

new covenant Choice

One vital test of all religious experience is how it affects our relation to God, our concept of God and our attitude towards Him ... If this new view of truth - this new encounter with spiritual things - has made me love God more, if it has magnified Him in my eyes, if it has purified my concept of His being and caused Him to appear more wonderful than before, then I may conclude that I have not wandered astray into the pleasant but dangerous and forbidden paths of error.

Dr. W.A. Tozer

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to GOD the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to JESUS the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.

HEBREWS 12:22-25

EDITORIAL

I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.
2 Timothy 1:5

We are used to the news media bringing us reports of conflicts and war around the world. A particular outbreak of violence may have an 'immediate cause' or 'flashpoint situation' which triggers off the conflict. The United Kingdom entered the war against Germany in 1914 because a treaty had been signed to help Belgium in the event of invasion. It has been calculated that fifty-nine million people were killed in wars between 1820 and 1945. Six million of these were Jews exterminated in the concentration camps of Central Europe during the second World War. The first atomic bomb, dropped in Hiroshima in Japan in 1945, destroyed 60,000 people.

Some seventy years ago in 1916, between the months of July and November, we remember that during the First World War, there were some one million casualties in the Allied offensive known as the 'Battle of the Somme'. Even after this fight of attrition, there was no significant gain in military advantage to either side, only the appalling loss of young life. There are men, now of advanced years, who will travel to this place of conflict, where they will remember friends of their youth who died or were wounded in battle.

THE PARABLE OF THE OLD MAN AND THE YOUNG

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
And builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretched forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! an angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.

But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

Poem by Wilfred Owen

Wilfred Owen's mother was by upbringing and conviction an Anglican of the evangelical school. Owen himself was raised from an early age on regular Bible reading

and daily prayer. He was taught that a man is not saved by the good he does, but by the faith he has in the redeeming power of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

He became an officer in the Manchester Regiment in June 1916 and was awarded the Military Cross in early October 1918. Tragically he was killed in action one week before the armistice was signed in November 1918. However his legacy of poems, mostly written on the Battlefield of the First World War, strongly reflect his evangelical background. The theme of sacrifice, a fondness for Biblical language and a consciousness of the reality of hell pervade his poetry with a potency that is inspirational.

In his poem, quoted above 'The Parable of the Old Man and the Young', Owen uses his knowledge of the Bible Story in Genesis 22:1-9, that of Abraham and the sacrifice of his son Isaac. This speaks to me of the parental responsibility we have in the Christian community and in society generally to take proper care of the young.

I use the illustration of this English poet to encourage our hearts to 'grow in our most Holy faith'. The contribution of New Covenant Voice magazine is intended for this purpose. May we trust God to work in our lives, to bring by the Holy Spirit the residing ministry of Christ's love, that we by spiritual baptism, made sons of God, will continue to know this love operating within us to minister to those who are dependant upon our life in God. Ultimately the principle of perfect love becomes the instrument of peace, responsibility and praise in the poetry of our lives.

The example of Abraham expresses to us the type of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus 'The Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world - For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son'. May the articles contained in this issue prove again to be the ministry of care from 'Fathers in the Faith' who minister the support and security of God's love to our hearts.

History repeats itself.
It has to.
No one listens.

John F. Norris

Steve Turner, poet

He (Jesus) will settle disputes among great nations.
They will hammer their swords into ploughs and their spears into pruning knives. Nations will never again go to war, never prepare for battle again. Isaiah 2:4

THIS MORTAL BODY

GEORGE W. NORTH

TO TRACE A THEME through a book of the Bible is a rewarding and illuminating pursuit. It is true that any particular book is set with design within the context of the other sixty-five books of the sacred canon, and that cross-reference will lead to discoveries of even greater truths; but we are well advised to remember that the writers of the particular books of the Bible had no knowledge that their works would ultimately be collated into one Book and that a system of cross-reference would be developed.

Therefore it is always important when studying a theme in any one book of the Bible to investigate thoroughly what the Holy Spirit had to say about that theme to the particular person or persons to whom it was addressed; for as far as the author knew, it all had to be stated within the compass of his own message. With this in mind, taking the human 'body' as our theme, let us turn to the epistle to the Romans.

A dishonoured body

Probably the familiar passage in 12:1 springs immediately to mind. But that is almost the last occurrence of the word 'body' in the book. Its truth must be considered later, in its order and against the background of knowledge supplied by the Spirit in the earlier chapters. There is a tremendous spiritual and moral as well as textual distance between the bodily state of a man as pictured in 1:24 and what is conceived and stated in 12:1. But if a man travel along the road of spiritual revelation given in the intervening chapters, he may with confidence expect the fulfilment of all the truth promised at the end of the road.

What a sad picture of the human race is drawn for us in 1:18-23. Perhaps if we bear in mind that this is a composite picture of mankind and not a portrait of one individual it will help us to an understanding of the difference in this letter and in scripture generally between 'flesh' and 'body'.

'Flesh' is the common substance of man; but a 'body' is particular to one individual. 'Flesh' is used generally to convey the idea of the ethically corrupt and totally depraved moral and spiritual state of mankind; while (in this context) 'body' is used to convey a personal and particular demonstration of the flesh through an individual.

A dishonoured body. Such is the original tragic state in which every man is found. The course of sin since its beginning on earth, and marked out plainly in these verses, has produced a race of dishonoured men.

God made our bodies for Himself. But with the exception of Jesus Christ, no man ever lived apart from dishonouring and degrading his own body ... and perhaps someone else's also. The body was created to be honourable, noble, a glory to God; but instead of being the Lord's, as the body of Jesus of Nazareth was the Lord's, it became a 'body of sin' (6:6).

A body of sin

In the normal usage of words, that which is within a vessel determines its name. Often we do not even mention the container when speaking of its contents - a pound of jam, for instance. No one thinks of going into a shop and saying 'Please may I have a glass jar with a pound of jam in it!' We commonly speak of a gasometer, or a can of petrol, or a dust bin. No one believes that the petrol is within the actual substance of the metal that forms the can, nor that the jar is really made from jam and not glass. So also with our bodies. Whilst the actual flesh, blood and bones are not sin, yet, as tea is the obvious and important factor of a 'cup of tea' so sin is the leading and deadly factor of the 'body of sin'.

The 'body of sin' is not some mysterious body that 'the old man' inhabits within the human body, quite beyond our human understanding and therefore hopeless beyond all our efforts to grapple with it. It is everyman's body until the powers and workings of love, grace and righteousness which come by Jesus Christ change it. It is the same 'mortal body' of 6:12 and is under the power of sin that indwells it. All-powerful and all-pervading, sin reigns in (the) me in my flesh. It is a tyrant-master, a law that works in my members. Over it the mind has no control and the will no power. Sin is involuntary at its deepest and most dangerous levels, and given the co-operation of will and desire, it is most corrupt and corrupting.

Not only is a man a spiritual and soulish sinner, he is a physical sinner too. He is deceived when he thinks that by impressing people with his own personality he is putting over his own image; he is just another tiresome and nauseating representation of sin! Sin is embodied in him. Sin is his image.

Quite regardless of my highest ideals and noblest endeavours sin defies all the best I am capable of. And no small wonder either, for it even spurns God and abuses His will. It produces confusion and bewilderment over the whole of existence. This thing is a law in me; it possesses and dominates even my members; as inescapable as gravity and far more subtle.

Wretched and corrupt

For this very reason, however, there is hope. Because sin works by law it can be dealt with. Looking at God for a moment we observe some similarity in Him. God loves, that is, He commits loving acts; so we know He is a God of love and conclude that God is love. Carrying this principle over into the realm of man and his activities, notice the wording of Col. 3:5 'Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry'. No difference is placed between the sins and the members of the body that commit those sins. Complete identity is assumed.

Notice the same thing again in 1 Cor. 12:27-28. 'Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues'. The shift of emphasis from persons to gifts or functions is an illuminating re-emphasis of this emergent principle and inescapable law within the spiritual body of Christ.

We may thus see what is meant by 'the body of sin'. It is the totality of the potential of the principle and power of sin within the human body, as well as the sum of its every possible expression. From this the body takes its name. Another way of saying the same thing is, 'By their fruits ye shall know them'. Fruit comes from within, though it hangs without. It is the natural and unavoidable expression of what is inside.

Let us imagine it this way. Name every sin that can be named; then connect each sin with the particular member of the body through which it is manifested or practised. Now place all the members together calling them by the sin they commit. The result is 'the body of sin'. But thanks be to God! He can and does intervene in the patterns and law-orders of personality and accomplish the impossible! This He does in His own perfect and unique way.

The man plagued and enslaved by sin (O wretched man that I am!) need groan for release no longer, for God's way of salvation is a way of power (1:16); it is revealed in plainest common sense language in 8:9-11. So often preached as a 'healing' text these verses hold the key to a greater truth, for they are an explanation of God's way of full salvation, revealing the mechanics of deliverance.

