

new covenant Voice

*The sign of
Christianity is not
a cross but a
tongue of fire*

Samuel Chadwick

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

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

ORPAH KISSED HER MOTHER-IN-LAW, BUT RUTH CLAVE UNTO HER. RUTH 1v14

Over a period of time my heart has been exercised to consider the need to endure and exercise patient faith, that in Church Fellowships we might complete our spiritual growth. 'I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you' (Gal.4:19). Some years ago (and recently revived in my memory) in answer to a question, advice was given regarding church growth - that one of the proofs that a local assembly of God's people was established in its life and ministry is that we would be seeing children's children born of the Holy Ghost, to become active members of Christ's Living Body. I offer the following thought from the illustration of the Old Testament story of Ruth as a devotional contribution towards Christ's purpose of Church increase.

Both the women in our text had an affection for Naomi, and therefore set out with her upon her return to the land of Judah. Together as Christians we have begun a journey. The call of God has separated us (sanctified) to walk in unity of loving heart and to play a part in the building and development of the Church of Jesus. Jesus said 'I will build My Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it'. For Ruth and Orpah the time of testing came. Naomi most unselfishly set before them the toil which awaited them, and allowed them the choice of an easier or lesser calling to return to their Moabitish friends.



The Holy Spirit also moves in our hearts in this way, and through a variety of circumstances and events brings us also to a place of crossroad of decision. At first both the women decided to cast their lot with the Lord's people, but upon still further consideration, Orpah, in her case with grief and a respectful kiss, went away. Other goodbyes are not so honourable. The kiss Jesus received was not so, and neither every kiss we give or receive. It is the one thing to love the ways of the Lord when all is fare, and quite another to cleave to the purpose of God under all discouragement and difficulty. The kiss of outward profession is very cheap and easy, but the practical cleaving to the Lord, which must show itself in a righteous decision for truth and holiness is not so small a matter.

WHAT ABOUT OURSELVES?

A moment of reflection is necessary, I feel, at this time, as we wait for the further movement of the

breath of God in the Mulberry trees (II Sam. 5) to indicate the stronger and fuller pathway of the revelation of His will in our lives. Have we counted the cost, clarified the call of God, understood the purpose of our Divine Relation? Some walk for a while in degrees of bright presence, then in their going away, recede into obscurity. Orpah is heard of no more, but Ruth lives in history and in heaven, for grace has placed her in the noble line from whom sprang the King of Kings.

In the process of pastoral counsel, when hearts seek to join Church Fellowship life, the primary question that can be asked is, 'Has the Lord called you to BELONG to this local expression of the gathering of His people?'. Many can come in various degrees of blessing and need, bearing gift and ministry, some for just a short period of time in their journey of faith in the will of God. Some, like Orpah, will fail to appreciate the heavenly nature of the Church's purpose and for lesser considerations, turn aside. Others will cleave with our hearts for a while, then God will call them to their 'chariot' in the further wilderness of the world to unfold the treasures of God's word with other thirsty hearts.

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee,
Destitute, despised, forsaken
Thou from hence, my all shalt be.
Perish ev'ry fond ambition,
All I've sought, and hoped and known:
Yet how rich is my condition!
God and heaven are still my own.

Let the world despise and leave me:
They have left my Saviour too -
Human hearts and looks deceive me:
Thou art not, like them, untrue,
And whilst Thou shalt smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate, and friends disown me:
Show Thy face and all is bright.

Man may trouble and distress me,
'Twill but drive me to Thy breast:
Life with trials hard may press me,
Heav'n will bring me sweeter rest.
Oh, 'tis not in grief to harm me,
While Thy love is left to me:
Oh! 'twere not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with Thee.

What of those who remain? Surely ours is not just a light kiss of affection, but the holy embrace of complete yielding of heart's love to Christ who died that we might live; a devotion that will cling to His purpose in our lives.

'If Jesus Christ is God and died for me, there is no sacrifice too great for me to make for Him'.

C.T. Studd

John Norris
John Norris
Editor

EMMAUS ROAD

GEORGE W. NORTH

FIRST THINGS

Turn with me to the last chapter of the Gospel according to Luke, starting our reading at the beginning of the chapter: 'Now upon the first day of the week'. All the things we shall be considering are firsts, neither in your mind or in your experience may they be relegated to second or secondary things. It is not of minor importance that Jesus rose on the first day of the week, it is a very significant and important matter indeed. Some people try to put this and other facts we shall be considering somewhere way back in their experience, others seek to keep them right out of their lives, but the Lord insists that they must be our first love, have first place, and be given first consideration. Let everyone take notice that God is not prepared to come second in anybody's life.

THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO

The god some people have is nothing other than a figment of their imagination, a nice comfortable god that can be fitted into their own ideas. They wouldn't mind having God so long as He doesn't disturb them over much, or alter anything in their lives, failing to see that to do that very thing is the precise reason why God comes to a person (v1-5). Notice the repetition and therefore the emphasis upon the word - these lovers of the Lord Jesus were in need of a new revelation and though they knew it not, were about to receive it. They had come to the tomb bearing spices as was their custom, but their customary deeds, though understandable, were wrong - out of place, they had to learn something new from God. Jesus did not want, for He did not need, their spices. He was neither what they thought, that is a corpse, nor where they thought, that is in the tomb. They loved Him and were there with the best of intentions, but what they were doing was based entirely upon a misapprehension, it was quite wrong. Though in an entirely different context than this, lots of people want to bring their fragrant spicy things to God, they appear so sweet, but they are things He doesn't want and will never accept. It is amazing how they keep on attempting to do it though, indeed so often they are encouraged and expected to do so like everyone else, but in the great things of life men are expected by God to bring nothing. There is a false emphasis creeping in, it is being mixed in with the truth, reducing it to sentimentality, making precious things to become vile. When those women got to the tomb that morning long ago, full of love and devotion to the Lord they never knew, bearing their aromatic spices and laden with expressions of human sentiments, they found there was nothing to do - nothing could be done, nothing at all, it was done, their efforts were useless. Have you yet come to the place where you have discovered there is nothing you can do? Everyone has to come there, there is nothing you can bring, nothing you can give.

