learning how to do what God desires of them. That is why we want to be clear and practical in our study, firmly establishing some important principles:

(1) *No one experience* — past or present — represents all that God wants to do for us. There is no arriving point. Accepting this releases one to learn to receive continually from the hand of God and accept each progressive experience as important to the whole.

(2) Salvation includes *more than* the "new birth" . . . the latter being necessary for the former. Yet, we can be born again and going to heaven but still not have all the salvation God wants to give us.

(3) We can have a *new spirit*, that which God places within at the time of the new birth, be a son and heir, and never come into our full inheritance and enjoy the privileges of a *free spirit*.

FREEDOM — GOD'S GIFT

God begins His sanctification/salvation/restoration in the spirit. This process cannot be initiated in the soul or intellect. *Faith* is received through the spirit and we learn and *understand* through the function of the soul. We might say that spirit is the motivating force and soul is the activating agent . . . it translates motivation into activity. Both of these areas need saving, but the starting point — the spirit — must know the touch of God before the soul — in any of its component parts — intellect, emotion, will, can comprehend spiritual truths.

Basing an answer to the following question on our premise that the soul

is the seat of the learning process, let me ask: In which area does religion belong? You learn it in the mind, don't you? We do not say religion is wrong — it can be wrong or it can be right. If it is the result of a *spiritual experience* moving on your mind, that is right. If it comes merely from a "learned" process, this is wrong.

Most everyone knows something about religion. You can go into a bar-room and start a conversation on religion — but as to a conversation on Jesus — that is another matter. You can ask the question, "Do you know the Lord?" and the usual response will be, "What church do *you* belong to?" Or if you query, "Do you love Jesus?" — this may only open the way for your listener to try to turn the situation into an argument on eternal security . . . modes of baptism . . . or other side issues.

Jesus is not a religion. He is a person — He is life. There is a great difference between receiving Jesus in the spirit and being religious in the mind. Many base their beliefs on information about Jesus rather than fellowship with Him. Our soul — intellect, will and emotion — is one divinely created computer. After having been fed certain facts, it is programmed to make corresponding responses. But humanly computerized answers can never answer spiritual questions. Our mechanism needs recycling — restoration!

Aren't we usually far more soulish than spiritual? We live in the mind realm and feed our intellects "soul" food from earliest childhood. On the other hand, our spirits lie dormant. In some instances, this condition prevails an entire lifetime. Even after the spirit is brought to life through the activity of God's Spirit upon ours, this realm can suffer malnutrition, handicap and underdevelopment. How do we overcome these possibilities?

FREEDOM — WHAT IS IT?

True spiritual freedom is the ability to obey God's will without turning to the mind for reasons why and why not. It is difficult to break loose from ingrained habits of responding immedi-

ately to former thought patterns. We speak of "natural responses," and rightly so. It is natural to do what we have been used to doing and think as we have been trained. Can you see the desperate need for restoration in the intellect, emotion and will?

The trouble? We have a new spirit and an old soul! At least before we met the Lord, we were able to agree with ourselves. Now there are times when we are at war within. Romans 7:15–25 pictures this spiritual indigestion. We try to make the Holy Spirit agree with our ideas of religion, while He is trying to show us His way is the only way to true freedom.

Consider some problems God may have re-programming our computers. The Holy Spirit is the "system analyst" and He must help us "reject" blocks to His free operation. New information must overcome the "bugs" in our pre-fed intellects.

A preacher friend of mine says to me, "Well, I can rest now. I've just finished lining up my sermons for the next year. Great feeling!"

My un verbalized reply to that programming is, "Yes, and the devil is in there reading every one of them right now!"

Can you see that being bound to processed data makes it extremely difficult for God to say anything *new* to us? Why? Because when the Spirit moves on our spirit, the first thing we do is check it out with our computers!

Or take a look with me at Mr. Average Church Member. The weekly schedule is all registered on his computer. Every other Monday is this meeting . . . Tuesday set aside for another. Wednesday is prayer service — one hour to the minute! Then comes Thursday visitation . . . Friday choir rehearsal . . . Saturday family night. And Sunday — that is programmed from sun-up right on! How can the Spirit find room to move around in that pre-planned array?

