

**ERIC BUTTERWORTH
PAPERS (3014)**

BOX 10

FOLDER 37

**GOD'S GOOD TIME IS
NOW**

DECEMBER 28, 1975

WEUD
Sat Dec 31, 1977 'GOD'S GOOD TIME...IS NOW'

~~Saturday~~ Tonight at midnight

Dec 28, 1978

ON ~~THURSDAY~~ OF THIS WEEK WE WILL ~~BE~~ EMBARKED
ON THE NEW YEAR 1978...THE BI-CENTENNIAL YEAR...
BUT MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, AS I HAVE POINTED OUT
IN THE JANUARY CHALLENGE...IT IS THE MID-POINT
IN ETERNITY. *this is a very special year, for it is the mid-point in Eternity*

YOU CAN START AT THIS POINT AND GO BACK INTO
THE DIM PAST...OR FORWARD INTO THE LIMITLESS
FUTURE. AND...YOU CAN START WHERE YOU ARE AND
BUILD ON THE 'ALL THINGS WORKING TOGETHER FOR
GOOD' OF YOUR PAST EXPERIENCE. YOU CAN GO FORWARD
TO ACHIEVE ANYTHING YOU CAN CONCEIVE AND BELIEVE.

JANUARY IS A VERY POOR TIME TO BEGIN A YEAR.
IT WOULD MAKE MUCH MORE SENSE TO BEGIN THE YEAR
IN THE SPRING, WHEN NATURE IS REAWAKENING TO A
NEW CYCLE OF GROWTH AND BLOSSOMING...WHILE
JANUARY 1ST IS JUST ANOTHER GRIM WINTER'S DAY.

ACTUALLY THE JANUARY 1ST STARTING OF THE YEAR
WAS NOT SET UNTIL THE 16TH CENTURY. AND THE ^{15 MARCH}
ROMAN CALENDAR HAS CONTINUED ITS INFLUENCE TODAY
IN THE WORDS SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, AND
DECEMBER...WHICH ACTUALLY MEAN 7TH MONTH, 8TH
MONTH, 9TH MONTH, AND TENTH MONTH.

BUT ALL THAT REALLY COUNTS IS...AS THOMAS CARLYLE
PUTS IT...'EVERY DAY THAT IS BORN INTO THE WORLD
COMES LIKE A BURST OF MUSIC, AND RINGS ITSELF ALL
THE DAY THROUGH: AND THOU SHALT MAKE OF IT A
DANCE, A DIRGE, OR A LIFE-MARCH, AS THOU WILT.'

EMERSON: 'EVERY DAY IS A GOOD DAY IF WE JUST
KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT.'

WE WILL SAY, 'HAPPY NEW YEAR'...BUT THE ONLY
SIGNIFICANCE IS IN 'HAPPY NEW YOU' CHANGE MIND

THE END OF AN OLD YEAR AND BEGINNING OF THE NEW OFTEN CALLS FORTH REMINISCENCES OF THE PAST AND A PREOCCUPATION WITH THE FUTURE, IN FORECASTS OR IN DREAD.

HOW MUCH BETTER TO GET INTO THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE NOW...TO STAND CONFIDENTLY AT THE 'MID-POINT OF ETERNITY'. LIFE IS NOT YESTERDAY... AND LIFE IS NOT TOMORROW. WHERE IT IS AT... IS TODAY...HERE...NOW.

NOW IS THE TIME!

WHEN JESUS SAYS, 'THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU', HE POSES THE GREAT PROBLEM OF LIFE...TO KNOW THAT EVEN AS EVERY ATOM CARRIES WITHIN IT THE WHOLE OF THE UNIVERSE, AND AS EVERY IDEA CARRIES WITHIN IT THE WHOLE OF GOD MIND, SO EVERY FLEETING INSTANT IS A 'SMALL PARENTHESIS IN ETERNITY' --SIR THOMAS BROWNE --

TRADITIONAL RELIGION IS REplete WITH CLICHES... AND ONE OF THE MOST OFTEN-USED IS...'IN GOD'S GOOD TIME.'