... GOD DOES A NEW THING

There was another company at the tomb that morning, they had been there before the women were and

were waiting for them - angels. It seems they were amazed at what those poor humans were intent on doing, and spoke to them and virtually then said, 'What are you doing?'. Do angels bend over companies of God's people now and say, 'What are you doing? Why are you fiddling about with these things? Where did you get all your ideas from, whence come these determinations and decisions that brought you on your errand - to do what you're going to do, and make, or attempt to make, the contribution you're going to make?'. The surprise and enquiries of angels are very informative. Those people, so early at the tomb that Easter day, had not the least idea that God was doing a new thing, none at all. They had been followers of Jesus; by their presence and their purposes they showed that they were lovers of Jesus too. It may come as a shock to us to learn that lovers of Jesus, people who have done such commendable things, can be so wrong in what they think. Intentions and activities can be founded on a completely wrong concept, because of limited understanding. These dear ones came to the tomb worshipfully, with the best of motives, but they were hopelessly wrong. It would be easy to say, 'Well, that's history now, the resurrection is past, the Spirit has come, the true light is shining, we would not do that now, we're beyond that now'. How true: but beloved, whatever be the event in history, whether past, or present, or future, hearts have changed very little. Unless there be a radical work of grace wrought in a man or a woman's heart, it remains the same, he or she can only be what they are. A person can only bring his or her own contribution of thought and understanding to God, that is all, minds can and do ramble off in wrong areas altogether, and invent and concoct the strangest things.

GOOD INTENTIONS ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH

When these people of old came, they did what they knew to do, and we might say, 'Bless them, their intentions were good, they were grand souls', and it would be true. That's right. Bless people with good intentions, but they can still be wrong - good intentions are not good enough. A lady once prepared a meal, it was beautifully cooked and nicely served on the plate, all ready for eating. The young man for whom it was prepared had a healthy appetite and sat down to eat it, as usual. He tasted the first mouthful and thought it was strange, he tasted it again and he didn't like it, and left it. The lady, having some authority, observing what was done, said, 'Why aren't you eating your dinner, what's wrong with it? It's good, we've all eaten it, go on, eat it', and having the power to do so, she made him do so. When, at last, she had succeeded in making him eat at least most of it, and wondering whatever he could possibly have found so distasteful, she tasted it herself and understood. She had made some 'gravy' for him with cocoa powder instead of gravy powder! Bless her, her intentions were good, but her mistake produced horrible results! How distasteful! Poor young man. Now the Lord wants us to know the truth, (and a tremendous truth lies here) that no man may rest on or continue in and try to bring to God what he thinks is right. You and I may not be allowed by God to do what we think we should do, believe what we want to believe and bring what we think we should bring, or give, or not give, as we think fit. God has to tell us that. This is one of the important 'firsts' of life.

A FIRST FULFILMENT

The story unfolds through v5-12, and passes on into the account of the walk to Emmaus (v13-36). But before looking into that lovely story, let us gather a point of value to us from the shorter section. The disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem, talking, when suddenly, while they were speaking, Jesus appeared in the midst of them. How long He had been there, no-one but He knew, what He had heard and what made Him break in at that moment, we cannot know, but something made Him do so. Till then they were not aware of His presence, but He had been invisibly there for some while before He made Himself known to them. What a tremendous realization that must have been to them, and what a confirmation of the word He had spoken to them years before, 'where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I, in the midst of them'. They had not understood it at the time. He had spoken in the present tense, when by all rules of logic He should have used the future tense, 'shall be'. Besides that, what He was saying really did need a lot more observation. Supposing the band should split up into six separate groups of two, or even four groups of three, how could He possibly be in the midst of all the groups? What He was saying must have been a complete mystery to them when he said it, quite obviously so many of His sayings could not possibly be fulfilled by Him while He was with them uncrucified on earth. But what a wonderful thing it was that He has said - now He was fulfilling it for the first time.

A UNIVERSAL BLINDNESS

Jesus made Himself apparent to them, He'd been there all the time, what a tremendous moment it must have been for them. The two disciples with whom He had walked along the road to Emmaus were there, they had returned to Jerusalem, and it was just as amazing to them as to the rest. When He had joined these two as they were journeying home to supper and to bed, 'their eyes were holden', somehow they were being held by something, they could see, but they could not see. They could see, or thought they could see, WHAT He was, but could not see WHO He was, to them He was a stranger. They did not feel or notice in any way that their sight was impeded, but it was, something prevented them from seeing the risen Christ. They knew Him, but they couldn't even recognize Him, nor could they understand Him or what He was saying. It is like that with everybody. Whoever you are, or wherever you may have been and whatever kind of life you've lived, Jesus has at some time drawn near to you. You didn't see Him, nor did you feel Him or hear and understand what He was saying to you, but He has been there. You may have felt the presence and power of Satan and sin at times, perhaps on many occasions, but see Jesus and know Him - no - you haven't seen Him, you cannot see. Paul the apostle wrote a letter to the people in Ephesus in which he said that he was praying for them, that the eyes of understanding should be enlightened; he knew their heart-blindness. This blindness is universal: people do not realize this though. The Jews to whom Jesus was born did not know it. He was the light of the world, but they did not see it. He spoke about this just before He interpreted to His disciples the Parable of the Sower, quoting Isaiah He said, 'Lest they should see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I would heal them'. The prophet knew that and said it of his people in his day, they had always been blind. It is still true today, the eyes of men and women are being held, they cannot see and the dreadful part of it is that they do not know it. The two on the Emmaus road saw a man, but did not see Jesus, He was with them but they did not understand, and tragically enough these were disciples, not Christ-rejecting Jews.

