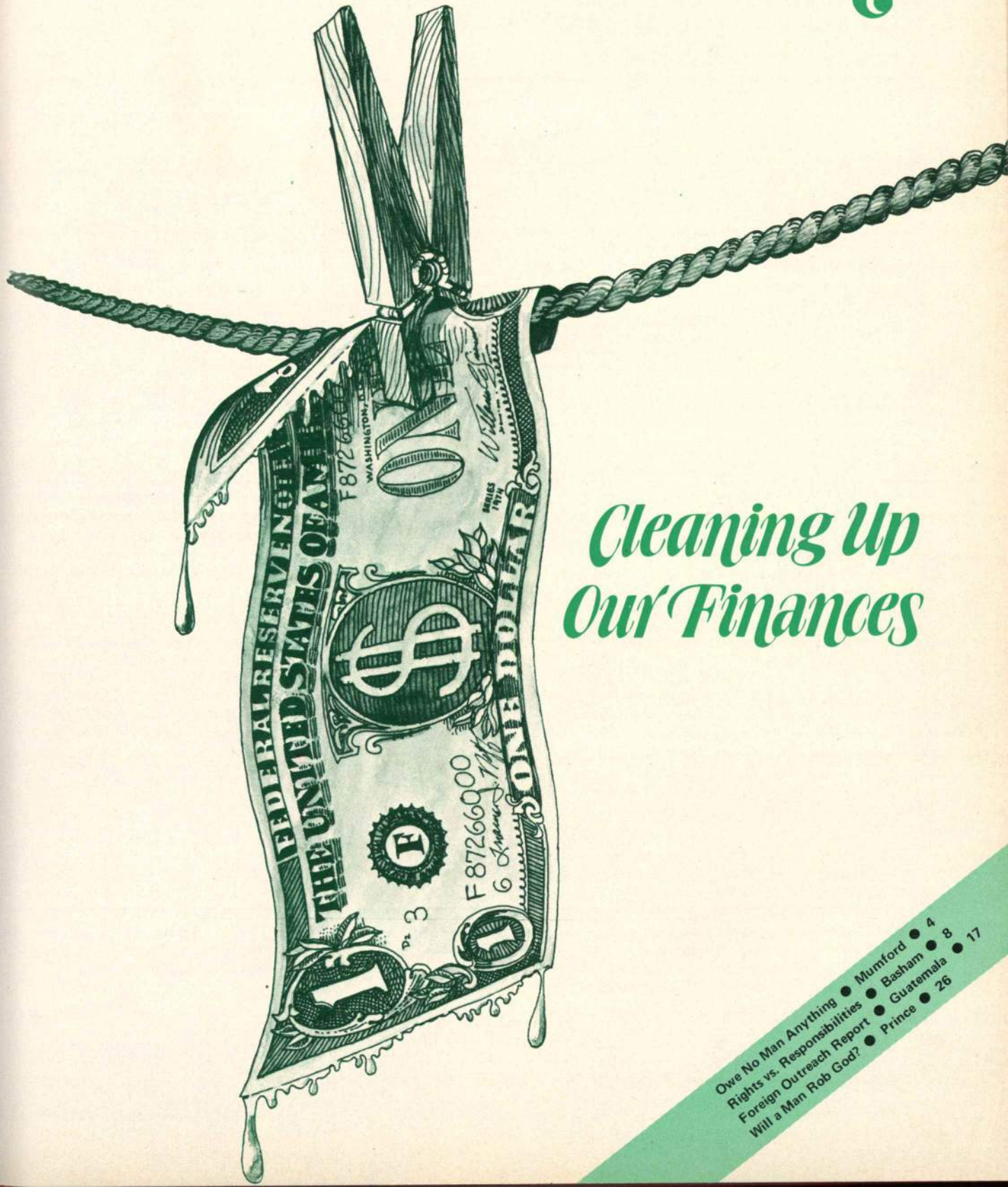


new wine

MAY 1976

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH



Cleaning Up Our Finances

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DRY STRAW?

Please discontinue my subscription. I don't get much inspiration, edification, or comfort from the lengthy articles which try to argue readers into an understanding of faith and doctrine.

The length of the articles, and their emphasis on proving one point of view defeat me from the start. New Christians need milk, and you're putting out bales and bales of dry straw, it seems to me.

Glennis McNeal
Portland, Or.

Letters to Editor

We praise God for what He is doing today. We have been amazed by the discipleship controversy. We find that the Lord is moving in that way in many places that have never been involved with Christian Growth Ministries, so, to us it says that that is the way He is going. It would have been a terrible thing if the church at Jerusalem had thrown out the Corinthians because of some misuse and error instead of teaching and bringing them to maturity. We only pray that the Body of Christ will quit raising barriers and begin to raise a Standard!

Mr. & Mrs. Gary M. Carnie

OUTREACH

I praise God for such a timely magazine. You always seem to be on top of what's happening. Your various articles on submission, shepherding, discipleship, etc. have really been a blessing to me. I'm now starting to walk in some of these teachings and am finding real life.

David Waggoner
E. Lansing, Mich.

You are certainly hearing the Lord right on submission. My wife and I found ourselves in serious difficulty in our marriage a few years back. We went from counselor to psychiatrist with no help in sight — and we were both Christians at the time. Our own pastor was unable to help.

The Lord brought us to the Church of the Redeemer here in Houston where we are members of a Christian community. By submitting our lives to the pastoral ministry and listening to what they had to say, a healing began to take place in both of us. Working along with this was the love and acceptance we both felt from the community.

May the Lord bless you in all that you do.

R.M.W.
Houston, Tx.

I so appreciate the teachings and the courage that you have to continue firm in areas where others, unfortunately, seem to be compromising. Especially in areas such as discipleship, water baptism, and healing you have sought to stay close to the teachings of Scripture. I thank you for continuing despite criticism.

Another extremely delicate area is discipleship and spiritual authority. In the short time that I've been back in the states I've caught strains of severe criticism about the so-called "Ft. Lauderdale group." I feel that much has been misunderstood. While in Brazil I had the opportunity to be with Juan Carlos Ortiz at several retreats and to hear the teachings of the Argentina group on discipleship. For me it was completely new, but I could see the Lord's hand in what he and others were saying.

I'm one of those who had a "bad experience" with discipleship — not because of the basic teachings, but the misinterpretation of what it was all about and a lack of the basic essential element of love. Still, I would in no way condemn discipleship — certainly it is needed and I praise the Lord for my experience which helps me to understand the feelings of those who criticize it.

Joan Schrink
Aiken, S.C.

The Lord has really laid a burden upon my heart to pray for your Foreign Outreach Ministries. It is wonderful to hear that some of the Christian literature has gotten behind the Iron Curtain . . . In these latter days it is so important that we spread the Good News over all the earth so that we might fulfill the Great Commission that Jesus might return again.

Ruth Whitman
Spring Lake, Mich.

We are very encouraged this year as to what the Lord will be doing as He sees His people interceding for the nations. We desire to fast with you the first Fridays of the months. It will be an exciting year! Our prayers and blessings to you.

Bob and Julie Jones
Martinsville, Ind.

JUST WANTED TO SAY . . .

I just want to say that the article by Don Basham entitled, "Storm Warning" was great. The article brought life and understanding to me about the different trials and temptations we go through. Keep up the good work.

Clifford A. Baker
Portland, Or.

Thanks for being "you." Thanks for fulfilling your part in the present visitation of God on the earth.

Marjorie Reading
 Fargo, N.D.

It is amazing how the subject always seems to hit the "bull's eye" — on target — for us almost every time.

Marge Ell
Minneapolis, Minn.

Keep on keeping on!

Mrs. Phillip E. Bennett
Walnut, Ca.

CLEARING THE AIR

I recently received the February issue of *New Wine* and was pleased to find the article, "Discipleship, Shepherding and Authority," by Derek Prince. This article has cleared the air of many false concepts we had heard, mostly second or third hand. We do appreciate receiving *New Wine* and pray that it will continue to be a blessing to all that receive it.

Pastor MacNaughton
Assembly of God
Jasper, Alberta

Could it be that what is needed to strengthen and edify one group of believers would not work or even be intended by the Holy Spirit to work with another? I firmly believe that you have every right — even obligation — to teach what the Holy Spirit has shown you to the rest of the Body of Christ. However, I also believe that the rest of the Body, as led by the Holy Spirit, may apply these teachings as necessary to their own walk with the Lord in whatever proportion needed to bring them where they should be in the Body of Christ.

Harry Yost
Palmer, Alaska

Editorial

No class of people was more despised by the Jews in Jesus' day than the publicans, the men who collected taxes for the Roman government. Most of them were extortioners, extracting more taxes from the people than the government demanded. Little wonder that the word "publican" was synonymous with "sinner."

Luke chapter 19 tells a story about one of these publicans, Zaccheus who, despite his unsavory occupation, had a desire to know Jesus. His opportunity came one day when he had climbed a tree in order to see Jesus as he passed by in the crowds. Much to Zaccheus' surprise, Jesus called up to him by name and invited Himself to his home for dinner. The crowd was surprised as well, and "... they all began to grumble, saying, 'He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner'" (Luke 19:7 NAS).

Nonetheless, Jesus' presence in Zaccheus' home wrought an immediate transformation in the heart of the greedy little tax collector...

Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything I will give back four times as much (v. 8 NAS).

... and Jesus acknowledged the validity of Zaccheus' conversion by stating, "Today salvation has come to this house" (v. 9 NAS).

We have heard countless testimonies of lives changed by Jesus Christ:

Jesus saved me from my sins...

Jesus healed me...

But how often have we heard, "Jesus changed my way of handling finances"? Sadly, one glaring inconsistency between what we Christians profess and what we do is in the way we mishandle our finances. More than one Christian businessman has said to me, "I'd rather do business with non-Christians. Christians use religion as an excuse for not paying their debts."

The most immediate and dramatic evidence of Zaccheus' conversion was the transformation of his attitude toward material wealth. Should not this still be one of the most accurate measures of our commitment to Jesus Christ? If life in the Kingdom of God includes Jesus Christ's lordship over our money, then many of us face some major adjustments in handling our personal finances.



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T.M.

New Wine is published monthly, except combined July/August issue, by Christian Growth Ministries, 264 S.W. 31st St., Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33315. Second class postage paid at Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and at additional mailing offices.

Please use our self-addressed envelope in the center of the magazine for new subscriptions, notice of change of address, and all contributions, comments, and suggestions pertaining to Christian Growth Ministries and New Wine Magazine.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: New Wine is a non-subscription magazine supported by the contributions of its readers. Single copies and back issues (except December issues): 50 cents each. Bulk prices for regular issues (Minimum order of 6) 6-24, 40 cents each; 25-49, 35 cents each; 50-99, 30 cents each; 100 or more, 25 cents each. Foreign contributions, except Canada, should be made by a check made out for American dollars or by local currency.

Material submitted for publication should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope if return of manuscript is desired. All material becomes the property of New Wine when published.

The views expressed in New Wine are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Editors or Directors.

Scripture quotations in this magazine are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

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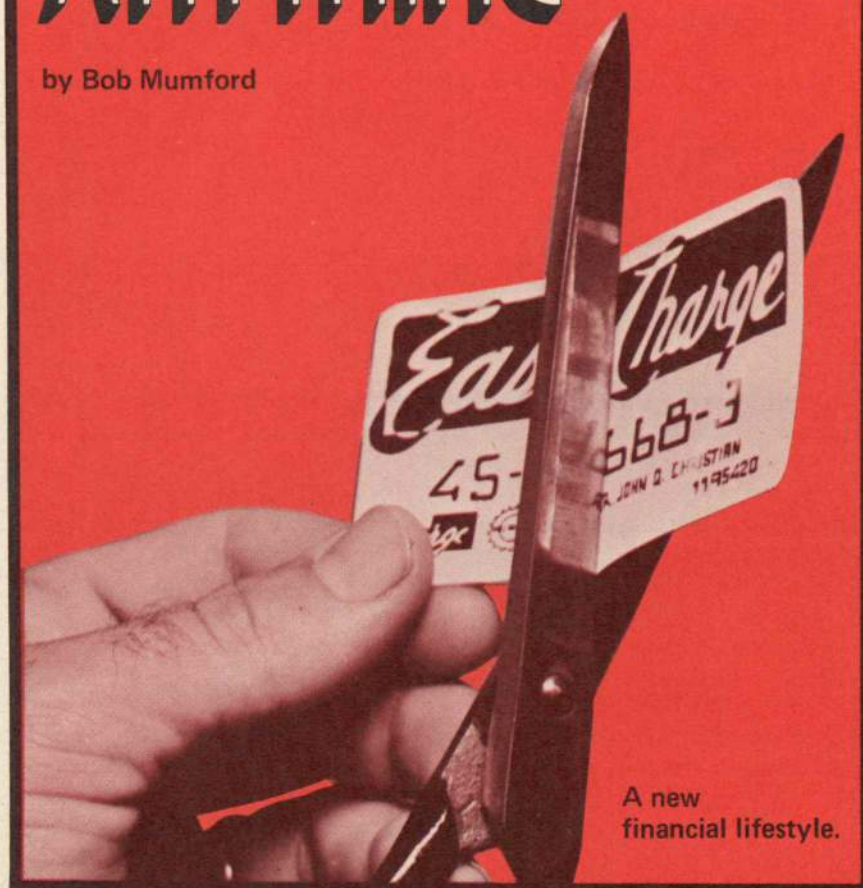
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OWE NO MAN ANYTHING

by Bob Mumford



A new financial lifestyle.

One of the most predominant themes of the Christian life is that God is moving us from where He finds us to where He wants us. He intends for our lives in Him to experience steady progress, as we come into an increased measure of obedience, maturity and blessing. We see this principle clearly in Israel's journey out of Egypt. God's plan was to move them out of bondage, through a period of instruction and testing in the wilderness, into the practical outworking and subsequent blessing of obedience to God in the promised land.

God's goal for Christians runs remarkably parallel to this pattern. While we are in bondage to the world, He apprehends us and begins to change

us, teaching us a new way to live, with the ultimate intention of bringing us into practical Christian victory in every area of our lives — the promised land!

The whole process isn't as simple as it may sound. With the Israelites, the journey to the promised land took forty years. But fortunately God has provided us with an explicit and detailed road map for our travels — His living Word. In this article, we will be examining Romans 13:7–12 for some down-to-earth guidelines for victory in our everyday experience with God, applying those principles in a very practical way to the area of finances.

(7) Render therefore to all their dues: tribute [taxes] to whom

tribute is due; custom [duty] to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. (8) Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. (9) For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (10) Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (11) And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light (Romans 13:7–12).

We want to examine this passage of scripture verse by verse, letting it sink deep down into our hearts. Verse 7 says: "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due." Here Paul is trying to draw a distinction between the two worlds — the heavenly world and the earthly world — and he is also informing us that we have obligations to fulfill in both of these.

