

Fulness

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“Many of the ideas and traditions to which I had been accustomed, although having no real basis in the scriptures, had become so sacred, that like the cows of India, no one dared to touch them, even when they were actually doing harm.”

Fulness Volume 13

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Editorial

Which way?

There is a song that Frank Sinatra has made famous which has the phrase 'I did it my way'. Many people appear to have adopted this thought as a motto for successful living. There is a strong desire to escape the increasing stranglehold of the State over their lives, extending as it does from cot to coffin. We live in a manipulated society, pawns of political idealism, dominated by vociferous minorities and silent multitudes.

To react and 'do it my way' can assert our longing to break out of the tightening grip of conformity, to preserve some semblance of personal identity. This motto however is far more than a cry for non-conformity. It sounds the note of rebellion. Invariably the latter sound drowns the former. Doing it my way, becomes the proud declaration of the rebel spirit, the impatient striving of self will. Such a philosophy carries with it seeds of self destruction from which even God's people are not exempt. Abraham learnt to his dismay that doing it his way produced Ishmael not Isaac.

One of the hallmarks of the life of Moses was the response he gave to God. One example from many is a verse from Exodus: 'So Moses and Aaron did it; as the Lord commanded them, thus they did.' In building the tabernacle Moses was careful to make all things according to the pattern shown on the mount. He did it God's way.

It is always hard to assess our own attitudes and actions. We may need help from an unbiased friend. It is harder still to assess the attitudes and actions that govern our corporate life together as the people of God. How much of present day theology and practice is merely the Church doing its own thing and not God's?

What started off correctly and was

proper in its own time is not to be our guideline. Early in David's kingship he fought two battles against the Philistines, both in the same valley. On the first encounter David defeated them at Baalperizim. When the Philistines returned for the second battle David could have repeated the same tactics. Instead he enquired of God and this time received a change of direction. He was instructed to circle around behind them and to come at them in front of the balsam trees. Today we have made a god of custom. As it has been so it will be. We dare not believe that God can keep abreast of the times we live in. We must swaddle our insecure saints in the snug wrappings of tradition. Samson-like we assert 'I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.' Samson-like we are not aware that the Lord has departed.

What may be right for one, may not be right for another. Saul wanted to give David encouragement against Goliath. What better way than to clothe David with his own armour? But David found it difficult even to walk in Saul's armour, let alone fight in it. David, what is wrong? Try a bit harder, persevere a little longer, if it was good enough for Saul it must be good enough for you.

Today we have made a god of conformity. But that conformity is seldom conformity to the Word of God. It is usually the imposition of the ways of the fathers upon their children. We must use the same Bible translations, sing the same hymns, say the same prayers, go to the same services at the same times. That we have crippled the people of God matters little. Goliath was too big for Saul but David was still expected to wear Saul's bankrupt armour.

In all these experiences David was

learning to depend upon God. It is this attitude God seeks to foster. He is not wanting to impart some successful formula that will enable us to carry on under our own steam. It is a disturbing life-style. It challenges our complacency, our satisfaction with the status-quo. It seems that few areas of life and belief do not come under challenge at one time or another.

Dependence upon God rather than upon custom or tradition does however open up fresh fields of exploration. We can discover new aspects of old truths. We can experience God extending our capacity for himself in unexpected areas. In the familiar realms of scripture, prayer, breaking of bread, mission, we must be prepared for periodic re-examination of our beliefs and practices. It is not that God changes or that truth changes—it is that we frequently need to. There is not only a personal need to lay hold of the purpose of God but also a corporate need. We must develop together. Forgetting those things that are behind, the successes as much as the failures, we look to God with renewed dependence. There are many practices that still need challenging even after centuries of Church life. All things are to be shaken.

Paul was flexible in his life. On at least two occasions he found God over-ruling his carefully laid plans. He didn't complain. He didn't go into that devastating cycle of 'Am I in the will of God?' 'Where have I gone wrong?' He knew his attitude was right, his relationship with God was clear. God likes to do things differently that's all. He wants to make sure that we keep on doing it his way.

Graham Perrins

Man's inhumanity to God: David Matthews

The statement 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever' is a gem to be found in the Westminster Shorter Catechism. What a simple yet profound statement it is of the relationship God intends between himself and man. In theory it is wonderful, but alas the practice is threadbare. The struggle to glorify God, whatever that may mean, is unbearable, and as for enjoying him, well that borders on blasphemy.

It all started in a garden. Adam hid himself behind a tree 'from the presence of the Lord God'. Satan had sown the seeds of death in his mind and immediately God became an ogre with a large whip, come to punish and expose this puny little man for the sinner that he was. Nothing, of course, could have been less true, but the deception has continued to this day. Let me illustrate the point. How many of us have been taught that Adam was expelled from the garden because he sinned? The truth is that God

put him out 'lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever'. The putting out was an act of mercy to preserve man from the consequences of even deeper folly—sinful man made immortal and therefore forever beyond God's redemption.

Man still hides behind his 'trees' convinced that God is out to get him. That is the awful outcome of sin. It is summed up in the attitude of the man who buried his 'talent', his excuse being 'I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man'. It is this attitude that puts religious man into an unanswerable dilemma. I say religious man because religion above all else has cultivated this exacting God image—Christ has been 'wounded' yet again, in the house of his friends. The irreligious man has rejected this God anyway and therefore tends to live his life apart from any sense of accountability to him. The religious man's dilemma is trying to love, worship and glorify a God of whom, deep

in his heart, he is afraid and from whom he wants to hide.

One answer was for man to de-personalise God; to so overstate his transcendence that he became unknowable and to a large extent irrelevant. This was, and still is, man's great inhumanity to God. Religion has placed God in such a rarefied atmosphere as to make him almost entirely detached from the human condition. The tragedy is that not only has sin broken the God-man relationship of the garden, but it has also totally corrupted man's concept of God. It is not atheists who have so maligned him, it is we ourselves by our failure to appreciate his true nature. Paul could well have said to us, 'I beheld an altar to the unknown God'. The fact that we bedeck our 'altars' with christian terminology only seems to compound the problem. It is not surprising that it was a theologian who proclaimed the death of God. The ultimate in man's inhumanity to his creator.



The very heart of the gospel is that God in Christ reconciled the world to himself. Christ himself declared 'I and my Father are one'. Here is therefore the first basic step in recovering a proper concept of God. He is and does exactly what Jesus was and did. As J. B. Phillips has put it, 'Christ was not God pretending to be man, he was God made man'. We tend to have the mistaken idea that God somehow changed from an Old Testament God to a New Testament one. He was always like Christ declared him to be. He did not suddenly become full of mercy and grace when the New Testament was being written.

Jesus landed himself in so much trouble with religious leaders, not simply because of what he did, but because in doing and saying what he did, he claimed that this was what God was really like. It was the religious men of his day, the men who spent a lifetime seeking sanctity, who resisted him tooth and nail. His mode of living, his whole approach to people, cut right across their portrayal of God—and this spirit of pharisaism is still alive today.

We are still bickering over the same questions—healing, Sunday observance, traditions, the second coming and 'food and drink'. Jesus upset the scribes and pharisees because he neither could, nor would, fit in to their narrow life style. Such narrowness was the direct consequence of their misunderstanding of the character of God. To them God was an 'exacting man' so they refused to recognise Jesus or the good news as he taught it. Their peculiar brand of holiness made him out to be a wine-bibber and a glutton. This kind of pharisaical religion gets so involved in textual nit-picking that it becomes incapable of releasing men into the freedom of the kingdom of God.

We still swallow camels while straining at gnats, all the time believing that this rigid fundamentalism of ours is the keeping of the first commandment. We do well to hear the words of the Lord himself to Simon the Pharisee—'You gave me no kiss'. Simon may have felt that orthodox belief was in itself enough, but orthodoxy without warmth meets with little approval from the Lord. Religion without feeling is the worst insult a man can give to God and has done more to deter those who truly want to know Christ than almost any other single factor.

God does not overlook the fact that man has sinned. Christ had to die to provide forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. He died as God-man, reconciling the widest of extremes—God and man, Spirit and flesh, the righteous one and the sinner. By his death he opened the door for all of God's purposes and man's truest aspirations to be fulfilled. He, in that one eternal act, broke down all the dividing walls between the holy and the secular, slew all the sacred cows, and brought life into total harmony. The most sacred division of all, the curtain into the Holy of Holies, split apart at his death, not only that man might get in, but also that God might break out in overwhelming blessing on mankind. Since the cross, the distinction between sacred and secular has, for the christian, become defunct. Whatever we do, whether deep in worship or having a good meal, we do it all in his name.

Most of us will give mental assent to all of this, but that does not mean we are living in the good of it. If our lives were determined by our 'theology' then most of us would be on cloud nine. It is our attitudes, however, that determine our quality of life. Theologically we may be convinced that salvation is obtained by the grace of God, but how difficult we still find it to live in the warmth and freedom of that grace. Grace above all else is to be experienced and lived. It becomes unreal locked up in Sunday hymns and creeds. Paul so taught and experienced the grace of God, that in Romans 6 he needed to explain that we don't sin (or need to sin) to provoke the grace of God.

The truth, of course, is that God loves you whether you sin or not, because that is his nature. He does not love me because I do not sin—neither does he love me because I sin. He loves because that is the nature and expression of his grace. Thus we are free to live because God has declared himself to be for us. The bondage of sin has been broken in the cross of Christ, and I am assured that if I sin then grace will abound to cleanse and forgive that sin. As we begin to appreciate more and more the Father's heart then we will live in his grace, and our attitudes and actions will be the substance of our belief.

The man who buried his talent did so on the grounds that at least if

he didn't make any mistakes, this 'exacting' God would not punish him; and the only way not to make mistakes is to do nothing. How limited was his concept of accountability to God. Had he even lost his talent in the competitive world of commerce, I believe he would have been commended for taking the risk of trying. The liberating word that he needed to hear was that God allowed him to make mistakes.

We too must be free to risk 'the talents' God has given us in the circumstances of our own lives. Paul did so. At one time, he tried to enter Asia, but the Spirit forbade him, so he tried Bithynia next and again he got it wrong! Did God then reject him? No of course not, and neither did Paul unlike Adam, go into hiding. He knew enough of the grace of God to go to bed and sleep on it. It is there he got his answer to go over to Macedonia. Paul wanted to do God's will, but to do that he had to risk his 'talent'. He believed that going into Asia was obedience to God or else why would he have wanted to go? Yet he got it wrong and twice at that!