REVELATION - THE REASON FOR MANIFESTATION

Except that Cleopas was a disciple, we do not know much about him. We know he had a wife Mary, and that she was one of the women at the tomb. Quite possibly it was she who was with him walking to Emmaus that morning - we do not know, but whoever it was they were very disappointed people. They had seen so much, heard so much, witnessed so many things, but when Jesus came they did not see Him, nor did they recognize His voice. They knew from reports they had heard that Jesus had risen, they certainly did not know Him as the risen Christ. They had either seen or heard about the things being advanced among the land, if these things were true it was a great miracle, but their hearts were by no means convinced. It was as true of them as it was of Philip and all the rest of the apostles that He had been so long time with them, and yet they did not know Him. These disciples were sceptics at heart. People will go flocking anywhere to witness miracles, especially if it is said the dead have been raised: they will go and see what evidences of it there are, but that does not mean they will see anything. Lots of people come to some sort of belief on the basis of miracles, and may as a result be classified as believers, but of what sort? What do they believe? John writes in Chapter 2, verses 23 and 24, that 'many believed in Jesus' name, when they saw the miracles which He did'. We consider that to be great, but John goes on to say 'but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them', even though they did believe; He never commits Himself to anyone on that basis. He knew what was in men and doesn't need anyone to testify to Him what is in human hearts; they were believing for the wrong reasons. No man may be saved by believing in miracles. Oh, how necessary it is to understand that. These two had followed the Lord. It could be that they (Cleopas at least) had been among the chosen seventy who had gone out in the land preaching, and performing miracles, but on the Emmaus road that day he couldn't see a thing. Here is a question for all honest hearts to answer, do you think that you are being held and that your heart is not seeing the real Christ? Are you, person of realization and recognition and comprehension, whoever you are, being held back, so that you do not apprehend the revelation behind the manifestations? Blessed be the name of the Lord, there is no reason why you should continue like that. Be sure of this: there is always a revelation behind or through the manifestation, the revelation is the reason for the manifestation, and by far the more important of the two. The living Christ can reveal Himself to you. The question is - do you want Him to?

THE CHRIST REVEALED

How wonderfully the Lord revealed Himself to these two people. 'Are you only a stranger in these parts, that you don't know what's been happening here in these days?', Cleopas said. 'What things?', the Lord replied. What a reply! He has been the central figure in it all, everything had happened to Him, it is almost incredible. He is asking what these things were, as though they had never happened. He had been tortured, rejected, treated like an animal, certainly as a criminal, they had crucified Him, yet He was speaking as though nothing had happened to Him. This is amazing: not a trace of bitterness, no recriminations, no anger, no condemnations, no 'I told you so' - no talk of suffering or of pains, not a word of complaint - nothing. Listening to Him it is almost as though He had not noticed it, that He was not aware of it. Those two words He spoke reveal more of the heart and stature of Jesus than probably anything else in the whole wide world, perhaps in the Book itself even. What things? It was as though He had spoken what Paul voiced later, 'our light affliction which is

but for a moment, worketh for us a far greater and more exceeding weight of glory': truly Paul had learned it from Him. Jesus has not stored up all the awfulness of His trial and death in His heart, there is no bitterness there, He never let it take root. He had nothing against anybody, not even Judas. Nothing. Those two words tell me that Jesus is a Lover, that Jesus is God and lives in a realm so utterly different from men. Surely few have any knowledge of the real, living Christ. What do these words tell you? We should all do well to ask ourselves what would we have said had we been asked the same question after suffering such a death. Would you have described it just like you describe all your symptoms when you have a bad leg, or someone has done you the ultimate injustice? The blessed lowly Jesus didn't wallow in symptoms, or point to His wounds. This amazing Jesus: He's far more amazing than most people realize. Let that simple phrase, that innocent question, drop right down into your heart and illuminate your understanding, till you see who the Christ really is. Beyond all human concept of magnificence, He is magnificence - seen by heaven's standards. His concept of things is entirely different from yours and mine. He is indescribable.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CHRIST?

That couple had opened their hearts to this stranger of the road, pouring out their beliefs and unbeliefs, their hopes and disappointments with Jesus, and He was listening to them. Whatever did He think of them and their estimation of Him? They evidently thought their trust in Him had been misplaced! 'Fools!', He said. What a response. He had never said such a thing to anyone else before, not even His enemies, not even His crucifiers, these were His friends and disciples. What a way to address those you love. 'Fools!'. He was right, they were, they were fools. Oh, He was not speaking in anger, but in truth and disappointment, they were so slow of heart to believe everything. They could not see, they never had been able to see anything properly these years, they had neither believed Him or their own scriptures, or the logic of the events they had witnessed, they did not understand the ways of God. He never excused them for that though; sympathy He had in plenty, compassion and understanding abounded in His heart, but such blind unbelief and total inability to recognize who Christ is and why He came and what He has done can mean nothing other than that such a man is a fool when he ought not to be. Those two people ought to have known, He had told them that these things were going to happen to Him, but they never let their hearts believe it, they had been deaf as well as blind. Christ requires the sight and hearing of belief. Quite obviously unless we first get this great work of Calvary right we shall all be found fools.

