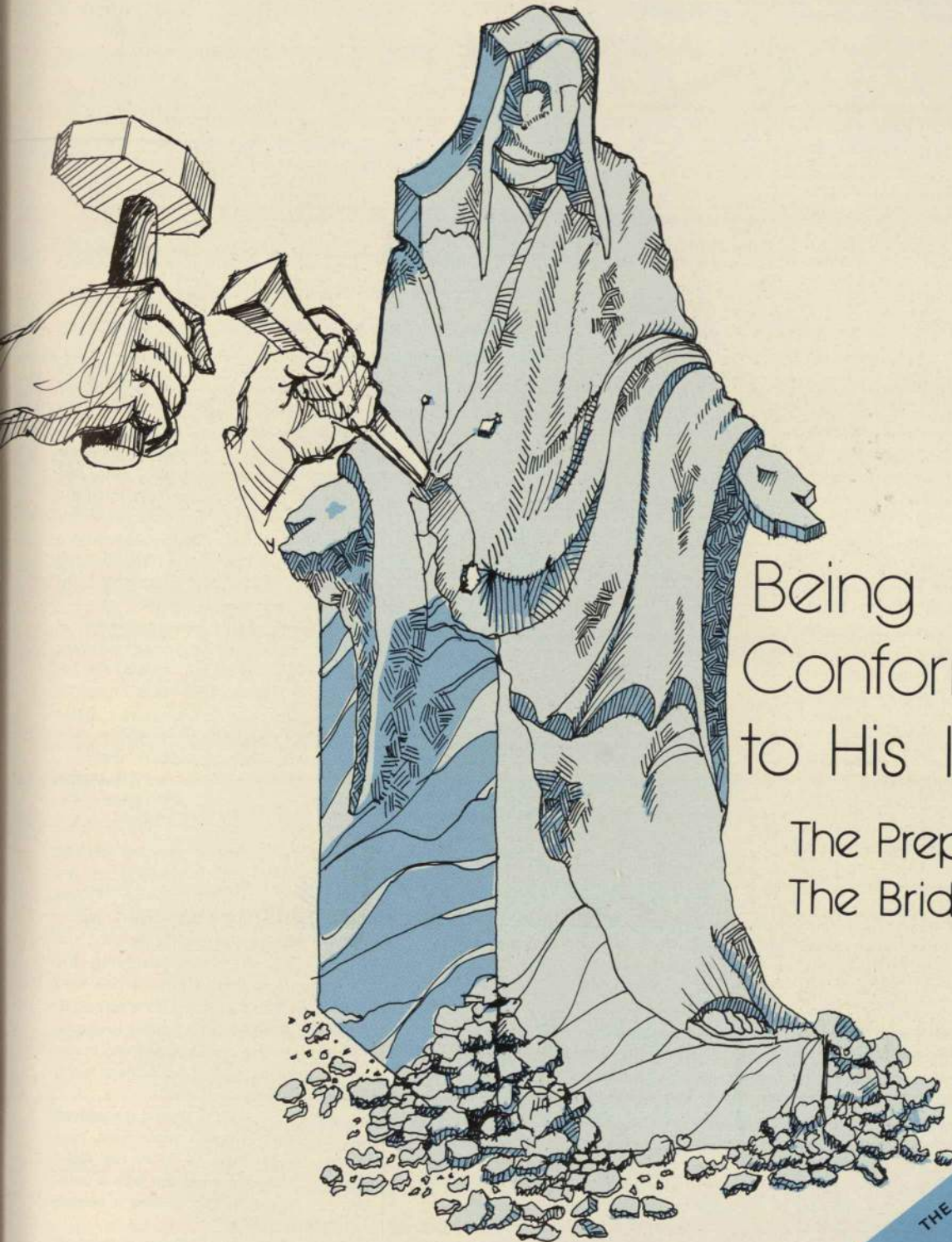




JULY/AUGUST 1974

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE  
DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

# new wine



Being  
Conformed  
to His Image...

The Preparation of  
The Bride of Christ

THE SECOND COMING  
The Purpose of the Second Coming  
New Wine Forum  
Bob Mumford  
The Second Coming  
Page 28  
Page 4

I can't help gasping when I get every issue of *New Wine*. I was crying out to God to teach us about being shepherded and how to shepherd, about becoming disciples and how to disciple others — then came your issue on those subjects.

Then I was crying out about the authority Jesus commanded to us and the structure of the body of believers — then came the last issue.

I sit and cry some days out of the desire to see the Kingdom come in my home and in my church. When this happens then we can expect God to reach out through us into the community.

Thanks, *New Wine* for the teaching and the encouragement you have given me these 2½ years.

Mrs. Richard L. Gause  
Denmark, Wisconsin

## HOMOSEXUALITY

I have just finished reading Mr. Bob Sutton's article, "Homosexuality" in the June issue of *New Wine* and I am taking this opportunity to shout — AMEN!

Mr. Sutton did an excellent job of presenting the scriptural position on homosexuality and the varied rationalistic psychological explanations. It was evident to me that Mr. Sutton's discussion on ministering to the problem was done in love and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

As a psychologist and clinical director of a hospital mental unit, I concur with Mr. Sutton's "treatment of choice," the several factors causing, and that the only freedom from homosexuality is found in Jesus Christ and the spiritual principles of God as outlined in His Word.

Frederick L. Gross, Ph.D.  
Palmdale, Calif.

I have just read your article on homosexuality and wish to say that it is the first article I have ever seen to deal with this problem in such a positive way.

I can bear witness with much of what was said because I was a homosexual, and God delivered me. I was desperate for many months after becoming a Christian. My worst fear was being condemned, so I never admitted to it, which made it doubly hard! I knew of no one I could turn to, but finally I told a brother who in turn prayed for me. It was a slow process of deliverance, but I now have the victory! It is possible to be set free from this terrible bondage.

L.G.

# Letters to Editor

## LETTER BRINGS LETTER

The letter to the editor entitled "Discipleship" in the May '74 issue was spectacular. Praise the Lord you guys had the guts to print it.

The minute we who are into the fulness of the Holy Spirit get the "It can't happen here" attitude, we're in trouble! Institutionalism has drained off most of the 1900 awakening; let's pray the same thing will not happen to the current outpouring.

Peter E. Gillquist  
Grand Junction, Tenn.

## A CLEAR TRUMPET CALL

Many charismatics are decrying what they call denominationalism or churchanity, but they are guilty of exactly this same problem from a charismatic camp. I have seen a holier-than-thou attitude by many sheep because a pastor moved a little too slowly to suit them, and they would leave or be critical. I have not seen any more real love of Christ from the charismatics as a whole than I have seen from the denominational people.

Why? Could it be that many are not drinking deeply from the waters of life? Why are so many charismatics finding it necessary to attend every meeting and Bible study group that comes down the pike? Could it be that what they experienced is shallow and they need a constant pumping up to keep the thrill going? Or could it be that what they call the infilling of the Holy Spirit might not be the Holy Spirit but another spirit?

I know it is easier to raise and ask questions, but I am also searching for answers. I want to see the body of Christ come together and find a real maturity. While I long and pray for a coming together, I see instead a fragmenting and dividing. The May issue was a clear trumpet call of God for his people to wake up and see what is happening and to come together as sheep and shepherd under the Chief Shepherd.

Ronald W. Summers  
Lexington, Ky.

## SHEEP AND SHEPHERDS

In your May issue of *New Wine* Magazine, the articles on sheep-shepherd expectations were idealistic, but not realistic for some Christians.

If these articles were taken literally many readers would be constantly looking for a better local shepherd. These expectations tend to put our walk on a human performance basis, which is not necessarily the same way that God in His wisdom has ordained for a situation, as un-ideal as it may seem.

The Bible, as I understand it, doesn't tell us to expect those around us to live up to our expectations, but to let God work out His perfect plan by our willingness to yield to his will and recognize His voice teaching us His truth in our present circumstances.

Betty Jo Cardozo  
Modesto, California

## MORE FAITH OR MORE PRESUMPTION?

There is much about Dr. Farah's article, "Faith or Presumption," [April 1974] to commend to the Christian community. I appreciate the call for us to live lives of sober integrity and to understand our place under God's sovereignty. I also, with Mr. Farah, am very cautious about reducing the faith to formulas.

Let us be cautious, however, about his suggestion of waiting for a "rayma," or specific word of direction from the Lord before we act or step out in faith.

The "logos," God's universal word, is itself meant to be believed and acted upon. Many Christians would be immobilized by adhering to Dr. Farah's technique. There is a subtle discredit to God's Word and a stance of indecision involved in puzzling over whether rayma is logos or logos is rayma.

J.B. Martin  
Elkton, Va.

Thank you so much for the article, "Faith or Presumption." In spite of the teachings of Wigglesworth, Finney, Prince and Hagin, there are times when knowing the Word, obeying the Word, applying the Word, claiming the Word, believing the Word and praising God for the Word — even the written, confirmed Word — do not avail. Had even ONE charismatic teacher prepared me for this fact (for certainly nothing in my experience did) perhaps it would have had a less devastating effect upon me.

It is now nine months since I discovered that God is NOT utterly predictable, that we do not know how to apply His Word infallibly. To acknowledge the fact is painful, but much kinder than hiding it behind the hallelujahs.

Christian Hankins  
Bonanza, Oregon

# Editorial

"When am I going to get the time?!" This exasperating question is plaguing many of us more and more!

It seems that with the pressures of just living in the world, the complexity of modern life, the emotional drain of high-key society, and trying to keep step with what God is doing in the body of Christ it is becoming more and more of a drain that makes life an ever-intensifying whirlwind.

Beyond all this, the ever-present need to find the time to be with our families, to cultivate relationships with those to whom God has joined us, and just to be alone, has become next to impossible.

In the midst of all this, it is easy to get caught up in the needs that surround us. Every place we turn there seems to be some place where we are vitally needed. If, however, we allow needs to become the center of our lives, we go into confusion, become up-tight and tense, unnecessarily burdened; we find ourselves frustrated because we can't get answers to problems and we lose the righteousness, peace and joy of the Kingdom.

We are learning that one solution to these perplexing problems is to establish the priorities in what God has given to us: our mates, our children, those to whom God has joined us, etc. Once our priorities have been clearly established, we must then discipline ourselves to stick to these priorities rather than allowing the needs to force us into a schedule.

We are also coming to understand that we simply must spend time with each other building and cultivating our relationships. Sharing our real selves with one another gives us new strength and becomes a source of many workable solutions to complicated and unsolvable situations that formerly seemed insurmountable.

## new wine MAGAZINE

JULY/AUGUST 1974

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# THE PURPOSE OF THE SECOND COMING

by Bob Mumford

**The second coming is more than a divine rescue mission.**

**A**s a serious and eager seminary student, I was assigned the research topic of *The Second Advent of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. I was taken aback when reading in one of the

massive reference volumes I was using, "Every serious student of prophecy would do well to remember that no one yet has ever accurately interpreted scriptures which pertain to future events!"

The experiences of the following years have proven that admonition to be exceedingly accurate. As a result, I have spoken *little* about prophetic events; and, above all, felt the necessity not to be dogmatic.

I should, however, make it clear from the beginning that I hold to a *literal, visible return of Jesus Christ* in glory (Acts 1:9-11). I also believe that the usual dispensational and popular teachings concerning the rapture, marriage supper, tribulation, etc. have been grossly misunderstood and soulishly interpreted. As we approach the end of the age, pre-, post-, and mid-tribulation positions, along with the interpretations that accompany them, will undergo major adjustment. There will be many facts, events and texts that we *should* have seen, but in reality, did not. These new ingredients will modify much of our understanding concerning prophetic events. As the prophet Hosea explained, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hosea 6:3).

A simple illustration of the prophecies and events of Christ's first advent will serve to illustrate what I mean. It was written about the origin of the Messiah, "Out of Egypt I have called my Son" (Matthew 2:15). . . . that He was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). . . . yet He was to be from Nazareth (Matthew 2:23). Can you see the impossibility of accurately interpreting all the biblical facts in proper perspective until the circumstances of His birth were known?

How could the readers of the prophecies possibly have understood that His parents were from Nazareth and that was to be His home? And that due to a decree for taxation, Mary was taken by Joseph to Bethlehem where Jesus was born? Also, that being warned in a dream not to return to Nazareth, the family of Jesus fled into Egypt from where they were later led to return? How clear it seems to us now; but how confusing to the prophets and prophetic interpreters prior to the unfolding of the events.

Anyone browsing casually in a religious bookstore will quickly be

overwhelmed by the overabundance of printed material of different theories and interpretations about the second coming. Even the general attitude and approach of the Scriptures can seem confusing!

The *time* of Christ's return is unknown (Matthew 24:36-42); but the concept of imminence (that He may come today) has always been a truth held dear to the heart of the church (James 5:8).

On the other hand, examination of many scriptures tend to give us another view: that certain events, such as spiritual maturity in the church, world evangelism, establishment of His government and kingdom, etc. must be accomplished *prior* to His coming. This seems to exclude any possibility of immediate return.

Bible truths are often set in opposition to each other — like parallel lines — which act as balancing factors in the life of the church. "Behold, I come quickly" is balanced by the command, "Occupy 'till I come." These parallel lines can only meet in the infinite Creator.

### PURPOSE OF HIS COMING

It will not be my purpose to examine the reality or circumstances of His coming, but to try to shed some light on the *purpose* of His coming. We cannot dwell on the *entire* purpose of the second coming, but rather examine what I feel to be *one* major purpose of His coming.

Unfortunately much of the popular teaching that centers on events in the world that will precede the coming of Christ (i.e. wars, famines, natural disasters, rise of the antichrist and satanic activity) has tended to make us believe that Christ is coming back to snatch the church out of the world just before it self-destructs! For the cataclysmic-minded believers it has become a divine rescue mission to save the persecuted church in its last gasp.

If we examine the second coming in light of the purpose of the church, the bride of Christ, and her mission on earth, it takes on a very different meaning. The coming of the Lord

Jesus is the *consummation* or completion of God's plan for the church through the ages. It is a victory celebration rather than a rescue mission!

As the Apostle Paul speaks of the Lord's coming in 2 Thessalonians 1:8, he writes of a fiery judgment that will come upon the world. Then, in verse 10, he speaks of Christ's coming as it will relate to the church. He says, "... He shall come to be glorified *in His saints*." The concept of a spiritual coming *in* the saints prior to His physical coming *for* His saints is overlooked by most people. Paul clearly teaches that Jesus is coming for a bride that is "glorious . . . not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27). This is Christ revealed *in* the saints.

This same theme is carried on elsewhere in Scripture. *Galatians 4:19* reads: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." *Acts 3:21* states: "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." And *James 5:8* admonishes us: "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman (God) waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until He receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Many of us have been given the idea that Christ's coming is what defeats the foes and establishes His kingdom. Jesus said, however, that all power (authority) had been given Him in heaven and *in earth*; and because of that we were to go into all nations and disciple them. Rather than thinking of Christ's coming as an event that *accomplishes* His purpose in the earth, let us consider His coming as God's *consummating* His eternal purpose by that very event.

Concerning the purpose of His coming, *Baker's Theological Dictionary* says, "So Jesus' *parousia* [coming] is not the decisive event of the gospel; it is rather the *inevitable*

*sequel* [italics mine] of the decisive event which took place with His death and resurrection. The time of its occurrence does not matter so much as the fact that its occurrence is assured!"

### SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

It is this inevitable sequence of events which begins with His death and resurrection and sees Him establish a kingdom on the earth (His revelation in the saints) that is consummated by His visible return for the saints.

At this present time He is in the process of establishing that spiritual kingdom in the earth.