'HOW LONG, O LORD?' CRIES THE ONE ILL AND IN PAIN. 'IN GOD'S GOOD TIME' YOU WILL BE HEALED. DOES THAT IMPLY THAT HE WANTS US TO SUFFER A LITTLE MORE TO LEARN OUR LESSON, OR TO PURIFY OURSELVES FOR HEAVEN TO COME?

HOW LONG BEFORE I ACHIEVE RECOGNITION, GET THE PROMOTION, ATTRACT MY BELOVED TO ME? 'IN GOD'S GOOD TIME!'

IT IS A MEANINGLESS AND MISLEADING BIT OF THEOLOGICAL MISINFORMATION. THERE CAN BE NO PAST OR FUTURE IN GOD...ONLY THE ETERNAL NOW. THUS...'GOD'S GOOD TIME' IS NOW. YOUR GOOD IS NOT WAITING ON GOD...BUT ON YOUR ACCEPTANCE

WALT WHITMAN SINGS: 'THERE WAS NEVER ANY MORE INCEPTION THAN THERE IS NOW, NOR ANY MORE YOUTH OR AGE THAN THERE IS NOW, AND THERE WILL NEVER BE ANY MORE PERFECTION THAN THERE IS NOW, NOR ANY MORE HEAVEN OR HELL THAN THERE IS NOW.'

LIFE FOR MOST PERSONS IS SPENT IN THE WAITING ROOM. FROM THE TIME WE ARE VERY YOUNG THERE IS ALWAYS THE FEELING THAT WE ARE PREPARING FOR THE REAL THING: 'WHEN I AM OLD ENOUGH TO GO TO SCHOOL.' 'WHEN I GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE', 'WHEN I GET MARRIED' 'WHEN THE CHILDREN ARE MARRIED AND ON THEIR OWN' 'WHEN WE RETIRE TO THAT LITTLE CONDOMINIUM IN FLORIDA.'

AND THEN...ALONG THE WAY DAWNS THE REALIZATION THAT MUCH OF WHAT WE HAVE BEEN BUILDING FOR WE HAVE ALREADY PAST. SO, THEN THE ANTE ROOM LOOKS UPON YESTERDAY WITH REGRET AND NOSTALGIA:

'OH, HOW GOOD IT WAS WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL... WHEN THE HOUSE WAS FULL OF CHILDREN...WHEN I HAD A JOB TO GO TO EACH DAY...' ETC.

IN OTHER WORDS THERE IS A CONFUSED SENSE OF LOOKING FOR OUR NICHE, OUR PLACE IN TIME AND SPACE. SOMEHOW WE OVERLOOK THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE.

~~WE~~ ^{must} ~~NEED TO~~ REALIZE THAT ~~RIGHT~~ WHERE ^{you are} ~~I~~ ^I ~~AM~~ ~~RIGHT~~ ~~NOW~~ IS THE BEST POSSIBLE PLACE TO BE IN ORDER TO BEGIN TO MOVE IN THE DIRECTION ^{you} ~~I~~ WANT TO GO. AND...EVERY PLACE AND EVERY DAY AND EVERY MOMENT, ^{you are} ~~I~~ ^{am} ~~IN~~ ~~MY~~ RIGHT PLACE. IT IS THE VERY BEST PLACE TO DO THE GROWING ^{you} ~~I~~ NEED TO RELEASE ^{you} ~~MY~~ IMPRISONED SPLENDOR...AND READY ~~ME~~ ^{you} FOR ~~MY~~ ^{you} GOOD.

IN JEAN RENOIR'S BEAUTIFUL AND MOVING FILM OF INDIA, 'THE RIVER'...THERE IS A SCENE WHERE THE CRIPPLED AMERICAN SOLDIER RAGING AGAINST THE FATE THAT HAS OVERTAKEN HIM...ASKS THE HINDU GIRL WHAT HE CAN DO TO MAKE LIFE WORTH-WHILE? SHE ANSWERS HIM IN THE ONE WORD THAT SEEMS TO SUM UP ALL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST: 'CONSENT!' IN OTHER WORDS...'BE!'

THERE IS NO PAST OR FUTURE IN THE ETERNAL NOW OF INFINITE MIND. THUS THERE IS NO FUTURE IN WHICH TO REALIZE TRUTH, OR TO KNOW GOD, OR TO REACH PERFECTION...AND NO DEMONSTRATION TO MAKE, BECAUSE THE ONLY DEMONSTRATION THERE IS, EVER WAS OR EVER WILL BE, IS GOD'S AND THAT IS MADE NOW.