What do you think of Christ and His great work? Those two said He was Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all men, that was their concept of Jesus Christ: what is yours? Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and all this time they had only been following a mighty prophet, to them He lived a prophet and died a prophet - that was their estimation of Him. It is a solemnizing thought that to every person Jesus is only who and what that person in his heart thinks He is. As it was then so it is at this present moment - the Lord Jesus is not acting 'Great God' to everyone, as He will do when He gathers the nations together in the end. When he calls men and women from the grave and the last trump is sounded, men will see Him in all His majesty and glory - He will be the Great God to them then. Jesus Christ is Lord and will be confessed as Lord then, He will act as the Great God then, and the disposing of your soul for all eternity will be in His hand. Much of what happens at that time will be according to the

measure of your concept and estimation of Jesus Christ now. However a man treats Him now He is still God. He is very concerned how you think of Him and what you say of Him, He listens to your conversations, and asks, 'Who do men say that I am?'. He once asked His disciples that question, and was answered, 'Some say John the Baptist', some say Elijah, some say 'that prophet'; it's still the same, some say this, some say that. In a world of uncertainty and insincerity, Jesus says 'But whom say ye that I am?'. Come on, be honest, He's here and He wants to know. We can all come out with trite Christian sayings, but who do you really think He is? Listen again to this serious statement of Christ: 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he'. To Him that is exactly what you are, no more and no less. For this reason every man has to come to the place where he confesses with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and believes in his heart that God has raised Him from the dead. It is of no use saying with your mouth what you do not believe in your heart. Worse still it is clearly wrong to say things just because people want to hear you say them and will accept you for that reason. It is therefore vitally important to every man that the inward grip on his spiritual eyesight should be broken, so that he can see Christ as He is. Each one of us must tell the Lord who he himself is and who and what he thinks He is. No man can get anywhere with God on a general concept or by the repetition of a general confession or of a denominational creed. You don't get through to God on that. What is your heart on this matter? Confess it. Whatever you do, do not turn to someone else's words - a phrase of a hymn, a quote from scripture, some statement other than your own. He wants to know what YOU think. It's not what David said, or what Isaiah said, or what some poet or hymn-writer says, but what YOU say. What do you say? And if He said to you, 'Oh fool', what then? So many people are slow of heart to believe. Is your heart slow? This is not an enquiry about the state of the physical organ. That could be in great disorder (which God forbid), yet your truest heart be perfectly right with God. There are those whose hearts are so besotted with sin, and clogged-up with wrong ideas, that their estimation of Jesus Christ is almost nil. On the other hand there are some people, who like Saul of Tarsus, meet the Lord and in a moment are clear as to who He is. But Oh, all these who have been going on for years and years, and have never got to that place. What of them? Which is you?

STOP BEING A FOOL!

Sometimes a man and his wife sit together in meetings listening to the same gospel - they have done so together for years. She rejoices to hear it and loves the Lord, he is as unaffected as can be, their hearts are in their faces. Both have had the same opportunities, but they do not share one heart - only one of them is saved; they are totally divided on this issue. Now whoever you are, man or woman, stop being a fool, this thing has to be settled. Man, woman, you must let your heart move while God in His grace quickens the word to you, lest you die a besotted fool, drunken with the ideas and philosophies and postulations of men of earth who know nothing that really matters but guess and theorize about those things. The truth you must understand is that God Almighty was manifested in the flesh for our salvation. What else do you want? What should God do for you or anyone else more than He has done?

It is of some significance that as the Lord was speaking, they were moving on towards their destination, Emmaus. If we could join them we could discover with them what they OUGHT to be thinking about Christ. First, he did not tell them He was the Christ, but spoke to them as man to man. 'Ought not these things to have happened to the Christ? Don't you think that if Christ is Christ this is what should

have happened to Him - that he should have done these things?' He turned them to the scriptures, it was their Book, and He showed them all about Himself and His sufferings from the Book. What did they feel like then? He had called them fools, and perhaps when He showed them these things they felt like it too. For years they had lived in the presence of God manifest in the flesh. He had called them to follow Him, and they had listened to Him and benefitted from Him so much. But such was the power of satan working through sin that they were shut up and held in bondage by their own thoughts beclotting their minds and hardening their hearts. Men are imprisoned, held in the morass of their own ideas, the things of this life, their own troubles, their own concepts, their own interpretations of things, blindness, deafness, hardness, bitterness, deadness. And Jesus draws near, walks shoulder to shoulder with you along the way, and you don't know Him. What a tragedy.

'HE WOULD HAVE GONE FURTHER ...'

'And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and He made as though he would have gone further'. I have become convinced that that phrase spells out the tragedy of many lives: He would have gone further - He would have gone further with you if you had gone further with Him. Perhaps it is true of every one of us that He would have gone further than we have gone or are prepared to go, if we had only gone with Him. Emmaus was only a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem and that's as far as they would go. It was not the Sabbath, it was the Lord's day. He had risen from the dead that very same day and was walking with them, but they were only prepared to go as far as the Sabbath permitted. That's where they lived, at the end of a Sabbath day's journey. It was the First day of a new week, He was the Lord of it the First person of a new age. The Sabbath was past, but such was their limitations that they did not think beyond it, they had no concept beyond it, blind, their eyes were holden by their tradition.

Some people let God go so far in their lives and then they refuse to go further - down goes the shutter - full stop; so far, and no further. The man who does that, whoever he is, is a fool, and a worse fool than the two on the road to Emmaus. Some people who go to meetings are like that, they make some sort of response, they are some sort of believers, but they have no intention of going right on with God, nor do they really want Christ, they only want a guarantee that they shall not be eternally lost. Where salvation is concerned the motives of the heart are a big thing, in the sight of God the thoughts of the heart count for very much, they are of paramount importance. Because a man is not a Jew and feels he is not bound by the Sabbath, he is not thereby free from sabbatarian principles. He goes to his church, or fellowship, as it may be called, he sings and praises and worships there, hears what he may regard as the choicest of messages and is satisfied - he has reached his limit. He can think of nothing better than or beyond that. Isn't it the best? Hasn't Jesus ever made as though He would have gone further with you and hasn't He gone further - without you? Because you wouldn't go with Him?