Can we not see God's dealing with Paul in these mistakes, and the lesson we can learn? We too can live life free of the fear of mistakes. We can even make the wrong decisions knowing that God will overrule those mistakes and that we will learn all the more. We should not be anxious over every decision that we take, for we know that God has promised, 'if you turn aside. . . then you will hear a voice from heaven saying, "this is the way, walk you in it"'.

God has given man the authority to rule in the earth. Christ has made that rule a reality. The whole creation is standing on tip-toe waiting for God's sons to come into their own. Waiting for us to retrieve our talents from their burial plot. Waiting for God's sons to walk in dignity and triumph through the circumstances of life, instead of cringing at the thought of making decisions or taking any initiative.

We must shake off these unfounded fears knowing that we will, we must, make mistakes, and that the Lord will correct us as a loving Father. Knowing that in the end, despite our fears and our mistakes, by the grace of God, the talent used will increase to his glory.

Sacred & Secular

It is good to see that the artificial barriers between sacred and secular are beginning to crumble as the move of the Spirit continues. It is taking many of us some time to adjust to this, impeded as we are by traditional thinking which urges us to keep our holy days, to eat and drink special things and to hold fast to our special buildings for worship. We seem forbidden to converse normally during meetings and services are encouraged to produce a special atmosphere of the kind which results in people creeping in and out on tiptoe with pained expressions upon their faces.

The list of ways in which we segment our lives is almost too numerous to contemplate and yet we hold tenaciously to the fact that our God is one God. I well recall a cockney sergeant during the last war holding aloft a hand-grenade, pointing to the squared pattern on the outer shell and bellowing at us raucously 'It's segmented to assist fragmentation!' I hope the analogy is obvious to everyone. As for me, I've watched the principle at work again and again.

God is one, he is whole and complete. He does not change. His principles hold good whether in the natural realm or the spiritual, the temporal or the eternal. He cannot deny himself, he is what he is, and his character is written in all that he has done. When we look at the natural creation we can see a picture of the spiritual; in the visible we can see the invisible.

Jesus was intrinsically holy, whether doing what many would consider to be specifically holy things or just passing the time of day by the well-side, where his genuine thirst led

Maurice Smith

him into a beautiful and redemptive conversation. Incidentally, that conversation itself underlines the same principle. When the woman began to dodge the issue she did what we all do so often—she went religious. She brought out her red herring by asking about the right place to worship. Jesus responded by saying that you don't worship in this place or that place especially, what matters is knowing God and being in the right spirit, in reality.

We can worship in Sainsburys or the Post Office, an upper room or by the riverside. It will be a wonderful day when we can worship spontaneously in such places. Once, the late Edgar Trout went into a chemist's shop to buy something that was in short supply. Upon being served, he said with delight to the lady assistant, 'Well, praise the Lord!' She was rather taken aback and enquired, 'I beg your pardon sir?' Edgar responded, 'I said—praise the Lord'. It was all a completely natural exchange, for he was not evangelising her, he was just being himself.

We spend a lot of time doing so-called mundane things. Engaged in familiar activities, our eyes constantly behold the ordinary things such as the people around us, the birds, the trees and the state of the weather. Jesus used all these things to explain the kingdom, because he knew the same principles applied in both realms. He knew full well that his Father remained true to himself, whether as creator of the trees or the creator of mankind. There were no somersaults going on in heaven.

Once this thinking has become part of us then our everyday lives can be filled with the presence and knowledge of God. We will not have to get alone to encounter him, our lives will be full wherever we are. We won't have to rely on meetings to drum up his presence either. The trees will not need to have 'Jesus Saves' carved into the bark in order for us to remember him, for God will be breathing through every pore. Bread and wine will whisper to us, water from the kitchen tap will speak volumes, birds will sing his praises and green grass bring us his rest. Of course, pushed into isolation such thinking becomes pantheistic, but rightly held it brings the God 'up there' right down into our midst.

It's quite surprising where the peace of God allowed Jesus to be and what it allowed him to do. Moving in such a free way, being so ordinary and yet so full of God, was the reason that he drew such a glad response from the common people. At the well-side he did not produce his Soul-Winners Guide and look up wells or water for a special line of rehearsed argument. He was thirsty and he freely admitted his need of another human being. Yet what beautiful results this produced.

The Lord grant that we his Church get to such a place very soon. Let us count the cost of this, realising that such living will bring down the heavy accusations of the religious professionals, with their demands for special this and special that, for so it has always been.

Pause a moment with me and let us pray together earnestly, 'Lord, teach us how to *live*!'

The great thing about this move of God is that the Holy Spirit has now been given his rightful place in the tri-unity. It's no longer God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Scripture. That kind of bibliolatry has given birth to a great variety of practices, ranging from the man who washed his hands before picking up his Bible, to the seemingly innocuous efforts of many to produce a 'Bible-centred' church. Although they may have been pleased with the result, nothing but a Christ-centred community will ever satisfy the heart of God.

Bibliolatry has a twin called bibliomancy, this refers to the treating of scripture in a superstitious way. There's a distinctly occult flavour about the way some Christians get their 'guidance'. The random opening of the Bible for direction is very similar to the random falling of sticks for the same purpose in I Ching. It can also be dangerous as the man who placed his finger on the text 'Judas went and hanged himself' found. Not being too pleased with the result he turned to another scripture—'Go and do thou likewise' it said! On the third and final random opening of his Bible he read, 'What hindereth thee?' Then there is the unconscious fear that if you don't read 'the word' in the morning, you're bound to have a bad day. The difference between that and reading our stars in the daily paper is only marginal.

Our wrong attitude to the writings (the name the Bible gives itself) stems from a religious approach. We have come to believe that we cannot exist without that mysterious, external 'something' the reading of the scriptures imparts. The early Christians seemed to get along very well without the Bible. They did not have ready access to the Old Testament scrolls, and they certainly were not allowed to take them home. Yet they seemed to grow in leaps and bounds when compared with most of their 20th century counterparts. In his second letter, Peter tells us that we have been granted 'everything pertaining to life and godliness' when we became partakers of the divine nature. Reading the Bible does not add to that, because it cannot. What it does do, is to confirm that what we have is of God. It's the most objective test we have, not in a static sense, but in a living way.

This false way of viewing what God has said results in our treating

scripture as a text-book. A.W. Tozer put it clearly when he said, 'Fundamentalism fell victim to its own virtues. The word died in the hands of its friends. Verbal inspiration, for instance, soon became afflicted with rigor mortis. The voice of the prophet was silenced and the scribe captured the imagination of the faithful—an

George Tarleton: WHAT IS THE WORD OF GOD?

unofficial hierarchy decided what Christians were to believe. Not the scriptures, but what the scribe taught the scriptures meant, became the creed. Christian colleges, seminaries, Bible institutes, conferences, popular Bible-expositors all joined to promote the cult of textualism.'

One of the things this cult teaches is precision in quoting scripture, which

would be quite foreign to the minds of the biblical writers. The writer of Hebrews, for example, when quoting one of the most famous of the Davidic psalms introduces the quotation with 'One has testified somewhere'. Our approach to the scriptures should not resemble the nit-picking of the scribes and pharisees, but the more generous attitude of the New Testament writers themselves. Peter both altered and added to the prophecy of Joel when he referred to it on the day of Pentecost.

They also seemed to favour a poor translation of the Old Testament, made in the 3rd century BC. J.B. Phillips looked to this version (called the Septuagint) for help in translating his 'Four Prophets'. In the foreword of that book he has this to say about the translation. 'For the most part I found their Greek perfectly clear and intelligible, but it was baffling and disquieting to find that, when I was facing a real difficulty in the Hebrew, the Greek version provided me with something either quite different, or else—and I hate to say this—with a slick pious phrase.' This resulted in Phillips discarding the version the New Testament authors loved to quote from. In fact, there is a text Matthew quotes—'he shall be called a Nazarene'—which no one seems able to find.

Now we need to be very clear about one thing. God's Word is more than words—it's a person. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. *He* was in the beginning with God.' Jesus Christ is the Word of God. So the writer of Hebrews says, 'the Word of God is living and active . . . and there is no creature hidden from *his* sight'. Once we have really grasped the fact that Jesus is the Word, the scriptures begin to take their rightful place. Thus we cease making that fatal mistake that knowing scripture is the same thing as knowing God. This is the tragic error the Pharisees made.

How wonderful it is that we are not serving some dumb idol, but worshipping the living God who speaks. In his great desire to communicate, Father could have rigged up some gigantic world-wide 'tannoy' system. Yet it pleased him to place his thoughts and words in man, that through man his words should have some flesh on them. So in the Old

WHAT IS THE WORD OF GOD?

Testament his main means of communication was 'by the prophets'.

His desire was, and still is, that what he says should have the distinct flavour of humanity about it, whilst still bearing that unmistakable mark of divinity. Divine truth mediated through the human personality. In the New Testament we see the height of this way of communication when he spoke to us in his Son.

Thus the character of each of the 40 or more authors of the Bible has been preserved in the 66 books they produced. Even their idiosyncrasies come through, like Luke using medical terms in his writings. None of the writers seemed conscious that they were writing the Bible least of all Luke. 'It seemed good to me' appears to be rather a lame excuse for presenting us with his excellent gospel.

It is also good to remember that these men were not writing a scientific manual. The Bible lacks the precision that the scientist likes, while at the same time giving him some amazing scientific facts. Things are not true because they are in the Bible, but they are in the Bible because they are true.

The thing that displeases the theologians is that God deliberately chose not to systematise what he wanted to say into a list of doctrines. They have been writing their books of systematic theology ever since to show their disapproval! With their tidy minds, they gather up all the biblical material that fits in with their preconceived ideas e.g., Calvinistic, Arminian, etc. Their efforts to tie the whole thing up are contrary to the way the Lord works, he seems to leave a lot of loose ends lying around. Romans 9 is a prime example of this. In this epistle we find Paul at his logical best. By a series of questions

and answers he arrives at the most logical question of all. 'You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who will resist his will?"' Paul's answer both blows my mind and blesses my spirit at one and the same time. 'Who are you, O man, who answers back to God?' Now that's a loose end.

