

STRAIGHTWAY

"AND STRAIGHTWAY THEY FORSOOK THEIR NETS, AND FOLLOWED HIM" (MARK 1:18).

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

Seeing the Endtime

Dr. H. T. Spence

(Reprint)

In the years of his ministry, my dear earthly father often told his students that they needed to know where they were in history and where they were in the light of biblical prophecy. Such knowledge was to enable them to preach the master truths along with the gospel message needed for their times. No one knows exactly how many years history has been in existence since God created this earth. The calendars have changed even in the past two thousand years. But it is interesting to note that following the chronology of Archbishop Ussher, who placed the Creation at 4004 B.C., this present calendar year would place us exactly six thousand years from Creation.

But aside from the issue of chronology, it is evident that we are living in a most peculiar time in the history of man. The Scriptures also reveal that we are living near the time of the Second Coming of Christ. What are we seeing

today, and in what season of time are we living?

The Concept of Time

Although God dwells in the dimension of eternity, He has placed His creation in the dimension of time. For an entity to dwell in the dimension of time, it must have a beginning. Therefore, as that entity continues in history, it has a past, a present, and a future. In that they have a beginning, angels live in some concept of time (though not in the same concept as man). Only eternity will reveal how their concept of time is measured. There was a time in their existence when all of them were holy; then there was the falling away of some, all of which have a continuing existence. Revelation 12:12 speaks of the future: "for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." It is a future for him that ultimately leads to the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10).

But man's concept of time is based on the rotation of the planet Earth and its rotation around the sun. He too has a past, present, and future. His concept of time is by circular and linear measurement. God gave His eternal Word to man through the dimension of time (covering approximately 1,656 years and forty to forty-four writers). Seventy percent of Scripture is dedicated to His revelation through history; even biblical prophecy is simply history foretold. Although Christ (in the eternal present tense view of God) was slain before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), He had to come in the dimension of time to die and save mankind. Man fell from his perfect state *in* time; therefore, he must be redeemed and restored *in* time. History is "His Story," and all of history is viewed either before His first coming

or after his first coming (B.C. and A.D.). Hebrews 1:2 states that God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds [or *ages*]." God has already set time: its beginning, its completion, and all of time in between. Our own lives are found in history; we were born in time, we live in time, we sinned in time, we must be saved in time (although our salvation in God is tied into eternity), we must live for Christ in time, and one day we will die in time.

Two Concepts of Time

The history of sacred Scripture reveals two concepts of *time*. They are presented with the two Greek words *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* (from which we get the word chronology) is a term to designate the quantity of time or time's duration, such as a time line, or the natural unfolding of time. But *kairos* does not measure so much the quantity of time as it does the quality of time. It is a word that represents a period of time possessed by certain characteristics; it designates more of the understanding of a season of time. In Matthew 13:30 the word *time* or *season* is in regard to characteristics that mark harvesting. In Galatians 6:9, 10, it is a season of time marked by the characteristics of reaping and opportunity. In Luke 12:42, a season of characteristics is marked by the discharging

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of duties. And in Acts 24:25, a season of convenience or opportunity is given to the hearing of the gospel. Hebrews 3:7, 8 warns, “the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts.” It is a season of His dealings with us.

Amidst the *chronos* of time, we are in the season of the end of an age. We must know and be aware of those characteristics that mark this season. To see the end of the age, Christ gave us understanding of other days— days presented in the Bible that had the same characteristics of the days in which we live. Many of these characteristics were given in His Olivet Discourse:

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors (Matt. 24:32, 33).

What are some of the characteristics? He describes in Matthew 24:37–39 that the end time will be like the days of Noah. Luke includes “likewise also as it was in the days of Lot” (Luke 17:28). Therefore, it will be like the days surrounding Noah before the Flood and the days surrounding Lot before the destruction of Sodom.

Days of Noah

The days leading up to the Flood

were marked with unique characteristics. We carefully observe that the first five chapters of Genesis are dedicated to individuals. Two lines of humanity are evident by the end of the fifth chapter: the godly and the ungodly lines. Two spiritual seeds are clearly displayed with their progenitors found in Cain (Gen. 4:16) and Seth (Gen. 4:26). But again, those chapters are dedicated to the distinguishing of individuals. In chapter four Cain’s ungodly line reaches an apex in Lamech. In chapter five Seth’s line, the godly line, reaches an apex with Enoch who walked with God and pleased God; he was then translated.

But there was a point in time “when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them” (6:1). When the population of man increases, somehow the congregating becomes the scene of the development of evil on a greater scale. Moral waywardness comes with the increase of people. Since the time of the Flood, there are now more people on the face of the earth than at any other time in history. In that all were born in sin, the greater the number of sinners, the greater the abounding of iniquity among humanity. Historically, it is clearly seen that the larger the city, the greater the proliferation of sin.

Back in Genesis 3:15, God had placed a hatred between the godly and the ungodly lines. However, this hatred

was now waning. Yea, we will read of one of the seeds beginning to view the other with desire. Enoch evidently saw the powers of the ungodly increasing, and he cried out against them:

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him (Jude 14, 15).

Enoch was one in concluding generations of the godly before this transition took place (Gen. 6:1, 2.)

The Philadelphia Church Age (from around 1750 to 1900) parallels this generation of Enoch. This period was marked by a height of spirituality and godly men. It contrasts with the next Church age, the Laodicean Church Age, described in Revelation 3:17:

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

By the time of Noah, a new element was already evident in his generation: "That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Gen. 6:2). When the

godly began to look upon the ungodly, powers of desire commenced within their hearts. The key attraction was their fairness. It was the fleshly side rather than the spiritual aspect that drew their sight. Being "fair" was the singular attraction. The appetite for the flesh is evident in that they "took them wives of all which they chose," or those they liked best.