This makes us like Little Red Ridinghood. We go to Grandmother's house the same way every day. When the devil jumps out from behind the same tree (disguised as the Big Bad Wolf), using the same stick he used last

week, we wonder how he knew we were going to be coming around that bend in the road. Our computer clicks up the result as one more hazard to be encountered. But no answer!

Then add to the computerized preacher and congregation a Sunday morning printed program. The devil knows from past performance just when Sam Jones is going to start yawning . . . and Mary Brown will begin getting restless wondering about the state of her roast . . . and Billy Green will become bored with drawing pictures

Another aspect of true spiritual freedom is the ability to say "yes" to the Holy Spirit when our computer turns out, "No . . . you have never done things like that . . . what would your friends say . . . you must have your wires crossed." As a result of this conflict, our circuits burn out . . . blow up. So do we.

What did Jesus tell Nicodemus about the activity of the Spirit? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

A believer is to be "moved by the Spirit" . . . and the Spirit is free and He will make you free — afforded opportunity. Many things bind and hinder Him in this desire. Would you agree with me that many Christians need liberating today?

FREEDOM — AS JESUS LIVED IT

Let's take a lesson from Jesus in knowing and acting upon the responses of a free spirit. John, chapter 4, gives the story of His encounter with a Samaritan woman. The setting . . . "He left Judea and departed again into Galilee." Then follows an interesting detail of His itinerary, ". . . he must needs go through Samaria." Why? No good Jew needed to go through Samaria. In fact, he would have taken the long way around in order to get to his destination, as contact with Samaritans was off limits for a good Jew. However, Jesus was free because he didn't let

anything bind Him or interfere with His obedience to His Father. He did what the Spirit told Him to do.

Using our little illustration showing how the devil fits himself into our computerized responses, can you see that our adversary would never become agitated by "natural" responses? But in the case of Jesus, he never knew what to expect. We act out of our intellects — Jesus acted under Spirit control. Satan is quite familiar with human computation.

As the Master and His disciples came to the city of Sychar the latter made their way to the marketplace to buy meat. Jesus, being thirsty, went on to the community well — dug by Jacob many centuries before. It was noonday and the area was usually deserted at this time, most women going to draw water either in the cool of the morning or evening. But as Jesus approached, He found a woman drawing water. She had good reason for coming at noonday for her reputation made her presence unacceptable to many. She had had five husbands and the man with whom she was presently living was not her husband.

Nevertheless, Jesus struck up a conversation with her. Most computers would have come up with the information that if Jesus wanted to talk with someone, He should have sought out a man — or at least a respectable woman. The dialogue between them follows:

JESUS: Give me a drink. (*Notice, Jesus puts Himself in a position of being willing to receive. This is necessary before we can offer something to others and expect them to be willing to receive.*)

WOMAN: How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman — for the Jews have no dealings with us. (*Evidently, His action crossed her computer!*)

JESUS: If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is asking for a drink, you would have asked of him for living water.

WOMAN: Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come here to draw anymore.

JESUS: Go call your husband, and then come back.

WOMAN: I have no husband. (*She may have been immoral, but she knew her religious protocol. Is this possible? Yes, indeed.*)

JESUS: You have spoken the truth. For you have had five husbands; and he whom you are now living with is not your husband. (*Truth is absolutely necessary for moving from bondage to freedom.*)

WOMAN: I perceive you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain and you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship (*Here she tried to side-track the prophet with a doctrinal discussion. How many of us try this tactic to turn Him away from personal penetration?*)

JESUS: Woman, believe me, the time has come when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth. The Father seeks such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

WOMAN: I know Messiah is coming, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things. (*She is still evading the issue and displaying her religious knowledge.*)

JESUS: I, who speak to you, am he. (*Jesus brought her to reality — face to face with God — in truth. That's Spirit territory!*)

What resulted? The woman was freed — she dropped her water pot and her past. She ran to tell others her findings . . . and many believed on him for the saying of the woman,

which testified, He told me all things" Freedom from her past . . . freedom to tell others. Free!

God wants to free us for worship and service. Religion . . . fear . . . discrimination . . . prejudice — all these can hinder us from receiving, as well as sharing what He has given to us. What provision has God made for bringing us into this relationship? Presupposing the possession of a new spirit — regenerated through the new birth, here are three major avenues to freedom:

- (1) the anointing of the Holy Spirit
- (2) drinking of the Holy Spirit
- (3) breaking the vessel to release the Holy Spirit.