We must always take into account that it took God 66 books to make what one might call his definitive statement. Most of it was acted out in the arena of life; that's why there is so much narrative in scripture. He didn't speak abstractly, but had men work out what he was saying in history. He moved them to speak his words into that history. Men like Hosea not only said what they were saying, but they also lived it out. Therefore we cannot ignore the cultural setting of the writings, and the effect of this on the authors themselves. Their attitudes to life were influenced by the thinking of their generation. Whilst God revealed eternal principles to them, he approached them in the time context in which they lived. Circumcision in the Old Testament and baptism in the New Testament were not divine innovations. It was because they were already part of the setting that God used them to illustrate his truth.

The result of all this is a unique library which took well over a millennium to complete. The 66 books form a whole. The Old Testament is not replaced by the New Testament. On the contrary, the New is the fulfilment of the Old.

As one of the old divines put it, 'the New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed'. Nowhere is this clearer than when Paul traces his teaching on faith in Romans back to Abraham. Then in Galatians he traces the doctrine of grace back to the promise made to the same man.

Scripture is rather like a wonderful

symphony. All the varied and colourful human 'instruments' are in such harmony that the overall sound is really incredible. We have often missed this panoramic beauty by opting for the microscopic approach.

The language God chose to have the majority of the books written in does not lend itself to such treatment. 'The words of the Hebrew tongue,' wrote Martin Luther, 'have a particular energy. It is impossible to convey so much so briefly in any other language. To render them intelligible we must not attempt to give word for word, but only aim at the sense and the idea.' So we should read the Bible as a whole to get the spirit of it, and not merely the letter. Scripture graphically displays the character of God, especially in his dealings with men, and these dealings are summed up in one word—covenant. The Bible is pre-eminently the book of the covenant, of God's unreserved giving of himself to us.

Finally, the Lord Jesus declared that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. (The use of 'rhema' here serves to emphasise the proceeding nature of the words.) Throughout biblical history the emphasis is on what God is saying in the present. They remembered and celebrated what God had said and done in the past. But when he spoke again, their receptivity and obedience to this new revelation from God became of vital importance. Today, the emphasis has subtly shifted to what men think God ought to be saying in the light of what he has already said. While agreeing that anything the Lord says today will be consistent with what he said yesterday, we must open our hearts to what the Spirit is saying to the churches now. He did not stop speaking 2,000 years ago. On the contrary, he is still speaking . . .



As deeply committed members of the local church in Bristol who are also due to become doctors next month, we would appreciate an opportunity to express strong reservations, both medical and spiritual, about the article 'Wholefoods' which appeared in the last issue of Fulness.

The immense value of fibre in the diet is the only point in the article on which medical opinion is virtually unanimous. With regard to saturated fats, however, there are conflicting views in the profession, and in the absence of unequivocal medical evidence, it is irresponsible of Fulness to claim that the body cannot cope with saturated fats, since these are major constituents of eggs, milk, butter, cheese, yoghurt, and red meats, which, as every housewife knows, are some of the most nutritious—and the most 'natural'—foods.

On the subject of 'natural' foods, your article is self-contradictory: what could be more unnatural than de-cafeinated coffee, and vitamin pills—both of which are products of sophisticated technology? We know of no widely accepted evidence that caffeine irritates the kidneys, and a diet containing some fresh fruit and vegetables every day provides ample vitamins, and in a much more 'natural' way, for all except children and pregnant women.

While there is evidence to incriminate sugar as a cause of heart disease, it is a popular misconception that unrefined brown sugar is safer. No matter how crude, brown sugar contains only trivial amounts of nutrients which make no useful contribution to the diet. However, the claim that brown is better than white because it contains this minute quantity of nutrients is irrelevant, since the evidence concerning disease relates to properties of the sucrose molecule itself, not to the presence or absence of other substances. Whereas white sugar is

entirely sucrose, crude brown sugar is mainly sucrose—so what's the difference?

As for the experiment in which rats were fed jam butties and cups of tea, causing them to live unhappily together, we feel that this leaves so big a 'something to be desired scientifically' that it should not have been mentioned: we wonder how happily the staff of Fulness would live together if they were fed on rat-food.

It is bad that Fulness should so indiscriminately encourage people to patronize health-food stores: desirable commodities like wholemeal flour, brown rice, and bran are becoming available from market stalls and other shops, and at a more reasonable price. The health-food industry is as much a cynical money-making concern as the processed-food industry. Health-food stores sell a wide range of expensive products of no value to health which, in our experience, are a deception serving only to pander to the serious spiritual bondage of gullible customers.

Over the past few years, we ourselves have become increasingly concerned that the people of God should adopt a more healthy lifestyle, and it is this very sympathy with the overall burden of the last Fulness which leads us to regret the inaccurate and misleading way in which you have brought the subject to public attention.

Finally, we are astounded at the health-food-store-type gimmickery of the closing paragraph, in which you make the magical claim that, as a result of 'your wholefood experience . . . emotionally you will also become a more wholesome saint'. Unfortunately, this absurd claim might be believed by a few emotionally unwholesome saints who unquestionably accept everything they read in Fulness.

*John Birch, Nic Harding,
Jonathan Jelfs, Iain McDonald,
Andrew Smith*

Oh dear! The five medics from Bristol have succeeded in throwing out the cabbage with the cabbage water. They have quite missed the intention of my article: simply to encourage Christians to eat more healthily; specifically to initiate them into a wholefood life-style. The five brothers seem to be so concerned to be disinterested professionals that they can find

only one good thing to say about the entire article. Commenting briefly on some of their more important points:

Firstly saturated fats—the Lancet (May 1977) reports a survey over a 10 year period involving 10,000 families in Belgium. It provides indisputable scientific evidence that saturated fats (such as butter) which produce a higher serum cholesterol than polyunsaturated fats (like margarine) harm heart muscle and lead to heart conditions and coronary mortality. My original MS had the words, 'The problem is the way the body has to cope with saturated fats'. Editorial precis produced the more definite statement, 'The body cannot cope with saturated fats'. It remains true that to overload our systems with saturated fats produces a serious hazard to health.

Secondly caffeine—a doctor friend of mine who has been in general practice for 30 years says that caffeine is a drug stimulant for the heart, brain and kidneys and it can harm these organs. Unnatural de-cafeinated coffee happens to be a healthier alternative to natural coffee—if you cannot live without coffee itself.

Thirdly vitamin supplements—even doctors are known to give megadoses of vitamins to counter certain deficiencies, such as vitamin B for old people complaining of pins and needles. Ideally, every nutrient should be furnished by foods alone. When no food is refined and all are grown on excellent soils, supplements aren't needed. If one lacks such an ideal situation then vitamin supplements can be helpful.

Fourthly sugar—I did not say that brown sugar was safer. Too much sugar is harmful whether it is brown, black, blue or pink because it may lead to diabetes or heart disease. That's why I wrote, 'cut down the use of sugar generally'.

Fifthly health food stores—it's sometimes true that bran, etc. can be bought more cheaply at a supermarket. However, these outlets also can sell inferior wholefood products. To start folk off on wholefoods it seemed good sense to suggest going to the main source of wholefood supply—a local health food store. Whilst it's sometimes true that such stores carry products of no value to health, so do chemists and iron-mongers. But that's life!

Continued on page 15

the Nation



God's desire has always been to bless the earth and not to curse it, to give life and not death. To Abraham he gave a promise that through him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. What does this mean for us? Are we to pray for every nation to become truly christian and for the garden of Eden to be re-established throughout the earth by christian governments and political parties? Or are we to pray for as many individuals as possible within each nation to be saved and eventually raptured out of this current scene?

Jesus was the seed, both earthly and heavenly, of God's promise to Abraham. Born of a virgin he was the first-born of an entirely new nation, a new kingdom. For 30 years through his walk with God he qualified in every way to lead this new nation. He was and is the leader par excellence. Throughout his three years of ministry he made constant reference to this kingdom—the kingdom of God. One of his stories about it involved an absentee landlord who had let his vineyard. When his employees were sent to collect the rent they were beaten and sent back. After repeated

attempts to obtain the rent through his employees he eventually sent his own son reasoning that the tenants would give him their respect. But the son was killed and, Jesus concludes, it can now only be expected that the owner of the vineyard will come in person to punish the tenants and hand over the vineyard to others.

To the early Church, the implications were obvious. The landlord was Jehovah and his vineyard Israel. The tenants had persecuted God's prophets and then crucified his son. Within a lifetime they would have known the retribution that followed; in AD 70 the temple was smashed and the Jews dispersed across the face of the earth. It was natural for the early Church to see themselves as the new tenants gladly rendering to God the things that belonged to him.

To bigoted Jews, the Messiah of Old Testament prophecy is theirs alone and his kingdom is the nation of Israel, restored to its former greatness and glory. However, the Messiah is not exclusively for the Jew but for all who repent of their selfish lifestyle and receive him as king. This is the single condition

for entering his holy nation. Repentance was, and still is, available for every Jew and every non-Jew. The idea that God would choose an elite minority for salvation and condemn the majority to damnation is absurd.

Jesus, then, demonstrated in word and deed the faithfulness of God's promise to bless the earth. For out of Israel's failure the promised seed was raised up. Working miracles of healing and provision he showed that at the heart of God's rule is compassion. God has not condemned the world to the atom bomb or to germ warfare. He will not allow man to annihilate himself. Neither has he handed his creation over to the devil. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

The Old Testament psalmists were under no illusion as to whose was the earth: 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness of it,' says one. And Paul declares 'All things whether in heaven or in earth shall be reconciled back to God'. Frequently we find the prophets exploding with the revelation that one day 'the earth shall be

filled with the glory of the Lord as water covers the sea'. John received extensive revelation concerning a new order of heaven and earth where Christ's reign would be supreme.

Who in the light of this kind of vision could possibly desire to be raptured away from such a hope to end up in some sort of celestial praise meeting? Christ will not come and wave a magic wand over the earth. Rather we, the Church of God, are to assume our real identity within the nations of the world to bring the blessing of God to all who will receive it.

Praying for the nation has meant different things to different people. To the Germans during the war, it meant that God was with them. Indeed, German soldiers wore belts whose buckles carried inscriptions declaring that God was with them.

In this country we assume that God was with us, enabling us to stem the tide of Nazism.

After the war, praying for the nation would probably have meant praying for Israel. Tozer, in his own lucid way, sadly observed that the Evangelical Church had committed adultery with Israel, still a Christ-rejecting nation. If Jesus were to come in the same way as he did 2,000 years ago, I have no doubt that the Jews would do exactly the same to him as they did then.