Everything God does is logical by the science of faith. These verses show how the dishonoured mortal body of sin is changed into an honourable body of righteousness. It is done by the operation of a new law: thus - Christ comes to dwell in a man by the Spirit (8:9). Now, Christ did not live in a body of sin. His emergence into humanity ended the continuity of the law of sin. He broke it in Himself, for Himself. Reigning in every other man, it never reigned in Him.

Righteous and honourable

Laying down that Lordly Life in atonement, Christ died unto every other man's sin, once for all. Thus, by indwelling me He brings my body of sin to death so that I shall not continue in sin. My body is now His. He cannot allow it to live unto sin and sinning; so, because of sin, He slays it; that is, He negates and annuls the law of sin that impels its actions. He breaks its continuity in me; my members are free.

It cannot be that the Living Spirit in me, indwelling the living spirit of me, shall be brought to impotence and frustration by being outlawed at body level. So for the purposes of righteousness He quickens the mortal body from this death to His life. Instantly, simultaneously, synchronously, as logically as His own death and resurrection, He quickens my mortal body into living unto Himself. He obligates me constantly to bring the deeds of the body to that death. It is an indebtedness. In gratitude to Him I constantly live at the place of the breaking of sin's power, the dissolution of its law. Led of the Spirit I remain at the point, power and purpose of His incoming and know the full glory of His indwelling.

Along this particular line there is no progress beyond this - the replacement of the law of sin and death by the law of righteousness and life. In my body I am no longer obligated or indebted or impelled to be what the rest of mankind is; or to do what they do.

Primarily these verses are an explanation of the way God brings a man out of the dilemma of sin. That they are often used as a basis for claiming healing shows their greatness, but neither their fullest meaning nor first intention. To enjoy all is our privilege.

The shattering madness...

The bondage of corruption being thus broken in the moral and spiritual realms, the son of God finds no difficulty in enjoying the liberty of increasing glory whilst he awaits the day set for the redemption of his already-quickened body (8:23). The fact this his mortal body will probably go the way of all flesh troubles him little or never. The bondage of corruption (the law of sin) being destroyed in the spiritual principles and powers implicit in his activities, he fears death not at all. Final release is fullest glory!

The foretaste of liberty sets him a-groaning for all its fullness. He may still have infirmities but sins he need not have. As in the future he will have a flawless body, so even now his weak body will properly show forth the glory appropriate to an earthly son of God. No more subject to vanity than he is bound to sin, he rejoices in the eternal life he now enjoys through Jesus Christ his Lord. He can do the things he wants to do, delighting more in the Spirit than in the law - in the Spirit he finds his life. This is the life that was in Jesus Christ and surely is still in Him for all the rest of God's sons.

Holiness is a sweet and wonderful fruit to the palate, and the man that eats thereof is in Canaan indeed.

This, however, is a sheer impossibility unless Canaan becomes Israel. (Note the introduction of the Israel theme between chapters eight and twelve). The original inhabitants of Canaan had all the fruits of their land before Israel occupied it; but they were sinners and sacrificed to devils. Canaan had to be superseded by Israel, the righteous nation that lived and sacrificed to God.

The story of the conquest and occupation of Canaan's promised land by Israel is glorious reading in the Old Testament. God accomplished all this for His chosen people; but years later, crying through broken-hearted Hosea, He accuses Israel of becoming Canaan; for, having obtained the fruits, they refused to sacrifice to God.

The repetition of this ancient tragedy is being enacted all around us; and this underlying heartbreak of God is still the reason for the moving and passionate language of Rom. 12:1. Our pleading God cries again through Paul, beseeching us to present our bodies living sacrifices unto Him.

When God sets a man free from sin and brings his body to honour by indwelling it, He does so with the direct intention of using it in the kind of service He calls reasonable. The sacrifice of my body in living daily and only unto Him is the only reasonable service I can render unto Him who Himself endured the cross and persistently and passionately set forth the way of the cross as the Christian norm. All of God's dealings with us before this are but preparations for it. This is our supreme and continuous privilege inspired by His many mercies toward us in delivering us in this age from sin and flesh.

...Of an idyllic dream

Thus to serve the Lord is the only thing that will save us from the shattering madness of the idyllic dream of lazing every one under his own vine and under his own fig tree. Rather, we are to prove the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. This will involve not being conformed to this world, but a transformation by the renewing of our minds. Many with a knowledge of God's will have failed just at this point of application.

To fail in response here almost certainly prevents the full outworkings of much already begun in earlier movings of the Spirit of God within. If I claim to be waiting for the redemption, that is, the manifest glorification of my body, I must be presenting my body now in good faith to Him by whose faithfulness alone that redemption can be effected. Withholding my body from this I withhold it from so much more - perhaps more than one would care to think.

Belonging to a greater body than the one I call mine (12:4) I have a position, an office, to fill and a function to fulfil. In this body of Christ there is no sin or self-will. How then shall I be His member if I refrain from living in my body as He lived in His? Except I live 'crucified' there is denied to me a vital part of new and glorious living, namely, transformation by mental renewal, enabling me to think as I ought to think, i.e. with the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).

This is all part of that process called 'newness of life' (6:4 & 8:2). No scripture, however pleasing to the taste, must be taken in isolation to mean other than what the context shows God means thereby. And this context insists that 'newness of life' implies 'living sacrifice'. It must do so; or else it is not, nor can be, what it says it is.

Jesus presented His body a living sacrifice; that is why we are saved ... 'We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man'. This was His crowning glory and highest honour. The cross is counted reasonable enough by God. This reasonable service, this reasonable means of bringing many sons to glory is offered to anyone who will present their bodies a living sacrifice unto God. Who amongst us will accept the honour?

AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, SO IN CHRIST ALL WILL BE MADE ALIVE.

(1 Cor. 15:22)

Before we reach the place where deep waters must be crossed, there is almost always a private word spoken by the Beloved. That word will be most assaulted: the enemy will fasten upon it, but this will put him to flight: 'I believe God that is shall be even as it was told me'.

Amy Carmichael

THE METHOD

EDGAR PARKYNS

THE METHOD. Please don't shrink from the word, even though you are unmethodical. It was said that several mediocre actors gained stardom by following something called "The Method". If mediocre Christians can be so transformed as to be numbered among those that turn many to righteousness and shine as the stars for ever, by the application of infallible method, we should give it some consideration.

What plodders most of us are! Some caterpillars, so the story goes, were following each other, head to tail, in a long line. The leader scaled a table, climbed a vase, and began to travel around the rim, closely followed by the column. When he had completed the circle he began to follow the traveller in front of his nose. The other caterpillars were confused and went away, but these, in a complete circle, continued following their leader for two days until they died of exhaustion. How many Christians are going round in circles, making no progress, certainly not being changed from glory to glory! How about applying some method?

I used to dabble in water-colour, especially when suffering from toothache or recovering from 'flu, and the results were usually disappointing. Then I invested in two ninepenny manuals on the subject: they were full of method, cunning method. My work improved so much that I actually sold a picture, once. Method turned my wishful dreams into something like sparkling reality. Christian, there is a method that can make you successful.

When Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian (Jeremiah 38) looked down into the pit and saw his dear friend the prophet waist-deep in filthy mire, he longed to help him; the permission of the king gave him authority, and his fellow servants the power, but there were problems to be overcome, which wishful thinking, loud prayers, or cries of sympathy could not banish. He needed method, and to apply it. Jeremiah's strength was failing: he could not grip those saving cords with a saving hold. Loops were provided for his arms, but the mire was thick and the rescuing ropes could cause excruciating pain, so Ebed-Melech brought more method to bear. He obtained old cast clouts and old rotten rags and sent them down, telling Jeremiah to make pads to place under his arms. The prophet applied the method provided, and in due course was drawn out of the pit, saved from destruction by the power of his friend, through applied method.

Far too many Christians are stuck in the mud, held and defeated by the mire of a carnal nature, while the stench of it nauseates them, and they send up feeble cries for help. Above them they can see the light of

heaven, and a greater Friend than Ebed-Melech looking down to them in pity, able and willing to save. Why, if He hears them, does He not lift them from darkness and defeat? Some decide that they must be suffering from demon-possession, and attend deliverance meetings. A few really do get delivered, but for others, although there is much shouting of victory and some struggling up the sides of the pit, there is no change. They are soon mired down again in the misery of that 'flesh, wherein there dwelleth no good thing'.

Some say that in the believer the flesh is destroyed, and that our sole enemy is the devil. If that were about the whole truth, why would Paul in all his epistles write to such length about the works of the flesh, with very few words about casting out devils? In Romans 7 & 8, in Galatians 5, Ephesians 4, Colossians 3, and a dozen other places, he deals with flesh in the believer, a stinking, detestable, spirit-destroying mire.

Some, alas, wallow in it as though they were taking a bath. They have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. They measure themselves, not by Christ's words, but by other men's standards. Jesus said: 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me'. But they love themselves, love to choose their own way, live selfishly as though Christ had not died for the whole world, covet luxury, ease and security, and even like to sin just a little to add spice to living. They feel that life would be spoilt without some ill-temper, some self-indulgence, some lust. They pray and sing in meetings, but at home are selfish, niggardly or just worldly. They are in the mire. A sow loves to wallow in it, but a prophet longs for deliverance.