Sight, the Greatest of the Senses

Sight is probably the greatest of the senses; it is this sense that attracted the flesh to those identified with the godly. In Genesis 3, when the serpent cast forth his temptation concerning the forbidden fruit to Eve, she saw first that it was "good for food and pleasant to the eyes" (3:6). In Genesis 13 Lot chose his geography by lifting up "his eyes" and beholding all the plain of Jordan (13:10). However Genesis 13:14, 15 states,

The LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest.

God directed the sight of Abraham, but human desire directed the eyes of both Eve and Lot.

Sarai was "a fair woman to look upon" (Gen. 12:11), and the Egyptians viewed that aspect of her (12:14, 15).

Abimelech (Gen. 20) took Sarah, but we do not read of any impropriety with her, for his heart was right. Whereas Pharaoh looked upon Sarah with fleshly, lustful purposes, Abimelech looked upon her with honorable propriety. (Read the distinction of God's judgment upon the two.)

In Joshua 7:21 the look of Achan upon that which was forbidden by God in Jericho led to his coveting. In 2 Samuel 11:2 David's look upon Bathsheba commenced his wrong desires for her. In Ezra 9:2 the remnant from the Captivity took of the daughters of the enemy and brought sin upon the remnant. The same was evident in Nehemiah 13:23, 24.

When the godly look upon the ungodly, it becomes the classic presentation of carnality. It is the releasing and the turning over of their lives to the fleshly part. Over a period of time, the two seeds finally become fully mixed. Coming out of this mixing will be men of great stature, inspiring fear, and men of renown (or men of name). Such men will become outstanding men of wickedness and debauchery. We have witnessed many of such men in the powerful Charismatic personalities who have made names for themselves in wealth and fame.

The End Time

We are in the times of Noah. The deeper the spirituality that the godly

line lives (Genesis 5), the deeper will be the destruction if they return to the flesh. Very deep sins will come out of the commingling of the flesh and Spirit. The powers of pornography today are tied up in the "sight" of man for the flesh: we read in 2 Peter 2:14, "Having eyes full adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children." We are living in a generation in which even Christian youths convince themselves that they must dress for this "sexual," fleshly appeal. The allurements of this age are tied up in the power of the flesh. This is why sanctification is so important for the Christian life; sanctification is for the confrontation of the Spirit and the flesh (1 Thess. 4 and Gal. 5). The great violation that comes to the Christian in these matters is the overthrow of the doctrine of biblical separation. If this guardian principle of the Christian life is cast aside, it will be the downfall of "godliness."

The powers of the flesh and the Spirit are coming together in the Church today, and lukewarmness is its product. Christ in Revelation 3:15, 16 would rather for the Church to be cold (the flesh alone) or hot (the Spirit alone); but this mixing He hates.

More than ever before, our children must be careful in the selecting of mates for marriage in this age. What

does one desire in a mate? Is it the “fairness” of the flesh or the “fairness” of godliness? It is evident in Genesis 19:14 that the young men who married daughters of Lot were young men who had no concept of God. Although Genesis 24:16 speaks of Rebekah being “very fair to look upon,” we also observe godly qualities in her life. Later, she gave evidences of weaknesses with her sons as well as deception in her marriage. The strange woman of Proverbs 7 dressed for the sight and fleshly appeal of a young man; through it she destroyed many a young man. She also was a woman who could not be trusted by her “good man” (her husband) while he was away (Prov. 7:19, 20). In contrast, Proverbs 31:11 presents the virtuous woman who could be trusted by her husband.

When godly men (from godly homes) begin casting their eyes upon the daughters of men (the ungodly), they first become passive to the things of God. If this passivity is not dealt with, then aggressiveness against God and God’s people will begin taking over the heart. After a while the desires for the fleshly things will greatly increase—“they took them wives of all which they chose,” or all they wanted or thought was the best. The restraints were cast away, and polygamy (of the Cainite line) became common.

How is our sight? Upon what are we looking? How are our thoughts in

regard to that which we look upon? Letting our thoughts run wild is the evidence of choosing all that we see and desire. But God sees our thoughts: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5).

As our Laodicean Church Age came on the heels of the greatest spiritual Church age, Philadelphia, it is evident there are dangers in going on with God. The deeper the godliness of a people, the deeper the sins will be if they ever return to the flesh of the world. Shallow churches may not witness deep sins; however, a deep church that has committed its legacy in deep spirituality will find its falling to be deeper. Lucifer, the anointed cherub of God’s throne and highest of the angelic beings, fell; his fall was irrecoverable. When one takes the powers of the Spirit and commingles them with the flesh, very deep sins will result.

Conclusion

In light of the deep sins of his generation, the Bible states that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. This is the first time the word grace is mentioned in the Bible (Gen. 6:8). Mankind had come to complete insensitivity to divine influences. Hence, God’s Spirit was to be withdrawn. But Noah, in finding grace in the eyes of God, was found as a just man, upright,

declared righteous by God. He was perfect, complete, and whole in the various compartments of his life. This does not mean sinless, but he was a man of maturity while living in such a godless, compromising world. He lived through several generations and saw the mixing of the seeds through that time period. But his heart before God was perfect. He had only one wife, and he walked in the legacy of his fathers (5:22). He was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5), and he announced the coming of the judgment flood (Heb. 11:7). In a time when ungodliness was the hallmark of man's heart, Noah was found "fearing" God (Heb. 11:7), or "godly." He responded to that "fear" before the Lord and "prepared an ark

to the saving of his house." He was a man committed to the preservation of the seed! We need to be found as a Noah who had faith in his God when it was not found in anyone else in that last generation before the Flood (Luke 18:8).