When the Jews came to Jesus and asked, "Should we pay taxes or not?" what they were really suggesting was that because they were God's people they should be exempt from any earthly obligations, especially to the nation that ruled over them. Some Christians feel the same way. They believe that because they are citizens of heaven, they don't have to pay taxes — rules and regulations don't apply to them. But Jesus, in effect said, "Show me a coin. Now listen! If you will render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's, you won't have any problem." Jesus was pointing out that problems come in people's lives when they are too heavenly-minded about practical, earthly matters. The wife says, "Honey, would you please empty the garbage?" (How many of you know that's very earthly?) But the husband says, "I can't — I don't feel led." That

is getting the two worlds confused.

It is important for us to get our worlds straightened out. We need to get the heavenly world where it belongs and the earthly world where it belongs. Spiritual things in their proper place, exercised properly at the proper time, and material things the same way! That means you don't pray on your boss's time. If you want to pray, pray on your lunch hour. That time belongs to you. Basically, straightening out our worlds heightens our understanding of authority, bringing increased order to our lives. We pay taxes to whom taxes are due, duty to whom duty is due, and we fear those who need to be feared. The order of a life under authority comes from learning to keep our worlds separated properly.

In the practical outworkings of separating the two worlds, and responding at the proper time to earthly and heavenly authority upon our lives, we come upon a very practical instruction in verse 8: "Stop continuing to owe debts." (Literally, what it says.) Here is a very earthly, yet very spiritual principle. After eighteen years of counseling I have personally come to believe the Church has failed in its responsibility to teach Christians how to manage their finances. Most of our young people are so naive concerning finances, that they become easy prey to the barrage of Madison Avenue appeals.

A LOOK AT THE PROBLEM

The newspaper ad says, "Come down and test drive the new 'Plushmobile' " (3 miles per gallon!). Why do they want you to come down for a test drive? Because they want you to get your hands on that wheel and feel the surge of 422 horses that you can't use. They want you to sink into those electric-powered, leather seats, handle those steam-heated door knobs, because then, an illegal, unreasoning desire, will awaken inside you, and you say, "Honey, we can afford this." She says, "We can?" You reply, "Yes, it's simple! We'll only eat every other week!" And the salesman says, "It's

easy, you can have this beautiful 'Plushmobile' for just \$90.00 down and forty-two easy payments" — "easy" payments which are murder to make, not to mention the added 18%, (sometimes even 21%) interest per year. And, giving in to that unreasoning desire, you are plunged into financial quicksand.

Do you know most people never finish paying for their car? They just trade cars every two years and continue to be strapped with those payments for thirty or forty years.

Installment loans, credit cards, buy now at 10% down and pay later! Many Christians have never understood that God's highest way is to not be in debt. God wants us to have enough personal discipline to pay our way in this life! Why? Because we have a love debt, and our job as a Spirit-filled, Bible-believing Christian is to be in the position of helping others. But we're not. And why? Because most of us are so far in debt ourselves that we couldn't possibly help anybody else.

At one time in my life, I was an encyclopedia salesman. Don't laugh. All great men sold books at one time or another — Eisenhower, Roosevelt, Dale Carnegie and Bob Mumford! But this job taught me something about the financial conditions in most homes. As I recall, the terms were \$20.00 down and \$7.00 a month. Inevitably, the husband would say, "Mr. Mumford, I'd love to have these books for my children, but I can't afford \$7.00 a month." I would say, "You mean you can't afford \$7.00 a month for something you really want?"

"Well, no. We have the refrigerator payment, the washer and dryer payment, the car payment, and the Christmas loan we borrowed from Ajax Finance!" (My mother-in-law, who has worked in a loan company for some twenty years, tells me that many families have had loans for twenty years running which have never been paid off — simply because of a lack of financial discipline in their lives.)

As I encountered this exact situation time and again, I began to see the real problem in our attitude toward

finances. Our mentality has been, if you want anything these days, don't wait — just borrow or buy on credit. It is precisely that immaturity and lack of prudence which is the root of many financial problems. If you ask a child, "Do you want \$.50 now or \$5.00 tomorrow, what would he say? "I want \$.50 now." Through our lack of foresight, we get sucked into the "buy now, pay later" credit card trap and then we can't get out. And when there is a need in the Body of Christ, we are unable to participate, because our finances are being eaten up by the debts we owe.

I feel like shouting, "People of God, get out of Madison Avenue, for Jesus' sake! Discipline yourself! Change your lifestyle! Learn to pay cash for the things you want!"

You say, "Well, if we waited until we could pay cash for them we wouldn't have them." *Now you're learning!*

That may sound cynical, but in actual fact, most Christians are so far in debt that any financial emergency, the least sickness or problem, would send them down the tube. Ensnared in such financial bondage, they are unable to minister to others in love. In a very real sense, their financial bondage is also a form of spiritual bondage.

What is God trying to say to us in all this? It should be obvious to us that God is putting the squeeze on. Where do you stand financially at this particular moment? \$2,000 in debt? \$4,000 in debt? More? Although it may prove extremely difficult to retire \$4,000 of debts, I believe God is instructing us to get out of debt. The question is, How?

DOWN-TO-EARTH SOLUTIONS

I want to give some practical suggestions on how to obey God's instruction to get ourselves out of debt.

Number one: Wear it. What do I mean? I mean, resist the compulsion to be always buying the latest styles every time they come out. Wear the clothes that you already have. This idea didn't originate with me. I found

it in an article in the *U.S. News and World Report*, which stated that more and more Americans are seeking to break their custom of changing wardrobes every time a new style appears. Now, I'm not suggesting we wear sackcloth and ashes, but we must resist conformity to the world's way: "Everybody's doing it; I must too!" We can rid ourselves of the bondage of that concept by heeding two simple words: Wear it!

Number two: Eat it. Don't throw it away. Don't act like food will last forever. Discipline yourself to eat all the food you put on your plate.

Have you ever sat in a restaurant and watched someone take two bites out of a meal, then throw the napkin on the plate? I feel like going over there and eating it myself! I have been too many places where people don't have enough. Many reading this article lived through the early thirties when people literally ate out of garbage cans. I was born in 1930 and I remember at six years old, that's 1936, seeing people in my city eating out of the garbage cans behind a local restaurant.

Eat it — don't waste it. Learn this discipline in your home and work it into the very fibre of your being.

Number three: Make it do. What do I mean by "it"? *Anything!* "Honey, let's buy a new car, one with the new radio that selects a station by itself and has hidden windshield wipers." No — *make do!* If your present car is running all right — drive it. Or that lawn mower you own. If it works, keep it in good repair and make it do.

If we will be diligent to "wear it, eat it, and make it do," do you know what will happen? We will begin to have some money left over, which is free to be used as God directs and not as your creditors demand. The scripture says, "*Stop continuing to owe debts!*"

Another helpful principle along these same lines is taught in Bill Gothard's seminar: Whenever possible, avoid buying depreciable items on time. By depreciable items, we mean those things that diminish in value and wear out as the years pass. For example, a car, a refrigerator, a washer

and dryer, Christmas toys, clothes. For these things, save your money until you are able to pay cash on the spot. Then what is a non-depreciable item? Something which appreciates or increases in value as the years progress, such as a house, or a piece of property. Investments which increase in value over the years are safe to buy on time.

The main principle is: Do not buy depreciable items on time. If you want a car, save up in order to get it. Oh for the joy to walk into a car showroom with a checkbook and say, "We'll take that car right there. The Lord has provided and we have saved enough to buy it. How much should we make the check for?" The salesman would faint!

But while you are walking in the discipline of saving for the new item, in the meantime, make the old one do! Lay hands on it if necessary to keep it going. It's not beyond the Lord to heal refrigerators, washing machines and cars. I was out one night in my 1946 Chevrolet, which was long overdue to be buried. It was a stormy night and as the snow was coming down, the lights in my car also went down, down, down, and then the motor stopped. I was all by myself, and I got out and looked under the hood and said, "Wow, you're sick!" I shut the hood and prayed, "God, in Jesus' name heal this car!" The lights came on and when I turned the key it started right up! God will help out with the old one if you're faithful in preparing for the new.

Another question relevant to our finances as Christians is: What about credit cards?

One day I went to see a friend at his office. As he sat behind his desk, he unfolded his credit card wallet, and in those clear plastic folders there must have been 150 credit cards. I said, "Don't ever let my wife see that!"

You may ask me, do I carry credit cards? We do have about six or eight of them, but we have a few regulations for their use. First of all, whenever each particular bill comes in, I immediately write a check for the whole amount, thus establishing credit without paying all kinds of interest. Secondly, my wife has agreed not to

charge anything that I am not aware of, nor do we charge anything that we are not prepared to totally pay at the end of the month.

I believe that credit cards are an asset, if they are used properly. But if you don't know how to use them, cut them up and throw them in the trash can. A truly compulsive buyer, like a truly compulsive eater, may even need a good dose of deliverance.

I must say that I feel good in bringing out these principles. I have been waiting to say this for about ten years. Wear it; eat it; make it do — so that above all you can get yourself out of debt. "*Stop continuing to owe debts.*"

ON THE GIVING END

With that principle firmly established let's deal with another question. What is the purpose behind God's command to "owe no man anything?" Jesus said, "It is better to give" God intends that our lifestyles allow us to be on the giving end, not on the receiving end. We are the ones to say, "Brother, can I help you?" and be able to back it up because we are in a position to give. The Bible says to give to the poor. Strengthen. Help. Just as in our spiritual lives, we try to maintain a victorious life so that we can help others who are spiritually in need, we should also maintain a victorious financial life so that we are in a position to help others who are financially in need.

OUR DEBT OF LOVE

We have one permanent debt, and that is to love. There is one kind of love that we can send out and it returns to us, but the kind of love we're talking about goes out "one-way" to people who are in need. It is not sloppy agape, but love which meets physical needs, spiritual needs. When someone is hungry we are able to say, "Brother, let me help. Sister, let me share with you a little of what God has blessed me with."

Love is the fulfilling of the law. God's love which comes to us is designed to go out from us to those in

need. But because of sin, we all wound up in what I call an "ego box." That ego box is me, mine and myself and it shuts us up with our own selfish desires. When the love of God comes, instead of going on through us to others, it is trapped by this ego box. What Paul is saying in these scriptures is, "Church, the debt you owe is the ability, as God's love comes down upon you, to reach out in love to others — not only spiritually, but financially, physically, mentally, and emotionally."

Do you believe that we are debtors when we have heard the good things of God? As we receive God's bountiful love, our desire should be to share that love and reach out to help others. Sometimes I feel like I owe everybody everything. As God showers his love upon us, He wants it to break out of our "ego box," and pour forth to others.

I experienced this one time when I was home from Bible college, flat broke. The Lord had said to me, "If you go home, I'll pay your way back." The night I was to return to school, I had preached in a church and they had given me nothing. And I didn't have any gas in my car. After the service ended and the church was being locked up for the night, I was left standing at the church's front entrance with the last person to leave the service — a precious little old widow, with a humped back caused by a growth on her spine. As I stood there for a moment I silently mused, "Well God, this is the first time you ever failed me."

Just then the little lady said, "Brother Bob, you wouldn't be offended if I gave you \$5.00 would you?"

I said, "Oh, ma'm . . . I couldn't take that from you." I knew her home life, that she took in washing on week-ends to support herself.

She replied, "But I've been standing here all this time and the Lord just won't let me go home." With that, she dug around in her little purse and put \$5.00 in the palm of my hand. That little widow's self-sacrificing gift taught me volumes about paying our

debt of love by tangible expressions of God's love to those in need.

No matter how desperate the condition of our finances is, I believe that God will begin to do something for our finances when we say: "God, I want you to heal my finances and get me out of bondage so that I can help others. I want to be able to bless others, and to be a person through whom God's love flows.

Verse 10 of Romans 13 says, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour." It just can't. Love has a disposition that reaches out, instead of taking for itself. Love cannot hurt people. Love cannot take from people without giving.

THE DAY IS AT HAND

Finally, we want to be exhorted by verses 11 and 12:

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

The New Testament teaches that there is a spirit and expectancy for the Lord to come at any moment. In verse 11, Paul even comments to the effect that "Now it's sooner than when we first believed." If he was feeling that in his day, how much more should we, today, feel this sense of imminence. It is evident by the climate, the circumstances, and the quickening of today's pace, that the consummation of the age and the "day of the coming of the Lord" is near.

What reaction should that information produce in us? Should we begin to drive around with our windows open, continually looking up into the sky, or go to bed every night fully clothed so that we will be dressed and ready when He comes? No, Paul's directions for preparing for the Lord's return are quite to the contrary. He says, "Awake and cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." In other words, adjust your whole lifestyle so that when Jesus

comes he will find you unencumbered by the works of darkness. And this applies especially in the area of finances.

You say, "Brother Bob, what would you yet need to do if the Lord were coming tomorrow?" I would like to believe that there is very little that I would have to do or get straightened out. I don't know of any significant debts left unpaid except my house payments and I would even regret leaving that unpaid. For the most part, I'm ready. I have the feeling that God intends us to walk this way in these days before the return of Jesus.

Our preparation for Jesus' coming is not to be looking up toward the sky all the time, but rather in diligently clearing away our present financial, emotional, and spiritual entanglements so as to be found by the Lord unencumbered — free and clear of all debts to this world.

Casting off the "works of darkness" and putting on "the armor of light," let us put our lives in order under proper authority, waking up to the times, *getting ourselves out of debt*, so that we may be free to minister to the Lord and to His people in need, and free to pray without earthly hindrance or encumbrance, "Even so, come Lord Jesus!" 🙏

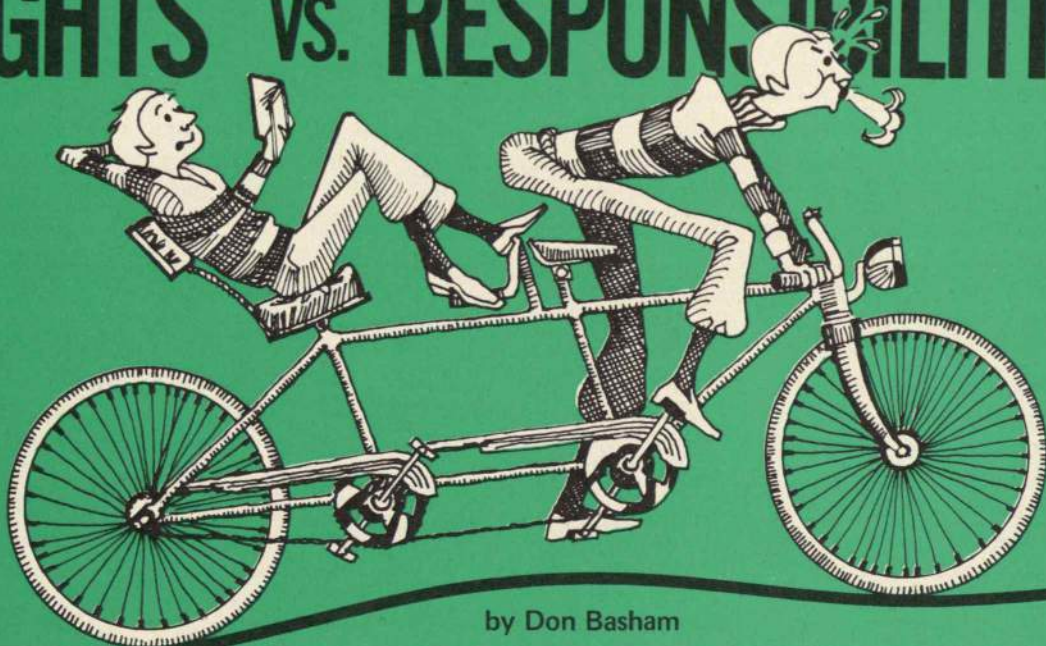
MONTHLY DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING

At the Chicago Church Summit Conference in September 1975, national Christian leaders established the first Friday of every month in 1976 as a day of united prayer and fasting for all Christians in America.