THIS IS A REALIZATION THAT WE NEED TO WORK WITH. PERHAPS YOU MIGHT PRINT IT ON A CARD IN LARGE LETTERS AND PUT IT ON YOUR MIRROR OR ON YOUR DESK...WHERE YOU WILL SEE IT OFTEN:

THE ONLY DEMONSTRATION THERE IS, EVER WAS, OR EVER WILL BE IS GOD'S AND THAT IS MADE NOW!

WE MAY NOT BE AWARE HOW SUBTLY WE ARE LOCKED INTO THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF TIME...'THINGS TAKE TIME!' AND...'IN GOD'S GOOD TIME.'

WE MAY PRAY AND AFFIRM THE TRUTH FOR SOME GOOD TO TAKE PLACE...AND IN CONSCIOUSNESS THERE MAY BE THE FEELING...IF I KEEP ON PRAYING...IN TIME THE CHANGE WILL COME.

WHAT DO WE MEAN?..THAT IF I PRAY ENOUGH, GOD WILL HEAR, OR HIS RELUCTANCE WILL BE ERODED AWAY? GIVE SOME TIME IN CONTEMPLATION OF THIS QUESTION...IT MAY OPEN A NEW DOOR FOR YOU.

RECALL THE TIME WHEN ~~THE~~ JESUS SAID, 'YE SAY THERE IS YET SIX MONTHS UNTIL THE HARVEST, BUT I SAY UNTO YOU, LIFT UP YOUR EYES FOR THE FIELDS ARE NOW WHITE UNTO HARVEST.'

THIS IS WHY JESUS SAID, 'WHEN YE PRAY, BELIEVE YOU HAVE RECEIVED AND YOU WILL RECEIVE.'

PRAYER, THEN, IS NOT TO GET GOD TO DO SOMETHING BUT A PROCESS OF GETTING INTO THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM...WHERE IT IS ALREADY DONE.

THEN TO 'CONSENT' OR 'LET IT BE DONE.'

A MOTHER, BENDING OVER HER CRITICALLY INJURED SON, LOOKED UP INTO THE SERIOUS FACE OF THE ATTENDING SURGEON.

'YOU HAD BETTER SEND FOR HIS WIFE AT ONCE... IT IS DOUBTFUL IF HE CAN LIVE THROUGH THE DAY.'

QUICK AS A FLASH THE MOTHER ANSWERED, 'HE REALLY DOESN'T HAVE TO LIVE THROUGH THE DAY...HE NEEDS ONLY TO LIVE ONE MINUTE AT A TIME. SURELY HE CAN DO THAT...AND MINUTE BY MINUTE I WILL BE HOLDING HIM IN THE REALIZATION OF HIS ONENESS WITH GOD'S HEALING LIFE.'

THE RELATIVES WERE SUMMONED, BUT BEFORE THEY ARRIVED HE HAD BEGUN TO IMPROVE...AND ALL THROUGH THAT DAY AND SUCCEEDING DAYS HE CONTINUED TO IMPROVE UNTIL HE WAS COMPLETELY RESTORED.

THIS REMINDS ME OF AN EXPERIMENT WE CONDUCTED HERE AT THE CENTER A FEW YEARS AGO. WE WENT OUT ON THE STREETS OF NEW YORK WITH A PORT-O-PAC VIDEO-TAPE CAMERA...POSING ONE QUESTION TO PEOPLE IN A CASUAL INTERVIEW: 'WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAD SIX MONTHS TO LIVE?'

WE INTERVIEW MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE OF ALL TYPES. MANY PERSONS SAID IF THEY FOUND THEY HAD SIX MONTHS TO LIVE, THEY WOULD JUST 'LIVE IT UP'. BAK

A FEW SAID THEY WOULD PRAY AND HOPE FOR THE BEST. MANY SAID THEY WOULD SPEND THEIR TIME GIVING THEIR ALL FOR THEIR FAMILY AND LOVED ONES, TRAVELING WITH THEM, GETTING TO KNOW THEM.