In these days when the flesh has become the central attraction to the world and the institutional Church, may God enable us to keep our eyes upon the Saviour and His Word. May we pray for godliness in these days of deep ungodliness. In this end time, may we long to know the fairness described in Song of Solomon 4:1—the beauty of Christ in the yielded human life. **S**

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With Purpose of Heart

Dr. H. T. Spence

(Reprint)

Our present history of human time is marked with dark and foreboding powers of which the Christian must ever be conscious. These powers are filled with moods and influences that can have a profound effect on the Christian's life if he is not careful. We live in the End Time, a time like no other time. The Devil has come to his most artistic season of wicked existence; he has had six thousand years to experiment on mankind. His arsenal of subtleties for drawing man away from God and love for spiritual things has come to its prime. How often we are reminded of R. C. Trench's definition of "the age":

All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, being the moral, and or immoral atmosphere which at every moment we inhale, again inevitably to exhale.

Such a floating mass is present everywhere we turn. The Christian must truly purpose in his heart to overcome such an age or he will be overcome by its power.

Three Worlds to Overcome

There are three worlds that the

Christian is daily facing that possess innate destructive powers: (1) the secular world/age in which he lives; (2) the Church world/age in which he lives; and, (3) the world within his heart. All three worlds are ever vying for control of the Christian and often unite in subtle attack upon the mind and affections.

The Secular World/Age

This present world/age is a visceral age, with much emphasis upon the flesh. Christ compared His Second Coming to the days of Noah. Genesis 6 speaks of "the flesh" four times. Genesis 6:3 reads, "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for *that he also is flesh*" (emphasis added). Man had come to such aggressive living in his body that he believed his whole existence was flesh—having no spirit or soul. Genesis 6:12 then states, "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for *all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth*" (emphasis added). This declaration from God announces that His appointed way or purpose for making flesh had been totally corrupted; man had fully misused his fleshly body. Genesis 6:13 states, "And God said unto Noah, *The end of all flesh is come before me*" (emphasis added). The sins that could be committed with the fleshly body had

reached a consummation; there were no more sins that could be sinned with the body; the flesh and its lusts had dominated the total existence of mankind. Finally, Genesis 6:17 states, "And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to *destroy all flesh*" (emphasis added). This was the only thing left for God to do: He must destroy all flesh.

In the light of this fourfold reality of the flesh in the days of Noah, we can see that such a condition has become the preeminent reality of our present history. Western civilization is consumed and even obsessed with the body. Society has become deeply concerned with health-care; it seeks through medicine, hospitals, and specialized doctors cures for every disease. Concern for the body has truly become the priority of humanity; this is especially true as one ages. The "care" of the body has taken precedence over the care of the soul. Our modern civilization presses for the satisfying of the body in designer clothes, all kinds of jewelry for every part of the body, "the look" in fashion cosmetics, soaps, lotions, creams, and everything that seems to be needed in keeping the body "in shape." Materialism has become a master sin and obsession. The money we make, the cars we drive, and the homes we live in are all part of the sensual and visceral drive of man's existence and status. The great master sin of fornication is sweep-

ing our world through its variously manifested fleshly sins. Our society is consumed by pornography, divorce and remarriage, and child pornography and molestation. The TV, movie, and video media are now consumed with these things along with the flesh sins of sodomy.

Dear Christian, this is what we must aggressively fight every day we live. Every time we go to a mall there is the pull to become more of a compulsive shopper for the material things of life. The media is ever calling to our thinking and the desires of our bodies to satisfy with comfort, ease, pleasure, amusement, and with the certain look and feel. According to the Food Network, over 870,000 restaurants populate America with the average person spending \$1,400 a year for dining out. This brings us to \$440 billion spent on 54 billion meals a year. It is evident that our fast-pace lifestyle has pressed for more eating out, and this was part of the warning Christ gave to His disciples (Luke 17:27, 28). If we are not careful, the primary occupation of our lives will be for the body, for its health, and for its desires. We must fight this world/age obsession daily or we will be sucked into the vortex of its powerful influence in our living.

The Church World/Age

There is also the "floating mass" of thought coming from the world/age of the Church. We are living in the

Laodicean Church Age; it runs parallel with the secular world/age. The reason for such parallelism is that the Church has been secretly inhaling the philosophical atmosphere of its time. The distance that may have been between the two worlds is fast closing. The Church's master sin has become carnality, the "flesh," the material, and the physical.

Christ revealed the testimony of the end-time Church: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17). The same powerful influence of the physical, the visceral, and the flesh has greatly undermined the spiritual within the institutional Church of our generation. This is why the Charismatic movement has become a dominating and influential force in the main stream of modern Christianity. The belief that health and wealth are signs of God's favor while sickness and poverty are signs of God's disfavor has become the hallmark of Neo-Christianity. The Christianity that was hated by the world fifty to one hundred years ago has now changed to become popular with the new generation. Larger churches, staggering multi-million dollar budgets, the latest technology, the high salaries paid to these modern Christian workers, the professional look and sound, the contemporary (worldly) music, and the physical "image" have all become important to "promoting the gospel" in

the Laodicean Church Age.

A young minister today is under the all-pervading pressure to attend the "accredited" schools, to get the "professional" look and delivery in his ministry, to be less offensive in his preaching, and to do whatever it takes to get the numbers higher and the churches bigger. This is the view of success before his ministerial peers. He may begin his ministry with a true spiritual motive and passion for souls; however, if he breathes the atmosphere of this present Church age, his motive for those souls will eventually change to the need of new souls to keep the church looking outwardly good and for the budget to be met.

This generation of the institutional Church is under the secular world spell of the flesh, the physical. It has greatly undermined the spiritual; it is a deception beyond all previous generations of the Church. What kind of deception is this? It is a deception to the true condition and spiritual state of the individual. The institutional Church does not know that spiritually it is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17).

Three things are absent and greatly needed in this Church: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes

with eyesalve, that thou mayest see” (3:18). The flesh of the Church has become more and more evident: it is naked. It is poverty stricken when it comes to the wealth of heaven and Calvary. The Church has no insight to its true condition. With all its materialism and “praise” music, it has deceived itself that this is the sign of God’s favor upon it. The Church/Age is another world we must overcome! The lukewarmness before God is apathy, indifference, and indolence. God hates such a life before Him.