Psalm 110:1 is one of the verses most quoted by New Testament writers.\* It speaks, even to the casual reader, that there is a purpose to be accomplished by Christ being seated at the right hand of God the Father — He (Christ) will sit there *until* . . . "I make your enemies your footstool . . ." A similar theme is carried throughout the New Testament . . . Until . . . the redemption of the purchased possession (Ephesians 1:14) . . . the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6) . . . the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 6:14) . . . the harvest of tares and wheat (Matthew 13:30) . . . we all come in the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:13).

The same Psalm is quoted in Acts 2:35: "Until I make thy foes thy footstool." This expresses Peter's understanding of Psalm 110:1. Jesus' ascension to the right hand of the Father would continue *until* something that approximated Christ's victory in the human situation had been accomplished here on the earth.

There is a *present* kingdom; just as surely as there is a future one. But the kingdom of God must be proclaimed, received and established in some degree prior to the coming of the King of that kingdom to rule. Matthew 24:14 teaches us this much. Does it seem incongruous to believe that the body, which is His church and bride, be won, sanctified and prepared *before* He

comes for her? Is it not logical to assume that the kingdom, in spiritual form be established — literally established — on earth in the saints before God reveals His King and His kingdom? (Revelation 5:10).

New Testament grammar teaches us that His coming (*parousia*) is to be a *revelation* (unveiling) of Jesus Christ. Somehow, and in His own spectacular way, God will reveal Jesus, His kingdom, His church and bride, by the events of His *parousia*.

### THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH

Whatever God has yet to do in the earth, He purposes to do it through and by means of a militant church, an advancing kingdom, a united body which is rising to the challenge! "Thy people will be willing in the day of thy power," says the Psalmist in 110:3. The years of spiritual warfare, evangelism, missionary endeavor, combined with the present global outpouring of the Holy Spirit, cause me to know that God is setting the stage to consummate His purpose in the earth by the revelation and return of His King — which has been delayed . . . *until!*

Let's turn to the book of Revelation for a glimpse of what I am trying to express.

Behold He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him (Rev. 1:7).

This is the literal return of the One who was taken in the cloud (Acts 1:9-11). What an unveiling of God's eternal purpose in Christ, His Son! What a sudden consternation and embarrassment to the world which has rejected God's Son and abused His church! What joy and triumph for those who belong to Him — for those called according to His purpose! As the writer of Hebrews says, ". . . and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (9:28).

Whatever the unique turn of prophetic events or unexpected developments in the church or in the na-

tions, those who have come to see the *purpose* of His coming will not be preoccupied with dates, signs or dispensational charts, or attempting to place the label of antichrist on each world figure. In Revelation 22:17 we find these words:

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.

As one who longs for His coming, but also sees the *purpose* of His delay, the Lord began to say something to me from this verse.

When the Spirit and the bride say, "Come . . . Come Lord Jesus," it will be then that those who are sensitive to that which the Holy Spirit is saying will know that His coming is, in fact, very near.

The Spirit and the bride are now saying, "Unity . . . plurality . . . submission . . . obedience." The Spirit is seeking to draw us — each of us — into a *belonging* — a kind of spiritual community, if you will.

All of these words, plus the quickening pace of the pain and peril of the day in which we live, cause me to listen carefully to hear a cry — not just teaching — but a cry in the Spirit among the beloved that groans and sighs. This cry, when heard and interpreted, will say, "Come . . . Oh, come, Lord Jesus. The Spirit and the bride are ready. Come Lord Jesus!"

When we hear this, sense it, perceive it among the beloved, it is then that we can know that His *purpose* for delay is nearly completed. The bride has made herself ready (Revelation 19:7). The Holy Spirit, who was given to present her faultless before Him in her wedding garment, agrees . . . "Yes, she is ready! Come, Lord Jesus!"

He which testifieth those things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, Come Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:20)! ♣

\*cf. Matthew 26:64; Acts 2:34; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 12:2.

IF MY PEOPLE . . .  
August 17, 1974

HAMMONTON, N.J. — Christians around the world will gather in their national capitals and leading cities to observe a day of repentance and intercession Saturday, August 17, 1974.

"If My People" is the theme of the international observance which has been endorsed by Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon, Corrie Ten Boom of the Netherlands, actor Pat Boone, evangelist David Wilkerson, Paul Little of Inter-Varsity and many other Christians around the world.

The purpose of the observance, says D. Leland Paris, international coordinator of the "If My People" project, is to call the nations of the world to repentance for violating God's laws.

Participants in the day-long event also will be asked to make prayers of intercession for the millions of Christians suffering in Communist and Moslem nations where Christian worship is inhibited or totally prohibited.

The theme of the worldwide ecumenical effort is taken from II Chronicles 7:14.

"We believe prayer changes things," Paris declared. "God will bring about many changes through the power of prayer and the unity of Christians, and the leaders of the world will see this demonstrated that day."

In the United States, Washington D.C. will be the focal point of the "If My People" Saturday observance.

Brother Andrew, widely known as "God's Smuggler," will be the featured speaker in a call for repentance.

Details about observances in other American cities and national capitals will be announced at a later date, Paris said.

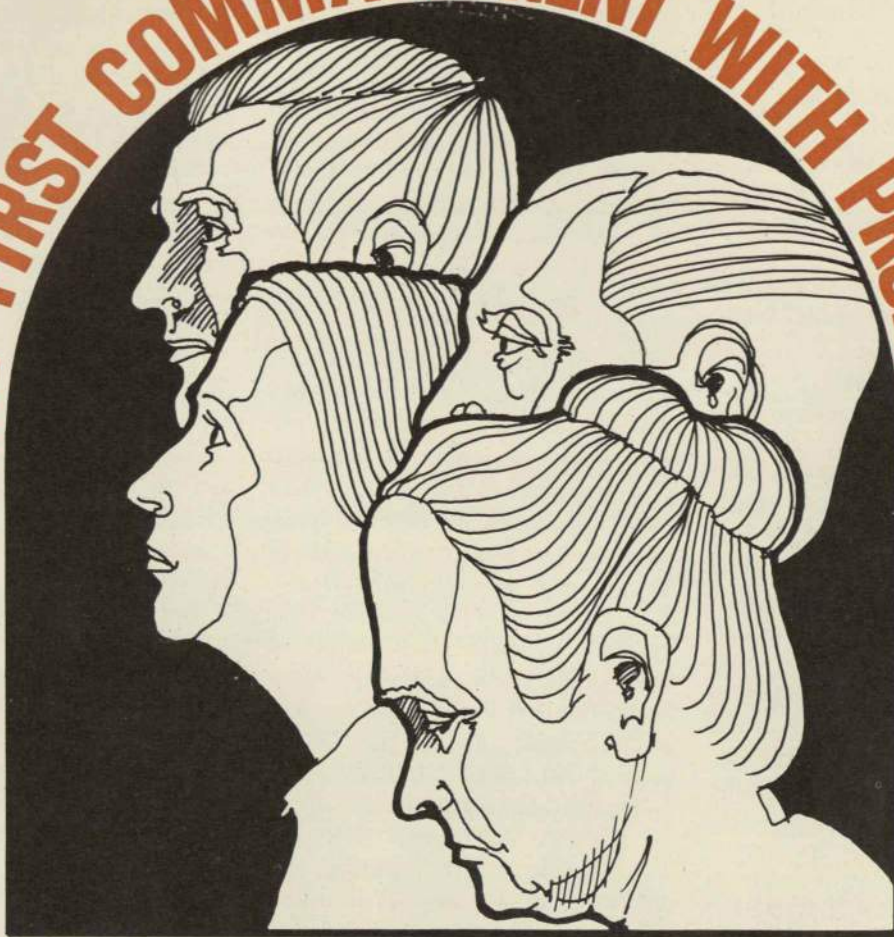
"If Christians everywhere will totally involve themselves in this effort, we can then become revolutionized in our vision and concern," Paris added.

Persons interested in participating in the worldwide project or wanting information on other leading cities where this will be, are encouraged to write: "If My People," P.O. Box 578 Hammonton, New Jersey 08037.

NEW WINE

# THE FIRST COMMANDMENT WITH PROMISE

by Esther Bristol



**D**o we want all to be well with us and live long on earth? Certainly!

Well then, do we actually realize that God has promised us these conditions *if* — we will do what He says? Let's read it for ourselves. It is very clear in Exodus 20:12. (Amp.)

Regard (treat with honor, due obedience and courtesy) your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land the Lord your God gives you.

In God's Word it is not just suggested that we honor our fathers and mothers, it is commanded that we do so. In Ephesians 6:1,2,3 we have this same commandment emphasized again . . . this time prefaced by the stern admonition:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord (as His representatives), for this is just and right.

We do not need to go into a long

dissertation concerning the rebellious youth of today to establish the fact that God's Word has been ignored. Let's face it, God's Word has been ignored all the way back to His first kids, Adam and Eve. And we are no exception in this rebellious lineage, be we parent or teen-ager. As Christians we are certainly well aware that we have all sinned and fallen short of the mark; but have we really given full attention to how grossly we have fallen short of obeying God's first commandment with promise?

Adults, did we honor and obey our parents or didn't we?

Young people, are you obeying and honoring your parents now or aren't you?

If the answer is "no" are we willing to recognize that it is the Lord Himself that we have disobeyed and dishonored and are we willing to do something about it? Miracles of release can take place in our lives and the lives

of others if we can face this question squarely, answer honestly, then act upon it.

### WE ACT ON HIS WORD

My husband and I were well into parenthood when we were born again and filled with the Holy Spirit. The Lord was gracious and let us float around awhile in and out of prayer groups, soaking up seminars, workshops and camp retreats. Then came the day we started gliding down to earth and came face to face with putting into practice the principles of God's Word. The warm glow of prayer meetings and retreats seemed to dissipate rather rapidly as we went into battle on the home front. In the midst of realizing that things were not "going well with us", a Christian brother pointed out the above scripture in Ephesians and suggested that we might take a long look at where we first went wrong. To further convince us that there was a clean-up job to be done in our lives he added Matthew 5:23,24. Amp.

So if, when you are offering your gift at the altar you there remember that your brother has any (grievance) against you, leave your gift at the altar and go; first make peace with your brother, and then come back and present your gift.

That did it! We came under conviction. It was obvious that there was restitution to be made to our mothers and fathers even though only one parent remained living in each case. We took a long hard look at the sign we have put in our home which reads, "WHATEVER IT TAKES". We looked at each other and silently prayed, "Yes, Lord, whatever it takes. Just show us the way." — And He did.

It was rugged for my husband,

Byron, to unlock that closet of his heart and examine all the bitterness and hatred that had been stored there against his father. It was heavy on his spirit that he had never even honored his father at the time of his death by going to his graveside with the family. So the word of the Lord to Byron, "Go and be reconciled", meant, in his particular case, a sixteen hundred mile trip to a cemetery in a country town in Michigan where his father was buried.

My daughter and I strolled around together in that quiet little cemetery while Byron knelt in silent prayer at his father's grave. I don't remember how long it took for him to wander back in thought through those emotionally damaged years and I'll never know what was loosed in Heaven and on earth. I only know that spiritual reconciliation through the Lord, Jesus Christ, had taken place. There was a radiance of release and perfect peace on the face of my husband as he put his arms around us and we strolled back to the car.

I, myself, didn't need to make a long journey. In fact, I went no further than the big easy chair in our living room. My father was no longer living on earth, but I asked Jesus to help me walk gently back into time. Together we encountered many incidents of girlhood rebellion, disobedience and dishonoring. It hurt and I cried and cried but Jesus held my hand firmly and the tears of anguish melted into tears of repentance and deep healing took place in my spirit.

With our living parents, as in the case of our mothers, we prayed about what to do. We were led to set aside a long period of quiet time with the Lord and a pad and pencil. In the black and white honesty of our own handwriting, the Holy Spirit showed us the hurts and rifts of misunderstanding that needed to be healed through communication. But we knew that reconciliations must come under the divine guidance of the Lord and in His timing, so we waited upon Him.

And He was faithful.

I vividly remember the moonlight night when my mother and I were standing on her front lawn. A soft peace had settled about us and the Holy Spirit seemed to nudge, "Now is the time. Put it right." I reached over to place my hand upon her arm.

"Mother," I started and I choked up a bit. "I have been remembering the growing-up years when I lived at home with you and Dad. I guess I really never told you enough how very much I appreciated all the countless things you and Dad did for me. But, (I went on hesitatingly) there are a few clouds over those memories and I feel I am responsible for them. I would like, if I can, to remove them." Then I went back through the years gently recalling things that had never really been settled or understood between us. We talked and shared at depths we had never reached before together. The wind softly rustled the palm fronds. We looked into each others eyes and we both wept. I put my head on her shoulder and she slipped her arm around me. God's healing Spirit had again performed a miracle and mended a relationship.

My husband, too, awaited God's timing to write a long prayerful letter of reconciliation to his mother. As he dropped this into the mailbox the weight of years of unsettled emotions seemed to roll away and he released the results into God's able hands.

And the results amazed us. Normally a shy, undemonstrative person, my mother-in-law seemed to reach out to show and receive affection. Although she never mentioned the letter, this open act of repentance unlocked her heart and there was a

Byron and Esther Bristol reside in Gainesville, Florida, where they are members of a local fellowship. Their daughter, Norma, is now Mrs. Hans Fischer.

free flowing warmth of spirit toward her son and it spilled over on to the whole family. She even asked us to pray for her that her relationship with the Lord was what it should be. A few months later she went on to be with her Lord.

### WE FIND IT WORKS

In thus releasing our parents and making the relationships right through the deep ministry of the Holy Spirit, we found we had released each other as marriage partners. Most of us are aware that psychologists recognize the damage we can sustain when we have "aught against each other". They point out the phenomenon of "transference" of damaged emotions suppressed in childhood to situations which involve interpersonal relationships, especially that of the marriage partner. That is to say, we view our mate through the distorted glasses of past hurts and grievances, and we become captive to these reactions.

Our Lord, most assuredly, was not captive to reactions. He creatively acted under all circumstances, in a positive manner and ministered life. Indeed, He died to set the captives free (Luke 4:18). And he continually stretches forth His hand to lead us all into accepting His blessed freedom.

It is the good news of this freedom and blessed release that comes from obeying the first commandment with promise that we desire to share with others, especially the young people.

There is no denial of the blessing it is to see beautiful young adults "turned on for Jesus," but it is equally heart-breaking to see them battling with some of the severe road blocks to spiritual growth that they encounter. We have repeatedly seen young people, delivered from the occult practices, drugs and sex perversions, only to fall into a vague sense of uneasiness, depression and confusion. No amount of prayer seems to give permanent relief. But, when we have shared with them about the scriptures of obedience to parents and honoring of father and mother, the Holy Spirit uncovers the gamut of emotions from death-dealing suppressed hatred to a non-communicative surface relationship of toleration. Little wonder that things are not "going well" with them.

In dozens of cases the Holy Spirit has gently nudged the boy or girl to "leave his gift at the altar" and go make it right. The results have been astonishing. For instance, one boy was called of God to go into the ministry. This joyful news was totally rejected by the parents involved. The boy's life was deadlocked until he came under conviction that he was in disobedience to God's "first commandment with promise." With pencil and paper he set about in earnest to put down in black and white the deeds of dishonor and rebellion toward his parents during the growing-up years. Then, with humble and gentle spirit, he shared with his mother and father and,

through the grace of God, the parents' attitude was completely changed. This was a true witness to the power of Jesus Christ in the life of their son and their hearts opened. They not only consented to his going into the ministry but he has their blessing and they are earnestly seeking what it is their son has found to so transform his life.

