

THE BEST OF 1973



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BEST OF NEW WINE

P.O. Box 22888
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33315

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BEST OF NEW WINE 1973



DECEMBER 1973

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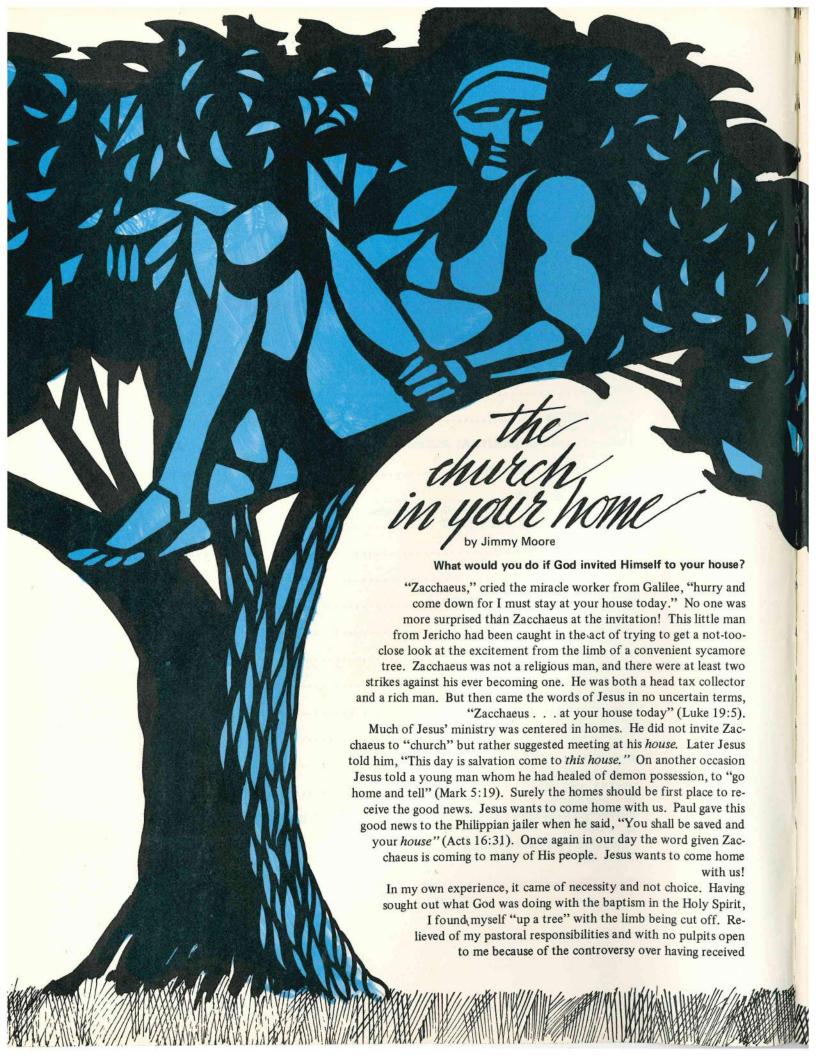
SUBSCRIPTION RATES: New Wine is a non-subscription magazine supported by the contributions of its readers. Single copies and back issues (except December issues) 50 cents each. Bulk prices for regular issues (minimum order of 6) 6–24, 40 cents each; 25–49, 35 cents each; 50–99, 30 cents each; 100 or more, 25 cents each. Single copies of the December issue sell for \$1.25 each. Postage and handling included. Foreign contributions, except Canada, should be made by International Money Order.

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the Holy Spirit baptism, I and my family were forced to start meeting in homes for prayer and Bible study.

During my life as a pastor, I had all too often experienced the frustration of having church life draw me away from my family life. It seemed that church activities, meetings, weddings, funerals, etc., were competing for first place with my family. In fact, when I began to want to find more time for my family, I would feel guilty for not loving God more than the family. There was always the possibility of living under condemnation of "putting your family before God". At any rate, if there was one thing I did not need, it was to have a church in my house! As one faithful church member has expressed in her bewilderment, "Pastor, I just cannot be a good mother and do all that the church expects me to."

This whole situation first came to my attention while I was preparing a sermon for Father's Day. I was going to call it, "A Man of God for the Modern Day", and there were to be the usual three points. First, what a man of God is to be in his church. Second, what is expected of a man of God in his community. And third, what is expected of a man of God in his home. After making a list of duties for the first two points, it was apparent to me that if a man did all that was expected of him, especially at church, there would be no time for the family! This turned out to be one sermon that was never preached.

This incident set the stage for God to begin to teach me a lesson I have had to learn and re-learn. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 55:9). When Jesus touched my life with that "second touch", the fire of His Spirit was felt most deeply in our family life. There was a melting and fusing together in spirit between Dottie and myself, as husband and wife, and there was a new love and appreciation for Eric and Kay, our two children. This was the beginning of many lessons as to how the "good news" proves to be good news for our home. Jesus' words come

streaking across the ages like a shaft of light, "I must abide at your house today."

Never before had it been so apparent to me that the place to practice Christian living was at home. As we traveled from "house to house", the fellowship experienced while sharing Bible study and prayer brought a close relationship with fellow Christians that seemed to be the very heart of the gospel. It took some time to settle into the informal "home" atmosphere without feeling threatened, but soon the transfer was made. Suddenly the gospel seemed much more relevant. Surrounded by plain glass windows, rather than stained glass, I was kept constantly aware of the earthly application of the heavenly gospel.

There is evidence from Genesis to Revelation — from creation to consummation — that the home is to be the focal point of God's dealing with man. In the very beginning God created a family. No doubt he could have created many individuals to start the human race, but the fact is God began with one family. All having one origin is the basis of the physical unity of the whole human family. (Of course, in Christ Jesus we see that the family of God is a spiritual unity, and not a natural relation.)

At the same time that we see the unity of the whole family of God, it is important that we also see the boundaries He has drawn around the individual family. These boundaries He shall never change. Jesus is quoting from Genesis 2:24 when He says, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:5). Jesus confirms for all time that God has not changed His mind concerning the permanency of the marital relationship. Paul quotes the same scripture in Ephesians 5:30 and shows that the understanding of the great mystery of Christ and His Church is found in the marital relationship.

Here we see the corporate as well as the individual work of the family. It might well be compared to the body in relation to the cells. The Church is the whole body, but the families are the cell units of which the Church is made. The cells are *not* individuals, but families. How we need to understand this principle! It is implied, if not stated clearly, in I Timothy 3:1–13, where a properly ordered family is a basic requirement for the bishop and deacon.

In the Old Testament we see examples of this principle worked out. Contrast the witness God gave to Abraham and the judgment brought against Eli. Of Abraham, God says in Genesis 18:19, "For I know him, that he will command his children and household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." Concerning Eli, God says in I Samuel 3:11, 13, "Behold I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle . . . For I have told him I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile. and he restraineth them not."

Perhaps in no other place is the importance of the home more vividly portrayed then in the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. The passover feast in Exodus 12 was a national observance to be carried out at the family level. The instruction was given, "a lamb for an house" (Exodus 12:3).

"And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it; (Verse 7).

"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are. (Verse 13).

"Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: (Verse 19).

"Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover . . . And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel,

and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until morning... and the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you: (Verses 21–23).

"And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses..." (Verses 26–27).

Clearly, the passover was the deliverance of the families of Israel who were obedient to His word. It is also evident that any families who failed to follow the instructions were not delivered. The type of the passover may well fit the salvation (or deliverance) of the families more accurately than it fits the salvation of the individual! Notice just a few of the basic principles found in the event. The lamb, who is the type of Jesus (I Corinthians 5:7), is needed to cover every member of the family. The sanctification of the house is portrayed in putting away all the "old leaven". The priesthood of the father over the family is taught, for it was the man of the house that was required to see that a lamb was provided for his house. The sanctuary of the home in dark hours; the proper place of the instruction of the children in spiritual truths; and finally, the deliverance of the whole nation came only as the families themselves were delivered - these are but a few of the obvious lessons that can be gleaned from the passage which are directly related to the home.

One of the most instructive passages, as well as gracious promises for families, is found in Deuteronomy 6 and 11. In chapter 6 are found two of the scriptures Jesus uses against Satan when He was tempted in the wilderness. It is a passage worthy of much meditation. The inheritance of Israel is described as a land "flowing with milk and honey". However, to receive this inheritance, the people must

establish the Lordship of God over their lives. This Lordship would be established when they would, "Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do" all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the Lord their God had commanded them to do. The motivation for the observance of these commandments was to be a complete love (Verse 5). Finally, to complete the covenant relationship, and to assure the blessings of God upon them, the ways of God must then be taught to the children. The emphasis in Deuteronomy 6 is on living out the life at home (Verses 6-9, 20), so much so, that the children will inquire to know the meaning of the observances.

Almost identical words are used in Deuteronomy 11:18-21 concerning the teaching of the ways of God at home. It might be well to remind ourselves that his teaching was to be done by example as well as by word. The passage ends with the words, "That your days may be . . . as the days of heaven upon the earth." (Verse 21). "As heaven upon earth", that is the promise for those who are faithful to establish their home upon the word of God and to teach their children the Word of God.

The New Testament is also filled with revelation concerning the family. Often it is hidden from our eyes because we read with our traditional glasses. Or else we see God's action in that day, but reason, "Surely we moderns can come up with a better method." Could we throw aside both these blinders, our eyes would be open to the startling fact of God's purpose and provisions for our homes.

When He was here in the flesh, Jesus performed a large part of His ministry in homes. No less, being present by the Spirit, Jesus would perform a large portion of His healing, teaching, discipline and deliverance today in the home. When entering a city to preach, Jesus instructed His disciples to find a home where the "son of peace" dwells, that peace may be ministered to the broken. Living in the family of God is learned practically — by living

with your family in the flesh!

Particularly interesting is the fact that the New Testament is strangely silent concerning religious training for children. There is no evidence that the church, as a whole, developed a program for that purpose. Paul writes in Ephesians 6:4, that it is the father's responsibility to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord". With no program as such, it is evident enough that the principles of training children at home, established in the Old Testament, was continued in the New Testament. It has always been God's way and cannot be improved upon.

Much of the ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing in the Book of Acts was practiced in homes. It begins in an upper room and ends in Paul's own hired house in Rome. The people had not been taught only in public meetings, but from house to house (Acts 20:20). As God has begun to restore this vision to the Church today, much has been written on "the church in the home", a phrase Paul uses on four occasions (Romans 16:5, I Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15, Philemon 2). It is now obvious that God is going to use the home to do His work for it is the home that is truly His greatest work.

In recent years there has been a rash of home fellowships developing across the nation and around the world. Many are excited, and rightly so, that the Lord has seen fit to visit their home and make it a spiritual lighthouse for others. Even some manuals of instruction have been written on how to have a house church. Some established churches have begun to utilize this new method to form a stronger church organization. For others, it is almost a new theology of church polity.

Do not be deceived at this stage of the work. God is not just after a better method or a new type of meeting. He is out to be *Lord over* our homes!

In traveling among charismatic home fellowships, I find at times, a strange *lack* of anointing. Some of the fellowships which had been greatly blessed have grown cold. This is hard to face, especially if you have felt the home church was the answer to all of the church problems. However, some people began to call me aside and ask, "What is wrong with our fellowship?" Some meetings closed, not from a lack of attendance, but a lack of anointing. This concerned me deeply.

After seeking God for an answer, this thought was impressed upon me by the Spirit. "The Lord does not only want a church meeting in your house, He wants your home to be a church." I recalled that the qualification of an elder was, "If a man know how to rule his own house...", and not if he could conduct a prayer meeting in the home.

Here is exposed one of man's basic weaknesses. He willingly trades the method for the Master. This is the mess of pottage we trade for our birthright. With patience and understanding we can have both. If our home is truly a "church", a house of prayer where God's Word is given more than lip service . . . a habitation of God by His Spirit . . . living in God's divine order. then out of our home shall come a flow of life to others. However, if we are merely having a "church meeting" in our home at stated times, we have a method that will soon go dry. Jesus must be Lord of our home.

Since it is possible that having meetings in your home can hinder what God is trying to do between a husband and wife, or parents and children, the Spirit of God may bring about an end to the meetings. Meetings in your home are not a substitute for having Jesus as Lord of all your home relationships and activities. The consistency with which the Spirit is speaking to the Church about the home is astonishing. Everywhere I speak on this subject, the Holy Spirit has already spoken to the people. Many will come to me and confess, "God has been trying to speak this to me for some time."

Not only is God speaking, but He is acting to restore the family life. Many of us in traveling ministries who have been caught up in the excitement and glow of a popular public ministry have been operating from a zeal for God, not according to knowledge. As a result we are being sent back home to set things right there. Those who refuse to follow in this direction are being broken . . . some beyond repair.

If this sounds strange to you, consider Exodus 4:24, where it says of Moses, "The Lord met him, and sought to kill him." He had just begun his trip back to Egypt in obedience to the call of God. Why would God attempt to slay him? Though not said directly, the implication is clear that it is a result of Moses not having circumcised his son. God was not going to permit Moses to return as leader of His people with his own home out of order. Jamie Buckingham expresses what many are thinking along this line when he says, "How can I be the priest in my home if I am never there . . . or if I am too busy to do priestly things like playing catch . . . going fishing . . . or helping my son change the oil in his old car?"

What God is after is deeper and more important than a new method of teaching or promoting evangelism — He is out to purify the very fountainhead of spiritual life — the home! Most of our problems in church and society are the reflection of the disorder that exists at home. Christian homes are no exception at this point.

More often than not, when the home fellowship is not moving as it once did, God is trying to speak to a home. A house divided against itself will fall, as well as the house not built on the solid rock. And if a tare seed of bitterness, rebellion, envy, loneliness, misunderstanding, hardness, pride or egotism has been sown and gains room for growth, it must be dealt with . . . and the sooner the better.

A wife may need loving and listening to. A husband may need attention and honoring. Children, usually not too impressed with our religious and charismatic garb, may need fellowship, teaching or discipline. Paul's admonition in I Timothy 5:8, states this case clearly: "You should

make it clear that for a man to refuse to look after his own relatives, especially those actually living in his house, is a denial of the faith he professes. He is far worse than a man who makes no profession."

No longer does it disturb me when our house churches are not anointed. Nor does the guilty conscience drive me to continue — lest the kingdom of God collapse. The house church and the kingdom of God are here to stay! This seems to be simply the reminding nudge of the Holy Spirit saying, "I want your home — not your meeting."

Do not let it take you by surprise, if perched upon your religious limb — watching Jesus from a distant vantage point, you hear that same voice that spoke to Zacchaeus, saying: "Sir, come down, for I must dwell at your house today." Do not resist or reason — just claim the promise expressed by the Master's words, "This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19:9).



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Does the Presence of God's power indicate God's approval?

by Don Basham



hotel room in a certain city with thousands of dollars in cash in his pockets. The cause of death was acute alcoholism. Yet miracles of healing had followed his ministry right up A minister I know saw this evangelist appear backstage at his own meeting so drunk he could scarcely

stand up. Yet when the time to preach arrived, he suddenly sobered up, ministered with powerful results; and immediately after the service resumed his drinking.

Such problems have always existed in the Christian ministry, but today they have reached crisis proportions. The restoration of the miraculous gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit have

served to spotlight the difficulty. Any time the church moves into new power and experience, new problems arise. Increased power brings increased problems.

But understand this: God does not allow the difficulties to surface to discourage us. He doesn't turn on the light to hinder but to help. When sinful matters are exposed, it is for the purpose of correcting them. Therefore the light is as much an expression of God's love as it is of His judgment. In God's providence there is an answer to every problem, and it is our purpose in these pages not only to expose the error of false apostles, prophets, teachers and pastors, but also to bring to light God's solution.

Here is another illustration of the problem:

While I was ministering in a certain city some years ago, a woman came to me for counseling. In the course of the interview she admitted to having become involved in an adulterous relationship with a local Spirit-baptized clergyman who was much sought after as a charismatic leader and conference speaker. She refused to divulge his name.

Two days later, I counseled with yet another young woman who began to tell me about a charismatic minister she had turned to for help. As she described the man (whom she also refused to name), it was obviously the same man described to me two days earlier. And sure enough, this woman also confessed to having committed adultery with the minister for a period of many months.

Neither woman would name the man because he was a highly effective and admired spiritual leader in their city.

Let me relate one final illustration. At a teaching mission in a certain Eastern city, a lovely young woman made an appointment to see me following a morning service.

"Rev. Basham," she said as we sat alone in the pastor's study, "I have a problem so unusual that I hardly know how to tell you about it." (It wasn't nearly as unusual as she thought!).

Reprinted with permission: True and False Prophets, Copyright 1973. Manna Books; Greensburg, Pennsylvania. "Our church brought an evangelist here some months ago. And his preaching was wonderful! Many people were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. So far as the meetings were concerned, it was a wonderful week!"

She paused and her eyes began to fill with tears. "But it wasn't a wonderful week for me. My problem is... well, I know that minister is a servant of God, and I know God used him in a wonderful way. I saw that with my very own eyes. But..." It was several seconds before she could find her voice and continue.

"The very first night he began looking at me in a way that made me uncomfortable. And after the service, he told me the Lord had shown him that I was a very special person and that he could help me discover the way I was to serve God. I was flattered but more than a little concerned because his manner was . . . well . . . too familiar.

"The next night," the young woman continued, "he sought me out again after the service. He took both my hands in his and told me the Lord had shown him he could be a father to me. Only, Rev. Basham..." Tears started to spill from her eyes again, "...he wasn't looking at me like a father, but in a way that made me feel...undressed!"

"Then after the third night's service, he said that while he had been praying for me the night before, God had revealed to him that he could be a husband to me! He was holding both my hands again as he said it. I shuddered and tried to tell myself he couldn't have said what he did. But I knew by the way he looked at me and by the way he held my hands that he really meant it. I broke away from him and rushed home in tears!

"Worst of all, Reverend Basham," she shook her head sadly, "at two o'clock in the morning, my telephone rang. It was the evangelist calling from his motel room. He begged me to come down to his motel and join him. He said he wanted to pray with me. He said God was showing him many

wonderful revelations about me and that it was necessary for him to share them with me immediately. And he told me not to tell anyone where I was going.

"I guess I screamed at him over the telephone, and hung up. I didn't have the nerve to attend any more of his services, because I knew he wanted to have an affair with me. No man who invites a woman to his motel room at 2 o'clock in the morning has right motives; I don't care how great a preacher he is. But Reverend Basham, how can such things happen? I know he is a man of God. His miraculous ministry proves that! But I just don't understand!"

That young woman was right. She didn't understand, just as thousands of other Christians don't understand. She wasn't aware of even a fraction of that particular evangelist's reputation. For I had heard complaints from responsible, heartsick Christians in many parts of the country; Christian fathers and husbands whose daughters and wives had been seduced by the man. Yet this man is still in ministry, still winning people to Christ with miraculous effectiveness.

How can a minister whose personal life is a moral shambles, who is guilty of continuing dishonesty or immorality or deception continue to exercise an effective ministry attested to by the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit?

I know of no more pressing problem in the church today than the problem of false prophets, apostles, teachers and pastors. For that is how the men we've been describing must be classified. They are FALSE ministers of Christ. We trust this article may help explain how the problem comes about.

HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE?

Matthew chapter 22 records the account of some Sadducees who tried to trick Jesus with a fable about a woman whose husband died. In turn she marries her husband's seven brothers, each of whom also dies. At the resurrection, the Sadducees ask, whose wife

shall she be? Jesus' answer had application far beyond the question of marriage in heaven. It has real relevance for our discussion. "Ye do err," Jesus replied, "not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." (v. 29)

Many tragic situations in the Body of Christ today stem from this fault: We do not know the Scriptures. To be ignorant of God's word, Jesus says, is to be shut off from God's power. In other words, before we can find God's solution to a problem, we must know what God's word has to say.

Man is not entitled to his opinion of how God ought to work. He has a responsibility to study the Scriptures to determine how God does work, and then to bring his life into line with the purposes of God.

The scripturally ignorant person complains, "Why does God do this? Why did God allow that?" Essentially, it is rebellion which asks, "Why does God?", while submission leads the Christian to God's word for the answer, "Why God does." So, we must study the scriptures and learn God's ways.

Let's state the basic problem once more: How can a man whose personal life is a moral shambles have a public ministry in which the genuine miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit are in evidence? In this chapter we will examine 5 reasons why we've failed to understand how these things can be.

I. We have misunderstood the meaning of God's grace.

A recurring problem in the Christian life is the fallacy that we receive God's grace because we deserve it. The problem usually begins in childhood.

"If you are good boys and girls, when you die you'll go to heaven!" pipes many a well-meaning Sunday School teacher.

Good boys and girls go to heaven when they die.

Bad boys and girls go to hell when they die.

This deception may continue to plague us when we're grown, even though we claim with Paul that we are sinners saved by grace.

"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 KJV)

We know God's grace is a gift which cannot be earned. However, we fail to remember this when we consider the spiritual gifts which are ours through the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Too often I've heard this admonition given to those struggling to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit:

"The Holy Ghost won't come into an unclean vessel. There must be some unconfessed sin in your life!" As if by self-effort any of us could become worthy to receive the Holy Spirit! The same lie we heard as children reasserts itself in slightly altered form: "Be good and you'll go to heaven", becomes "Be good and you'll receive the baptism. Be good and God will give you spiritual gifts!"

Such a statement denies the definition of a gift. A gift cannot be earned, or else it's not a gift, it's wages or reward. Paul had to explain this to the Roman Christians:

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Romans 4:4–5 KJV)

As in salvation, so also in spiritual gifts. They are neither deserved or earned! They are given.

How many times, after ministering the baptism in the Holy Spirit, or healing, or deliverance, are we told, "You must be a holy man to be able to do that!" As if by some personal merit we've earned a miraculous ministry. But personal merit has absolutely nothing to do with it! Even the apostles knew this. Acts chapter 3 contains the story of Peter and John ministering healing to the lame man at the Gate called Beautiful. It was a spectacular miracle and those beholding it drew the same conclusion people draw today. Peter had to correct them:

"And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though

by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?"

Then Peter gives the credit to Jesus, where it belongs:

"And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him (Jesus) hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. (Acts 3:12 and 16 KJV)

Peter repudiated the idea that his power or holiness had anything to do with the healing. Why was his denunciation necessary? Because those people also believed that a man had to be a moral super-saint to perform miracles. But grace cannot be earned; it can only be gratefully received through faith. And ministers used of God to perform miracles may be no better morally or ethically than any other believer in Christ.

II. We have mistakenly assumed the gifts of the Spirit were an endorsement of character.

Although people tend to accept the gifts of the Spirit as the mark of the true or false apostle or prophet, the word of God insists it is Christ-like character, not the miraculous gifts, which determine his status. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matthew 7:20 KJV)

If I give you \$5,000.00, that gift says nothing about you or your character! It does not say whether you are tall or short, strong or weak, good or bad, wise or foolish. The only thing it indicates about you is that you are the recipient of my gift.

But that \$5,000.00 says a great deal about me. It indicates that I am a man of considerable wealth; that I am generous and helpful and benevolent. A gift says nothing about the recipient, but much about the donor.

So also with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They say nothing about the men who receive them, (except that they had faith to receive them.) Rather, they reflect the miraculous power of God.

Years ago, a man spoke at our church who had been a hardened criminal before he accepted Christ. After his conversion he began to pray effectively for some of his ailing fellow-prisoners. During our service, he testified to some of these healing miracles. Afterward, one member of our church was very upset.

"How dare that convict talk like that!" he fumed. "The very idea that God would give his healing power to a criminal is disgusting! Why, my uncle was one of the greatest preachers in our whole denomination and God never used *him* for healing. Yet my uncle was a good man all his life. How could God use a criminal?"

The critical church member failed to realize the miracles were demonstrations of God's power and that they revealed nothing about the convict except that God used him.

A woman once complained to me about a person God was using.

"Brother Harry claims he has the gift of prophecy," she lamented, "but he still chews tobacco, and when he's mad, he beats his wife! How can such a man genuinely prophesy?"

"I'm sure God would rather use someone who didn't chew tobacco or beat his wife," I answered. "But if Harry is the only man in your church who has exercised faith for prophecy, then he's the only one God can presently use to bring forth His word."

Paul says 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 does the treasure represent? The wealth and riches of God. What does the treasure say about the earthen vessel? Nothing, except that the vessel holds the treasure. Such precious treasure in such humble vessels, Paul reflects, is a reminder that the power is God's and that we cannot make ourselves worthy of it.

III. God gives and doesn't take back.

"For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable." (Romans 11:29 RSV)

This scripture verse offers another explanation for the existence of the false prophet who manifests genuine gifts. The word "gifts" used in this verse is the word *charismata*, the same

word Paul uses to describe spiritual gifts in First Corinthians 12. So Paul implies that God gives spiritual gifts to men and no matter what sin a man may fall into, God does not revoke His gifts. Here we have a conflict between what man thinks God should do and what God chooses to do. The understandable human reaction is, "If I were God, I wouldn't do it that way. If I gave a miraculous ministry to a man and he fell into sin, I'd take the power away."

That's the human way, all right: pour out the miracles as long as the man behaves himself, but snatch them away the moment he steps out of line. But that is not God's way.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8–9 KJV)

Our responsibility is not to try to change God's methods, but to *understand* his ways and flow with them. We need to say with David:

"Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation;..." (Psalm 25:4-5 KJV)

In this case, man's objection stems from the mistaken belief that God should give spiritual gifts as merit badges for good behavior. If this were true, then of course, the gifts would be taken away for misbehavior.

But since the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not given because a man behaves properly, neither are they removed because a man behaves improperly!

"For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable!" God gives them "for keeps". He does not call them back. Let this be a sober warning to any man desiring a miraculous ministry! Is it any wonder that Jesus said, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required . . ."? (Luke 12:48 KJV) Can you see how our ignorance of God's word has led us into dangerous waters? Many have assumed the more God's power flows through a

man's life, the more spiritual protection he has. Don't you believe it! The greater the ministry, the greater the danger. The more powerful the ministry, the more significant a target for Satan the minister becomes.

IV. The ministry belongs to God and not to the man,

Every miraculous ministry is God's; it does not belong to man. God says, "My glory will I not give to another." (Isaiah 42:8 KJV) We must distinguish between the miracle-working ministry and the man through whom that ministry flows.

God will perform *His* ministry according to *His* wisdom, even though the human vessel through whom that ministry flows may not be living the obedient life he should. A miracleworking ministry entitles a man to no special favors from God. Rather, it exposes him to far greater risks than the average Christian runs, It is wrong to assume a man is "someone special" simply because he has a powerful ministry. He is "special" only in the sense that God has chosen to use him as a channel or mouthpiece.

The scriptures reinforce this point. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it." (Isaiah 55:10-11 KJV)

The picture here is one of God initiating, nurturing, and harvesting that ministry which He sends forth. True, the Lord uses the prophet's or minister's mouth. But it is the message and the ministry God is primarily concerned with here, not the obedience or disobedience of the mouthpiece. It's God's word that shall prosper, not necessarily the one through whom the word is ministered.

Even Jesus declared the ministry was the Father's and not His; He had no power on His own.

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do . . ." (John 5:19 KJV)

"I can of mine own self do nothing..." (John 5:30a KJV)

And to the Philippians Paul wrote that he was . . .

"... confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ..." (Philippians 1:6 KJV)

God begins the work and He will perform it. God is determined to perform His ministry whether a particular human instrumentality measures up or not

So God bestows a miraculous ministry, not because He thinks the minister is morally or spiritually superior, but that the needs of His people may be met! It is God's love and compassion (not the minister's) that leads to a demonstration of His power (not the minister's power) to meet His people's needs. Once He bestows a ministry upon a man, that man remains His chosen vessel, even though the devil may wreak havoc within the man's personal life. ". . . the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable."

Now let's examine God's dealing with the man, quite apart from the miracles that are flowing through him. A man with a powerful ministry is subject to far greater temptations than the average Christian. His position of unique privilege is also a position of unique peril. The fact that he is chosen for a powerful ministry makes it all the more imperative that he submit to the cleansing and crucifying work of the Holy Spirit in his own personal life. Unfortunately, most Christians assume the lion's share of that crucifying work has already taken place, else God would not have chosen the man. Alas, both God's word and contemporary experience confirm the fallacy of such an assumption.

For our protection, God would have us understand that the marks of the true apostle and prophet are not the miracles, but the fruit of the Spirit in the apostle or prophet's life. It is precisely because the miracles say nothing about the man that we must examine other credentials to determine if he is a true or false apostle or prophet.

As my friend Derek Prince has bluntly stated: "If you want to know if a man is a true apostle or prophet, don't look at the miracles in his ministry; see if he pays his bills at home and if the woman he's traveling with is his wife!"

V. God's judgment may be delayed, but it is certain.

Something in human nature prompts us, when given an inch, to take a mile. That is, if we get away with something the first time, we will almost certainly try it a second and third time. If we can escape detection, all of us are tempted to appear self-disciplined, while privately indulging ourselves. Against this tendency to self-indulgence, we must acknowledge the certainty of God's judgment.

The fact that God is slow to exercise judgment is a snare which Satan effectively uses. Many Christians assume that since God's justice is delayed, they may never have to account for their disobedience or wickedness. This is a special temptation to the man whose ministry continues to be miraculous, even after he falls into sin. He may mistake God's forbearance for indifference.

"He (the wicked) hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it... Wherefore doth the wicked condemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it." (Psalm 10:11 and 13 KJV)

But he presumes too much:

"Because he (God) hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man (Jesus) whom he hath ordained . . ." (Acts 17:31 KJV)

Here are some scriptures which indicate both God's reluctance to anger, and His reminder of the certainty of justice.

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will

he keep his anger forever.

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; not rewarded us according to our iniquities.

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." (Psalm 103:8–11 KJV)

"The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy." (Psalm 145:8 KJV)

"And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." (Joel 2:13 KJV)

"The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked..." (Nahum 1:3 KJV)

This parable of Jesus' is also pertinent:

"Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

"And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.

"And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

"And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also and cast him out.

"Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him.

"But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

"So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

"He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others." (Luke 20:9–16a KJV)) While the obvious meaning of the parable is that since the Israelites stoned and killed the prophets, they would put to death the Son of God, it also has signficance for us because it reveals the patience of God toward his ministers.

The owner of the vineyard is God and the husbandmen to whom he entrusts the vineyard are the ministers of God. As God delays his coming in person, the ministers, still exercising their ministries, become more and more sinful and rebellious, resorting to violence and eventual murder. The ministers shall eventually be destroyed, but only after repeated postponements of judgment, prompted by the longsuffering of God, who continues to hope for their repentance.

But the postponement of God's judgment merely allows the rebellion latent in His husbandmen to be fully manifested.

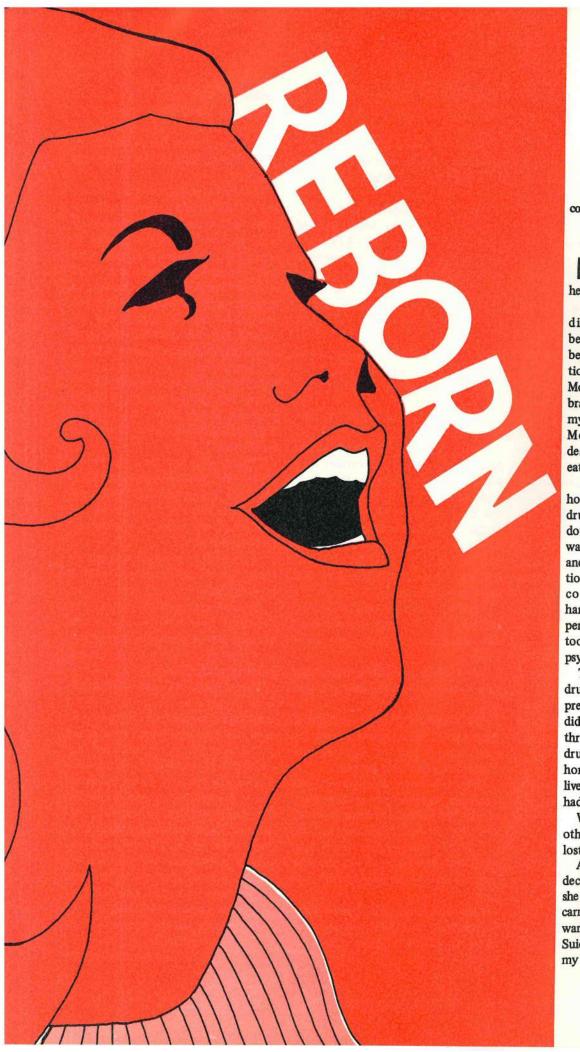
"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9 KJV)

God's loving patience is a dangerous thing for a man entrusted with a powerful ministry!