The World Within

But there is another world that must be watched and taken seriously in its power to deceive and overthrow the Christian’s walk. It is the world within. Our past has made this world. It includes our memories, our training, our sins, our secret sins, our deceptions, our failures, our unchecked failures, etc. All of this has an effect on one’s outlook of living. Most people live just to get by, with an indifference to life, to God, and to the important things of life. The greatest sin in the days of Noah was that “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). Yes, our thought life is part of the world within. There are those who have never gotten over their past; it still haunts them, and paralyzes them, and its ever pres-

ent thought causes much apathy in spiritual living. The world within is what we have made ourselves to be rather than what God has wanted us to be. The world within can be a deceptive one; the world within can be a fearful one; the world within can be one that never comes to deliverance through Christ the Redeemer. This is our private, personal world. We must overcome it through the power of the grace of God.

A God-Given Determination

This generation in which we live will truly need a special working of the grace of God to help us make it through without compromising, yielding to the power of these worlds, and becoming what we have fought against for years. It will also necessitate a determination in the heart of every Christian by God’s grace, a determination, a tenacity, or a deep resoluteness: “I am determined to make heaven my home, and I refuse to give in to this generation.” My earthly father, Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, often told his students, “Always keep communion with God and His Word, and find yourself in the Scriptures.”

When looking within the sacred Book, it is evident that we are living in similar times as that of Daniel. He lived in a worldly age (secular Babylon) and the religiously lukewarm age (his own Jewish nation). Daniel, as a teenager, was thrown into circum-

stances peculiarly adapted to take a young man off his guard and to view convictions as scruples. He was a captive in a foreign land (we are so in this world); he was removed from the restraints of home and the inspiration of collective worship in the Temple; he was away from the guiding eye of his parents and the preaching voice of the prophet Jeremiah. He was placed in a position of honor, and the king intended a kindness in the unique temptation that was presented to Daniel in chapter one of his book. He could have viewed this situation and convinced himself, "It doesn't matter what I eat or do, as long as my heart is right before God." He could have convinced himself that it was impossible to keep the principle of the clean versus the unclean meats in the environment of Babylon. He could have feared offending the king. He could have been viewed as a stickler over nonessentials. He could have gone so far in his reasoning to believe that God would forgive him if he laid down these "scruples" under these circumstances.

However, we are clearly told that "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Dan. 1:8). What a firmness of resolution! The Septuagint (Greek translation

of the Hebrew) reading of this says "Daniel strongly desired in his heart." A person is most of the time spiritually defiled by his own act. Don't defile yourself. If he had failed here we *probably* would have never heard from him again. This act of determination did not make Daniel great; he was already of this heart before he came to Babylon. The opportunity that arose simply revealed what was truly his heart. He was a young man (the Rabbinical writings place him around seventeen years old at this time) with the principle of Romans 12:1, 2. He had given himself totally to God and refused to be conformed to his world/age, both secular and religious. We only read of Daniel and his three companions refusing to defile themselves in this matter; it is evident that the rest of the Jewish young men conformed to the king's wishes.

These world/age powers have become so aggressive in our generation that apathetic Christianity will not be able to withstand their aggression. Our hearts must purpose to be fully determined to overcome them. One must turn away from the diet of this world and the powers such a diet professes to have. Our food as a Christian is Christ and our water is His Word and Spirit. These will be the powers to keep us!

In Acts 11:23 we read of Barnabas coming to Antioch: "Who, when he

came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." This purpose of heart has got to be maintained whatever comes or does not come. Purpose of heart in most Christian lives tends to pass after the glow of the feeling is gone. But the purpose of heart must continue when the glow is gone, when the feeling is gone, and when the manifestation of God's Spirit has subsided. What will we do when we get tired and refuse to live with fervency on a given day? What will we do when dryness comes in reading our Bible or prayer? What will we do when circumstances change? What will we do when the thrill leaves?

What will I do when I don't feel like reading and praying? I must do it anyway. I must maintain my heart; I must set forth my heart to God; I must, with purpose of heart, with determination, go on with all that is within me! Isaiah 50:7 states it well: "For the LORD God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." It is that setting of the face like a flint and going on. And part of that purposing of heart is found in "they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23). The Greek word is that they would "cling like glue" unto the Lord. Christians tend to live up and down in their walk with God. They tend to live always on the verge of

backsliding. We must be determined to go on with God. Don't allow anything to deter that burning heart for God.

Dear reader, there is a whirlwind of changes taking place in the lives of people, churches, and Christian schools. These world/ages desire to wear us out, make us tired of the principles, the standards, and the ways of Scripture. We have never known a time like today when leaders are throwing to the wind what had been the adornments of a walk with God. But whatever happens, whatever is said, whatever is changed, whatever conservative school leaves its legacy, we must go on regardless. We tend to give in too easily to the pressures of the world, the Church age, and ourselves. May the Holy Spirit give us resoluteness, purpose of heart, and tenacity of conscience in the Word of God. Whatever the people say, whatever changes may come, by God's grace let us walk on with God and in the principles of His Word. "As for me and my house," "As for me and my church," "As for me and my school, we will serve the Lord."

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The Silence of God

Dr. H. T. Spence

(Reprint)

The silence of God is one of the greatest mysteries of man's existence. It often has been an enigma in history in both the secular and the religious Christian world. For centuries there have been the cries of God's people, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?" (Ps. 73:11).

Our world is filled, it seems, with so many injustices that one wonders where God is. Society has become like a galley ship with a few on deck enjoying laughter, money, and pleasures, while most of humanity is below, toiling and grieving through life with no vindication. Much of humanity is in misery and sadness, living in the chains of despair all of their lives. While it seems that devils and the godless reign, the cry continues, "Where is God?"

The sage of Jerusalem gave a clear view of his day that has also become a commentary of our times:

So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.

Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun (Ecclesiastes 4:1-3).