And to those who want to be delivered I suggest the Method of second Peter, chapter 1.

The correspondence between the writings of Peter and Paul is striking. One would have liked to have been present when Paul held a private interview with Peter lasting ten days, and later held a more public meeting, opening up the secrets of the revelation given to him from the Lord, and finding rich confirmation in Peter's endorsement. The right hand of fellowship was more than a formal acknowledgement: the completed circuit of the love of Christ and the unity of the Spirit electrified the occasion, and was stronger than all natural differences. 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' sang one, who, being a prophet, saw these things from afar. The fragrant ointment upon the Head was flowing to the extreme members of the

body and the skirts of His garments: the dew of heaven was descending, and eternal life was springing forth among the Gentiles. (Gal. 1:18 & 2:8; Psalm 133)

Like precious faith with us, declares Peter (2 Pet. 1:1), is obtained through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace are multiplied through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

God in Christ gives faith to us, but His gift is channelled to us through that knowledge obtained by hearing the gospel. A solemn responsibility rests upon the preacher: he stands between the Giver and a multitude of receivers, so that if his doctrine is not pure and transparent, if it is muddied by his own ideas, he obstructs the flow of divine mercy and puts a curse upon his hearers, and upon himself (Gal. 1:8-9).

No man can know God without the knowledge of the gospel. On this premise we stand against all false philosophies, but condemn our own selves for failing to make known the mystery of the gospel locally, and especially world-wide. I can understand the zeal of Peter and Paul, but I cannot understand our own slothfulness. Pardon the digression.

'According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness'. First life, then godliness, please note. There is a crude idea, openly confessed at first, concealed within the bosom later, that although God gives pardon, godliness has to be provided by our own effort. This is immature. The law provided sacrifices for pardon and made its righteous demands for obedience. The gospel goes further. The things that pertain to life and godliness are GIVEN by His divine power. Peter said it, so did Paul and John. The prophets foretold it, Christ Jesus declared it, but how few really believe it! God worketh in you to will and to do His good pleasure.

As a believer, you have already accepted your standing in Christ: righteousness is imputed to those who believe. You were told it was a free gift: you needed it, (Oh how desperately!) and you took it. The new covenant, however, includes a new heart, righteousness imparted within; all things that pertain unto life and godliness. To appropriate these things is strangely difficult, partly because of the absence

of desperation, and partly because they are on the borderline between faith and fact, hope and experience.

We must let the apostle Peter use his keys and open to us the Method. It is found in verse 3 and 4. If we included the whole 'addition sum' of verses 5-7, that would take us beyond the scope of this article. I just want to provide the clean sheet and the pen and ink with which that sum can be worked out. And it can't be worked out any other way.

Writing, then, to those who have obtained like precious faith, he introduces us to the first part of the Method, which is:- 'The knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue'. All holiness begins here: the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, up there in the sunlight, giving hope of better things.

To know Jesus and His love, to realize that He has called us to glory and virtue, to look up out of the horrible pit and see His face: this is the beginning. You may read a dozen books on holiness, but if you do not know Jesus you will be little profited. And how may you know Him? He will be found of you if you seek Him WITH ALL YOUR HEART. And if bitterness or sin has hidden His face, confess it without delay and receive His full pardon.

Said Philip to Nathanael, 'Come and see!'. It was the beginning of new life for him. There is no substitute for knowing Jesus, and the Father through Him, by whom we have been called to glory and virtue. To know Him is to love Him and to love Him is grand! This is the major dearth among Christians today. They have lost their first love. The face of Christ is strangely dim. Busy in His service, they do not sit at His feet. They do not even know where to find Him, who is the joy of living. What joy and peace He brings! What a sense of pardon and peace too deep for expression! 'He shewed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord'. Do you know Him? Is He real to you? Or have you lost Him? If so, be as diligent as Mary, who sought Him sorrowing. Give yourself no rest until you have found Him whom your soul loveth. The knowledge of Jesus is the first part of the Method according to Peter.

The second part is this: 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises'.

Continued on next page

Try to put well into practice what you already know; and in so doing you will in good time, discover the hidden things which you inquire about.

Saying of Rembrandt to his pupil, Hoogstraken

These promises lie dormant in the word of God, but by the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ they spring to life. The promises belong only to those who know Jesus, theirs they are by right and revelation, cheques to be cashed at the ever open bank of heaven. How often we have missed this part of the Method. We have looked, not to the exceeding great and precious promises, but to experiences, to meetings, to the ministry, to the revival, or even to our own poor resolutions.

'Give me a promise!', cried one who was wrestling with God for a deeper experience. They are given! - to us!! Exceeding great and very precious. As soon as you regain the knowledge of Jesus, lay hold of the promises and embrace them!

Ebed-Melech threw down to Jeremiah the old cast clouts and rotten rags, that by these the upward pull might be applied to the weak and failing prophet. The risen Lord Jesus at the Father's right hand gives us, as soon as He has gained our attention, exceeding great and precious promises. They are the cast-off shoes and clothing of apostles and prophets, they are despised by those who feel no need for them, but to you they are exceeding great and precious, sent down especially for you by the Friend of sinners. Do not despise the old time-worn promises like 'For God so loved ...' and 'God commendeth His love towards us ...' and 'Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God'. They are very comfortable, and they will give you a big lift, when the Lord Jesus is at the other end of the rope.

Now is the time to stop praying and do some applying. Embrace the promises. Wrap them round you, near your heart, under the armpits: trust them, even though you are faint. And feel the saving pull applied! 'Out of the mud and the mire!' - We used to sing it with gusto. May we sing it with understanding also as the grey ooze of past failure falls away from us! 'Jesus lifteth me up' - by the exceeding great and precious promises!

'That by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature'. Is that what you wanted? 'Oh to be like Him!' 'Be like Jesus, this my song, in the home and in the throng'. Was that your heart's desire? Then here is the answer: Peter's Method, the Holy Spirit's method. By the promises laid hold of, in His presence. Not by experiences, crises, baptisms, dedications, resolutions, but by the promises. They were operate in the dank dungeon of defeat. You can be a 'Star' saint. You can be a success in the sight of Him who called you to glory and virtue.

'Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust'. And did you want that as well? You shall have it. Claim those promises. He will pull you out of the mire, however close it clings. The promises hold: God does not lie. Your resolutions may fail like Peter's, snapping like tow under the strain, but you have the eternal promises to lift you out of your own corruption, the corruption which is in the world through lust. Lust for money, lust for power and influence, lust for luxury, sex lusts.

How I feel for our lads in the bush villages, surrounded by sexual laxity! (E.F. Parkyns was a missionary in Nigeria - Ed.) Virginity is soon violated out there; this is regarded as inevitable. Will the promises work under these conditions? They will and do, Thank God! All over the world similar conditions prevail, and the English-speaking world, treading down the bars of a Bible-based morality, is eager to wallow in the mire. But there is escape. The promises will work when you know Jesus. You shall be a delivered Christian. Jesus holds the ropes to pull you out. Place the promises under your armpits and you'll soon see daylight.

To summarize the method

1. Understand that God by His divine power has given you all things that pertain to life and godliness.
2. Recover the personal 'knowing' the Lord Jesus who calls you to glory and virtue.
3. Lay hold of those exceeding great and precious promises.
4. That BY THESE ye might be made partakers of divine nature.
5. Escaping BY THESE the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Wonderful salvation!

Wonderful Saviour!

Now, if you wish to get on with the 'Addition Sum', now and not before, having clean paper, pen and ink, you can start:-

'Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge self-control; and to self-control patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love'.

In other words, when you are out of the mire you will be eager to enjoy a hot bath, a good meal, a tidy house, and loving fellowship.

A paraphrase of 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

With regard to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is important that we do not quench them, or make light of prophesyings. At the same time we do not accept these ministerings without discrimination. But rather we bring everything to the test, and so keep a firm grip of that which is genuine, at the same time making sure we abstain from evil in whatever form it appears. Editor

SPIRITUAL SLAVERY - PART TWO

BERNARD HULL

NOW LET US MOVE to the joyful news of man's liberation from the tyranny of sin and satan. It has often been said that the redemption and salvation of man is free. There is truth in this statement in that man certainly cannot earn his salvation by any works of his own. However, the revelation of scripture being witnessed to by the intuitive registration of truth in the heart of man, concur in saying that there is a price that must be paid for man's liberty from the wicked masters that have enslaved him. In the Old Testament the price of a slave was thirty pieces of silver (Exodus 21:32). This price was paid to the master of a slave in the event of that slave being gored by an ox and losing his or her life. Not only was this price paid to the man suffering the loss, but the animal that had slain the slave was killed also. How significant it is that the price paid to Judas when he betrayed Jesus was that very sum - the price of a slave. Surely there is significance also in the fact that Judas, stricken in heart and full of remorse, cast the money down at the feet of the chief priests and elders. He wanted no part of that money. He saw that he had betrayed innocent blood. However, the chief priests and elders had a problem. They could not add the money to the treasury, for it was the price of blood and this was forbidden. Finally they hit on a use for it; they bought a field and it was the field of the potter. It was to be used to bury strangers in. It seems that Judas killed himself in that very field and it was filled with his blood. Surely he was a 'strange' man; that is one who is strange to God's original intention for mankind. Are there not hidden truths in these events? 'To bury strangers in' - a place to put out of sight and mind the thing strange to God's purposes, i.e. Adam and his offspring who became slaves to sin. 'The potter's field' - clay used by the potter to mould vessels, from the ground there being moulded a new man rising by the power of God. All this took place because Jesus was sold for us; His blood was shed. In the estimation of man His value was that of a slave. 'The field of blood' - it seems that the bad blood of slavery to sin was poured out there and thus was that type of human life brought to extinction. How our hearts are stilled in contemplation of these things that reveal the perfections of the ways of God in the fabric of His doings, and the great love wherewith He has loved us to free us.