Of course, it is good to foresee God bringing the Jews to a knowledge of himself and we can rejoice that the word of God has come to pass, in as much as the Jews are now back in their own land, but to let one's prophetic attention dwell on Israel is foolish. Speculations about the rebuilding of the temple have diverted us from the main thrust of God's purposes. Who would want God to go back to Old Testament standards and restore a people complete with temple ceremonies and sacrifices negating the supreme sacrifice that Jesus has already paid for humanity? Such a thing would make a mockery of the open tomb. God loves the Jews. His own son was a Jew, but he is not sentimental.

Recently, praying for the nation has taken on a different guise altogether. The current emphasis began with the Nationwide Festival of Light. One cannot deny that the meeting of tens of thousands of people in Trafalgar

Square that momentous Saturday in the summer of 1971 was an historical event. But I believe the motivation was basically the simple desire, on the part of the people of God, to be together, singing, dancing and worshipping their redeemer, rather than a concern on the part of British Christians for the nation.

Involved in the N.F.O.L. was another group who had been around for much longer, Intercessors for Britain. The aim of this group is to turn God's heart from judgement to blessing through the intercessions of his people. Similar groups have sprung up in other places, including America. A system has been devised whereby hundreds, if not thousands, of people throughout this and other nations pray for a certain amount of time each day, creating an unbroken chain of prayer going up day and night. Regular bulletins help praying partners to pray intelligently over issues of Church government, labour problems, kidnappings, hijackings and a multitude of other transgressions of God's law. It must be fairly said that I.F.B. also pray concerning the state of the Church, charismatic and otherwise. Prayer is based on the fact that the presence of Christians on the earth commends the globe to God's mercy.

Now, of course, it is true that God loves to intervene in the affairs of men, to vindicate his name. But there is a great danger in trying to make the nation righteous if we attempt to do so without the grace of God. To do away with certain 'unacceptable' sins, but leave others completely untouched, may improve the superficial appearance of the nation, but it won't change the heart. There is no arbitrary line dividing that which is acceptable from that which is not; it is the whole that needs to be changed, not just the outward part.

It makes little difference, for instance, how many Christians we can get into politics, if the politics they practice are born out of the same old attitudes. They may pray and fast every day, but if they are deluded by the spirits of this age, namely materialism, socialism, nationalism, racialism, etc., they cannot possibly build the kingdom of God. The racial policies of Rhodesia and South Africa, for example, are repressive in the extreme even though these coun-

tries have very high proportions of fundamental, Bible-believing Evangelicals amongst their ruling whites.

More recently still we have had the bicentennial celebrations in the USA. Now if Americans wish to celebrate an anniversary related to some political or social ideal that is their affair, but God has been promoted as being both capitalist and democratic, when in point of fact he is neither. God did not sign the American Constitution yet the casual onlooker could be forgiven if he came to the conclusion that God was an American, had won both the wars and was now stock-piling nuclear weapons against the east, proclaiming the president the new apostle of righteousness.

At the core of this trend was the musical 'If my people', written by Jimmy and Carol Owens. Earlier, Jimmy and Carol brought us the musical 'Come Together', a masterpiece in terms of both content and timing. I well remember the 2,500 people who gathered together in the centre of London for one of the first performances. The atmosphere of tense expectation was beyond words. Since then God's people have been coming together as perhaps never before. 'If My People,' on the other hand, though well attended, received quite a different response. I.F.B. expressed concern that so few had covenanted to pray for the nation through this musical ministry.

The musical is based on 2 Chronicles 7:14, 'If my people... shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face... I will heal their land'. Speaking with Jimmy Owens just after the national tour he told me that he had not intended the scripture to refer to Great Britain or any other earthly territory. He agreed that the verse applied to Israel and Israel only. If that is true, it is a point that has been missed by almost every leader of 'If My People' up and down the land.

I have no doubt whatever that God used that ministry, but overall we were left with the false idea that the world is in a mess because the Church is not doing enough. This is utterly wrong; Jesus in the hands of his murderers never let his light shine more clearly than in those awful last few hours. That the Jewish and Roman state did not turn to Jehovah, was not because Jesus failed to pray sufficiently.



Even 'New Wine' magazine, a publication I greatly admire, devoted a whole issue asking christians in the bicentennial year to fast, work and fervently pray for a powerful spiritual awakening to stir 'our great nation' during 1976. One Bible teacher took as the basis for his article the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham sought, as you remember, to ascertain the minimum number of righteous people needed to preserve the city from judgement. He began with 50 but God was gracious enough to agree to 10. Our Bible teacher then worked out that the population of Sodom in Abraham's day was not less than 10,000, thus giving a ratio of one righteous person per thousand. He concluded that the USA with an estimated population of 210 million would need only 210,000 righteous people to save it from judgement! Such exhortations, rather than building up the kingdom of God, only serve to promote a nationalistic spirit.

Of course, God raises up people of his own choice to serve him in prayer for certain situations. Such Daniels have always been found in the Church and always will be. But, so often, instead of such a man fulfilling his own burden he offloads it onto the rest of the Church. I wonder what would have happened if Daniel had done the same. Somehow, I feel he would have become tied up with the administration of the burden, spending his time convincing people of its reality rather than getting on with it. I fear thousands are condemned into feeling that if only they could pray a little longer and a little more fervently the world would be a different place. A notion which is rubbish.

The latest project to emerge is being promoted, it seems, by men who know more about business practice and boardroom meetings

than the nature of God. Entitled 'Let My People Grow', it is a three-year programme of renewal resulting, it is hoped, in effective evangelism. There is a lot more thought and business procedure than in most evangelistic attempts but I feel it is bound for the same destiny. Its founders tell us that if we could raise the committed christian population to 5% we would make an appreciable difference to our nation.

No doubt God will bless this venture and many will come to a knowledge of Christ through it. However, far from concentrating my efforts on making 'an appreciable difference' to our nation, I want to be a part of those who throughout history have been building an alternative society, an alternative to the political, financial, social, and religious scene as we see it today.

God is neither Western nor Eastern. He is not the champion of monarchy, aristocracy, democracy or any other system of government. He is who he is, the supreme head of all creation. In the truest sense, he does not stand alongside men but through his son he has made it possible for us to stand with him, to see things as he sees them and think as he thinks.

I agree with Malcolm Muggeridge who says that man has decided to abolish himself, having wearied of the struggle to be himself apart from God. He has created his own boredom out of his own affluence, his own impotence out of his own erotomania, his own vulnerability out of his own strength, himself blowing the trumpet that brings the walls of his own city tumbling down. What am I suggesting then? That we fold our hands and let God do his worst while we christians have the hand of God protecting us from all ill? God forbid.

In the Bible the Church is promised

suffering. It was through such that Jesus learned obedience. We are never to be deceived into believing that God loves only us, and that the world will get its rightful due. Nor are we to capitulate to the values that it has to offer. We are to be a part of a redeemed society pioneering with the tools of righteousness, peace and joy, obeying God, taking the scriptures seriously, loving the brethren and allowing our life to explode out into the world, not through programmes of prayer effort but through men and women, whose whole lives are captivated by God.

So don't be down-hearted if, as a result of your genuine prayer, it seems that the world is getting worse. We cannot expect a christian Great Britain to emerge. We are not told that the world will improve, so there is no need for despair if it seems to be collapsing.

We are of a kingdom that has no beginning and no end. So let us pervade the world with the life of Christ, unlike the previous 'tenants', rendering to God what is his by right, not feeling obliged to meet the need, knowing that the need does not constitute the call. The word of God will come to pass concerning Israel and the world, but his main thrust is within his body, his bride, the temple of the living God. It is here, not in Israel or the world, that we can expect his majesty to increase as never before. Here alone will kingdom life be fully expressed, before the final day in the history of this world as we know it.

What we are seeing now is the earnest downpayment, the guarantee of the glorious fulfilment of this kingdom. So if you are looking for glory, look in the Church, not in Israel nor in the world. It is there that you will find God's heart being expressed in ever-increasing measure.

If you have a query arising from what has been written in past issues, or a problem that you feel could be aired on this page, please write to John MacLauchlan at 3 Cranborne Walk, Canterbury Kent

Q & A

John MacLauchlan

Q. What state will the Church be in when Jesus returns? Are some of my friends right in feeling that the Church is glorious now, and that Jesus could return today?

A. I cannot help feeling that your friends are being theoretical and unrealistic in claiming that the Church has already reached its full glory! All that is necessary for its full glorification has already been provided by the finished work of Jesus, but the Scriptures clearly describe a process by which this provision is practically out-worked. This process will result in the clear, concrete manifestation of perfection. Eph. 4: 11-16 describes the process of growth and change going on 'until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ'. This is in order that, ultimately, Jesus may present the Church to himself 'glorious' and perfect (Eph. 5: 27). The same is taught in Revelation. For example, in 19:7 we read that the bride 'has made herself ready' for the wedding day by availing herself of what God has given her (v. 8). We are now being changed from one degree of glory to another, and this is to prepare us for the ultimate in glory and perfection which is yet to come. Jesus' return will be to reign in union with a truly perfect and glorious Church.

You will notice that in his letters Paul usually describes the glory of what belongs to the people of God, and then moves on to outline clear,

practical steps of obedience that are necessary to outwork this inheritance. We are now seeing a similar practical reality being restored to the Church. We must see the finishing-line, but we must also run to reach it! We must be filled with a consuming vision of God's purpose and glory, but we must not conclude that we will arrive at our destiny without practical obedience. Only in the context of the growing and developing Church is it possible for the individual to be so trained and changed that he can become a contributing, functioning part of the glorious whole. Only under God-given leadership and in daily life with others who are going in the same direction, will he find his true fulfilment.

Q. Do we need to establish a body of accepted doctrine—a kind of end-time confession of faith?

A. I do not accept the need for doctrine or dogma as they are often understood.

In place of a static body of once-for-all defined doctrines, I see the need for the proceeding word of God to be expressed to each succeeding generation by foundational ministry. The Bible is not a text-book; rather it embodies the principles of the heart, mind, will and purpose of God. These principles must be received and expressed anew in each generation of the Church, until one generation emerges that will take them to their fulfilment and conclusion in life. I do not accept the Roman

Catholic assertion of unchangeable doctrines established by the institutional church. Nor do I accept the liberal Protestant idea of the constant evolution of doctrine, which inevitably becomes more and more dimly related to the Bible. I believe in an ongoing process, not of evolution, but of discovery. The Spirit of God works in harmony with the principles of the Scriptures, revealing those principles ever more fully to the Church. This process of foundational revelation takes place primarily through apostolic and prophetic ministry. Ground won and advances made in the past must always be gratefully received, but there must also be a pioneering, a pressing on into new territory. By 'new', I do not mean newly created, but newly discovered and possessed.