We have examined the reasons why Christians have not understood how miracles can be present in the ministry of a man who is not living an honest, moral or godly life.

These ministries will continue to roam at large in the body of Christ until God's people begin to open their eyes and take a scriptural look at the ministry. There is nothing disrespectful or sacrilegious about questioning the ministry of an individual whose life and background is dubious. We think nothing of carefully examining for months an insurance company with whom we will trust our earthly possessions; but we often will receive without a moment's question the ministry of a man who could endanger our spiritual well-being.

God would call His people to a new level of understanding and maturity, are we willing to meet the challenge?



A College student shares her encounter with the RISEN CHRIST!

n the tenth grade I started to drink heavily and do drugs.

The seeds sown by an emotionally disturbed father, undisciplined rebellion, and my parent's divorce, had begun to sprout and grow. My relationship with Mom began to fall apart. More than once it came to physical brawling. I started doing "speed" with my friends. It is a powerful drug called Mescaline, which can eventually destroy your mind — and it began to eat away at mine.

After several months, the tension at home, with my continued use of drugs, came to a head — I had a breakdown. We called it "freaking out". I walked into an eleventh grade class and realized I could no longer function. I couldn't find my chair... I couldn't orient myself. It sounds harmless, but it is a terrifying experience! I called my Mom and she took me to a doctor and then to a psychiatrist.

The psychiatrist started me on more drugs. Only I took the drugs which he prescribed, as well as mine — which He didn't know. I continued to slide through the "drug-confusion — more drugs" cycle, until I ended up leaving home, family, psychiatrist, and all — to live with my boy friend. Somehow, I had made it into the twelfth grade.

We stayed high on acid (LSD) and other drugs most of the time, and I lost touch with reality more and more.

About Christmas of that year Mom decided that I had gone far enough; she and my grandmother practically carried me home. Though I resisted outwardly, I really wanted to go home. Suicide was becoming a regular part of my thinking and I was existing in a

never-never land of unreality that scared me.

Not too long after returning home, I shut myself in the bathroom and began to make slashes in my arms with a razor blade. I cut myself several times and stood there watching the blood flow out of my arms. I began screaming and crying all at one time. My mother and brother wrapped my arms in tea towels and took me to the hospital.

My psychiatrist wanted to put me in a mental hospital where I could have better supervision. More pills... more dope! I was sick of dope! I used to run to the bathroom and throw it up after they had given it to me. Being around the other patients who lived in the same confusion and darkness that I did, seemed to bring the curtain of darkness further down in my life.

Finally, I pleaded with my doctor, "I want to go home!"

"Well, Where's home?" was his reply.

"I'll live with my Mom!"

"O.K., if you are willing to do that, you can go home."

Two or three times after that I went to the bathroom and cut my wrists — never badly enough to really hurt — just enough to bleed. I was getting desperate for something to intervene and break me out of the trap my life had become.

I first called on God, not really knowing what I was doing. In one of my moments of hopelessness, I went into the bathroom and began cutting my arm. As I stood there looking at the cut, something inside began to cry out. "God...God!" The name kept plummeting through my mind. Then it came out, "God! God, help me...help me...help me!" I wept in frustrated desperation to the silent walls and then cleaned up my arm as I had done before and thought little more about it.

A few days later my brother, Paul, who was also doing drugs (but not nearly as heavily as I), was approached by two girls. One of them asked him if they could pray for him. A little

stunned at the notion of being prayed for by anyone, he said, "Pray? Pray for what? Sure. Prayer can't hurt anybody."

They prayed that Jesus would reveal Himself to him. They talked for awhile and then invited him to come to dinner at their home.

When Paul got home he told me that they said Jesus could forgive sins and give people new life. He related the things happening in our day which pointed to the second coming of Jesus Christ — the wars... the economic crisis... the move toward world government... and many others.

To him, it didn't mean a lot — but it was like the sounding of a beautiful chime to me! I was overwhelmed. That was it. It was real! Somehow I knew that this was what I had been looking for.

A few days later he had dinner at the communal home where the girls lived. They shared scripture, told what God was doing in their lives, and shared the way of salvation with Paul.

As he recounted their words to me, it was like someone turning on a light in a dark basement. God made His plan for me so plain — "This is Jesus. He is My help for you."

"Paul", I asked, "how do I know I'm saved? What do they say about that?"

He thought for a moment. "They say if you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart, you will be saved." He remembered they had used the scripture, "If you confess me before men, I will confess you before my Father." Could it really be that simple? In my heart I believed all that he had been telling me, but I still didn't have what I was looking for.

I was on my way to a movie with some friends a short time later. Sitting in the back seat of the car, all that I had heard and seen kept playing over in my mind. Then quietly, to myself—almost in a whisper—I breathed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

I didn't expect anything to happen — but it sure did! If ever there were doors swung open and light come into

anyone — it was to me. I was alive all over. Where there had been darkness, now there was light. Instead of depression, there was a glorious joy!

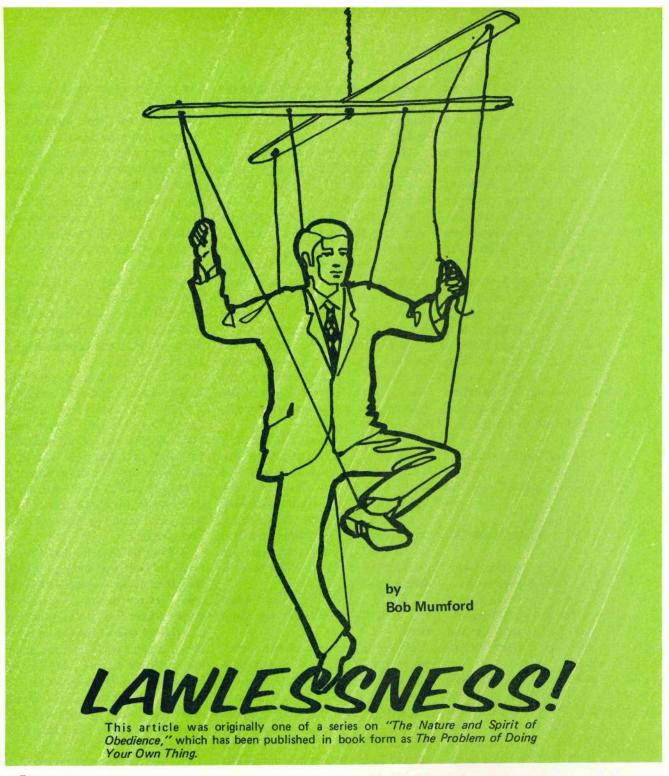
There I was standing in line at a movie theater and wanting to shout it again and again, "Jesus Christ is the Son of God!!!" I knew nothing of God's laws or commandments. I couldn't see the sin I was living in. But I told God that whatever He wanted me to give up, I would . . . sex . . . drugs . . . alcohol . . . anything! The desire and appeal for all these things that had been my life had suddenly vanished. I had been reborn into a different world. I was experiencing Life for the first time!

Next time I visited my psychiatrist he got quite a surprise! "I don't think I'll have to come back anymore, Doctor!" I told him. "Jesus healed me!" At the end of the session he scratched his head and puzzled, "I can't deny that you are changed, because you are!" I guess watching me go down hill for over a year and then seeing me healed in a few weeks was a little puzzling.

God was far from finished with me! I was to find greater joy in knowing Him through the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He was to bring a greater and deeper release from the years of sin by glorious deliverance from the power of Satan. A short while later my brother was saved and is now living for God. My father, who was in almost the same darkness as I, found Christ through what happened to me, and is a changed man. Mom and I have a new relationship.

For the first time in my life I am learning obedience and discipline. One of God's words for me was, "Children, obey your parents..." My mother wanted me to go to college, even though I had failed out of my senior year in high school. I went in obedience to her and the Lord. My last grades were three A's and a B. Truly a work of God for me!

I recently told somebody that I felt like I had been in jail for years and I just got out — just like a captive that had been set free!



"Lawlessness" means different things to different people. Some instantly hear the shrill of a siren, the screech of tires sliding to a halt, and the clank of hand-cuffs. Another will be caught up in the suspense of a courtroom scene with judge poised to pronounce the sentence; the accused, belligerent, in the face of the verdict. Still another may only be conscious of his own inner burning resentment and the discipline necessary to keep it

from erupting into action. But how many picture a Christian standing accused, amazed and questioning, at the discovery of his own lawlessness before the Word of God?

Certain principles are present in every instance of lawlessness. It is these basic principles that we are probing in our search toward understanding the Nature and Spirit of Obedience. Lawlessness and obedience are two sides of the same coin. Man has

been endowed with the privilege of choosing which side of the coin he will use in the daily exchange of life.

Personally, I have been working on this word "lawlessness" for six or seven years. There is within my heart a cry to understand obedience in some new way — some deeper way than I have ever known it before. Everyone who has dealt with the things of God for very long knows that an individual shares out of his own needs. A true

The move of the Holy Spirit in our day has brought new horizons of freedom to believers. But will God someday judge our generation by saying, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes"?

teaching results from the search of a man who has been crying out for understanding.

For an introduction to the character of lawlessness, we take three verses from the closing of Jesus' teaching which is often referred to as The Beatitudes — Matthew 7:21-23:

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils: and in thy name done many wonderful works (i.e., miracles, healings, other signs and wonders). And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Notice that the party in question calls Jesus "Lord". I Corinthians 12:3 tells us, ". . . no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." It is my belief that these three verses refer to born-again, Spirit-filled Christians.

Consider the phrase, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." As I understand it, this does not mean heaven in the ultimate sense, but refers to relationships and involvements in this present life, as well as to the future.

In the following phrase, "... but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven...", the word will could be translated the desire or the wish of my Father. In most instances it is translated this way. It is the same word that is used by Jesus (Matthew 6:10) when He teaches us to

pray, ". . . Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." It is the desire, or the wish, of the very heartbeat of God which is expressed in this word will.

So Jesus is saying, "Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the wish, the desire, the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name..."

Here let us consider three verses from the Book of Mark – 9:38–40. "And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name and he followed not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth us not. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part."

Looking again at Matthew 7:22, "...have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out demons? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I have never approved (many translations use this word and the Greek substantiates it) you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Here is the word I have been after — INIQUITY! Immediately there leaps into the mind of most Christians visions of robbing banks, beating up your grandmother, and all sorts of lurid crimes. We think, "Oh, those nasty people, no wonder the Lord says I never knew you." But the interesting thing is, the Lord does know them. So there must be something further as far as interpreting

what Jesus means when He said, "I never knew you." He cannot be saying, "I don't know your name or address." What is He saying, then? In this instance, iniquity is lawlessness. That is, they were walking without law. Please let me say right here as strongly as I know how — much of the Christian community is walking without law!

DOING YOUR OWN THING

Which brings up this question. Is it possible to know and understand the things of the Spirit, grab them to ourselves and go our own ways? The answer is a resounding YES!

One important principle which we need to realize is this: the ultimate law in all the Universe is the will of God. There is no law above the will of God.

How about a Mumford translation of our three verses from Matthew: "They called Him Lord because they loved Him. But He says: Why do you call Me Lord when you don't want to do the things that I tell you? If you are going to call Me Lord, then you must come under a spirit of obedience. You see, it's not what needs to be done. It's what I tell you to do. But you call me Lord, Lord, and you take the things of the Spirit and you use them to your own promotion, to do your own thing, to go your own way and build 'something for Jesus'."

Do you know that it is not what you do, and it is not where you go; but it is whether or not you have done the will of God?

I may say to God, "God, I am going to Philadelphia and preach the (Continued on next page)

SPIRIT OF LAWLESSNESS

gospel." He replies, "You stay in Fort Lauderdale!"

"But God, I want to go to Philadelphia and I enjoy preaching and I am going to save the world for Jesus! Move over God!"

Or, we may become acutely aware of a need on the other side of the world. So off we go — without background, training, commission — simply because there is a need. There is only one thing wrong with the whole set-up: it wasn't within the revealed will of the Lord for you!

These instances remind me of the time I rode a horse on a dare. It was a big white mare and the moment I got on the horse she became aware that I did not know how to ride. So the horse took the bit in her teeth and dashed off just where she wanted to go. I didn't have a thing to say about it! I just rode along. This is the way it can happen with the things of the Spirit. We get the bit in our teeth and dash off to do something for Jesus, and the Lord just rides along, waiting for the day when He can get the bit into our mouths and get us stopped long enough to direct us into whatever He wanted us to do in the first place.

Do you see it? I take the things of God and go my own way. Therefore, He says, "If you do that, you will find out that you are going to be disapproved. This is not what I am after in your life. I cannot use you. I find that I must reject you, not as a child of God, but I must reject you because of your lawlessness — because you refuse to come under law."

Now, Church, the strange part of this whole thing is that nobody has trouble "obeying" until God's will crosses his will! Also, how many of us have found out that God knows just where to place His finger in order to reveal to us our lawlessness?

This has nothing to do with open sin. It has to do with the inward nature of obedience. Lawlessness is a spirit. It is something within the child of God that we received from our father Adam that came right down to us. When God's will crosses our

will — that is when we discover the spirit within us that responds, "But I want to do my own thing!" We superimpose our own will on God's will . . . and this is lawlessness.

An example of this truth of law-lessness and disapproval is in Ezekiel 44:10-15. "And the Levites (notice, these were men of God) that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols: (doing their own thing) they shall bear their iniquity. (Here is the same word - lawlessness.)

"Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house; they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them."

The verses which follow do not say, "Those Levites that went after their idols — I am going to cut them off and have nothing more to do with them." No, this is what God says, "This is a lawless spirit, and because of this comes rejection and a certain punishment. You priests may continue to stand before the people and minister to them, but you may not come near to me anymore — nor to any of my holy things; only those who did not go astray can stand before me."

I believe this is almost an ultimate punishment — "you go ahead and minister but what I am after is sons of righteousness...those who obey...those who want to do My will...where there is a spirit inside the man which says, 'I delight to do Thy will, O God.'"

Yes, you can take the things of God and go build your own church . . . your own prayer group . . . your own doctrine. The worst part of it is that God blesses it. But the lawless spirit within you will ultimately call forth rejection and punishment.

If I could blow an urgent trumpet, the message would be: for Jesus' sake, seek to hear and understand what God is saying to us in this area! Each one of us will have to discover for himself his own spirit of lawlessness. Because we have thrown off outward sin, we have

difficulty recognizing that the spirit of rebellion, the spirit of anarchy, is at work in our lives. What God is really after is to write *His* law on our hearts.

GOD'S REVEALED WILL

Psalm 19 has much to teach us along these lines. It shows us the three ways by which God makes Himself known to man: general revelation; special revelation; and spiritual revelation, where God makes Himself known through the Spirit in the inner man.

Verses 1-6 gives us a general revelation:

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork.

"Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night, sheweth knowledge.

"There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

"Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.

"Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chambers and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

"His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

Pictured for us is a man looking upward. He sees the heavens spread before him. He sees the light...the dark...the stars. To many, these glories proclaim the Creatorship of God. To others the scene leaves only questions with no answers.

One day a professor was talking with a student who claimed to be an agnostic. The student said, "I want to know God and yet I don't believe there is any God."

To which the professor replied, "Go out in the back yard and lift your head up and say, 'God, if there is a God, I want to know you.'"

After following these suggestions the boy returned and his professor asked, "How did you make out?"

The response was, "I felt like a fool."

"Good!" came the answer, "That's

the way to start."

Here we see the workings of general revelation. However, there is no voice, there is no speech. This can be very dangerous because people will say, "Yes, God is a creator. I believe in God. I see His handiwork." The result of such limited acceptance results in pantheism and religion. It is dangerous because people get excited and feel they believe in God just because they see evidence of His creative powers. Even the devils believe in God.

Yes, general revelation is a step in the right direction, but it falls very short of God's desired goal to make Himself known to man. General revelation can tell you that He is, but it can never tell you what His will is for you. God wants to be known, but He also wants you to know what He is like. He said, "If you want to know what I am like, then read about it."

Verses 7-10 contain a special revelation of God:

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple.

"The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eves.

"The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

"Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward."

Yes, once we see God in creation, He has what is called Special Revelation for us. Many, or perhaps most, of us have mental images of God. These are the products of our imaginations of what God is like. And He may not be at all like that! God provided for that possibility. He said, as we have mentioned before, "If you want to know what I am like, read about it."

Special Revelation tells us just this and much more. It shows us His provisions for all of our needs and in this we get a picture of His greatness... His goodness... His wisdom. These are insights we never could receive through just General Revelation. He also tells us what He wants us to do... where to go... what to say... how to dress... what He expects from us. This is God dealing with the individual. His ultimate goal is, that after years of rebellion, each one may have revealed to him the specific will of God in every detail of his life.

Finally, we see a spiritual revelation of God in verses 12–14:

"Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight,

"O, Lord, my strength and my redeemer."

Spiritual Revelation occurs when God works what He is and what He reveals Himself to be, into the heart of man.

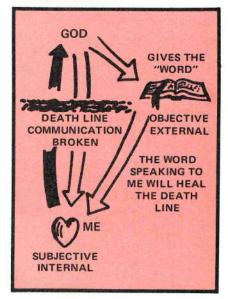
Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Book of Hebrews all teach us that God's ultimate goal is to open us up and write His laws on our hearts. Jeremiah says, "I will give him a new heart." Ezekiel puts it this way, "I will sprinkle you and write my laws on your heart." In Hebrews chapters 8 and 10, we find: "I write my laws on your heart."

The motion picture, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, portrayed for us the scene of God's laws being engraved upon the tablets of stone. As I witnessed this, I saw what God's ultimate intention was and what he wants to do within us. When His law is written on the table of a person's heart, there will not be a lawless spirit, but a spirit eager to do His will.

One translation of the question asked in this Spiritual Revelation as "Who can understand his errors?", words it this way, "Who can tell how many times we offend?" This is a question David is asking, "Who can understand how many times we must

have offended God and walked off in a lawless spirit, without even knowing it?"

David closes the Psalm with the prayer, "Let the words of my mouth..." Do you realize the truth implied in this opening phrase? Another reminder from scripture says, "Out of the heart the mouth speaks." It really is true. The meditations of the heart are expressed through the mouth. In Spiritual Revelation the Word is made flesh.



GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN

In order to explain how God works in the life of man, let me use the above illustration and then take myself as an example. I know myself better than I know anyone else and I know His workings in my life.

There is one thing that I want in life — I want to know Him. My heart beats inside. It beats out a desire and says, "God, I want to know You. I want to understand You. I want to come to love You and be a son who is pleasing to You." This is all working in my heart and I say, "God, reveal Yourself to me."

But something happened to impede the fulfillment of these desires. Sin entered in and caused what we shall call the *death line*. In the rupture, the communication between God and me was cut off. Due to this death line, my spirit, and all that was involved, died.

(Continued on next page)

LAWLESSNESS

We are all familiar with this alienation between God and man.

But God said, "Mumford, I still love you."

Amazed, I responded, "You do?"

"Yes," He answered, "and in order for Me to reveal My love to you I have to give you something — the written Word. This will speak to you and if you will permit it to, we can get this death line healed."

You will notice in our drawing showing the communication lines between God and me, that His plan is double arrows. It is not just me going to God, but it is God coming to me. This is extremely important! In fact, this is where we are most apt to ruin the entire procedure.

The minute the death line is healed, we are apt to think we know God, not literally but actually. We fail to remember that this is a progressive revealing of God's will.

Right here we are going to take two words. The first is SUBJECTIVE or INTERNAL. The second is OB-JECTIVE or EXTERNAL. The first is what is going on inside of me. The other is what is going on outside of me. The external, or objective, is what the scripture calls TRUTH. The embodiment of Truth is God's LAW. Jesus said, "Thy word is truth." (John. 17:17). Here is God's inspired Word given to us (special revelation) to tell us what He is like, what He wants from us, what He expects us to do. It includes our money, how we are to handle our sex life, when and where He wants us to go to church. This is called the perspicuity of scripture - meaning that the Bible speaks to everything. If you do not believe that it does - just read it!

To single out one experience which proves this, let me tell you about my purchase of a Christmas tree. The price was \$5.00 and I felt this was more than I wanted to pay. So I began haggling with the merchant. I said, "That little thing! It is half dead already. Look, the limbs are beginning to fall off."

"Well, I'll give it to you for \$3.50," said the salesman. I gave him the

money and got in the car.

I drove home thinking, "Boy, did I get a bargain!" That night before I got in bed, I picked up my Bible and a verse in Proverbs (20:14) jumped out at me. "It is worthless, it is worthless, says the buyer; but when he goes his way, then he boasts (about his bargain)." (Amplified).

Convicted, I cried, "God, you got me! This is exactly what I did." Recalling how I tried to get the salesman to come down on his price and how he

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

-Psalms 1:1-3

finally agreed to sell the tree for \$3.50. I realized I had sold myself for \$1.50. Big deal! But I did not know. Do you know why I did not know? Subjectively, I think I know things. Internally, I am Lord in my house. . . I have to make my own decisions and go my own way. God said, "I know that, but I'll tell you what I have done, son. I have given to you something outside of yourself that will show you how to do this."

The Father is searching for a people who will worship Him in spirit and truth. Jesus made it very plain when He said, "The Father seeks such to worship Him in spirit and truth." (John 4:23). He has given to us His Spirit and His Truth. Together they lead to spiritual health and growth. Someone has said, "The Word alone, you dry up; the Spirit alone, you blow up; the Spirit and Truth, you grow up."

F.B. Meyer tells a story about going to visit an older man who loved God with all of his heart. One morning about 5:30 o'clock Mr. Meyer came up the stairs into the friend's room to find him pouring over the scriptures. He asked, "What are you doing?"

The reply was, "Well, I am just finding out whether I love the Lord or not."

Surprise was evident in the next question, "You find out whether or not you love the Lord?"

"Yes," the old man replied, "I read the verse that says, 'He that has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me.' I have just been going over the commandments to find out whether or not I really love Him."

Perhaps we had better ask ourselves if it is possible to come into a religious self-deception and believe that we are something that we really are not. If I ask myself the question, "Do I really love the Lord?" and seek to answer it from merely the way I feel, I may be deceiving myself. But if I have a way of measuring my answer, I am obligated to put that method into use.

But how can we measure correctly if we are not acquainted with the ruler (the Word of God)? We are going to have to learn that there is a nasty word that is used perhaps a hundred times in the New Testament — that word is commandments. We don't even like the thought of that word! We rear back and say, "Are you trying to put me under the law?" You had better believe it — a new kind of law.

If you can see this principle starting to work in your life, you will pour over the scriptures, coming to the place where you will ask yourself, "Am I doing that? Am I obeying this?" It is important that we see this subjective-objective relationship which will lead to spiritual health and keep us walking in the light of God's Word.

SIX GUIDELINES ON THE RULER

Returning to our thoughts on Special Revelation, we find six definite guidelines for measuring our understanding of God's provisions for spiritual growth and maturity. These are progressive. They have been tested, tried and proved over many centuries of use.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,"

The word "law" is used in many different ways in the scriptures, but here it literally means "to point the finger". It means you are going one way and God says, "Go this way." This is general direction. The law of the Lord is perfect, turning you around — sending you in a different way. It is the finger pointing you. It might be called the "over-view" — it is over everything. It shows you how He wants things to be done.

"The testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple." Literally translated in both Hebrew and Greek, testimony simply means that "it works!" If you do what the law tells you to do, the testimony is this - it works! Most of us could give testimony after testimony about God's ways working. I have never in my life had anyone tell me that God had actually failed him. If you meet God's qualifications, you will find that it always works. It is sure and it makes you wise. It affords an internal knowledge - not an academic wisdom - but an intellectual knowing of that which is real from that which is not.

"The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." This has to do with civil and human relationships. We all know that there are a multitude of crying needs in our world today. And there are almost as many solutions offered as there are problems. But God gives certain statutes governing civil, human and inter-personal relationships. If we would live by these statutes, we would not have the racial, economic, social snarls with which we are beset. They would be unraveled through the statutes given to us for these purposes. The effect would be a rejoicing in the home, the community, the church - such as never has been seen before in the history of the world. Joy leaves when you break God's statutes.

"The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Commandment means special instruction clearly given. His command is pure, which is better translated clear, plain or distinct. One command given to us by Jesus is, "A new commandment give I unto you, that you love one another." It is plain. He told us to do it. It will open our eyes. When we do what the Lord tells us to do, it is amazing what we see following our obedience. God opens whole new vistas and horizons to the obedient. The disobedient go dry.

"The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever." This is the motivation for holy living — the fear of the Lord keeps you clean. Someone may say, "It doesn't mean to be scared of God." Oh yes, it does! It would be good for all of us who are seeking to follow the Lord to get a good dose of fear. Don't play games with Him. He will get you in the end. Judgment is not always speedily executed but He will get you. It may take a year, or five, or twenty years, but He will be there waiting for you. The fear of the Lord keeps you clean.

For example. . . the eyes of the Lord are watching when you make out your income tax. When you know He is going to be watching, it is strange how easy it is to put in the right figures! Uncle Sam may be on the alert occasionally, but the judgment of the Lord endures forever.

"The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." The judgments of the Lord are what results from neglect of or disobedience to the other aspects of special revelation. If we close our eyes and ears to the general direction given to us; if we scorn the testimonies of the Lord; if we settle for man-made solutions on our civic and inter-personal relationships instead of heeding God's statutes; if we disobey His specific commandments; and if we do not cultivate a fear of the Lord — JUDG-MENT is our final destination.

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous. We may question this in our own lives and even in the lives of others. But every time God deals, works or judges in the life of a man or woman — you can know it is right. There may be a rebellious spirit within

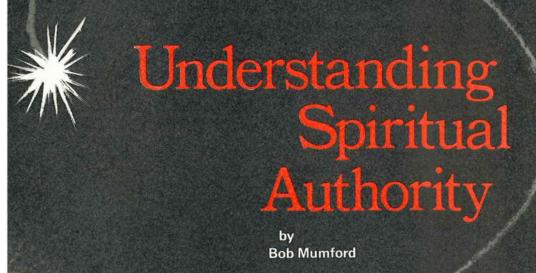
a person that completely hinders growth. Some of us would rather cry and stiffen our battle-line than submit.

Do you wonder why God passes judgment on His children as the need arises? One of the things that helps us to see the merciful hand of God raised in judgment is a statement from the Book of Revelation: "Lord, righteous and true are Your judgments, all the earth is being judged, but you are right, Lord, they deserve to die." In the light of this, we should cry out, "Oh, God, bring forth judgment in the earth."

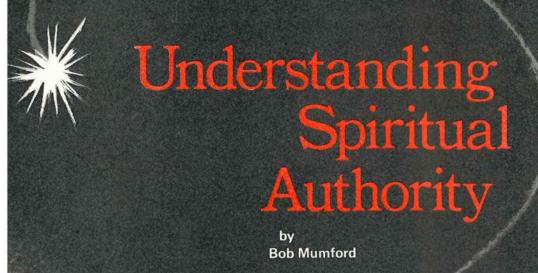
I believe the words, "more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb", refer to God's judgments. Rather than go the way of developing a lawless spirit, we should say, "God, God, God, I want your judgments. I know they are righteous and true. Lord, please don't wait until I get to eternity and then reveal them to me. Deal with me now, Lord. Show it to me, God, for what it really is. Work something in my heart. More to be desired is your judgment than gold, yes, than much fine gold." He that is without judgment is without a Father!

"Moreover by them (law, testimony, statutes, commandments, fear and judgments) is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward." We have the warning and we have the choice. We can either continue in our original lawlessness, or come under the judgment of the Lord and submit to His love, grace and provision. We can ask Him to put the bit and bridle and harness on us and walk along in His yoke, knowing the joy and freedom of companionship with the One who has made us for Himself, or we can go the way of the world, the end of which is death and destruction. Thank God He has given us the power of choice and clear instructions for our guidance.

Today as never before God is looking for an obedient church. And before obedience can come, we must first come to grips with our own lawless nature. I believe with all my heart that this is what God is saying to the church today. Let's listen!



DYNAMI



DYNAMI

"The Nature and Spirit of Obedience," now in the book, *The* Problem of Doing Your Own Thing.

BOB MUMFORD — Outstanding Bible teacher, in demand around the world; also author and leader in the present sweep of the Spirit. He and his family headquarter in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

ach of the above three words — Understanding — Spiritual — Authority — is a study in itself. Put them all together, they add up to DYNAMITE! But as I travel across our land, and in many other nations, this is what I hear God saying to the Body everywhere. Could it be that He is moving us into territory marked: DANGER, GOD AT WORK!

Would you agree with me that these words, taken both on an individual basis and as a concept, picture a progressive and developmental process? We are familiar with the phrases, "clothed with authority" and "the voice of authority". What are some of the sights and sounds we have come to associate with that sometimes aweso me...sometimes welcomed...even at times, terrifying word—authority?

What about the infant? Shortly after experiencing the warmth and security of mother's arms and the sound of father's laughter, there come new and different feelings and sounds. Among the first of these to impress the mind and form reactions, are the words, "no...no". Yes, early he learns there are some "no — no" areas in his little world. Early he begins to form responses to this puzzling situation — his own desires and that voice and word which carries a discordant sound, even to his limited understanding.

As the years pass, hopefully, there would be a growing feeling of love and acceptance in his family circle and his expanding world. There comes conditioning, instruction and example in the meaning of, and need for, the "no – no's" of life. "Daddy says so . . ." brings a recognition of authority and its expected obedience. Also, it brings the realization of possible disobedience and resulting consequences.

Soon other "authorities" appear on the scene. Not only parents, but brother...teachers... policeman...the man at the grocery store...all seem to possess this choice-making formula. There are written, as well as verbal, signposts along the way. Even self-formed mental projections throw up questions and answers.

Can you see that when God is brought into one's awareness, already thought patterns are formed . . . consciousness of choice has become a part of life? At age five, "Thou shalt not lie," carries meaning. This protective device, "I didn't do it. Johnny did it!!", can be used to escape possible punishment. Or at least it is worth a try. In another decade, "Thou shalt not steal," has real impact, as a teenager meets up with the prevelant "lark" of shop-lifting . . . "The others do it and get away with it!" Then add ten more years - "Thou shalt not commit adultery!" This can be a lifedetermining decision. Whether presented as "thou shalt not . . ." from God's Word, or just "situational ethics", there stand those words understanding and authority.

Now let us consider that third ingredient — That one that ties it all together for us, as Christians. Outwardly, at least, we have acknowledged God as the original, final and rightful Authority and Judge. Spiritual authority — "Thus saith the Lord!" How has God chosen to reveal and administer His authority? Remember we are not talking about ecclesiastical authority but spiritual authority. There is a difference.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL DISCLOSURE

Just as we have seen it in the physical realm, spiritual awareness has its definite origin, growth patterns and expectancies. To even *begin* to grasp God's plan and purpose in this area of His operation, we must recognize and accept some basic principles. One

which we have previously shared is His three-pronged thrust for setting up authority in our present Church-age.

Recall Jesus' parable in Luke 20:9-16, as He tells about the Master of the vineyard sending his servants to collect the produce. The husbandmen disregard the delegated authority beat the servants, and cast them out. They even went so far as to kill the son of the master when he was sent on his father's business. They reasoned they could claim the inheritance with him out of the way. Jesus then raised the question: "What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?" The answer came, "He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others." Continued rejection of God's delegated authority results in finally rejecting God and going our own way a rebel!