FREEDOM THROUGH ANOINTING

Anointing means to *pour upon* or *come upon* (literally, to smear or paint). In the Bible every priest and king was anointed at the time of his establishment to office. The high priest would pour holy oil upon the candidate — the oil would run down his beard, signifying that the Spirit of God had authorized that one to operate as an ordained representative of God. As the Spirit *came upon* him, he was set aside for service.

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him (David) in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord *came upon David* from that day forward (1 Samuel 16:13).

Not only is one set apart for service by the anointing, but he can be freed from all that might hinder in the effectiveness of carrying out his duties. Isaiah 10:27 presents this facet of the anointing.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden (talking to Israel who will be oppressed by Syria) shall be taken away from off thy shoulder and his yoke from off her neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed *because of the anointing*.

Do you catch the implication? Because of the action of the Spirit, the yoke shall be destroyed. How does this apply to us? Let's say that in the soul

realm we are bound by a yoke of wrong thinking . . . fear of what others might say . . . prejudice against new ideas and changed responses. We need deliverance from these before we can know freedom. The *coming upon* of the Holy Ghost releases, or breaks, this yoke. The power and authority of God comes and liberates us. Recorded in the Book of Acts three incidents confirm this *coming upon*, with resulting freedom.

First, we meet with the disciples of Jesus gathered in seclusion in Jerusalem. Following the Crucifixion they had been fearful until the resurrected Christ came to reassure them by His presence. He told them to wait for the *coming upon* or anointing of the Holy Ghost, at which time they would receive power. Did they?

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as a fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost . . . (Acts 2:1-3).

Next, we join with some of these men as they received word about the ministry of Philip, also one of the group, who had carried the gospel into Samaria, with resulting revival.

Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:14-17).

The new converts had been baptized in water, but had not yet received the *coming upon* of the Holy Spirit. Peter and John felt this sufficient reason for stepping into the situation in order to bring them more complete freedom.

A third incident of this *coming*

upon is in Acts, chapters 10 and 11. We read of the gospel being taken to the Gentiles by Peter, who after much persuasion went to Caesarea. In the home of Cornelius, while preaching to him and his household, the Holy Spirit fell upon these Gentiles and they all began to speak in tongues. Peter immediately baptized them. He wasn't about to baptize them before the *coming upon* because he couldn't be sure these foreigners could become believers until he saw the evidence from on High. This left no doubt in his mind and he returned to Jerusalem. In reply to their charges as to the authenticity of his actions, Peter replied, "I preached and the Spirit *came upon* them. Who was I to withstand God? Don't blame me. God did it."

Many of us today react as did the Jerusalem council — we must be faced with the evidence of God's coming upon. Then we are forced to either accept new information into our computers or question God's actions. Notice, there was rejoicing among the leaders once they accepted the new intake. They knew if the anointing came on someone it meant that God had already granted them salvation. The anointing was confirmation of something already accomplished.

If you do not feel that you have been anointed by the Holy Ghost, that does not mean that you are not born again and the possessor of a new spirit. All who believe in Jesus as Saviour, having repented of their sins and accepted Him as their righteousness, are sons of God. But there may be a lack of confirmation — a lack of boldness and freedom in the Spirit. Isaiah's words . . . "by the anointing the yoke shall be broken," shows the need for this *coming upon*.

We should always be able to find corresponding evidence of spiritual truth in the life of Jesus. We read that He received this double baptism — water and Spirit. (1) John baptized Him in the River Jordan (Mark 1:9); (2) the Father poured out upon Him the Holy Ghost, saying, "Thou art my beloved son . . ." (Mark 1:10-11).

Here let me use the word confirmation — or sealed — as we examine the

benefits of this outpouring of the Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 speaks of our "being sealed with the Holy Ghost of promise."

There was a time when I thought this meant to be sealed as you would seal a jar — nothing could get in and nothing could get out. That was the way I pictured my salvation. It was accomplished . . . nothing more was needed. As we have said, salvation is so much more than the initial experience of being born into the Kingdom. The seal God is talking about is what we might refer to as a seal of approval — a Good Housekeeping type seal, if you please. Does this make it more clear? It is God's stamp of approval — proving that one is already His.