New Wine, in conjunction with Intercessors for America, will be publishing each month a suggested prayer focus so that the collective effect of all our readers' prayers may be concentrated upon a specific area of need.

On May 7, the prayer focus will be: The Media (television, radio, magazines, newspapers, news reporters, etc.) Pray that *God will control* the media, using it to accomplish His purposes and binding any negative effect it has upon America.

RIGHTS vs. RESPONSIBILITIES



by Don Basham

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap (Gal. 6:7).

Nowhere is the immutability of the law of sowing and reaping more evident than in the growing degeneracy of our American society. Perhaps one single word most appropriately identifies the underlying reason for the multitude of seemingly insurmountable problems of crime, rebellion, violence, pollution, moral decay, economic depression and lawlessness which plague us. That one word is *selfishness*.

When we strip away all philosophical rationalization, all political double-talk and all religious prating, one simple question brings the problem into sharp focus. *Which comes first — our rights or our responsibilities?* An honest answer to this question exposes the gravity of our national dilemma, for we live in a day when everyone is clamoring for their *rights* while scarcely anyone has the courage to remind us of our *responsibilities*.

No free society can prosper without a strong streak of selflessness in its backbone, and yet that quality of selflessness is almost non-existent today.

No matter how powerful or wealthy

or moral a nation is, it cannot survive the economic plundering of millions of self-seeking citizens bent on sacrificing national welfare for personal benefit.

When a nation's largest city can spend itself into bankruptcy by voting itself wages, pensions and services drastically out of proportion to its revenue; when a nation's unions, by legalized blackmail, can bring a nation to its economic knees by a paralyzing industry-wide strike demanding a 30% to 40% wage increase with no promise of increased productivity; or when a nation's own legislative body insists upon allocating billions of dollars of "federal funds," raising the national budget deficit for a single year to over 75 billion dollars, it does not take divine illumination to prophesy the inevitable fate of that nation.

In a recent *Reader's Digest* article (Feb. 1976) former medical missionary and congressman from Minnesota, Dr. Walter H. Judd, pointed out, to make matters worse, that powerful special-interest groups are advocating additional government handouts which would shove the federal deficit to over 100 billion dollars per year. By yielding to such selfish demands for economic "rights," our nation engages in a fiscal irresponsibility that is beyond all reason or justification.

To illustrate such folly in more personal terms, it would be as if I decided I was entitled to spend \$100,000.00 more per year on my wife and children than I currently earn. So I persuade some gullible banker to lend me the money, assuring him that the money will be repaid by my neighbors, my children and my grandchildren.

"You see," I would explain to my banker, "I have a *right* to a much higher standard of living!"

But what about my *responsibility* to my neighbor, to my children and grandchildren? Or, for that matter, what about simple honesty, integrity and morality?

The same February 1976 *Reader's Digest* article quotes British historian Alexander Tytler as saying nearly 200 years ago,

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover they can vote themselves largess out of the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury — with the result that democracy collapses over a loose fiscal policy, always to be followed by a dictatorship.

Our selfishness often blinds us to

the most elemental truth. For example, the mayor of a city makes a speech informing the townspeople of a new 6-million-dollar urban renewal program designed to eliminate a slum area. All that is required of the city is that they put up 10% of the money, or \$600,000.00. The rest of the money, the mayor explains, will be provided by "federal funds." So the average citizen says to himself, "We pay only 10%. The rest we get for free!"

But can't we understand? *There is no such thing as federal funds!* There is only taxpayers' money! Your taxes and mine, and our children's and our grandchildren's! Our selfishness blinds us to the immortal truth that *the government can't pay for anything!* We taxpayers must pay for it all!

IT BEGAN IN THE GARDEN

The problem we are describing, the continuing struggle between rights and responsibilities, is as old as humanity itself. It began in the garden of Eden when the serpent tempted Eve to assert her rights and ignore her responsibility. Satan tricked Eve into believing she was entitled to more than she was getting. He insisted she had a *right* to the fruit of every tree in the Garden, over and above her *responsibility* to obey God's command to leave the forbidden fruit alone.

So Eve chose her "rights" over her "responsibility" and for centuries we have been wrestling with the disastrous result. And I suspect that every time we insist on our rights while we ignore our responsibilities we are in some measure repeating Eve's tragic mistake.

The Scriptures themselves are replete with admonitions concerning the consequences of demanding our *rights*. They clearly indicate that there is a right way and a wrong way of achieving our goal. When we are inclined to demand our *rights*, these scriptures can keep us from assuming a warped and unchristian viewpoint.

For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted (Luke 14:11).

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted (Matt. 23:11-12).

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, *not to think of himself* more highly than he ought to think . . . (Rom. 12:3).

For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth (2 Cor. 10:18).

The dilemma a Christian faces when he begins to assert his rights is that it seems impossible to avoid reviving the carnal nature which has supposedly been crucified. If the "old man" is dead and crucified, how then can it "demand its rights"? "Dead men" can't demand anything! And if the source of our new life is in Christ, how then can we *demand* anything, since the Son of God from whom we draw our very existence never *demand*ed anything? Paul made this plain when he warned the Philippians:

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind *let each esteem other better than themselves*.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

But made of himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:3-7).

So, the deliberation as to whether our rights or our responsibilities come first is repeatedly illustrated in Scripture.

A RIGHT WAY AND A WRONG WAY

The life of David contains two inter-

esting illustrations concerning rights and responsibilities. The first concerns David and his struggle against Goliath; the second concerns David and his struggle against Saul.

When God rejected Saul as king, He sent Samuel to the household of Jesse where he anointed young David to be the next king. Thereafter, David's fortunes began to rise rapidly. He became the king's armor-bearer as well as his personal musician. Then came the encounter with Goliath.

In this incident, it is obvious that David *asserted himself* with God-given confidence. When Saul protested that he would be no match for Goliath, David replied,

Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock . . . Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine (1 Sam. 17:34,36-37).

Thus claiming his right to the power and protection of God, David slew Goliath. He knew by experience the power and anointing of God, and his destiny was to one day rule Israel.

Not long after the encounter with Goliath, God put David to another test as to whether he would choose his rights or his responsibilities. Saul, goaded by an insane jealousy, began to seek David's life, forcing him into hiding. On one occasion when Saul was searching for him, David had the opportunity to kill Saul, but refused. (See 1 Sam. 24:2-7).

In this case, responsibility triumphed over rights. Already anointed to be king, already commanding a loyal following, fully aware that Saul was no longer fit to rule, David certainly had the *right* to slay Saul. Instead, he honored the authority of God, who had made Saul king, and forbade his men to kill the sleeping

ruler, waiting for the vindication of God.

How easy it would have been for David to say, "I've been chosen to rule in Saul's place. The Spirit of God no longer guides this mad man. I have a *right* to dispose of him and begin the reign God has promised. Israel needs me now!" Providentially, he refused to assert his right and accepted the responsibility of honoring God-ordained authority. No wonder that centuries later he was still being referred to as "the man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22) and that our Lord Jesus Christ is called "the son of David" (Luke 18:38). Such benediction was possible because David was a man who upheld responsibility over rights.

A STRUGGLE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

In the New Testament we find another illustration of this struggle. As His ministry neared its end, Jesus gave instructions to His disciples to have the final passover meal prepared (see Matt. 26:17-19).

In those days, when you were invited to a home for dinner, a part of the hospitality provided was a servant who met you at the door with a basin of water and a towel to wash the dust of the road from your feet. Understandably, it was a distasteful, menial task, fit only for a household servant.

As Ern Baxter points out, at that final passover meal, while the disciples had arranged for the water, the basin and the towel, there was no servant present to perform the lowly duty. Each of the disciples, as they entered the room, must have recognized the omission and realized that someone should do the chore. But they were already in a controversy over who was the greatest, and with their inflated egos, not one was willing to give up his rights as a disciple of Jesus to assume the role of a servant.

So they all sat and broke bread with Jesus with dirty feet. Again, Ern Baxter points out that "dirty feet" symbolizes an unclean walk with the

Lord. How many times do we Christians, bent on claiming our "rights" instead of accepting our responsibilities, tarnish our own walk with the Lord?

After their meal together, Jesus removed his outer garment, wrapped the servant's towel around His waist, poured water in the basin, and knelt before His disciples and — over their protests — washed their feet. When He had finished He said,

... Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have *given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you* (John 13:12-15).

And what does the Lord's example clearly imply? That our "high calling" in Christ not only includes the privilege of receiving and ministering His grace; it also includes forsaking our "rights" to be served and accepting our "responsibility" to serve one another.

Surely, by now, one thing must be clear: the grasping, selfish attitude we assume when we demand our rights is the very antithesis of the humble and sacrificial spirit essential to serving the Lord.

It seems to me that one sure mark of increasing spiritual maturity, one sure evidence that a man is going further and further with the Lord, is that he demands less and less for himself.

A PAINFUL EXPERIENCE

The Bible also makes it plain that what a man is really like is as much determined by his inner attitude as by his outward behavior. We can have a demanding attitude in which inwardly we are consistently claiming our "rights" while ignoring our "responsibilities" even while we maintain an outward facade of dedication. Let me share a painful personal experience which illustrates what I mean.

Some years ago, I gave myself to

writing a book dealing with a significant aspect of Christian ministry. The task required a major investment of my time and effort for over four years. My editors and publisher, and interested friends alike, encouraged me, predicting the book would become a best-seller and that I would greatly benefit financially from it. Needless to say I was delighted over the prospect of fame and fortune coming my way.

Eventually published, the book proved only moderately successful and my inflated hopes were dashed on the hard rocks of reality. Now, at times I can handle disappointment with a fair amount of maturity. But not so, this time. Inwardly, I went through a period of real struggle against bitterness. In my thoughts, I cried out that I had not been treated fairly. After all those years of hard work I was *entitled* to a best-seller! Even my editors had predicted it would be a best-seller. Even my minister friends had predicted it would be a best-seller. I had my *rights*!

In my selfish concern over sales of the book I tended to forget that it was God who had called me into the ministry it described. For a while that selfishness blinded me to the fact that God wanted the book written to help people, not to make me wealthy or famous. When, in loving patience, the Holy Spirit finally convicted me of my wrong attitude I saw how distorted my viewpoint had become.

Insisting on my "rights," I had almost forgotten my "responsibility" as a minister of the Gospel. When I repented and confessed my sin to God, things returned to their proper perspective. I became truly grateful for those who wrote to say the book had helped them. I stopped criticizing those responsible for distributing the book. With gratitude, I accepted the modest royalties as a portion of God's provision for me and my family. Getting my eyes off my "rights" and onto my "responsibilities" brought a much-needed healing to my inner attitude.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to find anything healthy or redemptive in making demands. In fact, I learned

that "demanding my rights" is more clearly the expression of an attitude of rebellion than of humble submission. From that painful experience I learned that to fall into the pattern of even thinking more about your rights than your responsibilities is spiritually dangerous.

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

As long as we are bound to the limitations of this mortal nature, absolute altruism will remain beyond our grasp. After all, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels . . ." Paul reminds us. Nevertheless, there are some practical suggestions which may encourage us in our efforts to put responsibilities ahead of rights.

(1) Let us voluntarily abandon the "I'm-entitled-to-be-looked-after" syndrome which slowly smothers all personal accountability. In this regard, Paul expressed the importance of the simple virtue of honest labor when he told the Thessalonians,

Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, *that if any would not work, neither should he eat* (2 Thess. 3:8-10).

Much of our so-called "welfare" has been simply a financial dole completely unaccompanied by any genuine concern for a man's sense of integrity or his need for self-esteem. Continuing impersonal handouts will crush human dignity. In speaking of much-needed reform in the national welfare program, presidential candidate Ronald Reagan described a unique American city where those receiving welfare were enlisted in the task of cleaning up neighborhoods and engaging in other useful community services. The result was a heartening rise in personal pride and self-esteem among the welfare recipients, along with a diminishing number of complaints and abuses of

welfare funds. In addition, there was a marked increase in the numbers of those seeking and finding permanent employment.

(2) As Christians we need to reaffirm that our work or ministry, no matter how ordinary it may seem, is to be done "as unto the Lord." If we strive to be consciously aware that what we do is "to the glory of God" such an awareness will inevitably enhance the most modest endeavor. Not only that, with such an uplifting attitude, we will be far more hesitant to climb on some soapbox and declare to the world that we are being "deprived of our rights."

(3) Let us remember that Jesus Himself is our pattern for living. If He said, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30) what justification have we, as His followers, for insisting on our own rights?

Peter speaks powerfully to this point when he says,

Servants [employees] be subject to your masters [employers] 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 you do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps (1 Pet. 2:18-21).

(4) Let us be clear about the difference between "our inheritance" and "our rights."

Some will ask, "But what about our inheritance in Jesus Christ? Isn't it true that God wants His people to prosper? Doesn't the 'abundant life' include material prosperity?"

Indeed it does! I believe absolutely that it is God's desire to bless and prosper His people. I believe our inheritance in Jesus Christ includes material abundance. But there is a vast differ-

ence between *trusting* God for material abundance and *demanding* that abundance from an employer or *voting* for it to be dispensed from the U.S. Treasury.

I believe God is pleased when we look to Him as our source, and pleased all the more when we look *persistently* and pray expectantly (see Luke 18:1-8). But Paul says,

Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, *let your requests be made known unto God* [not your union grievance committee or your Congressman!] (Phil. 4:6).

(5) Finally, we can look for, pray for, work for and vote for leadership in government at every level (as well as for leadership in the Church) which will exemplify the moral maturity and selflessness required if our society is to survive.

Many years ago an American poet, Josiah Gilbert Holland, described our present situation most eloquently in his poem entitled, "The Day's Demand."

God give us men! A time like this demands

Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands;

Men whom the lust of office does not kill

Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;

Men who possess opinions and a will;

Men who have honor — men who will not lie;

Men who can stand before a demagogue

And damn his treacherous flat-teries without winking,

Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog

In public duty and in private thinking.

For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds,

Their large professions and their little deeds,

Mingle in selfish strife, lo! Freedom weeps,

Wrong rules the land, and waiting Justice sleeps! ¹

¹ *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*, © 1948, Hayes & Brothers, James Dalton Morrison, Editor, N.Y. & London

HE DARED TO BELIEVE

George Muller's testimony to the faithfulness of God.