Then there was the case of the girl we shall call Mary who was preparing to enter into marriage. Much as she loved the young man and eagerly looked forward to being his bride, she could not cope with the severe depression that gnawed away at her spirit and tormented her soul. Not until the scripture of honoring her father and mother was revealed to her did the light of the Holy Spirit shine on this area of her life so long repressed. But once revealed, Mary was a girl of action. Although for many years estranged from her alcoholic father, she wrote him asking his forgiveness for her reactions of hatred toward him. The letter contained no trace of an incriminating attitude toward his acts of hostility and neglect. Instead, there was the special anointing of a repentant heart. The Lord quickly brought about a most unexpected meeting between the two and the compassion of the Lord flowed from Mary to her father. The father sat very quietly and listened as she witnessed for Jesus Christ. And he listened, and he listened. . . Now Mary is free to marry her young man, for the truth of Jesus Christ has made her free indeed.

If, then, it is our desire to become one in the Spirit with our Lord and with our fellow members in the body of Christ, it would truly benefit us all to look deep in our hearts. If asked, the Holy Spirit will show us how He yearns to cleanse our relationships and give us the grace to do our part of the cleansing. We can all experience that peace that passes understanding wherein we can honestly say that we honor our fathers and mothers and have complied with the first commandment with promise "that things will go well with us and we shall live long on the earth." ☞

# BIBLE STUDY

## The Second Coming

Biblical prophecy was accurately and literally fulfilled when Jesus was born in Bethlehem almost 2000 years ago. There exists even more prophecy concerning His Second Coming, and it is reasonable to believe that these clear promises will likewise be fulfilled. Our Bible Study points out scriptures dealing with the Second Coming, and seeks to help the reader understand what is to happen to Christians at that time and how Christians can prepare themselves in the meanwhile.

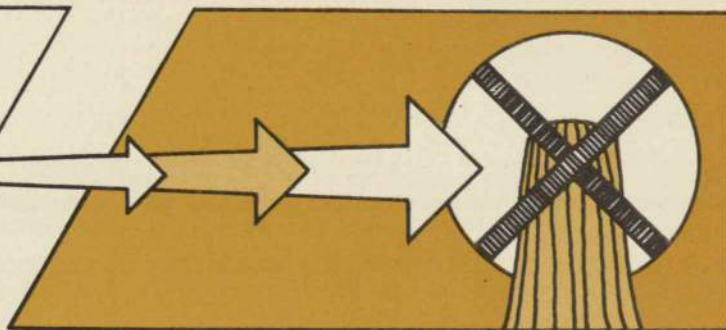
Bible Study answers are found on page 14.

1. Will all Christians have died when Christ comes? *1 Cor. 15:51*\_\_\_\_\_
2. At this time what will happen to Christians who have died? *1 Thes. 4:16*\_\_\_\_\_
3. What two things will then happen to all Christians, whether they have died or not?
  - a. *1 Cor. 15:51*\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. *1 Thes. 4:17*\_\_\_\_\_
4. Will these Christians ever again be separated from the Lord? *1 Thes. 4:17*\_\_\_\_\_
5. When we actually see the Lord, what change will take place in us? *1 John 3:2*\_\_\_\_\_
6. As a result of this change, what will the body of the Christian then be like? *Phil. 3:21*\_\_\_\_\_
7. What two words does Paul use to describe the body of the Christian after resurrection? *1 Cor. 15:53*  
(a.)\_\_\_\_\_ (b.)\_\_\_\_\_
8. How does the Bible describe the feast which Christians will then enjoy? *Rev. 19:9*\_\_\_\_\_
9. What did the Lamb's wife do before the marriage supper? *Rev. 19:7*\_\_\_\_\_
10. What kind of clothing did she wear? *Rev. 19:8*\_\_\_\_\_
11. What does the fine linen represent? *Rev. 19:8*\_\_\_\_\_
12. Of the 10 virgins, which ones went in to the marriage? *Matt. 25:10*\_\_\_\_\_
13. If a man has the hope of seeing the Lord when He comes, how does he prepare himself for this? *1 John 3:3*\_\_\_\_\_
14. To whom will Christ appear the second time unto salvation? *Heb. 9:28*\_\_\_\_\_
15. What two things must we follow after, if we desire to see the Lord? *Heb. 12:14* (a.)\_\_\_\_\_  
(b.)\_\_\_\_\_
16. What are three conditions which should mark out all Christians at Christ's coming? *2 Pet. 3:14*  
(a.)\_\_\_\_\_  
(b.)\_\_\_\_\_  
(c.)\_\_\_\_\_
17. What expression does Christ use to show how sudden His coming will be? *Rev. 3:3, 16:15*\_\_\_\_\_
18. Who knows the day and hour of Christ's coming? *Mark 13:32*\_\_\_\_\_
19. What did Christ warn Christians to do in addition to watching? *Luke 21:36*\_\_\_\_\_
20. What three things did Christ warn Christians could keep them from being ready? *Luke 21:34*  
(a.)\_\_\_\_\_  
(b.)\_\_\_\_\_  
(c.)\_\_\_\_\_

# AN ASSIGNMENT IN AMSTERDAM

by Walter H. Beuttler

God's guidance is always reliable,  
but not always predictable.



**T**he night was clear and the stars were shining brightly. There was no sense of movement as the TWA Constellation G seemed motionlessly suspended between heaven and earth. Only the steady drone of the engines gave any idea of motion on its flight to Europe with Labrador left well behind. It was an ideal night to watch the Aurora Borealis. Those mysterious and fabulous northern lights put on a magnificent display of multi-colored drapes in delicate hues while stars blinked as if to ornament those alluring yet forbidding polar regions.

As I beheld that spectacular Arctic phenomenon in silent wonder well past midnight, the Lord suddenly spoke saying within me, "I have sent thee on a journey." The words came as clear as a bell and as sharp as a razor. Though they were distinctly heard, they did not appear to have been naturally audible. Their implication turned that cabin into a cathedral of worship for the rest of the night as I contemplated the privilege of being sent by God on a journey. Oh, to hear such blessed words that are a more wondrous phenomenon in the realm of the Spirit than the phenomenon of the Aurora Borealis in the realm of nature!

## HUMILITY BRINGS GUIDANCE

Actually the journey had its beginning in 1951 during a time of revival at Northeast Bible Institute in Green Lane, Pennsylvania. The presence of God hovered heavily over the Friday night service. Through discernment graciously granted by the Spirit, I knew that God could accomplish His purpose only if we did not indulge in spiritual ecstasy, if not in spiritual carnality. I also knew instinctively that

we were to stand in a worshipful attitude and maintain absolute silence. Yet I could perceive that the dam of self-control holding back an emotional outburst was at the breaking point. Some were already beginning to lose control of themselves. Alarmed and becoming increasingly fearful of missing God's purpose, I resorted to rebuke to save the meeting. Immediately all moving of the Spirit stopped, the presence of God lifted and left the service as though smitten by a blight. Inasmuch as the service was dead and could not be saved, we dismissed and looked forward to another day.

During the night I was awakened by an audible voice singing in the room. Looking in the direction of the voice I saw the Lord standing by the window in a white garment. Looking my way He continued singing while I sat upright in bed. He sang two stanzas of a song I had never heard. The first one dealt with sin and forgiveness, the second stanza with grace and glory. When He came to the end of His song (sung in a deep, rich masculine voice) He was suddenly gone, but the room was filled with His presence. Seeing that it was 2:30 A.M. I knew it was time to get up, for during this revival the Lord awakened me every night at the same time to instruct me in what He was going to do in both morning and evening services. (This instruction could be very detailed including, for instance, who was to sing a special number, at what point in the service, what specific stanza or stanzas were to be omitted, etc. Much time of waiting on the Lord was also required to prepare me for meeting the essential requirement, specifically given for the revival, of "instantaneous, unquestioning obedience." When on one occasion

I said within myself to myself, "How will I ever get my (school) work done?" the unexpected answer was right there namely, "You don't have any work to get done; your work is to cooperate with Me to get My work done.")

While in worshipful contemplation of the solo He had just sung for me, I became aware of an inner uneasiness and said, "Lord, is there anything wrong?" Immediately came the answer, "Uzzah's error." I understood at once that by that carnal rebuke in the heat of my spirit I did what Uzzah did in the Old Testament, (2 Samuel 6:6-7). The gravity of my error was obvious from the instantaneous death of the service. "Lord," I said, "I am sorry but what can I do?" The reply did not tarry. "On Sunday morning during the communion service I want you to stand up and with a full confession ask the students to forgive you." (These words, as in some other instances, did not come as individual words but in one complete instantaneous thought). I squirmed saying, "Lord, I am a teacher. What will the students think of me?" There was no reply and none was needed.

Sunday morning came soon enough. While the bread was being given out, my heart suddenly pounded heavily and I knew it was the signal to stand up. So I did and said, "Students, I have a confession to make." All heads seemed to turn while a loud silence pervaded the chapel. Having told what happened with great care lest there be any effort to minimize my guilt by any degree of excuse or mitigating circumstance, I ended by saying, "I want all of you to forgive me for killing the service." Immediately a fellow stood up and in powerful pro-

phetic utterance, obviously addressed to me, said, "Because thou hast done this thing and hast humbled thyself before this congregation, therefore the Lord thy God will raise thee up and . . ." When I thus heard God's response to my obedience in public humiliation, I dropped on my knees and wept. Immediately the Spirit spoke within me word by word in utmost clarity, "Go and teach all nations." Then the Spirit moved mightily upon the entire student body for some three hours in confessions of sin, requests for forgiveness, deeper consecration and rededication to the work of the ministry.

### OBEDIENCE OPENS DOORS

As the school year neared its end in the spring, the Lord somehow gave me these words in my inner consciousness, "Go, get a passport."

"Lord," I said, "I don't need a passport. I have no place to go and no money to go with."

Again there came the distinct words, "Go, get a passport." I repeated my objection and a few days later the Lord repeated the same words for a third time, "Go, get a passport." I almost went but since I could see no reason whatever for getting a passport I did not get one.

Then a few days later a lady walked up to me in a church and said, "Brother Beuttler, do you have a passport?"

"No," I replied, "why should I have a passport when I am not going anywhere?"

"Oh, that is too bad. I have an air ticket here for you to go to Europe. This is a chartered flight. I was to go and can't. I cannot get a refund but I can give the ticket to someone else."

"I'll get a passport right away," I assured her.

"No you won't," she replied, "this flight leaves in two weeks and it takes four weeks to get a passport." (It did then.)

For three days the Spirit of God grieved within my spirit so that it became a grieving together over the

failure to carry out an assignment from God. It was one of those failures that neither bitter tears nor deep remorse could reverse. God remained silent until near the end of the year when the Spirit began to stir within me in an urge to get a passport. This time there was neither hesitation nor protest for I had nearly given up hope and was only too glad for another opportunity. Without any effort of any kind money flowed in from unexpected sources so that one week before Christmas I was on my way to Germany without knowing for what purpose.

The Lord had given no direction as to where I was to go. However, remembering that the TWA ticket was for Europe, I chose Germany inasmuch as my folks were there and since my mother was sick and did not know the Lord, I assumed that He would want me to talk to her about Him. Once in Germany God opened a door of ministry in a Baptist church. Every day the Lord awakened me about 4:30 A.M. with His presence to give me "what I should say and what I should speak." (John 12:49. Isa. 50:4). All through the week the subject was "The Knowledge of God." At the conclusion of the last service the pastor said to his congregation, "I have prayed for a long time that God would lead us into deeper truths than we Baptists have known and now God has sent a man from America to answer my prayer." With this he broke down and sobbed openly. Later I was told that they had never seen their pastor weep before.

This alone seemed remarkable enough, yet God had more on his agenda. While these special meetings were still in progress, further instructions came from the Lord in a manner that was clear to understand, but difficult to describe. Somehow I perceived distinct words standing in front and above me saying "Go to Amsterdam by air on New Year's Day about the middle of the afternoon." These words were printed and of a bluish-purple color. The words stood there clearly readable, yet seemingly not by natural sight. In my unwilling-

ness to go I said, "Lord, I have nothing to do in Amsterdam and besides I want to spend New Year's Day with my mother." Later during the week there was an exact repetition of the Lord's instructions and my reply. Then again this happened a third time in precisely the same manner. I was just about ready to give the same answer when I remembered the missed trip to Europe. Knowing instinctively that this was my last chance, I reproved myself for being so foolish in my refusal and agreed to go in the full assurance that, although this was the most unusual manner in which God had ever communicated with me, it was nevertheless His assignment. At the time, though, it was most incompatible with my personal interests and desires.

### GOD KNOWS SCHEDULES

In my preparations for going to Amsterdam I went to Stuttgart to get flight information from the Royal Dutch Airlines who regretfully informed me that they had no flight going to Amsterdam on New Year's Day. Inquiry from Swiss Air yielded the information that there was no air service to Amsterdam by any airline on any holiday including New Year's Day. This information catapulted me into a great personal crisis in view of the fact that I had done much teaching on the subject of divine guidance including the leading of the Spirit, and now my purported leading of God did not seem to square with my circumstances. Either the guidance or the information was wrong, and if the guidance was wrong, then what was wrong with me and my teaching?

Such was my predicament as I left the warm Swiss Air office and went out into the biting cold. With my French beret pulled down to the ears, and my hands buried deep in my overcoat pockets, I leaned forward into the cold wind-driven rain and snow and sloshed my way through the slippery slush, greatly puzzled in mind and deeply troubled in heart. Neither a fresh evaluation of my discernment of the leading of God nor a mental retrac-

ing of my steps brought me any nearer to the solution of my problem. I seemed to be at my wit's end, wrapped up in a question mark inside of an enigma.

In utter frustration I paused in my walk, closed my eyes and said reverently, but in dead earnest, "Lord, do you know the airline schedules or don't you?" There was no reply.

The only recourse I now had left was to go to the American Express. There the attendant behind his desk searched the Official Airline Guide, looking back and forth and shaking his head in the negative. "I'm sorry sir, but there is nothing." Then brightening-up he added, "Oh wait a minute, there is a special bulletin here. You are a lucky man. There is a special flight to Amsterdam leaving Stuttgart on January 1 at 4:20 P.M. Would that do?" Immediately the Spirit bore very strong witness within me that this was the flight. At once I bought my ticket with an air of triumph and a joyfulness I had difficulty restraining. God knew the airline schedules after all. Hallelujah!

### DIVINE INTERVENTION REQUIRED

The flight to Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport was normal enough, despite the inclement weather. What did seem abnormal, or at least surprising, was the silence of God notwithstanding a heart constantly poised God-ward for guidance concerning my assignment. Upon deplaning I paused on the tarmac and quietly said, "Lord, I have arrived. Now what?" There was no answer. Then in a tone of urgency and hopefully without a tinge of impatience, I asked again, pronouncing each word distinctly and emphatically, saying "Lord, I have arrived in Amsterdam. This is Schiphol Airport — Amsterdam, Holland. What am I to do here?" Since no guidance was forthcoming I followed the "guidance" of the common sense judgment of a sound mind with faith in unconscious providential guidance and went to a hotel for the night, which seemed to be the logical thing to do.

Upon retiring I assured the Lord of my willingness for any assignment in Amsterdam, but added that if I did not hear from Him by tomorrow morning, I would take a British European Airways' flight to London at 8 A.M. Since I heard nothing, 8 A.M. found me on the London-bound flight, seat belt fastened, all set for take-off. But there was no take-off. We sat out there on the tarmac in bitter cold for some fifteen minutes when the announcement came saying, "This is the captain speaking. I regret to have to ask you to return to the airport lounge. A heavy fog has settled over the airport and it is too dangerous to take off." So, among the moans and groans of disgruntled passengers, I returned to the lounge.