Let me ask you — when did Jesus become the manifested Son of God? When He was born or when He was baptized? Of course, He was a member of the Trinity before time began; but He became manifested as the Son of God when He was born to Mary in Bethlehem. What about His baptism? It confirmed something that already existed. He received the confirmation of two witnesses — John the Baptist and His Father in Heaven. The anointing does not put the Spirit within; it confirms that the Spirit is already within. The anointing bears witness with our spirit and this is where we get our freedom. It confirms that we are believers and sons, and releases us for service and fulfillment.

FREEDOM THROUGH DRINKING

Anointing is something that happens outside — upon us. Where does drinking happen? On the inside. We may have had the coming upon of the Spirit and still never fully know the freedom available to a constantly renewed spirit. Right here many of us have a "drinking" problem.

Jesus said "If any man *thirst* let him come to me and *drink*" (John 7:37). We are told in John 20:22 that, "Jesus *breathed* on them and said, *receive ye the Holy Ghost.*" The Holy Spirit is the breath of God. We must

drink and breathe. These two acts represent the *basic needs* of our physical bodies. They also represent the basic needs for spiritual development. Just as they are *natural reactions* in the physical — so in our spiritual lives. We need to learn to breathe and drink if we wish to remain free.

Return with me to a worship service in an average church situation — perhaps your own. Remember the preacher who had his sermons all lined up for the coming year? And the congregation with printed program in hand and inner programmed responses? Imagine someone with a new spiritual "input" looking for an outlet in that constricted atmosphere.

Paid professionals do the singing and praying. All you are asked to do is put some money in the offering plate and listen. You are longing to express your new joy, so when announcement is made that the congregation will join in a hymn, your spirit becomes excited. That is, until you hear the dirgeful tone of the music and scan the doleful faces around you. Still your spirit wants to at least say, "Amen" — but your soul reminds you that it isn't acceptable to speak aloud in church. So your spirit once again suffers from malnutrition — you conform and close the door to release.

You may decide to try another congregation. Here you find the person on one side of you saying, "Hallelujah!" and a "Praise the Lord," comes from the worshipper on the other side.

Your soul registers, "Oh, my goodness, I'm with fanatics!"

To which your spirit responds, "Don't go yet. I've just got to breathe." Soon you find yourself being edified — you always wondered how that would feel. "Hallelujah, Lord, thank You!"

Your mind asks, "What's that you're saying?"

A freed spirit answers, "Quiet, please. I'll tell you when we get home."

Anointing and drinking bring satisfactions that nourish the spirit. They

are God's provisions for His creation — a new spirit.

The third aspect of freedom comes through breaking the vessel in order to release its contents. After Jesus blessed the bread, He broke it. Then the people received. After we are blessed with the anointing and filling of the Spirit, we must be broken. Our wills must yield to His. It must not be our zeal, but His grace that is seen.

Mary broke her precious alabaster box to anoint Jesus' feet. The fragrance filled the house. Our treasured ambitions have to be broken before the fragrance of grace within will be revealed. Paul puts it this way in II Corinthians 4:7 — "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

What the world must see is the grace that God has given to us — not the vessel in which it resides. Difficulty and tests can be a means of breaking the vessel so that the grace of God flowing out of us can be visible to His Glory.

In the early history of the Church, there was a saying, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the saints." Persecution only multiplied the Christian witness. In tribulation, these Christians manifested the love and grace of God which had filled them.

Stephen was stoned to death worshipping Jesus. As his vessel was being broken, this treasure flowed out, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." That was a release of God's grace through breaking. It was not wasted on Paul. The grace of God touched him and later reaped a glorious conversion.

Men have lived and died that they, and others, might know true freedom in the physical, material and political arenas of life. Jesus Christ lived and died that *all* men might know true freedom in the spiritual realm. He offers us, as part of the restoration of the individual, the release of His fullness that we, and others, might have life and have it more abundantly. This promise is preserved for eternity in John 10:10. It is yours and mine! ♥

forum

STEWARDSHIP

SPECIAL GUEST PANELIST

Dick Coleman is pastor of the Westside Baptist Church in Leesburg, Florida.