In his famous work, *Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens drew the British public's attention to the desperate plight of orphans, levelling a series of charges against the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 for imprisoning the orphan in workhouse dungeons, the conditions of which were deplorable. In the closing months of 1835 this major social problem came to increasingly occupy the thoughts of one citizen of Bristol — George A. Muller.

A VISIBLE PROOF

Muller's concern for the plight of orphans in nineteenth-century England began more than a year before Dickens publicized the situation in *Oliver Twist*. There can be no doubt either about the tragic proportions of the problem or that Muller's anxiety was genuine. When he first arrived in Bristol he had been deeply moved by the common sight of children begging in the streets; and when they knocked on his own door he longed to do something positive to help.

While a student at Halle in 1926

Muller had lodged for two months in one of the great orphan houses built by the German "Pietist" Professor A.H. Franke in the late seventeenth century. He never forgot the experience; and late in 1835 he was particularly reminded of Franke's work. Muller's diary contains the following entries:

November 21. Today I have had it very much impressed on my heart, no longer merely to think about the establishment of an Orphan-House, but actually to set about it, and I have been very much in prayer respecting it, in order to ascertain the Lord's mind.

November 25. I have been again much in prayer yesterday and today about the Orphan-House, and am more and more convinced that it is of God. May He in mercy guide me!

Muller spent many hours during the next fortnight praying about his proposed orphanage. Deciding to embark upon this adventure of faith,

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he put the challenge that faced him like this:

Now, if I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith, obtained, without asking any individual, the means for establishing and carrying on an Orphan-House: there would be something which, with the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the consciences of the unconverted, of the reality of the things of God.

Was the most important consideration which led Muller to found an orphan-home a desire to ease the orphans' plight, or an attempt to demonstrate God's reality? Let Muller answer:

I certainly did from my heart desire to be used by God to benefit the bodies of poor children, bereaved of both parents, and seek, in other respects, with the help of God, to do them good for this life; — I also particularly longed to be used by God in getting the dear orphans trained up in the fear of God; — but still, the first and primary object of the work was

that God might be magnified by the fact, that the orphans under my care are provided, with all they need, only by prayer and faith, without anyone being asked by me or my fellow-labourers, whereby it may be seen, that God is *faithful still, and hears prayer still*.

On December 7, 1835, he received the first shilling for the Orphan-House. On December 9 of the same year the first piece of furniture was given — a large wardrobe. Contributions continued to arrive daily:

December 13. A brother was influenced this day to give 4 shillings per week. . . . To-day a brother and sister offered themselves with all their furniture, and all the provisions which they have in the house, if they can be usefully employed in the concerns of the Orphan-House.

December 14. To-day a sister offered her services for the work. . . .

December 15. A sister brought from several friends, ten basins, eight mugs, one plate, five dessert spoons, six tea spoons. . . . This evening another brother brought a clothes' horse, three frocks, four pinafores, six handkerchiefs. . . .

Gifts for the orphanage had, by the end of the year, become so encouraging that Muller was able to talk in terms of opening a small home at the beginning of the following April.

A large terrace house, No. 6 Wilson Street, had been brought to his attention as available at a low rental. It was three stories high and solidly built. After prayer and careful inspection Muller decided to rent the property for at least a year. He then began to furnish it for thirty children. Gifts which continued to arrive were eminently suited to the needs of the moment. By early April, furnishing and fitting of No. 6 had been completed.

It is unlikely that the staff had any illusions about the immensity of the task which lay ahead. They were well aware of the emotional difficulties which faced children who had lost both their parents. And, financially, they knew that every day, three times

a day for seven days every week, there would be thirty hungry children to feed, besides the staff. Thirty pairs of feet would wear out thirty pairs of shoes; clothes would grow too worn or too small and need replacement. Muller knew that if ever the children went hungry or badly clothed, his God would be discredited. But he was not alarmed; instead, he would repeat to his family and helpers Christ's words in Matthew 6:31 and 33: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Soon after the opening of the home in No. 6 for girls ages seven and upwards, it became obvious to Muller that there was a need for a home catering to children under the age of seven. In October 1836 he managed to obtain the use of No. 1 Wilson Street for an Infant-Orphan House, together with a piece of land for a play-ground. By April, there were sixty children in the two Orphan-Houses, thirty infants at No. 1 and thirty girls at No. 6.

In June, 1837 Muller decided to open a third home, for about forty boys aged seven years and above, first because the need for one was so obvious in Bristol and secondly because without one, he had nowhere to send the infant boys when they reached seven. By September enough money had been provided and suitable staff had offered themselves; all that remained was to find a suitable house. On October 21st Muller was offered another of the houses on Wilson Street — No. 3 — which he gladly accepted.

There had never been more to do. By the end of 1837, eighty-one children and nine full-time staff sat down to meals in the three homes. There were enough applications to fill another home with girls aged seven and above, and many more applications for infants than they were able to accommodate.

DAY BY DAY PROVISION

From the commencement of

Muller's orphan work in April 1836 to the end of June 1838, finances gave no cause for anxiety: there was always an excess of funds. But as the summer of 1838 drew towards its close, Muller's journal indicated that times were becoming difficult.

August 18, 1938. I have not one penny in hand for the Orphans. In a day or two again many pounds will be needed. My eyes are up to the Lord. *Evening.* Before this day is over, I have received from a sister 5 pounds.

August 20. The 5 pounds which I had received on the 18th, had been given for house-keeping, so that to-day I was again penniless. But my eyes were up to the Lord. I gave myself to prayer this morning, knowing that I should want again this week at least 13 pounds, if not about 20 pounds. Today I received 12 pounds in answer to prayer, from a lady who is staying at Clifton, whom I had never seen before.

August 23. Today I was again without one single penny, when 3 pounds was sent from Clapham, with a box of new clothes for the orphans.

Muller was later to look back on the period from September 1838 to the end of 1846 as the time when the greatest trials of faith were experienced in the orphan work. They were not years of continuous trial: rather there tended to be a pattern of a few months of trial, followed by some months of comparative plenty. During the whole period, according to Muller, the children knew nothing of the trial. On one occasion he wrote, "The orphans have never lacked anything. Had I had thousands of pounds in hand, they would have fared no better than they have; for they have always had good nourishing food, the necessary articles of clothing, etc." In other words, the periods of trial were so in the sense that there was no excess of funds: God supplied the need by the day, even by the hour. Enough was sent, but no more than enough.

From the earliest days of these trying years, it is possible to see how — in response to difficult situations — Muller never faltered from a path of almost fanatical obedience; his faith

stood firm as a rock and his character fully measured up to the challenges of the day.

Muller was well aware of the question that many longed to ask him and that some did: "How would it be, suppose the funds for the Orphans were reduced to nothing, and those who are engaged in the work had nothing of their own to give, and a meal time were to come, and you had no food for the children?"

Muller's answer was that he believed such a situation would occur "if ever we should be so left to ourselves, as that either we depend no more upon the living God, or that 'we regard iniquity in our hearts.'

"But so long," he continued, "as we shall be enabled to trust in the living God, and so long as though falling short in every way of what we might be, and ought to be, we are at least kept from living in sin, such a state of things cannot occur."

One of the nearest approaches to such a situation occurred in February 1842. At midday on Tuesday the eighth there was enough food in all the houses for that day's meals, but no money to buy the usual stock of bread or milk for the following morning; two houses needed coal. In Muller's view they had never been in greater poverty and he noted that if God sent nothing before nine next day, "His name would be dishonoured." Late in the afternoon nine plum cakes arrived, baked by order of a kindly sister. Encouraging — and, no doubt, tasty — as these were, the situation was still grim as Muller retired to bed that night. He finished that day's journal entry with the words: "Truly, we are poorer than ever; but, through grace, my eyes look not at the empty stores and the empty purse, but to the riches of the Lord only."

Next morning, Muller walked early to Wilson Street to discover how God would meet the need, only to find on arrival between seven and eight that it had already been met. A Christian businessman had walked about half a mile to his place of work when the thought occurred to him that Muller's children might be in need. He decided,

however, not to retrace his steps then, but to take something to the homes that evening. But, as he later told Muller, "I could not go any further and felt constrained to go back." He delivered three pounds to the Boys' Home. This donation, together with some other smaller sums, met the needs for two days.

By April 1842, Muller and his helpers had lived through six months of severe testing when week after week, with only short periods of relief, the funds had been no more than sufficient. Again and again, money or supplies had arrived with only minutes to spare before the children sat down at table. Muller's faith had at no time been more tried.

On Tuesday, April 12th the need had never been greater: since the previous Saturday less than fourteen shillings had been received at Wilson Street. Early in the morning, Muller knelt in prayer:

"Lord pity us! You know that we desperately need some oatmeal, some new pairs of shoes, money for the repair of old shoes and to replenish our stores, and some money for new clothes for the children as well as a little money which is needed for some of the lady helpers. Please send us some larger sums."

Later that morning an envelope arrived from the East Indies: it contained one hundred pounds. Muller wrote, "It is impossible to describe the real joy in God it gave me . . . I was not in the least surprised or excited when this donation came, for I took it as that which came in answer to prayer, and had been long looked for."

Reflecting on these years of great trial, Muller states:

The chief end for which the Institution was established is that the Church of Christ at large might be benefited by seeing manifestly the hand of God stretched out on our behalf in the hour of need, in answer to prayer. Our desire, therefore, is not that we may be without trials of faith, but the Lord graciously would be pleased to support us in the trial, that we may not dishonour Him by distrust.

This way of living brings the

Lord remarkably near. He is, as it were, morning by morning inspecting our stores, that accordingly He may send help. Greater and more manifest nearness of the Lord's presence I have never had, than when after breakfast there were no means for dinner, and then the Lord provided the dinner for more than one hundred persons; or when after dinner, there were no means for the tea, and yet the Lord provided the tea; all this without one single human being having been informed about our need . . .

It has been more than once observed, that such a way of living must lead the mind continually to think whence food, clothes, etc., are to come, and so unfit for spiritual exercises. Now, in the first place, I answer that our minds are very little tried about the necessities of life, just because the care respecting them is laid upon our Father, who, because we are His children, not only allows us to do so, but will have us to do so. Secondly, it must be remembered, that, even if our minds were much tried about the supplies for the children, and the means for the other work, yet, because we look to the Lord alone for these things, we should only be brought by our sense of need, into the presence of our Father, for the supply of it; and that is a blessing and no injury to the soul. Thirdly, our souls realise that for the glory of God and for the benefit of the church at large, it is that we have these trials of faith, and that leads again to God, to ask Him for fresh supplies of grace, to be enabled to be faithful in this service.

NEW HORIZONS

On Thursday morning, October 30th, 1845, Muller received what he described as a "polite and friendly" letter from an inhabitant of Wilson Street. The writer said that he and his neighbors were "in various ways inconvenienced by the Orphan-Houses being on Wilson Street."

The more Muller thought and prayed about the matter, the more he began to feel that it was God's will for him to embark on his boldest venture of faith: to build a brand new Orphan-House.

On December 10th Muller received the first donation towards the new

building: it was a gift of one thousand pounds.

During January, he looked into the possibilities of a number of sites, but none proved entirely suitable or inexpensive enough. On February 2 his diary records, "To-day I heard of suitable and cheap land on Ashley Down. *February 3.* Saw the land. It is the most desirable of all I have seen:

On July 6th, 1846, Muller received the largest donation he had so far received for his work: two thousand and fifty pounds of which two thousand pounds was intended for the building fund. He wrote:

It is impossible to describe my joy in God when I received this donation. I was neither excited nor surprised; for I look out for answers to my prayers. I believe that God hears me. Yet my heart was so full of joy, that I could only sit before God, and admire him, like David in 2 Samuel 7. At last I cast myself flat down upon my face, and burst forth in thanksgiving to God, and in surrendering my heart afresh to Him for His blessed service.

In December the total amount in the building fund was well over 9000 pounds. In June he received another thousand pounds which "again encouraged my heart abundantly to trust in Him for all which I shall yet need." It was now estimated that, including fittings and furniture the whole project would cost not less than 14,500 pounds. However, these extra expenses — mainly for heating, gas fittings, furnishings, three large playgrounds and a small road — would not be required until sometime after the commencement of the building work. Muller therefore decided to go ahead, and the first workmen arrived on the Down on July 5th. On August 19th the foundation stone of the new building was laid.

Throughout the winter, when the weather was fair, work proceeded on the new home and by May much of the building was already at roof level. Monday, June 18th, 1949 — great excitement prevailed at Wilson Street: the first children were to be moved to Ashley Down.

Every week Muller now took in five to eight new children, and by May 1850 over three hundred people sat down every day to meals at the house. This included a staff of over thirty people.

Muller delighted to prove the Lord's faithfulness before all who watched. One of the best-loved "Muller anecdotes" concerns Abigail Townsend, the young daughter of John Townsend, a close friend of Muller.

Early one morning, Abigail was playing in Muller's garden on Ashley Down when he took her by the hand. "Come, see what our Father will do."

He led her into a long dining-room. The plates, cups, and bowls were on the table. There was nothing on the table but empty dishes. There was no food in the larder, and no money to supply the need. The children were standing waiting for breakfast.

"Children, you know we must be in time for school," said Muller. Then lifting his hand he prayed, "Dear Father, we thank Thee for what Thou art going to give us to eat."

According to the account, a knock was then heard at the door. The baker stood there.

"Mr. Muller, I couldn't sleep last night. Somehow I felt you didn't have bread for breakfast, and the Lord wanted me to send you some. So I got up at two o'clock and baked some fresh bread, and have brought it."

Muller thanked the baker and praised God for His care.

"Children," he said, "we not only have bread, but the rare treat of fresh bread."

Almost immediately there came a second knock at the door. This time it was the milkman who announced that his milk cart had broken down outside the orphanage, and that he would like to give the children his cans of fresh milk, so that he might empty his wagon and repair it.

LARGER SUMS

Although Muller was now caring for three hundred children, he had a long and quickly growing waiting list of

children seeking admission. He found it distressing to turn even one child away. He was particularly depressed by what he heard about the moral state of the workhouses.

At the beginning of the year 1851 Muller received the biggest donation for his work that had so far been received: three thousand pounds. "This donation is . . . like a voice from heaven, speaking to me concerning a most deeply important matter respecting which I am seeking guidance from the Lord, the building of another Orphan-House."

For five more months, however, Muller continued to think and pray about the matter. In May 1851 he decided to go ahead with his plans for expansion, and began to pray that God would provide him with the necessary means, which would not, he reckoned, be less than about thirty-five thousand pounds.

In August, Muller received a cheque for 500 pounds, but in the early months of the new venture he received few large sums. In October Muller recorded:

It has now been for several months reported that I have already thirty thousand pounds in hand for the building fund, though this day it is actually only 1,139 pounds. . . . But none of these things discourage me. God knows that I have not thirty thousand pounds in hand. God can influence the minds of His dear children towards this intended Orphan-House, whatever their thoughts may have been hitherto on the subject.

He knelt down and prayed:

Lord, thou knowest how small an amount as yet Thy servant has, in comparison with what is needed; but Thou also knowest that Thy servant did not act rashly and under excitement in this matter, but waited upon Thee for six months in secret, before he spoke about this his intention. Now, Lord, in Thy mercy, sustain Thy servant's faith and patience, and, if it please Thee, speedily refresh his heart by sending large sums, for which he is looking, and which he confidently expects!