ONE CONCLUSION WE DREW WAS THAT, THOUGH WE ARE TOLD THAT A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE MASSES HAVE A RELIGION, IN MOST CASES IT IS NOMINAL, FOR ANY DECLARATIONS OF FAITH, IF EXPRESSED AT ALL, WERE LITTLE MORE THAN FORM IN MEETING SUCH AN IMPORTANT ISSUE OF LIFE.

IT WAS INTERESTING, AND EXTREMELY REVEALING OF A DEEP UNDERCURRENT OF FEAR, THAT EVERY PERSON INTERVIEWED READ MORBIDITY INTO THE QUESTION...
AS PERHAPS YOU HAVE ALSO.

WE DID NOT ASK, 'WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAD ONLY SIX MONTHS TO LIVE.' THE ONLY WAS READ INTO IT BY EVERYONE. WHAT WE ASKED WAS, 'WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAD SIX MONTHS TO LIVE?'

SIX MONTHS AGO YOU HAD SIX MONTHS TO LIVE...AND SIX MONTHS FROM NOW YOU WILL BE ABLE TO LOOK BACK AND SEE THAT YOU HAD SIX MONTHS TO LIVE.

IN OTHER WORDS WE ARE ASKING SIMPLY...WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO WITH YOUR LIFE IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS?

WE NEED TO WORK FOR THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF LIFE AS A WHOLE EXPERIENCE. IF ONE REALLY GIVES HIS CONSENT TO LIFE...PAST AND FUTURE MERGE INTO THE NOW...AND ANY CONCERN FOR TERMINATION OF LIFE HAS NO INFLUENCE...HE IS TOO BUSY LIVING.

IT MAY BE THAT THE PERSON WHO REACTS IN TERROR AT THE THOUGHT OF LIVING SIX MONTHS IS ONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN ABLE TO SEE HIMSELF AS LIVING A LIFETIME. LIFE TO HIM MAY BE A LIMITED THING... RATHER THAN A WHOLE EXPERIENCE.

SIX MONTHS IS A LONG, LONG TIME. SUPPOSE YOU HAD TO LIVE IT IN JAIL, IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, IN BATTLE COMBAT, OR IN THE INTENSIVE UNITY OF A HOSPITAL. A LONG, LONG TIME.

SO WHY FEAR SIX MONTHS OF LIFE? STRANGELY, THE THOUGHT OF SIX MONTHS OF LIFE WAS SO TERRIFYING THAT AN ALARMING NUMBER INTERVIEWED SAID THEY WOULD TAKE THEIR OWN LIFE... THAT THEY COULDN'T ENDURE THE PAIN OF WAITING AROUND.

WHAT A COMMENTARY ON THEIR INVOLVEMENT WITH LIFE AND THEIR SENSE OF SELF-WORTH!

ONE MAN I KNOW WAS TOLD BY HIS DOCTOR THAT HE HAD ONLY SIX MONTHS TO LIVE. HE REPORTED FOR WORK THE NEXT MORNING. HIS CO-WORKERS COMMISERATED WITH HIM... ASKING HIM, 'WHAT WILL YOU DO?'

HE ANSWERED, 'I WILL DO WHAT I HAVE ALWAYS DONE... I WILL LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME.'

THIS IS TEN YEARS AGO... HE IS STILL LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME. BUT YOU CAN BE SURE THESE TEN YEARS HAVE BEEN CREATING YEARS, YEARS OF LIVING... NOT JUST EXISTING IN ANTICIPATION OF DOOM... WHICH IN HIS CASE NEVER CAME... PROBABLY FOR THE PRECISE REASON THAT HE KEPT HIS CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE NOW OF EXPERIENCE.

I LOVE THE WORDS OF WALT WHITMAN: 'OH, WHILE I LIVE TO BE THE RULER OF LIFE, NOT A SLAVE. TO MEET LIFE AS A POWERFUL CONQUEROR... AND NOTHING EXTERIOR SHALL EVER TAKE COMMAND OF ME.'

*SO MANY OF US ARE SLAVES OF TIME...AND SOMEHOW WE EQUATE TIME WITH LIFE. OF COURSE IN LIVING WE MOVE THROUGH A PROGRESSION OF DAYS AND MONTHS AND YEARS. BUT LIFE CANNOT BE ANALYZED IN THIS WAY...ONLY IN DEPTH AND BREADTH.