Longing for a first-century New Testament church, he searched the scriptures, read books, and acquainted himself with Spirit-filled believers. As a result, he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at an Episcopal church altar in 1967. Since that time Westside Church has become a charismatic center, reaching out to the needs of many people.

As a teacher in the Body of Christ, he and his wife, Mignon, travel throughout the southeastern part of the United States teaching the Word of God and ministering with signs and wonders following.

What is stewardship? To what extent does God hold us accountable for our time, money and abilities?

PANELISTS:

Bob Mumford
Don Basham
Dick Coleman

Coleman: Stewardship simply means that God is the creator, owner and giver of everything we have – and that we are His stewards of these possessions. This includes one's total life.

A steward is one who administers something which belongs to another. In this case, that Another is God. He holds us accountable for all that we are and have.

The Bible makes this very plain. Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." Psalm 50:10 and Haggai 2:8 stress this, also.

Paul is speaking of "they that dwell therein" when he says, "What? Know



Dick Coleman

ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom ye have of God, and *ye are not your own*? For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, *which are God's*" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). This is total ownership by God! And we must give account.

In fact, we are even stewards of the words we speak. Jesus tells us in Matthew 12:36,37: "But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, *they shall give account* of it in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." A steward is accountable for everything.

However, stewardship teachings display sternness more in the use of money than anywhere else. The reason? Listen to Paul writing to Timothy, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 3:10). You see, the love of money causes an erring from the faith. Abuse and misuse of money brings severe consequences.

Since the love of money causes such dire results, then the opposite side of the coin — the love for God — brings great blessing.

Mumford — Yes, Dick, the person who has understood commitment in the New Testament sense knows it involves his whole life-style — not just that which has monetary value.

Every church-goer knows that the usual "Stewardship Sunday" in a church program mainly stresses the budget, annual assessments and long-range needs. But when we include "time and abilities," we get a much better grasp on the New Testament concept of stewardship.

Which would be the better example of stewardship: an act of service done spontaneously out of love — or an act of service that was premeditated with stewardship in mind?

Basham — Stewardship, in its fullest sense, cannot be completely either one of these alone. A steward must always be aware that he is a steward — one who is responsible for his master's goods. Yet, this does not preclude spontaneous responses.

A man truly happy or excited about his work will find many spontaneous responses stemming from his basic commitment. So it is with a faithful Christian steward. He will rejoice in unexpected opportunities to do things that please the Lord.

Mumford — Don is right. Although I understand the *intent* of this question, the answer cannot be reduced to an either/or decision. The answer is both. There is a subtle snare if either position is arbitrarily held.

The first type, the one who gives spontaneously almost always finds that at the end of the accounting period, he has given less than he

imagined that he did when he was giving strictly, "as I am led of the Spirit."

The second type, the one who tries to serve God by a methodical approach — inflexible, runs the risk of being legalistic — adopting an almost Pharisaic-type stewardship.

My recommendation would be — do both!

Coleman — If I had to make a choice, I would say the latter plan of premeditating one's giving would be the better example of good stewardship. This type of action reveals a state of mind which understands the principles of God's stewardship. It recognizes that one is a steward and that places him in fellowship with the Owner. As a loyal servant, he moves into his giving motivated by a desire to please His Lord.

In II Corinthians 8:1-9 there is recorded a premeditated act of service on the part of the members of the Macedonian churches. Let's analyze it:

vs 1 — Here we have Paul's desire to share the good news of the Macedonian churches' God-bestowed giving.

vs 2 — They gave under trying conditions, but with joy.

vs 3 — They gave beyond their means, with a free will.

vs 4 — They pleaded with Paul for the privilege of giving.

vs 5 — They first gave themselves.

vv 6-8 — The Corinthians are complimented for their many gifts; but also cautioned that they "abound in the grace of giving," also.

vs 9 — The crowning example of giving is Jesus. He became poor that we might become rich — rich in our giving.

Could you clarify the differences between tithes, gifts, and offerings. Where should each be given?

Basham — Basically, by definition, a tithe is one-tenth of one's income which has been dedicated to God. Here are three early references regarding the tithe:

(1) Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek — Genesis 14:20.

(2) Jacob promised a tithe of what he received from God — Genesis 28:22: "And of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

(3) The tithe was incorporated in the Mosaic law as a requirement — Leviticus 27:30: "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy unto the Lord."