Upon entering the door there was suddenly a strong presence of God all around me so that I instinctively knew that this was where the Lord had an assignment for me. That inner presence turned into a heavy spirit of intercession combined with intense worship. Being wholly absorbed in this activity of the Spirit while I sat in a corner of the large airport lounge, I became oblivious to time and surroundings. When I finally noticed that several hours had passed by, I went to check the weather and found the fog so heavy that one could see only the barest outline of the nearest planes. In front of me stood two men, one of whom was apparently an airport employee, the other one a passenger. The airport employee spoke to the apparent passenger saying, "We do not understand this fog. There is no fog anywhere in the Amsterdam region except right over this airport. We just can't understand it." Making inquiry at the information desk, I found out that all flights had been cancelled and none were expected to leave that day because of the density of the fog.

Up to this point everything had gone well enough. But then I began to lose the way through rationalization. My reason said that this could not be God's will inasmuch as I was sitting around wasting people's money by doing nothing. In fact, I began to figure out how much money I was

wasting each hour by sitting at the airport waiting for the fog to lift. The presence of God, of which I had been so conscious, slowly dissipated and in its place came utter confusion. I, along with hundreds of stranded passengers, was vainly milling about looking for a place to sit.

Finally, I went to the dining area and sat at the end of a long table wondering what to do. As I sat there in my distress and confusion, I noticed a man of unusually good-looking appearance coming in my direction. He wore a black suit and had such a regal bearing of dignity that I wondered who the man could be. From his general appearance I concluded that he must belong to one of the royal families of Europe. His whole demeanor was so cultured yet natural and without any affectation. To my surprise he sat down in front of me across the table. However, I was so troubled in my spirit that I paid no further attention to him. Instead I closed my eyes and prayed saying, "Lord, where am I?" I meant, of course, with respect to the will of God. Then I opened my eyes and looked at this man for no reason that I could give. At that very instant I saw him lift a book from his lap which he opened to read. Quite naturally my eyes fell on the title of the page which was, strangely enough, in German. It read: "*FUEHREN WOHN DU NICHT WILLST*" ("*LEADING WHERE YOU DO NOT WANT TO GO*"). Then the man put the book back on his lap, as though he had changed his mind about reading it. Instantly I knew I had my answer from God. Thereupon a waiter came along and said, "Will you two gentlemen please move? We need this table to feed some passengers." He got up and walked in one direction while I walked in the opposite direction.

This man again arrested my attention with his outstanding appearance, erect bearing and cultured steps so that I again asked myself whom this man could be. Again I dismissed my own thoughts with the explanation that he must come from one of the royal households of Europe. However, since that time the Lord has confirmed

to me both personally and publicly that this man was none other than the angel of the Lord whom God had sent to Amsterdam to bring me back into His will. (Incidentally, a number of pastors who told this story to their congregations, had a move of the Spirit and confirmation by the Spirit of the validity of this account. The story was also read to the students of The Assembly of God Bible School in England by the late Donald Gee who wrote to me personally that this reading was followed by a move of the Spirit of God in their school). So I confessed to the Lord my erroneous rationalization and unbelief and asked for forgiveness whereupon the awariness of His presence returned as before.

With many passengers looking for an empty seat I was fortunate (providentially) to find one at a little round table with a dark-skinned stranger. Quickly I took the chair, shut my eyes and continued with my intercession in the Spirit. However, I was interrupted by this man. "Sir, tell me your secret." Opening my eyes I saw him leaning halfway across the table with an inquiring look on his face.

I answered, "Sir, who are you? What do you mean?"

He replied, "I am an African businessman, brought up in the Mohammedan faith. Notwithstanding my earnest seeking, Mohammed could not bring me forgiveness of sins nor the peace I sought. Therefore I left Mohammedanism, tried other religions, both Eastern and Western, but in none could I find what I needed. Finally I gave up all religions, but for many years I have prayed one prayer, namely, 'Oh, God, if there is a God, show me the way to true peace.' " Then he added, "Sir, are you the man that has what I am seeking and if so, can you show me the way to true peace? I was watching you this morning for several hours sitting over there in that chair. There was a light on your face. What was that light? I thought to myself, Could this be the man that has what I am seeking? If you are, What is your secret?"

While he was saying all this, and

more, the Spirit began to build up within me what I was to say to him. When he finished I gave him the testimony of my salvation when under similar circumstances I walked the streets of New York very lonely, without friends and no peace in my heart, and how I found what I was seeking through Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace.

In conclusion I was going to say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," repeating a scripture I had used before in speaking to him. I started to say, "Believe on the Lord J. . . ." when I was interrupted by a voice which said, "Attention please, will all passengers on British European Airways' flight number (whatever it was) go to your plane immediately. We are leaving in ten minutes because the fog is lifting." With this we said goodbye, and have never met again.

### THE POWER OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Looking at the entire journey in perspective, a remarkable panorama of the interplay of divine providence emerges. God heard this African pray for many years, "Oh God, if there is a God, show me the way to true peace." He was on one continent. God heard his prayers and got the wheels of divine providence into motion to answer him. His chosen instrument was in America, a second continent. By a most unusual supernatural leading, God brought them both to the same place, at the same time, on a third continent. To make possible a personal contact and provide the necessary time, God shut down one of the world's busiest airports with an unusual fog. When the instrument lost the way, God went to the extent of sending an angel to the airport to bring the instrument back into the way of the leading of God. Notwithstanding the fact that many of the fog-bound passengers were looking for a seat, God had one vacant for his instrument, right in front of the African. God answered the man's prayer by bringing to him the way to true peace

through Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace. As the delivery of the message was being completed the fog lifted and planes resumed their operation. This was the day God sent his angel to Amsterdam. This is, in fact, the story of Philip and the Ethiopian all over again, except in a modern setting, and is an eloquent testimony of the power of divine providence. ☞

### LAUDATORY HYMN TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE

"TO THE ONLY WISE GOD AND SAVIOR" . . . Who for some twenty-two years opened doors for teaching the knowledge of God to the uttermost parts of all continents and the remotest islands of all oceans, supplied every need without strain or stinting, guided time and again in amazing providence, preserved in circumstances of mortal peril, and granted the companionship of His presence on some thirty-three trans-oceanic flights with ten around the world and one over the seemingly endless white desert of the North Pole (Paris-Tokyo, courtesy of French Assemblies of God). . . "BE GLORY AND MAJESTY, DOMINION AND POWER BOTH NOW AND EVER. AMEN" (Jude 25).

### IN MEMORIUM

Walter Beuttler (deceased May 17, 1974) was born in Germany and served as International Bible teacher to the body of Christ.

### BIBLE STUDY ANSWERS

- (1) No. (2) They will arise (from the dead).
- (3) a. They will all be changed; b. They will all be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. (4) Never. (5) We shall be like him. (6) Like the glorious (glorified) body of Christ. (7) a. Incorruption; b. Immortality. (8) The marriage supper of the Lamb (Christ). (9) She made herself ready. (10) Fine linen, clean and white (bright). (11) The righteousness of saints. (12) They that were ready. (13) He purifies himself even as he (Christ) is pure. (14) To them that look for him. (15) a. Peace with all men; b. Holiness. (16) a. In peace; b. Without spot; c. Blameless. (17) "As a thief". (18) Only God the Father. (19) To pray always. (20) a. Surfeiting (Gluttony); b. Drunkenness; c. Cares of this life.



## The Kingdom of God

The second in a series of six articles  
on the Kingdom of God.

# WHAT MUST WE DO?

The heartcry that opens to us  
the kingdom of God.

by Charles Simpson

"Our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20), Paul declares to the Philippian church. Paul held multiple citizenship as a Jew, a Roman and a Christian. As such he was subject to three sets of laws: Roman, Jewish and the law of Christ. Caesar laid claim to Paul's loyalty as a Roman; the Sanhedrin laid claim to his loyalty as a Jew; and Jesus laid claim to Paul's loyalty as a citizen of God's kingdom.

Being a citizen of three kingdoms was not easy. Paul sought to be a better Jew and a better Roman in order to bring glory to the Lord Jesus. He paid his taxes, loved his neighbors and worked with his hands. He sought to be "all things to all men." But from the very outset of his Christian experience, serving the Lord Jesus was his priority. Caesar was lord of Rome, but Jesus was Lord of Paul and the church. Because of Paul's renunciation of earthly ambition and his dedication to enthroning Jesus in *every* life, he got into trouble. Eventually, Paul lost his Roman and Jewish citizenships through martyrdom. However, he received eternal citizenship in God's kingdom which shall not be taken

away. Being a good citizen of heaven will make you an earthly alien.

The kingdom of God consists of those, whether on this side of death or the other, who are registered under God's government through Jesus Christ. This is what the Good News is about! There is another kingdom whose Saviour is the Lord, where abides righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, now and in eternity.

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" Peter declares. Christianity is a *nation*? I thought it was a *denomination*. No! Christians are a distinct nation of people among the nations who have a government, laws and a Lord.

Gypsies are known as a nomadic people without a country. Centuries ago, they were driven from their homelands, and have since been wanderers. Nevertheless, they have a king and rulers among them who are recognized.

In a real sense, Christians are pilgrims and sojourners in this world. We are in it, but not of it. We are moving toward the land of God's promise, which He has prepared for us. Though we are not yet in the land, we are already a people with identity and

government. The Lord Jesus is our King. We maintain our identity among the people of the earth by learning and living His ways. One day He shall reign in all the world and we shall reign with Him. In the meantime, He is reigning in our lives and teaching us to reign over ourselves, in our families and in the church, which is His body. As He reigns over us, He is able to reign through us, and one day we shall reign with Him.

Often I have noticed in various large, foreign cities an American community living abroad. Just as in America, where we may have a German community, a French community, a Chinese community and a Latin community, so in foreign cities, there is often an American community. Americans abroad are under the U.S. Government just as we are at home. They speak the same language and have the same customs, but they live away from their homeland, and are subject to a foreign government and its laws. Because they have so much in common with other Americans, they tend to live near one another in some kind of community relationship. So it is in the spiritual realm. Some of us live on this side of

the sea of death, some on the other — already in heavenly places. Nevertheless, those who live in Christ share the same government and ways of God. We who yet live in this foreign society, show the righteousness, peace and joy of God's eternal kingdom. While we are yet in this present, secular world we pray for those in authority as ministers of God, that we may have a peaceful atmosphere in which to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus. Though we are involved in this world, our citizenship is in heaven. We are citizens of an eternal kingdom.

Early pietists, reformers and anabaptists strongly reacted to the church-state relationships of the eleventh through the sixteenth centuries. As they separated from the state church, they also separated from the state. They saw themselves as a state within the secular state. So sensitive were they to their separation, that they formed separate communities and abstained from military service and other secular involvement. Their motivation was not so much pacifistic as it was their awareness that their kingdom was not of this world. Without promoting withdrawal, one could hope for a revival of the same awareness in our generation. We would do well to take seriously Paul's admonition, "Prove yourselves blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15 NAS).

### IDENTIFICATION AND ORIENTATION

Jesus spent the last forty days of His time on earth speaking to His disciples about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). I would like to have the transcripts of those sessions! The fact that Jesus spent this most valuable time in that manner indicates the importance of the subject. The disciples were still interested in *when* the kingdom would come to Israel; Jesus was interested in their receiving the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim *the King*.

His instruction regarding the kingdom never had its full impact until He had sent the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. Then, with divine energy, they began to baptize other disciples and give them the same instruction in God's government that they had received from Jesus.

After Jesus ascended, 120 of His disciples obeyed His command to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit. Finally, on the day of the Jewish feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended in a mighty torrent. Pentecost was fifty days after Passover. At Passover, the Jews celebrated the deliverance from Egypt; at Pentecost, the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Now the Holy Spirit was coming to write a new covenant, not on tables of stone, but in the hearts of committed followers. As Sinai shook with fire and smoke, so did the upper room tremble under the power of God, as God's finger wrote His covenant in their hearts. They were filled not only with the peace of the Holy Spirit, but with the assurance, "He's there!" The Holy Spirit was saying, "Jesus is there at the Father's right hand! I am come to tell you He is Lord!"

When the power of God came, theology became reality. Suddenly, Jesus' teaching became practical for this life. *He is Lord now, not later!* Looking back on His teaching through Holy Spirit-given spectacles, His rulership was magnified and they were intoxicated with heavenly joy and peace. As the Holy Spirit took over His executive office in the church, God's government was a present and powerful reality expressed in the day-to-day life of the church. They were not of this world and it was all that they could do to stay in it. Soon, existing corrupt leaders would either acknowledge Jesus as Lord or seek to rid themselves of the powerful challenge. The church was regarded by many as subversive, and it was, in the holiest sense. The church was not reacting to Satan's program. It had a job to do and by God's grace they set out to do it: Reclaim the kingdoms of this world for God's glory. Make

disciples of all nations, not just *in* all nations.

Peter's Pentecost message to the thousands of visiting devout Jews was about Jesus' Lordship, His right to rule their affairs. It was no "easy believism" or "greasy grace," that he proclaimed. The challenge was total. He was Lord of all or not at all. The response would have to be total commitment to His Lordship and His commission to make disciples of all nations.

Standing with the eleven, Peter said:

This Jesus hath God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear . . . Therefore, let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified! (Acts 2:32, 33, 36 NAS).

The impact was staggering and clear. They had killed the King. "*What must we do?*" they cried out by the thousands (almost in unison). This was Peter's moment. He was in charge. He and the others were God's delegated authority . . . messengers to the multitude. Whatever he said, they would do. They were ready to act.

"*Repent!*" Peter's voice thundered over the multitude as it had often done over Galilee's waters when he hailed a friend on a passing boat. "*. . . be baptized, . . . for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38). And they did, by the thousands. They repented; they were baptized; they received the Holy Spirit in power; they changed history.