There was no immediate answer to this prayer. Towards the end of 1852 Muller prayed especially hard that God would send him some larger sums for the work. At last, on January 4th, 1853, he received a promise that as the joint donation of several Christians, he was to receive eight thousand one hundred pounds. "Day by day, for nineteen months," he wrote, "I had been looking out for more abundant help than I had had. I was fully assured that God would help with larger sums; yet the delay was long. See how precious it is to wait on God! See how those who do so are not confounded!"

By November 1857 Muller was able to open home "Number 2" on Ashley Down. There were many sceptics who doubted whether Muller would be able to provide for seven hundred children, and the large staff which was now needed to look after them. These doubts were confounded: and in the years which lay ahead Muller would startle the world by tripling the size of his work.

A BOUNDLESS FAITH

Looking back on nearly thirty years of work, there was ample incentive for Muller to expand the institutions' activities even further. Increased administrative work would present little problem: by the early 1860's Muller already employed three full-time personal assistants who relieved him of much of the correspondence, accounting, etc. His staff could be expanded as necessary. But the expense of looking after two thousand children plus staff would be enormous. Two new homes with the necessary land would cost about fifty thousand pounds. "And how," people said, "will you be able to keep up the work, provided you are able to accomplish the building, as then the regular current expenses will amount to about 35,000 pounds a year?"

I feel the force of all this [Muller replied] looking at it naturally. I am not a fanatic or enthusiast, but,

as all who know me are well aware, a calm, cool, quiet, calculating business man; and therefore I should be utterly overwhelmed, looking at it naturally; but as the whole of this work was commenced, and ever has been gone on with in faith, trusting in the Living God alone for everything, so it is also regarding this intended enlargement. I look to the Lord alone for helpers, land, means, and everything else needed. I have pondered the difficulties for months, and have looked steadily at every one of them; but faith in God has put every one of them aside.

And indeed, that faith was to set aside obstacle after obstacle in the years ahead and to demonstrate that the God George Muller served was truly the Living God. As Muller stated his intentions for expansion in May 1861 he reaffirmed his basic purpose and vision upon which the work was founded and which unalteringly continued even after his death.

My chief object was the glory of God, by giving a practical demonstration as to what could be accomplished simply through the instru-

mentality of prayer and faith, in order thus to benefit the Church of Christ at large, and to lead a careless world to see the reality of the things of God, by showing them, in this work, that the Living God is still, as 4,000 years ago, the Living God. This my aim has been abundantly honoured. Multitudes of sinners have been thus converted, multitudes of the children of God in all parts of the world have been benefited by this work, even as I had anticipated. But the larger the work has grown, the greater has been the blessing, bestowed in the very way in which I looked for blessing; for the attention of hundreds of thousands has been drawn to the work and many tens of thousands have come to see it. All this leads me to desire further and further to labour on in this way, in order to bring yet greater glory to the name of the Lord . . . That it may be seen how much one poor man, simply by trusting in God, can bring about by prayer; and that thus other children of God may be led to carry on the work of God in dependence upon Him, and that children of God may be led increasingly to trust in Him in their individual positions and circumstances. ♣

Essay of the Month

We again invite our readers to submit articles on the theme of the month. One essay per theme will be selected by our editorial staff for publication.

Listed below are the themes for the upcoming issues and the deadline by which they must be received in our *New Wine* office.

September — "Evangelism" (Part two of this theme) DUE: June 14

October — "Forgiveness and Reconciliation" DUE: July 12

November — "Music and Worship" DUE: August 16

Essays should be written from the writer's own experience and observation (preferably in the form of a testimony) and should be 1500 to 2000 words (or 4–6 typewritten, double-spaced pages). Please include a photograph and short biography of yourself.

Send all manuscripts to *New Wine* Essays, P.O. Box 22888, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33315. If you wish to have your manuscript returned, enclose a self-addressed and stamped envelope.

All published material becomes the property of *New Wine*.

Foreign Outreach Report

Guatemala

On February 4, 1976, Guatemala was devastated by an earthquake. In the time since that disaster struck, we have been in frequent contact with Norman Parish (missionary for 26 years in Guatemala), Jorge Lopez, and their emergency relief organization, CEMEC. CEMEC, which stands for Calvary Emergency Evangelical Committee, is made up of the pastors and workers of 150 Calvary Evangelical Churches throughout Guatemala.

Shortly after the earthquake, representatives of CEMEC came to Christian Growth Ministries to apprise us of the situation. Immediately we dispatched Jeff Monroe, staff photographer for *New Wine*, to bring back a firsthand pictorial report of the situation in Guatemala. At that time we also asked Jorge Lopez, secretary of CEMEC, who is working closely with the Building Supervisor of Guatemala in its reconstruction program, to come to Florida to share with our *New Wine* readers and local believers how we can help. Our discussion with Jorge Lopez revealed not only the grim facts of the earthquake, but even more, provided an inspiring outlook of what God is doing to redeem that country since the disaster.

THE DISASTER

At 3:03 in the morning, on February 4, while most of Guatemala slept, the devastating earthquake (7.5 on the Richter scale) shook that land for a total of 39 seconds. In that brief time, according to government figures, 22,778 people were killed, 76,504 injured, and over 250,000 homes were destroyed, leaving more than one million people homeless.

In the state of Chimaltenango, hardest hit by the quake, of its population of 199,735, 13,754 were killed, 32,000 injured and 90% of its homes were destroyed. All across Guatemala, reports were similar. Photos of the



destruction revealed that the heavy adobe brick houses collapsed inward upon their occupants as they slept. Billy Graham was quoted as saying that he had been in Vietnam and Korea during those wars, and had not seen such devastation as that which he saw in Guatemala!

Most of the survivors of the quake are now living in makeshift shacks of bamboo, straw, cardboard, and paper picked from the rubble. Those whose



Makeshift shelter

homes still stand refuse to enter them because the 2000 tremors since February 4th continually threaten to collapse these weakened structures. Lopez informed us that with the rainy season due to begin in May (six months of continuous rain and lowered temperatures) the ensuing toll

from sickness among the people living in these pitiful shacks may exceed the figure for those killed in the actual earthquake. *The need for protective housing during the rainy season is essential for the survival of the Guatemalan people.*

GOD AT WORK

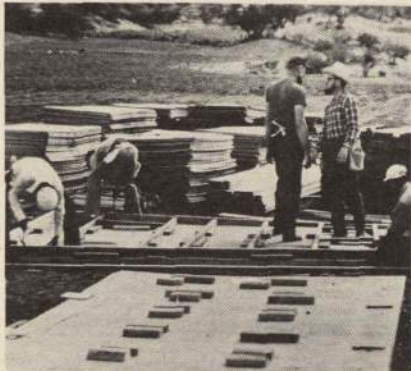
As we talked with Lopez about the need for housing and CEMEC's work in this regard, a story began to unfold that was equally as dramatic as the earthquake was destructive.

Prior to the earthquake, the Lord had been faithful to forewarn His people, and they had prepared themselves in very practical ways. In addition, because of the already existing relationships among the 150 Calvary Evangelical Churches throughout Guatemala, when the earthquake hit, instructions and communication through the pastors of these churches enabled them to galvanize their people into immediate relief action. Within 24 hours, the pastors of CEMEC were sending teams of people to investigate the hardest hit areas to identify the most pressing needs. As a result, they were the first to begin clearing away

the rubble, and the first to submit building plans for structures to the government, plans which were immediately approved. The government initially authorized CEMEC to be responsible for rebuilding two towns, Santa Maria Cauque and San Jacinto, with 1000 houses.

Providentially, evangelical Christians are leading the way in ministering to the survivors and in rebuilding the country. Although the primary task of CEMEC is in building homes for the people, their spiritual leadership among survivors of the quake is unmistakable.

The practical aspect of their work is that in each area, they erect a small sawmill to cut lumber and prefabricate the walls and roof of a 12' x 12' or 12' x 16' wood dwelling with corrugated metal roof, which is then transported to the site where the previous adobe home stood. A team of four men composed of CEMEC workers and local survivors* can completely erect one of these structures in three to four hours, at a total material cost of only \$300 for each house.



But the spiritual effect is even more significant. The building of these homes is a direct expression of Jesus' love for the displaced families. According to Jorge Lopez, "The Gospel of Jesus is being communicated, not primarily by preaching, but by Jesus' love in action in providing shelter for the survivors." Nightly services are also held in reconstruction areas, and the witness of the pastor with a hammer in his hand during the day and a Bible in his hand at night is bringing many to accept the reality of Jesus Christ. According to Lopez, "In a week's time in Almolonga, a tiny town, 64 people



were baptized. And in San Jacinto, 22 people. Seeing what the Christians are doing, the people then respond to what they are saying about the love of Jesus Christ."

GOVERNMENT TAKES NOTICE

The work of CEMEC is also having an astounding effect upon the government of Guatemala. When reconstruction efforts began, the head pastors of CEMEC committed themselves to a sound principle: In each area where they were sent, they would feed all the townspeople from a common kitchen, provided they would work in the reconstruction, following the scrip-

tural injunction in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, "If anyone will not work, neither let him eat." Thus, the survivors voluntarily work to feed their families, rather than waiting for free hand-outs, and for someone else to reconstruct their cities. Upon observing the success of this CEMEC program, the government's National Emergency Committee subsequently authorized this scriptural principle to be implemented nationwide in all project areas, calling the program, "Food for Work." In this and many other ways, God is opening the door for Christians to lead the way and establish God's order across the land.



Common kitchen for volunteer workers.

A CHANGE OF ATTITUDE

The fact that Guatemalan evangelicals are now looked to for help by the people of that country is in itself significant. Previously, the evangelicals had been largely ignored or even opposed, partially because of the people's devotion to an unusual mixture of idolatrous native religions with a misapplied traditional Catholicism. But since the earthquake, this has changed. God has moved the leadership of CEMEC into national prominence, and now the people are being confronted with a practical witness of the evangelical message.

Jorge Lopez informed us that the President of Guatemala has met with Norm Parish to discuss his work, and has sent government officials and advisors to observe CEMEC's rebuilding efforts. "We have been issued government passes," Lopez added, "to see any government official without making an appointment, along with unlimited access to government equip-

VIDEO TAPE AVAILABLE

As this article was being written, the production of a 30-minute video tape of the Guatemala situation was being completed. It is an excellent pictorial report combined with an interview with Jorge Lopez (available in both English and Spanish), showing the destruction and reconstruction of Guatemala after the earthquake.

This video tape is available on loan at no charge. If you would have opportunity, through your local T.V. stations, churches, schools or prayer groups, to utilize this tape to help in the rebuilding efforts in Guatemala, please write or call today to:

Christian Growth Ministries
Video Department
P.O. Box 22888
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. 33315

Phone: 305-525-2073

ment. When Billy Graham came to Guatemala to view the destruction, we used the Presidential helicopter to take him to the various areas." CEMEC has

THEY NEED OUR HELP

At the close of our discussion, Jorge Lopez touched upon a significant



One of the completed CEMEC houses.

been given the responsibility by the government for rebuilding a number of cities, an opportunity for influence which can only have come from God. Amazingly, Christians formerly disregarded now hold positions of highest influence in the rebuilding of Guatemala.

Another redeeming feature is the spiritual openness now apparent among the people, almost as if the walls of resistance to God's purposes were also levelled by the tremor.

Still another significant occurrence has been the cooperation of the Red Cross, the Mennonites, other organizations, and CEMEC in their vital relief work. Jorge Lopez commented that the cooperation of CEMEC and Mennonite workers in San Maria Cauque brought more rapid reconstruction to that city than to any other devastated area. Liking the situation to the vision in Ezekiel 37:7 "... and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a *shaking*, and the bones came together, bone to his bone," Lopez made this observation: "The 'shaking' of the earthquake has brought the Body of Christ together in a unified effort to reach out in love to the people of Guatemala."

point: "In any disaster, help comes in two distinct stages. Immediately after an earthquake, with the media there publicizing the need, large relief organizations come with medical aid and food. But after a week or two, the publicity decreases, and the emergency relief teams leave. Then the real work begins." For Guatemala that means rebuilding the homes of 250,000 families.

What can we do to help? We can't go to Guatemala to help the builders, but God has *already* called a work force together: the Christians of the 150 churches of CEMEC, located throughout Guatemala. They are rebuilding both the homes and the spiritual lives of their countrymen. We can help by supporting them in their work.

There are two unmistakable facts about the CEMEC relief work in Guatemala. First, God has sovereignly opened doors to this group of pastors and Christians, placing them in key positions to serve the needs of their own people. Secondly, we at Christian Growth Ministries and *New Wine* Magazine have known Norman Parish, Jorge Lopez, and the brothers of CEMEC for many years. Because of

this, we stand with them now, both spiritually and financially in the work they are doing.

YOUR PART IN IT

You, our readers, can help these ministers through whom God is working so effectively. They need sizable gifts of money to purchase lumber, roofing and other building materials for thousands of additional homes. Because of our relationship with these men, we are able to send all donated funds directly to them, eliminating the red tape and administrative costs which often diminish donations to larger organizations.

All contributions will be welcomed, but we challenge you to pray about this fact: *A three hundred dollar donation by an American family will build a house for a Guatemalan family.*

Money is needed immediately — time is of the essence. Send your contribution today to:

Christian Growth Ministries
"Guatemala"
P.O. Box 22888
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33315

All money sent by *New Wine* readers designated for "Guatemala" will go directly to the rebuilding work of the men of CEMEC. Our Christian brothers, and the homeless people of Guatemala are relying upon us. We must not fail them. 🙏



Toward Healing the Rift

by Don Basham

Report on the 1976 Charismatic Leaders Conference.

Doctrinal controversy within the Body of Christ is nothing new. Since the days of Peter and Paul, godly men holding conflicting convictions have clashed with one another over what constitutes the will of God in a given time and place. In Galatians 2:11, Paul wrote, "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face. . . ."

Recognizing that the current charismatic movement in Christianity would not necessarily be exempt from such occasional variances, a group of responsible ministries and teachers began, in 1971, to meet together, primarily for the purpose of fellowship, prayer and discussion of various differences in belief and practice. The first meeting was convened in Seattle, Washington, followed by yearly conferences in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1972, and St. Louis, Missouri in 1973 and 1974.

Then, for reasons which seemed valid at the time, it was decided the conference scheduled for the spring of 1975 should not be held. In retrospect, that decision seems to have been unwise, since in 1975, the controversy over shepherding, discipleship and submission flared into national prominence, along with accusations and verbal attacks against some of the teachers associated with Christian Growth Ministries in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

As it worked out, there was no corporate gathering of leaders to deal with the rising controversy until August, 1975. Many of the leaders who had attended the previous conferences agreed that had the regular annual conference been held earlier in 1975, some of the extreme polarization might have been avoided and some of the heated charges and accusations might have been resolved in their infancy. Belatedly, a number of leaders representing both sides of the question came together in August in Minneapolis, Minnesota, for three days of almost total frustration. Tempers flared, and suspicions and hostilities on both sides allowed little progress beyond deciding that another meeting should be held.