One of the most praiseworthy of all the praiseworthy things about the apostle Paul is that from the moment he responded to Christ, he never stopped going with Him; God had no trouble with that man at all. Paul surely said, 'I want to go on further with you Lord, all the way'. Wherever you are in your Christian journey, whatever the stage you have reached in your pilgrimage, Jesus would have you go further. But those two had got their minds set on a certain place, and there they stopped, even though on

their own later confession, their hearts were burning in them. Oh, the folly of men and women. God speaks to them, perhaps in a meeting, and they find the flame begins to burn, but because of life-long habit, the usual thing - the fire is allowed to die down and finally go out. That memorable day was the Lord's day, they could have gone further if they had wished, but they did not want to. They did not see that they could have broken free from all tradition, and set out on a new path in a new way with the Lord. They didn't understand they were going in to have a meal and go to bed, that was where they lived, they belonged there and they invited Him in to sup with them; good people. They had yet to learn that once Jesus gets hold of a man he doesn't belong anywhere on this earth, there is no stopping place. You may not put down your roots and say, 'this is where I belong and that's as far as I'm going'. Oh, this great God of ours! See the grace of the Lord - it overflowed. What if He had gone without them. Oh, how much they would have missed - let us read on.

'... HE WENT IN AND TARRIED WITH THEM'

'He made as though He would have gone further, but they constrained Him, saying Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. AND HE WENT IN AND TARRIED WITH THEM' (v28-29). He went in with them. He did not do so spontaneously though, nor say yes immediately He was asked, they had to constrain Him. Was He reluctant, or was He disappointed with them? It seems He would rather have gone on and taken them with Him. If so, where would He have taken them, what had He in mind for them? But speculation is useless. What grace He showed that He should tarry with them. That is what they wanted - but He was tarrying for them rather than with them; oh how slow they were. They were as slow to perceive as they were to believe - they were still blind. What if He had refused and said, 'No, I am sorry, I am going on, you've had your chance and refused it, there are others who will respond. Goodnight'. What if He had? But He didn't. Praise to His name. He doesn't treat people like that. People sometimes, in deep distress, say 'God is doing this to me', or 'Jesus is doing that to me'; nearly always they are wrong. The Jesus of death and resurrection is not like that. He never punished people, nor does He leave His own. He loves you, that is the only Jesus who should be preached. This punitive Jesus who is always smashing people up is not the Jesus of the Gospels. Apocalyptic judgements are reserved for the future, and conceived upon Old Testament ideas, and should be firmly left where they are. Everything is going to wind up in fire in the end, but until then it's all grace. Paul, who spoke of apocalyptic things also, most often cried out 'It's all by grace, it's grace, grace, grace'. In grace the Lord went in to tarry with Cleopas and his companion, and He went in with purpose to reveal Himself to them. 'And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him'. We may only surmise what happened and how it was done: most probably, as He handled the bread they saw the nail prints in His hands. If so, no wonder they knew Him, their eyes must have been well and truly opened. What a moment! But as soon as they knew Him, He vanished out of their sight.

He was manifest to them on the road - he was revealed to them at the table. Because they say they believed, but true faith is that which believes in the invisible Lord - 'Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed'. That is a basic principle of salvation by faith. The Lord vanished from their sight so that they should rely on outward manifestation no more. The veil on the heart is fearsomely dense, no amount of manifestation can rend it. But had He come and walked with them only to

vanish - leave? Where had He gone? Did they cry, 'Lord where are you, are you here?'. Did they feel unconsolable? It had been wonderful. Excited, and marvelling in themselves, abounding with joy and good news, they felt free to act contrary to their usual custom, and there and then made up their minds to go back to Jerusalem, hurrying all the way. It is not possible to be dogmatic about what happened. But did He go all the way back with them - this time invisible? Did He listen again to their conversation? If so, what did He hear? He vanished out of their sight, but did He vanish out of their presence? A record has been kept of some of the things they said, 'Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?' Notice something. Did not our (plural) heart (singular) burn? There were two of them but they did not say our hearts, but our heart. They had one heart need, and the Lord addressed Himself to it. The basic need of every heart is exactly the same, as scripture says, 'He makes all their hearts alike'. Listening to Him they felt and said with common consent that this was the One. Amen.

HE IS TARRYING FOR YOU

What the Lord said on the Emmaus Road, He is saying now, that is why he raised up Luke to write it. He loves you, He cares about you, how much longer has He got to tarry for you? Do not play a cat and mouse game with the Lord, do not play hide and seek with Him, you can't, He is not playing. Because He said He is come to seek and to save that which is lost, don't think you can play fast and loose with opportunities. No one is a master of time, therefore when He comes, and tarries with you, remember He is tarrying for you and make the most of the opportunity, it may be your last.

When God has spoken to you, never lie and say He hasn't, or you will damn yourself. God has spoken to you: have you recognized His voice? Superstitious people think that God is speaking when it thunders, and strangely enough that could be, but that is not the same as saying that whenever it thunders, God is speaking. He speaks often through unavoidable events of life, events you cannot dodge. How long have you been fencing Him off? God is tender and loving, but He is not soft in the head, He is gracious and He loves you. This is what the resurrection is all about. He rose to come to you, and He is expecting you to respond: and you will, in one way or another you will respond to Him. May you respond to His love, and hear Him say 'He has come to break the power of cancelled sin in your life. Hallelujah! He has opened my eyes to the grace of God. I can be my true self, free, whole'. They said, 'Our heart burned within us, as He talked with us in the way'. What did they do? They forgot that they had reached home. They forgot all about staying for the night, they forgot all about the thieves and robbers and wild beasts that would be outside the city gates of Jerusalem when they returned, and went back. When they got into the city, they 'found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon'. We have got some real evidence now, someone who really believes. Simon had denied Him and had fled broken-hearted from the Judgement Hall unable to forgive himself, so when He rose Jesus went to him first. Simon had already been to the tomb with John, only to return baffled at its emptiness. Where was He? Then Jesus had come to him. Listen, whether you're walking in the way, with set ideas about where you're going, or whether you're broken-hearted and baffled because you've been such a fool, Jesus comes to you. Maybe you think you are as bad a betrayer of Jesus as Judas, for though he sold Him for a pittance, you let Him down in the hour when He was most counting