For an example of delegated authority, consider Paul and his words of greeting in Titus 1:1. "Paul a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness."

To be operative, authority must be (1) of God...God had dramatically called Paul; (2) authority must be accepted by the one who is called by God...Paul had certainly gone allout in his allegiance to his new-found Lord; and (3) that authority must be accepted by those to whom God's man is sent.

Do you remember those important words of Jesus in Matthew 23:29. "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord." Again in Matthew 10:40, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." Do you see where God puts Himself in this matter? He stands just one step behind His delegated authority. How we treat His servants determines our measure of seeing, hearing and growing in spiritual truths. Permit me to share with you two stories which bring home this divine arrangement. One is from my own ministry and the other from the life of a friend.

I had just finished preaching my first Sunday night sermon. I felt it had been a miserable message and I had died a thousand deaths there behind the pulpit. Walking up the aisle to greet the people after it was over, a little old Polish lady approached me and said, "Brudder Mumford, can I pray for you?" She was trembling all over . . . inwardly, I was, too. Pray for me? God's man of faith and power who had come to straighten everybody out? A woman? But God said, "You had better submit." So I knelt down on a pew in front of where she was standing and bowed my head - I knew I was in need. As she laid her hands on my head, the power of God came upon me . . . from top to toes . . . fingertips and all! Mentally, I asked, "God, how come you gave that to this little old lady?" But the Lord had sent to me a servant and she came to me in the Name of the Lord.

My friend, an Episcopalian priest, lay in the hospital. He was in so much pain that about all he could do was cry out to God for relief. A critical spinal operation lay before him. Through his hospital doorway comes a casual acquaintance - a Pentecostal preacher full of life and high spirits. He shouts, "Hello, Father! Jesus sent me to pray for you!" The noise shoots more pain up and down that spine. The very thought of enduring, even for a few moments, that boisterous contact is repugnant. Coming closer, the visitor asks again, "Is it all right if I pray for you?" It seemed the easiest way out of an unhappy situation, so my friend nodded consent.

Relating the story to me, he said, "That man clamped his hands down on my head, pain mounting all the while. He bumped the bed and prayed loud enough to be heard all the way to heaven. He did everything wrong... and then he was gone. I almost thought I was, too! But as I lay there, I suddenly realized there was no more pain. It was such a relief and surprise that it took me quite some time to accept it." Simply because God's servant was received, God's power was released.

Too often we want our ministry directly from God. We want personal attention. We aren't about to receive what we need through some delegated representative. It works the same way, not only in isolated instances of ministry, but in receiving teaching and new revelations of His desires for us. We are prone to say, "I get my orders straight from God." Remember, God doesn't come after the grapes Himself . . . He sends His servants. It is a three-way stretch which God has ordained. And God blesses or afflicts us with "servants" according to our needs.

STAND UNDER OR AGAINST

Turning to God's Word, Romans 13:1-5, look with me for a moment at the difference between power and authority. In verse one, the word power is used is some translations, but authority is the literal translation of the Greek word used here. Do you know the difference between the two? Authority is the badge that the policeman wears. Power is the gun he carries. If the badge doesn't get across the message, the gun will. Again, if a Greyhound bus is coming up the road, the officer doesn't stop the bus with power — he stops it with authority.

- (1) "Let every soul (every person) be subject (submit) unto the higher authorities. For there is no authority but of God; the authorities that be are ordained of God.
- (2) "Whosoever therefore resisteth the authority, resisteth the ordinance (command) of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation (the literal word is judgment; this is not going to hell not at all).
- (3) "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the authority? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:
- (4) "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword (his gun) in vain: for he is the minister of God (the one who

fixes up those who have rebellion... Mumford's translation!) a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

(5) "Wherefore ye must (it is necessary) for you to be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

Two very important words are presented in these brief verses: subject and resist. Both are used not just once but several times. The literal translation of "subject" is two words and means "to stand under". The word "resist" is of the same Greek construction and means "to stand against". In any given situation you have only two choices - stand under or stand against! We must learn that when we feel this thing called resistance (or rebellion) rise up, we are obligated to recognize it and call it by its rightful name - rebellion - before it takes over. This means every soul grandmother to child. Not a pleasant pill to swallow, is it? We might as well admit that it is not easy to submit and that even the word isn't palatable! But we can learn - and we must!

So . . . I come out from the grocery store and there is a ticket for overtime parking on my car. I want to rise up and stand against the whole police department. I tear up the ticket and three weeks later comes a knock at the door — it is the constable. I can resist him . . . and resist the judge . . . "It's unfair!" . . . "Thirty days!" I can be in jail and have only one thought . . . "Just wait until I get out!"

We have two choices: stand under and let that rebel die — or stand against and watch that rebel grow. Do you know that there is nothing anybody can do with you if you really want to be a rebel? The police know this is true. Workers with children and youth know it. Is this happening in our day? We have a whole generation that is standing against authority . . . parental . . . governmental . . . spiritual. As this evil element spreads, the feeling permeates into the church. The whole world may be going one way, but God asks the Church to go

His way.

Verse 2 tells us, "They that stand against, shall receive to themselves judgment." It does not say that it is God who is judging me. When I stand against, I am judging myself a rebel! As I continue in my rebellion, I become blind - not just to the facts inherent in a given situation, or against people involved - but I become blinded to the things of God. God has built His kingdom structure in such a way that it automatically excludes all rebels. You rebel . . . darkness grows; and you receive to yourself judgment. God does not judge. Oh, no. You do it vourselves. Listen, when you feel resistance rise in you, break. Stand under it! It is not for the sake of the authorities - whether they are right or wrong - the thing is this: God is giving you an opportunity to break that core of rebellion that is buried in your spirit. If that breaks, everything else will fall into place.

God has His laws. We stand or fall according to our choices. It involves individual responsibility. One day the Lord said to me: "Mumford, you and I are imcompatible, and I don't change." It took awhile for that statement to sink in. Have you felt the full force of that truth yet? Most of us know how to manipulate and maneuver our parents and others who cross our paths. We know how to get our own way. This makes me doubly thankful that God cannot be bought... He cannot be threatened . . . He will never be out-maneuvered. There is no escape. You avoid Him at one turn along the road and later you will meet up with Him around the next bend. He's there waiting!

FEARS/PROBLEMS/ANSWERS

Rising up out of this divine arrangement of delegated authority comes some fears and problems. As we take our expected stand under the authority God has placed immediately over us, question marks appear on the horizon. But God has provided the answers and they are available to the

honest seeker.

Two fears in the Body of Christ are (1) that there will be no authority, and (2) that there will be wrong authority. Some of us are even afraid of the word "authority". Consequently, there are spiritual Lone Rangers. These ride off by themselves and admit to no need of anyone. "Just me and God." From my observation, it is mighty rough going out there riding the range all alone. It puts the fear of God in many of us because we realize that where there is no authority, the wolves have free access. Also, there is the danger of falling into the plight recorded in Judges 17:6: "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

Then the fear of wrong authority: pitfalls here, too. We hesitate to submit for fear the one under whom we take our stand may ask us to do something we feel we just do not want to do! A strong plea from a mission field may come and the cry go out, "Everybody empty your bank accounts and give it to missions!" Is this a basic distrust of God?

Two problems add themselves for consideration: (1) that no one will want to submit; (2) that there will be spiritual dictators. Very real problems but with answers. As the Church moves into obedience, the listening ones will willingly come into subjection to the authority God places over them. And God will increasingly raise up men to places of authority who, in turn, will be submissive, themselves, and thus prove capable leadership.

Speaking of spiritual dictators, much criticism has been leveled in the past (and some of it justifiable) against ecclesiastical hierarchy and authority. But if we take a good square look at some of our smaller circles of operation, similar tendencies (only on reduced scale) might be brought to light . . . and that not of choice but perhaps necessity!

Often some of the fears and problems we raise prove to be only smokescreens behind which we hope to take refuge. I believe God is moving throughout the entire Body in an effort to open our eyes to His ways and means platforms. The Holy Spirit is bringing us into the whole truth in order to set us free — not to bring us into bondage, as some would have us believe. Jesus tells of this coming facet of the Spirit's work in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth..." Authority needs to be received to become effective.

As to the possibility of authority being misrepresented, God can take care of this aspect, too. We must admit that once some of us taste the power of having authority over others, basic conflicts can arise. This is demonstrated in the following father-son situation.

My two boys engage in some backand-forth argument. The older one finally gets tired of it and comes to me with the complaint, "Daddy, I can't do anything with my brother."

Asserting my parental authority, I say: "Well, go back in there and tell him, Daddy said . . ."

Willing to give it a try, I hear: "You had better get in bed. Daddy said so." It worked! Do you see how easy it would be to put that magical phrase in use to one's own advantage? "Daddy says do this... Daddy says don't do that..." And all the time Daddy may be unaware of misuse of his authority. But God is never "otherwise occupied"... or out of town... or caught off guard. He can protect and retract His authority!

We can use this same technique not only to brandish a club over those in submission to us, but, also, to worm our way out of submitting to someone. It is easy to say, "God told me..." when we want to go or get our own way. Nobody can argue with that, because He is the highest authority there is. If each one of us will stand guard over his own proper use of authoritative prerogatives, we will have less time to be questioning that of others.

How about this statement for a scorcher? A rebel seeks to find fault with the authority over him so he will

not have to submit! "I don't like purple ties . . . his hair is too long . . . preachers shouldn't drive Cadillacs Some "peoplewatchers" are constantly on the alert for any and all reasons for nonsubmission. As far as they are concerned, they have never yet met anybody good enough to warrant their submission and they have a little hardcore of rebellion to prove it. They might as well come right out and admit that what they really are after is to go their own way . . . run their own lives . . . do their "own thing" irrespective and unbridled!

UNDER-COVER AGENTS

And we might as well "tell it like it is" and try to hear it like it's told! To be effective kingdom agents, with proper working credentials, we all must be under cover. That goes for everyone - stem to stern. Paul recognized this principle and presented it in no uncertain terms. In Ephesians 5:21, he states: "Submitting (standing under) yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Then he goes on and speaks specifically to wives, husbands, children, servants, masters. In 6:10, he wraps it up, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Then comes the admonition to put on the whole armor of God, closing with a request for prayer, . . . "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel,"

This is just what I want to do here and now — share with you what I have been learning about "covering". What may seem new to us, proves to have been available to us all the time. In order to "spell it out", let's begin by saying that God establishes authority in the earth. He puts someone directly over each area of His creation. On the sixth day of His creative activities, He spoke to Adam and Eve: "... and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth

upon the earth." All should have someone over them, in the Lord, to whom they answer. This is submission—"Let every soul stand under."

The home was the first Godordained unit of society. The husband/father was placed at the head of the home. Most of us men have assumed a position of "male" leadership in our homes — handy to have around when the furniture needs moving and such related "strong man" responsibilities — but we are speaking of spiritual headship.

One of the wide-spread depictions in the area of home-life in our entertainment world today is the movie and television portrayals - along with the comic strip characters - showing "dear old dad" as a bumbling, stumbling idiot who trips over the coffee table, with the wife and children helpfully guiding him along through life. There is also a profusion of husbands without wives, and wives without husbands, who are all trying to make it on their own. This affords a lot of laughs along the road . . . but when the surface is scratched, the pathos shows through. Male mediocrity and female liberation are two sides of the coin that Satan is trying to pawn off on us today. Church, hear me, don't buy it!

In the Mumford household there have been some adjustments, just as there are in every home. Picture things as they ought to be: father, priest of the home. . . in his proper place over his family — a spiritual covering. This is as they ought to be! The following "before and after" presentation depicts part of our "transition".

SCENE I (Some years before we really began to understand what was going on): Father goes off on an extended teaching mission. My wife, two daughters and two sons are left at the mercy of the devil. Sure enough... things begin to go wrong. The refrigerator stops working. The car won't start. Children are wanting to run off in all directions. Sickness... confusion... questions! My wife, Judy, gets on the phone: "Honey, you just have to come home..."

Here am I away trying to do the will of God! I had a hard time figuring it all out. Then I saw two things. First, I was not taking my rightful place as the priest in my home. When the priest is not taking his place, as ordained of God, the home is uncovered and demon activity comes in and out at will, causing havoc. The home and family are under attack. Secondly, when I take my stand and assert it in the home, that home is under covering. I said, "Devil, listen to me. This home belongs to Jesus Christ, I am priest of this home and you get your hands off!" What happened?

Scene II Father is off again on a trip... the phone calls take on a different tone. I call, "How are things going, honey?" Answer: "Great...We miss you... praying for you..." I began to see the covering of the Lord come down over my whole home — financially, physically and spiritually. God healed and helped in every area.

But, if my wife rejects my ministry, I am in trouble. If my wife receives my ministry, she receives from me. The same goes for the children. This is covering.

What about persons who are not in a "home" situation - the singles, the widows, the divorced? I often wondered why God commanded His people to . . "take care of the widows, visit the fatherless." Now I am beginning to understand this was not just to make sure they had money and food in the house. God was calling on the men in the leadership of the church to take care of these who had no covering, that they might be protected, not just from the physical demands of their aloneness, but from the rebellion that can result from having to stand unprotected in the spiritual realm. No one is made that way. We need each other.

This principle is valid in a prayer group . . . a church . . . and it also applies to men in individual ministries. When God said, "let every soul be subject . . .", He meant just what He said. When I am called to a certain area to teach, I go first to my brothers to

whom I am submitted in Fort Lauderdale. After prayer and laying on of hands, I feel that I go out to serve with the blessing of God upon my ministry. I go as a submitted member of the Body of Christ. Frankly, it was not always like that. But God said, "Mumford... Oh, Mumford..." I began the "... but, Lord..." response. He would have none of it! We are all in the learning stages and the Master Teacher knows just how to bring us around.

What if your particular "covering" doesn't come up to your plans and specifications? Is this any excuse to "come out from under"? No. Your responsibility is to take that one to the Lord. You may be certain that once you have taken your proper place, God is going to test you. The rain may come through a few holes in the roof, but ask God to patch up the leaks.

Wife, you may feel you know more scripture verses than your husband . . . you listen to more tapes . . . but . . .

Teen-ager, you may feel Dad has been a bit rough on you and you are going to stay out all night to prove to him you are entitled to a few rights of your own, but . . .

Church member, you may not like the color the pastor has chosen for the new carpet in the sanctuary — and you... chairman of the committee for raising funds...but...

Do you know how to tell the difference between the sheep and the goats? Sheep don't butt! Is that excuse you make a cover-up for your rebellious spirit? The "buts" are not an acceptable reason for your lack of submission.

When you come into submission, this is when your rebellion will be revealed, should any be lurking in dark corners hoping to avoid exposure. This affords God the opportunity to present to you the privilege of making changes and adjustments in that attitude. I have had my own children pray me into a place of submission. With submission, comes a wonderful release. The driving spirit that often keeps us going full steam ahead,

churning up a heat of religious fervancy that is really only froth, subsides and we settle down into a spiritual maturity that brings cleansing and joy.

To experience the outworking of this principle, each one must search out and find someone to whom he can verbally submit.

Children go to your parents and tell them, "Dad . . . Mom . . . I have been rebellious. But I want to submit to you." Do the same to your school teacher.

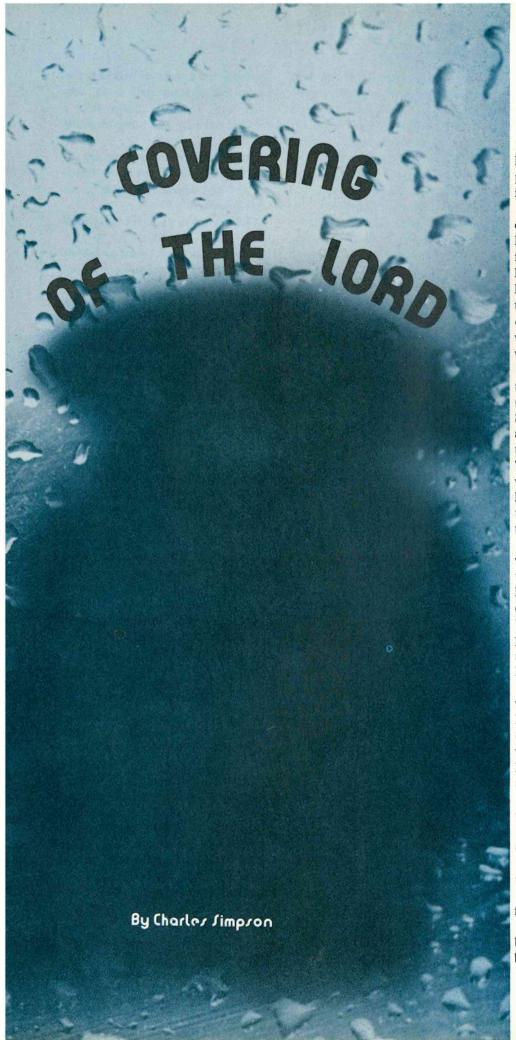
Wives, make it clear to your husbands, in words, that your wish is to take your stand under his covering.

Every minister . . . missionary . . . worker in the kingdom must have someone to whom he is submitted.

Remember, once you submit, then comes the test to see if you said it only with your mouth - or if you meant it from your heart. Also, remember when the test comes, the one thing that determines whether you pass or fail is your determination to maintain your stand and relate in a submissive attitude, even if you do not agree in every situation. I know of a church where the members took the stand that "our" pastor is right, even when he is wrong. God has blessed this church financially, spiritually and every other way. One can feel the presence of God when he goes into that gathering.

Yes, God is moving us into new territory — and there are some dangers. However, no danger in exploring and claiming new territory is as hazardous as the danger of continuing in rebellion. Submission breaks that core of rebellion and as it breaks we are set free. We are brought into a new spiritual relationship whereby we stand under one another, as well as standing beside each other. Continual confusion subsides and in its place comes the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer to His Father:

"That they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:21)



Hurricane "Camille" hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast in August, 1969. This tragic disaster took the lives of two hundred and fifty-eight people and caused millions of dollars in property damage.

I remember the Sunday of its arrival quite well, since I was pastoring in Mobile, Alabama, only eighty miles from where the center of the hurricane hit land. That Sunday morning, the hurricane was outside the Gulf, facing the Mobile Bay area; but by faith, we continued the morning services. Before we left, word came that it was moving west of Mobile.

Sunday evening we had our worship service in worsening weather with increasingly high winds and driving rains. Several new Christians were baptized and we spent some time praying for those who faced this powerful storm. That night it hit. In our area, the winds reached over 100 miles per hour. But near Gulfport, Mississippi, at the center of the storm, winds climbed to nearly 200 miles per hour.

Later, flying over this area, through which I had driven hundreds of times, tears came to my eyes. In Mobile some homes and property were severely damaged, but where the center of "Camille" hit, the devastation was beyond description. I thought of the scripture, "When the enemy comes in like a flood . . ." (Isaiah 59:19).

Several days after "Camille" hit, I was at a place of business which belonged to a friend. His store was located near the coast and had severe water damage. Several other men were helping to clear the debris...mud covered the floors...it was awful.

"Was he covered?" I asked a helper who was shoveling mud.

"No, he wasn't covered for this type damage," he replied.

"You mean his insurance won't . . .?"

"No," the answer came almost before I had finished asking.

My friend had heavy lines in his brow. Years had gone into building the business. There was pain in his face,

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though he fought against despair.

This scene was multiplied thousands of times. Some were covered, or protected, in case of flooding; but most were not. The fact is, no insurance can prevent natural disaster. It can only "cover" financial loss after the damage has been done.

Is there a covering that could *prevent* the storm from touching the inhabitants? Is there a place of protection that works *before* the tragedy instead of *after?* I believe there is such protection.

A PLACE OF PROTECTION

When the news came that the hurricane would hit a certain area, the people were gathered into shelters. These shelters were strong and well situated to guarantee protection. Whatever was left out of the shelter was exposed.

Isaiah 4:6 promises that God will provide a place of safety from the storm and rain: "And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." Notice that the covering (tabernacle or roof) does not follow us out in the exposed areas, we seek it out. To get protection, you must be in the right place.

There are those who just assume that they will be protected, no matter where they are. There were several such groups that "bravely" faced "Camille". "Oh, we've seen hurricanes before," they said as they resisted and even scoffed at offers of shelter.

One group engaged in a "hurricane party", which is a gathering of "revelers", who by frivolous and foolish merriment show their contempt for the storm. Law enforcement officers and friends pleaded with them to move inland away from the storm, but to no avail. The party took the main force of the wave. No one survived. Protection is being in the right place. God's protection does not follow us — He invites and even pleads that we come to it. Protection is being where God says we should be.

PROTECTION IS NOW AVAILABLE — ON THE ROCK

Salvation is more than escaping some vague *future* destruction. Obviously, there is the warning of impending destruction in the Bible. However, it seems that in our world "hell" will not be "put off" any longer. It is breaking out all around us every day. Will our salvation work *now?*

We cannot wait until we go to heaven to find protection. The "now storm" demands a "now place" for us and our families. "On this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18). I believe Jesus is speaking of a present Church and a present victory for those gathered on the unchanging Rock. Jesus is Lord, now. The Church, or assembly, is the place to overcome hell, now. When we get rightly related to the Rock, and those who gather with us there, we will be protected under His authority. The problem is that many Christians live in a "hurricane party". They gather where they choose, when they choose, and if they choose - yet claiming God's protection.

In Matthew 7:24 and following, Jesus clearly warns against building in the wrong place. Safety depends upon location — on the Rock. Those who build on the sand are inviting disaster.

DISCOVERING THE PRINCIPLE

Several years ago, while I was still in Mobile, I conducted regular weekday Bible studies. One Thursday morning, a woman asked, "What does I Corinthians 11:10 mean?" This verse states: "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels."

Specifically, she was asking about the practice of wearing a "head covering" or "prayer shawl". As I studied the passage, I became impressed with the underlying question, "What does it mean to be covered?" Is Paul only speaking about long hair? Obviously not. Is he only speaking about the prayer shawl or head covering, worn by Christians of many groups? No. I began to see that being under "power" means to be under authority. The "coverings" were physical evidence of a spiritual covering — authority. Not only were woman, but men, children, and even Christ, under authority (See I Corinthians 11:3).

As Christ submitted to the Father, He came under the Father's protection. No one could touch Him except by the Father's consent (John 10:18). So it would be with men who submitted to Christ, with wives who submitted to husbands, and children who submitted to parents. We are protected by the authority to which we submit: Unsubmitted, we are unprotected.

Why, "because of the angels", I wondered as I continued studying I Corinthians 11:10. Looking through the scriptures, I saw that the angels have the responsibility to protect us when we are in the proper place before God (Psalm 91:11, Matthew 18:10, Isaiah 37:36). Psalm 34:7 declares that, "the angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear Him." I saw the principle! If I acknowledged Jesus as Lord of my life, in obedience, I was under His authority. If I were under His authority, and the authority to whom He commanded me to submit, then the angels were authorized and responsible to protect me. I wish to stress here the words obedience to His Lordship and submission to His authority . . . not only the authority manifested in Himself, but also in the offices He instituted in the home, church and government. When I submit to my Father, He is obligated to provide and protect. As I submit to my pastor, he can watch for my soul (Hebrews 13:17). As I submit to the government, it can provide a peaceful environment. Rebellion, however, in any of these realms can make the job of protection and provision difficult, if not impossible. Bear in mind that all rebellion is against God, who is the (Continued on next page)

COVERING OF THE LORD

source of all authority (Romans 3:1-2). That rebellion relieves the angels of their responsibility. This is particularly frightening when you realize that there is a fulltime destroyer who goes around looking for unprotected sheep (I Peter 5:8).

A LESSON IN MOTIVATION

Shortly after learning this principle, the Lord began to deal with me about a change in ministry. It was not easy to believe what I was hearing was from the Lord. God was saying "Move". Obedience is a day by day matter. Righteousness is being where God wants you. If God wants you in California, you cannot be righteous in Georgia: even if you tithe and start family devotions.

Obedience is better than sacrifice (I Samuel 15:22-23). I was prepared to make sacrifices, but I hedged on obedience. God was saying, "Move. I don't need your sacrifices. I want you to obey." It was then that I began to discover that, as in the days of Israel's wilderness sojourn, our cloud cover still moved. If we want protection we must move under the shadow of the Almighty.

God had to illustrate this point to me in a forceful way. Being not only a pastor, but a traveling teacher, I was often away from home. I "claimed" Psalm 91:11 for both myself and my family: "For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." God had always proven faithful.

"Psalm 91, Lord!" I would cheerily remind God as I waved goodbye on parting with my family for two weeks.

I had just returned from a trip about midnight one Saturday. My wife, Carolyn, and I had heard quiet noises in the yard but thought they were probably neighborhood dogs. Before going to sleep, Carolyn went into another room to check on the children. She returned upset and frightened. "Someone is trying to get into the house!" she whispered.

I could hardly believe her. We had never before been bothered or disturbed in our home. Nevertheless, she had seen someone. I immediately went to a window to see if I could detect the intruder. Gently lifting the drape in our darkened bedroom, I pressed my face to the glass. Imagine my shock and his when our eyes met — face to face! His expression was wild and his eyes enlarged with violent fear.

"In Jesus' Name!" I spontaneously shouted at his bewildered stare. He turned and fled into the night, bending a chain-link fence nearly to the ground as he ran over it. I cannot remember when I was ever so glad to see anyone on the run!

I went back and sat beside my disturbed wife. I began to think. "Thank God I was home...but, God, what about Psalm 91, 'Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night' and 'No plague shall come nigh thy dwelling?"... That was too close, Lord — where was the angel?... If you are trying to speak to me, you have my attention!"

The Lord impressed me to re-study Psalm 91 since I was counting on it for insurance. There were conditions to its covering. I did not have to read far - "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." God had protected, but he let me see how close to the edge I was. To stay covered, I would have to move under His shadow, and be in my place. In verse 9, I saw that the Most High Himself would have to be my habitation - not a geographical location. God has ways of getting our attention. Most of us pray more fervently in the storm. We are also more sensitive to relocate in a shelter that may not otherwise be attractive.

THE UNCOVERING PROCESS

Most of us are born covered — that is, we are born under authority in a family situation. And most Christians are also begotten into a family of believers. Nevertheless, we usually

manage to get into a vulnerable position sooner or later. There are certain steps that bring one out from under authority and covering.

I. PRIDE. Here is the beginning of the downward way. Pride is Satan's sin (Isaiah 14:11-17; Ezekiel 28:11-17). It is the first one on the list of abominations (Proverbs 6:16-19). Perhaps the greatest aids to pride are success too soon, human and Satanic flattery, and appointing untried novices to positions of responsibility (I Timothy 3:6). The enemy begins to over-state our abilities. Soon the victim is actually believing that he needs no one else to protect him. He soothes his conscience by saying, "I'm just going to submit to God and not man!" Actually, it is God who commanded us to submit to one another (Ephesians 5:22).

II. REBELLION. Pride, unrepented of, will lead to rebellion. When God uses others, or circumstances, to humble the proud, the person will either repent or rebel. If he rebels, he is in a worse position and more vulnerable. The proud child of "humanism" who wishes to do his own thing, will not apply the disciplines of practical living in a real world. When discipline confronts him, he will rebel. Saul, King of Israel, was spoiled by early success. Besides that, he was born at the convenience of Israel's demand, not God's. When God would have instructed him, he rebelled (I Samuel 13-15). The classic statement on rebellion is Samuel's pronouncement to Saul after he disobeyed, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft."

I once believed this meant that God simply despised rebellion as much as He despised witchcraft. I now believe that rebellion, unrepented of, *leads* inevitably to deception or Spiritism.

The first five chapters in Isaiah are a study in the results of rebellion. To this chosen nation of Israel, which continued to rebel against authority, God said, "I will take away its hedge...and break down its wall (protection)" (Isaiah 5:5).

III. DECEPTION. Deception is the third step in the uncovering process

that leads to degradation. Once the power of the Holy Spirit departs, there is no protection against the vile forces of darkness. Bear in mind, that no generation has witnessed a greater revival of the occult than has our socalled "enlightened" generation. This rise in Satanic deception is the direct result of spiritual rebellion against God's divine authority. To further bear this out, what was rebellious Saul's last great sin? Spiritism. He sought to receive his guidance from the witch at Endor (I Samuel 28). This was one of the final reasons for his untimely death.

Deception is one of the prevalent endtime signs. We are told in II Timothy 3 that the generation that is known for its pride, will be known for its rebellion against parents and that same generation will be known for its deception. Romans chapter 1 also substantiates this inevitable slide from pride, to rebellion, to deception. II Corinthians 11:1-4 warns Christians against being beguiled through knowledge, as Eve was, and receive another spirit besides the Holy Spirit.

IV. PERVERSION. If the degradation stopped with deception, enough damage would already have been done. However, if repentance does not take place, perversion is the final step in destroying the image of God in man. Romans 1, Isaiah 3 and Genesis 19 give a study in this condition. Once the enemy deceives man. he is able to do whatever he desires with him. Sodomy, or perversion, is both physical and spiritual. Theological perversion is the sister of moral perversion. Both represent "man with man" rather than man submitting to God and wife to husband. Satan does this to provoke God's wrath (Isaiah 3:8-9).

Pride . . . Rebellion . . . Deception... Perversion. The last step is the ultimate absence of authority and protection. Notice the more authority is removed from the home, the more perversion results. While we can repent at any of these levels, it becomes increasingly difficult to get deliverance.

This matter of covering cannot be taken lightly. In a day when the forces of Satan are going to be let loose on the world as they never have before, the people of God are going to be protected only in the shelter which God has provided for them.

HOW TO BE COVERED

I. HUMILITY. The opposite of pride is humility. When God's people have gone astray, the way back always begins with humility before the Lord. "If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves . . ." (I Chronicles 7:14). "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God . . ." (I Peter 5:6). Also, Joel 1 and 2 have a great deal to teach us on humbling.

II. SUBMISSION. The opposite of rebellion is submission. It is submission that actually brings one back under the roof of authority. "Submit yourselves, therefore, to God . . ." (James 4:7). "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21). "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands" (Ephesians 5:22). "Obey them (shepherds) that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves . . ." (Hebrews 13:17). "Children, obey (submit to) your parents" (Ephesians 6:1).

III. REVELATION. As we submit, God can then trust us with true revelation, which is the opposite of deception (II Corinthians 3:17-18).

IV. MATURITY. The revelation of Christ in our personal fellowship brings true maturity. "Beholding His face, we are changed into the same image" (II Corinthians 3:18).

Not long ago I was having lunch with a young man who was sharing with me how this principle had worked in his own life.

About a year after he had received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, he left the church of which he had been a longtime member, and began to fellowship with a group of believers who met together several times during the week. During this time he often felt a sense of insecurity and being "all alone in the spiritual world". He occasionally found himself wondering, "What will I do if this whole thing falls apart?"

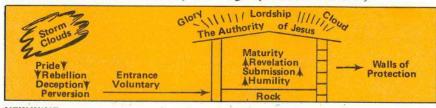
After some time God began to deal with him and his wife about verbally submitting to the man whom God had raised up as an elder in the fellowship. Not much time passed when he noticed the feeling of insecurity was gone. "Praise the Lord," he said, "I was under the proper covering and the Holy Spirit was giving me the 'Amen' in my heart."

Everyone who is willing to listen, will hear God leading him to find the place of covering that He has designed for him. It might be a test of willingness to obey where He leads, but in that place will be found a freedom in the Spirit never known before.

Hear God as He speaks in these two promises of covering:

"And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain" (Isaiah 4:5-6).

"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat, but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)



Reprinted with permission:
"Keep The Unity"
New Adventures in Prayer,
Prayer Group Newsletter,
3316 North Ohio Street
Arlington, Virginia 22207

ne of the priceless gifts of the Holy Spirit is the joy of flowing in the company of Christians from many denominational traditions and social levels. Experiencing the unity of the Spirit in the midst of such diversity is a challenging task! We are different yet there is a unity in our diversity. We have no "cookie cutter" producing little Christs, making disciples who are all alike, as some who are under such a bondage would demand.