The second attempt (a kind of theological examination of the biblical teaching on discipleship, shepherding and submission) held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, December 16-17, 1975 gave evidence of a more charitable attitude and a genuine desire for understanding and reconciliation. Substantial progress was made toward allaying suspicions and re-establishing an atmosphere of love and trust in the

midst of strong differences. The statement issued by the leaders at Ann Arbor, a summary of which is quoted below, was widely circulated. One positive decision coming out of that meeting was the proposal that a Question and Answer Forum on discipleship, shepherding, submission be arranged, with the editorial staff of Logos Journal interviewing the teachers associated with Christian Growth Ministries on the subject. The March 1976 issues of both Logos Journal and New Wine Magazine contained identical transcripts of the forum.

THE ANN ARBOR REPORT

Following are the main elements of the report from the Ann Arbor Meeting:

December 16-17, 1975, a group of us met in Ann Arbor, Michigan, for theological and pastoral evaluation of the current controversy over "discipleship" and "shepherding". . . . We took up the questions which are most frequently raised:

- the extent of authority and submission
- tithing to a shepherd
- the relationship between "sheep" and "shepherd"
 - how extensive?
- the influence of the teachers from Ft. Lauderdale
- trans-local authority, the possibility of a new denomination

We experienced a real measure of understanding. We do not mean that there are not differences which still remain, for there are. But they need not be differences which divide us. In fact, we have come to a great sense of unity in the Spirit. We believe that where there have been excesses and abuses, they can be corrected. . . . We have come to the conviction that a considerable measure of the controversy has resulted from misunderstanding and poor communication. The real differences which exist are well within the bounds of "allowable variety" in the Body of Christ.

. . . we reached the place which could be best described as a "committed relationship" to one another. This does not mean that we do or will agree with one another in all regards, but it does mean that we are not

justified in publicly attacking the motivation, the attitude, the view, the conduct of one another without endeavoring to bring about a reconciliation through the prescribed New Testament procedure as outlined in Matthew 18, in love. It is anticipated that this "committed relationship" will increase in depth and in numbers among those who have been given responsibility in the charismatic renewal . . .

Respectfully submitted by:

Brick Bradford	Killian McDonnell
Jamie Buckingham	Bob Mumford
Larry Christenson	Derek Prince
Steve Clark	Kevin Ranaghan
David du Plessis	Michael Scanlon
Everett Fullam	Charles Simpson
Dan Malachuk	Rodman Williams

March 8-12, 1976 saw the resumption of the annual charismatic leadership conference, held this time in the St. Francis de Sales Center for Christian Renewal in Oklahoma City. The following statement was released for publication at the close of the conference.

REPORT ON THE 1976 CHARISMATIC LEADERS CONFERENCE

Reconciliation among major segments of the charismatic renewal resulted from a week-long meeting of ministers, teachers, and editors in Oklahoma City March 8-12, 1976. Thirty-eight representatives from the movement gathered at the Center for Christian Renewal for four days of prayer, sharing, and discussion on the shepherding-discipleship-submission controversy that has troubled Christians in many parts of the world in the last year.

The consensus of the meeting was that allegations of heresy were unfounded, that there was no reason to question the integrity of the teachers involved, and that, while many doctrinal differences remain among the groups represented, those differences fall within acceptable limits.

The conferees agreed that much of the controversy had grown out of rumor and misunderstanding, misapplication of certain scriptural principles, and a lack of communication among leaders of different ministries and groups.

Leaders associated with Christian Growth Ministries, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, around whom much of the controversy has swirled, said in a statement to the conference that they regretted the abuse and confusion that had resulted from the discipleship teaching. They pledged to correct such abuses and misunderstandings wherever possible.

Other groups represented at the conference — the

fifth meeting in a series beginning in Seattle in 1971 — were as follows:

American Baptist Charismatic Fellowship, Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee, Church of the Redeemer (Episcopal), Classical Pentecostals, Elim Fellowship, Episcopal Charismatic Fellowship, Logos International Fellowship, Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Service Committee, Mennonite Renewal Services, Presbyterian Charismatic Communion, World Missionary Assistance Plan, Youth With A Mission, and various Christian centers and ministries from every geographical area of the United States and Canada.

Specifically, the conference:

(1) Accepted the report from a theological inquiry into the discipleship-shepherding teaching held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in December, 1975.

(2) Received and commended a statement of concern and regret issued by the teachers associated with Christian Growth Ministries.

(3) Called for an end to public attacks and malicious gossip as a way of dealing with differences within the Christian community.

(4) Adopted a statement of ethics for handling differences between ministers, which was drawn up as a result of the meeting in Seattle in 1971.

(5) Established a "Charismatic Concerns Committee" to plan future conferences and to help deal with issues and problems that arise in the charismatic renewal.

(6) Agreed to continue to meet together, at least annually, to consider how the charismatic renewal can best serve the renewal of the Church.

(The next section in the statement was The Ann Arbor Report, which was reprinted in its entirety earlier in this article.)

STATEMENT OF CONCERN AND REGRET

Following is the statement issued in Oklahoma City by teachers associated with Christian Growth Ministries:

We realize that controversies and problems have arisen among Christians in various areas as a result of our teaching in relation to subjects such as submission, authority, discipling, shepherding. We deeply regret these problems and, insofar as they are due to fault on our part, we ask forgiveness from our fellow believers whom we have offended.

We realize that our teachings, though we believe them to be essentially sound, have in various places been misapplied or handled in an immature way; and that this has caused problems for our brothers in the ministry. We deeply regret this and ask for forgiveness. Insofar as it lies in our power, we will do our best to correct these situations and to restore any broken relationships.

Don Basham
Ern Baxter
Bob Mumford

John Poole
Derek Prince
Charles Simpson

RESPONSE TO STATEMENT

The remaining conferees received with gratitude the above statement from the teachers associated with Christian Growth Ministries and thereafter the entire conference made the following response:

We call for an end to the public attacks on those individuals involved in the teaching under question. Public attacks of this kind are a grave disservice to the work of Christ. Also, the multitude of rumors and stories of alleged or actual abuses that are being circulated by members of the Body at large are doing serious harm to His Kingdom.

We appeal to all Christians to live according to the teaching of Scripture which relates to resolving difficulties between members of the Body. In particular, we reaffirm, and invite all Christian leaders to affirm, the following guidelines based on Matthew 18:15-17, as a statement of how we desire to relate to one another when difficult situations arise. These guidelines were originally drawn up after the Seattle meeting in 1971.

(1) We believe that God has set us in positions of leadership within the Body of Christ, either as leaders within a local congregation, or as preachers with a ministry to the Body of Christ at large, or in a combination of both these ministries.

(2) So far as we are able, we will seek at all times to keep our lives and ministries sound in respect to ethics, morals and doctrine.

(3) We will acknowledge and respect all others who have similar ministries and who are willing to make a similar commitment in respect to ethics, morals and doctrine.

(4) If at any time we have any criticism or complaint against any of our brother ministers within the Body of Christ, we will seek to take the following steps: First, we will approach our brother directly and privately, and seek to establish the true facts. Second, if thereafter we still find grounds for criticism or complaint, we will seek the counsel and cooperation of at least two other ministers mutually acceptable to our brother and ourselves, in order to make any changes needed to rectify the situation. Finally, if this does not resolve the criticism or complaint, we will seek to bring the whole matter before a larger group of our fellow ministers, or alternately before the local congregation to which our brother belongs. In following these steps, our motive will be to retain the fellowship of our brother and to arrive at a positive, scriptural solution which will maintain the unity of the Body of Christ.

(5) Until we have done everything possible to follow the steps outlined in paragraph 4, we will not publicly voice any criticism or complaint against a fellow minister.

(6) In our general conduct towards our fellow ministers and all other believers, we will seek to obey the exhortation of scripture to "follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19).

Don Basham	Francis MacNutt
Ern Baxter	Ralph Mahoney
Brick Bradford	Ralph Martin
Jack Brombach	Earl Morey
Larry Christenson	Bob Mumford
Steve Clark	Ken Pagard
Dick Coleman	Don Pfothenauer
Judson Cornwall	John Poole
Loren Cunningham	Derek Prince
David du Plessis	Lester Pritchard
David Edwards	Kevin Ranaghan
Charles Farah	Jeff Schiffmayer
Everett Fullam	Charles Simpson
Joe Garlington	Bob Slosser
James Hamann	Vinson Synan
Bob Hawn	Morris Vaagenes
Rod Lensch	Bob Whitaker
Len LeSourd	Maxwell Whyte
Nelson Litwiller	Bruce Yocum

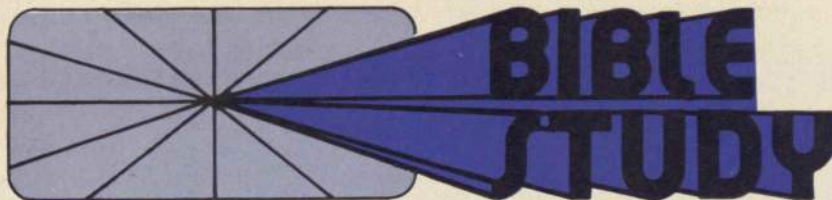
CONCLUSION

As one of the CGM teachers who has been directly involved in the controversy, and as a participant in both the very painful Minneapolis meeting and the very constructive 1976 Charismatic Leaders Conference in Oklahoma City, I would like to convey my appreciation for and my confidence in the men of God on both sides of the issue, who have so diligently prayed and labored to bring understanding and reconciliation.

It became apparent to all of us in Oklahoma City that our difficulties stem from more than natural sources. We saw plainly that we were "wrestling not against flesh and blood" but were contending with Satanic forces of a high and powerful order.

We frankly admit our disappointment that leadership from some segments of the charismatic renewal did not, or perhaps could not, join with us in our attempts at reconciliation. We respect them and their ministries, even as we pray that a way be soon opened to further communication, fellowship and eventual reconciliation.

In the meantime, we rejoice in our fresh resolve and renewed spiritual determination to mutually esteem one another as we strive to consider our differences and handle our disputes in a manner which will bring honor to the whole Body of Christ. ♣



ECONOMIC SALVATION

Scripturally, Christ Jesus has become our salvation in every area of our lives. The Greek words used for salvation (*soteria* and *sozo*) make it clear that our redemption not only provides the promised blessing of eternal joy in heaven, but also has temporal applications such as healing, deliverance and prosperity. Isaiah 12:3 says "... with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," and the Holy Spirit is presently teaching us how to enjoy the earthly privileges of drawing from all the wells, including the well of economic salvation.

(Bible Study answers are found on page 25.)

1. Read Galatians 3:13–14 and answer the following questions:

- What has Christ redeemed us from? _____
- He has done this in order that what might come upon us? _____

2. Through His redemptive work on the cross, Jesus Christ has made for us a newer and better covenant than even Israel had. 2 Corinthians 1:20 shows us that all of God's promises are for us in Christ _____ and _____.

3. Through His covenants what does God give us? (Deut. 8:18) _____

4. Jesus was made a curse for us that we might partake of all God's blessings. Since the curse of the Law has been removed from us it would be good to see just exactly what is a curse and what is a blessing. Using Deuteronomy 28 as our text, write the appropriate term — *blessing* or *curse* — beside the following conditions.

- v.29 failure to prosper _____
- v.38 to be in want _____
- v.11 to be plenteous in goods _____
- v.12 to be able to lend and not borrow _____
- v.59 a sickness of long continuance _____
- v.20 rebuke and frustration in the things you try to accomplish _____
- v.13 to have power over the circumstances _____

5. According to Deuteronomy 28:47 we are to serve the Lord with joyfulness for _____

6. On the cross, Jesus Christ became poor that through his poverty we might become (2 Cor. 8:9) _____

7. God's word to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 was "I will bless thee . . . and thou shalt be a blessing." 2 Corinthians 9:8 teaches us that God gives us all sufficiency in all things for what reason? _____

8. Jesus said that we would always have the poor with us. But do the poor have to be in need? (Acts 2:45) _____

9. According to Proverbs 19:17 when we give to the poor

- to whom do we lend? _____
- who will repay us? _____

10. Psalms 122:6 gives us a vital key to prosperity. We are to: _____

11. What debt above all do we owe our fellowman? (Rom. 13:8) _____

12. The Bible teaches us that God's people are to tithe. In the light of Malachi 3:8–11 answer the following questions about tithing:

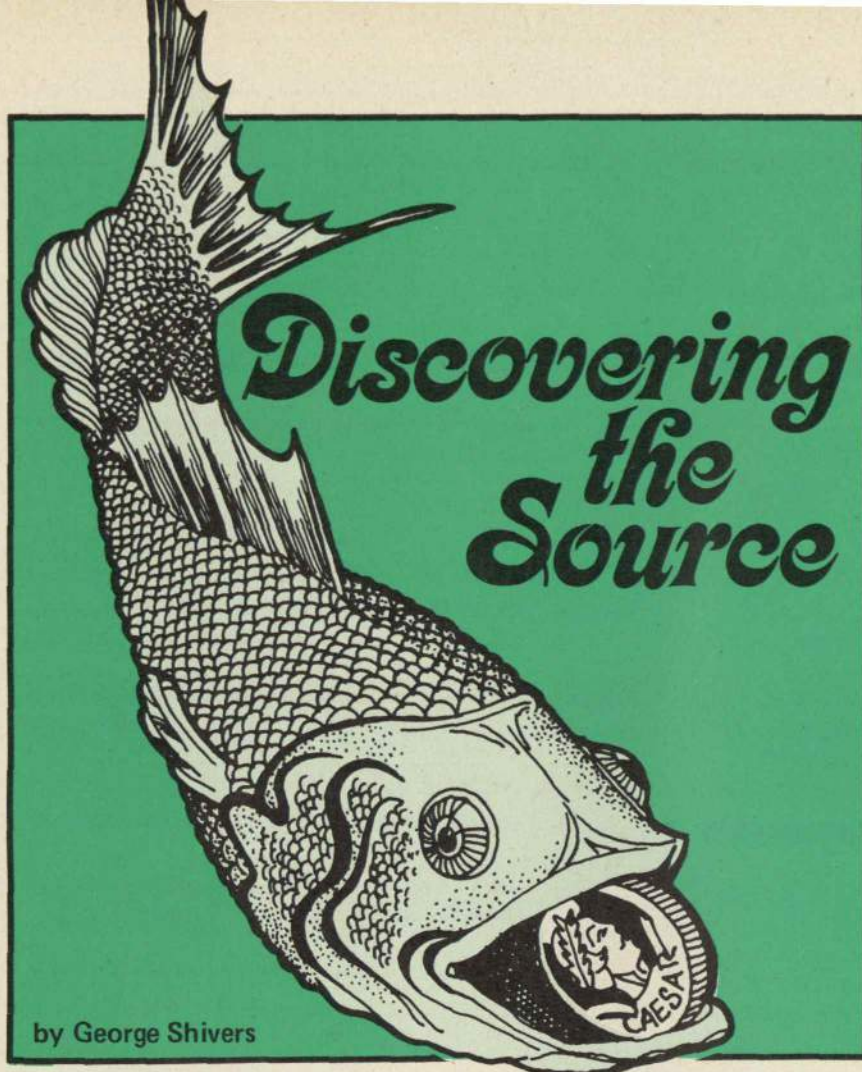
- If we fail to tithe whom do we rob? _____
- What will fall upon us? _____
- When we tithe whose faithfulness will be proven? _____
- What will God do to Satan, the devourer? _____

13. Compare Deuteronomy 12:8–14 and Malachi 3:10 with 1 Timothy 3:15; 5:17–18 and Galatians 6:6. Using the principles taught in these scriptures would you say it is scriptural to tithe anywhere we please? _____

14. When the wicked store up wealth, who are they saving it for? (Prov. 13:22) _____

15. During times of economic hardship, what are we to do? (Hab. 3:17–18) _____

16. In Deuteronomy 30:19 God states that he has put before us _____ which is _____ and _____ which is _____. He asks us to choose _____.