'You are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's' (1 Cor. 6:20). Here is a grand statement from Paul: We are bought ... we are God's. We are to be slaves unto Him. The price that God paid was that of blood. Our slavery to sin was in our blood and only the price of blood could make us free. He gave His Son. His Son

was a slave to Him. Some say that this price must be paid to someone and the devil has been suggested as the one whom God paid. Satan was not legally the owner of mansoul. He was, and ever is, a usurper. Adam, in his innocency, was his own master. He was truly free. God wanted that first man to choose God Himself as Master. He desired that Adam, by a series of choices, would take God's side in obedience, and thus become a willing love-slave to God. Adam decided to sell out to another master. He received his reward and it has been experienced by us all, that is death in its various workings. Yet, into the fight came another, sent by the Godhead; Jesus came to rescue man from this mastery of sin. He paid the great price by receiving into Himself the rewards of iniquity. He, who was without sin, became sin for us. He took into Himself the spiritual, psychological and physical powers and effects of sin, even unto death. This is His grace, but for Him it was not free. This awful price was paid and He paid in full. The price was paid to righteousness, as it is in God. Wesley says 'justice divine is satisfied, and all may live from sin set free'. The price of blood has been paid by Him, that we might be free to choose forever glad servitude to God and His Son Jesus Christ.

When the claims of God in Christ are brought to a man's heart by the Spirit of God, it is then that the possibilities of being freed by the power of the gospel are upon him. The Spirit of God is commissioned by the Godhead to impart the power of the cross to the human heart and to loose that heart from the bonds of sin and death. The heart thus freed is able to choose abandonment to God and begin a lifetime of thankful slavery to Him who has saved him. Paul refers to this fact in Romans chapter six. He declares that a person who has been baptised into Jesus Christ has been baptised into His death (verse four). Undoubtedly the values of Jesus' life and death reside in the Spirit. It must follow then that identification with and the partaking of them can only take place when a man is baptised in the Spirit. We can rightly deduce then, that this being so, Romans 6:4 refers not to baptism in water but in the Holy Spirit, and it is then that a man 'is baptised into Jesus Christ' and into His death. Going further in the chapter to verse thirteen we find that we are 'made alive from the dead'. Perhaps Paul was thinking of us coming from the tomb into new life, like unto Adam when he was placed in paradise, fresh from the creating hand of God. Is it any surprise then that Paul immediately says 'yield yourselves unto God' and 'your members instruments unto righteousness'. He continues in the same vein of truth. 'Now, being made free from sin, and become bondslaves to God' (verse 22). It is vital that the born again child of God

should willingly become the bondsman of God. He is made free (from sin) that he may immediately be mastered by God. The new birth makes a man free to become a slave to God!

Now let us use our imagination somewhat! Let us consider the fact of slavery as it existed in the days of the Roman Empire. We can learn many lessons this way. We know that a good number of the members of the churches in those days were in fact slaves. They had been bought and sold in the market place or had been born in slavery. Perhaps some had been captured in their home village by a raiding party. They had watched as their homes had been ransacked and burned and possibly experienced terrible things at the hands of their captors. They were carted off to some far away place to be sold in the market-place to a lifetime of servitude. Uprooted from everything familiar, carried into a great unknown, never to return to that place from whence they had been taken, and after a long journey to find themselves in an evil-smelling room awaiting the market day. They were scarcely alive, having only been given barely enough to live on. They were human flotsam awaiting a future that was not pleasant to contemplate.

Another day dawns and the poor slave finds himself in a market-place. Chained to others of both sexes and of various ages he stands awaiting what he now regards as an awful fate. Many richly-robed men and women move around examining the commodities for sale. They discuss the various merits of the merchandise as they move along. The buying begins; the sound of the haggling over price fills the air. It is obvious that the bidders are set upon the purchase of this or that slave. They have come with minds made up as to what they want, and to what use they are going to put the slave. Perhaps they purchase a young man who has strong physique, him they will use for manual work. Another purchase is made with a view to producing a book-keeper for the master's house, and then again a girl is bought to be a maid. Thus it goes on, until the master and lord has made his purchases, and the unwilling human merchandise is linked together in bonds and marched away under guard to their new home. The slave was now bought with a price. A master had paid for him. He was his master's property for life. He did not know the language of his master's house. He did not know for what purpose he had been purchased. He was utterly ignorant of the ways and habits of the house which from now on would be his home. He had no idea what the future held for him or even where he was, indeed all things were new for him and a total ignorance filled him as to that new life which awaited him!

On arrival at the master's house the newly purchased slave was at once put under the care of another slave, one who was experienced in the master's will and purpose. Usually each household was directed by the master who had a special chief steward/slave, and it was through this man that the master directed

things. We can think of Abraham's household in the book of Genesis; all his affairs were under the care of Eliezer of Damascus (Gen. 15:2). It was this man who was sent by Abraham to search out a bride for Isaac. He went forth knowing his master's will exactly, and knowing his master's heart also. Each chief steward knew his master's will. When a new slave was entrusted to his care and tutelage, he knew exactly that which the master required of that slave. He took the slave under his wing and led him through whatever instruction was necessary to bring that one to an understanding of that for which he had been bought. He himself was a slave, he understood the ways of slavery and he understood the master's heart; it was through him that all the various departments of the household linked together and moved harmoniously along.

The first task undertaken by this chief slave in respect to his new pupil was to strip him of his rags. All the old things were cast away, then the washing took place. Perhaps there was also anointing with ointments and oils, and in the case of females even fragrant perfumes were applied. Following this, the slave was clothed in garments which were in the style and colours of the household. He or she did not choose what to wear; it was supplied by the master and was according to his will. The cleansing, the anointing and the clothing were all performed under the care of the chief steward in the name of the master. It was at this point that the process of learning really began in earnest. It was to be nothing short of a total re-education. He would learn to cleanse himself; perhaps in his original home the use of water for the purpose of washing had been unknown! He would learn to clothe himself correctly and be taught how to keep himself presentable, as was pleasing to his master. He was under the tutelage of the chief steward all the while and his education continued along the line of the particular role he was to fulfil. He found it either difficult or easy depending upon how teachable and submissive he was to his master's will.

A new language had to be learned - the language of the house. He must start from scratch; he knew nothing. There were the customs of the house to learn also; he could not bring his old habits in there. For him there was a new diet to enjoy, new tastes for his palate. He did not need to hunt and search for his food now, the master supplied all. He no longer killed animals in order to clothe himself with skins, his master took the responsibility of clothing him also! Multitudes of things that had been causes of worry to him in his former life were now no longer issues to him. His master took care of all things for him. One thing alone was required of him, simply that he do his master's will with alacrity and precision at all times and without question. No arguing or discussion, simple obedience was the requisite. Life was really very simple!

In those days it was not unknown for slaves to rise to high positions in the household of their master. If they learned well and obeyed without demurring they were given increasing charge over others and over the master's goods. A slave whose integrity was proven, and whose faithfulness was well known to his master was often entrusted with powers of attorney in the master's business. Many a slave came to understand his master's mind so well that he could and did interpret and impart his master's will to others faultlessly. When a slave rose to this sort of eminence it also led to a mutual respect between master and servant, and to the bestowing of gifts and riches upon the slave, with the possibility of freedom also being granted to him. Are not these things full of simple lessons for our hearts to understand? We are bondslaves to God; let us see how truly we can apply some of these analogies to ourselves in our relationship to our Master.

The presence of the Holy Ghost in a man's heart can only be known by the fruits and effects He produces. Mysterious and invisible to mortal eye as His operations are, they always lead to a certain visible and tangible result. Just as you know the compass needle to be magnetized by its turning to the north - just as you know there is life in a tree by its sap, buds, leaves and fruits - just as you know there is a steersman on board a ship by its keeping a regular course - just so in the same way you may know the Spirit to be in a man's heart by the influence He exercises over his thoughts, affections, opinions, habits, and life.

Bishop J.C. Ryle.