on you for your support. The death to which He went covers all that - He is risen and He loves you - He will meet you. Simon was a restored man when the two arrived back from Emmaus - 'He's alive, He's alive, we have seen Him'. Oh, the excitement, the exchange of the stories of wondrous events, the joy, it was marvellous - and suddenly Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, again. Isn't the Lord thrilling? He's better to us than we deserve Him to be - we are bad to Him. He is good to us. We hear sermons and some have preached about bringing a box of ointment and pouring it out on Him, and giving Him all our treasures. But do you think we have anything to give Him? What? He comes and stands in the midst of them, showing them Himself, and they were afraid. 'Peace be unto you'. He says, 'I'm not dead, handle Me and see, I'm really Jesus: a spirit doesn't have flesh and blood, as you see Me have'. He asked them for meat, and He took it, and did eat before them.

HE HAS DONE EVERYTHING TO PERFECTION

The majesty, the glory, the humility, the obedience of Jesus. Everything had to be fulfilled that was written of Him: this is the One that leads hearts likewise to obedience. He brings to the time and place where at best the rebellion has gone out of a man's soul. That stubborn determination to stick to 'my beliefs' goes out of a man when he yields to Him. All that shrinking back from Him because of 'my own ideas' of Who and what He is when He isn't at all what I think He is, comes to an end when He is there in the midst. He could not be a Saviour unless He fulfilled everything to the final degree. He is the Saviour because He is perfect and has done everything to perfection. Men who hold back from Him only do so because they want sin; that is all. They want their own way. They make every excuse because they do not wish to go all the way, yet it has to be. He had to go all the way to the end, right through everything, and so must you and I. For this reason on the same day of resurrection, the Lord started talking to them about being baptized in the Holy Ghost: 'I send the promise of the Father upon you; but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high' (v49). They needed this enduement because they had witnessed so many things. They had witnessed facts, but no man can be a witness to Him just because he can talk about facts and things. Knowledge of facts never saved anybody, it is power from on high that saves souls. Jesus is the one raised from the dead to baptize men and women in the Holy Ghost. Until a man is baptized in the Holy Ghost, he cannot come into the fulness of all that Jesus accomplished on the cross and by bursting from the tomb. Everyone must have the enduement of power, and receive knowledge from on high. The word translated 'power' is simply 'ability'; the result of the baptism is heavenly ability. In some quarters that is interpreted to mean ability to perform miracles, or do works, but Jesus never once said that, He had no wish and they had no need for it, they had received power and authority for those things years back.

YOU MUST GO FURTHER . . .

What He did say is 'ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth'. How marvellous it is to be able to do that. Has your soul entered into everything Jesus says? Whether walking along the road, or in your home, are you only going as far as you think and no further? God have mercy on you. It is great to have a revelation given to you by the way, marvellous, but it isn't marvellous enough. It is great to receive revelation in your home, but you still have further,

much further, to go. When the Lord took the bread and brake it, something broke in them. It might have been an inflection in His voice, it may have been the blessing that He used that did it, but something broke in them. We've all been held in the same kind of miasmic spell by the devil since birth, only Jesus can break it, only He can open your eyes and your heart. Back again in Jerusalem these two discovered that they were all telling their stories of Jesus; they were all the same. 'Jesus is alive. He is alive. He is alive'. Can you imagine that? The words 'Up from the grave He arose' had not been written, but they were thrilling with this newness from heaven, it had sprung up from the earth.

... BEYOND ALL HE WANTS YOU BAPTIZED IN THE SPIRIT

After these things 'He led them out as far as Bethany and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven'. It must have been wonderful parting in blessing. He left them blessed. Be introduced to Jesus will you? If you've never known Him till now, know this, He loves

blessing people. 'He was carried up into heaven, and they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God'. Blessed, full of worship and of joy, they went back to Jerusalem. 'He's alive', said one, 'He came into our home', said others, everybody had a testimony of some sort, but they still had to tarry in Jerusalem to receive the element from on high. That Bethany blessing was great, but not great enough, they still had not received the Pentecostal blessing.

Overlapping into the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we find that Luke carries his statements further. As he ends his Gospel, he says, 'they were continually in the temple blessing and praising God'. They were blessed, they even burned inside. What now could they or God want?

Beyond all, He wants you baptized in the Spirit. All that happened that great resurrection day led to the day of Pentecost. God with Him further and further, let Him reveal Himself to you, open His heart and the heavens to you and fill you with the Holy Spirit. GWN

NEW BIRTH - PART FOUR

NORMAN MEETEN

As mentioned in issue number 9, the following concludes the large last section of Norman's article on New Birth.

Ed.

PROOF NUMBER FIVE

Chapter 5:4 'For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith'.

Chapter 4 'You are of God, little children, and have overcome them'. Why? Because we are told in John's Gospel that Jesus has overcome the world. Now if the great Overcomer is living on the inside of you, you have the ability to overcome as He did. That is the testimony of the born again ones - they are overcoming. They are not being overcome by this and that and the other. Paul says, 'We triumph always, everywhere'. He was a man born of the Spirit. The life that he once lived and the life that he now lived was the proof that he was different. No longer defeated, a new creation with a new ability to live in victory moment by moment, trusting in the keeping power of God. Not overcome by sin but overcoming; not overcome by temptation but overcoming; not overcome by circumstances but overcoming IN circumstances. God does not alter your circumstances, beloved, He alters you. Many people talk about prayer changing things. Prayer does not change things beloved, it changes you. Things rarely change; you have to get changed; and when you are changed, the same set of circumstances will seem quite different. Two people can live in exactly the same environment; one can live in defeat and the other can live in absolute victory.