A banker learns about financial maturity.

The following essay on "financial responsibility" was selected as the Essay of the Month for May.

The society in which we are living today makes it almost impossible for a person without a disciplined life to understand, or to totally embrace the truth that God can and will supply his every need. Since our nation's economy is based almost entirely upon credit, borrowing has become an American way of life.

The ease with which credit can be obtained has caused us to look more and more at our own personal ability to provide our needs, and, consequently, to take our eyes off God. I have found that the more faith and trust we place in ourself to provide our needs, the less faith and trust we have to place in God and His ability to supply our needs.

Six years ago I became a new creature in Christ Jesus. My life up to that time had been devoted to climbing the social ladder and becoming successful in the banking business. I hadn't read the warning in 1 Timothy 6:9, that speaks of the temptations, snares, and hurtful lusts which drown those who seek to be rich. I praise God that He stopped me from taking that direction.

Very soon after my rebirth, He began to show me, in small ways at first, that my life was centered on materialism instead of God. I tried to excuse myself and justify my ambitions by saying, "God wants us all to prosper." "I can't lower my standard

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of living — it wouldn't be a good witness if I were poor."

Actually, I didn't understand what the word "prosper" really even meant. At the time, I was so far in debt and so saddled with monthly payments, it was difficult for me to believe that I was prospering. As the Holy Spirit began to woo my wife and me toward tithing, we found this act a peaceful release of faith, but we still clung to the security of material possessions. Shortly after we had begun to tithe, He placed me in a situation where my income was cut in half. At first, I was crushed. We were living in a fine four-bedroom brick home with a two-car garage, and I knew that now my family would have to move to a smaller, less expensive home. Feeling that I was failing my family, I would drive down the street and weep when ever I saw a child in dirty, ragged clothes, thinking that was how my children would look because of my salary reduction. But when I called the kids together to explain the situation, God ministered to me through them in such a beautiful way. With tears rolling down my cheeks, I told them that we could no longer afford the house we were living in and would have to move to a smaller one. When I finished, they all three ran to me, put their arms around me, and said, "Daddy, we just want to live with you. We don't care where it is."

That's when my eyes gradually began to open. A portion of the faith I had in myself began to shift to faith in God. He slowly began to show me how much I was striving in financial matters, I still hadn't learned that God wanted to supply all the needs of my family. We found another home and moved into it. It was a rather humbling experience to face our friends at first. Soon, however, something began to be very noticeable. Even though our income had been cut in half, we seemed to have a little extra money each month. In general, I discovered that when I put less confidence in myself and more in God, things went better.

About six months later I found myself drifting back to a place of

confidence in myself. I thought, "I can do pretty well on half the money, even if I do say so myself." But God could see what was happening, so He cut my income again! Now there was no choice but to trust completely in Him and in His Word. One night, Matthew 6:19-34 seemed almost to jump out of the Bible at me. It was such a blessing to realize how much He loved me and desired to care for me.

FINANCIAL MATURITY

For the next six months God supplied in abundance each and every single need in our family. We lacked nothing! We truly lived an abundant life, praising God for everything from each loaf of bread in the cabinet to our socks and shoes on our feet. Everything just seemed to be there before it was needed. I had finally learned that God is willing and able to supply our needs. I had learned not to put my faith and trust in myself and my income, but to put it in God.

Apparently God felt I had finally learned what He wanted me to learn, because He increased my salary to what it formerly had been and He has since seen fit to bless my income abundantly.

I further learned that financial bondage is the direct result of trusting in ourselves. We come into bondage because we have an insatiable desire on the inside for "things". But we must look to God as the source of our satisfaction as well as the source of our needs. If we take our eyes off God and His will for our life, we immediately begin to attempt to do things our way. Too many times our way is to look at the future, figure out how much our budget can stand in payments, and go borrow the money. Prior to the experience I have just related, I had so many monthly payments that there was often not enough money to buy proper food and clothing. I was in bondage to my creditors. I was earning money for them instead of God.

In bringing us to financial maturity, God cannot demonstrate His power to supply our needs if we don't let Him. Now when I feel a desire for some-

thing, I first seek God's direction through prayer. Whether or not there are available funds in the bank is irrelevant. What is relevant, and of utmost importance, is: Does God want this as a part of my life? If He does, then all the resources of the world are His to accomplish it. The available funds are His, not mine.

Too often we don't give God an opportunity to provide, but do it ahead of His schedule and miss a blessing from Him. It is easier to follow God's direction when you do not have the funds. The lack of available funds is a sure answer that God is not ready. When that is the case you know that God will supply it when He is ready. But when the funds are available, sometimes a battle arises between your own self will and the will of God. This is where the disciplined life is so important. There have been occasions in my life when I let my own self-will defeat what I knew to be the will of God about a purchase, only to find out later that God had a specific place for the money I had spent.

The more mature a person becomes in financial matters the more God will see fit to entrust him with. Luke 19:17 says "Because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." I would not entrust my entire paycheck each month to one of my children because they would not use it wisely. A certain part can be entrusted to them and that part will grow as they mature in financial matters. My children are expected to counsel with me and with God as they appropriate their funds. God expects the same from me in the appropriation of the funds He trusts me with. He tells me very plainly where He wants His resources placed. Sometimes it is for my benefit and sometimes it is for the benefit of another of His children. I just thank Him for the portion He entrusts to me.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Financial responsibility is actually two-fold. First, it involves our responsibility to God, and second, God's responsibility to us. Only when we can

demonstrate to God our maturity in financial matters can He demonstrate His power to supply our every need.

God has taught me that financial maturity involves learning three basic principles:

1. Giving
 - a. To God — Malachi 3:10
 - b. To Christians — Romans 12:13
 - c. To the poor — Proverbs 19:17
2. Receiving
 - a. From diligent labor — Romans 12:11
 - b. From creative resourcefulness — Proverbs 31
 - c. From prayer
3. Spending
 - a. By building a sales resistance (discipline)
 - b. By shopping for the best buy
 - c. By not buying when it requires counting on future income

He has shown me the importance of 1 Timothy 5:8. "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." It is my responsibility to provide, but I cannot provide without the leadership and guidance of God. I believe with all my heart that God is my giver. No matter who my employer is or what my job is, I know that I am to do it as unto the Lord (see Col. 3:22,23). And the Lord gives me my reward.

All I have in this life has been provided by God, and it is my prayer that I might be obedient to Him and His will in the appropriation and application of the resources He sees fit to entrust to me. 🍷

BIBLE STUDY ANSWERS

(From page 23)

1. a. The curse of the Law; b. The blessings of Abraham. 2. Yea, amen. 3. The power to get wealth. 4. a. Curse; b. Curse; c. Blessing; d. Blessing; e. Curse; f. Curse; g. Blessing. 5. The abundance of all things. 6. Rich. 7. That we may abound in every good work. 8. No. 9. a. The Lord; b. The Lord. 10. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. 11. Our debt of love. 12. a. God; b. A curse; c. God's; d. Rebuke him. 13. No. 14. The just. 15. Rejoice in the Lord. 16. Blessing, life; cursing, death; life.

A black and white photograph of a man in a dark suit, seen from the back and side. He is holding a wad of cash behind his back with his left hand, while his right hand is placing a coin into a small metal tray held out by another person's hand. The background is a solid light blue.

WILL A MAN ROB GOD?

by Derek Prince

A scriptural examination of tithing.

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all (Gen. 14:18–20).

Returning from a successful battle against the four kings who had defeated and taken captive the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abram — later renamed Abraham — is met by Melchizedek, who is both king of Salem and priest of the most high God. As priest, Melchizedek offers Abraham bread and wine, the two elements that later reemerge in the most sacred ordinance of the Christian faith — the Lord's Supper. In return, Abraham gives to Melchizedek, as priest, tithes of all the booty that he

had taken in battle.

In this passage we are introduced for the first time to two important scriptural concepts: *priesthood* and *tithing*. Often the first occurrence of a word in the Bible contains in it the seeds of truth which is to be more fully developed later. If we follow these two concepts of priesthood and tithing through the rest of Scripture, we discover that they remain closely linked throughout. We may briefly summarize the truth unfolded concerning each, as follows:

Priesthood: The primary responsibility of a priest is described in Hebrews 5:1 "... that he may offer both *gifts* and *sacrifices* for sins..." Through offering sacrifice for sin, a priest obtains — for those to whom he ministers — acceptance and direct access to God (which cannot be obtained in any other way). Over and above sacrifice for sin, a priest may

offer *gifts* which express the worship and gratitude of those whose sacrifices have obtained them acceptance with God. Sacrifices are predetermined, in their nature and form, by divine ordinance; gifts are to a great extent left to the initiative of each worshiper.

The second main responsibility of a priest is stated in Malachi 2:7, "For the priest's lips should keep *knowledge*, and they should seek the law at this mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." A priest is God's *messenger* to His people, able to impart to them the knowledge of His law. In particular, he is required to teach the difference between "clean" and "unclean" — between that which is acceptable to God and that which is not (see Lev. 10:10–11). In Hosea 4:6 God warns the man who fails in these duties that he is no longer qualified to be a priest: "... because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject

thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me."

Tithing: The word "tithe" is directly related to "tenth." Tithing is the practice of regularly setting aside and devoting to God the first tenth of our income — whether in money or in produce or in some other form. In addition to tithes, there are two other main forms of giving referred to in Scripture: *offerings* and *alms*. The tithe is a fixed proportion of our income over which God has a special claim. *Offerings* are what we give to God over and above the tithe and for the most part they are left to the discretion of each worshiper. *Alms* are what we give to meet the needs of our fellow men.

TITHING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Many Christians have the impression that tithing was first enacted under the Law of Moses, but this is not so. It was more than four hundred years before the Law that Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek. Two generations later — and still long before the Law — Jacob vowed to give the Lord a tenth of all that the Lord would give him (Gen. 28:22). It is not unreasonable to conclude that tithing was regularly practiced by all the patriarchs.

For Abraham, tithing was not the result of a law imposed upon him, but rather the free expression of his *faith*. In Romans 4:11–12 we are told that we qualify to be called the children of Abraham if we "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised" (i.e. at the time when Melchizedek met him). Tithing is one of the "steps of faith" in which we are challenged to follow Abraham.

In due course, under the law of Moses, a lower order of priesthood was instituted, related to Levi rather than to Melchizedek. Both kingship and priesthood had been combined in the person of Melchizedek, but this was not so with the priesthood under the law. Priesthood was given to the tribe of Levi; kingship was given, briefly, to the tribe of Benjamin, then permanently to the tribe of Judah. During

this dispensation no person was permitted to combine in himself the two offices of king and priest.

Unlike Melchizedek, who had first given Abraham bread and wine, the Levitical priests had nothing of their own to give the people except a portion of what the people had first given them. However, the direct connection between priesthood and tithing continued unchanged. In Numbers 18:21 the Lord told Moses, "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi *all the tenth in Israel* for an inheritance, *for their service which they serve.*" The "service" here referred to is that of priesthood. Thus, the Israelites acknowledged the Levites as their priests by giving them their tithes.

In Numbers 18:26–28 the Lord further told the Levites, "When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a *tenth part of the tithe* . . . and ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering *to Aaron the priest.*" Thus, the Levites in turn acknowledged Aaron as their high priest by giving him a tithe of the tithes which they had received from the other Israelites.

Further instructions about tithing under the Law of Moses are given in Deuteronomy 12:5–14; 14:22–29; 26:12–15. It is outside the scope of this article to examine in detail all the requirements there stated. However, it appears that in addition to the tithes regularly given to the Levites, a further tithe was to be offered every third year from which not only the Levites, but all the poor and needy in the land were to benefit. It has been estimated that, in one way or another, the average Israelite under the Law returned about twenty-five percent of his income to God. There is one point about which these scriptures are specific: an Israelite was not free to give his tithes in any way that he pleased. He was required to give them at the appointed place and time to persons whom God specified.

From this overview of tithing, two principles emerge: First, tithes were a

way in which believers acknowledged the priest who ministered on their behalf; second, they gave their tithes directly to the priests. Further, under the economy of the Law of Moses, the prosperity of the priests was directly related to that of the people. The more successful the priests were in both blessing and teaching the people, the more the people prospered. In turn, the more the people prospered, the greater was the tithe that they were able to give to their priests.

After the Jews returned from Babylon and the temple worship was reconstituted, the procedure for tithing was reactivated. All the people pledged themselves to bring their tithes to the Levites; and the Levites in turn brought a tithe of their tithes into the temple "storehouse" (see Neh. 10:37–38 NAS). Later, the people reneged on their pledge. Deprived of their tithes, the Levites deserted the temple and returned to working in their own fields in order to obtain the support they needed. As a result, the temple "storehouse" was left empty and its services were abandoned (see Neh. 13:10–11).

After a while, however, Nehemiah called the people back to their commitment. They started once again bringing their tithes to the Levites, who returned to their ministry in the temple. The temple storehouse was replenished and its services resumed (see Neh. 13:11–14). This established that the faithfulness of the people in bringing their tithes was essential for the proper functioning of the temple.

Later, in Malachi 3:8–10, the Lord again had to rebuke His people for their unfaithfulness and disobedience in respect of tithes and offerings:

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

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

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a bless-

ing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it (Mal. 3:8-10).

These verses establish a number of important principles:

(1) God keeps a record of His people's giving and He blesses or curses accordingly.

(2) The prosperity of the people is bound up with that of their priests. Where the temple "storehouse" becomes empty, the priests are no longer able to carry on their ministry and the whole nation suffers as a consequence.

(3) God requires His people to express their faith by their giving. When they obey, the result is such abundance that every need is met. The key to this abundance is not praying, but giving. People who merely pray, without giving, will pray in vain.

This passage in Malachi is only about a dozen verses from the end of the Old Testament. Presumably, therefore, it was not just recorded merely for the benefit of the few generations left before the close of the Old Covenant, but looks forward also into the New. Properly interpreted, the principles contained in it apply equally to God's people under the New Covenant.