WITH NO DARKNESS AT ALL - PART TWO

GEORGE W. NORTH

UPON THE THRESHOLD of the New Testament we are re-introduced to a familiar theme. The purposes of God, His thought-forms and manner of dealing with men, remain unchanged from those we discovered in the Old Testament. The ancient nation of Israel having failed Him, God chooses from amongst them a virgin; and securing her co-operation by faith, He proceeds to show all nations how deliverance may be brought forth and wrought in the earth. God's will is inflexible and His faithfulness is unswerving; Mary, all simplicity, yielding in utter amazement to the desires of God for His people, with sheer joy and virginal love, gave Him the response so long denied Him, saying, 'Be it unto me according to Thy word.'

Thus perhaps, are all true deliverances wrought throughout the entire universe, simple response to God on man's part blotting out all impossibilities. At least in this way God achieved with Mary His long cherished and foretold desire. And by this was instigated a chain of events continuing to this day which, though differing in detail, conform exactly to the basic patterns herein revealed, viz., that deliverance in the earth is the result of true union between God and His people.

Simple response...

We could dwell on this figure and instance with much profit, but will take from it just one further lesson. This very event was of itself a deliverance of a kind, for Mary represents true spiritual Israel, and from her experience we may learn how similarly many

dear, virginal, holy people have need as truly to be 'delivered' from passive purity to purposeful productivity. And this we all may be by following Mary's example. For as the angel met her wondering enquiry, 'How shall these things be?' with the all-inclusive answer, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee' (cf Acts 1:8); so must we see, understand and acknowledge that there is a work of deliverance in keeping with, yet lying beyond, personal purity, possible to all upon whom the Holy Ghost comes with power.

This whole incident is as allegorical as are the historic happenings to Sarah and Hagar, and more so, for it foreshadows the era of salvation-deliverance into which we are now entered since Pentecost. The Jesus formed within Mary was presented later as the Christ, the Anointed Deliverer to the nation. Out of her obscure purity, when submitted to God for His and its rightful purposes, came forth the Saviour; the One who said, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ... to ... deliverance', and unto deliverance He went, right through to Calvary, its most potent and lasting form. Now the nation that had failed its Husband-God, all unconsciously and unworthily through this faithful woman achieved its high calling. Jesus Christ, Son of God and man, firstborn of every creature, sits upon the throne of humanity's inward spiritual union with God.

It is quite impossible to declare His generation, He belongs to no particular age of group more than another. He came forth from Bethlehem to God and man,

but His goings forth were from of old, from everlasting. He was 'cut off out of the land of the living', by agreement with His Father to 'render to all their dues'; whether as man to God in sacrifice, or God to man in grace of self-commitment according to promise, or God and man to the devil - what a debt of wrathful justice is due to him from both!

...Blots out impossibilities

No grave marks His death. Instead His death marked the grave. His history cannot be encompassed thus:- 'Jesus of Nazareth, born so and so, died so and so', for behold He lives! and Bethlehem and Calvary are the two most historically important events in the progressive self-revelation of God to man. And according to Paul's transcription and interpretation in Romans 11:26 of Isaiah 59:20/21 the Redeemer shall yet appear as the Deliverer to His people.

Luke records in Chapter 9 that when the Lord Jesus was on the mount of Transfiguration He was joined by Moses and Elijah who talked with Him 'of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem'. Now this word 'decease' means 'outgoing' (Greek, exodos), and its truth is vital to a proper understanding, experience and ministry of deliverance. No wonder Moses was called to the conference! He was going to learn of a greater exodus than that which he, under God, had so successfully directed and led, hundreds of years previously. And we must also learn what an important strategic place the exodus holds in the whole plan of deliverance, ancient and modern.

When Moses led his people across the Red Sea, 'which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned', it established the exodus in finality. That particular and most important phase of deliverance was accomplished. So complete was the deliverance that not a single soul of Israel, nor a hoof of any animal they owned, was left behind.

A greater exodus...

Conveying this thought forward and passing over the regrettable and unnecessary lapse of forty years of time, we find the same kind of thing happening as they enter the Promised Land. As Jordan divides to admit the advancing host to its possessions, we read, 'All the people ... passed clean over'. It is the repeated thought of entirety that is so important. As with Israel under Moses and Joshua, so with the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ. Deliverance is accomplished once for all. That is, the basic work of power has been wrought on all the earth, By one Person, through one act, for all the people, for all time.

The story of the exodus of Moses is not complete in Exodus 12; it is incomprehensible apart from chapter 14; the incidents and activities recorded in each are two parts of one whole. Even so with the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, though time divide them, these also are but one spiritual event. Of old deliverance was wrought for Israel both from 'the

house of bondage' and from 'Pharaoh and his host', and it was celebrated by songs of boundless joy as they beheld their enemies lying dead at their feet upon the shore of the grave they themselves had lately passed through. From us too, could we but grasp the vast power and reach of the exodus accomplished by the Lord Jesus at Calvary, God should be receiving unexcelled praises in surpassing songs of joy.

Calvary was not only the place of crucifixion but of the resurrection also, for the garden was 'in the place where they crucified Him'. There, at the foot of the cross, on the resurrection morning, Peter and John received the great revelation so vital to us. Allowing Peter to enter first, John follows taking careful note of all that Peter saw - the linen clothes which so lately had wrapped the Lord's body lying undisturbed, exactly as they had been vacated, as though the body had suddenly vanished into thin air leaving the clothes bandage-like to collapse into the form of the Man who had been there. And the napkin that had been about His head, not lying with the linen clothes but wrapped together in a place by itself as though it were separated from the rest.

More was revealed than John's wondering eyes took in, but his heart believed beyond what he saw, into the realm where only faith can reach. Paul puts it for us later thus, 'every man in his own order'; Christ first, 'afterwards they that are Christ's'. This is the order of things in the whole range of resurrection truth, and it is the order revealed in the sepulchre. The head napkin alone, first, 'in a place by itself'. Oh, what wondrous truth! Yet not alone, for it was part of the whole group of clothing discarded, unwanted in the tomb, to tell us that neither Christ nor His body, the Church was there; for as 'neither is the man without the woman', neither is the Head without the body. (See 1 Cor. 11:11 and Eph. 5:31/32). Christ vacated the tomb complete - 'not a hoof' was left behind, 'all were clean passed over'. The exodus was complete, the work entire, Head and body rose together; as in Adam all died, so in Christ all were made alive. Blessed Calvary!

...Than that under Moses

On the cross the Lord Jesus triumphantly disarmed devilish principalities and evil spirit powers, and in the act openly exhibited their persons and powers - utterly defeated. Peter states that the quickened Christ after having died in the flesh, went and preached to a company of spirits in prison, seemingly kept unto the event. Further, Paul says the Lord descended into the lower parts of the earth, and then ascended up on high leading captivity captive; while the writer to the Hebrews says that in dying the Lord Jesus destroyed the devil in order to deliver those whose fear of death subjected them to lives of bondage. On such grounds then the whole ministry of deliverance is well founded, and is nothing more or less than the proclamation and administration of the fullest possible benefits of Calvary to man world-wide.

Humans are neither just spirit, nor only soul, nor merely body, but all three in combination as 1 Thessalonians 5:23 so plainly states and the order of truth revealed there should be duly noted. Undoubtedly the first is the most important for all originates in spirit; 'In the beginning God', and 'God is Spirit'. All principles and forms, manifestations and powers of good and evil originated in spirit, and it was in this realm where the Lord Jesus wrought so effectively during Calvary. What He accomplished there and then in the invisible 'spirit' world results in salvation-deliverance for man in every realm of his being when properly appropriated by faith.

Everything ultimately emanates...

Originally God created many orders of spirit beings, all of whom held some functional rank and place in heaven. In this heavenly estate, at some point, presumably generated within the free will of the anointed cherub Lucifer, desire strengthened into determination to be greater than his Creator whom he served. Thus sin originated. This developed in heaven as a spreading revolt in which many angels left their first estate to join in an attempt to dethrone and demean God and install Lucifer in His place. This rebellion was crushed; Lucifer was expelled and fell as lightning from heaven, and those deceived angels were taken captive and are held in chains under darkness awaiting the judgement of the last day.

The fullest results of that terrible revolt are not yet known to us, but its manifestations were not confined to heaven nor angelic beings. With the fallen tempter's entry and success in Eden, the heavenly plague was transferred to earth and men followed in the wake of angels in rebellion against God.

Just why Lucifer, who became Satan in the act of revolution, was allowed to escape the fate that overtook his dupes, we are not told. It may bespeak his power or it may be - and more likely - just God's master-plan that allowed it. But this we do know, God's arch-enemy, failing to unseat God in heaven 'got at' Him through men on earth.

God's undisguised anguish at the fall and loss of man whom He loved is hardly surpassed in the whole revelation of scripture. Uncomprehending man and woman never knew the immeasurable agony of the heart crying

out to them in Eden, 'Where art thou?' ... 'What is this that thou hast done?'