The body of Christ, like the human body, has members which function differently yet work together. This is the unity we must keep (I Corinthians 12:12).

This unity is worth preserving but it cannot be preserved unless we are "wise as serpents and as innocent as doves". Some sincere believers would impose bondage of "doing it our way" with good intentions. We must pray to be kept in dove-like innocence and yet be alert enough to know when we are being beguiled into bondage.

How can you tell when you are being piped a different gospel? There are certain symptoms that show up in the believers of that gospel.

First, there will be hints of exclusiveness. In general, there is a projection of "my group is onto something 'special'." They will appear to believe they have a superior revelation or a purer walk, usually tracing their revelation to a single teacher (I Corinthians 3:1-11). Any of us may love Christ and even demonstrate

Christian virtues yet still fall prey to exclusivism.

Second, you will notice a predominate reactionary quality. That reaction may be against religion, denominationalism, free groups, the establishment, full-gospel, or even noncharismatic groups. The key characteristics of a reactionary spirit is zeal, impatience and a "pushiness". Paul recognized that there are those who preach Christ from strife and vainglory. However, he rejoiced only in the fact that Christ was being presented. This should say something to us about the place of reactionary gospels (Philippians 1:15; 2:3).

A third symptom is fixation. This is a focus on a truth or a body of truths with an avoidance of foundational or well-rounded doctrine (Hebrews 6). Here we have what some call "tunnel vision". Such a fixation reflects itself in repetition. Repetition is necessary for proclamation of truth but we can also develop a fixation through repetition. The only fixation God allows us is on Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-2).

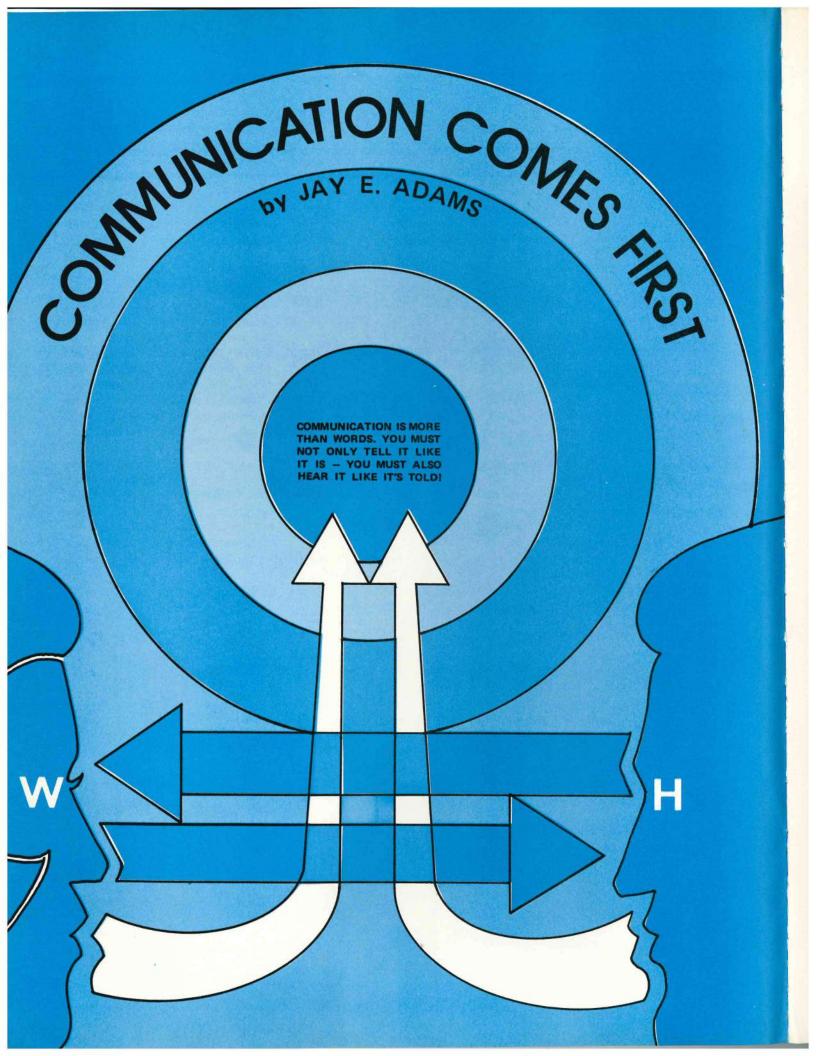
A fourth trait to watch for is compulsiveness. This is "ax grinding", a determination to bend our ears on a pet subject. The topic may be worthy; but a jerky, buttonholing compulsiveness closes out the possibility of mutual sharing. Even compulsive talking about love can block the love we seek to build (Galatians 5:19-21).

A fifth sign of spiritual poisoning is a concentration on less than the whole man. We are body, soul and spirit. Sometimes one may become so spiritual he can neglect soul and body. We are the Lord's — mentally, emotionally and willfully. If healthy, we will demonstrate a balance and a wide spectrum of response in all our faculties (I Thessalonians 5:23). There is a time for little thought and a time for hard thought. There are times

when we bubble with joy and times when we merely effuse joy. There are times when we make great efforts of will and times we merely agree with God. There are times when we exercise our spirits fervently and times when we rest in our spirits expectantly.

A final symptom to watch is an inordinate passion for the novel. Those who have such a passion usually develop major new teachings from minute and infrequently mentioned scriptures. Some people, bored with their spiritual dryness, will follow anyone who makes new sounds instead of seeking fervently after God. Newness is a matter of the spirit. As we become new, all things become new to us even when they have the sound of "oldness". This, I believe, is what Jesus meant when He said, "I have not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it (fill it full of life and meaning)"... Matthew 5:17 and 17:20-21.

Let us pray that we shall never develop a defensiveness in our walk with Christ! Thus, if we seek understanding, we will be given wisdom. We are free and should sense that freedom. We are also to be discerning. If we neglect watchfulness and lose Christlike innocence (Philippians 4:4-9), we are open immediately for deception.



n the second half of the Book of Ephesians Paul discussed various relationships between Christians. Beginning at 5:22, he addresses wives and then (25 ff.) their husbands. He describes the fundamental roles and relationships between them. In the next chapter he speaks first to children (v. 1) and then to their parents (v. 4). Finally, he discusses the working or business relationship as he exhorts both slaves (v.5) and their masters (v.6). So it is plain that in chapters 5-6 Paul writes about the basic human relationships that Christians, as well as other men, must sustain.

First of all, Paul stresses the need for vital Christian communication as the basic skill needed to establish and maintain sound relationships. A sound husband and wife relationship is impossible apart from good communication. A healthy relationship between parents and children depends on such communication. Businessmen and employees first must learn to communicate in order to get along. That is why the very first subject discussed after exhortations to restore the image of God in one's daily walk is communication.

Paul's analysis of communication begins at verse 25. He urges: "Therefore, laying aside falsehoods, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." Christians cannot walk together unless they do so on the basis of honesty, openness, and truth. As members who function together in the same body, we must have truth in order to work in concert. This is Paul's basic point. He elaborates upon this question of Christian communication throughout the rest of chapter 4. We must turn our attention, therefore, to that portion of Ephesians (vv. 25-32).

Communication is fundamental to a Christ centered home because it is the means by which a husband-wife relationship and parent-child relationship is established, grows, and is maintained. Apart from the open channels of truthful communication that Paul discusses here, there can be no truly Christ centered home.

TELLING THE TRUTH

A missionary and his wife returned from the foreign field several years ago. She had become severely depressed. When she came home, she went for a year to a psychiatrist, who talked separately first to her and then to her husband; but nothing ever happened in that experience. We began to talk, and as we did she turned to her husband and said: "My problem is that when I married you I didn't love you. I haven't loved you since. I've never loved you, but I've never told anyone the truth before." That missionary and his wife are now back on the field, and they love each other. She loves him and he loves her better, too. She had a problem, but nothing could be done to help because she "never told anyone the truth" about it. She did not know how to deal with the problem; and no one else, including her husband, knew what to do. Once communication took place, the problem could be solved. Until then her life had been a miserable, hypocritical farce. The work on the field suffered, she suffered, and her husband suffered. The whole body suffered for want of honest communication. Year after year she suffered; in lonely self-pity she told herself, "If only I had married someone else! I could be out from under his roof, and life would be so different." But pitying herself led gradually to a downward spiral that eventually brought on such a deep depression that her husband found it necessary to curtail his work and at length to return to the United States. The logiam could be freed only when she finally told the truth. Once she did, she received help. And the marriage was rebuilt on Biblical love.

Phillip came alone to counseling. He had refused to talk to the secretary; he declined when she asked him to

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answer the preliminary questions on the intake data sheet. He sat for the first half of the session without saving a word. Finally his counselor said to him, "There are people who would like to have this time who really want help. Shall I schedule this hour for someone else? We must not waste it if you don't mean business with God. Now are you ready to tell the story?" In response he finally opened up and said, "I've been through shock treatments, mental institutions; I've been everywhere. I've been depressed, discouraged, and defeated; all kinds of things have been said to be wrong with me. But there is only one thing wrong with me, and I know it. I've had something down in my craw for twentytwo years that I've never spoken verbally before. When I got married it wasn't because I wanted to. My mother insisted on it; that is the only reason I married Margaret. I have secretly regretted every day since." Every time he went into the bathroom and saw the cap off the toothpaste tube or the tube squashed in the middle instead of rolled up from the bottom, he became infuriated. He would fly into a rage or become deeply depressed. Instead of thinking, "There's a toothpaste tube squashed in the middle," or "There's a toothpaste tube with the cap off," he said to himself, "That woman has been at it again!" His resentment toward her and his marriage came to the surface in dozens of such small issues. He had never told her or any other human being. The counselor explained how there could be neither happiness nor harmony in a home apart from truth. After spending considerable time explaining how to tell her the truth, mentioning some possible pitfalls and how to avoid them, the counselor sent him home to talk to his wife. "Don't come back until you tell her," he said. She returned with him. They both earnestly dealt with the problem, and after three weeks were dismissed to continue counseling with their pastor. They left acting like newlyweds. Once the truth surfaced and (after the initial shock) they began to do what God

wanted them to do about it, the whole situation changed. Their problem was that they had been living a lie. Their marriage was based on falsehood. Only speaking the truth could help.

You may be like Phillip. You too may be holding things inside. You know if you are. You know that there are unresolved matters that break down communication between you and other members of your family. How can you expect to have a singing marriage when lies cut off communication? You can't. Yet your marriage can sing if you mean business with God. In spite of everything it can. You must begin with this passage which says: "Lay aside falsehood, speak the truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another."

HOW TO HANDLE ANGER

Where should you begin? Start by admitting the truth to God and to the others involved. Then look at what the next verse has to say: "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger." This is a quotation from Psalm 4, which is a nighttime psalm. This psalm was intended to remind one that before the close of the day his heart should be flushed clean of all the bitterness and anger of the day. Nothing unforgiven, unsettled, uncovered should be carried over to the next day. Anger itself is not sinful; every emotion is from God and is good when Biblically appropriate. But, "Do not let the sun go down on your anger," Paul says.

Anger may be handled wrongly in either one of two ways: blowing up and clamming up. On the one hand, as Proverbs continually stresses, anger may be turned into sin by blowing up (see 25:28; 29:11,22, Berkeley). Losing one's temper is sin. It would surprise some to know how many Christian families suffer from the evil effects of such anger. In some psychological circles ventilation is thought to be therapeutic; so in group therapy sessions, in Encounter sessions, in T groups, and so forth, venting of anger

and hostility is encouraged. Counselees are being told to get it out of their systems. They are urged, "Do the here and now thing - whatever you feel like doing; just get it out. If there is something inside just yell it out, scream at the next person across the table, systematically unlace him, take his stuffings out and throw them around the room. Hit the pillow if it represents your mother - hit it until the feathers fly!" In all such advice, there seems to be concern only for the feelings of one person; certainly not for the feelings of the one on whom the wrath is poured. The other person doesn't count; at all cost ultimately (to him) the counselee is the one who has to feel better.

Well, there is nothing Christian about such a procedure and attitude. Listen to Romans 15:1-2: "We should not please ourselves, but each should please his neighbor for his welfare" (cf Ephesians 4:31-32). Proverbs is very clear about the fact that a man who so vents his wrath is like a city without a wall around it. That is the first extreme to which one can go. Ventilation is plainly un-Christian.

The other (opposite) extreme is the one mentioned in Ephesians 4. Here Paul condemns those who harbor resentment (in the craw for twenty-two years, or two years, or two days).

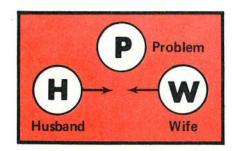
Some counselees not only let the sun set on their wrath, they let many moons go down. Sue and Wilbur came for counseling. She sat there with arms defiantly folded, he nervously shifting from side to side. You could see before either said a word what it was going to be like. She opened the conversation from her side of the desk with these words: "I'm here because my physician sent me. He said that there is nothing physically wrong with me. He said I'm getting an ulcer, but not from any physical cause." All the while her husband sat cowering. Sue reached down into what looked like a shopping bag, (it was her purse), and she pulled out a manuscript that was at least one inch thick, on 81/2" x 11" sized paper, single-spaced, typewritten

on both sides. She slapped it down on the counselor's desk and said, "There is why I'm getting an ulcer." He said, "Is that a fact?" and took a look at it. He couldn't have read it in a month, even if he cared to. But as he spotchecked through it, flipping along, he saw immediately what it was. It turned out to be a thirteen year record of wrongs that her husband had done to her. They were all listed and catalogued. Now what would you have said to her?

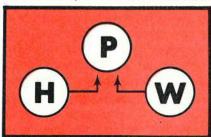
The counselor looked at Sue and said, "It's been a long while since I have met anyone as resentful as you." She was a little taken back and Wilbur sat up a little straighter. The counselor continued, "This is not only a record of what your husband has done to you (incidentally, subsequent sessions showed that it was a very accurate record), it is also a record of what you have done about it. This is a record of your sin against him, your sin against God, and your sin against your own body. This record of bitterness shows that your attitude has been the opposite of I Corinthians 13, where Scripture says that love never keeps records." Only then was there a basis to deal with problems. Wilbur certainly had to change the wrong things that he was doing to his wife, but on the other hand she had to change the wrong way that she had learned to respond to the wrong things that he was doing.

In most cases of marital disruption, counselors find that it is a matter of sorting out each partner's responsibilities before God. Husbands point at their wives; wives point at their husbands. Usually there is plenty to point to on both sides. But pointing at another hardly solves any problems. To solve problems, husbands and wives should begin by pointing to themselves. Scripture says that one must take the log out of his own eye before he is able to see clearly enough to remove the splinter from another's eye (Matthew 7:3-5). That is exactly where so many go wrong. They attack one another like this:

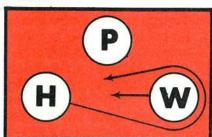
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There is no communication when two people are squared off like that against one another. How do we get communication started? Two people communicate when they walk and work unitedly in the same direction.



But how do we move the arrows from the former position to the latter? How do you turn the attack from persons toward problems? How may a quarreling husband and wife begin to expend their energy on solving problems God's way instead of continuing along the destructive course of tearing each other and their marriage apart? That is the question. The answer is: through the right kind of communication. That is the only answer. They must begin by pointing both of the arrows in the same direction. Either partner may do this by pointing first at himself:



The other arrow is already pointing at you, so all that you have to do is get lined up alongside: look at your log first. For the first time in a long while the two arrows will be pointing in the same direction. It is truly amazing how much instant agreement you can get

from a person who previously may have disagreed with you concerning nearly everything else under the sun, when you begin to say, "I have wronged you." Then specify and sincerely ask forgiveness. That is where reconciliation often must begin. You never ought to begin by taking the lid off the other fellow's trash can until you have cleaned out your own garbage can first. That is where communication begins.

DON'T WAIT

Perhaps your problem is with your parents; maybe it is between you and your child. Is it your husband, your wife, a friend, a member of the church, or a neighbor with whom you have some kind of bad relationship? Listen! You must begin to communicate with that person. If you can't talk to him about anything else, there is always one thing that you can talk about: the wrongs that you have done to him. If you can't think of any wrongs (and I certainly don't want you to cook up any artificial ones), let me suggest one that probably exists. It is simply the one that we have been discussing. If you have been putting off going to another person to try to achieve reconciliation with him, you have wronged him.

Few things are sapping the strength of the church of Jesus Christ more than the unreconciled state of so many believers. So many have matters deeply imbedded in their craws, like iron wedges forced between themselves and other Christians. There is no excuse for this sad condition, for the Bible does not allow for loose ends. God wants no loose ends. Let us now look at the means He has provided for dealing definitively with such difficulties.

In Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus says that if you are offering your gift at the altar but you remember that you have done something to another person, drop that gift and go "first" (reconciliation takes precedence over worship) and be reconciled to your brother. Then come back and finish

your offering. That is how important it is to get matters settled right away. You must do so right now; do not put it off. Do not "let the sun go down on your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26).

Husbands and wives frequently complain that they are having trouble with sex, but the trouble usually is not with sex. Counselors do not find many difficulties that have to do with sex alone. The real difficulties in bed at night come from the fact that all kinds of problems have been carried into bed from the day, problems that should have been settled before going to bed. That is where the difficulties come from; the problems get in the way. Husbands and wives must learn, literally, not to let the sun go down on their anger.

In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus also says something about the other side of the picture. If someone has wronged you, then you must go and see him. You must seek to win your brother and rebuild the relationship so that the two of you can walk together and talk together as Christians. You see, Jesus won't allow the unreconciled condition to continue among believers. In Matthew 5, if another considers you to have wronged him, Jesus says that you must go. In Matthew 18, He says that if the other person has done something wrong to you, you must go. There is never a time when you can sit and wait for your brother to come to you. Jesus doesn't allow for that. He gives no opportunity for that. It is always your obligation to go. In the ideal situation (the way Jesus set it up), if two believers have flared up over something and they both go away in a huff, when they cool down they both ought to meet each other on the way to seek reconciliation. That is the way it ought to be.

Jesus once said, when talking about the future, "Sufficient unto the day is the trouble thereof" (Matthew 6:34). You can't worry about tomorrow. Human shoulders are only broad enough to carry one day's load at a time. If that is true about the future, it is also true about the past. You cannot drag around a lifetime full of unsolved

problems and expect to negotiate well in a family. You won't walk straightly. You won't serve very well. You won't do the work of the Lord very effectively if you are carrying such a load. Sufficient unto the day is the trouble thereof. Take up your cross daily, said the Lord Jesus; that is, crucify daily the self that is within you. Scripture places a premium on living on a daily basis with God; it makes daily dealing with our brothers an urgent matter.

You don't dare let things go. If there is somebody with whom you are having difficult times or who is having difficult times with you, before this day is over straighten out the matter before God. Write that letter, make that phone call, or if possible pay that visit. In your family sit down and settle matters before nightfall.

A NEW COMMUNICATION

Once you get this relationship reestablished, once you have confessed your sins to each other (and to God, of course) and you have asked forgiveness from one another, you have not finished; you have only begun. You have only cleared away the rubble of the past. Now that affairs at last are on a daily basis, you must never allow them to pile up again. That means a new pattern in your relationship must be formed. Paul continues, "Let no unwholesome word proceed (literally, pour out) from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification (or building up) according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those that hear" (Ephesians 4:29). This shows what communication must be like from now on. It is the pattern for forming the new relationship.

What does Paul mean? He is not talking about foul language when he speaks of unwholesome words. Of course his statement would include that, but it is much broader. The term refers to any word that tears down another. Our young people have an expression that closely approximates the idea: they speak about cutting each other up. It is very sad to hear such

talk. Christians should never talk about using words — God's great gift for communication — to cut up another. That is what Paul condemns: systematically dicing and cubing another by words.

It is not only youth, but also husbands and wives who use words for such purposes. Sometimes they become quite adept in such misuse of language. Recently a couple attempted to use a counseling session to vent their spleen on each other. Not one word came out of either mouth without a surly, sarcastic remark about the other. Their counselor had to say to them, "That is doubtless one reason why you are here. You may do that sort of thing at home, but I will not allow you to do it here. If you continue, I will close the session." Counselors must not permit such a violation of God's will. Scripture says that the same fountain may not produce both bitter and sweet water. Christians must not take the name of the Lord Jesus Christ upon their lips and at the same time use His gift of words to be nasty to other people.

In the Ephesian passage, Paul describes a better usage for words. Instead of pouring our energies into speech that cuts others down, our words ought to build them up. When words are directed toward the problem rather than toward the person, they will build him up by helping him solve his problems. Instead of attacking persons with words, a Christian must direct all of his energy, including his words, toward the problem, attacking it God's way.

Look at Paul's thought again: "No unwholesome word" is permissible. Instead, Christian speech involves words that "build up" the other person and that are "according to the problem that has arisen." That means that one's words must be aimed at (or concerned with) the problem that has arisen. Attack problems, not persons, with words.

NEW ATTITUDES

A husband and wife came for coun-

seling with such a communication problem. Jan's and Chris's speech was so nasty that unless their attitudes changed, their problems could never be resolved. You see, there are usually at least two problems involved in any human conflict. There is the issue over which the parties differ, and there is also the problem of their attitudes toward one another. When Chris originally phoned for an appointment he said, "I've got a problem; it is very delicate." He explained the issue that had arisen between him and his wife. This did involve a very difficult matter - one that was quite hard to settle. Chris and Jan came. There they sat. During the first few minutes she cut down everything he said and he cut down everything she said. The counselor quickly brought this to a halt. He said, "Look, you have been having problems because of this issue; but the issue itself isn't your major problem. You'll never settle that issue or any other until you first settle the prior problem of your attitudes toward one another. Although both of you profess to be Christians, your present attitudes are certainly un-Christian. You are going to make this decision yourselves, and in doing so you are going to learn how to talk to one another as well. I want you to know also that ordinarily we don't work with anybody longer than twelve weeks. Most leave in eight weeks. I expect you to solve this problem in that time. We will start on your attitudes first "

At the time Chris and Jan were not living together. He had left her. "First," the counselor explained, "you will have to go back together again. You can't put two people together by keeping them apart. I Corinthians 7 says that you must be reconciled. To begin with, here are the things you are going to do this week . . ." They agreed and went to work. They sought and received forgiveness from God and one another. Then they really began to work on the problem of communication. The issue itself was shelved for the time being. When other matters were cleared up and their attitudes were squared away and their marriage

really began to take shape again, then they were turned loose on the issue. Chris and Jan went to work on the problem together. In previous weeks they had discovered how to use words to solve other problems God's way. They really worked hard on the main issue, and at the eleventh session they announced, "We have solved our problem." And they had! The reason why they couldn't do so before was because they did not know how to communicate as Christians should. They were using words to cut each other up; they were expending their energy by tearing each other apart. When in repentance they began to attack problems with words instead of attacking each other, they discovered the joy of researching issues Biblically. Then the whole picture changed. When communication was straightened out, it was possible for the issue to be solved.

YOU CAN DO IT!

Christians can learn to live without bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice. They must work on maintaining an attitude of good will toward one another. In the soil of such attitudes solutions to life's problems grow thick and tall. Such attitudes can be sustained only by being "kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another just as God in Christ has forgiven." What a wonderful Saviour we have. It wasn't lovely people for whose sake He died; it was for ungodly people, for His enemies. It was for law breakers that He suffered. He loved us, says Paul, in spite of how unlovely we were. Just as He loved us, Paul insists, we are to love one another.

Love at first is not feeling. Love first can be expressed as giving. That is at the core of love. If one gives, the feeling of love will follow. To love we must give of ourselves, of our time, of our substance, or whatever it takes to show love; for giving is fundamental to the Biblical idea of love. Listen to this: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). "He loved me and gave himself for

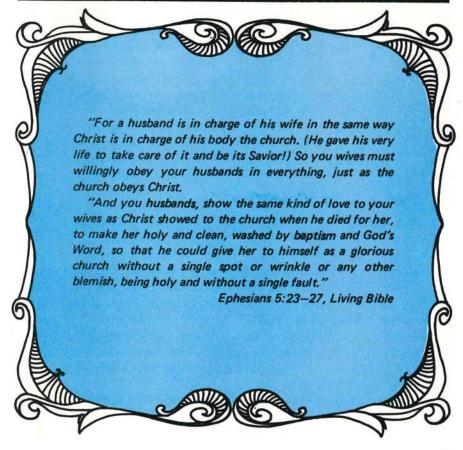
me" (Galatians 2:20). "If your enemy hungers, give him something to eat; if your enemy thirsts, give him something to drink" (Romans 12:20). It is always giving with which love begins. And that spirit of giving brings a new atmosphere into any home. It is an atmosphere that creates a climate in which communication may grow and thrive. Think about all of this; perhaps there is some action that you need to take. Possibly you need to confess

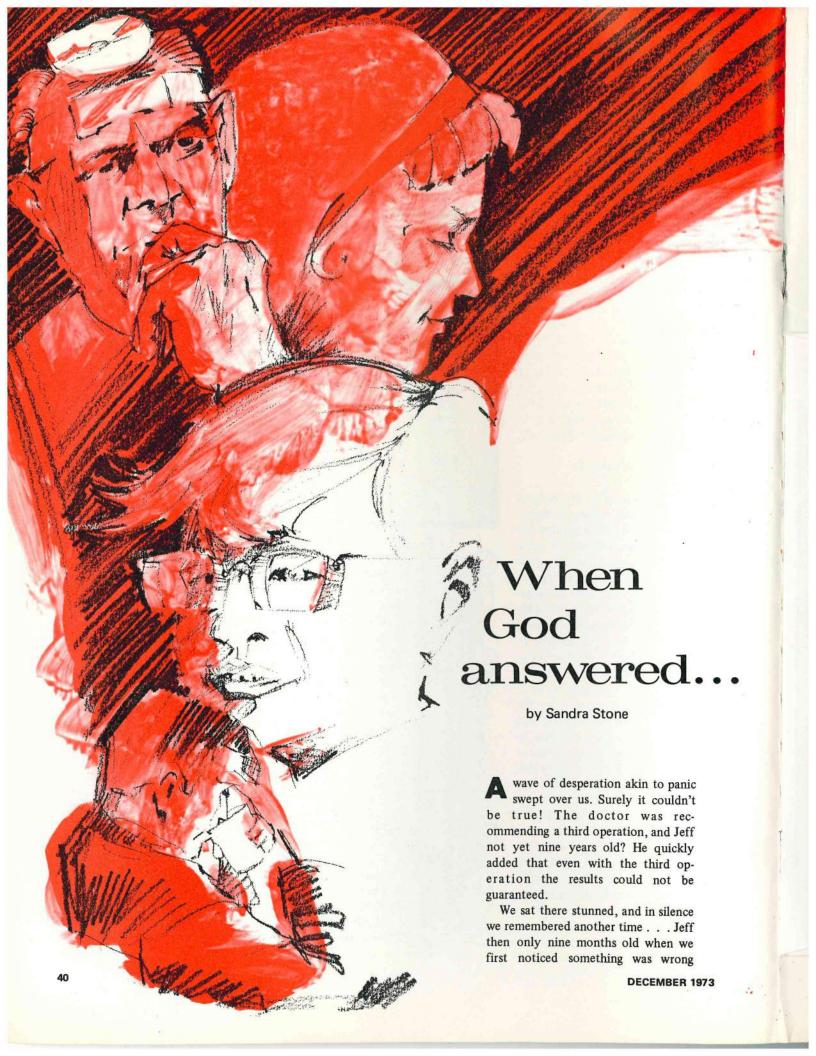
your sin to God and then to somebody else with whom you need to reestablish communication leading to a new relationship in Christ.

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As a matter of presupposition, I must state frankly that I believe God created man and woman, and His intention was for them to be one in marriage. How this is to be accomplished is fully explained in the Bible, which is our Handbook for daily Christian living. To the readers who disagree with me in this, I must also say that I have no helpful suggestions about how to live happily in marriage apart from God's framework and prescription. In fact, I don't think it can be done.

From - Living Happily Happily Ever After by Bob Mumford





with his beautiful big blue eyes. Occasionally his eyes would turn outward; and as he started to walk he'd constantly bump into the corner of a wall or doorway. Our concern took us first to his pediatrician and eventually to an eye specialist. The problem was diagnosed as defective coordination of the eyes, and surgery was scheduled. Such a little guy for such a serious operation! I stayed with him in a companion room in the hospital. I must say Jeff's acceptance of the whole thing was much more resigned than mine.

When the bandages were removed, Jeff's eyes were nice and straight. Our elation was short lived. In three months the eyes started to turn even worse than before. No explanation could be given by the doctor as to why the surgery hadn't corrected the problem. Further testing revealed a nearsighted condition in addition to the focusing weakness. At this point, glasses were recommended to correct both problems. People would ask, "Isn't it difficult to keep glasses on such a tiny fellow?" It wasn't. Jeff was very dependent on his glasses for his vision was so poor without them.

At age four the doctor suggested surgery again. We went through the same procedure; this time his eyes held for nine months. Imagine our dismay as they started to turn again! We next went into a series of trying different things - patches, exercises, etc. By the time Jeff reached seven years old, the doctor found that he was not using one eye. This was his brain's way of avoiding double vision. If this continued, he'd eventually lose sight in the eye, so we went through a number of things to help "wake up" the eye, and try to train it to work as a partner with the other eye. All of this was to no avail. Everything that medical science had to offer was tried and failed. It was at this point my husband, Jim, said that we needed to pray, definitely, for Jeff's healing; not just the routine praying we had done for him in our daily devotions. We knew the Lord could heal him even though our church didn't practice the



Sandra Stone, shown here with Jeff, and her husband Jim are active members of Trinity Temple Church in West Palm Beach, Florida. They live with their three other children in Lake Park, Florida – Jim is a data process group manager for R.C.A.



laying on of hands as some churches do. We just didn't know how or what to pray for.

As a last resort a prism was put on the lens of Jeff's glasses to further force his eye straight. The effect on him was horrible. Until he adjusted to it, it caused him to feel extreme nausea, and he'd feel as though the ground were rushing up at him. Of course, this all was affecting his school work, his personality, and most of all his parents who loved him so much.

Then the Lord gave us a weekend that changed our whole life! Some friends mentioned the Christian Growth Conference being held in Miami May 7-14. The only speaker in the group that we had heard of was Bob Mumford. We had enjoyed very much the cassette tape, "The Value of Praise", he had made. Other than this, we knew nothing of the Christian Growth Ministries. We felt compelled to attend the conference on Friday, May 13. Jim and I took the day off and went to Miami. That day was a turning point in our lives, and a gift from the Lord! Every speaker, every person we met, radiated the love of Christ. Heaven truly came down and touched us that night. During the evening service we both received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At the same time the Lord spoke to me and said, "If you bring Jeffrey tomorrow night I'll heal his eyes." This was so far from anything I was thinking about that it had to be the Lord. It was a very new experience for me and I hesitated to tell Jim about it. After struggling with it all the way home, and far into the night, I told him, and he immediately said, "Let's go!"

The next day we told the children we were going to Miami that night. When they asked why, I took a deep breath and said, "Because the Lord said if we did He'd heal Jeff's eyes." This was a big step for me, because we were still in a church that would deny the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit as being for today. Our lives were changing rapidly and we needed to be sure of what we were leading our children into, knowing that we had to take a firm stand. Having made the plunge, we were off to Miami.

We knew nothing of Derek Prince and his ministry, either. When we were seated, fourth row back, imagine our delighted exchange of glances when Derek Prince started his sermon on the atonement of Christ for our healing. We had come to the right place it seemed! After Derek's message was given, he led into the practical side of the spiritual truths - the acceptance of healing for specific illnesses. Now we did get excited! Since this was the first meeting of this type we had ever attended, we sat immobile, drinking it all in for quite some time. Then imagine our chagrin as four times we heard Brother Prince say, "Eyes are not my ministry", as he started praying for people. We saw many wondrous things happen, but had the Lord forgotten us? Now what? If eyes weren't Derek Prince's ministry, what were we there for?