There is a danger in the idea that we can have an accumulated body of theoretical doctrine divorced from life. The accumulation must rather be in the life and experience of the Church. The word must be built into the Body of Christ. Just as God spoke and the universe was formed, so now he speaks and the manifest result is not theoretical, but practical and real. This result is the Church.



reaking read

'To break bread' means to eat a meal. That can be clearly established from the eastern usage of the phrase. It comes from the practice of breaking bread with the hands, not cutting it with a knife. In the Israel of biblical times, an ordinary family meal, a special meal with guests, or a feast like Passover would all start the same way. The head of the house would give thanks, break the bread and hand the pieces to those sitting at table with him. So, breaking of bread came to mean eating a meal.

During Jesus' ministry prior to his death, he frequently ate with his disciples. That is, he broke bread with them (for they would have spoken of it in that way), and they shared table-fellowship with him. He established this as a basic form of fellowship, in which they expressed that they belonged together. The so-called 'last supper' was but the last of many such occasions before Jesus' death. The times when Jesus fed the multitudes were demonstrations of his power and provision, but also an extension of the kingdom principle of eating together.

But table-fellowship with Jesus did not end with his death. It continued after his resurrection, and, if anything, receives more emphasis in the NT from then on. The risen Lord approaches the disciples on the

Emmaus road, but it is as he breaks bread with them that they recognise him (Luke 24:30, 35). Later, Jesus eats with his disciples to prove his risen reality, and demonstrate the continuation of the fellowship begun before his death (Luke 24:41, 42). John 21: 9-15 records breakfast with Jesus at the lakeside, a meal which had the same purpose.

At the beginning of Acts, Luke gives a summary of the activity of the 40 days between Jesus' resurrection and his ascension. He tells us that the time was spent speaking to them 'of the things concerning the kingdom of God', and then goes on to tell us that the Lord gave his directions while 'eating with them' (Acts 1:3, 4). This rendering (see NASB margin) is to be preferred to the translation 'gathering together'. The word used implies eating a covenant meal together. The risen Lord continued table-fellowship with his disciples, eating a meal of the new divine order which he had inaugurated, and linking this with his instruction about the kingdom of God. The same period is referred to in Acts 10:41 where Peter says that he and others ate and drank with Jesus after he rose from the dead. The significance of table-fellowship with the risen Lord is also brought out in the very familiar Rev. 3:20.

But we must look now at what is taught in the account of the last

supper (Matt. 26: 26-29). It is helpful to know the background against which Jesus spoke. The occasion was an early Passover meal, so they must have been thinking of the nation's deliverance from Egypt, of salvation and redemption. Also, they could hardly have failed to link Jesus' statements 'This is my body' and 'This is my blood' with his earlier teaching recorded in John 6.

This earlier teaching is described as making a great impact on them. When Jesus spoke of eating his flesh he caused the Jews an intellectual problem: 'How can we eat this man? Can we bite him and chew him and digest him?' Far from explaining himself more clearly, Jesus went on to add a moral problem to their intellectual one, by inviting them to drink his blood. Such a thought was not only repugnant to them, but expressly forbidden under the Law. Without explanation, Jesus said, 'He who eats me, he also shall live because of me'. No wonder even his disciples were confused!

Then Jesus gave them a principle of interpretation that many these days need to heed. There is a need to recognise who is speaking, and interpret what he says not literally, but spiritually, looking for its inner principle. He is the man from heaven, and he transcends the limits of human experience, even though he may use earthly symbols to express himself. Human ability (flesh) and its literalism cannot understand;

only the Spirit can communicate the heart and mind of God (John 6: 62, 63). So, it is the essence of recognising him, and partaking of him (knowing him, believing in him, fellowshiping with him, obeying him) that is in view here.

So let us take this background and apply it to the last supper. The disciples would not have taken Jesus' statements literally. They did not launch into the impossibilities of transubstantiation or consubstantiation, for Jesus stood before them with his flesh intact, and his blood securely in his veins. No, they would have understood that he spoke to them of knowing him, of fellowship with him, of partaking of him spiritually, not in literal flesh. We can easily demonstrate that 'is' may often mean 'signifies, stands for' in the NT (Luke 8: 11; Gal 4: 24; Rev 1: 20), and, in any case, if Jesus spoke these words in Aramaic, the verb would have been absent. The very word for 'body' in Aramaic means 'self' or 'person', showing that he spoke of the impartation of himself. The reference to covenant points to the new divine order which Jesus inaugurated. This meal that he instituted therefore has to do with communal fellowship with himself, in a new divine order or covenant, on the basis of forgiveness, reconciliation, salvation.

The main emphasis in Jesus' statements at the last supper fell on the kingdom of God. There is an air of solemnity, of climax, about his final word at the supper. 'But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on

until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom'. This meal is to promise, anticipate and confess the coming consummation of the kingdom of God. In it, the people of God confess that the kingdom of God has broken into this present evil age, that Jesus Christ is Lord. In it, we also confess that he is returning to rule and reign in manifest might and glory over all the works of his hands. The Lord's supper becomes an anticipation of the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19: 9).

On four occasions in the NT, there is mention made of a specific act with bread and wine within the context of the meal. At the last supper, Jesus took portions of bread and a cup of wine and distributed them. In 1 Cor. 10: 16, there is the same practice. And in Acts 20, where the believers in Troas meet for a fellowship meal (v. 7), after dead Eutychus is restored to life, there is the specific act of breaking morsels of bread and 'tasting' (v. 11). The language here shows small portions, morsels, to be in view. It would seem that it was frequently the practice of the believers to repeat the action of Jesus with bread and wine 'while they were eating' (Matt 26: 26).

We must guard against replacing the meal by the special act with bread and wine. We must also guard against artificially imposing this special act on a meal, so that it appears odd and out of place. But if we see that the whole meal is the Lord's supper, the whole

meal is the breaking of bread, all of it confesses the kingdom and expects the kingdom, then within the meal we can naturally express the basis of our salvation and fellowship. We are a forgiven people in covenant relationship with God because of Jesus' sacrifice, tasting the powers of the age to come, and enjoying table-fellowship with our risen Lord. In it all, we joyfully anticipate eating and drinking anew with him in the consummated kingdom.

In 1 Cor. 11: 20, Paul laments that when the Corinthians come together, it is not in order to eat the Lord's supper, but it has become an ordinary meal, with gluttony and deprivation.

Their purpose, he says, should be to eat the Lord's supper. They should lift their communal meals to a new level, confessing Jesus' lordship and their identity alongside him. The special act with bread and wine can then be put in its rightful place as declaring the basis of their salvation.

May we return to the practice of the first believers, continually devoting ourselves to the breaking of the bread, and breaking bread daily from house to house (Acts 2: 42, 46). Eating together in family and in fellowship with the church is an integral part of the kingdom fellowship of the new age. No longer is it merely to satisfy hunger, but it is to declare who we are and where we are going. We are the people of the new covenant, proclaiming, enjoying and anticipating the kingdom of God.



Continued from page 9

Finally, a doctor recently trained in a London hospital was asked how many lectures he had received on dietetics and nutrition during his training. 'Not one', was the reply. The fact is that medical students

only touch these subjects in relation to the disease they are treating. In the main they only know the composition of food in relation to the diet a patient needs because of his complaint. Unpalatable as this may be for the five medics, there are those trained and backed with a life-time experience in nutrition and dietetics who possess more knowledge in these areas than they themselves will have picked up from their general medical training.

At least we agree that 'the people of God should adopt a more healthy lifestyle', even if we may differ on some of the details.

Trevor Martin

Etc...

Graham Kerr's new book 'The New Seasoning' (Lion Publishing) is the world's first christian cookbook. It describes the new-found christian faith of TV's Galloping Gourmet and his wife, Treena, and tells of his new approach to cooking. Though not an entirely wholefood cookbook, it offers over 200 nutritious, economy-conscious recipes!

Graham himself choicely calls his book a 'cookbook that celebrates the joys of christian family life'. At £1.95, with 238 pages in hardback, it represents a really good buy. I wholeheartedly recommend it.

Trevor Martin

Etc...

The call of God



'Ian, I would like you to meet John,' my friend said, as we walked through the headquarters of the mission organisation I had just joined. 'He has just returned after three years out in India.' As one who was very much looking forward

by Ian Farr

to leaving for the mysterious East within a few months, I was delighted to have the opportunity of meeting

an 'old campaigner' who could tell me more of the challenge which awaited me. However, the response that I got from John was not at all what I expected. Instead of the thrill of finding that here was another recruit to go and even-

gelise the 'lost millions', there was just a cold stare as he said, 'I hope you know what you are doing; it's tough out there, and you will never make it unless you are sure of your call. What verses have you got?'

Being one of those people who could always find a verse to suit my need, and prove to myself anything I wished, I had long since given up finding my 'guidance' in this way, and was unable to give the requested textual proof of my call. For the rest of that day, and for some time afterwards, I found myself feeling condemned and confused. Was I right? Had I really been called? Should I go or stay? Was I just seeking to satisfy my selfish desire for travel and adventure? What was a call anyway?

Like many others, I had been in many 'missionary challenge' meetings, had heard many eloquent preachers pouring out their hearts about the needs of India, Africa, South America, the drug addicts, the down and outs, and just about every other country and class of people. The need of the world was vividly portrayed as the speaker drew things to that inevitable climax, 'Where are the workers, who will go?' Many times, as the accusing Kitchener-like finger had pointed, or the sun set on that last slide, my emotions had been stirred. With many others I had inwardly, if not openly, rededicated myself, and volunteered. But there was always the question of knowing the call. Was I called? Did I have that essential, yet somewhat mysterious element?

Four years in India did nothing to answer my question. I loved the country, enjoyed the people, felt the satisfaction of seeing many apparently responding, accepting Christ, and being blessed in their lives. Yet as I left that country it was with a real sense of frustration. I knew that I had built nothing. Something was missing. Missing in me, and missing in my message.

