

בְּיָמֵינוּ כָּל יְמֵי תַנּוּק וְלִמְעַן יִצְרֹחַ יְמִידָה
אֵל וְשִׁמְרַת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֲשֶׁר יִסָּב לָךְ וְאֵל
כַּאֲשֶׁר הִפְרָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ לָךְ
וְדַבָּשׁ:

פ

עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד: וְאֵל
אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכֹל לִבְבְּנוּ וּבְכֹל לִנְפְשֵׁנוּ וּבְכֹל
הַיְדֻבְרִים

These Two Commandments

Boyce Mouton

וְיִשְׁקָב לְתַתּוֹת
אֵת וְטָבַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-בְנִית: וּבְהֵימֹם מִלְּאִיִּם
לֹא-מִלְּאֵת וּבִרְת הַצּוּבִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא-הוֹצֵנוּ
יָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-נִטְעַת וְאֲכַלְתָּ וְשָׁבַעְתָּ: הַשֶּׁשֶׁת
כַּח אֶת-יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
יָם: אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ תִירָא וְאֶתוֹ תַעֲבֹד
בְּעַ: לֹא תִלְכּוּן אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים מֵאֵל
תְּהַוְהוּתְהוּת: הִי אֵל גֹּיִם נְהוּת אֱלֹהֵינוּ

“ . . . These Two
Commandments . . . ”

BY BOYCE MOUTON

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DEDICATION

To the late Mike Pratt,
whose confidence in me has
been a constant source
of encouragement.

Preface

In the summer of 1973 I began an earnest study of church government. There were many questions which I felt had to be answered. Chief among these was the question of my own identity in the church. After nearly twenty years of preaching, a large question mark seemed to rest upon my role in the local congregation. Our by-laws described me as the "located evangelist" but the people expected me to be a pastor. I felt that the elders of the church should be its pastors and I resented shouldering the responsibility of an entire eldership. It seemed that our tradition gave to the elders a lot of authority and virtually no responsibility, and to the "located evangelist" a lot of responsibility and virtually no authority.

The importance of answering these questions was augmented in my mind by the graduation of our eldest son from high school. Should he decide to "enter the ministry" I wanted him to be spared the agony and confusion which I felt.

I had read the Bible through many times, but I read it through again. This time I was seeking for scriptures related to the government of the church. When I came across the name of

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Christian worker, I paused to study how they related to apostolic Christianity. With the aid of an exhaustive concordance, I checked each usage of their name and sought to understand what role they played. In addition to the study of Scripture, I also read a variety of books on church government and studied the writings of the early church fathers.

After a year of research I began to grow discouraged. I had hoped to discover a divine pattern for the church with a neat package of titles and job descriptions. If it was there I did not find it.

At this point I began to think of the millions of Christians who had lived and died without the benefit of an exhaustive concordance or a commentary. If it was "all that hard" for me, what chance did these people have?

From this perspective I took another look at Christianity. I tried to put aside my sectarian glasses and preconceptions and tried to sit like a little child at the feet of Jesus with no theological ax to grind. Suddenly His words seemed to assume a new significance. It was a breath of fresh air to the musty chambers of my mind. Like new wine, it demanded a totally new mentality to contain it.

I still have a burden for the structure of the church, but from an entirely different point of view. It was the priorities of Jesus that made the difference in my life — I pray that they will in your life also.

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