They were farther away than hiding behind a tree in paradise. Eve had turned herself into a temptress, a tool of Satan, to plunge the whole human race into a pit and prison more abysmal than the grave. But they were already too dead to understand; their light had gone out and their life had passed away. They could neither see nor feel the horror of woe they had brought upon us all by their selfishness. In one blind act they committed the race to the devil, selling us all out to him in one irrevocable transaction of sin for which there was no remedy save in the agony of God. He must sacrifice Himself for man's sin - hence Calvary.

But this acceptance of the devil on man's part by Adam set up, by direct heredity from Satan, a whole series of chain reactions within man and without, that he is quite incapable of rectifying. Spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, environmental and national troubles scourge the race - so many and varied and complicated as to baffle the best skills and equipment of man.

...From the spirit-realm

Worse still; under the direction of powerful princes, a whole host of implacable and depraved spirit-beings works upon these conditions with unceasing activity doing the devil's will among men. By such ways and means Satan rules the human race, and is described in the Bible as 'the god of this world', 'the prince of this world', 'the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of (the original and/or personal) disobedience'; whilst the princes that serve under him are called 'world rulers of the darkness of this age'. These operate behind and over 'the kingdoms of this world' through untold numbers of evil (variously called unclean, wicked, foul) spirits, whose origins are not disclosed.

From this whole satanic system, from its personnel, with their powers, presences, possessions, pestilences, perversions and perils, the Lord God gave His Son to deliver us - root, stock, branch and fruit; spirit, soul and body. And by giving Himself, Spirit, Soul and Body for us and to us, Jesus has accomplished the task!

The New Life is a resurrection after a death by crucifixion accomplished in us by Spiritual Baptism. It is not a REFORMATION, or REVIVAL of the old life. The good life which we compel ourselves to lead through faith in Christ, however valuable it might appear to be is not the new life, which is now coming down from Heaven. This is only possible in us by a direct act of God's grace to give us the gift of the Spirit of Christ.

Editor

THE ANOINTING - PART ONE

GEORGE W. NORTH

NOTHING BUT HARM can result from the practice by which men take a biblical word or expression and adapt it to their own usage so that popularly it relates to something other than that for which it is used in scripture by the Holy Ghost. The danger of such practice lies in the fact that the scripturally untaught person who hears it in connection with an experience he has undergone, may quite easily and erroneously imagine himself to be in a position other than he is. Thus put upon false ground a soul may become an easy prey to spiritual abuse as experience is found unrelated to scriptural certainty; indeed, in some cases, contrary to it.

In this connection the word 'Anointing' has suffered to no small degree. It is not uncommon in certain circles for a soul who has undergone a measure of spiritual, mental and emotional exercise whilst seeking the baptism in the Spirit, if he comes short of it, to be told he has received 'an anointing'. Sometimes if the exercise be great or prolonged it may be called 'a heavy(!) anointing', and he is forthwith exhorted to press through until 'he receives his baptism'. Here is a case where a biblical word has been adapted to mean something other than God originally intended to be understood thereby. If the person so informed accepts that experience as the Bible definition of the Anointing, he is completely misled and in danger of committing himself at best to spiritual abnormality and consequent immaturity, or at worst to a wilderness of frustration.

Imperfect usage

It cannot be too emphatically stated that the Anointing for the Christian lies beyond, and not before, the baptism in the Spirit; being neither a state preparatory to it, nor a stage just short of it.

It was never intended by God that men, however good their intentions or encouraging their words, should in this way degrade the glorious spiritual experience and truth of which He speaks as the Anointing.

To relate the Anointing merely to a man's spiritual, mental, emotional and perhaps physical exercises or reactions is proved both by scripture and experience to be wrong. Such exercises may to a degree be involved in some particular cases, but are incidental only, not greatly to be encouraged, and perhaps wherever experienced prior to the baptism in the Spirit might better be called 'Quickenings'; certainly not 'Anointings'. We must look as usual at the person of our Lord Jesus Christ if we would learn the true nature and purpose of the Anointing.

Before Jesus of Nazareth commenced His ministry among men en route to the cross, He set all His disciples a public example. When, fulfilling all righteousness, He walked out to John at Jordan for His baptism in water and anointing in the Spirit, He was acting as all men called by God to minister on this earth ought to do.

Perfect example

John said he was sent of God for this occasion, in order that Jesus might be manifest to men as the Son of God. Of course, Jesus was always the Son of God. He had known that well enough at twelve years of age, but now He must move among men as God's chosen minister. Baptism in water was the way the Lamb of God chose to identify Himself with sinners. Into the same Jordan wherein they had confessed and forsaken their sins, He went confessing none. Instead, standing and praying in complete dedication, He was publicly acclaimed from heaven as His Father SANCTIFIED HIM UTTERLY UNTO THE MINISTRY BY THE ANOINTING.

When He went forth as God's 'Sent One' among men He had to go as the Anointed, the Christ. It is not recorded that Jesus did any miracles or gave any signs as to His identity prior to the Anointing. His life in this respect, apparently, was not outwardly different from any other before this. The Anointing was absolutely indispensable to His ministry. And not in any mere symbolic or ceremonial sense either; it was as necessary as it was exemplary.

Reading Luke 4:16-21, we become aware of all that the Anointing meant to the Lord Jesus. Standing up that day in the synagogue at Nazareth, His home town, He selected words that the prophet Isaiah, himself an anointed man, used concerning his own ministry: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me'. The living consciousness of the Spirit's abiding presence upon Him was of all things the dearest to the heart of the Lord. The act of anointing in Jordan had been the greatest occasion of His life hitherto.

Twelve years of age had found His heart yearning to go out and do His Father's business. Already He was more than equal to the doctors of law seated around Him in the temple; but His Father was working to a pattern that could not be varied even for His own Son.

It was patience indeed to accept with joy eighteen more long years of restraint, but it was abundantly worthwhile. During these years of obedience He grew in favour with God and man and worked out on earth

things He had planned together with His Father before the world was. From His encounter with the doctors He went back to Nazareth and was subject unto the will of God and parental discipline. God meantime prepared events for the day of His Anointing.

Ordinary men

During the past centuries not a single man chosen by God for special ministry, had ever been allowed to imagine that he could possibly minister in any official capacity in God's Name unless he was anointed to the appropriate office unto which he was called. The offices were created for particular ministries, whether of prophet, or priest, or king.

The ministry was the important thing. There would have been no offices except that God wanted certain things done among men in His Name - that is, as God would do them - that is, with His power and authority - that is, in His nature and person. No man, whoever he was, whatever his qualifications, beliefs or personality, could fulfil such demands in or of himself. Therefore, God created offices and chose men to fill them, ordaining them in these positions and appointing them to these functions BY THE ANOINTING.

The Anointing was paramount. David regarded it as inviolable. To him even Saul's life was sacred because the anointing of his God was upon him. The Lord's Anointed must not be 'touched' for the Anointing rendered the anointed one as sacred in his office as the Holy of Holies - God's earthly throne.

The Anointing was symbolic. It was never intended merely to elevate a man to office, but also to equip him typically for the Christ-like ministry which that office designated and embraced; the importance of the ministry being the reason for the creation of the office which is ever greater than the person who fills it. The offices and ministries of prophet, priest and king among men were always greater than a Moses or an Aaron or a David that filled them temporarily. Men die; the offices and ministries continue. Read here Numbers 20:24-29. The High Priest, whoever he may be, must wear the regalia of ancient ordination and be freshly anointed therein.

In the day the Lord said concerning the High Priest (in this case Aaron, Leviticus 21:12) 'the crown of the Anointing of his God is upon him', He revealed what He intended men to understand by the Anointing. Called of God, with crown of gold, ceremoniously cleansed and clad, Aaron stood forth among men as the

chosen High Priest; then, as from heaven, the hand of Moses poured upon him the elect and precious Ointment of God.

Extraordinary oil

Over all, this holy oil poured its soft texture of divine approval; a royal cloak, investing its owner with the authority of heaven's courts; above all, it was the crown of crowns that seated him in the throne of the power of the divine majesty; it was paramount. It streamed down from his crown of gold onto the mitre, down his hair and beard, saturated his garments and dripped its aromatic perfection in a circle of golden glory around his feet (see Psalm 133). It soaked him; he was clothed eventually in the oil. He was a son of oil! The glorious perfume of Christ pervaded him; his hair; his garments; his lungs. It ran down his sleeves onto his hands as he ministered; it anointed the ground as he walked; he was God's man among men. Separated, set aside, consecrated, sanctified entirely - what you will - all you desire - by God, to God, for God, as the Christ of God, by the Anointing.

This was no ordinary oil. God had ordered it, for He was going to ordain by it. It was not just pure olive oil, ANY olive oil. It was specially prepared oil, made and kept for God, for the Anointing. Principle spices, each chosen with special attention to its symbolic meaning, were measured in correct proportion into an olive oil base to make the holy compound. This exclusive oil held a blend of meanings for the heart as it was poured upon the head.

Pure myrrh, freely flowing, with outer bark of sweet cinnamon, together with the sweet inner bark of calamus, and root and pith of cassia, each made their special contribution to the mixture as the Apothecary joined all in the oil of the Holy Spirit into an Anointing compound for God. (Exodus 30:22-31). This is that which was poured upon men to anoint them to holy office; in this alone lay their authorisation and symbolic power from heaven.