What was missing soon became evident to me on my return to England, as I spent time studying the New Testament. I realised that the 'evangelism' that I had been involved in fell far short of the dynamic Gospel of the Kingdom. For some time I felt like a school-boy who had greatly disappointed his parents by failing his exams. If God had called me to India, then

I should surely be there, and not in England. Was I to be another of those sad failures from the mission field who did not return to the country of his calling after his first term? Yet I knew that if I did go back it was at the risk of ending up bitter, defeated and disillusioned, like others that I had met all too often on the field.

For me, there was a need to look radically at all that I had accepted so glibly for so long about Christian service and missionary work. It soon became apparent that many of the ideas and traditions that had grown up in the Evangelical circles, to which I had been accustomed, although having no real basis in the scriptures, had become so sacred, that like the cows of India, no one dared to touch them, even when they were actually doing harm. I could not accept the fact that for all the money and energy expended, results were generally few and far between. The usual excuse seemed to be the harvest is plentiful but the labourers few, so there was the constant challenge for more to go. Yet it seemed to be no answer, for in those places where the percentage of workers was highest in proportion to the population, the results were often worse than elsewhere.

Jesus did not say 'the labourers are few, so would everyone who can, please go', but rather 'pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers'. The harvest is not a problem to him, he is the Lord of that. The problem is with the labourers themselves, and not with the quantity, but the quality.

I began to realise that the scriptures did not lay the emphasis where we Evangelicals had been laying it for so long. The call was not the crucial thing in Christian service. Paul would indeed encourage us to 'consider our call' and Peter exhorts that we 'Make certain about his calling'. However, in both these cases, as also in the majority of New Testament references to calling, the emphasis is not on a call to do something but rather a call to be something.

It has nothing to do with ministry, with India, or Africa, with teaching or medicine. It concerns our being chosen by God and our position as his children, men and women of his desire and choosing, to be with him, enjoying fellowship in kingdom life and experience.

It is difficult to express the effect on

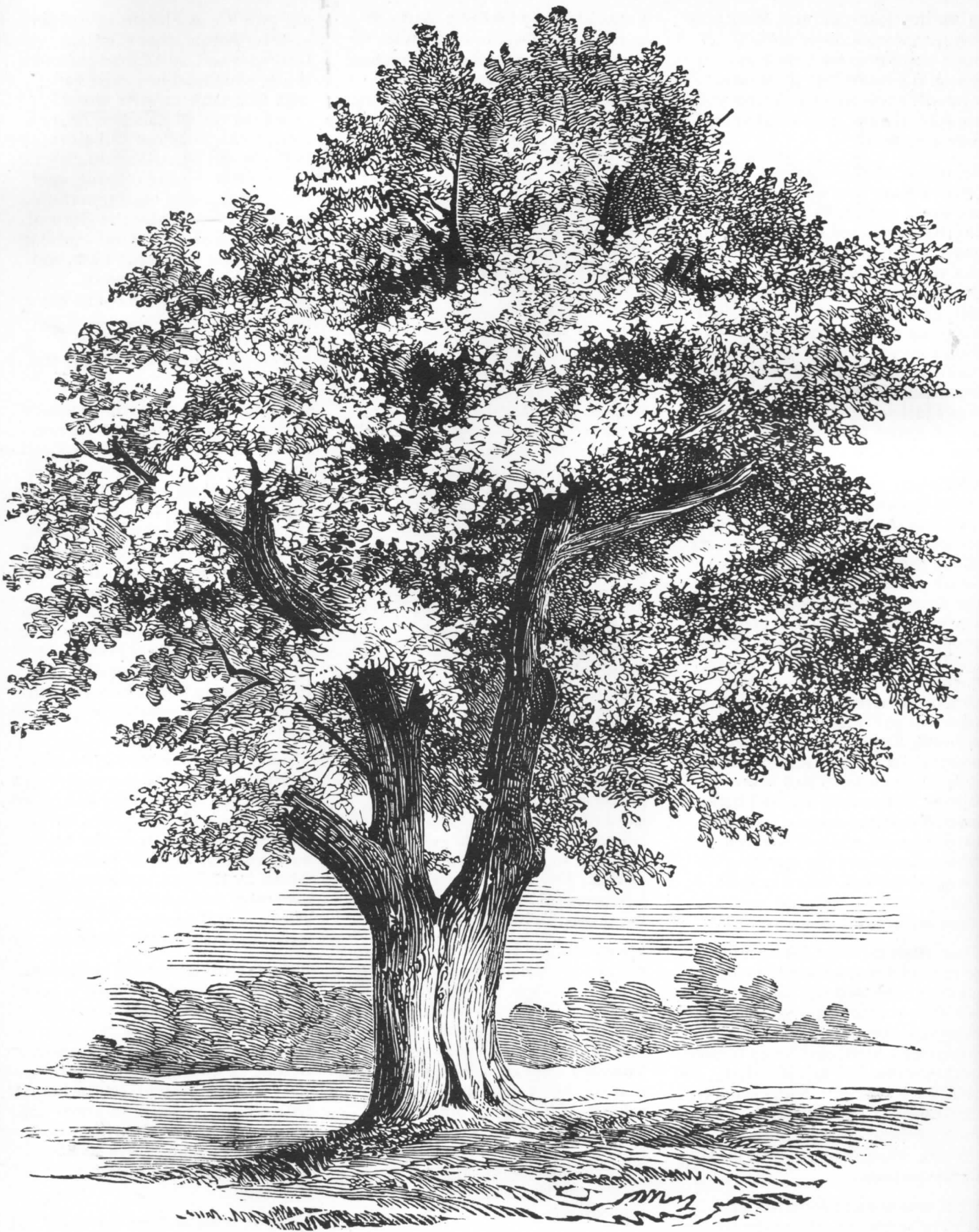
my own life as I began to realise, as never before, that the same God who had called into existence things which did not exist had, with that same creative word, called me out of darkness into his light, to his kingdom and glory, to holiness and sanctification. Certainly, the grind of guilt, and the frustration of condemnation joyously lifted under the glory of grace. I realised that God's primary concern was with what I am, and for that he had made every necessary provision. I really was a new creature in Christ, called and chosen by him for no other reason than that he loved me and wanted me.

One lingering doubt still remained with me. Was I being too narrow in my thinking? True, the realisation of what my calling really was had made a great difference to my own enjoyment of God. But if I was right, how would the job ever get done? As I became more aware of what was involved, even that last doubt soon subsided. I realised that God was not depending on me, and others like me, to evangelise the world. Rather he was looking for those who would be totally dependent on him. Through such men, he would soon accomplish his purpose.

Thus he calls men, not to be his 'agents' to infiltrate the world with his message, but as Jesus had called the twelve, to be with him, to learn of him, and to receive his authority. Of those he will send whom he chooses, equipped with his power and authority, as that effective and necessary foundational ministry of the kingdom.

Indeed, throughout the scriptures the only men who are said to have been called into ministry are the prophets and apostles. Nor did these receive their call as a result of long agonising hours of seeking. But, as they sought God for himself, with a burning desire to know him, so he was able to put within them his word, enabling them to be sent out and accomplish his intention.

How we need in these days, not to fill the world with young enthusiasts sharing their beliefs, but rather to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth those men, chosen, proven and fully equipped by the Spirit, who will accomplish under God, in a comparatively short time, that which all the finest efforts of sincere men can never produce.



Life: the secret ingredient

by Nick Butterworth



I was the visiting speaker at the morning service. In the minister's absence I was being entertained by the church secretary in a small room off the main auditorium. A gas fire, a few brown varnished chairs, a portrait of Jesus with long blond hair. The Minister's Vestry.

We exchanged pleasantries for a few minutes during which time my friend told me in veiled comments of the valuable work he had been doing leading Bible studies amongst the young people.

We were joined by the treasurer and one of the deacons and continued to chat until one minute to deadline. A brief look at the watch and 'Let's just have a prayer, shall we?'

The prayer said, we duly filed in and arranged ourselves in front of the waiting congregation. As I surveyed the scene before me, two of the faces to my right were conspicuous by their youth. One, a girl of about 18 and next to her a younger girl, her sister I guessed, aged about 12 or 13.

I was officially welcomed and proceedings were launched with a hymn which was sung more at the top of our voices than from the bottom of our hearts. Next on the agenda was a time of open prayer into which contributions were invited. With that each person adopted his or her customary attitude for prayer; eyes shut, head cupped in hands, slightly bowed, some leaning on the chair in front, others, more corpulent, leaning back with hands folded in their laps.

Then the professionals went to work. The prayers took the form of four or five dissertations by the same number of people, on the finished work of Christ and the resultant benefits to ourselves. Eloquence, theological correctness; everyone was most impressed—with the possible exception of God. But you can't please all of the people all of the time, and so, on the whole, a pretty good show.

As I was deliberating this scene an uninvited voice entered my thinking. 'Who are you to think such things about these people and this situation?' (It must be conscience) 'You're not so very spiritual yourself. If people only knew what goes on in your mind now and again you wouldn't be sitting in the visiting speaker's chair'. With these words I entered into a struggle. What they were saying

seemed so right but as I entertained these thoughts they only seemed to bring me into confusion.

It was then that I noticed for the first time something which had been going on for some minutes. It was the younger of the two girls in front of me. She was trying hard to look like she was praying—eyes closed, head bowed, cradled in one hand, her elbow on her knees. But she was very obviously bored by the charade all around her. One moment her fingers covered her eyes in the perfect attitude of prayer. The next, still with eyes closed she began to scratch the side of her nose. Then one finger strayed down to her mouth and she began to nibble her fingernail, at the same time surreptitiously opening one eye to glance around her.

Suddenly, I became angry. I was not angry with the girl. I was angry at the system, the poisoned atmosphere in which she had grown up which had taught her that to look as if you are praying is a good second best to actually praying.

The people in front of me now seemed to fall more or less into two broad categories. There were those who were good at operating the system, organisational people, with good memories for scripture verses and a secret lust for the admiration of others. There were the others who had fallen prey to the system, not very eloquent, too honest about their own weaknesses to take a prominent position, they dared not question the system for fear of appearing unspiritual.

Then I recognised the voice I had struggled with. Not conscience, but condemnation. I had been conned. For a moment I had allowed my own weaknesses to undercut a true evaluation of the situation. The issue had become clouded. I had been tricked into thinking that to know the truth and judge with right judgement was to have a critical spirit.

Even if I was right, I thought, surely I ought to bear with these people knowing that God meets us where we are. Didn't Paul become all things to all men? No he didn't. He didn't become pharisaical to the pharisees. He didn't become hypocritical to the hypocrites. And I realised now that I could know the truth about this situation without pride or criticism.