Is this the world ruled and governed by the Almighty? Is He actually in charge of history and the affairs of men? Such observations have produced a real dilemma in the human heart to suggest that God has become silent.

The World's Answer to the Silence of God

Western civilization, in facing this dilemma of the so-called "silence of God," has birthed a number of theologies and philosophies attempting to answer the problem. Five beliefs have been proposed in the past two hundred years to alleviate the concept of the silence of God.

The first belief has been that of the Deists, who believe that God, after creating the world, left the world to basically run on its own. Therefore, God stays aloof from the affairs of men.

Evolutionists provide a second view declaring there is no silence because there is no God. Life and history are products of time, chance, and forces that are beyond our control. There is a growing opinion among the evolutionists that humanity is gaining a greater

control over the evolution of life, so there will be less problems in the future for humanity. Since the evolutionist believes there is no God, injustice is simply considered a part of life.

A third humanistic belief arises from the Enlightenment's "closed world system" that eventually matured into secular humanism. This opinion suggests that if there is a God out there, He could never enter a closed world system. Every action or reaction within our closed world system is merely a by-product of its laws. Therefore, there can be no supernatural miracles.

A fourth belief arose within Neo-Orthodoxy and was systematized by Thomas Altizer and William Hamilton. Called Radical theology or Theodanatology (the "God is dead" movement), it claims that though God may have lived at one time, He is now dead. His death took place at the death of Jesus Christ or sometime before. Another interpretation of this theology says that man has come forth from a pre-scientific age and that he no longer needs the crutch of a historical God to help him.

A fifth concept has also arisen in recent years called Open Theism. This is the belief that God's omniscience is incomplete, having past and present knowledge but no knowledge of the immediate or distant future. The future in His understanding is open and unresolved. Therefore, God cannot work

with the hope of an absolute resolve of the future.

The Biblical Christian's View

When a Christian contemplates this matter of the silence of God, it is usually in the context of suffering, persecution, and afflictions of trial. His questioning the silence of God stems from another problem called Theodicy. In theology, Theodicy asks, "Why do the righteous or the innocent suffer?" Where is the Judge, the Avenger, the Justifier? It seems that He is silent in the cruel affairs of men. Why is God no longer talking or working among us? Why doesn't He answer prayer and come down in behalf of our situation?

But we must immediately declare that the reason for suffering, persecution, or affliction is not the same in every incident. Sometimes suffering is the result of personal sin and lack of faith. Let us remember, *there is no silence of God to the genuine Christian*. The Christian faith is the only religion in the world that grants adequate knowledge and assurance from God in times of His seeming silence.

One of the great problems in misunderstanding this silence is our lack of understanding the times in which we live and what God is doing. If we do not see through this, we will become discouraged, disheartened, and perhaps even change our theology to accommodate a false conclusion about God's workings.

Three Actions of God at This Time in History

God's sifting and shaking of the earth and humanity is one of His actions that we must acknowledge at this time of history. Amos 9:9 expresses His siftings:

For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.

Hebrews 12:25–29 expresses His shakings:

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the early only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.

God is sifting and shaking the Church and the world today. He does this through many false prophets, greedy nations, bloody wars, and the falling away. Yet the promise still remains

that not the least grain shall fall upon the earth.

The second action that must be viewed as a type of the silence of God is that after giving man a complete revelation through the Scriptures, *God is not adding anything to what He has already said.* The Word of God is complete! God truly has spoken: “ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), or the Greek rendering is “once for all delivered unto the saints.” The Charismatics are coming forth with audible voices, visions, and dreams that they believe are from God. Through these claims of extant revelations, they are trying to destroy the silence of God. But God is going to manifestly get quieter as we near the coming of Christ. The Bible is His only infallible voice.

God's sealing of His true people is a third action of God at this time. In Ezekiel 9:3–8 the angel with the writer's inkhorn began marking those that sigh and cry for the sins of Israel. We read of this sealing of God in John 10:27, 28:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Verse 28 is true only for those identified in verse 27. Such a security is only to those who *hear* his voice, to

those He *knows*, and to those who *follow* Christ. These true sheep are being sealed in every generation. To His flock there remains this warning:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means (2 Thess. 2:1–3a).

We must stay in the blessed Book. God is sealing His saints for glory in these days of apostasy.

The Silence of God in the Life of Jesus

Jesus Christ experienced the silence of God at the cross (Matt. 27:46b), when He cried “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Most likely God was silent because Christ was bearing the sins of the world. At this moment in Christ’s life there was no voice of the Father declaring, “This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” God was silent then. There were also times that the Father was silent when Jesus was reviled and tempted. Yes, Christ had silent times.

Silence of God in the Life of the Godly

One of the greatest examples of the silence of God is in the life of Job, a man who had known the voice and

the presence of the Lord. From the conversation between God and Satan, and the calamities that came upon Job in chapters one and two, it is obvious that God never spoke to Job during that entire time. Others talked, but God did not, until the end of the book. The Jewish writings designate the time period of Job’s afflictions to be about one year. The silence became so deep that Job declared the following:

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him (Job 23:8, 9).

The left hand of God is the hand of providence: God is always working through providence, even when the right hand of His power and miracles does not seem evident. Yet, Job could not even see God working in circumstances or tokens of mercy. It seemed that God had turned His back on Job, forgetting about him. Job’s friends became bold in their words against him, believing his deep maladies proved that God had left him. The only problem Job had was that he did not understand why these things were happening to him. He did not know of the conversation that had taken place between God and the Devil. He may have cursed the day he was born, but he never contemplated suicide. Job was never fatalistic about the silence of God, for he declared in Job 23:10–12,

But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

He was going on, holding to his integrity, in what seemed to be silence from heaven. He went on even while the wicked prospered with their words against him. Even in the end God never told Job why.