He was stripped down to His basic sinless manhood as He stood in Jordan that day. But a heavenly hand released the Dove that rested upon Him, as the wondrous voice filled the atmosphere with God's approval of the sweetness of His life. This was the day of His Anointing, His public manifestation as the Christ.

Continued on next page

Thy WORD is pure: Therefore thy servant loveth it. I am small and despised: yet I do not forget Thy precepts. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and thy law is truth.

Psalm 119:140-142

Basic sinless man...

Thirty years before this, God the divine Apothecary had carefully chosen a vessel in Galilee named Mary of Nazareth, and sent Gabriel to tell her, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God'. Root and pith He was to be son of David and seed of Abraham; but whilst outwardly the child of Mary (the woman, Genesis 3:15), he was inwardly the Son of God. Cassia, cinnamon, calamus blended with myrrh as this Heir of God was launched into a manhood of sorrows. The Holy Ghost came upon Mary and God compounded these principals of original power, authority and royalty into the freely flowing personality of Jesus of Nazareth.

Born of the Spirit, developing in holy life, He was THE SPIRIT incarnated; the Son of God. But He could furnish no proofs that men would accept; even His own (half) brothers did not believe in Him. So He had quietly lived His life away in a Nazarene workshop when He had come to give it for the world. Thirty long years He waited until the day His Father chose to manifest Him, and what a day it was!

...THE Son of oil

The Anointing upon men of old had been God's voice to the nation saying 'this is my High Priest', - or Prophet, or King - and the voice of affirmation from heaven that day was confirmation to Jesus and revelation to men. He was the heaven-sent One, now ready and able by signs and wonders to show who He was. Hitherto it had been miraculous birth and holy life only, but now as though from a new beginning with God, He comes forth a new figure in Israel, invested with power, on a new plane of service and ministry - He was the Anointed.

So in the synagogue that day Jesus, most human of men and devoted of sons, stood in utter gratitude to declare in truth the most precious consciousness of all, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me'. Now He could say 'He hath anointed ME', and He who was thus anointed to preach the gospel to the poor knew He was sent to heal, to deliver, to recover and to liberate. All this sign ministry was granted and authorised by the Anointing, which in itself was a re-affirmation and approval of divine Sonship - a new oncoming of the Holy Spirit for the special purpose of God.

BIBLE STUDY

EDITOR

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

A number have argued that John's Epistles are to be regarded rather as pastoral writings, but he does have a purpose to attack controversy. This is not a theological treatise written in the academic peace of a library, but an urgent tract for a difficult situation, to counter propaganda of false teachers who were trying to seduce (2:26) and deceive (3:7), particularly on the subject of the Deity of Christ. John exhibits a tender, pastoral care for his readers. 'His first concern is not to confound the false teachers, whose activities form the background of the Epistles, but to protect his readers, his beloved 'little children' and to establish them in their Christian faith and life' (John R.W. Stott). He defines his purpose of writing as being 'that your joy may be full', 'that ye sin not', and 'that ye may know that ye have eternal life' (1:4, 2:1 & 5:13). These are the qualities the pastor desires to see in his flock.

An able commentator has said 'John's Gospel has been called a summary of Christian Theology, his first epistle of Christian ethics ... and that in the Gospel he sets forth the Divine Life as it is exhibited in the Person of Christ'. In his Epistle he sets forth that life as exhibited in the individual Christian. It has often been advised by one of the main contributors to this magazine, in encouraging Bible reading for the new convert: to read through the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John many times.

In any study of this letter we must bear in mind that it is always to be read with the Gospel before us, and the language of the Epistle connected with that of the Gospel.

But let us look in this issue of New Covenant Voice what the Epistle says about our Lord Jesus Christ:-

1. The Word of Life Ch.1:1 explained further in verse 2 as 'that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was wonderful unto us'. Eternal life meaning the quality of life rather than a description of time. It is the Life of God manifested in Christ and imparted to us in the second birth. (Cp Ch.4:2-3 & 5:0-13)
2. One Sacrifice for sin Ch.1:7 in respect to cleansing. Ch.2:3 & 4:10 in the aspect of propitiation.
3. The Advocate Ch.2:1 means, one called alongside to help. This is used of the Holy Spirit in John 14:16,26, 15:26 & 16:7.
4. The Righteous One Ch.2:2 Cf. Matt.27:19, Luke 23:47, Acts 7:52 & 22:4. also 1 Pet.3:18
5. The Christ - the Anointed one of God Ch.4:2 Cf Matt 16:6 John 6:69, 7:41, 9:22
6. The Son of God Ch.2:22-24 compare also Ch 3:8, 4:14-15, 5:9-10
7. The Saviour of the World Ch.4:14 Cp John 4:42
8. The Destroyer of satan's power and works Ch.3:8 Cf 4:4

HOW WE GOT OUR BIBLE

When Jesus walked on this earth, He often referred to the 'scriptures'. This collection of Jewish writings is what we now call the Old Testament. Early Christians used these 'scriptures' in their assemblies, and regarded them as the word of God to His people. As the apostles began to write to the young churches, their letters and accounts of Jesus' life were regarded with the same feeling. Churches began to collect the apostles writings, and wanted copies of all that had been written by them - not only what was written to them, but also what had been written to all the other churches.

All these works had to be laboriously copied out by hand. Writing material was papyrus which did not last very long, so new copies had to be made all the time. By the 4th century however, vellum began to be used for writing on. This was made of animal skin and lasted a lot longer. When the earliest writings began to be copied onto vellum, they lasted, and some of these manuscripts are still in existence today. There are for example, letters from early Christians whose lives overlapped with the apostles lives, and who were taught by them personally. These have many quotations from what we call the New Testament and indicate that the early Christians had no doubt in their minds as to which works could be regarded as 'scripture'. There is even evidence within the New Testament itself that certain works were regarded as scripture at a very early stage. Paul quoted as 'scripture' (1 Tim. 5:18) 'The labourer is worthy of his reward', which is only found in Matthew 10 and Luke 10. This shows that by the time Paul wrote to Timothy, Matthew and Luke had been written and were already regarded as scripture. And later, Peter classed Paul's epistles with 'other scriptures' (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

In 130 A.D. the scriptures were being called the Law and the Prophets (Old Testament) and the Gospel and Apostles (New Testament). But in the 2nd century forged gospels began to appear. At first they were easily recognized as such, but as time went on, they began to have some influence. There were about fifty false gospels, which filled in the gaps in Jesus' life that the apostles had not written of. There were also various supposed acts of the apostles. They became quite widespread, and Mohammed is said to have got his ideas of Christianity from them. Some of the dogmas of the Roman Catholic church have their root in them. For example, stories of Mary's life and the supposed removal of her 'spotless and precious body' to Paradise were written in the 4th century, coinciding with the rise of Virgin worship. These stories were written in order to support heretical views by providing false evidence.

Because Christians were a persecuted minority there

was no way of stopping the flow of fictional scriptures. Each church would have to rely on its own discernment to decide which works could be used for public ministry and which could not. Then in A.D. 312, just before the battle of Milvain Bridge, outside Rome, Constantine had a vision. He saw the sign of the cross, and the words 'In this sign conquer'. He decided to fight under the banner of Christ, and won the battle. When he became Emperor of Rome, he issued a law allowing all people to follow the religion they chose, which meant that Christians were free from persecution at last. He ordered 50 copies of the Bible to be made for use in the churches of Constantinople, and Eusebius Bishop of Caesarea directed the work.

Eusebius found out which books were in circulation among the churches at that time in order to decide what should be included in this Bible. He divided his findings into four groups. The first was the books which all churches accepted as being written by the apostles. The second group was of those books which were accepted in some places, but considered with some doubt in others. (These books are James, 2 Peter, Jude and 2 and 3 John) The third group he regarded as worthless and included works by other early Christians. The fourth group he called 'forgeries of heretics'. The books which he eventually included in his New Testament are the very same ones we have today.

In 397 A.D., the Council of Carthage formally declared that these 27 books were of apostolic origin and fixed the contents of the New Testament once and for all. So it can be seen that the books which were regarded as belonging to the New Testament had never really varied right from the beginnings of Christianity. In spite of persecution, poor writing materials, the existence of false gospels and the churches difficulty in consulting with each other, each church had independently guarded these books and treasured them as being the Word of God to His Church.

Then Emperor Theodosius (378 - 399) made Christianity the state religion and banned idolatry. It seemed as if the church had conquered the Roman Empire. But, in fact, the churches were filled with unregenerate people. In Rome itself, the bishops began to seek after power, and to declare themselves 'universal bishop'. The eastern churches would not submit to Rome and broke away. Over many years, the western churches developed into the Roman Catholic

church, submitting themselves to the practices laid down by the Papacy. While this was going on in the church, the Roman Empire was crumbling, finally being demolished by barbarian armies in the 6th century A.D. Along with the Roman Empire went its civilizing

influence on everyday life and the so-called 'dark ages' began. Only the church continued to have schools which taught the priests and monks just what was necessary to carry out their function. Most of the population could neither read nor write, and because the church carried on its services in Latin (in order to re-inforce the idea of Christian unity under their Roman leader) the gospel was obscured. The practice of reading the Bible even fell into disuse among the clergy. But the Bible itself was preserved. Two translations of the Bible were made into Latin, and the second, carried out by a monk named Jerome between 382 and 404 A.D., became the standard Bible of the Western church for 1000 years. It was called the 'Vulgate'.