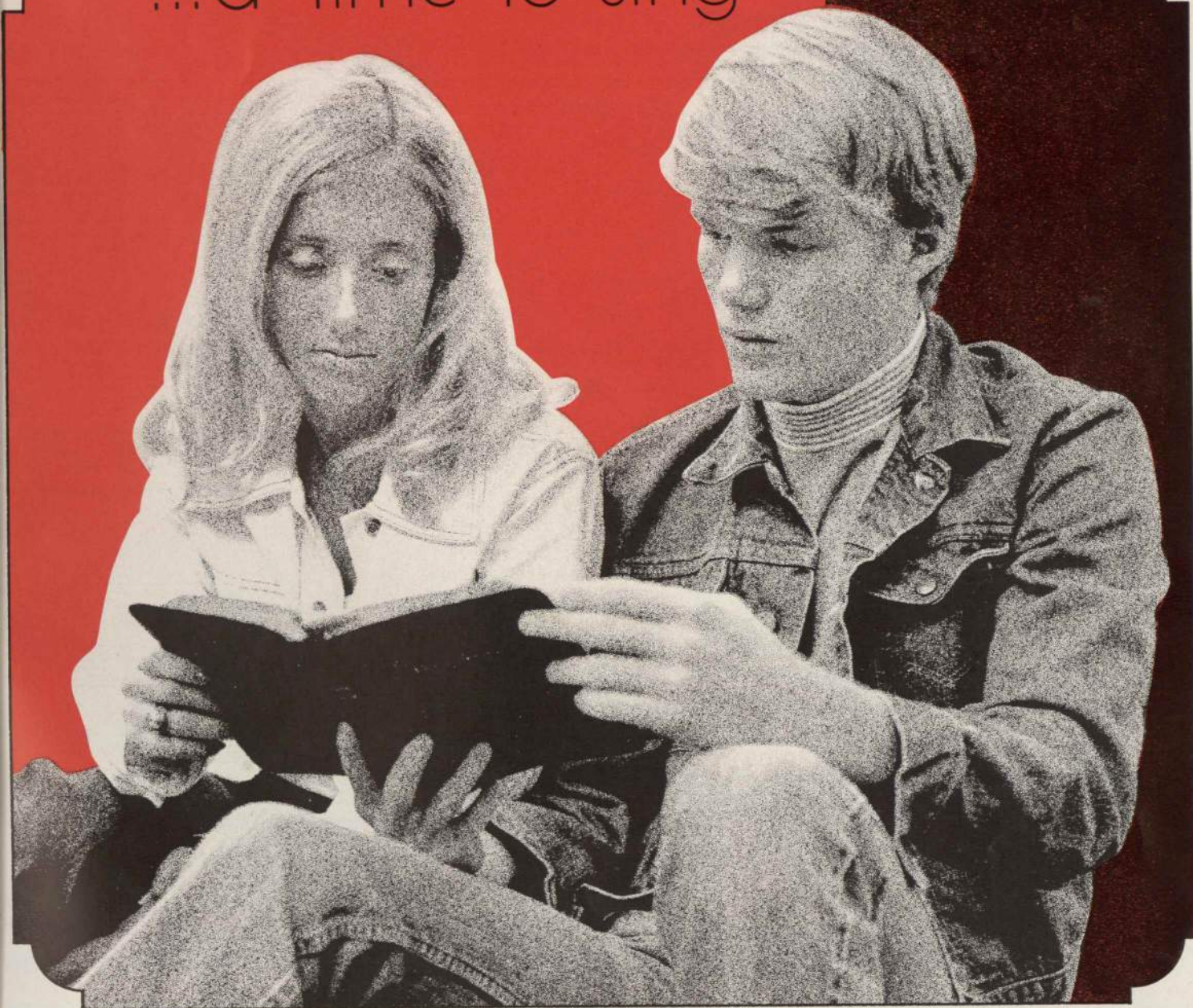
Let us examine the question, "What must we do?" Notice that they did not ask, "What must we do to go to heaven when we die?" Prophets had long foretold the coming of the Messiah and His kingdom. Orthodox Jews all looked and longed for His coming. Now they had been told that He not only had come but that they

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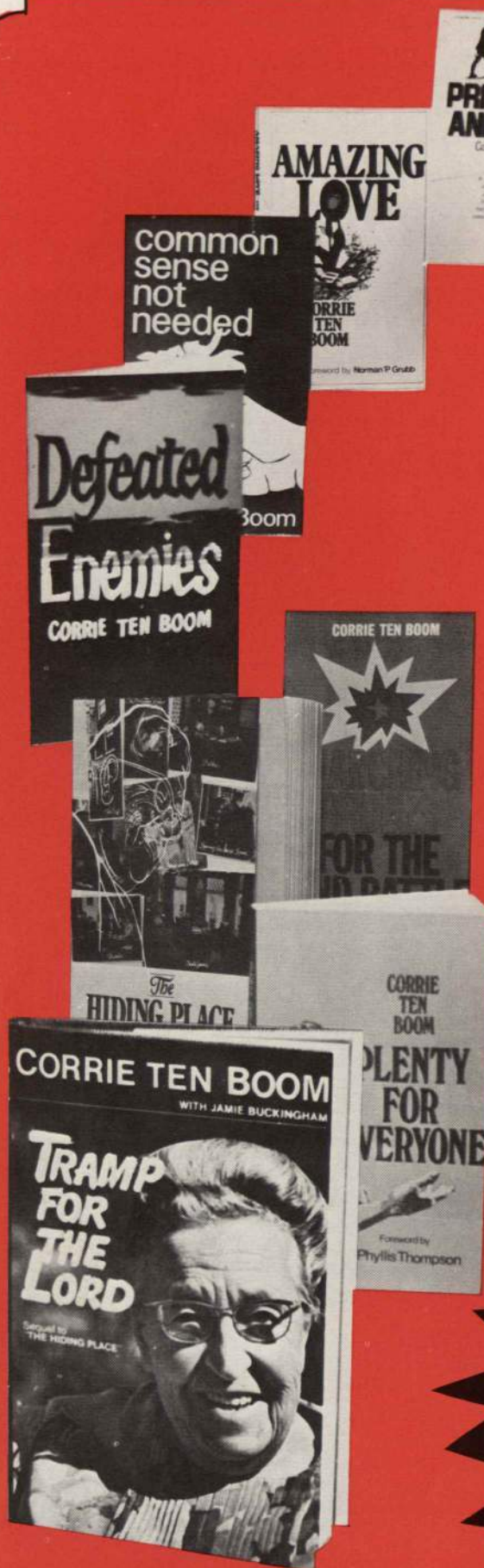
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had killed Him. Not only had they missed God's government, but they had murdered the Governor! "What must we do?" they pled.

The apostles suddenly represented the only divine authority present. They were God's delegated representatives, trained for this hour. Hidden to natural vision, the Holy Spirit was dramatically convicting and unveiling truth. Only the apostles could answer their frantic question.

Peter's sermon was not about heaven and hell. True, heaven and hell were at stake, but his message was about the Messiah. Every Jew knew well — all too well — what had happened. "What must we do?" was the earnest plea of men who sorrowed with godly sorrow for their rebellion, and searched with all their hearts for the kingdom of God. Repentance was not simply a matter of dealing with nasty habits. They had rejected the rule of Christ in their lives. As orthodox religionists, their habits were nice, but their heart was nasty. There was murder there . . . hatred, strife and pride was in them. They were "whitewashed graves!" That is what *He* had said. *He* was right.

"Repent!" Peter cried. "Turn around. Start with the inside. Make Jesus Lord of your life. Be baptized and identify as His disciple." Proof that one had repented of rejecting Jesus would easily be established by publicly identifying with Jesus in baptism. Physical obedience in baptism would testify to His Lordship. Obedience in baptism would be an act of purification following genuine repentance.

The baptism that Peter preached was no popular cultural exhibition. It was a public identification with one who had recently been slain as a subversive, and His on-going government.

Several years ago I had an experience which helped me to understand what baptism must have meant to those Jews who heard Peter.

It was about 2 A.M. when I arrived in Bombay . . . travel-weary and dazed from crossing time zones. Nevertheless, I was quickened to the fact that Bombay was a long way from

home and that it was a totally different society. Dress, language, Eastern hospitality and anti-American hostility were constant reminders. By the next day I was south in Cochin and on my way to a small village in the state of Kerala called Mavelihara. The state of Kerala had a Communist government and Hindu religion. Both were strange and foreboding to me.

*Police Station Attacked — 2 Killed!* — the headlines shouted in Cochin. A band of local Communists had attacked the police station because of its unfriendliness to their objectives. The Prime Minister was to visit that week. The town was in upheaval. Yet the residents were living in the twilight of social apathy drugged by poverty and spiritual darkness.

Red flags lined both sides of the main road going south through small villages. Hindu shrines added to the evidence of an alien atmosphere. "Don't be too obvious with your camera," my Christian friend and host warned. "One of our ministers was badly beaten a few weeks ago. All of his front teeth were knocked out. Real Christians are not popular here with local officials." I did not have to be warned twice.

For several days Ken Sumrall, who had made the trip with me, and I preached to the assembly of Christians who had come from villages throughout Kerala. They sat from early morning until late evening under a brush arbor listening to the Word of God and worshipping. At times, rain filtered through the thatch roof and dropped on them as they sat on the mats which covered the ground. Then Sunday came. Down to the middle of town and down to the river they marched to baptize the new disciples. As they marched they sang to the beat of a large drum. Their songs were of their King whom they served in the midst of a hostile society.

At the river, the Christians lined one bank and looked across to the hostile faces of Hindus and Communists. As they sang to the Lord Jesus, the pastor waded out into the water and briefly proclaimed Jesus as Lord. Against their dark skin their eyes beamed hope

and commitment. Their pearl-like teeth shone, and broad smiles of kingdom joy were contrasted against a background of suffering and persecution.

Soon, one after another, the new converts moved out into the water and stood beside the Lord's appointed shepherd.

"Do you repent of your sin and accept Jesus as Lord?" he would ask in their own language, loudly enough for all to hear.

"Yes!" would come the answer, loud and affirmative. "I turn from my past life. I ask Jesus to forgive me. I will follow Him forever!"

Then placing themselves in the shepherd's hands, they would be lowered in burial . . . "I baptize you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ . . ." Amid shouts of hallelujah they were brought forth praising the Lord in a new language. Now there was nothing to which they could return. Baptism meant identity with Jesus. That meant rejection for most of them by society and family. It was not a secret ceremony.

After all of the new disciples were baptized, the line began to form and the procession moved back toward the brush arbor. Again came the beat of the large drum and the chant of Eastern hymns.

"We would be honored if you would march at the head of the group," my host smiled. Under the curious and hostile gazes of onlookers we moved forward. We had just held a registration session for the kingdom of God — publicly.

In Peter's day, registration in the kingdom of God was quickly followed by orientation.

So then these who had received His word were baptized; and there were added that day about 3,000 souls. And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:41-42 NAS).

Their decision to come under the government of God as expressed in the church, was a decision to live a new

way with new values, attitudes and precepts. To walk this new way they would have to learn it by the apostles' example and instruction. The apostles immediately began to function as Jesus commanded. "Baptize and make disciples. Teach them to observe everything I taught you" (paraphrase). As the new babes were born into the kingdom, they came under visible government and into a visible fellowship. Soon they were totally immersed in a new culture. The community accepted full responsibility for the well-being and development of these new disciples who had changed governments.

Paul expresses it this way. "For he delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13 NAS). We have changed governments! Paul declares.

we do to change our lives *while we live*?" Their cry was not to do as little as possible, but *as much as possible* to separate themselves from the bondage of Egypt.

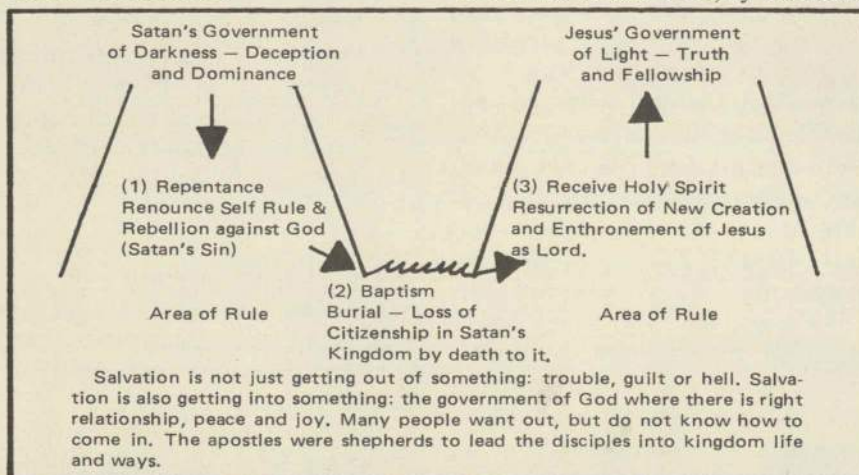
Israel separated themselves from the government of Pharaoh to the government of Moses through baptism. Moses preached a kingdom gospel. That is, he told them of a place of righteousness, peace and joy where God would rule over them. He told them of Mount Zion and milk and honey. However, he also told them of giants and obstacles. In order to leave Egypt and come into Canaan, they would have to submit to a new governor — Moses. They had to decide if he were really sent from God. Having settled that, they had to decide if the prize was worth the price. Having determined that it was, they started to follow Moses. The first thing he did was to lead them, by the Lord's

with all their possessions, family and friends, into Moses' hands. He baptized them into the sea and God baptized them into the cloud, confirming their discipleship. When they came forth, they could never return, though many would often desire to return. It was this constant looking back and denial of God's delegated authority in Moses that prevented the first generation from entering into Canaan. Jesus said it this way, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62 NAS).

When one desires the kingdom of God, or God's government, in his life, he must be ready to repent of his present state. He must acknowledge that going his own way got him into his present state of confusion and loss. In baptism, he literally lays himself in someone else's hands, believing him to be God's messenger sent to lead him into God's kingdom. Water baptism will put distance between him and the past, as well as identify him as a citizen of the new government. Holy Spirit baptism will confirm to his own heart that Jesus did indeed ordain his pilgrimage and put a wall of fire between him and the past. The Holy Spirit will be a cloud of light to the new disciple, but darkness to those who will not follow the Lord.

Once Israel was baptized under Moses' government, they became Moses' problem — and, oh, what problems! He had the job of turning those millions of slaves into a holy nation, an army that could drive out giants, and occupy a rich land. The journey started with Israel's cry, "What must we do?" But soon after the exodus began, Moses was crying, "What must I do?"

There is no greater challenge that faces God's people and God's leaders than this! How do we turn an enslaved and divided church into a holy nation, a mighty army? It will begin only as we cry out, "What must we do?" No doubt, we will hear some God-sent man say, "Repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit." As we respond, we will begin to find the government of God. 🙏



In order to show more clearly how Christians move from one kingdom to another, Paul reminds us of Israel. In 1 Corinthians 10:6,11 Israel is said to be our example.

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Corinthians 10:1,2 NAS).

Fifteen-hundred years before Pentecost, Israel had been in Egypt under the whiplash of slavery. They, too, had cried, "What must we do?" Their question was not, "What must we do to get to heaven?" but, "What must

direction, to the Red Sea where everyone was baptized . . . into Moses. They turned their backs on Pharaoh and his pyramids and began the journey. Moses could lead them because He had already lived in the wilderness and had been taught by God the way through it.

There they stood at the water's edge . . . Pharaoh charging behind them . . . "Moses! Moses!" they cried. At God's instruction, Moses asserted his God-given authority and the waters parted. The cloud of God's Spirit came upon them. They moved forward putting their lives and confidence in this hope! God did hear our prayer and Moses was sent by Him. As they put themselves, along

# FASTING

Who  
What  
Where  
When  
Why

by Arthur Wallis

**H**aving proved the great value and blessing of fasting over many years, I became concerned that so many earnest believers had apparently never given the subject any serious thought. This concern became a constraint to share with those who hunger for God's best, what the Bible has to say about this spiritual exercise. While not a major biblical doctrine, a foundation stone of the faith, or a panacea for every spiritual ill, nevertheless, when exercised with a pure heart and a right motive, fasting may provide us with a key to unlock doors where other keys have failed; a window opening up new horizons in the unseen world; a spiritual weapon of God's providing, "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds."

## WHY FAST?

The very idea of someone actually fasting today seems strange to most twentieth-century Christians. They associate it with medieval Christianity, or perhaps with High Church practice. As a spiritual exercise it is confined, they would think, to believers who appear to be a little extreme or fanatical.

There are others whose misgivings concern the practical aspect. To them fasting and starving are synonymous terms, and they fear it will have harmful results.

Why such attitudes to a practice that is so obviously scriptural? When our minds are conditioned by prejudice or paralyzed by traditional views, we may face a truth in Scripture again and again without its ever touching us. When, however, such a truth is first ignited by the Holy Spirit, there is immediate conflict in the minds of most people. The truth of

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the Bible has suddenly become "alive and powerful" and there is an assault upon our traditional attitudes and prejudices. The outcome of the struggle reveals whether or not we are open to receive and obey fresh light from God, and so grow in the knowledge of the truth.

It may surprise the reader, as it certainly did the writer, to find that Scripture has so much to teach us by example and by precept, of the value of this practice. There are warnings, too, for fasting has its dangers, and we have tried to point these out.

"To fast," means primarily "not to eat." We shall see that there were three main forms that fasting took in Bible times, but each involved literal abstinence. If at times the word may be widened to include other forms of self-denial, this does not alter the fact of its basic meaning.

### 1. The Normal Fast

*He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry. . . . Matthew 4:2.*

What this involves is plain from the first mention of fasting in the New Testament: Jesus fasted. . . and afterwards He was hungry. It meant abstaining from all food, solid or liquid, but not from water.