All of a sudden I felt cold — the joy drained away and we were really be-wildered. Jim asked if I felt led to get in line with Jeffrey, but I had to admit

that there was no feeling or direction. We sat. After about half an hour, he asked again, but there was still a void. Later, this was repeated once more. Then around 10:30, because the children were tired and restless, Jim said, "Unless you feel led to get Jeff in line, let's go." I said, "I know the Lord said to come but I also know Derek Prince isn't the one to pray for him." So, reluctantly I agreed, "Let's leave."

Jim took the other three children and started back to the exit while I was still struggling to help our little one with her shoes. Just as Jim was near the back door, Derek Prince came to the microphone and asked for everyone's attention. This stopped Jim and he waited to see what was going on. A young man was standing next to Brother Prince. He came to the mike and said, "I've been struggling for an hour and a half. The Lord told me to do something and I finally have to do it." He continued, "A year ago, the Lord healed my eyes and He told me that there is someone here tonight who needs his eyes prayed for for healing."

Wow! I looked back at Jim and he was heading for me with Jeff. I ran for him and said to everyone I passed on the way, "The Lord told us! Praise the Lord!" I sure didn't feel "let down" now! At the eleventh hour Jesus was answering prayer! The Lord executed this dramatic (literally last-minute) combination of events that we might know of a certainty that He was working. When I reached the front with Jeffrey the young man told Jeff that the Lord had healed his little boy's eyes, and that had given him faith to believe for his own healing. He then laid his hand on Jeff's head and prayed in the Spirit for him. Later, I realized the value of that prayer. If he had prayed in English, we would have been looking for whatever he prayed. This way, we had no idea, and just had to hold on in faith to that perfect prayer.

When we left the auditorium, our ten year old boy asked Jeff if he could see better. When Jeff said, "No", Tim asked, "Why?" The answer came so readily — "We were obedient to what the Lord told us to do; now we must claim Jeff's healing by faith. It may be a week or a year until we see the results, but I know God touched him tonight."

Two days later, Jeff was sitting in the kitchen with his glasses off, staring at the wallpaper. "Mommy," he said, "The wallpaper looks different." "Why?" I asked. "Well, it always had a fuzzy line around the flowers and now they are straight." Praise the Lord! Through that week we watched his eyes get straighter and straighter and his glasses were on less and less.

By Friday, our son Tim was standing across the room with a milk carton in his hand. "Read this word, Jeff", he said. "I can't," was Jeff's reply. Oh, me of little faith thought he couldn't see it, but by this time Tim's faith was strong enough to quickly retort, "Well, spell it then." Jeff spelled P-O-I-N-S-E-T-T-I-A. Tim realized that Jeff just didn't know the word. He then went down the milk carton, even reading the tiny letters—one half gallon—in the corner. Our hearts leaped for joy!

Now came the testing. Jeff's eyes were straight most of the time, not all, and he put his glasses aside. At this point, his faith carried us. Every day he prayed, "Thank you Jesus for healing my eyes." One day he said, "My eyes are better than they were, but not as good as they're going to be."

The most heart rending episode for me was the day I saw his eye hurt and all blood shot. I struggled with whether he should have taken his glasses off yet. I finally asked, "Jeff, do you want to put your glasses back on?" He looked at me as if I were crazy. He answered, "No, I just got sand in my eye and it hurts." We washed his eye with Murine, asked the Lord to soothe it, and immediately it was better.

Many persons asked if we were going to take Jeff to the eye doctor. Their faith hinged on his report, even though they saw Jeff's eyes straight and his glasses off. We decided to wait for his regular appointment on August 10. That visit would certainly tell to

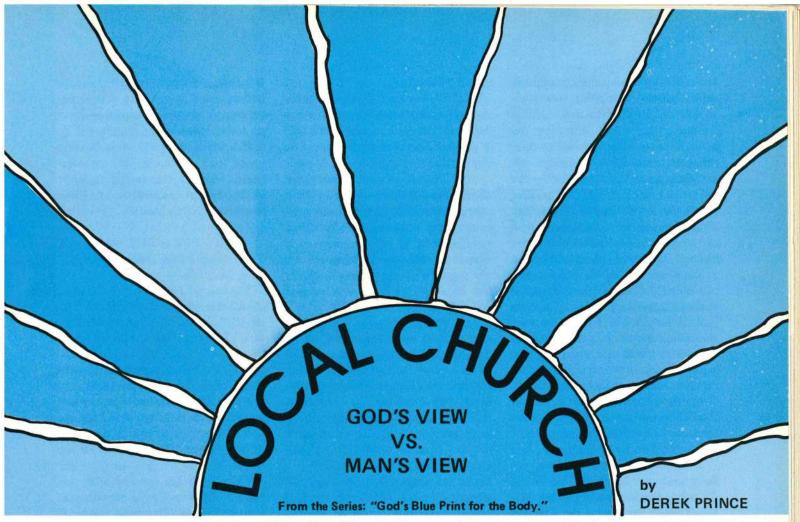
what extent his eyes were healed.

On that day Jeff was scheduled to go to the eye doctor, and I promised to write this testimony after that visit. The first question I was asked when we went into the doctor's office was, "Where are Jeff's glasses?" Anticipating this question, Jim had said to reply, "We don't think he needs them, but we will let you decide." The technician who does the testing put a patch over Jeff's right eye. On May 11, without glasses, he could only see to the big "E" on the chart. Now he read down, almost to the bottom of the chart! The same thing with the other eye. At this point, the technician asked in bewilderment, "Jeff! Have you been taking vitamins or doing eye exercises? What has happened to your eyes?" I was happy to tell her of the mercy and the love of our Lord, and what He had done for Jeff. She was amazed. She then said, "Let's check your focusing." She tested him for a long time and then said, "He can focus the full range." On May 11, he couldn't focus at all without glasses. A dazed expression on her face, the technician went out to see the doctor.

Obviously, she told him something of the story, for he came in without a hello, grabbed the folder of records and sat down. He read and read, shaking his head from time to time. He finally looked up and said, "This couldn't possibly happen! There is no explanation medically. As fast as Jeff's eyes were deteriorating before May 11, if you've had his glasses off since May, his eyes should be much worse, not better."

He then asked, "What did they do?" The technician said, "I told you, she said they just prayed!" My moment to tell the doctor had arrived. He heard me through the whole story. He obviously is not a Christian and I just pray that he ponders what was said that day in the days to come. He wants to see Jeff in six months and I'm grateful for another opportunity to witness to him about the Lord's healing mercy.

Praise the Lord! Miracles are as real today as they were many years ago!



Human nature has a devious quirk for taking a simple command or principle of God and doing it exactly backwards — in the name of religion! A prime example is the astounding difference between the scriptural pattern for the local church and the pattern which man has developed. Our study will bear this out as we go.

The local church is that part of the universal church which is resident in any given locality. You do not become a member by signing up, taking a pledge, or subscribing to a particular set of doctrines. You are a member of the local church, first by being rightly related to the Lord Jesus, which makes you a member of the universal church. Since the local church is part of the universal church, it is reasonable that you must first belong to the universal church in order to belong to the local church.

The second requirement for local church membership is simply being a resident in a given locality. In other words, every member of the universal church in a given area is, by virtue of his residence in that area, also a member of the local church in that area. God has not left it to us to make any decision about this matter. The only decision we have to make is how we will be related to Christ.

The church in a local area grows out of a basic cell group. Jesus defined this group in Matthew 18:20: "Where two or three have been led together (by the Holy Spirit) into my name, there am I in the midst." This is the literal meaning of this passage. The focal point of fellowship for those who are led by the Spirit of God is around the name of Jesus Christ. When this little cell is in true harmony, there is no limit to the divine authority and power available to it.

In the second stage of growth, the cell group, which is a group of disciples, becomes a church when its leadership is appointed (Acts 14:21-23). The appointment of elders, or shepherds, qualifies a group of disciples to be recognized as a church.

Philippians 1:1 gives us a picture of

a church that has completed the third phase of development. There are elders, deacons, and believers. The leadership has been completed by the addition of deacons.

There is one further stage of development; the completion of the ministries. I Corinthians 12:28 gives us a picture of a local church in which all the spiritual ministries are functioning: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers (notice the preeminence of the ministry of the word over the other ministries - this is because of the final authority which is in the word), after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments (I prefer 'steerings') and diverse kinds of tongues." We will not try to analyze the nature of these ministries, but this is a picture of the completed church with the ministries functioning within it.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

The leadership of the church functions in two areas: spiritual and material. The spiritual leaders, commonly called "elders", have a dual function — to rule and to teach. A great deal of confusion has arisen concerning this office because it is designated by three different names in the original Greek, and these are in turn translated by five different English words in the King James Version of the New Testament. The Greek words for elder, overseer and shepherd, are translated as elder, overseer, bishop, shepherd and pastor.

Some ask, "Why three names for one office?" Quite simply, the task is that of an overseer, the qualification is that of an elder, and the ministry is that of a shepherd. It is, however, only one office, and not two or three separate ones as the church has often represented it.

In the material realm, the task of the deacons is simple — to look after the material needs of the congregation. See Acts 6:2—4.

The qualifications for elders are listed mainly in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 2:5-9; and those for deacons are found in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13.

THE LOCAL CHURCH IS THE SUPREME COURT

It is often supposed that the final authority in church matters is vested in some special group, functioning outside, or above, the local church. This is incorrect. The final authority is vested in the local church itself, functioning under the direction of its God-given leaders. The New Testament clearly establishes the local church as the final court of appeal in all questions of doctrine, ethics, and morality. This makes it of paramount importance to understand the correct operation of the local church, since only in this way can full scriptural authority be exercised by God's people here on earth.

I – FOR DISPUTES BETWEEN BELIEVERS

In Matthew 18:15-17 Jesus indicates that the local church is the final court of appeal in all disputes be-

tween believers:

(15) "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

(16) "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

(17) "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and publican."

Jesus says first of all, "If you have a dispute with another believer, go to him alone." In my experience, few Christians ever follow this procedure. If they have a dispute with another believer, they usually go to every other individual in the congregation trying to find people to take sides with them; but they never get around to confronting the individual involved. This is a source of tremendous grief and division in the body of Christ, and it is against the clear command of scripture. If you have a dispute, go to your brother alone, and go to him first.

If you go to him and he refuses to hear you, then you have scriptural right and obligation to take one or two more to be witnesses and mediators in your discussion.

If he still fails to listen, the only course left is to bring the matter before the local church. This is the Supreme Court, and its decision is final. Failure to listen to the decision of the local church means that the individual involved loses his right to be treated as a believer. He is to be outside the fellowship of believers until he repents, returns and submits.

In line with the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 18, Paul says in I Corinthians 6:1, "Dare any of you having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" If two believers have a dispute, it is wrong to take it to a secular court of law. It is to be settled before the church. Some say it is wrong for a believer to go to law. Paul does not say that. He says it is wrong for a believer

to take a *believer* to law; he says nothing about going to law with an unbeliever. All disputes between believers are to be settled by the church.

It is frightening to me that God has vested such authority in the local church; and at the same time most local congregations are in no condition to exercise this authority.

II – FOR QUESTIONS OF DOCTRINE

The second area in which the local church has final authority is the matter of doctrine. We find an incident that illustrates this in the fifteenth chapter of Acts. By way of background, Paul and Barnabas had seen scores of Gentiles won to Christ and baptized. Yet they had not required these non-Jewish converts to keep the Law of Moses or receive circumcision, which was the "initiation rite" of the Jewish faith.

When word got out that this was being done, many Jewish Christians in Jerusalem said, "This is all wrong. If these people are going to fellowship with us they must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses." This caused no small dispute. The future of Gentile Christianity was at stake.

In order to settle the matter, Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem and initially met with the leaders of the Jerusalem church to discuss the matter. When this group reached agreement, they placed their recommendation before the entire church, who finally ratified it.

Picture this scene! There were at least 20,000 Jewish believers in Jerusalem at this time, probably twice that number. This was no small committee meeting — it was a major assembly! I cannot help but marvel at the grace of God that several thousand Jewish believers could come together on a decision as vital as this one and come away in unanimity. Let us read the outcome in Acts 15:22: "Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church (the leadership did not act independently, it was backed up by the entire church) to send

chosen men of their own company to Antioch."

These chosen men were to carry the decision of the Jerusalem church by way of letter. We pick up part of the letter in verse 25:

"It seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord (please note that) to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

(26) "Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(27) "We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall tell you the same things by mouth.

(28) "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no greater burden than these necessary things..."

Who made the final decision? The Holy Spirit. But He revealed His decision to the entire local church gathered in official assembly. Paul says, "We have the mind of Christ." In matters such as this, no believer on his own can say, "I have the mind of Christ." It is the collective body that has the mind of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

As a result of this council, the Gentile Christians were required to keep only four points in the Law of Moses — verse 29 — "That they abstain from fornication, idolatry, eating of blood, and of things strangled." This is an extremely important event in church history; and because of it, you and I are not required to keep the Law of Moses.

III - FOR MORAL CONDUCT

The third area of local church jurisdiction lies in the area of moral conduct. Our example is an incident that occurred in the Corinthian church. Paul writes in I Corinthians 1:2 — "... to the church of God which is at Corinth..." Notice that Paul is writing to the whole church at Corinth—the entire assembly.

Over in chapter 5, we find that one of the problems in this church was extreme immorality — incest. A man was

living with his father's wife. Let us read:

(1) "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

(2) "And ye are puffed up (with all their spiritual gifts) and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. (There is no place in the fellowship of God's people for such a person.)

(3) "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed.

(4) "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together (the whole church), with my spirit, with the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(5) "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,"

The action to be taken was the responsibility of the entire assembly — not a committee or a group of elders. The New Testament requires that immorality in the church not be swept under the rug; it is to be brought into the open and properly dealt with. The Scripture is frank about such matters; it calls a spade a spade, not an agricultural implement.

The guilty person was to be delivered over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh — not his spirit. This was an act of the grace of God in bringing him under judgment at that time in order to spare him eternal judgment.

In the last two verses of this chapter, Paul says that it is not our place to judge unbelievers, God will do that; but it is our responsibility collectively to bring judgment upon the moral conduct of fellow believers. Many Christians know only one scripture about judgment, "Judge not that ye be not judged." But there are many more that speak of the responsibility of the local church, as a whole, to maintain ethical

and moral purity among its members.

THE VALLEY OF DECISION

There are two alternatives for the development of the local church, and I must add that they are mutually exclusive.

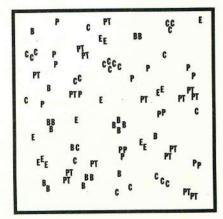
The present generally accepted pattern is many local churches in a given area, each with one leader or pastor. God's pattern, on the other hand, is one local church, with many leaders. Man has simply taken God's order and reversed it. The New Testament pattern is unity of the church within a given area, and plurality of leadership. Man has set up a plurality of churches within an area, each under a single leader. An exact reversal of God's pattern!

The prophet Joel gives a picture of the sequence of events that will bring the present age to its close. There are three phases: Desolation (Chapter 1); Restoration (Chapter 2); Judgment (Chapter 3). The scene of judgment is pictured in Joel 3:14: "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision..." All who enter "the valley of decision. The issue is simple, it is to say "Yes" or "No" to God. There is no third alternative, and no way out of the valley until the decision has been made.

God is now bringing the whole professing church of Christ into this valley of decision. The church must decide: Will it continue on its own way, setting its own standards and following its own plans? Or will it repent, and submit to the pattern of God clearly revealed in Scripture? We cannot go both ways. The time for religious exercises is over. Now is the time for reality and action.

GOD'S VIEW VS. MAN'S VIEW

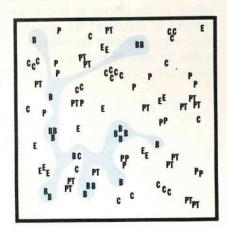
I would like to illustrate how these two perspectives of the local church look in practice. First, we want to see the church as it exists in the local situation today. Below is an illustration of the church in a local area — the size of the area is not important for present purposes. This is merely a representative section. The different letters represent persons of different denominational affiliations, scattered at random throughout a local area. The denomination is the binding factor, so we must relate the various persons together into a "church" on the basis of denomination.



By way of explanation, B = Baptist, C = Catholic, E = Episcopalian, P = Presbyterian, Pt = Pentecostal. Of course, these are only a few of the many different denominations that are found in most areas.

Two letters side by side represent husband and wife. For example BC represents a Baptist married to a Catholic; PtP represents a Pentecostal married to a Presbyterian.

In order to depict "the Baptist Church" in the area, we must draw a line that *includes* all the B's, but *excludes* all the other letters. In the case of BC, the wife will be "out". Diagram No. 2 depicts "the Baptist Church" in the area.



In order to depict "the Catholic Church", we must in like manner draw a line that includes all the C's, but excludes all the other letters. Diagram No. 3 depicts both "the Baptist Church" and "the Catholic Church" in the area.



In order to depict "the Episcopal Church", "the Presbyterian Church" and "the Pentecostal Church" in the area, we must draw similar lines around the E's and P's and the Pt's. Passing over the intermediate stages, Diagram No. 4 shows man's view of the total "church" in the area. Put in simple language, it is a "mess".

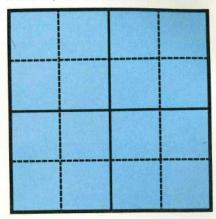


GOD'S PATTERN

"Brother Prince," you ask, "what other alternative is there?" I would like to suggest what I feel is a reasonable alternative. Please, let me emphasize that this is an elementary and idealistic pattern. I do not suggest that it will ever operate in this particular way — but I am not after details, I am seeking principles and patterns which

may be adapted to different situations as the need arises.

I imagine a city divided into four main areas, and each of these areas divided into four sub-divisions, as indicated by the dotted lines.

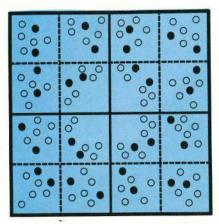


Now the Spirit of God moves on this city and people are born again in every area of the city. These are represented by circles — each circle is one believer. House groups begin to develop and in each sub-division we have one or two homes in which these cell groups meet (Matthew 18:20). These are groups of "disciples" — no leadership has come forth as yet. They are simply prayer and study groups of believers committed to each other all over a city.

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Out of these groups the Holy Spirit will begin to bring forth leadership. It never takes very long in any group. There are some who will mature more rapidly and, accepting a greater measure of responsibility, will emerge as leaders. They do not appoint themselves, they are recognized as the Holy Spirit sets them in places of leadership.

Brother Bob's wife is stricken with illness in the middle of the night and he phones Brother Dick almost automatically to come and pray for her, indicating that the group is beginning to treat Dick as an elder. Dick displays other qualities of leadership, and so comes to be recognized as one of the leaders of the group. Thus leaders emerge in every group, which we will indicate by the black dots. Notice, they come up from the group — they emerge from the ranks of the disciples. In every sub-division we now have two leaders.

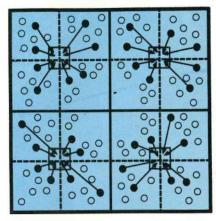


Now, in every area of the city we have numerous groups meeting on, for instance, Tuesday nights. May I suggest that it is good to have all the prayer meetings in a city held on the same night. This prevents "group hopping" and requires people to make a commitment and become part of a fellowship where they feel the Lord wants them.

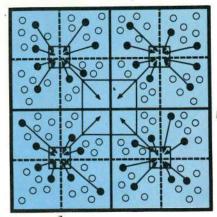
The key to the whole thing fitting together and working comes at this point. Are the various leaders going to join together and fellowship amongst themselves? This is the critical question. If the local leaders will come into fellowship regularly with one another, then the barrier to fellowship between the believers in the entire area is removed.

Let us suppose that the leaders in each area of the city come together once a week for fellowship. They level with each other; they are open and honest. They share their own personal problems and those of their flocks. They pray for each other's needs.

They exchange revelations and check out with their fellow leaders what they are doing in their separate groups. I need not say again that this is highly idealized; it is just an idea of how it can actually be done. Every Monday night the leaders come together and their personal needs are met; then on Tuesday night they are able to meet the needs of their own flocks.



Now we come to one step further. In the center of the city we draw a larger square. Let us say that on the first Monday of each month all the leaders of the entire city come together. They share what God is doing; they are in fellowship; they acknowledge one another's authority. There is now no barrier to the entire city fellowshipping together because all the leaders are in fellowship.



Logically, there is no limit to the number of similar patterns that can be added on all sides of this one, or to the number of house groups that there may be in any given sub-division. Only practical considerations of transportation and accommodation limit the size of the total area that can be covered.

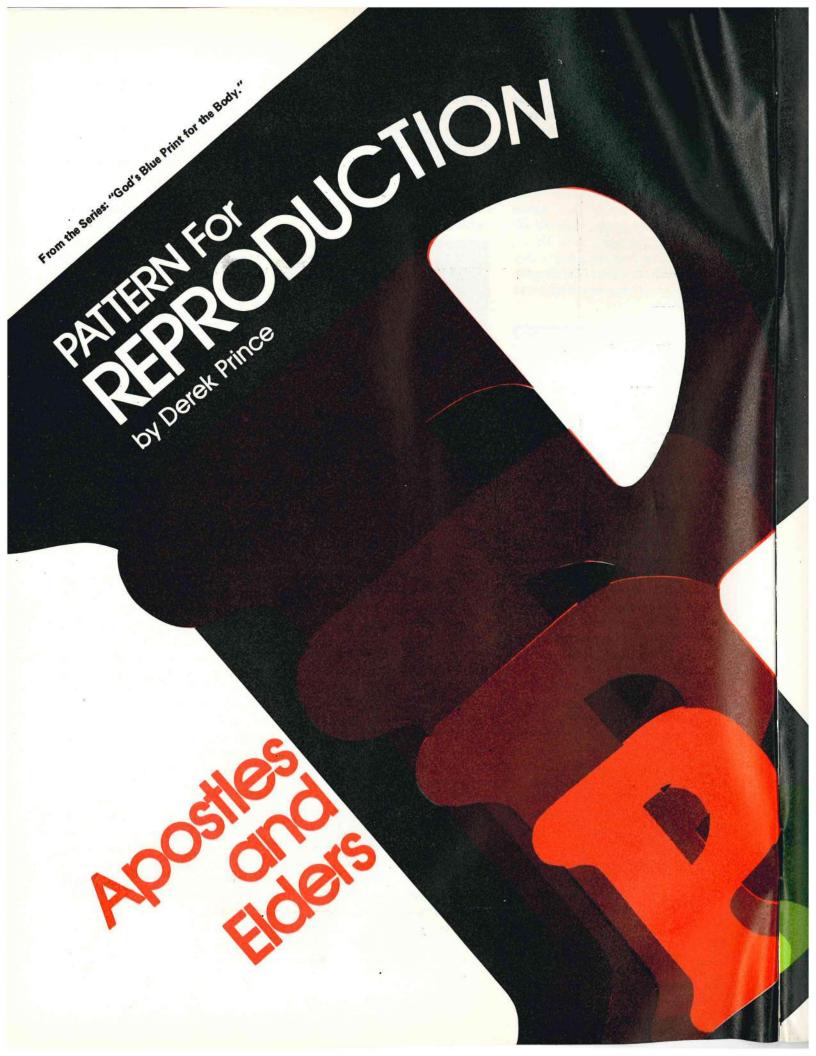
UNITY DEPENDS UPON LEADERS

When all the leaders in a city fellowship regularly together, they can speak with one voice. They are open to the leading of the Holy Spirit for the entire city. Together they can invite mobile ministries, such as an evangelist, or a teacher, if they feel a need in their area. Also — which is no less important — they can collectively refuse ministries. The local leaders are the door of the sheep-fold. An outsider must enter through them.

When a group of leaders speak together, then there is true authority. But when every little man is a pope in his own group, there is no collective authority. As long as leaders are islands unto themselves, wolves will continue to roam at large and prey upon the flock. A leader standing alone without fellowship or covering, will almost inevitably be picked off by the enemy.

Here is a pivotal point on which God's dealings in this hour are turning. Is the leadership of the church going to come together? One day as I was meditating on this, the Lord asked me, "With whom did I have more trouble—the city of Nineveh or the prophet Jonah?" I replied, "Lord, when you got Jonah straightened out, you had no problems with Nineveh." It is exactly the same today. Once the leadership is in order, God will have little problem with the rest of the body of Christ.

The church needs a divine revolution, and it is on the way. If there are those in my generation who are not willing to respond, if they prefer to perish in the Valley of Decision, then there is a younger generation that is willing to hear and obey. The motto of the new generation is, "Tell it like it is." This is the attitude of the openness and willingness that God requires today.





n previous studies we have examined the five main ministries which have been placed in the body of Christ. They are listed in Ephesians 4:11, "Apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers." Four of these are primarily considered to be mobile ministries (i.e. to the whole body of Christ); they are, the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist and the teacher. One, the shepherd or pastor, is a resident ministry which operates in a local area.

In relation to the mobile ministries, we have defined the body of Christ, or the universal church, as every born again believer in the Lord Jesus Christ around the world. The local church we have defined as all members of the universal church (born again believers) who are in a given area. In God's eyes there are only two qualifications for belonging to the local church: being a born again believer, and being resident in a given locality.

What we have seen is very different from the accepted pattern of church organization which we have inherited by tradition from previous generations. As I said before, I believe God has brought the church into the valley of decision. Henceforth neutrality and compromise are no longer possible. The church today must decide if it is going to follow the path of tradition or if it is going to follow the clear pattern of church order which God has ordained and set forth in the Scriptures.

The fact that God has allowed us to do something for generations is not a sign that it is right. Paul said to the men at Athens about their idolatrous worship, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at (He closed His eyes to); but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). God has winked at the ignorance of the church for generations but in our day He is commanding men everywhere to repent. He is restoring the understanding of the church as He

ordained it. Increasing light brings with it increased responsibility.

God did not design the church to be a lot of separate denominations — each with its own government, its own doctrines, each one doing its own thing. The key to restoring unity and fellowship in the body of Christ as a whole, is bringing the leaders together in fellowship. It is actually the leaders who divide the body.

A WAY OUT?

How do we come out of the state in which we find ourselves? How do the leaders of the church come together? I believe part of the answer is to be found in the call that God gave to Jeremiah the prophet (Jeremiah 1:10): "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."

God sovereignly called Jeremiah and set him over the nations to fulfil God's purposes. The initiative came from God, not from Jeremiah. Everything of any permanent value in the kingdom of God has its origin in the purpose and calling of God, not in the expediencies or improvizations of men. The child of expedience is invariably an Ishmael; the child of divine purpose is an Isaac.

In the task assigned to Jeremiah there were two processes involved: There was a pulling down and a building up. Likewise, in Ecclesiastes 3:3, we are told that there is "a time to break down, and a time to build up." Sometimes in the ecomony of God a time of building must be preceded by a time of pulling down. Today God's sheep are split up by denominational barriers that shut them off from fellowship with one another. The first stage in solving the problem is to break down these barriers, and this can only be done effectively by the leaders.

At the present time, all over the United States, groups of men are beginning to come together in regular fellowship. Some are ordained ministers, some are laymen, some are leaders of

prayer groups, some are in special outreach activity; but all are men acknowledged of God's people as leaders. As they are beginning to come together in fellowship, the barriers of mistrust and misunderstanding are being broken down, and the way is open for them to consider themselves as being co-shepherds of one flock. As this takes place, the barriers between the flocks are coming down, and they are fellowshipping with each other.

A friend of mine has said, "Don't organize. Recognize!" There are men in every area who have shepherd qualifications; some are already fulfilling the shepherd ministries. God forbid that these men be set aside! It is necessary that these men come into a right relationship with each other and that the flock as a whole recognize and acknowledge them as leaders and shepherds. As leaders come together, the flocks will come together.

THE REPRODUCTIVE CYCLE

To this point in our studies we have seen some of the structure and operation of the local church; and examined the nature of the five main ministries which operate in the body of Christ. Now we need to see how these ministries are intended to reproduce themselves.

God created all life with the ability to reproduce itself. His command was, "Be fruitful and multiply." What is true in the realm of natural law will often be true in the spiritual. If the local churches and ministries which we have been studying are operating as they should, then God has ordained a pattern and method of growth which makes them self-producing.

There are two key ministries in the reproductive cycle of the church: the apostle and the elder. We will see how the apostolic ministry is first brought forth; how it in turn produces the elders; and how the elders, then, reproduce apostles. Three New Testament cities will be key in our study: Antioch, Lystra and Ephesus.

The fountain head of all Scriptural revelation concerning this truth is

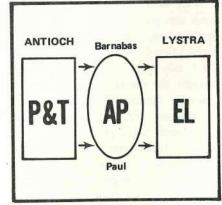
found in Acts 13:1-4:

(1) "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers: (Five men are named here who held the ministry of prophets and teachers, among whom are Barnabas and Paul).

(2) "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

Before Paul and Barnabas were sent forth from Antioch, they were prophets and teachers. After they were sent forth, they were "sent-forth ones" — i.e. apostles (see Acts 14:4, 14). In the course of their journey they twice visited the city of Lystra. On their second visit they "ordained elders" in the church in this city (see Acts 14:21-23).

We may represent what has so far taken place by a simple diagram. A square represents a resident local congregation. A circle represents a team of mobile ministries. The letters "P" and "T" stand for prophets and teachers. The letters "AP" stand for apostles. The letters "EL" stand for elders.



As the prophets and teachers in Antioch fellowship and minister to the Lord, the apostolic ministries of Paul and Barnabas are brought forth. This is the first stage: the mobile ministry of apostles born out of fellowship in a local congregation. True spiritual birth of this kind can only come forth out of fellowship. Fellowship is the place of spiritual birth. Without fellowship there can be no spiritual birth.

The second stage takes place at Lystra. Within a local congregation apostles ordain elders, who thereafter assume responsibility for the leadership of that congregation.

After completing their journey, Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch and report to the congregation which originally sent them forth (see Acts 14:26–28). In due course, Paul is sent forth a second time from the congregation at Antioch. This time he takes Silas with him (see Acts 15:40). Prior to being sent forth with Paul, Silas was already recognized as a prophet (see Acts 15:32).

The opening verses of Acts 16 describe how Paul, accompanied by Silas, came to Lystra: (1) "Then came he (Paul) to Derbe and Lystra; and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus (Timothy), the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed: but his father was a Greek:"

Timothy had been brought up in the local assembly in Lystra by his believing mother, and verse 2 says, "... (Timothy) was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra..."

Timothy had thus obtained his first degree toward the ministry, he was recommended by the leaders of his own local congregation. If you cannot live the Christian life under the scrutiny of a local assembly, then you have no business exporting your life to others. By scriptural standards, no one has a right to step out in the ministry who does not start in this manner.

Timothy was well spoken of and Paul desired that he should join Silas and himself in their travels: (3) "Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews; (4) And they went through the cities..."

What did Silas become when he was "sent forth" from Antioch, and Timothy when he was "sent forth" from Lystra? I Thessalonians gives us the answer. This epistle was written jointly by the three men named in the salutation: "Paul, Silvanus (Silas,) and Timotheus (Timothy)." In I Thessalonians 2:6 we see how these three men describe themselves: "Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor

yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ." Who were these "apostles of Christ"? Paul, Silas and Timothy. All three were "sent-forth ones" — i.e. apostles. In this way Silas — like Paul previously — was promoted from the ministry of a prophet to that of an apostle.

Timothy became an apostle in the same manner as Paul and Silas, by being sent forth from his local assembly, which happened to be Lystra. Timothy received his commission from the elders in that city. This is indicated in I Timothy 4:14, where Paul writes to Timothy: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of hands of the presbytery." The "gift" here mentioned by Paul is not the baptism in the Holy Spirit, as some would suggest. I cannot see a scriptural basis for anyone needing prophecy to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The prophecy probably had to do with Timothy's call as an apostle, as this was the manner in which Paul had previously received his call to the same ministry (see Acts 13:2).

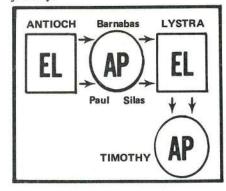
The important point is that Timothy's ministry was given with the laying on of hands of the "presbytery". This word is derived from the Greek word for elder, *presbuteros*, and it means a "group of elders".