I have seen that happen in prisons. Once when I was taking my regular two hour Friday meeting in Walton Jail Liverpool, I spoke to some men. The men all wore the same uniform and we were locked in a room

together with a little peephole for the warden to keep an eye on us. These men had had all week in their cells to think up all the red herrings possible to throw me in my privilege of presenting Jesus. But one fellow, his name was Peter was particularly good at it. He was brilliant and could tie me up in knots intellectually, dropping me into the ocean without batting an eyelid. He had come with the resolution that he was really going to take me for a dance. So I thought I would give him plenty of rope; and the proverb says 'Give him enough rope and he'll hang himself'. I just prayed that the warden would not peep through the hole or I would have been in trouble and so would they.

So I let him have plenty of rope. And he seemed to have the answer to every single problem and every situation. He was writing a book on evolution. He was in prison for embezzlement - one of the greatest embezzlement rackets ever caught up with in this country - suffering a long sentence. He was brilliant; he had three degrees, one in law. He had read up what would happen to him before he set out on it, and he read it to all his confederates too. They knew what they were in for. He said he had not just been caught out; he knew exactly what would happen to him if the law caught him. And the law did. He had no reason to grudge; he knew.

After about half-an-hour and giving him plenty of rope, I said to him, 'Peter, I want to ask you one question; and I want one of two answers - yes or no'. I said, 'It would appear to me and to everyone else in this room that you have the answer to every problem that had ever presented itself to man. In fact, you believe that man is the centre of the universe and has evolved from a something unto what you think is everything; and you seem to be the most brilliant specimen amongst us. Now', I said, 'I have one question to ask you. Have you got the answer to your own personal problem called sin? Yes or No?'.

And every eye in that place was upon him - because they were all there. They did not need to be told; as we do not need to be told. The only difference between a man in prison and a man outside of prison is that one person's sin is legal and the other person's sin is illegal - that is the only difference. That is why you cannot point the finger at the man in prison. Every eye was upon him because if he had the answer to that problem he had the answer to all of their problems. They were rotting under the dreadful result of their practice of sin that had caught up on them. And they were all waiting for the answer.

And he bowed his head. He said, 'Norman, my answer is no'.

I said, 'Peter, that invalidates every single statement that you have made tonight and undermines all your high-faluting theories and declares unto you that the book that you are writing is a waste of time; and you are a man that lives an utterly defeated life; and your present state and condition and environment is the proof of it'.

The man who has the privilege of going and preaching to men and women who are the victims and subjects of sin is the man who says he has found the answer. No use preaching theories. It is no use giving an alleviation to his problem - because those men, if they commit sin once, they are back. They need to know an answer that does not just alleviate their problems and make life just a little better for them. They need to know the power of God that BREAKS sin in them so that they never do it again. If your manifestation of sin is kleptomania (that is you are an habitual stealer), you dare not steal once more. Once more. If your manifestation of sin has been violence which has ended up with murder, you dare not commit one more murder. That shows me how radical the provision of the cross is.

If your manifestation of sin happens to be a bad temper and not kleptomania, it does not make you any better. You need to know the same answer as they need to know.

In that prison there was a young boy and he used to sit on the edge of the company of people. I noticed him Friday after Friday. His face was sad and sallow, and his eyes betrayed the tragedy that lay beyond his life; I did not know the detail at that moment. And my heart ached for him. But the Lord had taught me never to pressurise people and push them further than He had already taken them ere I frustrate what God was doing in them. Then one Friday, in the fulness of time, this young man came and he said, 'Norman, will you come and talk to me?'.

I had permission to visit the prison at times other than Friday evenings, and I made an arrangement with the Church Army chaplain. He said, 'Yes, you can come and see David on Thursday evening'. And I went. The cell was unlocked and I was allowed in, and we were alone; and we sat there, and all his dejection ...

And I said, 'David, what's the matter? Why are you here?'.

He did not know how to talk, but eventually, after some considerable time, he told me that he had gone out one Friday evening, got drunk: and the next thing he remembered was being arrested for the murder of his girl-friend, to whom he was engaged to be married and whom he loved dearly. And he had got a life sentence.

Put yourself in his position. Sin that had got out of control, ravaged his life and wrecked his days

and destroyed the most precious person that he knew. And there he was - rotting. He said, 'If only they'd hang me, if only they'd electrocute me, if only I could do myself in. But then', he said, 'if what you say is true, all is not lost. Can I be a new creation? Can I start all over again? Can I have a new life? Can I have a new beginning?'.

And it was my privilege to talk to him and pray with him. The following week I went in to see him - and I did not recognize him; absolutely transformed. And his life became a testimony in the same environment, formerly a situation that only spoke despair and dejection and impossibility, no hope.

'If I have to spend all the rest of my days literally here', he said, 'it doesn't matter any more'. He had learned to overcome. Glory be to God.

It is a sad thing that human beings like us sometimes push God so far before we come to understand and see the provision that He has made for us in His Son. God forbid.

There was another young man there that used to sit in those rows. Some months before I had seen him and I recognized him; and after the meeting I went up to him and I said, 'Where have I seen you before?'. He said, 'In the Sixth Form at Wigan Grammar School, and', he said, 'I made fun at you and thought you were a first-class goon and took little notice of what you said. If only I had listened'. A brilliant young fellow with a future before him ... gone.