### 2. The Absolute Fast

*For three days he . . . neither ate nor drank. Acts 9:9.*

We have a few examples in Scripture of what we have called the absolute fast, that is, abstaining from drinking, as well as eating. Normally this was never for more than three days, probably because any longer period might have proved physically injurious. The body can go long periods without food and be physically bene-

fitted, but only for a very short time without water.

There are examples in Scripture of absolute fasts which must have been supernatural in character because of their very long duration: Moses (Deuteronomy 9:9 and Exodus 34:28) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:8). These two leading representatives of the old covenant (Moses the giver of the law, and Elijah its restorer) both also had a supernatural ending to their earthly course, as well as a supernatural re-appearance with Christ on the holy mount.

One would need to be very sure of the leading of God to undertake such a fast for any period longer than three days.

### 3. The Partial Fast

*I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth. . . . Daniel 10:3.*

The emphasis here is upon restriction of diet rather than complete abstention. The partial fast allows a great many variations which have been tried with blessing and benefit. There is the method of living exclusively on one type of food for the duration of the fast or omitting a certain meal each day, thus strictly limiting the quantity of food consumed.

The partial fast is of great value, especially where circumstances make it impossible or inconvenient to undertake a normal fast. Certainly it requires no less self-discipline. It is most suitable for elderly persons or those with a weak constitution who could not manage a normal fast. It can be used as a stepping stone to the normal fast by those who have never fasted before. One of its great advantages is that even after being sustained for a long period, normal eating can be

Since 1940 Arthur Wallis has devoted himself to a Bible-teaching ministry and to writing through which he serves the body of Christ.

resumed almost at once, which is not the case with the other two kinds of fasting.

### JESUS' STATEMENTS ON FASTING

#### 1. When . . . Not If!

*When you give alms . . . when you pray . . . when you fast . . . Matthew 6:2,5,16.*

What did our Lord teach His disciples concerning fasting? That must surely rule our conduct now. Quoted above is the first of His two vital utterances on this subject.

In speaking about giving, praying and fasting, Jesus warned His hearers of the futility of practising their piety before men to be seen of them. He did not say, "If you . . . but when you . . ." He took it for granted that succeeding generations of disciples would recognize their obligation to give . . . pray . . . fast. He stated unambiguously, categorically and without qualification to the mass of His disciples, "When you fast . . ." He left us in no doubt that He took it for granted that His disciples would be exercised to obey the leading of the Spirit in this, as in praying and giving, when the occasion demanded it.

It is significant that the Lord dealt with fasting as a spiritual exercise distinct from praying. Just as there may be praying without fasting, so there may at times be fasting, truly acceptable to God, without praying — at least in the sense of intercession. There is no mention of prayer accompanying the fast we read of in Esther. In the fast of the prophets and teachers in Antioch, they were giving themselves to worship, rather than prayer (Acts 13:2).

#### 2. The Time Is Now

*When the bridegroom is taken away from them . . . then they will fast . . . Matthew 9:15.*

This second important statement of

Jesus on fasting came as an answer to a question of the disciples of John the Baptist.

It is this age of the church that is the period of the absent Bridegroom . . . to which our Master referred when He said, "Then will they fast . . ." These words of Jesus were prophetic. The first Christians fulfilled them, and so have many saintly men and women of succeeding generations. Where are those who fulfil them today? Alas, they are few and far between, the exception rather than the rule, to the great loss of the church.

### REGULAR AND PUBLIC FASTS

*On a fast day . . . you shall read the words of the Lord — Jeremiah 36:6.*

*Sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly — Joel 2:15.*

We have already noted that normally fasting is undertaken occasionally, as the need arises, and that it is a personal matter between the individual and God. The *regular* and *public* fasts, of which Scripture gives a number of examples are obvious exceptions.

Wherever in Scripture we read of a public emergency being met by a national call to fast, we find without exception that God responded in deliverance.

### FASTING UNTO GOD

*When ye fasted . . . did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me? Zechariah 7:5 (R.V.)*

*They ministered to the Lord and fasted . . . Acts 13:2 (R.V.)*

Fasting must be done unto God, even before the eye of the Father who sees in secret. While avoiding the brazen conceit of the Pharisee, and the desire to court the praise of men, we may still act out of selfish motives, for the gratification of personal desires and ambitions, and without the basic motive being the glory of God.

In Isaiah 58, the classic of Scripture on the subject of fasting, God reminds His people that the acceptable fast is

the one which *He* has chosen. Fasting, like prayer must be God-initiated and God-ordained if it is to be effective.

When we fast, how long we fast, the nature of the fast, and the spiritual objectives we have before us, are all God's choice to which the obedient disciple gladly responds.

### PURPOSES OF FASTING

We have now seen what fasting is. We have established that it is a biblical practice, and that it is for today. We have distinguished various types of fasts, and seen how essential it is that our motives are right, that we fast unto God. Now we come to examine in Scripture the purposes of fasting. We ask, "What is the good of it?"

#### 1. For Personal Sanctity

*I humbled my soul with fasting . . . Psalm 69:10  
Blessed are those who mourn . . . Matthew 5:4*

If humility is the basic ingredient of true holiness, the soil in which the graces flourish, is it not needful that from time to time we should, like David, humble our souls with fasting? Behind many of our besetting sins and personal failures, behind the many ills that infect our church and fellowships and clog the channels of Christian service — the clash of personalities and temperments, the strife and division — lies that insidious pride of the human heart.

Fasting, then, is a divine corrective to the pride of the human heart. It is a discipline of the body with a tendency to humble the soul.

#### 2. To Be Heard On High

*So we fasted and besought our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty . . . Ezra 8:23.*

Fasting is designed to make prayer mount up as on eagles' wings. It is calculated to give an edge to man's intercessions and power to his petitions. Heaven is ready to bend its ear to listen when someone prays with fasting (Jeremiah 29:13,14; Joel 2:12; Luke 18:3).

Prayer is warfare. Prayer is wrest-

ling. There are opposing forces. The man who prays with fasting is giving heaven notice that he is truly in earnest. He is using a means that God has chosen to make his voice to be heard on high. In giving us the privilege of fasting as well as praying, God has added a powerful weapon to our spiritual armoury . . . and it has lain forgotten for centuries.

### 3. To Change God's Mind

*The people of Ninevah believed God; they proclaimed a fast . . . When God saw what they did . . . God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them . . . Jonah 3:5,10.*

The power to prevail with God was never more clearly demonstrated in Bible times than when a pronouncement of divine judgment was averted or deferred through prayer and fasting. Their repentance . . . moved God to change the decree of judgment He had pronounced against them. God's purpose in sending Jonah to Ninevah was that He might extend mercy towards this people.

### 4. To Free The Captives

*Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6.*

The primary reference is, of course, to literal slavery. But for us there is a spiritual application, and we must recognize the vital part that fasting has to play in this ministry of deliverance. This is warfare in the realm of "principalities and powers." Satan is a stubborn foe, and will not relinquish his grasp on the spirits and souls, minds and bodies of men, unless compelled to do so. Fasting seems to provide that compelling. A fast undertaken at God's direction will strengthen the intercessor to maintain pressure until the enemy is compelled to loosen his grasp of the captive. Then fasting will also give authority, when God's moment comes to speak the commanding word that effects the release. This is one of the open secrets behind a ministry of deliverance from the power of Satan.

### 5. They Fasted To Deliver

*Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued? Surely, thus says the Lord: Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you - Isaiah 49:24-25.*

There are many needy cases around us. Are we afraid to face them because we know our impotence and fear the power of the devil? The Lord surely wants us to know His own deep compassion for these tormented souls. He has given us the authority to deliver them. "In my name they will cast out demons" (Mark 16:17). Do we care enough to fast and pray for their deliverance?

### 6. For Revelation

*I, Daniel . . . turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and supplication with fasting . . . Gabriel . . . said to me, O Daniel, I have now come out to give you wisdom and understanding - Daniel 9:2,3,21,22.*

Daniel, trained from youth to a life of discipline, in which fasting played a significant part (Daniel 9:2,3; 10:1-3), became one of the greatest Old Testament seers of visions and dreams.

The New Testament illustrates the same point. Read Acts 10:10 (Peter); Acts 27:21-24 (Paul); also 2 Corinthians 11:27 tells us Paul was "in fastings often," and he proceeds in the next chapter to speak of his "visions and revelations of the Lord."

We have not found anything in Scripture to suggest that we are to seek visions, dreams or supernatural revelations, but those who give themselves to seeking God with fasting may find God rewarding them with such manifestations of His presence. But these do not constitute the only, or even the most important, aspect of revelation.

Constantly we need revelation concerning the will of God for our lives and there is the question of

revelation upon the written Word. Why is it that we do not apply this age-old prescription of prayer and fasting to meet our desperate situations? The promise given long ago to those who keep God's chosen fast is still true.

### 7. The Fleshpots of Egypt

*Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full - Exodus 16:3.*

Though God has given us our bodies and planted within them certain basic instincts, including the bodily appetites, we are required to keep the physical subservient to the spiritual.

For each believer there is a finely drawn line between the satisfying of the normal desires of the body, and satisfying that inner demanding spirit.

### 8. To Buffet the Body

*I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified - 1 Corinthians 9:27.*

Paul insisted on the importance of disciplining the bodily appetites and not making "provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (Romans 13:14). To the mind of the apostle there was not merely the danger of temptation, if the body was not buffeted, but of the loss of power in the great contest of life, just as an athlete who failed to train seriously would be hampered on the day of the race and lose the prize.

The idea of self-imposed discipline is basic to the whole biblical concept of fasting. The value of fasting as an aid to subduing the body and mastering the appetite has always been recognized.

## SOME PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF FASTING

### 1. What About Asceticism?

*Why do you submit to regulations, "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" . . . according to human precepts and doctrines? These indeed have an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion and self-*

*abasement and severity to the body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh — Colossians 2:20–23.*

What is asceticism? It is derived from a Greek word meaning “practice or training for the attainment of an ideal or goal, and was applied to soldiery, athletics, and learning, as well as virtue and piety.”<sup>1</sup> This agrees with the New Testament, and in this sense our Lord Himself, the apostles, and every disciplined Christian could be called “ascetic.” Asceticism, however, soon developed features that were erroneous and harmful, and this is why the word carries with it the stigma of extremism in the minds of most people.

When asceticism becomes a thing of form enforced by man-made rules, it is incapable of dealing effectively with the bodily lusts. Self-control on the other hand is the fruit of the Spirit, springing from divine life within, cultivated by the habit of a disciplined life.

## 2. Fasting and the Body

*The body is . . . for the Lord . . . your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit . . . So glorify God in your body — 1 Corinthians 6:13–20.*

A normally healthy and well-nourished body can exist for several weeks without being injured or incapacitated by lack of food. During a prolonged fast the body is living on surplus fat, and at the same time it is acting like an internal incinerator, burning up the waste and decaying tissues of the body. Only when this refining process is complete does it commence to consume its sound living cells, and that is when starvation commences.

It is strange that any who believe in the biblical revelation should ever have thought that a practice so scriptural as fasting, taught and exemplified by Christ Himself, could ever be harmful to the body, provided it is carried out in accordance with Scripture. The fact is that the very reverse is the case. Fasting makes possible a process of physical therapy. It fully releases the body to operate its own natural system of cleansing and healing.

## 3. For Health and Healing

*Beloved, I pray that . . . you may be in health — 3 John 2.*

*Your healing shall spring up speedily — Isaiah 58:8*

Included in the many blessed results of God's chosen fast is the promise, “Your healing shall spring up speedily.” Is this a natural healing made possible by the fast, or a supernatural healing? We believe the promise embraces both possibilities.

## 4. How to Begin

If you have never fasted before do not start off, as did someone the writer once met, with a forty-day fast! — unless you are very, very sure that God has called you to do this. The body grows accustomed to fasting by degrees, and God does not usually ask us to run before we have begun to walk, or even crawl. Start with a partial fast, or else fast one day till the tea meal. Next time extend the fast till night, breaking it with just a light meal or fruit only.

When you can manage a one-day fast without feeling faint or famished (we do not say without feeling hungry!) you will be ready for any call of God to a longer fast of three, five or seven days. The longer the fast you envisage, the more certain you need to be that God has called you to it.

Beware of slavish imitations of others. If the fast is to be for some days, there is temptation as it approaches to indulge ourselves while we have the opportunity. Better far to bend our wills in advance of the battle of self-discipline; that will ease the later conflict. Some advocate having fresh fruit only on the last day before fasting, that is if the fast is to be for a number of days. It is wise to cease taking tea or coffee a few days before a longer fast, and so get over the caffeine withdrawal headache before you start.

You should expect a season of fasting would prove to be for you, as it was for your Master, a time of conflict with the powers of darkness. Do not make the mistake of judging the efficacy of your intercessions by what you feel. Often you will not see till

later the full results, but the promise stands: “Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

## 5. How to Break the Fast

*They gave him bread and he ate, they gave him water to drink, and they gave him a piece of cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. And when he had eaten, his spirit revived; for he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights — 1 Samuel 30:11–12.*

To break a fast of only a day or two's duration presents no problem. It is most important, however, that we should understand the rights and wrongs of breaking a longer fast, and so avoid considerable pain and discomfort.

Here are some golden rules: (1) watch your quantities; (2) eat slowly; (3) masticate well; (4) stop at the first warning sign; (5) rest as much as possible; (6) don't try to do too much too soon. We would do well at this time to give thought and prayer to our future diet and eating habits.

## Conclusion:

This should be a time of consolidation, when you get right through in prayer on matters that God has revealed to you. This should be a springtime in your soul, as well as in your body. Thus, like your Lord and Master, return from your fasting wilderness, “in the power of the Spirit,” expecting that the works of God and the graces of Christ will be manifest in you, as they were in Him.

Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do, and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:12–13). ☞

<sup>1</sup> The Encyclopedia Britannica.

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# ECHOES OF THE SPIRIT

Significant events in the body of Christ.

During the week of May 27 — 31, over 2100 pastors, leaders, elders and shepherds gathered at Montreat, North Carolina, for one of the most significant and powerful weeks the body of Christ has ever experienced. Leaders from around the nation and around the world gathered to share and fellowship in what God is doing.

The broad spectrum of leadership present was reflected by the presence of such men as Ern Baxter, Bob Mumford, John Poole, Charles Simpson, Ralph Martin, Steve Clark and Fr. Francis McNutt. Each of these men came to share the particular burden of his heart? yet, by the time

the conference was over, it was clear the Spirit was speaking one message to His people: Become rightly related to each other!

All over the Montreat campus men did just that. Little groups huddled here and there, sharing what had been happening in their lives, or seeking out each other and straightening out their injured relationship, or seeking to establish new ones.

Significant in itself was the presence of several leaders from the Catholic Charismatic movement. Ralph Martin shared his vision of three great rivers, each representing separate branches of the Charismatic movement that would one day flow together as a single

stream of God's people; and Francis McNutt told of the need to mend relationships with brothers in every area of our lives.

John Poole's message on laying down our weapons and taking up tools to work together was one of the keynotes of the conference. He challenged men to quit carrying weapons with which we defend ourselves and begin to carry, instead, tools with which we may build the house of the Lord.

Everyone who attended Montreat came away with a sense of awe at the power that had broken men in tears, convicted them of need for one another, and formed new and tighter joints throughout the body of Christ.

## THE EXORCIST

by Jamie Buckingham

If you're thinking about going to see that box office smash movie, "The Exorcist," give it a second thought.

I received a midnight telephone call several weeks ago. It was an old friend calling from his motel room in North Dakota. A loyal church member, he spends about half his time on the road as a traveling salesman. That night he was weeping, almost incoherent, saying he was about to go out of his mind. His problem? He had just returned from seeing "The Exorcist."