Asaph, the chief choir leader of David and Solomon, had a hard time dealing with the silence of God in Psalm 73. He observed with concern the prosperity of the wicked and God's silence in judging them. Yet to him it seemed that God was plowing up His people and bringing numerous chastenings in their lives with regularity, not allowing them to escape the least correction. It was only when he went into the sanctuary of God and saw the end of the wicked that he understood.

Silence of God in Judging the Ungodly

How often sinners view the silence of God in judging their sins as evidence that God is not that much concerned. Psalm 50:20, 21 declares,

Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thought

test that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

Solomon also acknowledges,

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him (Ecclesiastes 8:11, 12).

In this passage the silence of God is part of the delusion He sends upon the heart and mind of the sinner who thinks everything is all right.

No doubt there are times when the Christian is concerned that God is not judging situations of sin in the land. This was the concern of the prophet Habakkuk (around 626 B.C.). Amidst his preaching, he observed that God was not judging Judah. God had to tell His prophet (1:5) that He was sending the Chaldeans to judge Judah. God was silent at the time of the burden of the prophet, but the judgment was definitely to come.

Silence of God in the End Time in Preaching

A silence of God that is becoming more obvious today is the absence of Holy Ghost-anointed, insightful preaching. Such days were evident in 1 Samuel 3:1, "And the child Samuel

ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision." Those were days when no vision from the Lord broke forth to the people. In Proverbs 29:18 the Sage of Jerusalem declared, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." The Hebrew rendering is "Where there is no prime-vision preaching, the people will become ungovernable."

Part of the end-time judgment is the Lord's withdrawal of prime-vision preaching. Prime-vision preaching goes beyond just an expounding of truth. It is preaching truth needed at one's own point in history, with the immediate anointing of the Holy Ghost, granting insight into the age and godly living. This preaching gives the hearer a vision from God through His Word.

The prophet Amos gave prophetic utterance concerning such a time:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD (Amos 8:11).

How is this passage to be viewed? Will there come a time when people will simply not give their ear to the hearing of the Word as it is being preached? Such a view is true in principle, for churches today are filled with apathetic and indifferent professing Christians who are not truly hearing

the Word of God. But this passage in Amos goes deeper in its understanding; the next verse gives us the insight to what the prophet is saying:

And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.

This is a description of a remnant of people who are longing to hear the Word of God but are unable to find it being preached anywhere. Why is this? God is withdrawing His prime-vision anointing; it will be increasingly rare to find it in a church or a school. Just being fundamental does not assure that there is the prime-vision preaching present. How often we receive letters, e-mails, and phone calls acknowledging that a church pulpit, though not preaching heresy, is no longer feeding the people; there is no anointing upon the pastor; there is no insight coming from his preaching to aid the people in godly living or insight to the age in which we live. Yes, reader, it is becoming rare for a pulpit to have such preaching. The remnant are starving to find it; they tend to simply "live with what they have" for there is nothing better. But now and then they will find a preacher in touch with God, with God's Word, and in communion with the Holy Spirit to set forth—refreshingly so—the prime-vision preaching for the times in which they live.

Why is God withdrawing such prime-vision preaching? The answer is evident: it is because of the great falling away in Christianity; people are no longer desiring the Word of God. We live in the time of “no open vision.” These are the days when God’s Word is being questioned and criticized; debate rages as to what doctrine or Bible version is needed. God has not called us to be Bible critics, but rather Bible preachers. The Philadelphia Church Age is gone: its spirit, its preaching, and the unusual movings of God. The modern view of Christianity has now taken over preaching and church music. The Laodicean spirit is now here. People are wanting more of the physical: healings, money, prosperity, charismatic feelings, pizza parties, entertainers for youth programs, and rhythmic music. The day of the deep workings of the Spirit is now past; *this is the day of the flesh*. Even pulpits that once knew the power of God’s Spirit in preaching have now given over to the desires of the people.

Nevertheless, there is a remnant who are longing for that prime-vision preaching; they heard it when they were young and are longing to hear it again. In every church they go, they are listening for that “bell” of the past to ring. But, alas! It is in very few places. One will even be hard pressed to find it in a Fundamentalist church. The preaching has become general, generic, and targetless for our generation. God truly

is growing silent with His vision, the proclamation of the true Word of God.

The Silence of the Dealings of God with the Soul

This so-called silence of God in His dealings with the Christian is a delicate one and must be understood once again in the light of the Word of God and of our times. The Philadelphia Church Age (about 1725 to about 1900) was a period in Church history of the mighty spiritual movings of God in the Great Awakenings and Evangelical Revivals. Deep preaching was clearly evident back then; the greatest Protestant hymns of the Faith were written during that time as well. The Laodicean Church Age—the age of lukewarmness, indifference, apathy, and the fleshly power of professing Christianity—has invented a synthetic presence and moving of God for its worship. Contemporary Christian Music produces a visceral and emotional response that is being falsely interpreted as the moving of God. We have laid aside deep preaching and deep music to become content with the shallow special effects of contemporary worship. Sadly, the typical church today believes this froth to be the moving of God.

There is the tendency for the true child of God to read of the workings of God in the past (the Philadelphia Church Age) and long for such workings again. If these workings do not

come in the same fashion or manner, the Devil convinces him that God is not working in his life. One must understand how God is moving in the End Time, yea, at the end of the Laodicean Age.

Revelation 3:20 states, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” The Greek word for knock is not a pounding at the door; it is the gentlest rapping. One would have to get very quiet to hear this soft knock. In these days when the Charismatics are looking for “mega” evidences of God, the Lord is working in the contrary. The child of God must not be looking for the “big” workings as the sign of God’s presence but for the small tokens of grace, mercy, and providence.

The dear prophet Elijah, when running from Jezebel, wanted to go to the Mount identified with Moses in quakings, fires, and mega manifestations of God among the people. However, 1 Kings 19 reveals that although a great, strong wind did come and rend the mountains, the Lord was not in the wind:

And after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it [the small voice], that he wrapped his face in his

mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? (1 Kings 19:11–13).