Although the church had sunk into a terrible state of darkness, there is evidence that the light of the gospel still shone in some lives. For example, in about 676 A.D. there was a wandering minstrel named Caedmon, who sang the Bible stories in Anglo Saxon to the people of Northern England. He was just a peasant from Whitby, and relied on monks to translate Bible stories to him out of the Latin, but he was able to present some of the Bible to others who were unable to read. At about the same time a monk named Bede translated The Lords Prayer, the Creed and the gospel of John into Saxon, for use by parish priests who did not understand Latin. Alfred the Great (849 - 901) translated portions of scripture for his own use. But during all these centuries, the Bible was generally lost to the ordinary people of Britain.

But the thousand years of papal dominance came at last to an end. Two men declared themselves 'Pope' at the same time and the church hierarchy was, for a time weakened while they struggled for power. In England, an Oxford scholar named John Wycliffe seized this opportunity to present the Bible to the ordinary people in English. For many years he had been urging the church to reform itself. He was sure that the Bible was the word of God, and that where the church varied from what the Bible taught, the church should mend its ways. This made him very unpopular with the clergy, but until a single Pope emerged triumphant, they could do little to silence him. He organized men to help him with the work of translating the Vulgate into the English of his day and in 1382 it was completed. He trained preachers to take the word of God to the people, and armed them with this English Bible. For doing so, and for other beliefs he held, he was excommunicated. After he died in 1384, his body was exhumed, burned, and the ashes flung into the river by the priests. But his work had been done.

In 1414, Wycliffe's Bible was banned. Any copies found by the priests were destroyed, and the penalty for keeping one was death. But in spite of this, it seems that people were prepared to run risks. Enormous sums of money, or goods, were given for a single page, or even the loan of one Testament for an hour a day.

Almost 200 copies of Wycliffe's Bible have survived, and they show the many faults that caused him to revise it as soon as it was completed. He had employed many scholars to translate from the Vulgate and some were not as good as others. English in those days was mainly a spoken language, so, when it was written down, people used different forms of spelling. Regional dialects varied enormously as well, so the resulting work was rather patchy.

In 1454, the invention of printing made the production of books quicker and cheaper. Bibles were printed in Hebrew and Greek as well as Latin for use by scholars within the church. (For the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek). Wycliffe's Bible was made obsolete; it was handwritten and the English language had changed so much that it was difficult to read or understand. The stage was now set for the emergence of a standard Bible in English. Wycliffe had paved the way by breaking the tradition of having the scriptures only in Latin; the invention of printing meant that large numbers could be quickly produced; it could reach a wide circulation because literacy was on the increase; and the spirit of Reformation began to turn mens hearts generally away from the corruptions of the Papacy and back towards the word of God for guidance.

William Tyndale wanted the scriptures to be available at least for the less well educated priests who had no understanding of Latin, so that they could be better pastors of their flocks. He did not translate from the Vulgate, nor attempt to update Wycliffe's work, but went to the texts then available of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures. He was persecuted by the English church, and fled to Europe where there were influential Protestants who could shield him. In 1525 his New Testament was completed, printed, and smuggled back to England. Any copies found were burned by the priests, but still more copies were able to come into the country. Eventually the authorities caught up with him and on October 6th 1536, he was strangled to death and his body burned at the stake. As he was dying he prayed that God would open the King of England's eyes. He laid down his life to bring God's word to the people. He was not able to complete the whole Bible, but those who had worked with him continued the work after his death.

The next English version of the Bible to appear was by Coverdale in 1535. He had used Latin and Dutch source material. In 1537, John Roger's Bible arrived on the scene. He had worked with Tyndale on his New Testament and this complete Bible was therefore largely Tyndale's work. But because he had been executed as a heretic, his name did not appear in it, and it was sometimes known as 'Matthew's Bible'.

Henry VIII split from Rome, and Cramer advised him that an English Bible would be useful to the nation. King Henry gave permission for Matthew's and Coverdale's Bibles to circulate, until his own bishops could produce one with the blessing of the Church of England. In 1538, Cromwell ordered all clergy to place a Bible in the church where all the parishioners may go to read it. Coverdale's version was most favoured for this purpose because it had no notes in the margin which might incline the reader's mind towards one doctrine or another. It became known as the 'Great' Bible, and caused quite a commotion. In some churches, where more than one Bible had been placed, the priest could hardly be heard over the noise made by members of the congregation reading out the scriptures to their families and friends. Matthew's Bible was the most popular in King Edward VI's reign, but in 1555, its translator, John Rogers, and Bishop Cramer, were burned at the stake by Queen Mary in her efforts to purge England of Protestants. Coverdale fled to Europe.

Many Protestants fled to Geneva, and there a group of them gathered together to work on another English version of the Bible. This was based on Tyndale's translation, but had many revolutionary features. It was divided, for the first time into chapters and verses, it was printed in a modern type which was easier to read, and it was small enough for personal use. For the first time, a group of scholars collaborated, whereas before, English translations had been the work of individual pioneers. They used italics to represent any word that could not be found in the Hebrew or Greek manuscripts they translated from, and they incorporated maps and copious notes. Some people found all these notes very helpful, because persecution of Protestants in England had made good, trained ministers scarce. But the feeling of people in England generally was that they wanted a purified sort of Catholicism, independent of the Pope, and the Geneva Bible was felt to be a bit too Calvinistic to be read out from the pulpit. So at last, the state church organized a group of bishops to work on a translation of the Bible into English. It was not considered so good as the Geneva Bible, for parts of it read better than others. Ironically, one of the bishops to work on this translation was Archbishop Parker, who had earlier been a zealous burner of Tyndale's New Testament. However it was the one authorized for use by the Church of England.

When James I ascended the throne of England in 1603 there were several versions of the Bible in circulation in English, all of which were felt to be unsatisfactory for one reason or another. So he commissioned this, ultimate translation, which was hoped would satisfy both the Anglicans and the Calvinists of his kingdom. 47 men were appointed, to work in 6 committees. 2 committees met at Oxford, 2 at Cambridge, and 2 at Westminster and each was assigned a portion to work on. Each individual translator was instructed to consult every version in circulation, as well as the Greek and Hebrew texts then available. When he completed his portion, it was

examined by his own company, and when approved by them, it would be sent to all the other committees for their comments. So every part of the work went through the hands of the whole body of revisers. In 1611, it was printed and took up its position as the church's Bible. It was unchallenged for over 200 years and was successful for several reasons. Great care had been taken to ensure that no mistakes were made in translation, and also that the language would be the most pleasant to read. It was written at the same time as Shakespeare lived, during the period considered to be the flowering of the English language. Today, even though the English language has altered so that the meanings of some words are obscure, it can still be used for personal devotions as well as for public ministry. The Authorized Version has stood the test of time.

But now, there are many other versions of the Bible in English. In the 19th century, the increasing interest in archaeology led to discoveries of papyrus manuscripts dating from the time of the apostles. Egypt is the only place where papyrus could survive that long, because of the hot, dry conditions. Some of these papyri were fragments of the gospel of John, in circulation in Egypt in the years immediately following his death. The language of these documents was everyday Greek, not literary Greek. This discovery gave impulse to the modern speech translations that have been appearing since the 1880's, for it was realised that the Bible was originally written in ordinary language, as spoken by ordinary people.

In 1881, the Authorized Version was revised by a group of English and American scholars. They hoped to make it easier to understand, because many words had altered their meanings slightly, or even fallen into disuse. At the same time, archaeologists were discovering many more very ancient, handwritten manuscripts of the Bible. Some translators felt that it would be best to go right back to these very early Greek and Hebrew versions, as they believed that the work of copying out could cause some mistakes to arise over the ages. Other translators have begun their versions in the hope of making the Bible very easy to understand, so that even the very young may be able to have access to God's word. Many attempts have been made by scholars to reproduce clearly in our own language the exact thought of the original Greek and Hebrew texts as inspired by the Holy Spirit all those centuries ago. And we have nothing to hinder us from reading it - there is no persecution to stop us, and we no longer need to be a scholar of Latin or Greek to be able to approach the scriptures.

Men like Tyndale and Cramer lost their lives so that we today could have free access to God's word in a language we can understand. Let us make the most of our privileged position and study these precious scriptures!

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In this issue:

- 1 This Mortal Body G.W. North
- 4 The Method E. Parkyns
- 7 Spiritual Slavery B. Hull
- 9 With No Darkness At All G.W. North
- 12 The Anointing G.W. North
- 14 Bible Study Editor
- 15 How We Got Our Bible --- Emmaus Fellowship