In II Timothy 1:6 Paul again writes to Timothy concerning his "gift": "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." In this passage Paul indicates that he himself also laid hands on Timothy. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that in the initial "sending forth" of Timothy from Lystra both Paul and the local elders laid hands on Timothy.

I would imagine that during the visit of Paul and Silas to Lystra, prophecy came forth in their fellowship that Timothy was to go forth with the other two men. The elders acknowledged it, and together with Paul and Silas, they laid hands on

Timothy to commission him, and thus sent him forth with the senior apostles, Paul and Silas. This is the scriptural pattern — the beginner works with those who are experienced in the ministry.

We may now return to our diagram and insert the additional appointments and developments which take place at the commencement of Paul's second journey:



Out of the local congregation at Antioch the apostolic ministry of Silas is raised up and sent forth. Out of the local congregation at Lystra the apostolic ministry of Timothy is raised up and sent forth, being recommended by the local elders. In each case a mobile ministry is born out of local fellowship.

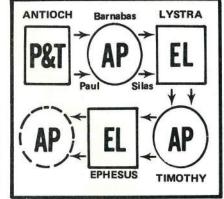
In a later phase of their travels together Paul and Timothy came to the city of Ephesus. They ministered together there for some time. Then Paul moved on, leaving Timothy to finish some work which still needed to be done (see I Timothy 1:3).

From Paul's First Epistle to Timothy we learn that one of Timothy's main responsibilities in Ephesus was to appoint elders. This is made clear in chapter 3, verses 1–10, and chapter 5, verses 17–22, where the qualifications and requirements for elders are set forth.

From Titus 1:5-9 we see that, on another occasion, Titus was left by Paul in Crete with a similar responsibility – that of appointing elders.

Now we return to our diagram and complete the cycle. Timothy, as an apostle, has come to Ephesus, and has there appointed elders in the congregation in that city. Now, in God's

providence, the way is open for the next apostolic ministry to be sent forth by the elders in Ephesus, in the same way as Timothy himself was sent forth by the elders at Lystra. However, this is not actually described in the historical records of the New Testament, so we represent it conjecturally by dotted lines.



The alternation of the square, containing elders, and the circle, containing apostles, depicts a reproductive cycle which can continue ad infinitum.

HOW THIS APPLIES TODAY

In this reproductive cycle the two key ministries are those of the apostle and the elder. If we study the New Testament objectively, we discover that there is much more said about apostles and elders than about all the other ministries put together. But how are apostolic ministries initially brought forth? By a birth out of prophets and teachers, fellowshipping together and ministering to the Lord in prayer and fasting (see Acts 13:1-5). This has a very important practical application to our present situation: If we are prepared to recognize in the church today the ministries of prophets and teachers, then out of these there is a scriptural way for God to bring forth apostolic ministries that fulfil all the requirements of the New Testament.

We find that the Bible in no way endorses the principle of "apostolic succession". This principle states that an apostle can be ordained only be someone who is already an apostle, himself having been similarly ordained.

The city of Antioch, from which Paul and Barnabas were originally sent forth, was within easy reach of Jerusalem. The New Testament indicates that some of the original apostles were resident in Jerusalem (see, for example, Galatians 1:15-19). If God had required that Paul and Barnabas should be appointed by men who were already acknowledged as apostles, He could easily have arranged for such men to travel from Jerusalem to Antioch for this purpose - in the same way that Judas and Silas were sent from Jerusalem to Antioch (see Acts 15:22-23). However, in the providence of God, the apostleship of Paul and Barnabas was ordained by local leaders in the church at Antioch, not by apostles sent down from Jerusalem. Thus the New Testament directly sets aside the requirement of "apostolic succession".

According to the pattern of Acts, apostles are regularly appointed by the laying on of the hands of the leaders in a local congregation. For this reason, it is both logical and scriptural that apostles should be answerable to the congregation that sends them forth.

OFFICES AND MINISTRIES

Briefly to round off our studies, we need to consider two distinct, but closely related, functions in the church. These are: governmental offices and spiritual ministries.

Scripture recognizes only two governmental offices in each local church. These are elders and deacons. Elders function in the spiritual realm and deacons in the material realm. Together they provide day-by-day leadership and direction to the church. Above the elders there is no higher level of administrative leadership. If we are to preserve the autonomy and integrity of the local church, which Scripture so jealously guards, we must never depart from two basic principles: first, there is no governmental office above that of the elders; second, the eldership of each church is always plural.

In conjunction with the govern-

mental offices God has also ordained for each local church certain basic spiritual ministries. These are listed by Paul in I Corinthians 12:28: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." This is one of the few places in Scripture where Paul explicitly lists the ministries in descending order of authority. He indicates this by the use of the words "first", "secondarily", "thirdly", "after that" - and so on. The highest spiritual authority in each local church is that of the apostles. This is followed in turn by that of the prophets and the teachers.

On the other hand, the highest governmental office in the local church is that of the elders. Thus when an apostle becomes resident in a locality, he takes a governmental office in the local church as a "coelder". This is illustrated by the words of Peter in I Peter 5:1: "The elders who are among you I exhort who am also an elder." A more literal translation is, "I exhort you as a co-elder." The Greek word used is a single, compound noun — sum-presbuteros — coelder.

From the passage in Acts 13:1–4 we may reasonably assume that the five men there listed as prophets and teachers were likewise recognized as co-elders in the church at Antioch.

This leads us to a general principle. In the city where they take up residence, apostles, prophets and teachers take their place as co-elders side by side with the resident elders in the local church. In matters of governmental administration they function on the same level as these local elders. However, in matters which fall within the scope of their special ministries — whether as apostles, prophets, or teachers — their authority is to be acknowledged both by the local elders and by the congregation as a whole.

It is interesting to note that there is no mention of evangelists among the ministries listed in I Corinthians 12:28. There is a logical reason for this. The ministry of the evangelist is directed exclusively toward the unconverted. But all the members of the local church are, by definition, already converted. Therefore there is no need within the church for the ministry of the evangelist. This does not mean that the evangelist is not a member of the local church. As a believer, he has his place within the church along with all the other believers, but he does not function there in his ministry as an evangelist.

One believer may combine within himself a governmental office with one or more spiritual ministries. For instance, Peter held the governmental office of an elder, but he also had the spiritual ministry of an apostle. Again, Philip held the governmental office of a deacon, but he exercised the spiritual ministry of an evangelist (outside the fellowship of the church). Apparently he also had the ministries of the workings of miracles and the gifts of healings, which could be exercised either inside or outside the church. (See Acts 6:5; 8:6-7; 21:8).

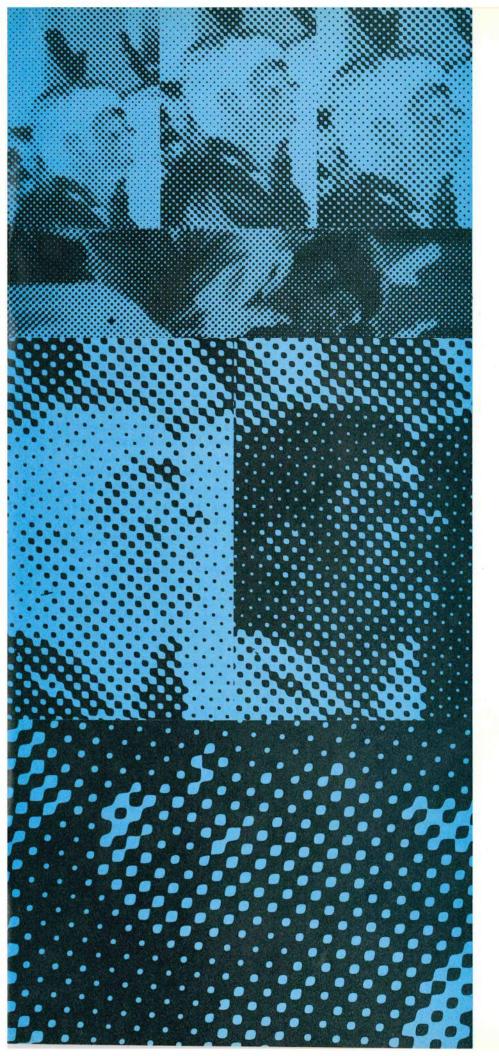
Many other such combinations of office and ministry are possible.

GOD'S SOVEREIGN INTERVENTION

In our studies we have seen how the local church develops from a single cell into a functioning body, with completed leadership and a full range of ministries. There are many evidences that God is now leading His people back into this original New Testament pattern of church life.

Faced with this sovereign intervention of God, we are left with only two possible choices. We may identify ourselves with God's purposes and move with Him to their fulfilment. Or we may refuse to recognize God's intervention and reject His purposes, only to find that God sets us aside and raises up other, more yielded instruments for the accomplishment of His will.

For believers who will make the first choice, the most glorious period in the history of the church lies immediately ahead.



CAN YOU KEEP IT?

The freedom brought by deliverance cannot be taken for granted.

BY DEREK PRINCE

n almost every transaction between God and man there are two parts: God's part, and man's part. Man cannot do God's part. God will not do man's part.

This principle applies to all the main provisions of God received through faith in Christ. God alone can forgive and cleanse from sin. But when forgiven and cleansed, it is the believer's responsibility thereafter to walk in the light. God alone fills with the Holy Spirit. But after the initial infilling, it is the believer's responsibility to be continually filled and refilled.

The same applies to deliverance from evil spirits. God alone can deliver. But after deliverance it is the responsibility of the believer to keep himself free.

I myself learned this lesson from personal experience. For several years after I had entered full-time, full gospel ministry, I was tormented by terrible bouts of depression. One day God showed me, from Isaiah 61:3, that this was a "spirit of heaviness" that was oppressing me. He then directed me to this promise in Joel 2:32: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." I claimed this promise, praying specifically, in the name of Jesus, for deliverance from "the spirit of heaviness". God wonderfully answered this prayer and granted me a full deliverance.

After that, however, I discovered that it was my responsibility to keep myself free. My main difficulties were in the area of my thought life. I was habitually prone to negative, pessimistic thoughts. God showed me that this was in reality a denial of my faith in Christ, since Romans 8:28 assures us that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose." I deliberately set out to reeducate my own mind, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5). I cultivated positive, optimistic reactions and thought patterns, based directly on the statements and promises of God's Word. This initiated a process of strict mental discipline which lasted several years. At the end, however, I was not just temporarily "delivered", I was "free indeed" (John 8:36).

Later, God thrust me into a public ministry along this line. I found myself preaching and ministering deliverance to many hundreds of people. In the experience of others who received deliverance in this way I proved again the same truth that I had already proved in my own experience. It is one thing to be initially "delivered"; it is another thing to stay permanently "free". I discovered that there are a number of simple, basic requirements for keeping deliverance. Briefly, these may be outlined as follows:

I. Deliberately yield every area of your life to the Lordship of Jesus. In Matthew 12:43-45 Jesus warns us that, when an evil spirit goes out of a man, he will seek to return and reenter the same man. If he is successful in this, he will bring back with him other spirits more wicked than himself. Jesus describes the condition of the man which enables the evil spirit to re-enter as being "empty, swept, and garnished." The key word here is "empty". Such a man has got rid of the evil spirit, but he has not allowed Christ to take possession of the area in his life which was vacated by the evil spirit. Consequently that area remains "vacant", affording opportunity to the evil spirit to re-enter.

Once you are delivered from an evil spirit in any area of your life, you should immediately yield that area of your life to Jesus as Lord, asking him to move in and take full control. Where Jesus is in effective control, the area is no longer "vacant" and the evil spirit is not able to return.

II. If you are not already baptized in the Holy Spirit, seek this infilling, and thereafter remain continually full. In Ephesians 5:18 every believer is exhorted to "be filled with the Spirit." This is not optional; it is mandatory. To live below this standard is to live below the level of God's revealed will, and makes you vulnerable to Satan's attacks.

III. Live in and by the Word of God (the scriptures). In Matthew 4:4 Jesus says: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Do not allow your life to be controlled by your emotions, your habits or your religious traditions. These offer no protection against Satan. When Jesus himself was tempted by Satan, he began his answer each time by saying "It is written..." — that is, by direct quotation of God's written Word. You must learn to do the same.

Remember that it is not sufficient merely to believe God's Word in your heart, you must also confess it boldly with your mouth (see Romans 10:8–10). Jesus is "the High Priest of our confession" (Hebrews 3:1). If you maintain a bold, scriptural confession of your faith, Jesus will stand by you. But if your confession is negative, fearful and unbelieving, you deprive yourself of his ministry on your behalf as High Priest.

It is to the written Word of God that Paul refers in Ephesians 6:17, when he says, "And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..." Notice that it is your responsibility to "take" this sword. After you have first "taken" it, then the Holy Spirit will help you "wield" it

IV. You will also need to put on the other items of the believer's equipment, as listed by Paul in Ephesians 6:14-17. These are: the girdle of truth; the breastplate of righteousness; the shoes of the preparation of the gospel; the shield of faith; the helmet of salvation. All these are for your protection, but they are not weapons of attack. The only weapon of attack is the sword of God's Word.

If you make full use of all this equipment, you are completely protected from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet — upon one condition: that you do not turn your back! God has not given you anything to protect your back. If you turn around in fear and defeat, be sure that Satan will take his opportunity to wound your unprotected back.

The reason why you need all this equipment is stated in Ephesians 6:11–12; you are committed to a total conflict against Satan and all his spiritual hosts of wickedness. Concerning this conflict Paul says in Romans 12:21: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." You have only two alternatives: either to overcome, or to be overcome. There is no third course open to you.

V. You must learn to wear at all times "the garment of praise." This is your special protection against "the spirit of heaviness", as revealed in Isaiah 61:3. While you live in a continuing atmosphere of praise and thankfulness to God, you trouble the devil more than he can trouble you. You will not become a prey to depression, with all its accompanying negative attitudes and emotions.

Make the same decision that David made in Psalms 34:1: "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth." Remember that David wrote these words as a fugitive in the court of Achish (or Abimelech), king of Gath. In order to save his life, he had to pretend to be mad, slobbering on his beard and scrabbling with his finger nails on the door (see I Samuel 21:10–15). If David could praise the Lord under those circumstances, then you, too, can praise him in your time of stress and trial.

VI. Cultivate right relationships. One of the warnings given by Alcoholics Anonymous to cured alcoholics is this: "Resentment is a luxury that you can no longer afford." The same applies to every one delivered from evil spirits, especially if these spirits are in the emotional realm. You will find a good example to follow in the personal testimony of Paul before Felix: "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). To maintain right relationships with God and man requires spiritual "exercise", just as much as it requires physical exercise for an athlete to remain in good condition.

In Ephesians 4:26–27 Paul warns: "Be angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil." Never let impatience, resentment, or anger push you into doing something sinful. If you yield to anger, you give "place to the devil." That is, you open up an area of your personality to the devil, allowing him to enter and occupy it. Keep short accounts with the people close to you. Before you go to sleep each night, be sure that you are cleansed from anger, resentment, bitterness.

VII. Submit to scriptural discipline. The Bible obligates the believer to submit himself to various forms of discipline: divine discipline; self discipline; the discipline of home and church; and the discipline of obedience to secular government. In Acts 11:26 we are told that it was "disciples" who were first called "Christians". As the word indicates, a "disciple" is one who is under "discipline". People who are not willing to be under discipline have no right to claim the title of Christians.

It is particularly important that you find the place appointed for you in the body of Christ — in some ordered fellowship of likeminded believers. In this place you will come under the authority of those whom God has set as leaders. Scriptural authority pro-

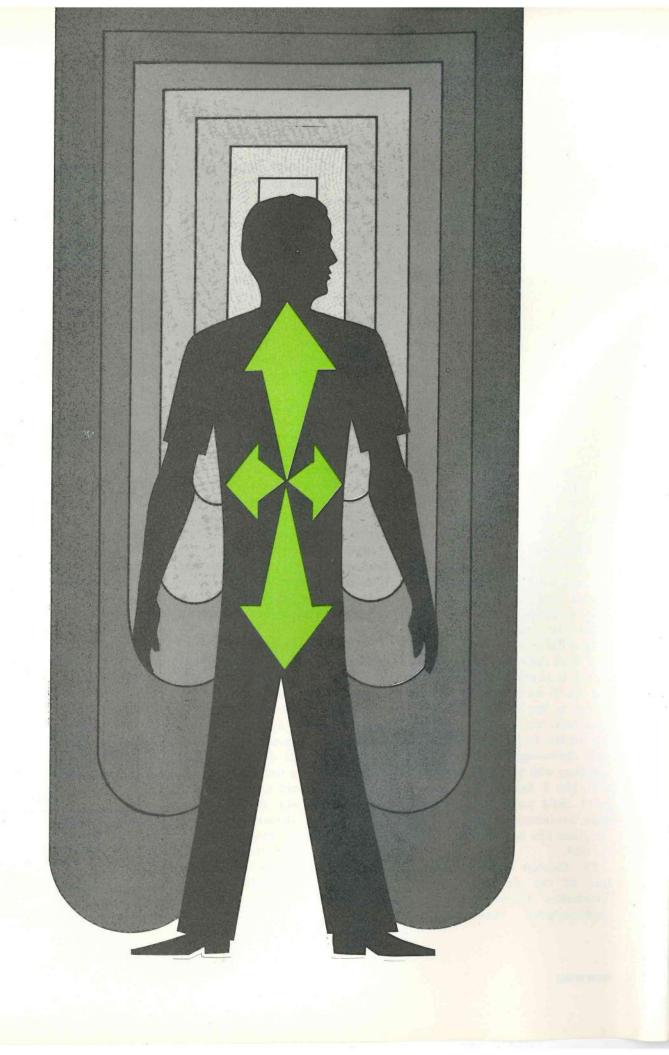
vides a protective covering over each believer. If you refuse to submit to such authority, you are spiritually "uncovered", and thus an easy target for Satan's attack.

VIII. Finally, make Jesus central. The experience of deliverance from evil spirits is at times thrilling and dramatic. Frequently it opens the eyes of people to an area of scriptural truth about which they had never received any previous instruction. The impact of this is sometimes almost overwhelming. There is a tendency to attribute every type of problem to demons. This, of course, is unscriptural. Not all problems are due directly or indirectly to demons.

Never let yourself become one-sided in your spiritual emphasis. It is possible to be one-sided about many things, such as tongues, healing, deliverance, prophecy, church order, etc. All these things are important, but none of them is central. Jesus alone is the center of all scriptural experience. Put Jesus in the center, and you will then gradually be able to arrange all other aspects of truth in their right order around him.

In John 12:31-32 Jesus himself said: "Now shall the prince of this world (i.e. Satan) be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." The order here is clear and practical. First, Satan must be cast out. Then Jesus must be uplifted in his place. Security and success come through uplifting Jesus.

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The beginning of God's plan to restore the individual." SPIRIT

by Charles Simpson

As we' try to define what God is doing in our times, I think one of the key words is restoration. There are many different ideas about exactly what this entails, but I think it is one of the major themes the Holy Spirit is speaking to the church today.

Do you believe God wants to restore the damage done by the devil? I do. His plan of restoration for the individual, the church and the whole creation is to bring back everything to a place even beyond where it was before the enemy took over. The devil can tear a thing down, but it takes God to rebuild it. This is one of the hallmarks of the Spirit of God — He is a builder . . . an edifier.

Before God can do what He wants to do with the church, there must first be a restoration in individual lives. Christ is the standard and we are all being restored into His image — both corporately and individually.

The way in which God goes about restoring us, as individuals, is the theme of our study. We need to understand what we can do to cooperate with God in the process, rather than hinder His workings in our lives. First, look with me at I Thessalonians 5:23-24:

"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. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

What will He do? He will sanctify you wholly. This is not holy. It is wholly — completely! He will sanctify you completely.

THE PROCESS

One point needs to be established before proceeding. Many members in the body of Christ today are looking for instant sanctification. We want an experience that will enable us to say, "Now I have it!" We want all of our problems to be over and done with... no more sin... no more devil... no more flesh. Some of us have an experience and think we have everything we need — then we find out we don't — and in our defeat, we start to pretend we do have it, thus getting into deeper trouble.

When we are saved, we have it! Then someone tells us about an experience in sanctification and we receive that — this time we are sure we have it! Next we hear about the baptism in the Holy Spirit and feel this must be the answer. Along comes deliverance...and so on.

God desires to show us the full implications of salvation. I believe that there is something instantaneous in salvation, and that is regeneration, or the new birth. This happens at a point in time when we place our trust in Jesus Christ and He comes to live in us. The New Testament concept of salvation is the entire process by which we are pre-

sented to the throne of God. The key word is *process*. It *begins* with the new birth, or regeneration, and is the entire redemptive process of the individual — God's whole provision for man.

We must see that salvation is a walk with God and not a once-for-all experience that takes care of everything. How do we grow in the natural? ZIP!!! Four years old. ZIP!!! Ten years old. ZIP!!! Fifteen years old. No, it doesn't work this way — it is a process. We do not feel any older when we are sixteen than we did when we were fifteen and three-quarters. We grow a little every day and mark our progress by birth-days. We need to learn to do the same in our walk with God.

Most of us are adolescents in our walk with God. If you have adolescents in your home, you know what I mean... too old to act like little children and yet not able to function as adults — it is a difficult period of growing up. Most adolescents would like to grow up and be finished with the growing pains. Can you see that we do the same in the way we try to grow up in God? We want to have a single experience that will make us mature so we will not have to go through the pain of the growing-up process.

However, it doesn't happen that way. We grow for awhile and then God gives us an experience that will serve as a "spiritual birthday" and mark a little progress along the way. If we could learn to cultivate this concept and live Charles Simpson, former Southern Baptist pastor, travels widely as a teacher and conference speaker from his home in Gautier, Mississippi.

with it, we would no longer find our lives so experience-oriented.

SETTING APART

Returning to our reference from I Thessalonians 5:23-24, we see that God wants to sanctify us. Sanctify. basically, means to set apart. On one extreme, we find ourselves in the world, with its values . . . behaviorial patterns . . . ideals. On the other extreme, we have the kingdom of God and all this entails. In the sanctification process we are moving from one of these extremes to the other - apart from the world and its life style - into the kingdom of God and the life of Christ. Verse 23 shows us how this process works. God will sanctify your whole spirit and soul and body. We shall use this pattern of God's workings and build our study around it.

The Apostle Paul recalls his own experience in God as he tells us in II Corinthians 1:10:

"Who hath delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."

Here is our process. Notice that it has three phases which are represented by three tenses of verbs:

- (1) "Who delivered us . . ." This is past tense. Should someone ask, "Are you saved?" you would answer, "Yes, God saved me."
- (2) "... and doth deliver us..." This is present and continuing tense. We are being saved and delivered from the world and death.
- (3) "... will yet deliver us..." Here is future tense. He continues His work. It is a process: We have been saved... We are being saved... and we will yet be saved.

Can you see, with me, that in this process is the saving of the entire individual — spirit . . . soul . . . body? When I was born again, my spirit was

delivered, or saved. God gave me a new spirit. In the present, my soul is being saved or delivered as I grow into the likeness of Christ. Finally, at the resurrection, my body will be delivered into the likeness of Christ's body. We are in the process of being renewed and transformed, totally into the pattern of Christ.

If we are going to use spirit, soul and body as our pattern, we need to understand these terms more fully. For many years I was a dualist. I believed that man was made up of two parts: the *material*, or the body; and the *non-material*, or spirit and soul, which I considered to be one. However, Hebrews 4:12 tells us that the word of God can divide between the soul and the spirit. You see, there is a difference.

THE SPIRIT AND SOUL

Scripture presents the difference in this way. The word "spirit", both in Hebrew and Greek, means "breath" or "wind". The Spirit of God is the breath of God. The word "inspire" means to "breathe on." The Scripture was written by men who were inspired, or breathed upon by God. The wind is often used as a picture of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said you can hear the sound of it, but you cannot see it or know where it comes from.

The word "soul", however, is an entirely different thing. The Greek word is psuche, from which we get words like psychology, etc. This mainly applies in the realm of the intellect and mind. The soul is where the learning and thought processes take place. The soul includes the emotions. Many also include the will. For emphasis sake, we will deal with "soul" as the will, intellect and emotions.

Of course, the physical realm is obvious to all — the body.

We must understand, as the world and many Christians do not, that religion and doctrines, right or wrong, belong to the soul realm. You can learn religion. You can learn a set of words that make you sound "spiritual", or a list of doctrines and scriptures with which you can defend your beliefs. But this is all in the realm of the soul. I am not opposed to right doctrine and proper understanding of the Scripture — we need more of it; but I am saying that this is not what makes you "spiritually" alive to God.

Your spiritual life comes from your spirit; it is your breath. It is the motivating force of your life. Did you ever come into a meeting with a tired soul? What happens when the Spirit of God comes on you? Your soul is "breathed on" and it is quickened — it comes alive! There is a distinct difference, even though the two are interrelated. I hope this will become clearer as we progress in our series.

In the restoration process, everything originates in the spirit. This is God's pattern. I Corinthians 6:17 tells us: "He that is joined to God is one Spirit." We must be joined to God in spirit before our soul nature can be renewed or our bodies be quickened. We begin by considering a new spirit and what it means to receive a "new spirit".



Hear this explanation from I Corinthians 15:45 — "And so it is written, the first man, Adam, was made a living soul: (This was a conscious mind... an intellect... a being capable of intellectual and emotional processes); the last Adam (Jesus Christ) was made a quickening spirit." The writer used two different words for a very good reason. The Bible says that God breathed into Adam... He put spirit in Adam, and he became a living soul.

My personal conviction is that when Adam sinned, his spirit died. To say the least, his spirit was disconnected from the spirit of God. Since God is the sustainer of life, Adam's spirit died. All men are born into natural life with dead spirits, or spirits unrelated to life's source. When we are born with death in our spirits, then our souls (will, intellect and emotion) are perverted and our bodies will eventually die because of the death that is within us. The problems that we face today are not just due to sick minds or sick bodies; these are only symptoms of dead spirits.

BEGINNING IN THE SPIRIT

Jesus Christ came to do something about man's dead condition and He begins at the root of the problem the spirit. If man's whole problem were in the realm of the soul, then all we would have to do would be to educate people and everything would work out satisfactorily. History has proven that this does not work. We can teach people about God and about religion, but it will not help them because that is in the realm of the soul and that is not where the problem lies. All of the social programs, psychology groups, and self-help plans will never give us the basic answer. I am not opposed to these things, but they do not get to the root of man's basic problem - that dead spirit.

The Bible says of God, "All of our springs are in thee." This is our life source. Whenever you find the Spirit of God, you will find life. When the church lost the manifestation of the Spirit of God, history experienced what is known as "the Dark Ages". When the Reformation and Counter Reformation came, God's Spirit started to move in the church and the light came back into the world. We had the Enlightenment and the beginning of the modern era. But it came about because of the Reformation and the moving of the Spirit of God.

The old Adam, or the first Adam, begat a race of men who are dead in their spirits. Now God sent a new Adam to begin a new race in order to give us back everything which we lost in the old Adam. When God begins His restoration process, He begins at the foundation. He begins by giving us a new spirit.

If someone comes to me for help, I know now that the place to begin is not in the soul realm. I begin in the realm of the spirit.

Sometime ago I was forced to take a bus to a series of meetings due to an airline strike. Seated next to me on the bus was an elderly gentleman who had turned away from God some years before. He had been given a lot of religion and had all that he felt he could take. (I'm glad I was never faced with what he had to face.) He was hard and profane. I knew he would not be interested in me being a preacher, so I got the conversation around to Jesus.

Soon I began to feel the breath of God. The Spirit of the Lord came into that bus and the man's countenance began to light up. He quit using so much profanity and began to get rather soft. I thought he was going to melt into the seat! God breathed on that man's spirit and he felt *life* as he had never felt it in years of religion. Do you see something of restoration in this incident?

Paul presents this theme in I Corinthians chapter 15:

(46) "Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural. (God first gave us the natural – then the spiritual.)

(47) "The first man is of the earth, earthy (Adam was of the earth, and he was earthy. All who are born of Adam are the same — earthy.); the second man is the Lord from heaven.

(48)"As in the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: (those that are born after Adam are like Adam and they will do what Adam did. The natural man always behaves like Adam) and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

(49) "And as we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Paul is telling us that in the same way that we are like Adam, we shall also be like Jesus Christ. This is the promise of restoration. It excites me! I take everything that Jesus is to be a promise of what I will be like someday!

This promise will not work if we try to get a man's soul or body sanctified before his spirit is sanctified. I have seen people with "sanctified" souls or bodies, but with dead spirits. I am completely in favor of having a sanctified soul or body; but we need to begin at the beginning — and that is in the realm of the spirit. Once a man is sanctified in his spirit, then he will naturally want to have his soul and body follow along.

A NEW SPIRIT

How do we receive a new spirit? John 1:12-13 tells us: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, (that is the growing process) even to them that believe on his name; Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Spirit).

Notice, birth in the spirit does not come from the will (soul); nor does it come from the flesh (body). It comes from God (Spirit). Who takes the initiative in spiritual birth? God. All we can do is stand still and receive. Quit trying! God says, "Be still and know that I am God." The new birth is from God; all we can do is receive it. Is "begatting" of the child or of the father? Spiritual birth is of God — literally, "Out from" God. All we do is yield.

Chapter 3 of John's gospel brings this into clearer focus. We are told of a man named Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. The Pharisees were good people, in spite of the connotations we have given to the word today. In fact, they were the fundamentalists of Jesus' time. They believed in the scriptures literally. But, unfortunately, they had the wrong spirit or attitude. They had "religion", which was in the realm of the soul.

Nicodemus saw something in Jesus which he did not see in his religion. He saw lives changed... miracles... healings... authority over demon spirits — and he knew he was seeing

God in action. "Soul" cannot perform miracles. Positive thinking cannot turn water into wine. Right doctrine will not heal the sick and raise the dead.

John 3:2 says that Nicodemus came to Jesus one night and said, "We know thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

He knew that God is a spirit and that the spirit of God was with Jesus. He sensed and saw something different in Jesus. God was with this man. Jesus cut right through the realm of the soul and into the spirit where the issue lay, and He said, "Unless a man be born again (literally, from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is not just a matter of a second birth — the birth must come from the right source — Above!

Jesus was telling Nicodemus that if he ever was to see or experience the kingdom of God, he would have to have a new spirit. Without this new spirit he would never comprehend or see what God was doing in the earth. Why doesn't the world understand what is going on today on the world scene and in the spiritual realm? Why can't you explain to a man of the world why he will get into difficulty if he dabbles in the occult? Because these things have to do with the Spirit of God and those who have never been born from above will never understand them.

BEING BORN

Essentially, I see three things in the new birth. The word, the Spirit and faith. We have already seen that the new life comes from the Spirit; there is no question about that. I Peter 1:23 says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

It takes a seed to begat life and birth. A seed must be involved in conception. The seed which impregnates us with the life of God is the word of God. The One who puts the seed in us is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives to us the word — a quickening living word — and Christ is formed in us.

Chapter one of Luke presents an excellent illustration of this truth. The angel, Gabriel, came to Mary and delivered the message that she was to have a child that would be the savior of His people. The angel was a messenger who brought the word of God. Mary said, "How can that happen? I don't have a husband."

Then Gabriel said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God."

Now I feel (and this is strictly my opinion) that at that moment, when the word was being spoken, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Mary and Jesus was conceived in her. The seed of God was conceived and made flesh. How? By the word (from the angel) and from the Spirit (the Holy Spirit).

This is the way God's life comes into all of us. This is why we must not preach psychology or philosophy, but the word of God under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. There are many people who are very "religious" but who have never had the new birth. They need to yield to God and receive the new Spirit which has been promised to all of us.

Perhaps the best way to tell how one yields to God and to His Spirit is a remarkable incident that occurred a few years ago. I was teaching on the Holy Spirit one Sunday and after the service a very dignified man of about seventy years stepped up to me and said, "I understand that you believe in the gifts of the Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit."

I replied, "Yes, sir, I do."