A gift, on the other hand (this would also apply to a "free-will offering" is that which is given to God and His work *beyond* the required tithe.

Tithing is an act of obedience; a gift or freewill offering is a voluntary commitment beyond that minimum of the tithe. It seems to me that a person cannot really make a *gift* to the Lord until he has faithfully and obediently presented his tithe. In other words, *giving* must come out of the nine-tenths that is left over after the Lord's tithe has been returned to Him.

Coleman — Two of the terms we use in relation to our giving, *tithes* and *offerings*, are mentioned in Malachi 3:8. In verse 10 of this same portion of Scripture we find, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . ." Thus, we see the tithe is specifically commanded to be brought into the "storehouse." This to me, is the local storehouse from which you are fed. If you are not "fed" locally, then give to those shepherds who do feed you.

I believe offerings, that portion of your giving over and above the tithe, can go to other ministries. There are many of these, but be sure to consult with your local shepherds on this. They should be able to advise you as to worthy ministries. Beware of putting your money in a bag with holes in it.

Some Christians invest in furnishings for their church, clothes for their shepherds, books for the church library, land upon which to establish further ministry. These all come under the category of gifts — or offerings. They should not be considered as tithing.



"If a man is in right relationship with God, giving can be cheerful. But just because we don't feel good/cheerful, this does not exempt us from obedience."



"The one element God looks for, and this is one which we can all produce, is faithfulness. Whether we have little or much, we can all be faithful in returning to Him that which He has given us."

Another matter for consideration in the area of gifts, is that of making a will. I believe every Christian should investigate this and make it a matter of prayer. Much wealth is willed to secular purposes; but even here a believer is accountable for being obedient. What he leaves behind in this world is important.

Mumford — This question raises some blood-pressures! Getting close to the pocketbook gets close to the heart.

Tithe, as I understand it, is God's basic provision in the Kingdom for what we might call, "cash flow." Should every child of God give systematically to the work of God, there would be ample supply.

Gifts are part of that spontaneous, Spirit-led giving that is simply a gift . . . directed toward toward one who is needy; or in an act of love, when there may be no *evident* need. It should be free, with no strings attached; and the reward is spiritual.

Offerings, in my understanding, are what could be described as project-oriented, i.e., putting Bibles in a primitive area. For this, the need is made known, and we — according to our ability — participate in offering of our provision to the Lord in behalf of some particular or special situation. The provision for the Tabernacle in the Old Testament was accomplished by a freewill *offering*.

Would you please comment on giving in the right spirit (i.e., "God loveth a cheerful giver.") What about "prosperity plans"? Can these be wrongly motivated?

Mumford — Motivation in all things is the essence of Christian experience. It is not *what*, but *why* that matters to God.

Reluctance to give dishonors the one to whom we either desire to, or are obligated to, give. Pinch-penny attitudes are rooted in spiritual weakness. Where God is freely at work, the finance flows accordingly.

To me, teaching people to give *in order to get*, carries very serious implications. Prosperity plans do work in many instances. Because they work, God's approval is assumed. This is superficial and dangerous. One cannot doubt that, "he who gives also receives." This is a spiritual law. But, the person who discovers this as a law and then begins to use it with wrong motive, places himself in a perilous position.

For instance, if I *knew* giving God \$10 would insure a \$100 return, I would be an idiot not to hock, sell, mortgage and steal all I could get in order to make such an investment. Never would God countenance such a plan. On the other hand, sacrificial giving from rightly taught and motivated believers, is blessed by God accordingly. The danger is in the interpretation of *why* He blessed them for their giving.

Coleman — As Bob has brought out, what one gives is one matter, but why he gives is a matter of motive. Perhaps it would be well to list some wrong motives that we may better analyze our own. Here are at least four such: (1) Conscience money. The motive here is to buy off your conscience — to put you at ease with God. (2) Ego money. This involves being recognized

for your giving. (3) Emotion money. Let's say a person gets a raise, an unexpected gift, or experiences religious emotional fervor —and then gives God a tip! (4) Bargain money. This motive can be one of greed — money given in order to be blessed. "Prosperity Plans" often appeal to this motive.