*WE ASK OF SOMEONE, 'HOW LONG DID HE LIVE?' BUT THAT IS REALLY IRRELEVANT...OTHER THAN TO HISTORIANS. ALL THAT REALLY COUNTS IS... 'HOW WELL DID HE LIVE...HOW DEEPLY DID HE LIVE...HOW FAR DID HE PROGRESS IN RELEASING HIS IMPRISONED SPLENDOR?'

*THOMAS CARLYLE: 'OUR MAIN BUSINESS IS NOT TO SEE WHAT LIES DIMLY AT A DISTANCE, BUT TO DO WHAT LIES CLEARLY AT HAND.'

*THIS THOUGHT HAD A PROFOUND INFLUENCE ON THE LIFE AND THINKING...AND EVEN MEDICAL PRACTICE OF THE GREAT SURGEON, SIR WILLIAM OSLER...WHO EVOLVED THE IDEAL OF LIVING IN 'DAY-TIME-COMPARTMENTS.' HE URGED PEOPLE TO SEAL OFF EACH DAY INTO SEGMENTS COMPLETE IN THEMSELVES...AND THEM... TO 'DO WHAT YOU CAN WITH WHAT YOU HAVE RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE.'

OF COURSE ONE NEEDS GOALS THAT TRANSCEND THIS ONE DAY...FOR GOALS GIVE DIRECTION TO LIFE, AND VITALITY AND DEPTH TO OUR THOUGHT.

*THE PERSON WHO REMOVED ALL GOALS IN THE FACE OF THE SUPPOSED SIX-MONTHS SENTENCE WOULD LIVE A SIX MONTHS HELL OF FEAR AND DREAD. BUT LIVING AND WORKING TOWARD A GOAL...HE WOULD LIVE DYNAMICALLY AND FULLY...AND LIFE WOULD HAVE MEANING.

* CERTAINLY HAVE A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE, AND IDEALS TOWARD WHICH TO BUILD... BUT A GOAL IS NOT A PREOCCUPATION FOR TOMORROW... BUT A DIRECTION FOR TODAY.

It is

THERE'S NO TOMORROW. TODAY IS ALL THERE IS. FOR WHEN TOMORROW COMES IT WILL BE TODAY. CERTAINLY 'LIVE IT UP'... IN CONTRAST TO 'LIVING IT DOWN' IN A NEGATIVE STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS. ^{up with} LIVE IT UP IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF A VERTICAL ^{up from} EXPERIENCE OF GROWTH, OF INSPIRATION, OF ^{ground} COMMUNION WITH THE TRANSCENDENCE OF LIFE AND OF GOD.

WHATEVER YOU ASPIRE TO OR ARE WORKING FOR... IT WILL BE YOURS 'IN GOD'S GOOD TIME.' BUT THAT IS NOW. ACCEPT IT. BELIEVE IT. LET LIFE LIVE YOU FULLY AND COMPLETELY.

LIFE IS A CONSTANTLY UNFOLDING ADVENTURE... LET IT HAPPEN... AND KEEP IT HAPPENING IN THE NOW. DON'T HOLD TOO TENACIOUSLY TO THINGS THAT HAVE PASSED... AND DON'T GROPE SO FRANTICALLY FOR THINGS YOU MOPE WILL HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE. GIVE YOUR CONSENT TO TODAY... FOR IT IS 'GOD'S GOOD TIME.'

IN SPIRITUAL SEEKING -- GET IMMERSED IN THE PRESENCE. DON'T PRACTICE THE ABSENCE OF GOD. DON'T DEAL WITH GOD IN THE PAST TENSE... AND DON'T SPEND TIME TRYING TO FIND GOD - AS THOUGH HE WERE OFF SOMEWHERE ELSE.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS PRESENT... HERE AND NOW IN TIME AND SPACE. HERE IN THIS MOMENT AND HERE RIGHT WITHIN YOU AS YOUR POTENTIAL FOR ABUNDANT LIVING.

YOU CAN REALIZE YOUR GOOD 'IN GOD'S GOOD TIME' AND GOD'S GOOD TIME IS NOW!