Now the truth dawned on me more clearly than ever before. The system is a great big trap. It holds not only those who don't know their way around it, but in a subtle way, even those who operate it. All are held captive to the idea that more is required of us than the sum total of what we have to give. Condemned by what looks to us like an impoverished contribution we begin to construct a facade in both our individual and corporate lives.

The irony is that we become condemned not in the light of God's perfection but when we compare ourselves with the arbitrary and very imperfect standard that we have set for ourselves.

Jesus said 'I am come that they might have life'. How well we know the words but how little we know the life. We hear the words only after they have been filtered through the grid of our preconceptions, diluted and emptied of their powerful content.

Life! It cannot be constructed—it grows. It begins not with intellectual assent to certain doctrines or by signing a statement of faith and praying The Repentant Sinner's Prayer. It begins with the acknowledgment of God's sovereign right to do with me as he pleases. I have no rights. He is Lord.

Life is the gift of God in the first place and bringing it to maturity is his prerogative. All our efforts to construct life must be as hideous to God as Frankenstein's monster to us. Tragically, in the Church we settled for an imitation of the real thing. So many churches could be compared to a Hollywood film set. They create an impressive illusion of the real thing, but behind the facade there is no substance. Only props and struts.

Some people have made a bid for freedom and have come out of the system. Unfortunately, in many cases the system has not come out of them with the result that the problem is compounded. Their diagnosis of the malady was superficial. Now, instead of enduring three or four hours of unreality a week, the whole show has been imported into their front room and they are living with it.

At a retreat for leaders some time ago, I heard a man tell of certain difficulties he had found in his local fellowship. At one time they had

been meeting for worship on Sunday afternoons, but for one reason or another they were dissatisfied with the gatherings. Then they heard about other groups who had simply met to have tea together and play games such as Scrabble or Monopoly. They decided to give it a try and met to go for walks and play games together. He concluded that although things were less intense than they had been, still somehow they weren't quite making it.

As I listened, at first I was puzzled. The only alternative seemed to be to stop meeting altogether. Then I realised where the problem lay. The question was not worship or Scrabble. The question was, what did they want to do? They had fallen into the trap of thinking that there was some external pattern for them to conform to.

But here is the glorious truth: the external form of our lives is only a manifestation of the life within.

For this glorious truth to become part of our experience needs more than mental agreement over its correctness. We need to be brave enough just to get on and live, content to be who we are. It takes faith to rest. It takes faith to believe that we are not just looking for a spiritual loophole, to get out of doing what we ought. It takes a person who has drunk deeply of the grace of God to know that of himself he can do nothing and that God will enable him to do that which he requires of him.

This is a spiritual principle. It is a principle of life and growth. In some ways it is very elusive. It is not comprehended by great intellect but by having a heart set to know God and walk in his ways. 'If any man's will is to do his will he shall know . . .'; 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear'.

Life can only really be understood by living it. So many Christians live a kind of dual existence, walking alongside themselves checking up on every move to see how they're doing. But the person who is doing the checking is not doing the living and never seems to help the one who is. If you dissect a flower to see how it lives all you will find out is how it would have lived and how others still do. But your flower will be dead. It is this observer who needs to die, and for God to take his place. So many of our problems arise from answers which do not include God.

Christianity is not a club or an

organisation or a philosophy. It is not even a way of life. It is a life. His life—the life of Jesus. That which does not arise out of my life in him is not part of that life no matter how much it resembles it or how spiritual it sounds. Prayer meetings, evangelistic programmes, walks in the country, fellowship holidays, Scrabble, all can be dead or alive depending on their source.

It is important to realise that immaturity is not sin. I may be very young just yet but I am alive, born of incorruptible seed and growing, ultimately to the maturity of Jesus, my elder brother. When we see a newborn baby boy we don't panic because he doesn't have a beard yet. We don't buy a clip-on one so that he can hold his own with mature men. But we do tend to panic if a newborn Christian doesn't have a burden for missionary work. Or if he doesn't want his home opened up for community. We do tend to clip on impressions of Praying Hyde or George Muller.

Some years ago I and a group of friends were members of a large denominational church. During that time we became convinced that the form of church life we were living was not the land of our fathers. Like many of Israel during the Babylonian exile we had been born in captivity, and although those we were with were the Lord's people, deep in our hearts was a longing to return to the freedom of the land of promise.

My desire was to demonstrate to the institutional church something of the alternative. People do not easily give themselves to words and visions, preferring the familiar to the untried. And so, with an inclusive rather than an exclusive burden and vision, we began to explore a form of church life which was organic rather than organisational. We determined to have no more outward form than our internal life could support.

During our embryonic stage there was not much to show. We had no official meetings, and no co-ordinated plans for the future. During the first four months of our development we met together only as our friendship brought us together. An invitation for a meal, our work, a walk in Epping Forest.

This is the stage that gives religious people problems. 'You're no better than the world', they exclaim. Better? Maybe not, but different. One evening when I take my friend Mick home we end up talking and

praying for half an hour sitting in the car outside his house. Another time walking through the park with a couple of other friends we find our conversation turning into prayer.

One evening, a few of us were sitting around the fireside in my home. As we sat, just enjoying being together, I had an idea. Wouldn't it be good to be with one another like this and have a meal together, and have someone read a chapter from a book to us?

Everyone was very enthusiastic and so we began to meet regularly for a simple meal and each week Bernard read a chapter from *Wind in the Willows*. Then others began to come along and soon our house was packed with people on Wednesday nights, to the extent that I had to ask people not to come on a Wednesday unless they were interested in a deepening relationship with us in the context of daily life.

Leadership needs to grow organically. Labels such as elder or pastor are worthless if they do not describe function. Appointments should be the result of appreciation and recognition of the evident role that a person is fulfilling. Until now I had not taken much responsibility for others. I depended upon them knowing God for themselves. But now I sensed a desire to move on.

As a baby grows so the structure—the skeleton begins to firm up to support the developing life of the baby. His bones are soft at birth, but as he needs to walk they become firmer.

Now each week at one point I interrupted the conversations and the tea and coffee-making and called us together. Not for a lofty time of worship but to let people know what was going on—a sort of 'notices'. This gave us a sense of identity together and it was not very difficult from here to introduce short times of prayer.

We didn't sing much. Musical talent was short and self-consciousness was in ample supply. But, gradually, as we contented ourselves with what we had whilst still longing for more, leadership and musical talent increased and inhibitions waned. Because we realised that we were loved and accepted by God before we began to worship the pressure was off us to produce something in worship to make us acceptable. We found new forms springing up spontaneously, not copies of what

others were doing but appropriate to the particular gifts and personalities in us.

From here we began to aspire to a greater degree of involvement with one another. Folks have shared their money and possessions. Others have moved house and employment in order to work out their relationships with each other in the context of everyday living. How wonderful! And how painful sometimes. There

are all sorts of problems uncovered as people share their lives. I have related this brief history not as a success story, but as a first-hand example of organic church life. There is much ground to recover still; intercession, healing, evangelism. But, praise God, something has been done. Once there was only vision and hope. Now, a few denominational churches in our area are beginning to ask how they can introduce organic structure into

their fellowships, because they can see what has happened in groups like our own.

God forbid that we should now embark on the 'Wind in the Willows' method. But may he grant us the courage to be honest about what is dead and what is alive. May we be delivered from sentimentality and tradition for its own sake. May we have the faith to believe that he will build his Church.



Q. What principles should guide our approach to the controversial subject of health-foods?

A. We must ask what principles and presuppositions underlie any course of action. Underlying much 'health-foods' thinking is the concept of man as basically alright, but the victim of an inadequate diet. This kind of attitude comes across in Adelle Davis' 'Let's eat right to keep fit'—amidst much good advice, too! The answer to almost every illness, and even to character and emotional defects, is to be found in dietary adjustment. The Christian must reject this thinking. Man is not basically alright. He needs redemption and spiritual transformation, not merely dietary adjustment.

The Christian must accept that man has mis-managed God's world. He has polluted it and exercised poor husbandry. He glorifies his technology at the expense of the environment. The result is that most of us eat foods far removed from God's design and intention for us. Surely, therefore, the Christian will want to eat food that approximates as closely as possible to the natural foods that God gave man (Gen 1:29; 9:3). He may have to supplement his 'altered' modern diet with natural foods. He may have to put the germ back into the wheat, and add roughage, vitamins and minerals. Trevor Martin's article in Fulness volume 12, and other articles and

publications on diet can help him here. But his approach must be on a Christian basis, and he must never deceive himself into thinking that dietary adjustment is a panacea for all ills! He must be prepared to change and supplement his diet where he has need but he is also responsible for avoiding wasting his money on unneeded pills and powders.

Etc...

Following a good response to Trevor's recipe in volume 12, with many baking bread for the first time, here's another recipe to encourage the cooks!

Recipe for farmhouse fruit cake.

Ingredients:

- 6 oz. margarine
- 6 oz. brown sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 5 oz. sultanas
- 5 oz. raisins
- 2 oz. peel
- 2 oz. cherries (chopped)
- 8 oz. 81% plain flour
- ½ level teaspoon baking powder
- ½ level teaspoon mixed spice

Method:

1. Set oven to 325°F or gas mark 3.
2. Grease and line 7 inch cake tin.
3. Place all the ingredients in a large bowl and mix until blended.
4. Pour into prepared tin and smooth over.
5. Bake for 1½ - 1¾ hours.

Etc...

Frankly, I'd decided to cancel my subscription for Fulness. However the latest is so full of plain common sense and interesting ideas that I've changed my mind. Shalom!

J. Morgan, Nuneaton

Etc...

Sometimes I forget to need you Lord
And then I wonder why things loom
so large.

They're not there to hurt or harm me
But to draw me deeper into you
It's so simple—I just can't make it
on my own
So why worry when I can't.

You're there
Longing for me to lean on you
Longing to hear my cry for help
Longing to prove your love to me
Oh Father—my Father

I'm glad you made me this way—
needing you.

That's right—you made me to need
you—to need my friends
I'm glad we're not all the same
I'm glad we can see things in
different ways
Take away any threat of variety in
my life
Make me glad that others see things
in different ways
That's good
A God with a people of infinite
variety
How narrow I've been Lord
How insecure and self-centred.

Father—you're so big so vast so
unboring
And you've everything to give us
I need you and everything you
have to give me
So—help me to stop going it alone
so often
And lean more on you.

by Pat Barton

Etc...