Since then I have received several similar calls from different places in the nation. All had been to see the movie. All wished they hadn't.

Paul Scott, a hardnosed syndicated columnist, has called the film the most explosively dangerous film ever produced in the U.S. He reports powerful and strange reactions by those who have viewed it. Even

Christians, who felt they were immune from "demonic attacks," stagger out of the theatre after having watched a 12-year-old girl being exorcised on the screen.

Scott says the film will trigger an epidemic of persons wanting to be possessed by the prince of darkness. He cites 80 documented cases where persons, after reading the book, became possessed. The film is even more powerful.

A month ago I had one of those rare evenings when I had completed an interview in Pittsburgh and wasn't supposed to be in New York until the next afternoon. It seemed foolish to come all the way back to Florida, so I just stayed over in the city. That night I was sitting in a packed theatre when the 30-second preview of "The Exorcist" flashed on the screen. The preview received a standing ovation and then, from the back rows, I heard a group of people begin to chant with growing intensity, "Satan . . . Satan . . . Satan . . ." That's pretty heavy stuff, folks, even in Pittsburgh.

Despite the controversy swirling around the film, this is more than another porno flick. The writer, William Peter Blatty, and the director actually designed the movie so the viewing audience would become involved with the Satanic action on the screen. Reports of faintings, vomiting and viewers who had reoccurring nightmares afterward are the best advertisement the movie has had.

There are some among us who do not believe in a supernatural underworld. Boasting loudly, they will march up to the box office just to show forth their prowess. I make no attempt to stop them, just as I make no attempt to stop those who feel it is chicken not to experiment with drugs. They are free to destroy themselves as they wish. But to that minority among us who remains sensitive to the things of God I make a recommendation: Stay away from the film. What you gain in lurid entertainment could be nothing to what you might lose spiritually. ☞



# SECULAR GOVERNMENT AND THE CHRISTIAN

by Don Basham

In recent months *New Wine* has published a number of effective articles dealing with aspects of spiritual authority — husbands and wives, shepherds and sheep, teachers and disciples. Yet comparatively little has been shared concerning secular authority, and many Christians still have little understanding of what God requires of them regarding it. They maintain that since Christians live under grace, secular authority has no legitimate claim on them. “I’ve been freed from bondage to the law,” they say, “I just do whatever the Lord tells me to do.”

I suspect most of us — deep inside — often feel we should be exempt from secular authority; especially when we do not agree with it! Therefore, it may come as a shock to discover how clearly the Bible speaks to us about recognizing and obeying all civil authorities. Even though we are Christians, we still live in a worldly society. This makes it essential for us to be properly related to all the authorities in that society. To help us recognize this responsibility and to act on it is the purpose of this article. First, let us review the importance of the principle of authority.

## THE PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY

To be alive is to have a relationship to authority. The dictionary defines *authority* as “power to influence or command thought, opinion or behavior.” Without recognition of authority, there can be no responsible society or effective government. The presence of authority establishes order; lack of authority leads to anarchy.

In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25).

Without the presence of authority every man becomes a law unto himself. Let me offer a simple illustration from my own childhood.

I was reared in a Christian family consisting of my father and mother and two older brothers. We three boys had our own private bedroom and bath at the back of the house. Access to our room was via a corridor leading from the kitchen. Left to our own room, the three of us occasionally fell into what psychologists refer to as “overt expressions of sibling rivalry.” In plain talk that means we would get

into fights. The slugfests would begin between two of us and the third brother would inevitably be drawn in on one side or the other. As long as the conflict remained at a low noise level it would continue uninterrupted. But sooner or later one of us would yelp with pain, upset the furniture, or bump against the wall. Within seconds after the sounds of our altercation reached the front of the house, we would hear parental footsteps coming down the corridor. And when we heard those footsteps, all combat instantly ceased! Mother or Dad would enter the room with a stern, “What’s going on in here?”

In innocent union we would chime, “Nothing!” Of course, by then the room was usually a shambles and one or more of us might be bleeding slightly, but at that particular moment, peace and order reigned.

One minute a raging battle; the next minute peace and order. What made the difference? *The appearance of authority on the scene.* For in spite of our superficial antagonisms toward one another, we brothers were united in our respect and recognition of parental authority. That authority provided the stability in our home

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which enabled us to grow to a satisfactory maturity.

I believe the same principle applies to God's family. Submission to authority is essential for us to grow to maturity in Christ. Actually, rebellion against authority is the basic problem of mankind. Since all authority originates in God, ultimately all rebellion against authority is rebellion against God.

The problem began even before man was placed on the earth. Lucifer's pride-filled heart led to his rebellion against God and his expulsion from heaven. ("I will exalt *my* throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the Most High!" Isaiah 28:13-14). Later, the same tendency to rebellion flared in Eve at the suggestion of the now-fallen prince (Satan in the form of a serpent) when, in the garden of Eden, he tempted her to rebel against God's command and her husband's headship, and eat the forbidden fruit.

### **EVEN SECULAR AUTHORITY ORIGINATES IN GOD**

Let every soul be subject to the higher powers [authorities]. For there is no power [authority] but of God; the powers [authorities] that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good; and thou shalt have praise of the same.

For he is the minister of God to thee for good (Romans 13:1-4).

There may be no more revolutionary words in all Scripture than Paul's statement that there is no authority except of God, and that the authorities which exist are ordained of God.

From the context it is clear that Paul is speaking of secular law and government. This means that kings, presidents, governors, legislatures, tax collectors, policemen, school teachers . . . all those in authority, are where they are by the will of God. That statement is devastating in its implications. Merely to read it gives rise to our rebellious, independent nature.

"But not *this* president, or *that* governor; not *our* corrupt city council or police department, or tax laws or . . ." Rebellion insists we place ourselves outside authority we don't agree with. Thus we set ourselves up as authorities qualified to overrule the Word of God. "I know what the Bible says, *but . . .*"

We are like a certain prominent minister who was returning home from a midnight emergency call to the hospital. The city streets were almost deserted at the late hour and he was in a hurry to get home. The traffic policeman who pulled him over gave him a citation for going 55mph in a 25mph zone.

"But don't you know who I am?" the minister fumed in protest. "I'm Dr. Wellington Hastings, minister of Metropolitan Church on Main Street!" But he got the ticket anyway. There was a time when I would have sided with that minister, but not since God dealt with me personally in this area. Let me explain.

For many years I considered myself a better-than-average driver. In fact, it was only Christian modesty which prevented me from admitting I was an *excellent* driver. Twenty-five years without a traffic ticket! How about that? But like most Christian motorists, I continually broke the law; I just didn't get caught. I exceeded speed limits, cut corners, fudged on stop signs and bluffed my way through heavy traffic, expecting others to yield to my arrogance. I was a Christian living under grace and traffic regulations were meant for others!

Then three years ago (just about the time I began teaching regularly on the subject of submitting to authority) God decided to show me how I wasn't

merely living under His grace; I was flaunting it! Refusing to indulge my trespasses any longer, He gently removed his protective grace and allowed me to receive justice. In the space of a few months I was tagged not once, not twice, not three times, but *four* times for moving traffic violations.

I was outraged! Why were the local traffic authorities picking on good Christian citizens? Why weren't they out arresting real criminals? It didn't matter that I was actually guilty on all four counts! Finally, I calmed down enough to ask God what was going on, and He showed me: **REBELLION!** I was a rebel! I had consistently broken the law and finally I was receiving what I deserved. And among those just deserts were not only stiff fines and a court appearance, but also a thirty-day suspension of my driving privileges. Moreover, at the end of the month-long suspension they didn't simply return my license — I had to begin all over again and take the written examination and driver's test as any sixteen-year-old youngster just learning how to drive had to take!

With considerable embarrassment I acknowledged my rebellion against traffic laws as rebellion against God, asked His forgiveness, and attempted to submit to His chastening with humility.

Today, I obey traffic laws. Today, when I see a policeman or patrol car, even though I still may feel uncomfortable, I remind myself, "There goes God's minister to me for my good" (Romans 13:4). Through that experience I've come to see more vividly than ever how God uses secular authority to deal with the problem of rebellion in His children.

### **EVEN UNJUST SECULAR AUTHORITY IS FROM GOD**

Actually, the requirements of the Lord concerning submission to secular authority are even more demanding than my experience with the Pompano Beach Police Department would indicate. The Scriptures make this quite plain. For while Paul explains

that all secular authorities are ministers for our good and servants of God to punish us if we do evil, Peter takes the matter a giant step further. He not only echoes Paul's advice, but adds to it.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

*For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; . . .*

*Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward [wicked].*

For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God (1 Peter 2:13-20).

In verse 18, in Peter's instructions to Christians concerning the relationship between servants and masters (in our society this would include employer-employee relationships) he insists on submission to authority *even when the authority over us is wicked*. The Greek word for "froward" is *skolois*, which is defined variously as "crooked, perverse, wicked, unfair or surly."

Our first reaction to Peter's demand is, "This is too much! Surely God does not expect us to obey wicked authorities!" But the solemn truth is, God does. *Here we come to the crux of the whole matter of submission to authority*. Understand this: Submission to authority is not based on the personal character of the man in authority, nor is it based on how justly or unjustly the authority is applied. Our submission is to God who gives the authority. The key is in Peter's words, "Submit yourself to *every* ordinance of man (whether you think the ordinance is fair or not!) *for the Lord's sake*." Remember Paul said, "There are no authorities but God,

and the authorities that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). By submitting to authority — even unjust authority — we submit to God. Conversely, by rebelling against authority (any authority) we rebel against God.

I can almost hear the cries of protest! Nevertheless, the scriptural principle is clear. Before we decide how impossible, immoral and un-American it is to obey; and before each of us comes with his own one-hundred-and-one objections and exceptions, let us try to see what God is after by placing what seems to be such unreasonable demands on us.

Actually, what He's after should be clear to us. He is out to crucify the rebel nature in each of us. That perverse, independent, self-willed nature does not die easily. But we must be honest and admit that *it would never die at all* if we lived only in cozy circumstances where everything went our way; where all rules and authorities were to our own liking.

According to Peter, God is not impressed with our performance when things are easy. He's not even impressed with our taking patiently the punishment for our sins (as I tried to do during my driving suspension). Remember what Peter said?

For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God.

What is acceptable with God? What is thankworthy with Him? To submit, even to unjust authorities. I agree that every self-righteous bone in our body protests such a course of action. It's positively un-American! It seems cowardly, impractical, unreasonable and unjust, at least to the carnal nature. But remember, God isn't out to please or appease our feelings of self-righteousness. He's out to crucify that carnal nature and bring us to the point where we can see how obedience to His authority is required, even when we don't approve of that particular authority. He is out to get unqualified obedience, and that requires suffering

for Jesus' sake.

## SUFFERING UNJUSTLY IS A PART OF OBEDIENCE

Don't forget that in laying such requirements upon us, Peter is really doing nothing more than reminding us of the full nature of our calling in Jesus Christ. Granted, it's not a part of the calling we like to be reminded of. We'd rather remember how we've been called to be saved, healed, delivered, baptized with power, blessed, prospered and protected; how we have been called to share the riches of our inheritance in Christ.

And we are indeed called to all those things. That's all true; but it's not *all* the truth. Peter also says we are called to suffer as Christ suffered, reminding us that as Christ's disciples we are not to defend ourselves because He didn't; we are not to lash out at unjust authority over us because He didn't. Rather, we are to commit ourselves and our cause to God, who judges all things righteously, because that's what Jesus did.

Our tendency to take matters into our own hands when things don't go to suit us; our tendency to submit to authority only insofar as we agree with it (which in truth is no submission at all!) is really an indication of how little faith and trust we have in God. We act as if He doesn't know or care about what we are enduring. We refuse to acknowledge that His purposes are being worked out in us when we are placed in situations where "for conscience toward God" we must "endure grief, suffering wrongfully."

*The measure of our submission to God, then, is not expressed when we submit to just authority, but when we submit to unjust authority.*

If we insist on judging for ourselves which authorities are good and which are evil; which we shall obey and which we shall not obey, we become partakers in the original sin of Adam and Eve, who forsook their primary responsibility to obey God and embraced Satan's rebellious way of the knowledge of good and evil.

Without realizing it, we are falling

prey to the spirit of rebellion and lawlessness which is sweeping our world. In describing the last days, Jesus predicted that just such a fate awaited many Christians.

And because iniquity [rebellion and lawlessness] shall abound, the love [agape] of many [Christians] shall wax cold (Matt. 24:12).

Christians shall lose their love for God because they have become caught up in a spirit of rebellion. No wonder Satan continually goads us to rebel against authority; the result serves his purposes more effectively than more obvious forms of sin.

Today, God is persistently calling our attention to the principle of obedience to authority to show us how far we have fallen from the place of genuine obedience. I agree with Derek Prince who has wryly commented, "Most of God's children act like unruly brats." By revealing in His Word the many levels of authority to which we are to submit, God is showing us that however we may have already met Him, few of us have fully met Him as the Source of all authority. But once we see this truth and yield to it, we will have little difficulty in yielding to authority, wherever we find it.

### IT TAKES THE GRACE OF GOD TO SUBMIT TO AUTHORITY

To receive a revelation of the nature of authority would be terrifying except for one thing — God never reveals His will to us except He also makes available the grace to embrace it and fulfill it. By the strength of the natural man, submission to secular authority is impossible. But by grace, "all things are possible." While total success may yet seem beyond our achieving, thank God He hasn't called us to be successful; He's called us to be faithful. On that basis, let us suggest three practical steps toward complete submission to secular authority.

(1) *Cultivate a mental awareness that secular authorities are ordained of God.* They are there because He wants them there. They are there for our

good. Christians should know and believe some basic scriptures on authority (such as Romans 13:1 and 1 Peter 2:13-14) as surely as they know and believe John 3:16.

Practice recognizing secular authorities as "ministers of God." The President of the United States is a minister; congressmen are ministers, governors, state legislators, mayors, policemen, tax collectors and school teachers are all ministers of God. Not because they are honest or competent, but because the authority vested in them is from God. His authority makes them ministers.

Recognize all posted laws and regulations as representing the authority of God. Signs and rules like: "Speed limit 55mph," "No parking," "Yield right-of-way," "Keep off the grass," "No trespassing," "Do not write in this space."

(2) *Recognize that both submission and rebellion are essentially attitudes rather than acts.* Don't concentrate first on outward behavior. It's possible to do a lot of "obeying" with gritted teeth and a rebellious heart. Rather, believe God to change your attitude from one of rebellion to one of submission. Once heart attitude experiences transformation, many of the outward restrictions laid on us by authority no longer seem so formidable.

(3) *Trust God to change those authorities which are not right.* There are many unjust governments, officials, administrations, laws, rules, ordinances, and restrictions in our land. And God knows every last one of them. They exist with his permission to accomplish His purpose. As His purposes are served, they can and will be changed.

This does not mean we are not to work for improved justice and social betterment. There are legitimate Christian activities *provided we can engage in them by lawful means with a submissive spirit.* Nevertheless, the most significant contribution for any Christian wanting to strike a blow for justice may be to make certain in his own heart that he is not a rebel!

As we learn to submit and obey we

have the privilege of praying for God to change and adjust the authorities over us. "He removeth kings and setteth up kings" (Daniel 2:21). Our responsibility as Christians is to live quietly and obediently under whatever secular authority is over us, even while we trust God to work His purpose in us.

### THE LORD COMMENDS THOSE WHO KNOW THEY ARE UNDER AUTHORITY

To receive the praise and commendation of the Lord, we need to learn what it is to be submitted to authority. Luke chapter 7 tells us about a man who came to Jesus for help. He was a man caught in the most rigid and brutal authoritative system in the world at that time — the Roman army. In that system he had learned the principle of authority well. And the conditioning of that system enabled him to rise to a faith greater than that of any man in Israel. When he sought Jesus for the healing of his servant, Jesus volunteered to come to his house and minister, but the centurion told him that wasn't necessary.