While most within the institutional Church are listening for the pounding on the door, for the wind to rend the mountains, for the earthquake and fire, God is getting quieter. In the previous chapter, God had been in the mighty fire of Elijah; there He needed to make the distinction between the false and the true prophet. His remnant knows Him in the gentle knock and the still, small voice. One must learn to be encouraged in the small dealings, movings, and workings of God.

The Christian today must discern the silence of God in these matters; He is not choosing His movings today as He did in the past. Christianity today judges the presence or blessing of God by that which is big: big churches, big campaigns, big miracles, big budgets, and big evangelism. The greatest prophet, the forerunner of Christ, was identified as a man of no miracles: “John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true” (John 10:41).

Dear Christian, don’t be intimidated by the talk of the modern Christianity. God may not save all of your children; He may not vindicate you as in other days; and He may not increase your

church or its budget or your personal bank account. He is now testing to see if the life is of faith. "Nevertheless when the son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

Conclusion

While most are not hearing what the Spirit is saying to the churches, there are a few who are not dismayed by the so-called "Silence of God." They are growing on with God; the evidences of grace and the Spirit of God are found in their tenacity and endurance through all that comes upon them. God truly is deepening their heart and spiritual walk with Him. To them God is not silent, for they know how God is working just before His Son's coming.

Faith in God amplifies the Scriptures in times of the silence of God. Providence becomes more precious as well. In Zechariah 1:7, 8 the young prophet receives a vision in his time, a time when it seemed as though God was silent and not working among His people. Fifteen years had passed since they had built the foundation of the temple. The people, who had stopped building because of persecution and discouragement, now entered into apathy and indifference in their relationship with God. The vision reads, "I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white"

(v. 8). Often in the Bible, horses are a type of the providential forces of God moving in history; but this horse and rider were standing in the "bottom." At this time in Jewish history it seemed that God was not working; it was a "bottom" time with no movement from God. A contemporary book to this time is Esther. Although God is not mentioned in the book, it is heavily freighted with providences. In the second chapter of Esther we are told that her name is Hadassah, meaning "myrtle." The name *Esther* means "star" or the starflower of the myrtle tree. That book suggests that God, though silent in vision, was still working through His providence during the myrtle tree period of Judah.

Though the world believes that God does not exist, and the Christian world wonders why God does not deal with the abortionists, the injustices, and the violence in the earth, the true Christian will continue in His walk, trusting by faith the Word of God and seeing God in the small things of life.

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places (Hab. 3:17-19).

A Christian Caught in the Throes of End-Time Mandates: What Will Be God's Will in the Matter?

Dr. H. T. Spence

Since the first of 2020, an aggressively growing quantity of written, oral, and debatable materials has flooded the internet concerning everything surrounding the COVID crisis and what needs to be done about it. The public forum presentation on the COVID-19, the Delta variant, and the ever-increasing draconian mandates concerning the vaccination and vaccine passports, all have their voices and collectively have literally created a barrage of information. Whatever perspective one takes, he will find a deluge of data supporting his position about the subject. One thing the flood of information has readily contributed to is the overwhelming state of confusion that now controls the world concerning this subject. It intelligently maintains "the Lie" of this whole pandemic debris that has purposefully propagandized the political, so-called scientific, and pseudo-medical worlds. All this material, carefully orchestrated with the powers of fear, now has brought our society to a state of perplexity. What is the truth about the vaccination, its content, its purpose, its hidden agenda, its side effects, its premature "ramrodding" force upon the populace, and its far-reaching dominating force on future generations?

We now live under a government that is not truthful with us. It casts a deceptive cloak of an Orwellian agenda that has proved not to be for our benefit and welfare but rather for its own coercive powers to control the people. Some countries have instituted more excessive control, even to the preparations of vaccine camps. Yet other countries are in the present quandary of when to move from *intimidating* its people into submission to finally *forcing* them to become submissive subjects to the state. It is one thing for an individual (Christian or non-Christian) to volunteer to take a vaccine, but another thing for such a soul-searching decision to be forced on the individual when that individual's conscience before God is against it. When does a mandate in our generation become a true prelude of the mandate to the Mark of the Beast? When does a mandate become the controlling factor to eat in public restaurants, to travel, to buy, or to be in the presence of others? Several countries have liberated their people from such mandates (including masks, social distancing, limitation within restaurants, etc.) while maintaining a low COVID percentage. Yet certain countries have severely restricted their inhabitants from such liberties. Back

in 2020, we were told that the masks were only for a few weeks, but they have been with us for over a year and a half. We were told that the vaccine would be a one-time thing; now we are told booster shots may be needed every few months. And how many variants of COVID have been prepared to invade our society and demand even more vaccinations?

Mr. Fauci is already informing us that another variant may be on the way. The pharmaceutical empire will be given absolute control of our lives and living, as these so-called mutating strains become more and more common among us. What is the Christian to do as these powers increase, whether by manipulative politicians or their reliance on a political pseudo-scientific community? Whatever perspective one may have of this, there is still God's providence, either permitting or causing the growing invasion of these inflicting sicknesses. Nevertheless, how far are we to go in our submission to the demands of the government? Each Christian will need to conscientiously resolve these matters before God and His Word.

A Christian who will pursue in conscience the provisional religious exemption in the context of the mandatory COVID vaccination may find the pursuit to be more complicated than what seems to be so on the surface. It is true that businesses are required to make an effort to "reasonably accom-

modate" an individual who requests a religious exemption. But the Christian is going to find it more difficult to gain such an exemption, and more so to keep it intact as the pressure is placed upon him in a variety of intentionally subtle ways to eventually force the exemption out. The Christian must prepare for this.