One has to be very careful about giving in order to get. Such motives can raise money for certain purposes, but it won't raise Christians to maturity. The supreme motive in giving is that which says, "My Lord owns all I have, even me; and my giving expresses my worship and praise of Him whom I love." God not only "loves a cheerful giver," but a cheerful giver loves God.

Basham — Speaking about "cheerfulness," we should note that we are *required* to tithe, whether or not we feel good/cheerful about it. If a man is in right relationship with God, giving can be cheerful. But just because we *don't* feel good/cheerful, this does not exempt us from obedience. I believe if we begin to tithe, even if it hurts and we don't "feel" right about it, God will bless our obedience and our feelings will soon change until it will become a joy to give. Someone has said, "Don't give just until it hurts, give until it stops hurting."

About "prosperity plans" or "blessing pacts" — etc., they will work because they are based on sound scriptural principles . . . "Give and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38). I do find it objectionable, however, when individual ministers or evangelists continually attempt to recruit people into such plans for supporting their *own* ministries. It's one thing to teach, "God will bless you if you give"; but it is something else to teach, "God will bless you if you give to *me*."

We have heard many "tithing laws" . . . Tithe before taxes . . . the first check is the Lord's . . . give only to your church . . . etc. Where does New Testament liberty fit into tithing?

Coleman — When a person begins to think in terms of deductions first and the tithe second, his motive may be held in question. When I am asked about this, my answer is, Why taxes? Could you not also say, before or after groceries . . . house payment or rent . . .? Why should what we give to our Lord be put in the context of what's left over? The first thought of the "cheerful giver" is to give to his Lord first and then take care of other matters second. I don't mean to separate our "other matters" from God, because being a good steward is to be faithful in all things. This means both the 10% and the 90%. Setting aside the first tenth expresses a spiritual priority that the Kingdom of God and His righteousness is to be sought first (Matthew 6:33).

Your mention of tithing laws, brings to mind the pharisaical practice of tithing, but failing to do more than tithe. Remember that Jesus told them they should tithe, and not leave undone such weighty matters as justice, mercy and faith (Matthew 23:23).

New Testament liberty fits into tithing at the point where one's heart is so converted to Jesus that his whole life is liberated from bondage to the flesh, and he becomes increasingly free to give from a heart that loves God. Martin Luther said that every man needed two conversions — one of the heart and another of the pocketbook. When we settle our relationship with the dollar, we settle one of life's greatest issues. The right use of money can bring great joy and liberty. Jesus said, "Freely ye have received, and freely give" (Matthew 10:8). When we give with godly motives, we give with freedom.

Basham — Very often the question of tithing one's gross income or net income, reveals an attitude which is basically selfish. One might as well ask, "How little can I give and still be considered obedient?"

Jesus said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them" (Matthew 7:12). I believe this can apply to determining the tithe. If God

were to say to you, "I want to add 10% to your income," which figure would you quote as your income — before or after deductions? Whatever your answer, use the same figure in determining your tithe.

As I understand the difference between Old Testament and New Testament tithing, the former was in order to obtain righteousness, while in the New Testament, it is in gratitude for having become righteous through faith in Christ.

In the light of various New Testament teachings on stewardship, specifically the Parable of the Talents, does God give us certain blessings — or do we earn them?

Basham — To me this is not a question of either/or, but of both/and. Obviously, certain blessings from God cannot in any way be earned — salvation, healing, baptism in the Holy Spirit, etc. However, other provisions and blessings, which are within God's will for our individual lives, can be appropriated by prayer and obedience to the conditions necessary for their reception.

For example: "Give and it shall be given unto you . . ." Here, clearly, obedience will result in blessing and this principle will operate in any believer's life. Yet, concerning other blessings, the choice is God's. Jesus told the twelve disciples, "You did not choose me, but I have chosen you." No amount of prayer or persuasion or obedience on the part of any other men could have resulted in their being chosen as a part of the twelve. That blessing came by God's sovereign choice. In that regard, we do not choose our ministry or service. God chooses and we respond. As we respond, the blessings necessary for the fulfillment of His plan for us become available through faith.

Coleman — Let me begin by stating two biblical principles.

(1) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of

works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9). The word "saved," is not only an initial re-birth experience, but a walk.