We extend our apologies to Phil Streeter for omitting his name from his contribution in our last issue. Phil was the author of the poem 'You are so extravagant Jesus.'

Etc...

Tony Pullin

The hope of his calling

My conversion was at an early age and was not a crisis. Since that time there have been two crises in my life both of which have involved a change of direction. The first, 11 years ago, was when my wife Muriel and I were baptised in the Holy Spirit. For many years I had believed and taught that such an experience today was unbiblical and impossible and I am not sure which was the greater miracle—the outpouring of God's Spirit in power or the gracious persistence and love of the Lord in bringing us to a place where we humbled ourselves before him and opened our hearts to his sovereign blessing. We have appreciated both miracles ever since.

Six years rolled by during which we learnt many things and enjoyed the new dimension of life in the local church to which we had joined ourselves after being baptised in the Spirit. But somehow there were lots of problems that still weren't being solved. Our desperate prayer meetings for revival grew more and more desperate, and the big wave of blessing that was always just about to roll in never made it to the beach. The campaigns that we hoped would be the big break left little evidence of change. It seemed the Lord was about to come at any moment, only to find us in failure and frustration. We longed for something more but did not know how to find it. Our sense of direction faltered, leaving us helpless and only able to cry out to God.

It was at this time that the Lord in

his grace began to speak to us again. I was ministering for a week at a christian guest house and had taken as my theme 'God's Prophetic Programme'. The series began with the 'rapture' of the saints, so that the rest of the week was really for academic interest only, since, according to my well-documented system, the real action in the world was going to take place through the remnant of Israel after the Church had gone. However, identifying the Man of Sin and discussing the Middle East, the ten horns, the woman on a scarlet beast etc, was all gripping stuff, and it was gratifying to see the entire company of guests packing the lounge each night. Somehow I had never faced up to the gulf between my sincere enjoyment of teaching and the sad lack in my own life and that of the church at home. On the Thursday a man of God passed through. I ministered at length on 'God, Russia and Egypt', followed it up with a question and answer session, and felt I had handled it all rather well. Afterwards he came to me quietly and graciously, and putting his hand on my shoulder said, 'Young man, don't be too dogmatic. I used to believe all that once and I had to throw it all overboard.'

Phew! He said little more, but it was a shaft that pierced my doctrinal armour and reached my heart. I went up to my room alone, not knowing what had hit me, and sought the Lord. Before the end of that week two dear old sisters whose names I don't know placed

into my hand the second issue of Fulness. Wisely they didn't try to argue with me. Perhaps they knew I could have out-pointed them on textual 'proof'. Perhaps they prayed for me; I don't know. But God was on the move in our lives and that was a link in the chain.

Back in Bristol at the weekend, Muriel and I felt we should attend the last night of a small campaign for which Hugh Thompson was responsible. The campaign, as Hugh later described it, was a disaster, but that night I walked to the front of the church and knelt before God. With little human knowledge of my circumstances, Hugh prayed in Jesus' name that I might be delivered from the religious bondage of years long gone by; the 'ism' of the past. Something happened within me at that moment. God broke a power that was binding my spirit and blinding my eyes. It was as though fire passed through me.

Within weeks God began to write on my heart something of the true hope of the Church; the glorious hope of a bride made ready to meet her bridegroom; a city of transparency and beauty; a finished house for his eternal dwelling place; a redeemed and victorious people having returned to Zion, reflecting his glory and showing forth his praise; a highway of holiness on which the king would return, his enemies now his footstool, his people prepared to rule the earth with him. I saw that this age was not going to fade out, closed by the removal of the Church as an embarrassing failure, but that it was going to conclude in a blaze of glory; that the grace of God would triumph in bringing forth a generation of people who would be changed into the image of Jesus, waiting only for the final release of resurrection at the sound of the trumpet.

Naturally, it didn't all come at once. But I cannot begin to describe the joy and the glory that filled our lives as new horizons opened up. An entirely new sense of purpose was born in our hearts, a new appreciation of the grace of God. It was breathtaking to conceive that God was able, and had committed himself to transform his people into a perfect reflection of all that Jesus is, both in his character and power, and that this was the purpose of God in the outpouring of his Spirit. God was

going somewhere, and we wanted to go with him.

The first passage of scripture to come alive at that time was Eph. 4. I read, almost as though for the first time, that God's purpose was that we should all attain to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ; and that he would accomplish this not through a rapture but through the ministries given to the Church by the ascended Christ—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers. It was so clear, so simple, so wonderful. I saw the need for the recognition of such men so that they might fulfil their ministries and lead the Church on towards the goal.

There was a further step in the enlarging of our vision when a vital key to understanding the whole of prophecy came to light. It had to do with the true nature of the Israel of God. This was the bit of revelation that gave me nearly half my Bible back—I mean all the O.T. prophets, the Revelation and sundry other parts. My system of interpretation had been based on two elect companies—the heavenly people, the Church, and the earthly people, the remnant of Israel. This led on to two gospels—the 'gospel of grace' for the former company and the 'gospel of the kingdom' for the latter, who were definitely going to have a harder time! And ultimately there would be two levels in the coming kingdom, the bride and restored Israel. Let me share briefly some of the scriptures which were opened up to me at that time, because it has meant so much in practical ways since.

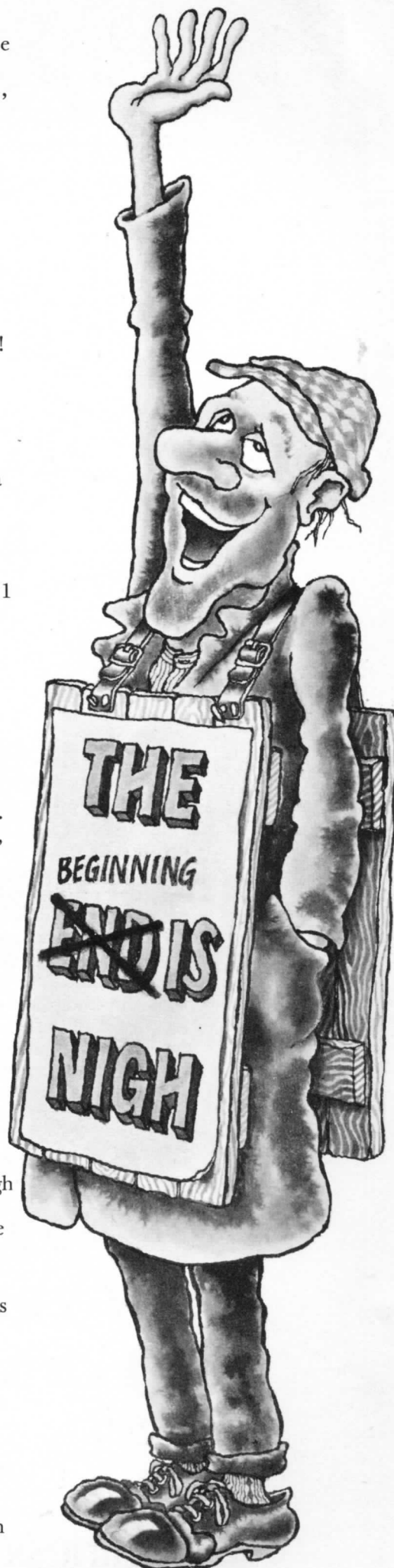
I began to understand the import of the Lord's words in Matthew 21:43, that the kingdom of God was to be taken away from Israel and given to a nation producing the fruit of it—those to whom Peter says 'you are a chosen race . . . a holy nation, a people for God's own possession' (1 Pet. 2: 9). From Eph. 2:15 I saw that there could never be two elect companies in the kingdom when it was God's purpose 'to make the two (Jew and Gentile) into one new man'; and that the gospel of the grace of God and the good news of the kingdom were one and the same thing. Gal. 6:15 sprang into focus—the 'Israel of God' was a new creation; the N.T. references to the

'Jew inwardly', the 'true circumcision', the 'sons of Abraham' all came alive. I discovered the bride to be the holy city, Jerusalem, of Rev. 21, where the names of the twelve tribes and of the twelve apostles are both inscribed, and I saw at last that the great prophecies of the O.T. are not interesting reading concerning someone else's future—they are relevant to this hour, being fulfilled across the earth in our generation.

Now I could read 'Arise, shine; for your light has come' and say Amen! God is arising now, his light is shining over the earth as the Holy Spirit speaks to the churches. A heart-cry is born in the people of God for the fulfilment of the eternal purpose, the emergence of a company who will bring forth the fruits of the kingdom and come to the very stature of the Christ. Now I began to understand the new covenant, announced in Jeremiah 31 and operative in the Church, the Israel of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, Heb. 8, 10, 12. Now I could return to the Revelation and find my vision kindled and rekindled as the call goes out to those who will follow the Lamb wherever he goes, to those who will overcome as he overcame and share with him in his glorious reign.

I know now that the hope of Jesus' return, as someone said, has dropped 18 inches, from my head to my heart. Polemics have given way to passion. More important still a practical outworking has begun in our lives. God has been touching many areas of life, our marriage and family as well as our ministry. He has taught us again and again our need of our brothers and sisters and that only as we share together, submitting to one another in honesty and love, can we move on with him. But I want to say for Muriel and myself, though conscious of much weakness still, that God is good and that which he has begun he will perfect until the day of Christ Jesus.

I remember the day I fed 500 pages of sermon notes into my wastepaper basket and said, 'Lord, I don't know anything. Please teach me by your Spirit'. At first I only knew there was a witness and a response in my spirit to things I did not understand. To follow that alone was a new experience. I understand a little more now, and love him more than ever.





Fresh Fruit Salad is a result of what God is doing amongst Christians in the East London area and is an expression of the life we are now living. The songs we have included, and their performance, are not intended primarily to represent what we believe to be technically excellent, but rather what we know to be a true reflection of our current musical abilities and aspirations. With the exception of 'Quicken us together', all the songs are 'home-grown', and in an attempt to capture some spontaneity, they have been recorded in straight stereo,

with no overdubbing or multi-tracking.

We're pleased with the result, and we're also looking forward to being able to record some more . . .

Fresh Fruit Salad consists of over one hour of songs and music and is available from Flex records and tapes, 57 The Drive Collier Row Romford Essex.

The price of £2.50 includes postage, packaging and VAT.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to Flex.

Fulness volume 13 price 30p