We must also realize that according to the Word of God the End Time will be given to the forcing out of the Christian paradigm from society because of the growing inconvenience such a presence will have. The hour in which we live may catapult us into the providential throes of a new phase regarding religious exemptions in the End Time. But this may be the hour in which God will begin drawing His people away from certain employments that heretofore were most proper and honorable. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act kept a number of doors open for the professing Christian who was against personal vaccines, but such exemptions had to be approved by an authority figure from their religious establishment. Yet this approach is becoming a growing ethical problem. For example, in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis I has strongly promoted the COVID vaccine calling it "an act of love." Thus, we may be witnessing an overwhelming majority of religious organizations that are strongly for the vaccines.

Certain employments such as in the medical field may now demand the vaccination claiming workplace safety; the default conclusion is the unvaccinated may bring others into harm's way. Also, society is viewing the unvaccinated as disloyal and non-sympathetic individuals towards humanity; they perceive them as self-centered in their pursuit of a religious exemption. Such thinking, to the world, incurs problems that the medical staff and organizations simply believe they cannot afford to have present. The secular world, as the authority to make these decisions, will look beyond the conviction of "one" for the collective "good of the many." Possibly the only provision to accommodate a religious exemption is for the worker to be isolated or forced to work from home. Additionally, we are at a time now that businesses may prefer to let the employee go rather than deal with the hassles the exemption creates. This is especially true if the pressure is being placed on the business by the government. This will become more and more evident not only in the medical community but also with schools or any place where large groups are brought together in one context.

In the personal realm there may be several reasons for exemption in the natural. For one, we have been caught in the vortex of a clinical experiment that is using global humanity for its experimentation. A limited reason

against the vaccine has been its non-FDA approval (which takes several years), but full FDA approval has now been rushed (without public input or comment) for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (August 23, 2021); in the very near future approval will be given for the Moderna vaccine. This accelerated approval may be given to diminish most of the concerns and grievances voiced by the public. Because of this we may be witnessing in the days ahead more and more non-acceptance of exemptions, especially with the religious exemption.

When it comes to religious exemption, there are several reasons why Christians should be opposed to the vaccine mandate. All these reasons have their biblical injunction, and each becomes a part of the whole. But we must remember that the presuppositions and paradigms of the Christian have no meaning to the secular world. One of the great concerns that initially became obvious at the outset of the vaccines was the usage of fetal cell cultures and tissues that were part of the early stages of such vaccine preparations. The Christian is against abortion in any stage, as well as the usage of fetal cells for experimentation, even though the law of America permits it. To the world such scientific ideology is normal, but to the Christian such ideological views would strongly be against conscience. Using within my body that which violates the biblical

principles I believe in is an attack against the very God I serve. Part of my biblical belief as a Christian is God's creation of my body according to Psalm 139, being made in His image and likeness to become His temple of abode. But again, this is a paradigm that the world knows nothing about, as their presupposition is evolution, a denial of the very existence of our religious exemption.

The world declares that a woman has the right to do with her body what she freely desires to do, including the aborting of a baby within her body. Even the father of that child has no say-so. But we are told that the government has a right to dictate what is to be injected into our body, not only controlling it for the present time but also for the future. Yet, all of this is under the guise of saving and protecting society. And once such government mandates become part of my human existence, how far will I be forced to submit my body to the demands of our government and other appointed authorities? We are told that even the mandates of what is exempt and what is not concerning the injection of the "foreign" into my body is now the sole right of the government and no longer my right.

It is politically evident now that honorable religious exemption is one step away from extinction in our country. And it may be that God is now wanting to use this final critical hour to

be the rejection of God's people from certain vocations that they have had for many years. If the exemption is accepted, how many more weeks or months will it add to the employment before the world gives a final "no" to the honorable Christian testimony in the secular world? And if providence uses this hour to resolve our employment, we must believe it is to Christ's glory and not a pragmatic decision to sustain our position a little longer. Either way, it is the world declaring "yea" or "nay" as to our continuation in *their* philosophical and naturalist world of control. Thus, in a history of an unknown vaccine thrust upon us in great prematurity (even from science's standards), how are we to rationalize this situation and yield to such intrusion?

Therefore, what is the conclusion to the whole of the matter? It may be that God is telling us to withdraw at this hour from certain employment or to submit our plea of exemption to the world and see what will happen. But ultimately, the exemption will be temporary as the world is now moving radically into another paradigm shift where religion no longer plays a part. We may submit our best biblical, apologetic defense, but it will be the world that will give its permission to reside, exist, and work in its community. We must take into consideration that the present distress may be God's appointed time for us to change em-

ployment or resolve our years of such employment. If God's providence permits the Christian to linger a little longer in certain employment, that may be all it is, and the delay is to get us ready for the inevitable. We may be hearing the prelude words of the world making clear to us, "We no longer have accommodation for you as a Christian in our world." Whatever happens at this crucial hour we are in God's Hand. We must let Him decide and then submit to His will in the matter. God may not lead all Christians to request

a religious exemption but be led of heaven to resign, trusting Him for the future. Trusting God is part of our rejection of the vaccine. Yet others may submit to the exemption. If the exemption is denied, we cannot go against conscience or change our position for the pragmatic need. We must maintain the course of conscience captive to the Word of God and let it lead where it may. May God lead His people as He desires to lead them, either collectively or individually.

§

Be Ye Not Ignorant, Brethren!

H. T. Spence

Such perilous times we now face
Have brought man to shameful disgrace!
His sins now devour his life every hour,
Destroying the whole human race!

Though knowledge abounds everywhere,
Man lives in the throes of despair!
His ignorance deep; his soul in deep sleep!
No hope can be found anywhere!

The Devil's devices have grown;
But our God is still on His throne!
The Lord's grace will keep the least of His sheep.
He knows us, for we are His own!

But ignorance must not control
Our mind and our heart and our soul!
God's Word must reveal; his knowledge must seal,
Or ignorance will be the toll!

*Oh, Christian, the Gospel must be
Our knowledge for this century!
Ignore not its Truth; embrace its reproof—
Let ignorance ne'er be our plea!*