It should be pointed out that in the Old Testament tithes were never used for the construction or equipping of places of worship. These were always provided for out of special offerings. Two main examples are the tabernacle of Moses (see Exodus 35:4-29) and the temple of Solomon (see 1 Chronicles 29:1-9).

TITHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In Hebrews, chapters 5-7, the writer takes great pains to emphasize that Jesus is our "high priest after the order of Melchizedek." Earlier, at the Last Supper, Jesus Himself had already established this identification when He offered to His disciples the same distinctive symbols that Melchizedek had offered to Abraham — bread and wine. By this act He indicated that the priesthood of Melchizedek, suspended under the Law of Moses, was being

restored in Him. Consistently with this, kingship and priesthood were once again united in His person (see Heb. 6:20-7:3).

Since Jesus did not belong to the Levitical priesthood, He could not offer the sacrifices which they alone were authorized to offer. Yet, as a priest, His ministry was incomplete without the appropriate sacrifices. The writer of Hebrews describes three successive kinds of sacrifice which Jesus offered. First, "in the days of his flesh" (during His earthly ministry) he "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" (Heb. 5:7). Second, on the cross He "offered himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9:14). Third, exalted in heaven He now offers unceasing intercession on behalf of all who come to God by Him (Heb. 7:25).

The writer of Hebrews further emphasizes that the priesthood of Melchizedek, being based on an endless life, is permanent and unchanging. This includes the receiving of tithes (see Heb. 7:4-8, 24-25). For us who are by faith the children of Abraham, his relationship to Melchizedek as his priest is a pattern for our relationship to Jesus as our high priest. On the one hand, Jesus offers us the bread and the wine which are the symbols of His sacrifice on the cross and of the New Covenant into which He thus brings us with Himself. On the other hand, we — like Abraham — offer back to Jesus "tithes of all." The giving of our tithes is the scriptural way by which we acknowledge His priesthood.

Under the Law of Moses, tithing was regulated by precise rules. In the New Testament, *rules* are replaced by *grace*. In 2 Corinthians Paul devotes the whole of chapters 8 and 9 to the principles which govern the giving of Christians, and the key word in these chapters is "grace," which occurs seven times in chapter 8 and twice in chapter 9. Nevertheless, it is wrong to suppose that "grace" sets a lower standard than "law." In Matthew 23:23 Jesus commended the scribes and Pharisees because they paid tithes, but in Matthew 5:20 He warned His own disciples, "Except your righteous-

ness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." From those under grace God expects not less, but more than He does from those under law.

The New Testament does not indicate that there was a single universal system which governed the giving of all Christians. Rather, it lays down a number of basic principles, and leaves us free to work out the application of these principles in whatever way best suits any given situation. We have already stated the principle that by the giving of our tithes we acknowledge Jesus as our "high priest after the order of Melchizedek." Here are some other relevant principles:

(1) In Romans 13:7 we are told to give "honour to whom honour" is due. Gifts — whether of money or of commodities — are an effective and scriptural way to show honor. In Mark 7:10-12, Jesus told the Pharisees that in failing to provide for the financial and material needs of their parents they were guilty of breaking the fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother." Thus to provide for a person financially and materially is one scriptural way to show him honor.

Likewise, in Acts 28:10, Luke says that the people of Malta, after receiving healing through Paul's ministry, "honoured us with many honours; and when we departed they laded us with such things as were necessary." The "honours" here referred to were gifts of money or commodities.

One appointed way, therefore, for us to "honor" those who minister to us is by giving to them. Conversely, if we fail to give when we are able, we are dishonoring God's ministers.

(2) In Acts 4:34-35 we are told that the believers who sold lands or houses "brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet." This indicates that they placed their gifts at the disposal of their leaders and trusted them to handle them in the best way to meet the needs of all the believers. The record shows that, at first, the apostles were directly responsible for administering these gifts, but later —

"when the number of the disciples was multiplied" the load became too heavy for them and deacons were appointed to carry out this task, still under the oversight of the apostles (see Acts 6:1-6).

This establishes the principle that the spiritual leaders in the Church are responsible also for the general administration and oversight of its finances.

(3) In 1 Timothy 5:17 Paul says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine [teaching]." This is another passage where the word "honor" has a financial application. Lest there should be any doubt about this, Paul goes on to explain in the next verse, "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."

This establishes the principle that elders are entitled to the financial support of those to whom they minister, to be assessed in proportion to their effectiveness and to the amount of time they devote to teaching God's Word. An elder who devotes his whole time to such a ministry obviously needs more support than one who only devotes his spare time to it.

In 1 Corinthians 9:7 Paul uses a variety of metaphors to state the same principle: "Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?" (NAS). "Serving as a soldier," "planting a vineyard," and "tending a flock" are three different metaphors for the ministry of preaching, teaching and governing God's people. Each metaphor establishes the principle that those who minister the word of God are to be supported financially by those to whom they minister.

A little further on, in 1 Corinthians 9:13, Paul uses the example of the Levitical priests to enforce his argument: "Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar?" (NAS). ("Those

who perform sacred services" and "attend regularly to the altar" are the Levitical priests.) From this reference to the Levitical priests, Paul goes on, in the next verse, to draw a direct analogy with the ministers of the Gospel: "So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel."

There can be no question that Paul here uses the pattern of the Levitical priests in the Old Testament as an example of how the ministers of the Gospel in the New Testament should be supported. We have already seen that the Levitical priests received and lived from the tithes of Israel. By a simple, logical extension, the ministers of the Church should receive and live from the tithes of those whom they care for.

We have seen, too, that the two main responsibilities of the Levitical priests were to teach the people God's law and to offer sacrifice on their behalf. Under the New Covenant these responsibilities are transferred to the spiritual leaders of the Church. In Hebrews 13:7 the writer describes these leaders as those "who have spoken unto you the word of God . . ." This is the ministry of *teaching*. In Hebrews 13:17 the writer further says concerning these leaders, ". . . for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account . . ." This ministry of "watching" finds its fullest expression in intercession — the same *sacrifice* that Jesus, as our high priest, now offers on behalf of us all in heaven. It is the spiritual counterpart of the sacrifices offered on Israel's behalf by the Levitical priests. Since the responsibilities of the leaders of the Church in the New Testament correspond to those of the Levitical priests in the Old Testament, it is logical that these leaders should live as the priests did — from the tithes of God's people.

SOME COMMON OBJECTIONS

The use of tithes to support the leaders of the Church is logical, scriptural and practical. Wherever this principle is followed, the result is almost invariably financial prosperity and in

most cases also spiritual prosperity. However, various objections are offered to it. We will take a few moments to consider some of these:

Objection No. 1: "All I have belongs to God." This sounds good, but a person who talks like this often does not actually give God even a tenth. It is somewhat like a man who says, "All I have belongs to my wife," but in practice he does not give her a house-keeping allowance or any spending money for herself. His wife might well ask him, "If all you have belongs to me, why do I see so little of it?"


Objection No. 2: "Tithing is just Old Testament legalism." To this there are two answers. First, the practice of tithing neither began nor ended with the Law of Moses. Second, tithing for the Christian is not the result of legalistic rules, but of the grace of God working in his heart and making him "a cheerful giver" (see 2 Cor. 9:7).


Objection No. 3: "I can't afford to tithe." My answer to this is, "On the contrary, you can't afford not to!" Over and over again, God's word promises abundant blessings to those who are faithful in giving to Him. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over . . ." (Luke 6:38). "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . . and [I will] pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, . . . And all nations shall call you blessed . . ." (Mal. 3:10-12). However, God always requires that we take the first step, in faith, not waiting "until we can afford it," but simply trusting God to keep His promises.

Oswald J. Smith, pastor emeritus of the famous People's Church in Toronto, Canada, relates that during the years of the depression men came to the church office every day, seeking financial help. He made it a point to ask each man whether he had been in the habit of tithing. Not one had! Eventually Oswald Smith came to the conclusion that, in times of need, *God has His own way of providing for* (continued on page 31)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

This month's answers by Bob Mumford

 We are instructed in the Lord's Prayer to pray, "... and lead us not into temptation." Does this mean that God *does* lead us into temptation?

 This phrase has been a source of controversy and confusion. Several times in church history and especially more recently, there have been committees formed to remove this statement from the text as an interpolation which is inconsistent with the nature of God and other verses — especially James 1:13. "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt any one (James 1:13 — NAS)."

Basically, the source of the problem is found in the Hebrew and Greek word for "tempt," which is translated both "test" and "tempt" in alternate places, and thus it becomes a matter of translation.

If we ask a person who knows the Scripture if God will "test" us — that is, create some particular circumstance to manifest our weakness or stability in relation to the Word and will of God, they would say, yes! Compare for instance the King James Version of Genesis 22:1 "... God did *tempt* Abraham" with the New American Standard Version, "... God *tested* Abraham." Thus, the problem should be clear. If in the Lord's prayer we translated the text "lead us not into a testing," it would be much clearer, for it removes the aspect of sin which surrounds the word "temptation."


The meaning of the petition which the Lord Jesus encouraged us to pray, as I understand it, would be: "Father, I pray that there would be nothing in


me or in my heart that would require you to put me to the test."

Understood in this manner, it becomes a very vital petition, and prayed with faith, could spare us certain kinds of "testing" that would not be necessary due to our keeping short accounts with God. This same principle is applicable to the preceding phrase "and forgive us our debts, as we *also* have forgiven our debtors." This requires a fresh and up-to-date relationship between man and God!

Finally the principle of something being in our heart that needs to be "put to the test," is fully illustrated in the life of Judas Iscariot. A review of his life-style reveals a certain love for money — even avarice. When our Lord Jesus made Judas the treasurer rather than Peter, it was predicated on this principle. Judas had within him attitudes and motives concerning money that needed to be put to the test! Peter, in the matter of money, simply had nothing within him that needed to be manifested. His problem lay in the realm of over-confidence, if not rank self-confidence — and he was tested accordingly.

Let us pray this important petition with new devotion, believing for His answer — "Let there be nothing in my heart that needs to be put to the test!"

 With the flood of financial appeals from Christian organizations, are there any practical guidelines for discerning whether or not to give and to whom?

 If ever there was an area that needs clear teaching, instruction and example it is the matter of handling finances. God's

people have been seduced, used, and abused. There has come a callousness towards finance — and for some, it has resulted in outright cynicism. In many, however, there is a gullibility and ignorance that makes them an easy mark for anyone who can quote scripture and make an emotional appeal.

The New Testament is not nearly so "spiritual" or subjective as we might think concerning finances. Note the Apostle Paul's simple injunction in 1 Corinthians 16:2: "On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come" (NAS). What I am suggesting by this verse of scripture is that often, because we have not *planned*, we become victims of emotional and psychologically designed appeals.

There is, whether we like to admit it or not, a very direct relationship between seeing a need and hearing a voice. This is not to say it is not God's way of moving us toward a desire to give, but simply to illustrate that this connection is how millions of dollars are misappropriated from God's people by those who know *how* to do it.

The poorly dressed beggar on the street of any city in the USA (excluding countries where poverty is genuine) is a case in point. The fact that such beggars often die with hoarded fortunes only testifies to the gullibility of the American people. This is especially true of the Christian, for we *want* to help, and are even instructed by the Scripture to help. So we become easy marks for those who will show us a "need," then move us to some financial commitment when we have no accurate idea of the validity of the ministry itself, its financial integrity, or whether or not it is the will of God for us to give in this

INSIGHTS

"It is not a question of how much I am going to give to the Lord . . . but how much of what the Lord has provided am I going to keep for myself."

— Jerry Cook

"Our spiritual growth is in direct proportion with our growth in unselfishness."

— Aubrey P. Andelin

specific instance. Such appeals are usually soulish, i.e. projection of guilt and failure upon us for not giving to *this* worthy project. If we pray and plan as instructed in 1 Corinthians 16:2, we can better resist the impulse which seems to be the mechanism that opens us to illegitimate giving.

I suggest then that a person:

(1) Pray and plan your giving so that you are *already* giving freely and scripturally. This prevents you from yielding to "guilt" pressure.

(2) Counsel with your pastor or spiritual leader as to the direction of your giving. He knows both positive

and negative things that will assist you in your decisions.

(3) Avoid "impulse" giving in the same way one should avoid "impulse" buying — it doesn't fit into the plan of God for our total life in Christ.

(4) Remain open to the leading of the Holy Spirit as to particular needs or specialized situations. These, however, are the *exceptions* and not the rule.

(5) Refuse arbitrary, unilateral decisions in the realm of finance. That is, recognize that "secret" giving apart from husband, wife, pastor or others to whom you are committed and

responsible may not have the blessing of God which you seek. Giving which is open, discussed, and planned does not violate the scriptural injunction of Matthew 6:1–4. Responsible stewardship is not the same as an ostentatious display to be recognized as a spiritual philanthropist. ☞

Each month *New Wine* receives questions from our readers covering a variety of topics and issues. If you have questions for this feature, send them to Questions and Answers, c/o *New Wine* Magazine, P.O. Box 22888, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33315.

WILL A MAN ROB GOD?

(continued from page 29)

those who have faithfully honored Him with their tithes.

Objection No. 4: "I give my money as the Spirit leads me." Again, this sounds good. But experience proves that impulsive, ill-considered, irresponsible giving often loses much of its usefulness and deprives the giver of the blessings which God intends him to receive. When the Spirit of God leads, the results will always agree with the principles and patterns of Scripture — and these support the practice of regular tithing to God's ministers.

Objection No. 5: "I give my tithes direct to the Lord." I find it difficult to visualize just how this works out in practice — unless such a person makes the check for his tithes payable only to "the Lord." At any rate, the scriptural examples we have considered all indicate that tithes were given directly to those who were to administer them. Abraham gave his tithes to Melchizedek; the Israelites gave their tithes to the Levites; the Levites gave their

tithes to Aaron; the believers in the Jerusalem church laid down their gifts at the feet of the apostles. With these clear examples before us, what need is there to look for any other way?

A QUESTION OF PRIORITIES

In its essence, tithing — as we have outlined it — is a question of establishing right priorities in the handling of our financial and material possessions. Our first priority is toward God Himself. It is summed up in Proverbs 3:9–10:

Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Two key words here are "honour" and "firstfruits." Many Christians do not realize that it is actually possible to *honor* God by our giving. Yet this is what we do when we regularly set aside God's portion — the tithe — *first*, before we begin to make any other use or disposition of our finances. In this

way, we give God His rightful place in this area of finances and we lay a sound, scriptural foundation for all secondary forms of giving — offerings, alms, etc.

Our second priority is toward God's ministers, the leaders of His people. Again, *honor* is involved (see 1 Tim. 5:17). We *honor* "the elders that rule well" when we give them the portion that is their due. From Abraham onwards, as we have already seen, this portion is the tithe.

Furthermore, there is financial wisdom in investing first in ministries that reproduce other ministries. If we do this, God's work will not suffer — as it so often does today — from lack of ministers to carry it on. With sufficient, effective ministries thus ensured, the result will be the same that Israel experienced under the Old Testament: the offerings over and above the tithes, will be ample for all material needs of buildings or equipment and God's people will be both multiplied numerically and blessed financially. ☞

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