The man was a minister and quite learned. I felt very much like a novice in his presence. He was wearing a black suit and carried a black bowler hat in his hand. His next remark was, "I want to talk to you about being filled with the Spirit."

Without thinking, I asked, "Have you been born again?" Then I caught myself and apologized. "I'm sorry, that is a habit. You see, the Holy spirit is for God's children."

He looked at me quite sternly and stated, "Young man, I have been preaching for forty-one years."

That was the wrong answer! However, I apologized, "Please forgive me. I have embarrassed you. But, you see, the Holy Spirit is only for those who have been born again."

He was quiet for a moment. Then he said, "Nobody ever asked me that before."

To which I replied, "Well, I'm sorry, but I think you had better consider that before I pray with you." I gave him some scriptures to read and he went home. He lived about thirty-five miles away and we set up an appointment to meet the following week.

The time we had set was Friday at 10:00 A.M. I did not arrive until 10:30 and was humiliated. The gentleman was waiting for me on the porch. I thought, "Not only have I embarrassed him, but here I am thirty minutes late for this appointment."

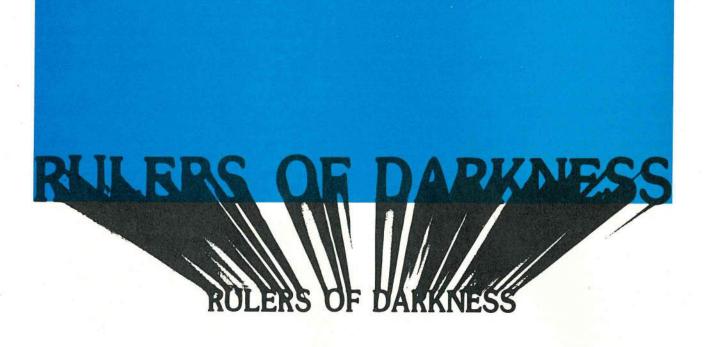
As we began our conversation I noted that he was very sober. He handed me a piece of paper with these words, "Young man, on this paper is a list of all the sins I can think of and I have written at the bottom of the list, If there be any more, Lord Jesus, put them also under the blood. What do I do next?"

I said, "Let's go inside and pray."

As we knelt together in the living room, the sun shone through the lace curtain onto his flowing white hair. It looked as if the glory of God was upon him. With the simple faith of a little child, this man of seventy years asked Jesus Christ to come into his life and forgive his sins.

Suddenly that stern, dignified man seemed to come alive! His face glowed... it was as bright as the sunshine. We wept together for joy. After seventy years, he had just begun to live!

This is the new life... that is a new spirit. Everyone must begin here. If we do not start in simple faith as this gentleman did, then there is no restoration process — there is no new spirit — there is no new life. To find life, we can never skip birth!



By Hobart Freeman

PART OF SATAN'S MASTER PLAN TO ENSLAVE AN ENTIRE GENERATION

The Scriptures predict that there will be a great increase in demonic activity in the last days. Our age is characterized by an ever-increasing flood of Satanic wickedness. This rapid expansion of the world of the kingdom of darkness is seen in the increase in crime, lust, deceit, moral depravity, suicide, war, fear, worry, atheism, psychic disorders, demonic oppression and possession, drug and alcohol addiction, together with the growth of spiritism and occultism.

Practices which were once abhorred by the average person as witchcraft,

sorcery, and spiritism are now being

Dr. Hobart E. Freeman, a former teacher of philosophy and ethics, writes from the position of one who has been used of God to help set hundreds free from the bondage of occultism.

popularized through religious literature, church groups, and radio and TV, whereby millions are being subjected to such occult practices as clairvoyance, telepathy, hypnotism, magic, seances, and forms of extrasensory preception (ESP).

We find that many persons in government circles seek and welcome the counsel of clairvoyants and mediums, such as Jeane Dixon, whose prognostications are derived from fortunetelling, and Arthur Ford who conducts seances while in a trance.

Multitudes, including businessmen, government and religious leaders, beset with problems, fearful and confused because of the present state of the world, are seeking help from fortunetellers and spiritualist mediums. Others have been subjected to the influences of spiritualism, assuming everything supernatural is of

The use of hallucinogenic drugs has

become a symbol of mankind's frustration with life and is an attempt to venture into the spiritual "unknown" by means contrary to the Divine will.

Feeling the contemporary Church lacks awareness of the true spiritual dimension, many are seeking spiritual understanding from such organizations as, Inner Peace Movement (IPM), the Association for Research and Enlightment (ARE), Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship (SFF), and the Religious Research Foundation of America (RRFA). The occult nature of these and similar organizations is seen in their stress upon psychic experiences and many other practices similar to occultism in general.

Multitudes are being deluded by the unscriptural doctrine of reincarnation, whereby one "atones" for his own sins through a cycle of rebirths. This is arousing unusual interest in the Western world as a result of renewed interest in Eastern metaphysics and

the writings of the Rosicrucians and Theosophy, as well as psychics like Edgar Cayce and Grace Wittenberger.

Thousands of self-admitted witches meet regularly to perpetuate pagan rituals, fertility rites, and invoke and worship pagan gods (demons, cf. Deuteronomy 32:16-17 and I Corinthians 10:20). In San Francisco, the First Satanic Church has been founded with Anton LaVey, the priest of Satan, as its founder and leader.

The current scientific interest in psychic research, the growing acceptance of parapsychology as a science, the use of hypnotism in medical practice, and the acknowledgment of extrasensory perception as legitimate manifestations of the mind, are unmistakable evidence of the success of Satan's diabolical scheme to gain access to man's spirit as a necessary step in his invasion of humanity on a scale unlike anything in the history of the human race!

CAUSE FOR OPPRESSION

Those who have become involved in any form of occultism will eventually suffer satanic oppression. There are valid reasons for such a conclusion, based both upon Scripture and experience.

1. Occult involvement is disobedience to God's Word and is an abomination to Him.

In Deuteronomy 18:9f., God warns: ". . . thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found with thee anyone . . . that useth divination (fortuneteller), or an observer of times (soothsayer), or an enchanter (magician), or a witch (sorceress), or a charmer (hypnotist), or a consulter with familiar spirits (mediums possessed with a spirit or "guide"), or a wizard (clairvoyant or psychic), or a necromancer (medium who consults the dead). For ALL that do these things ARE AN ABOMINATION UNTO THE LORD!"

This passage sets forth the methods by which the heathen sought to unveil hidden knowledge and exercise super-

natural powers. In contrast, God declares in verses 15-22 that Israel would learn the things that she needed to know, not by *discovery* through the methods of divination and occult practices, but by *revelation*.

These practices are all condemned by God without reservation. Carefully examine the following Scriptures: Deuteronomy 18:9-14; Exodus 7:11-12; II Timothy 3:8; Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:26, 31; 20:6, 27; I Chronicles 10:13-14; II Kings 21:5-6; Isaiah 2:6; 8-19; Jeremiah 27:9-10; Zechariah 10:2; Malachi 3:5; Acts 8:9f; 16:16f; 19:19; Galatians 5:16-21; Revelation 21:8; 22:15.

God not only forbade participation in all forms of occultism as spiritually defiling (Leviticus 19:31), but made such disobedience as punishable by death (Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 20:27), and sufficient grounds for rejection of that soul by God (Leviticus 20:6).

 Occult involvement breaks the First Commandment and invokes God's curse.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me...for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation..." (Exodus 20:3-5).

Few people have seriously considered that there are but two sources of supernatural guidance, or power — God or Satan. One who visits a fortuneteller, obviously is not seeking help from God through Jesus Christ, or he would pray directly to God, or seek help through a Christian friend or minister. The fortuneteller does not call upon God for the information, but divines by occult methods and demonic power, as is seen in the girl in Acts 16 who had a "spirit of divination".

Although Satan often accommodates the seeker with knowledge or help, one has opened the door to the Enemy who moves in and oppresses him, for the powers of darkness always exact a heavy price for their services.

God's prohibitions against occultism

are still in effect today. Those who disobey His commandments against this sin invariably fall under His curse, suffering psychic, mental, physical or spiritual oppression or enslavement, from which liberation is needed.

EVIDENCE OF OCCULT OPPRESSION AND SUBJECTION

We must distinguish between general oppression and occult oppression and subjection. Liberation from occult oppression or subjection requires proper understanding of its peculiar nature and cause.

General oppression, whether mental, physical, or spiritual, may result from any one of several causes. It may result from some traumatic experience, sin, resentment, hate, pride, fear, or illness, as well as other causes. Occult oppression and subjection, however, always results from an individual's involvement in some form of occult activity or false religious cults.

Both from the Scriptures and experience, it is evident that evil spirits are of various kinds and work in a variety of ways. There are blind spirits, epileptic spirits, lying spirits, spirits of pride, intellectualism, lust, infirmity, insanity, homosexuality, suicide, fear, apathy, anger, strife, hate, depression, stubbornness, misunderstanding, gossip, obscenity, and many others.

These malevolent spirits are definite personalities, not mere habits, diseases or psychological conditions. The demonic spirits seek to oppress those whose character, appetites, and moral, mental, or physical weaknesses are most harmonious to themselves. They bury themselves in the very structure of the person and identify with the personality of the victim insofar as possible. This is why it is difficult for the novice to discern, or the medical doctor, psychologist, and psychiatrist to admit the reality and activity of demonic spirits in such victims.

A distinction should be made between occult "subjection" and "oppression". Subjection, resulting from occult involvement, means that one or (Continued on next page)

RULERS OF DARKNESS

more of these malevolent spirits have brought the victim under the domination and control to such an extent that the individual has been enslaved by such things as: sexual lust, violent temper, lying, hate, religious delusions, or forms of occultism themselves. In persons so subjected, it is often found that they have become psychic themselves, and are so enslaved by occultism that often they lack the will, and sometimes even the desire to be set free.

Oppression means that one or more of these spirits are afflicting the victim with one of many forms of mental, physical, emotional, or psychic ailments, such as depression, pain, marital discord, apparitions, and so forth.

Although these symptoms may stem from other causes, occult subjection and oppression may be classified for clarification into five categories: (1) Mental and Emotional, (2) Psychic, (3) Spiritual, (4) Physical, (5) Material, Domestic and Social.

I. MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES AND ABNORMALITIES.

There are many forms of mental and emotional abnormalities which have no functional or organic basis, as is commonly supposed, but result from occult involvement.

1. Psychoses indicative of occult oppression or subjection.

The symptoms that will be found in this category are such things as serious, prolonged depression or melancholia; resignation to failure or misfortune; apathy in general.

Sometimes this depressive state alternates with a directly opposite mood of extreme joy or an optimistic outlook. This mental disorder is characterized by extreme changes in mood, fluctuating up and down — often without warning.

There may be complusive thoughts of violence and aggression, as well as the presence of destructive emotions of hate, resentment, suspicion, envy, malice and other antisocial abnormalities. Unpredictable impulses,

moods, and actions characterize such an individual.

There is often found in such persons a continual "flight of ideas", the individual going off on one tangent or another, often without completion of a thought, in addition to general incoherence of thoughts and ideas.

Some individuals are subject to uncontrollable passions and appetites, vile language and sexual aberrations. Also indicative of the activity of demonic powers is drug addiction, glut, tony, addiction to alcohol or tobacco, compulsive gambling, and many other forms of excess and intemperance.

2. Psychoneuroses indicative of occult oppression and subjection.

The neurotic exhibits symptoms such as persistent and chronic fear, dread, or evidence of strong nervous tensions. The individual often lives at a frenzied pace and suffers insomnia and restlessness.

The most pathetic and difficult forms of neurotic oppression to deal with are the deep-rooted feelings of self-pity and the abnormal desire for attention found in some individuals.

Compulsive thoughts, behaviour, phobias and obsessions are often present in such persons. Compulsive lying, deception, infidelity, arson or cleptomania (an irresistible desire to steal) are some of the compulsive abnormalities.

II. PSYCHIC DISTURBANCES AND ABNORMALITIES.

Under this category are to be found those forms of subjection and oppression that pertain particularly to the extrasensory functions of the mind or psyche (spirit).

1. Occult Subjection:

Those who have had occult involvement, or who come from a background which contains occult connections, frequently become "psychic" themselves.

- (a) Clairvoyance: This term describes the ability to see objects or events beyond the natural range of vision. It is the awareness or knowledge of what is taking place elsewhere.
- (b) Precognition: This power enables occultly subjected persons to

have knowledge of, or the ability to see events before they occur.

- (c) Telepathy: Persons who are psychic often exhibit the power of the transference of thought from one mind to another, either by thought-sending or mind-reading. When the term ESP is mentioned, often this is what is first thought of.
- (d) Divination: This is the most common form of occultism and has reference to the ancient black art of fortunetelling by the crystal ball, ouija board, tea leaves, handwriting analysis (graphology), horoscope, etc.
- (e) Radiesthesis: Divining for such things as water, oil, and minerals, using a dowsing rod or pendulum, is an ancient occult practice known the world over, having its roots in heathenism, and it is condemned in the Scriptures (Hosea 4:12; Deuteronomy 18:10).
- (f) Psychometry: This is the psychic ability to determine the facts about an object's owner from contact with the object.
- (g) Magic Practices: Includes: hypnosis, remote influence of others, magic charming, conjuring and healing animals and humans, casting spells, and countless other magical and superstitious practices.
- (h) Spiritism and Mediumistic Powers: Certain other abilities which can result from occult subjection: self-induced trance states, contact with spirit writing, levitation (the lifting or floating of objects), spirit knockings or rappings, telekinesis (objects are caused to move mysteriously about the room, musical instruments play as by unseen hands), parakinesis (PK, or the ability to control objects by the power of the mind and will), and many other forms of psychic phenomena.

2. Occult Oppression.

Occult participation does not always result in the above mentioned sensitivity, there often being only some form of "oppression" occurring.

(a) Poltergeist Phenomena: Poltergeist (German for "noisy ghost") manifestations are common phenomena, having been observed by

many reliable witnesses and may be attributed to the malicious works perpetrated by demonic spirits.

In this instance, the oppressed individual suffers definite psychic attacks in the form of such bizarre occurrences as: objects are seen floating about the room, the sound of rattling of chains, moaning, weeping or crying; voices speak threats and obscenities; or the piano begins to play in the middle of the night by unseen hands.

- (b) Apparitions, Specters, Monstrous Phantasms: Appearances of ghostly figures, specters, and demonic creatures (often mistaken for mere hallucinations) such as headless figures, weird animals, or other hideous creatures. At times there is experienced an actual attack by these malevolent spirits. Psychic attacks in the form of persistent nightmares are also common.
- (c) Incubi and Succubae Experiences: This is an attempted assault upon a man or woman by an unclean spirit or demon of lust for the purpose of gratifying its sexual appeitites.

III. SPIRITUAL SUBJECTION AND OPPRESSION.

From the religious standpoint occult involvement invariably affects one spiritually, frequently causing serious damage to one's spiritual life and faith.

1. Indifference to Spiritual Things: Indifference to the Word of God, prayer, worship and spiritual matters in general — often against one's will.

2. Serious Problems Concerning Doubt and Unbelief:

Extreme and persistent doubts concerning the teachings of Scripture (especially the supernatural), or difficulty in exercising faith.

3. Religious Aberrations:

Religious delusions, heresies and errors — ranging from agnosticism to affirming the doctrines of Spiritualism, Modernism or the false religious cults.

4. Inability to Receive the Holy Spirit:

Frequently, there is found to be a spiritual barrier in those with occult associations when they wish to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

5. Resistance:

A very significant indication of the spiritual effect upon those who have had occult involvement is the resistance sometimes evidenced by some to the teaching concerning the reality of occult subjection and oppression, as well as indifference to the dangers involved.

Occult Bondage and Opposition to God:

In many instances where spiritual damage is severe, there are evidenced the following forms of occult subjection: Inability of the person to believe on or confess Christ, to pray or read the Word of God, to understand or keep one's attention on the preaching or teaching of the Scriptures, to acknowledge the fact of the efficacy of the blood Atonement or the Deity of Christ, and the infiltration of unclean thoughts and sexual images into the mind when any attempt at spiritual devotions or exercises is made.

Opposition to God, as seen in the following characteristics, is unmistakable evidence of demon possession: Blasphemous thoughts against God, Christ and the Trinity; opposition to the work of the Holy Spirit; aversion to all references to the blood of Christ or His Deity; scorn, mockery and ridicule toward the Bible, preaching, believers, Christianity, or divine and holy things in general.

IV. PHYSICAL OPPRESSION

Certain physical symptoms are indicative of the presence and activity of demonic powers.

1. Speech and Behavioral Abnormalities:

The oppressed individual will frequently manifest one or more of the following symptoms: abnormal talkativeness, unusual loudness of voice, hysterical laughter, persistent uneasiness, silliness, unusually foolish talk and behavior, muttering to oneself, compulsive shouting or screaming when provoked, peculiar postures (e.g. abnormally rigid or the opposite state of sluggish droopiness), deep sighing (denoting despondency or feelings of self-pity), withdrawal from public scrutiny, odd eccentricities of speech

which are annoyingly repetitious.

2. Abnormal Facial Characteristics:

The face is often seen to be noticeably contorted by fear, chronic doubts or anxiety. Other extremes of facial characteristics are seen from a stereotyped, frozen smile or grimace to an expressionless or stoical indifference.

The eyes may be abnormally bright and protruding, or glazed, having a trance-like or hunted, animal-like stare. In others there is a wicked, defiant glare, or a demonic leering in the eyes.

3. Abnormal Physical Ailments:

Chronic, persistent physical ailments, diseases or pains that do not respond to prayer or treatment of any kind, but which seem to linger on and on, may indicate occult oppression.

V. MATERIAL, DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL FORMS OF OPPRESSION

Most people are unaware of the farreaching effects of occult participation. Occult associations can also result in oppression which affects the lives of others, resulting, for example, in serious marital problems (often ending in divorce — one person traced the beginning of marital strife and incompatibility to the day following a visit to a seance), discord between parents and children, disputes with neighbors, friction and strife between business associates or others, as well as church divisions and irreconcilable schisms.

LIBERATION FROM OCCULT OPPRESSION AND SUBJECTION

Satan has deluded many concerning the following questions: Can a Christian be oppressed, or possess evil spirits? Can one who has never actively participated in any form of occultism be occultly subjected or oppressed? The answer to both these questions is YES, which can be supported both from Scripture and experience.

We know from experience that believers can be oppressed and suffer invasion of the mind and body by malicious spirits because the vast ma-

(Continued on next page)

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jority of those with whom we have dealt and seen God deliver were Christians! Moreover, many of these were believers who had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The misfortunes and physical afflictions of Job are said to be the work of Satan (Job 1–2). The woman bowed together by Satan and delivered of a "spirit of infirmity" by Jesus in the synagogue was a believer ("a daughter of Abraham"). Believers may also be implied in II Timothy 2:23–26. Since Scriptures teach that all sickness is the "oppression" of Satan (Acts 10:38), it follows then that a Christian who becomes sick or diseased is suffering Satanic oppression.

The second significant question is: Can a Christian who has never actively participated in any form of occultism be occultly subjected or oppressed?

We have found many times that a person who has never actively participated in any form of occult practice can suffer oppression or subjection, experiencing what may be termed "passive" oppression or subjection.

In our files are records of individuals suffering forms of "passive" oppression or subjection of every description, which have resulted either from the occult involvements of their relatives, or from having been innocently subjected to occult influences as children.

Finally, it should also be pointed out that there is no such thing as "minor" or "harmless" involvement. Some of the most severely oppressed victims are often those who merely had warts removed by magic charming, or who followed the horoscope column in the newspaper each day, although they did not allow it to "affect their lives and decisions".

METHODS OF DELIVERANCE

Wherever there has been occult participation in any form, it is essential that the following procedure be under:

taken and carefully followed or liberation from occult subjection or oppression will not result.

1. Confession of Faith in Christ:

If the person who needs liberation is already a Christian, then he needs only to affirm his faith in Christ. Some, however, who are not believers will have to be led to make such a confession.

Then there are others who are unable to make such a confession of Christ without help. In such cases, the oppressed person, bound by the powers of darkness, must be led in a confession of faith in Christ by someone who should have them repeat after them a saving confession. Do not be concerned about sincerity in such cases, for if the subjected individual were not in earnest he would not be seeking liberation.

2. Confession of Occult Sins:

All occult involvement must be confessed. The oppressed should name each specific form of participation which can be recalled and confess it to God as sin. The individual should, for example, make a confession similar to the following: "Father, I confess that I have sinned against Your Word by consulting a fortuneteller, by following the horoscope, and divining for water, as well as anything else of this nature which I may have forgotten, and I ask for and accept your forgiveness, in Jesus' Name."

3. Renunciation of Satan and Command to Depart:

This must be a direct command to Satan himself (not a prayer or request) on the part of the person seeking or needing the deliverance for the Enemy to depart in Jesus' Name! No one else can do this for the oppressed person. It was by an act of this individual's will that the door was opened and Satan will only heed a command from the same individual to depart permanently.

4. Exorcism: the Prayer of Deliverance:

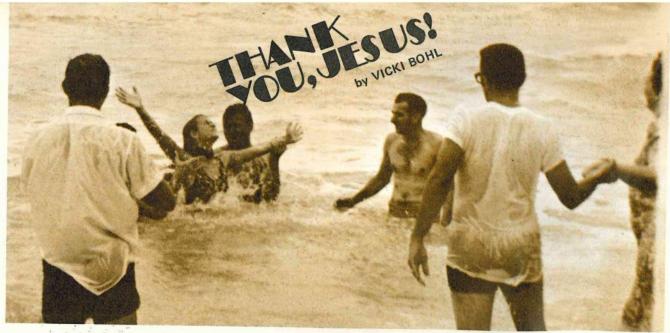
Although we believe, when done in faith, one can liberate himself from occult bondage and oppression, it is, however, advisable to have another exorcise these powers when the oppressed individual's faith is weak and the oppression severe.

5. Responsibility of the Liberated:

The important thing to remember is that DELIVERANCE IS A WALK, not a once-for-all experience without any responsibilities on the part of the person who has been set free. After deliverance, it is necessary to build certain safeguards around the ground that has been liberated from the Enemy. Jesus warns in Matthew 12:43-45 that deliverance is not necessarily permanent unless one takes certain spiritual precautions against the Enemy's attempts to return. Moreover, one should not neglect to destroy all occult objects and literature without regard to their cost (Acts 19:18-19).

- A. Study of the Scriptures: Faith comes by hearing and believing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).
- B. Prayer: Develop a consistent prayer life. Prayer partners are recommended. See Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20.
- C. Fellowship: Spiritual fellowship with other members of the Body of Christ is essential. See Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:41-47.
- D. Resistance: After liberation Satan may seek to oppress again, or through temptation attempt to entice the individual to yield to him in order to regain access to his life. We are admonished in Ephesians 4:27 not to "give place to the devil", but to "resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). However, even if the Enemy did break through in a moment of weakness, one should immediately take a firm stand and refuse to give him further access, demanding that he depart.
- (a) Confess your victory and deliverance through Jesus' blood (Revelation 12:11).
- (b) Claim your authority over Satan by virtue of your position with Christ and command that he depart. (Ephesians 2:6; 1:20–21; Colossians 2:13–15; Psalm 91; Mark 16:17).
- (c) Put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18).

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hen I was asked to write my testimony, I had several reactions. I first thought, "Why are they asking me? I don't have an extraordinary testimony. I haven't been on drugs or tried alcohol. Why I've never even run away from home!" Then I realized that although Christ didn't break me of the drug habit, He had to break my habits of pride and self-will, as He is still doing. He gave me the experience that He wanted me to have, and therefore it's precious. Christ was good enough to save an ordinary person like me and that's beautiful and unique in itself.

I was brought up in a Christian family, and was, maybe, just a bit more sincere than the average churchgoer. I was twelve years old when I said my sinner's prayer. My family and I had been watching a Billy Graham Crusade on television. After it was over I went up to bed. As I lay quietly in bed, I started pouring my heart out to Jesus. I had always talked with Him but had never really walked with Him. I told Him that I wasn't sure what He had for me but I was willing to see. Mine wasn't an overly dramatic salvation experience as you can see. It was a quiet and simple one. But it's the experience Christ shared with me and I thank Him for it.

Many people feel that once you're saved, that's it: there's nothing more. And for some people, that's true. However I had another beautiful experience that I would like to share. It

was that of my water baptism. When I speak of water baptism, I don't mean merely sprinkling, but being immersed. There are many people who say it isn't necessary, yet it made an even greater impact on my life than the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which was also a very special experience.

My first reaction to the immersion style of baptism was, "Gosh, what a dumb idea! Who wants to get all wet just to be baptized, when the minister in the church can just sprinkle a little bit of water on you." Again I changed my mind; or Jesus changed it for me. I received teaching on the subject, which you really must do to understand it. I was told that my body had died to sin when I came to Christ and so now I was just dragging around a dead body. By water baptism I could "bury" that dead body and all memories of my past sins. Why carry them around when they've been paid for already and then washed away?

I was baptized at Hollywood Beach, Florida, on October 19, 1969. I was told to praise the Lord in the best way I knew how when I came out of the water. I've often heard that a drowning person sees his whole life flash before him in a split second. While I was under water, although it was only a matter of seconds, I saw every bad thing I'd ever done flashing in front of me. And then I saw Jesus. I came up out of that water and stretched my arms out as far as I could reach and I shouted, "Praise the Lord!" I couldn't

stop singing for the next three days.

Not only was the experience itself beautiful but what it did to me was the wonderful thing. Now I was living my salvation. I was not only talking with Jesus, I was walking with Him. I used to walk to school every day. I would walk as if Jesus were walking right along side me. Throughout the whole day I would try this. All during school I wouldn't get mad at anyone if I could help it. And I would try to refrain from gossiping because I knew He was standing right next to me listening to every word I said. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could always remain that fully conscious of Jesus' presence.

Since then I have had many more glorious times with Jesus — far too many to share now. Yet all these are only a taste of what Heaven will be like. The Lord has been good enough to give us a little bit of Heaven-onearth, by giving us a Saviour and experiences as wonderful as those I've had. He offers them and all we have to do is take them.

Praise the Lord that He is with us always. We may not be able to see Him, but we can live daily with the knowledge that He is in our midst. We can walk with Him, talk with Him and LIVE Him. THANK YOU JESUS!

Vickie Bohl, daughter of Don and Dot Bohl, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., originally wrote this article for "Manna", a local Jesus Paper, March, 1972. Don Bohl, father of Vicki (see preceding page), tells of his experience in learning the wisdom and grace of God.

MSTAKES

by Don Bohl

vicki and her boyfriend, Randy stepped into the den where I was watching the ten o'clock news. "Dad?" (I knew by the tone of her voice she was going to ask for something.) ". . . can Randy and I take the canoe out on the lake for awhile?" She had "please" written in her eyes.

I wished I had that kind of energy! They had been picnicking on the lake most of the day, and then spent the late afternoon water skiing — now they wanted to go some more. Randy had been invited to spend a week with us at Lake Oscawana, New York, and they had hardly stopped since he arrived. I guess you can expect two 17-year-olds in love to have zip like that. During their picnic they had been discussing the time when they could be married, and a moonlit canoe ride would be a perfect way to end the day.

There was more to Vicki's vibrant life than young love - she was also in love with Jesus. Our oldest daughter had brought such joy to our lives as she radiated the love of Christ through her life. She loved to sing about Him. She and Randy had just returned from a choir tour of England and Scotland. She was showing great promise as a singer and the sweetness of her bubbling praise often filled our home. It seemed to bring a little more of heaven into our lives. Maybe that's just the way a father sees it, but I often thought she was too good to be true. How good the Lord was to give her to

They hadn't missed an evening ride on the lake since Randy arrived — what else could I say to her. . . "O.K., but be sure you're . . ."

"... back in time, back in time," she laughed as they turned and hurried out the door. They had an eleven o'clock curfew and she knew it meant exactly eleven. The news was over and I went up to bed.

Dot and I had just finished our bedtime prayers and I was settling down when a frantic banging started on our door. It was Nana, Dot's mother. "Randy's calling for you! Vicki's in the water and he can't find her!" It couldn't be! I just finished thanking God for protecting our three girls and Randy!

We raced downstairs and onto the big porch overlooking the lake. We had spent countless other moonlit nights looking across this beautiful lake toward surrounding hills, praising God for the wonder of His creation. This breath-taking scene was now pitifully marred by Randy sitting in the canoe a few yards off shore moanfully calling, "Vicki . . . Vicki!"

Only moments before these two wholesome kids had been enjoying the peace of the tranquil lake. For a few seconds a cloud had covered the full moon and turned the lake to inky darkness. Out of the night a high-powered speed boat cut through the water and struck the canoe where Vicki was blissfully resting, exhausted from the day's activities. The impact threw them both into the murky water. Randy, slightly injured, managed to climb back into the damaged canoe — Vicki was nowhere to be seen.

I took Dot in my arms and tried to stifle the sickening knot that was tightening in my stomach.

"God, do you really want Vicki now?", I cried as I made my way to the beach area where a crowd was gathering. Police and fire boats had joined other boats already in the search, their spotlights doing a macabre waltz on the water's surface. I caught Randy in my arms as he came to shore and we wept together in shock.

The police wanted Randy to show them the point of impact, so we went out in one of their boats. They had begun dragging the bottom of the lake.

The lake now became a nightmarish dream world... the boats slowly plodding back and forth in their search patterns... the ugly iron hooks clawing the water for Vicki. The pungent odor of exhaust and gas fumes was sickening. When I could see we were of no further use, I asked the police to take us back to shore where we rejoined Dot and Nana who were watching from the porch.

Our hope came back to life when the men started to search the bushes along the shoreline, thinking she might have made it to shore and was lying unconscious in the under-growth. We sat down next to Nana on the swing and prayed, "Lord, we believe you can bring Vicki back to us, even now . . . please, Lord, please!" Nana whispered, "Oh, Lord, take me . . . take ME!"

After a very long hour, the boats stopped circling. They were no longer needed. They turned and slipped into the night carrying our last hope with them — the water had yielded up our Vicki.

A few minutes later when a coroner and a police officer came to fill out the necessary reports, we learned that the speeding boat had been driven by a thirteen year old boy. Tears welled up in Dot's eyes, "What is a thirteen year old boy doing out in a speedboat at 10:30 at night?"

The natural guy within me, the Don I know so well, should have pounded the table and railed, "That miserable brat should be locked up for the rest of his life!" In times past my vindictive nature had vented itself on trifles like a neighbor's dog that misbehaved at our doorstep. Now, even in my own hurt, I felt compassion for this boy. This was not the Don Bohl I had known so well. I was experiencing something I had never known — forgiving the unforgivable. I know now only Jesus can give the grace to forgive that way.

Dot and I returned to bed and tried to comfort one another. This kind of thing happens to others — not to me! I questioned, "Why Vicki?" She was a radiant Christian. She had no serious problems. She was an "A" student. She was talented and popular. "Why, Lord? Why do you want her NOW...WHY?"

Two sleepless hours later we got up and went to the kitchen for some hot tea. I dreaded the morning light that was soon to come. I would have to tell her sleeping sisters — and call her grandfather.

We sat at the kitchen table in the cold light pondering God's Word and found comfort in the Book of Job. We saw the permissive will of God, allow-

ing Satan to attack and strip Job of everything.

God gave us the grace to say with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away... blessed be the name of the Lord." As we prayed, we felt God's assurance that although the accident was caused by Satan, our Father had allowed it, for He had a higher purpose that we could not understand. As a good friend of ours put it, "God doesn't make mistakes."

The day before the funeral, Dot and I awakened with the same thought — we must contact the parents of the boy who was driving the boat. We imagined they must be in agony over the accident.

They accepted our invitation, and as we gathered in our living room we experienced the same forgiving grace from the presence of God. Dot was peaceful and serene as she comforted the boy's weeping mother. "We're going to miss Vicki so terribly, but we know she will never suffer another pain — her spirit is now with our Lord." I added, "We hold no ill feeling toward your son. This was an accident and you can't carry this burden around with you for the rest of your lives."