*For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go and he goeth, and to another, Come and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it (Luke 7:8).*

Because he was a man *under* authority he could recognize Jesus as one *having* authority. Therefore, he could say with confidence, "But say in a word, and my servant shall be healed."

Jesus' astonishing comment to those who were following him was, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

The centurion's submission to authority was not incidental to his great faith, it was central to it. Is it any wonder then, that the Lord seeks to bring each of us to that point where he can truthfully say, "I also, am a man set under authority." And this cannot be accomplished until we learn to live in proper submission to secular authority. ☞

# Forum

## THE SECOND COMING

Charles Simpson — Bible Teacher, Pastor

• Don Basham — Author, Counselor, Teacher •

Jamie Buckingham — Speaker, Author •

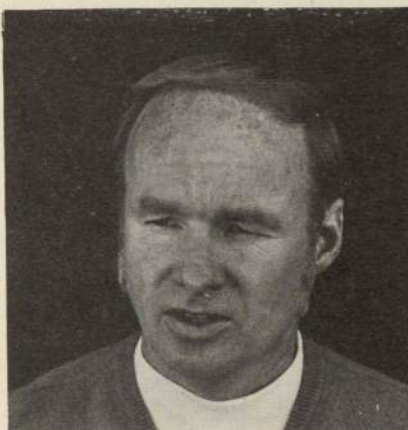
Jesus assured His disciples that they would be able to know the general time of His second coming by discerning the signs of the times. Today we are seeing many signs which point to this general time. How should we as Christians interpret these, and how do they affect our Christian walk? Our panel this month deals with such questions.



Why are there so many different views about what is going to happen in the end times?

**BASHAM:** Even mature Christians interpret scriptures differently. Most Christians who accept the literal interpretation of scriptures are in general agreement about *what* will happen in the end times; while they may vary widely in their beliefs concerning *when* and *to whom* these events will occur.

**SIMPSON:** There is a variety of views on all major doctrines and there are several reasons: (a) We are all priests and therefore have our own interpretations of objective facts; (b) Bible scholars vary in their ability to literally believe the Scriptures; (c) It is not always clear as to whether the Bible is



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speaking literally or figuratively; and (d) Often certain views are crystalized prematurely, before God has spoken the final word, or given the last piece of the puzzle. We must remember that God deliberately veils truth until it is the season.

**BUCKINGHAM:** Some things are kept from man — on purpose. Full knowledge of end times is one of them. Even

Jesus himself, while here on earth, did not have full knowledge of end times. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:27).

It is the nature of man to box things in, to make them fit his little logical thought patterns. Sometimes I think it is almost as difficult for a scientist to enter the Kingdom as it is for a rich man, for a scientist wants to put everything into a formula. Jesus spent much of his ministry exhorting people to get a new view of the Kingdom of God — a Kingdom which defies definitions and limitations. Yet since we mortals are finite in our thinking, we keep trying to twist God's infinite Word into our own molds and patterns. It was not Jesus' intention to give us a formula concerning the end times. He simply wanted us to seek first the Kingdom of God and let the Father handle everything else.

At a very impressionable age I had a fundamentalist preacher tell me, "Until you get things straight concerning end times, you'll never know what God is really like." Of course he meant until I agreed with his colored charts. I lived under that bondage for years until I realized it was not important what happens following the return of Christ. That is His business. What is important is my relationship with God — today.

**What is your understanding about the church and the work of the Holy Spirit in the days that immediately precede Christ's return?**

**BUCKINGHAM:** No man has a final word from God on *anything*, especially end times. We know in part, we prophesy in part, we see through a glass darkly.

Ten years ago I was "sure" the next event in the Kingdom time schedule would be the sound of the trumpet, followed by the rapture, tribulation, millennium, etc. All this was based on my interpretation (actually it wasn't mine, it was somebody else's) of some obscure passages in Daniel plus some passages in Revelation that nobody really understood.

Then, a few years ago after reading a popular book on end times, I modified my position to believe that Jesus could not come until the ancient Temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem.

Now I am leaning towards a position that says the Body of Christ will suffer real persecution (tribulation?) prior to the literal coming of Christ. There seems to be much biblical evidence to support this view. Especially am I excited over what is happening in the church as I see the raped, perverted, adulterated bride of Christ being returned to her virginal purity, prepared to welcome the coming bridegroom. This is taking place just as the Scripture says. The "spots" are being eradicated by a new emphasis on the blood of Jesus and the "wrinkles" are being ironed out by the heat of persecution.

However, if Christ tarries five years, perhaps I shall gain additional insight into the Word. I hope so. And I hope I shall not be so chained to some doctrinal stance that I cannot receive additional truth when it is revealed.

**SIMPSON:** Notice what Daniel says in chapter 12, verses 2,3,10. "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and

everlasting contempt. And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand" (NAS).

The social context in the last days shall be wicked. But that setting will cause the church to seek God and there will be a refining and edification of the church. James 5:7 tells us that God is waiting till the season when He will cause a great "latter rain" to come on the church, thus preparing it for harvest. The rain is a reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit is poured upon the church there will be an increase of the fruits and gifts, thus making the church ready for the Lord's appearing (Eph. 5:26,27).

**BASHAM:** Scripturally, there are a number of developments which will characterize the church and the Holy Spirit at work in the days preceding Christ's return. And it will not only be the Holy Spirit which determines the character and nature of the church of the end times, for Satan and his demonic forces will also have a profound effect. Here are some of the basic developments taking place or to take place:

(1) The church will experience a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit with a return to the miraculous gifts and ministries. This was prophesied by Joel, quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, and most charismatic Christians believe the current outpouring of the Spirit is that prophesied by Joel.

(2) A great increase in the supernatural activity of Satan through the rise of occult and demonic power, prophesied in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12. This "devil's pentecost" is also occurring in the day in which we live, and the Satanic miracles now being witnessed by many deceived people may be more dramatic and spectacular

than those of the Holy Spirit.

(3) The division between the true and false church (the bride and the harlot). The true church, the bride of Christ, will be caught up in the rapture, while the apostate church, the Babylonish church, remaining will be the church of the antichrist, referred to in Revelation 17.

(4) Increasing lawlessness and violence, rebellion and natural disasters on the earth, all of which will have their effect on the church.

The effect of the profound forces, both good and evil, may well result in a drastically altered appearance for the church of Jesus Christ. Surely, there will be a continuing and increasing emphasis on the nature of the church as regards Christians in proper submission and relationship to each other, and a corresponding decreasing emphasis on the church as characterized by ornate buildings, Sunday-morning-worship-with-business-as-usual-all-week. I believe the nature of these forces will pressure people into either total commitment to Jesus Christ, or total rejection of Him. The ground for the indifferent, semi-committed church member will no longer exist.

**Many people in other times have felt, from looking at their own circumstances, that they were living in the generation that would see Christ return. How can we know if ours is the generation that will see Christ return?**

**SIMPSON:** The Holy Spirit always creates a longing for Jesus' appearing. In every generation, revival has produced a new emphasis on the second coming.

Some conditions, such as wars, famine, violence, and pestilence have remained consistently throughout human history. But there is to be an escalation in deception, betrayal and hatred. A deep desire for peace without true repentance will set the stage

for a false peace and a world deceiver (Matthew 24).

The Jews who were scattered returned and rebuilt Jerusalem. This has signaled the phasing out of the Gentile age (Luke 21:24). The "regrafting in" of Israel, the falling back into idoltry and demon worship by unconverted Gentiles will characterize the days of His appearing (Romans 11:20-29).

No one can say positively that this is the generation that will see His appearing. However, there is much reason to believe that His coming is nigh.

May I add that our faithfulness must not be based on the fear that we will "miss the rapture." Rather, we must be faithful because He is with us now, and His Kingdom is now within us.

**BASHAM:** As Brother Simpson shared, we cannot know for certain. But one thing is certain: our generation is closer to it than the last generation! Of course, the literal fulfillment of many specific prophecies, such as the establishment of Israel as a nation in 1948 and the regaining of the old city of Jerusalem by the Jews in the 1967 wars, are of great significance in the calendar of end-time events!

**BUCKINGHAM:** I like the way Corrie ten Boom approaches this. At a student meeting in California a theological student approached her saying, "What's all this talk about Jesus' coming again? Don't you know that men have been prophesying for years that He would come, and He never has."

She looked at the scoffer and said, "Indeed, Jesus is coming again, and soon. And you have just proved it to me."

He blinked his eyes. "How did I prove it to you?"

"Because the Bible, in 2 Peter 3:3, says that in the last days there shall come scoffers walking after their own lusts and they will say, 'Where is the promise of His coming? Ever since the

early church men have been looking for him and He has not come.' So you see, my young friend, you are one of the signs of the times."

**I feel that the kingdom of God demands that we be part of the solution to local and national problems through prayer and committed action. But if the Bible says things will get worse and worse as time goes on, aren't we fighting against God's plan if we try to improve the world situation?**

**BASHAM:** The fact that the world will get worse and worse does not alter the Christian's responsibility to shine in the darkness or to pray for the triumph of righteousness. We are working for a kingdom within a kingdom: the kingdom of God within the kingdom of this world. As the world system perishes, the true kingdom will come into full manifestation. *That* is the kingdom over which Jesus will return and rule.

**BUCKINGHAM:** For many years I looked upon the world as a sinking ship. My task, I thought, was to get as many people as possible to man the water pumps. Now I see that Jesus spent his ministry, not admonishing people to try to save the world, but to prepare to jump off.

"Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven," does not refer to the systems of this world. Jesus said the kingdom of God is within you. He wants heaven to come in our hearts, which will then evenuate itself in our neighborhood.

Our example for life style must be Jesus. He never crusaded against slavery, war or even taxation without representation. He never took up arms in a revolution, although He was the greatest revolutionary the world has ever known. He never encouraged his followers to preserve the world's systems or institutions — even the

religious institutions. Instead He urged them to put their faith in God knowing that as they passed through this valley of Baca they would leave behind a well for the thirsty.

**SIMPSON:** Our first priority is to be the kingdom of God. We are to reveal that our problems are solved by His Lordship. We are heaven's embassy on this earth (2 Corinthians 5:20). We represent God and His government to the world. We are not *of* it, but *in* it. We are another nation — a holy nation, a new chosen race. As a unique, sanctified, governed people, we reflect the glory of God and bear witness to Jesus' Lordship. God's government is revealed as good government through the church. That is the basis for social action. If we are not the possessors of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, we have no basis or authority to advise, admonish or instruct secular society.

The above being true, we are not to try to make an unregenerate world behave like regenerated citizens of God's kingdom. One of our problems has been the lack of separation or distinction. We act like the world and expect them to act like the church by legislating or moralizing on their behavior. When sinners act like sinners they are just acting natural. It's regrettable but true. When Christians act like sinners that isn't natural!

So, rather than changing the world, which is impossible because of its basic nature, we must bring people to the government of God — the Lordship of Jesus Christ, where change becomes basic, progressive and permanent.

Social action is a means to show secular society that Jesus cares and is the answer. As long as God leaves us in the world, we will be as light in the midst and salt. We will be involved and have a preserving, helpful influence. But our hope is not in the world. The world's hope is in the Lord.

Praying for the nations and being a good influence is the will of God. It is not the will of God that things get worse. That's the will of man, and Satan.



**CHARLES SIMPSON**

"The Holy Spirit always creates a longing for Jesus' appearing."

**DON BASHAM**

"It is good, wholesome, redemptive, faith-building and sanctifying to live daily in the expectant hope of Christ's immediate return!"



**What should be the attitude of a Christian toward the signs of the times and the second coming of Christ?**

**SIMPSON:** Jude tells us rather clearly. Verse 18: there will be mockers who will go their own way. Verse 20: We should build ourselves in the most holy faith by praying in the Holy Spirit. Verse 21: We should keep ourselves in the love of God, expecting to receive mercy. Verses 22,23: We should have mercy on some of the doubters or seek to (go) convince and persuade some and save some that are at the very edge of hell. However, we must be careful not to compromise our own faith. Verse 24: The Lord is able to keep us from falling in an age when many will fall.

Matthew 24 records that Jesus' emphasis was on preparation: (1) Be alert, (2) Be giving meat to the Lord's household, and (3) Be treating your fellow servants kindly.

The 14th verse tells us that "last-day" Christians will be proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God as other kingdoms are crumbling.

Some estimate that one out of every twenty-five New Testament verses deals with the second coming. It is a most significant subject — especially now.

**BASHAM:** I believe the attitude of every Christian toward the signs of the times and the second coming of Christ should be one of *expectancy*. We are scripturally enjoined to hold this attitude! No matter the exact place we are on the timetable, "the time is nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11–12). Even if Jesus did not return for another one hundred, even one thousand years, we would still be right in steadfastly looking for Him. The true and faithful bride should look expectantly for the coming of the bridegroom, even if his coming be long delayed. She demonstrates her love and faithfulness by her continued longing and expectancy. The same is true of Christians. It is good, wholesome, redemptive, faith-building and sanctifying to live daily in the expectant hope of Christ's immediate return! Praise God, He could come today! Someone has said that Jesus is the one "whose certain return at an uncertain time has been the hope of the church through the ages."

It is a blessed and true hope and we should rejoice in it!

**BUCKINGHAM:** One of my favorite cartoons shows two heated Christians, both with open Bibles, waving their fingers at each other. One is shouting, "You mean to tell me that you really

believe in the pre-tribulation, amillennial, eschatological, neanderthal view that those who are out of fellowship at the rapture will be taken up, upside down! Do you? I don't see how I can have fellowship with someone with such sloppy theology."

The other guy, his eyes red in anger, sneers back. "Who are you to talk? You fuzzy-thinking, post-trib, post-beast, pre-armageddon, anti-raptural symbolist. I hear that you liberal wierdos actually believe that the New Jerusalem will be in Cincinnati, Ohio. Heresy! Just stay away from me and my people."

Underneath the cartoon is the sad caption: "See how they love one another."

The Apostle Peter gives a vivid description of the "day of the Lord." It has all the flavor of an atomic holocaust. But he closes out his statement on end times by saying, "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in holy living and godliness . . ." (2 Peter 3:11).

As important as it is that we believe in the second coming, it is vastly more important that we love one another. When Christians can come together in love and unity then the world will know for a certainty that Jesus is the Son of God. And at that time, He shall appear to claim His bride. ♡

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September FORUM will deal with the timely subject of COMMUNITY.

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Do you have questions which you feel need to be discussed through the FORUM? If they represent a need for enlightenment or encouragement to the body of Christ, we will be happy to consider them for possible future topics to be referred to our panel.

Please state questions clearly and mail them to FORUM PANEL: *New Wine Magazine*, P.O. Box 22888, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33315. We appreciate reader participation in this feature of *New Wine*.

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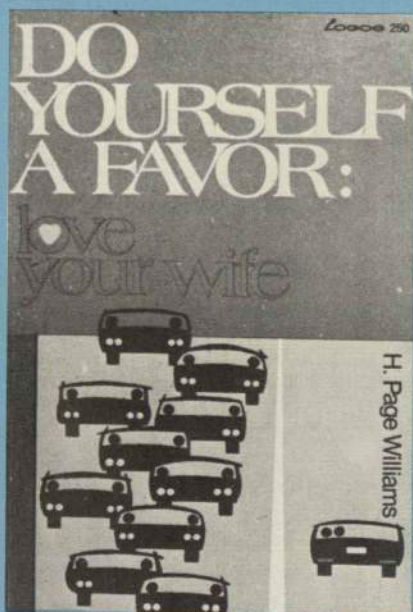

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