(2) "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." (II Cor. 1:10). This shows us that "saved" is a continuing experience — past, present and future. The same grace that "saved" us in the initial experience also sustains us in the daily walk, and that same grace shall consummate our salvation at the second coming of Christ.

At the judgment seat of the saints, rewards will be given for works done while in the body on earth. Jesus said, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27). A part of laying up treasures in heaven is in our giving while on earth. It is all a part of our stewardship of the total life. My conviction, therefore, is that salvation is free and by grace; whereas rewards are "earned," but received only in heaven.

Our relationship with our Father while on earth is such that nothing can be said to be "earned." Blessings are wholly of grace. We can only claim God's promises which provide blessings, and these come because of our faith and obedience in our walk with Him. Any motivation involving earnings must be crucified.

Mumford — Taking your question to mean — how or what *does* God reward — let me just say, "God gives — always! We are made to receive. He is the Giver!"

It seems to me that the one element God looks for, and this is one which we can all produce, is *faithfulness*. Whether we have little or much in time . . . money . . . ability, we *can* all be faithful in returning to Him and in using for His service that which He has given to us. This, God rewards. ♡

Asking questions this month are Jack and Cora Bigger. They and their three daughters, Jeannie, Janet and Jill, live in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where Jack is on the staff of Christian Growth Ministries.

(Continued from page 8)

our income, systematically set apart for God. "Offerings" denotes that which we give to God over and above our tithes. In the terms of Scripture we do not *give* our tithes to God, we *pay* them. God says very emphatically, "The tithe is mine" (Leviticus 27:30). In a certain sense, all we own belongs to God; but in a specific sense God has laid claim to the first tenth of our income. In countries which use the decimal system in their currencies, the calculation of our tithe is extremely simple. We merely move the decimal point one place over to the left!

In these verses of Malachi God tells His people that they have "gone away" (i.e. turned away from God). When the people ask in what way, God gives them a practical answer — in a financial way. He asks them to repent and turn back to Him, and He tells them how to do this — also in a financial way.

God warns His people that the result of their wrong financial dealings with Him is a "curse." However, He also tells them how the "curse" may be replaced by the "blessing." He says, "Prove me . . ." — that is, "Put me to the test . . ." He is specific and practical in telling His people how to do this: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . ." Upon this condition God promises to pour out such "a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." The way to enter into the promised blessing is by a practical step of faith — to bring to God all that which is His due.

In the New Testament the same faith principle is presented by Jesus: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6:38). Once again, this is abundance!

Always the step of faith must come before the blessing. As it was with Abraham, so it must be with us. First, "give." After that, "it shall be given unto you." First, "bring all the tithes into the storehouse." Then, "I will pour you out the blessing." This is the unchanging law. First the "sowing," then the "reaping."

When a Christian tells me that he cannot afford to tithe, my answer is, "You cannot afford *not* to tithe!" Not only do I declare this on the basis of the clear teaching of God's Word, but I have seen it in my own experience and in the experiences of thousands of others. It works. God is faithful.

God's promise in Malachi provokes one important question: Where is the "storehouse"? Some preachers declare that the storehouse is the "local church," but the Bible does not actually say this. What is a storehouse for? Mainly for two things — to store the food that we eat and the seed that we sow. This applies also in the spiritual realm. The storehouse is the place from which we obtain the spiritual food that we need to eat and the spiritual seed that we need to sow.

Paul uses similar language in II Corinthians 9:10: "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown . . ." Paul speaks of two related provisions: the bread that you eat and the seed that you sow. Both come from the storehouse.

Quite simply, then, the "storehouse" is the place from which you get your spiritual food, and also the place from which you get the seed to sow for the harvest. If you are blessed by fellowship in a local church which fulfills these two requirements, then it is your storehouse. But if you are associated with a church which provides neither spiritual food for your own needs nor seed of God's Word to be sown in the harvest field, then it is not your storehouse, and it is foolish and illogical to support it with your tithes. Where you eat your meal is where you pay your bill. You do not eat at Howard Johnsons and pay your bill at the Holiday Inn!

Remember that the right use of your finances is a solemn responsibility for which you must one day account to God. Faithfulness in our financial dealings sets us in the path that leads to blessing and abundance in every area of our life. But unfaithfulness in this respect brings a curse upon us. ♡

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