Randy experienced the same grace as he put his arm around the boy who was still in a state of shock, and said, "I know you didn't mean to do it and we forgive you."

Mike Reed, a dear friend and a youth minister from Hollywood, Florida, joined Vicki's childhood pastor in conducting the funeral. At the same altar where Dot and I had exchanged our marriage vows and where Vicki had been christened, we gathered for a joyous memorial of her "homegoing".

Mike set the tone for the service by reading from I Thessalonians 4:13, "... sorrow not, even as those who have no hope." We had taken great care to see that the service was like Vicki would have wanted it. She would not have wanted us to mourn her, but to lift up her first love — Jesus. There was music of praise and worship... much a part of Vicki's

life. Vicki sang at her own funeral. By way of a tape that had been made sometime earlier, she led us in worship with, "Praise Ye the Lord". This is the way she would have wanted it.

Mike read Vicki's testimony, which she had written only a few months before. It ended, "Praise the Lord that He is with us always. We may not be able to see Him, but we can live daily with the knowledge that He is in our midst. We can walk with Him, talk with Him, and Live HIM. THANK YOU, JESUS!"

He ended by saying, "I have never known a teenager who walked with Jesus like Vicki did. She was continually alive with the light of Christ. I believe that if Vicki had been told that she had only an hour to prepare for her end on earth, all she would have needed to do is kiss a few loved ones goodbye. She was ready. I wonder how many of us are as ready as Vicki was to meet her Maker."

Mike then asked if there were some there who would like to have the same assurance and know the same Jesus that Vicki knew. With bowed heads, about forty people raised their hands to show that they, too, wished to have Jesus in their hearts.

Like concentric rings produced by a pebble thrown into the water, Vicki's death continued to produce concentric rings to God's glory. We learned what Jesus meant when He said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and dies, it cannot give forth life." Lives were changed, family relationships healed, a marriage was mended, souls were saved, and new commitments were made to Christ. Even now, months later, we are still seeing fruit from Vicki's life.

The weeks and months that followed were not always easy. At times the enemy would have had us question the wisdom and mercy of God. So many times we were sustained only by praise and prayer and thanksgiving. Each time God was faithful to give continued grace.

A few days after the funeral the words began to go through my head,

"Sorrow not, even as others who have no hope." Hope?

"For the Lord Himself shall descend... and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:16,17).

These words became real in that moment. They brought the memory of another moonlit evening a few months before Vicki's "homegoing". Dot and I had just returned from a trip to Israel. I can still see Vicki running out to greet us, her long brown hair trailing behind her. She caught me so tightly in her arms, laughing and crying tears of joy as she welcomed us. "Oh, Daddy, I missed you so. I'm so glad you're home!"

I believe we will experience that joyous moment again with Vicki when Jesus comes for His own and we are caught up together with her in the clouds to meet the Lord.

"And so shall we ever be with the Lord!" Hallelujah!

God doesn't make mistakes. T

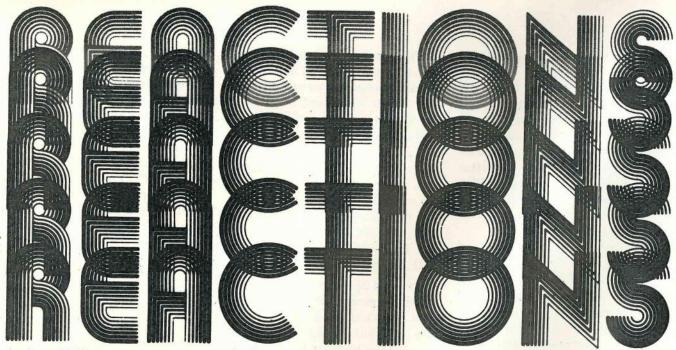
RULERS OF DARKNESS

(Continued from page 65)

(d) Keep guard over your mind and thoughts. Absolutely refuse entrance into your mind anything of a negative, critical, resentful, selfish, base or depressive nature.

Satan knows that he must release his victim when commanded to do so in Jesus' Name, but this does not mean that he always does so immediately, or that certain symptoms disappear at once. Boldly confess the fact of your liberation by faith for the victory is won!

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by James T. Hamann

great man of God of a former era by the name of Henry Suso one day answered his door to hear a woman say, "Here is the product of your sins"; and the little babe was thrust into his arms, and the woman was gone as quickly as she had appeared. This vicious rumor was spread throughout the community where he lived by this unscrupulous woman on an innocent man living to please God. This situation grieved him so that he wept bitter tears and had great sorrow of heart. He felt, though, that God would not try to have him vindicate himself, but raise this little child to the glory and honor of God.

Then one day he looked out the window and saw a dog playing on the lawn. The dog had a mat, and kept picking the mat up, tossing it over his shoulders, running and getting it, tossing it some more, picking it up and tossing it again. God said to Henry Suso, "That mat is your reputation, and I am letting the dogs of sin tear your reputation to shreds and toss it all over the lawn for your own good. One of these days things will change."

And things did change. It was not very long before the people who were tearing his reputation were confounded, and Suso rose into a place that made him a power in his day and a great blessing still to those who sing

his hymns and read his works.

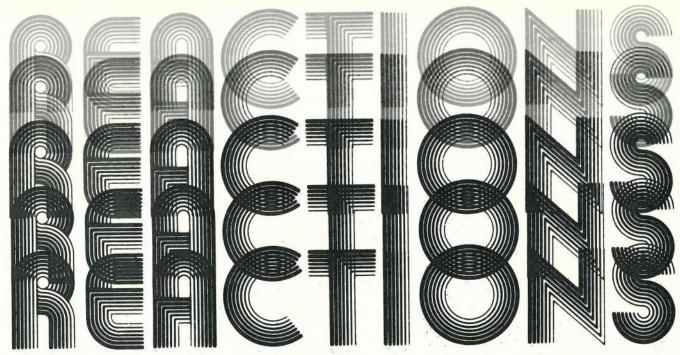
What a tremendous story of a man who had been changed not only in the area of actions, but reactions as well. He could have been embittered, vindictive and defensive by what had happened, but instead he manifested the love and meekness of Jesus Christ, and, oh, what powerful results!

Jesus Christ came into this world to demonstrate a totally new life and then to make possible a personal participation in this new life. In the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. found in Matthew, chapter 5, verses 38-48, He shares with us a vital aspect of conversion which is so often neglected today. We are talking about God sharing Himself with us in such a manner that the total ways of man are changed not only in the area of actions, but reactions. So often we emphasize just the one facet of truth that is, when Christ indwells a man his actions indeed are changed. Yes, this is very true. The lying, immoral acts, drunkenness, etc., are no longer part of the true Christian's life. But what about the vast area of reactions to happenings that take place daily in the course of living, such as: (1) the boss at work reprimands us for an oversight; (2) someone at the last moment breaks a vital engagement; (3) we are personally criticized for something of which we are completely innocent; (4) someone makes fun of our ideas, ways.

and principles; (5) we react to the thoughtlessness of a partner in marriage; (6) we face the disobedience of children; (7) we feel that recognition is given to others and we are not commended. When such happenings as we have listed, and others of like kind, are thrown into our lap, do we manifest resentment, anger, self-defense and self-pity? Jesus Christ has come to change us in this area of reactions.

In the Scriptural passage, He talks about being hit on one side of the face and the necessity of being willing to even turn the other to the attacker. Christ taught that we are to love our enemies, we are to bless those who curse us and hate us, and pray for those that despitefully use us and persecute us. This teaching was so different and unique to that which was the way of fallen man with self enthroned within. He was teaching about a "WHOLE NEW LIFE," but to be sure, He was not theorizing, but subjectively during His earthly pilgrimage demonstrating the same. Though a hundred and one different accusations were vehemently expressed to Him such as, being an illegitimate child, in league with satanic power, or mentally deranged - the amazing and thrilling part of Christ's life was His non-retaliation, forgiveness and love which so disarmed and dumbfounded His accusers.

The Apostle Paul's heart became



opened to God by the demonstration of a new life and a new way by the martyr, Stephen. As Paul (then called Saul) was leading the angry mob of religious bigots in the stoning of this godly man, he saw such a visible demonstration of spiritual reality that he was shaken to the very core of his life. The thing that actually shook Paul up was the reaction of Stephen as he was being stoned and lay dying. He didn't hear just empty words, but the Scripture says in Acts, that his face looked like the face of an angel; and he heard him say, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." This demonstration of forgiveness and love was that which brought Paul to Christ and will do the same today.

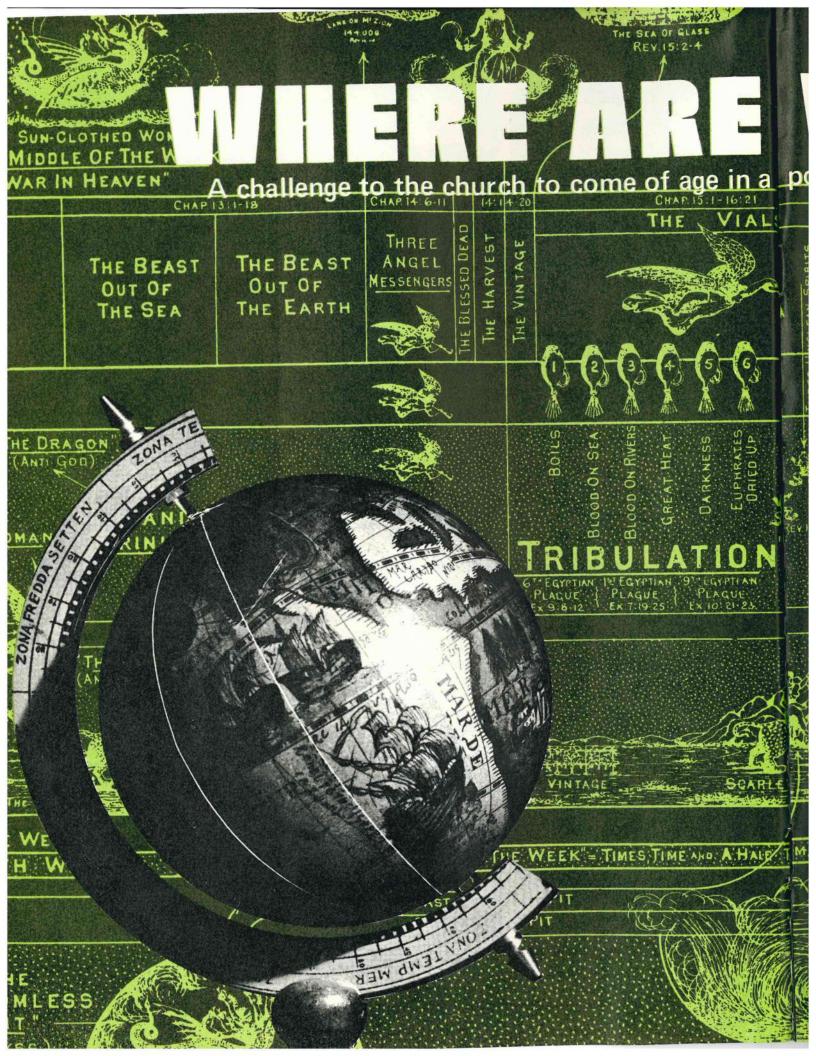
We can call to your attention a modern-day situation, which, though well publicized, bears repeating; and that is the story of a young widow by the name of Betty Elliott, who was used of God to turn a savage tribe to Christ. Though her husband, with four other missionary fellows, was viciously attacked and murdered in Ecuador by the Auca Indians, she did not become reactionary. There was no rushing home with her little family, feeling that God had dealt her a dirty blow; she did not shut herself in with her sorrow and become filled with hatred toward this stone- age tribe. Instead, in a matter of months, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, she found herself, along with her little daughter, living in the midst of these same people, which even the government of Ecuador had labeled uncontrollable and uncivilized. Though she was totally defenseless physically, yet by the love of Christ these people were conquered by the living Lord expressing Himself through this young American woman.

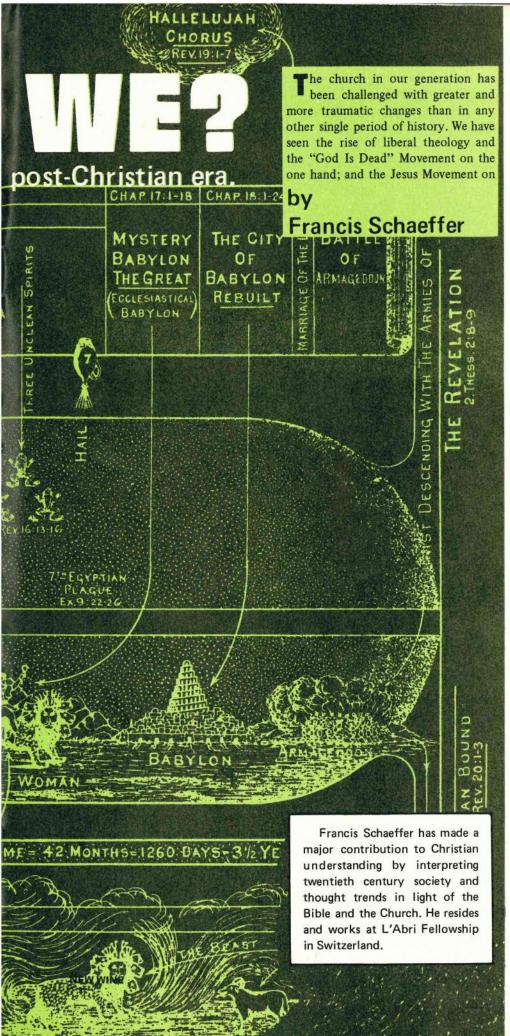
This kind of life has been provided for us wherein we are no longer ruled by happenings that bring tragic reactions. To be reactionary means that self is still in control of our life. The cross of Jesus Christ has provided for a deliverance in this area. When Christ died, we died with Him. Romans 6:6 states, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." To appropriate this fact that when Christ died we died by simple faith can bring a real release from the former tyranny. You see, you can kick a dead man, you can curse him, you can spit on him, and there is still no reaction, because he is dead. This is certainly applicable to the spiritual realm.

Then there is the positive side that as we abide in Christ as the branch in the vine, we can express to the personalities that cross our path, whether friend or toe, whether for us or against us, love and understanding. After we have died to the old reactionary life of Adam, there can flow through us the new life of Jesus Christ. Galatians 5:22-25 tells us, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Our self-centered reactions will make us a victim of happenings, but His life demonstrated through us will make us a victor in happenings. Not long ago a Hindu woman was converted chiefly by hearing the Word of God read. She suffered very much persecution from her husband. One day a missionary asked her, "When your husband is angry and persecutes you, what do you do?" She replied, "Well, sir, I cook his food better; when he complains, I sweep the floor cleaner; and when he speaks unkindly, I answer him mildly. I try, sir, to show him that when I became a Christian I became a better wife and a better mother." The consequences of this was that, while the husband could withstand all the preaching of the missionary, he could not stand the practical preaching of his wife, and gave his heart to God. T

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the other. Our society is turning from traditional religious forms to the mysticism of eastern religions and the occult.

In the midst of the convulsions of change, the church of Jesus Christ has been given the unparalleled challenge of standing and preaching the gospel in a society that not only considers it out of date but holds the very foundations of such a gospel as being unbelievable and unacceptable.

In the light of the current trends in modern thinking, we - as born-again Christians - must consider where we are in the stream of history and how we got here. We have to realize that our society did not arrive at its present position overnight. In 1964, at Berkeley, marked a new twist in modern youth. This was the beginning of the Free Speech Movement, the hippie thing, and the drug culture. But the actions of young people since 1964 have not just come about by chance; they were born from our past. I do not think that we can really understand the battle we have to face in what is coming in our generation as we speak for Jesus Christ, unless we see very clearly exactly where we have come from and what is coming next.

WHERE WE ARE

In my book, The Church Before the Watching World, I stated part of the problem this way: "There are some in California and elsewhere coming out of the drug culture who are continuing the same language and life forms and who, happily, are true Christians of a deep and beautiful kind. But, unhappily, many of the cries of, 'Jesus, Jesus!', heard from the Jesus Freaks only equal, 'Jesus is better than hash.' What is the difference between these two groups? The real Christians are turning totally from the upperstory concept of the trip (I will explain these terms shortly) by turning to the clear content of the Bible. They are in the stream of Bible-believing Christianity. The others maintain the upper-story trip or banner philosophy; or, at best, they will return to an almost contentless emotionalism."

I add in a footnote to this portion of the text: "In the light of this confusion, I would urge the true Christians of the West Coast of the United States, and other places, who are in the midst of this confusion to rapidly take the lead in making plain that they have no relationship to the contentless groups. I certainly do not think the difference should necessarily be a difference in clothes and such. But, as true Christians, it is imperative to find some way to practice truth at this point and to do so before all the advantage with those coming out of the drug culture is squandered."

We are finding today, as the flurry of the Jesus Movement dies out, that many of the people who so avidly entered this movement are now, just as avidly, moving into realms of the mystic and the occult; and at best, becoming involved in various small groups of the movement that bear only a surface resemblance to true Christianity. Why are we seeing this? Why the disillusionment on the part of many in the Jesus Movement?

HOW WE GOT HERE

I believe the place to begin in understanding the dilemma of modern youth, and the dilemma which we face in addressing them, is at the birth of modern science. Alfred Noth Whithead, although he was not a Christian, says that modern science could only have been born in a Christian thought form. He understood that the early scientists, from Copernicus to Newton, believed that the universe was created by a reasonable God; therefore, it was perfectly reasonable to expect to understand the universe on the basis of reason. This understanding was the basis for modern science. They held to a uniformity of natural causes in an open system. By "open system", we mean that the system of cause and effect which governed the natural laws of the universe was subject to change from God and man. In other words, man was not a part of the cosmic machine. He could act upon the machine

portion of the universe and express true freedom of choice.

Let us now turn to the side of philosophy. Plato faced the dilemma of finding a true absolute. He understood very clearly that, without an absolute, the particulars have no meaning. He knew something or someone had to exist outside the finite area of man.

When we come to the high Renaissance and down to the time of the Enlightenment in France, we find thinkers with the titanic hope that they, though finite, will be able to find an absolute, a universal, which will give them a field of knowledge - that is, a system of knowledge into which all new knowledge can be placed to become part of the system. This was the thinking of rationalism. Rationalism is the man, beginning only from himself, gathering enough details in order to make a universal with no knowledge from outside of himself - and particularly no knowledge from God.

SHIFTS IN THOUGHT

About the time of the Enlightenment, and following, a double shift takes place in the world view within the intellectual community. First, there is a shift in the area of science. Instead of holding to a concept of the uniformity of natural causes in an open system, the view became that of uniformity of natural causes in a closed system. In other words, everything, including man, was part of the cosmic machine. There was no one or nothing that could reach in from outside the cosmic machine and influence the flow of cause and effect.

When young people cry out and say that they are sick of being part of the educational machine, it is only a small portion of the whole dilemma of mankind as he sees himself as either chemically or psychologically determined. He is merely a part of the great cosmic machine, unable to exert any influence which will change his destiny.

The second great shift came in the area of philosophy. By the time philosophy had moved to the work of those who followed Kirkegaard, truth as

truth simply no longer existed. You could have a concept of truth pragmatically or statistically, but never ultimately. Taken to the logical conclusion, it means that you cannot verify anything; you can only falsify some things. The whole concept of truth as men had held it was finished.

This understanding was passed from the philosophers to the intellectuals, to the professors, to the students and into the masses of people.

UPPER AND LOWER STORIES

By now we have developed what I call a "lower story" concept. Everything in the area of reason leads to pessimism. Here everything is expressed as a mathematical formula. Existence is merely determinism, behaviorism, part of the cosmic machine. We are caught in what is properly called "Reductionism". That is, everything can ultimately be reduced to the energy particle. In this system, man has disappeared; he is merely a part of the cosmic machine.

Standing as a dichotomy to the lower story, is the upper story of non-reason. This dichotomy was expressed in the philosophy of Jean Jacques Rosseau as he saw the autonomous cosmic machine, and at the same time he put forth the concept of autonomous freedom. Modern man seeks for meaning to life only in the upper story of nonreason. In the lower story we have only the cosmic machine, which equals determinism or fatalism. Here there can be no meaning. This leaves us meaning only in the area of total nonreason in the upper story.

THE EXISTENTIALISTS

Here we meet the philosophy of the existentialists — Satre, Heidegger, or Karl Jaspers. The essence of their system is an existential experience apart from reason. Karl Jaspers is perhaps the most important, because he speaks of a "final experience" which will give you enough hope and meaning to live in a world which, by reason, makes no sense. We must see that

when we live in an upper story world, it is only the experience that is meaningful and reason plays no part. You may have an experience and call it "Jesus"... "Krishna"... "Hash"... and it makes no difference! When you are living here, they are all the same! This is the tragedy of many of the Jesus Freaks. They are living totally in the upper story—in the area of experience; and their experience is not founded in reason—the propositional truth of the Bible.

Modern theologians really are living in the upper story. For this reason, from Karl Barth on, I would call them existential theologians. They have separated themselves from anything that is open to verification or falsification in the Bible. They have a spiritual experience in the upper story, using Christian theological terms; but in many cases it bears little or no relation to true Biblical Christianity.

In the area of reason, modern man can only live today in the realm of the absurd. If man is only an animal, a mere chemical machine, then there is no meaning to life — life is absurd. In the middle of all this, why go to the university... why hold a job? In the midst of an absurd situation, education is absurd... everything is absurd.

PHILOSOPHY BECOMES PRACTICE

In 1964, beginning with the Berkeley thing, the philosophy that had been handed down through these generations was suddenly taken into the streets by the students and the adult world stood amazed. The students stopped traffic, broke windows and burned buildings; and the establishment became exceedingly upset. But there is no reason why they should be upset, because they taught them to do it. They removed all the meaning from life and when the youngsters carried it to its logical conclusion, they yelled, "Foul!" But they could not tell them it was right or wrong because they had removed all absolutes and there was no criteria for right or wrong. Everything is just part of a big computer.

So then, for men today downstairs in the area of reason, man is just a machine. Upstairs they have no category or absolutes. There is no moral category, no metaphysical category or certainty of being; and, finally, we have no category of knowledge — no distinction between reality and fantasy.

This brings us to a conclusion which is rather frightening. In a system of thought with no absolutes, nothing which is absolutely certain, then by what standard do we judge society? If there is no absolute by which to judge society, then society itself becomes the absolute. Whatever society sets up as the norm is right. This is the way Sweden has developed its sexual concept. Kinsey's great contribution to sociology was not merely a collection of facts on sex - it was bringing modern man to believe that, at least in regard to sexual matters, what the majority does is right. When there is no absolute by which to judge society, e.g. the Bible, then society itself becomes the absolute. This is the premise on which modern man is operating. Do you see why it is imperative that our preaching of the gospel contain the absolute propositional statements of the Word of God?

BIRTH OF THE DRUG CULTURE

In light of all this, we can begin to understand what has been called "the drug culture". As a result of the existential philosophy, which is basically the concept of the upper story experience with no basis in reason, drug taking became a philosophic presentation. Jaspers had said that if you can just have the "final experience" that you could then find enough hope to face the absurdity of life. Aldous Huxley, Ginsburg, Leary, and others began to say that drug taking was an experiential solution to the problems of the world. If everyone could just "turn on", they would be able to find that existential experience which would give meaning to an absurd situation. It was an utopianism. Drug taking at this time, from 1964 on, had an ideological twist to it. It was, in a way, a social act. Drugs were an ideological solution up through Woodstock. Drug taking was a great "love in", with flowers... beauty ... and the whole thing.

But the drug culture lost its innocence. At Altamont in California, the Rolling Stones hired the Hell's Angels to keep order at a rock festival; and the Hell's Angels killed people. In Europe, the same thing happened at the Isle of Wight Rock Festival. There were 480,000 people there and it developed into one of the ugliest things that has ever happened. At the end there was no pretense of beauty; and the fellow who was running it grabbed the microphone and just shouted swear words at the crowd. That was the end of it. Drug taking as an ideological solution - a utopia - was gone.

The Beatles are typical of this search for a "final experience". They started as a rock band and then got into the drug thing. They did not find what they wanted there and went to psychadelic sound. Then they moved into the Eastern religious experience and still found nothing. Their whole thing fell apart and they made the "Yellow Submarine". There is no hope left; life is indeed absurd. They had failed to find any ultimate meaning in all their search. This is where the new generation is today. There is nothing left! There is no hope - no answer. A new bourgeoisie has developed with a new life style. All they want is enough affluency to buy their grass and stay up, and they are not going to raise a fuss. They are convinced that there are no real answers - so why look? Why make any noise? Enjoy what time you have under the sun and it's all over. There is no meaning to any of it! Apathy rules.

WHAT HAS THE CHURCH DONE?

The great tragedy of all of this is that the church, which was to have been the light of the world, has truly added to the confusion and frustration of a seeking generation. How?

First, we have our own brand of practical Kierkegaardianism. By that I mean that we have reduced the content of our preaching of the gospel. Merely speaking about Jesus is not enough. We must speak of the Jesus who is contained within the revealed truth of the Bible. Jesus was prophet, priest and king. He died on the cross and shed His blood as an atonement for sin. He died for us. He is Lord and King. He came as a prophet to be the revealer of the Godhead bodily. We must always connect our speaking of Jesus with the propositional truth of the Bible.

We have said to the world when they ask questions, "Don't ask questions - just believe!" As if that was the spiritual thing to do. Many in the church, in evangelism, have asked them to take a blind leap of faith that has no relation to the act of placing faith in a God revealed in the Bible and making a decision of faith on the basis of what we understand about Him through His revealed Word. We are asking people to live upstairs in experience with no truth while using Christian words! And we are destroying the gospel just as much as the liberal does.

Secondly, we have played down the factual content of the early chapters of Genesis. We often avoid discussing a portion of the Bible which poses embarrassing problems to us. This is an overwhelming mistake! The existential theologians treat the Bible as an upper story experience that has no basis in reason or propositional fact. Karl Barth's contribution was to say that the Bible is full of mistakes in the areas of science and history - but that is unimportant. All we want is the religious impact of it. So, you now have a divided field of knowledge in the Bible. There is "religious truth", and there is the place where the Bible touches the cosmic, history and science in which it is open to error and correction.

But what you are really saying is that the Bible is *not* revelation truth, but it is an upper story experience and "religious truth" is all that matters. This is where much of the church is today. What would have been considered as agnosticism or atheism in 1890, is now considered to be good theology.

Thirdly, and I think this is really the most fatal of our errors, we have failed to exhibit to our children and to the watching world that we really do take the Biblical truth seriously. We cannot honestly expect our generation to take us seriously unless we are willing to practice what we preach. The very nature of the gospel necessitates that we exhibit both the love of God and the holiness of God.

I am convinced that either we, as born-again Christians, must come back to a sufficient base in the preaching of the gospel or the drift in our society, and in our own understanding of the gospel, will continue. What is a sufficient base? It is not a vague "spiritual" base. It is not sufficient to go around yelling, "Jesus". As long as "Jesus" is in quotation marks it has no meaning. There must be content to it. If there is no content, it may be just another trip - with Christ no different from Krishna. Eastern religions, drugs, and the occult are "spiritual". But they have no basis whatsoever as far as real truth is concerned. They are all another form of the upper story "trip"; and "Jesus" will be another trip if we are not clear as to what we mean when we say, "Jesus".

WHERE WE MUST STAND

We who are Christians cannot take half-way positions. Regardless of what stream of the church we come from, there are certain very basic things which we have in common. We are called upon to exhibit to the world both the love and the holiness of God. We will never, never, never go beyond this in our concept of spirituality. Before the world we must live on the basis of there being a God who is there and who has revealed Himself in propositional truth. We cannot just make words about Him. We must live as though the truth we preach is truth!

We are to exhibit to our neighbors

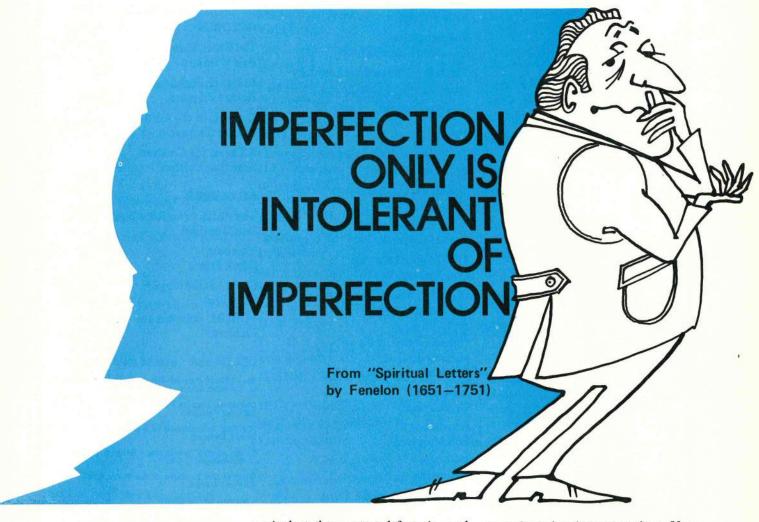
and to each other the love of God; and at the same time exhibit the holiness of God in saying that what is right is right — and what is wrong is wrong. There is no middle ground! This is beyond us — but it is not beyond God working through us by the Holy Spirit.

We say that we believe truth exists. The modern generation does not believe that truth exists. We cut across the grain of 20th-century society like a buzz saw cuts across a piece of wood. We must not only say that truth exists, but it can be known and communicated in words. We are the real revolutionaries of our society. But do you think for one minute that the world will take us seriously if we do not practice truth?

Somehow, we must show them that there is a difference between them and us. Our whole culture screams that all things are relative, and we must show them that there are absolutes in the Word of God. We must show it — and show it in a way that will cost us. If we do not they may make a profession of faith; but they will not have understood it and it will be just another upper story trip. Then they will turn to the occult... to Eastern religions... or any other trip. It is all the same!

If we do not make this distinction of adequate content in love and compassion in a demonstration of the holiness of God, then they will either shrug their shoulders and walk away — or they will think they understand it as one more form of trip. Later they will fall away and may never again listen to the preaching of the gospel.

The church faces one of the greatest opportunities in its history to demonstrate the reality of the risen Christ to a watching world. The choice is ours; and, very simply, it is this. We may continue "as is", letting this opportunity slip past and thereby stand in judgment for it. Or we may preach with content, rather than with mere words; not just "witnessing", but with lives laid down in love and commitment to the revealed truth of the biblical gospel.



t has seemed to me that you have need of more enlargedness of heart in relation to the defects of others. I know that you cannot help seeing them when they come before you, nor prevent the opinions you involuntarily form concerning the motives of some of those about you. You cannot even get rid of a certain degree of trouble which these things cause you. It will be enough if you are willing to bear with those defects which are unmistakable, refrain from condemning those which are doubtful, and not suffer yourself to be so afflicted by them as to cause a coolness of feeling between you.

Perfection is easily tolerant of the imperfections of others; it becomes all things to all men. We must not be surprised at the greatest defects in good souls, and must quietly let them alone until God gives the signal of gradual removal; otherwise we shall pull up the wheat with the tares. God leaves, in the advanced souls, certain weaknesses entirely disproportioned to their eminent state. As workmen, in excavating the soil from a field, leave certain pillars of earth which indicate the original level of the surface, and serve to measure the amount of material removed — God, in the same way, leaves pillars of testimony to the extent of his work in the most pious souls.

Such persons must labor, each one in his degree, for his own correction, and you must labor to bear with their weaknesses. You know from experience the bitterness of the work of correction; strive then to find means

to make it less bitter to others. You have not an eager zeal to correct, but a sensitiveness that easily shuts up your heart.

I pray you more than ever not to spare my faults. If you should think you see one, which is not really there, there is no harm done; if I find that your counsel wounds me, my sensitiveness demonstrates that you have discovered a sore spot; but if not, you will have done me an excellent kindness in exercising my humility, and accustoming me to reproof. I ought to be more lowly than others in proportion as I am higher in position, and God demands of me a more absolute death to everything. I need this simplicity, and I trust it will be the means of cementing rather than weakening our attachment.

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