God has made provision for us to be born again of the Spirit of God, no matter how far we have gone, to bring us into the place where we know that we are born and the principle of righteousness has been established in our hearts and the law of sin broken in our experience, and the great and glorious manifestation of love flowing and running and expressing itself in our lives; a consciousness and realization that we are believing not just a theory but have a confession of an inward revelation of Jesus that tells us that Christ has come in our flesh, that brings us into a place where we do not live overcome and defeated, but discover the place of victory and triumph.

PROOF NUMBER SIX

Chapter 5:10 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in His life. He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life ...' He is dead!

Isn't it simple! John is the simplest of the evangelists. He says that either you have life or you are dead. 'He that hath the Son hath life and has got the witness within himself'.

The last great statement that Samuel Wesley ever made to John was this: 'John, the only thing that matters, the only thing that counts, the only proof that is incontestable is that you have got the witness of God within your heart, the witness of the Holy Ghost'. John Wesley; along with Charles Wesley and George Whitefield and other young men up at Oxford, were zealous, earnest young men, seeking after the truth. So impeccable did their lives become that they were referred to as the 'Holy Club', ultimately called Methodists. After he left and came down from Oxford, John Wesley went away to New England to preach the gospel - only to discover that he had not got what he talked about. In his despair he returned unto the land of his nativity, confiding in many of his

contemporaries his inward dilemma. he knew the truth, he knew the words, he knew the doctrines. As far as he was able he was living a disciplined, holy, godly life: but he knew he had not got what his father had said. Those words had never ceased. God had spoken. God had spoken when he was yet a lad through his father on his death-bed. God had seen the condition and God had determined that He was going to bring forth His Son via him. God spoke, and that word had begun creating, working, fermenting as it were, in his being and he could not rest; and he knew that despite all that he knew he had not got it. Everyone said that he had. He was a cut above most of his generation, 'but', he said, 'I had not got it'. Qualified, educated, ordained, a missionary, and all the rest of it. Like many of us he had been right through the gamut of it all. He knew the truth in his mind, but right deep down in his heart, it was not there. He had no inward witness.

It was one night as he sat in a Moravian hall in Aldersgate Street and the preacher was reading the introduction of Luther's Commentary to the Romans. Strange as it may seem, that was God's instrument to reinstate, to reiterate, the word that He had originally spoken. And as that man read the Holy Ghost descended and the word of God formulated in his heart; and he leapt to his feet and knew. He had come, he had the witness within, he had been born from above. he was a new creation. The theory had become reality.

Have you got that witness within that no-one and nothing can gainsay; that no situations, no circumstances, no adversity, no difficulty, no temptation or trial or tribulation can quench? It rises within and agrees with God. Yes, Lord, yes Lord. And you know it is not you, it is not from the head, it is from down there somewhere. You have been born again. Paul refers to the same great Spirit in Romans 8. He talks about the birth-cry where the Spirit says 'Abba, Father' - the recognition from the seed from which you have been born. That is not parrot-like. The supernatural uprising from deep within you that agrees and witnesses to the fact that God has done the work.

PROOF NUMBER SEVEN

Verse 18 'We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself and the wicked one toucheth him not'.

This is where many people fall down. It is wonderful to know that God is keeping you; but you are to keep yourself. You are not to yield your body,

your members, as instruments of unrighteousness. In other words, you are not to put yourself in a place where the devil can take unfair advantage. You are not to expose yourself to conditions and states into which God does not lead you. You have a capacity, you have an ability. This is what Paul says - 1 Thess. 4 - we have to learn how to possess our vessels in sanctification and honour. And unto this end He has given us the Holy Ghost. You keep yourself unto Him, not for anyone else or anything else; and then the wicked one cannot touch you. As you keep yourself unto Him, you keep yourself in His way.

Do you find that ability within? To keep yourself in an increasing way as days follow days and realize that each new situation only serves as a new opportunity for you to prove the reality that you are born of God. that you have been born from above; and the truths that prove the fact are highlighted by the circumstances and the situations into which God is pleased to bring you. And in those, you keep yourself unto God so that the wicked one cannot touch you and your life becomes a proof both to yourself and to everyone who has eyes to see that God has done something in you that has made you what you were NOT by natural birth.

Jesus said, 'You MUST be born again', and you need to be born again, beloved, because you are dead as a result of trespass and sin. The figure and pattern and example of how to be born is exemplified to you in the birth of Jesus 'And the birth of Jesus was on THIS wise'. And your birth is on THIS wise. And the proof that you are born are these seven past principles. Let me say again: you may not have seen them or enumerated them in that logical form before, or even seen them in the scriptures. You do not have to. If you are born again I have only told you what you already know. The word of God has confirmed and ratified the experience of your heart; or served to show you the converse position, that what you thought you were, or what you are not, is the position of your present experience.

Are you born again? In the light of God's word and truth? Does your inward man say 'Amen. Truly I am favoured, highly favoured'?

You have reason to thank God if you are among those highly favoured. I believe that all of you are highly favoured, whether you are in or whether you are not. God has spoken and He does not speak for nothing. His word does not return unto Him void, but accomplishes that whereunto He sends it. Let the word of God work in your heart and bring you into the truth of which it so plainly and so simply states. NM

All decays begin in the closet; no heart thrives without much secret converse with God, and nothing will make amends for the want of it.

Berridge

Truth without enthusiasm, morality without emotion, ritual without soul, are things Christ unsparingly condemned. Destitute of fire, they are nothing more than a godless philosophy, an ethical system, and a superstition.

S. Chadwick

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

BERNARD HULL

'A SIMPLE LOOK AT...'

OPPOSING FORCES

Probably none of us need to be told that spiritual life and growth will entail its share of conflict! It seems that even in the beginning, before Adam fell into sin, he was to expect some form of fight, of battle, in order to 'subdue the earth'. There was to be some serious work entailing expenditure of energy which would result in order and beauty being established over all the earth. Physical health is the result of a living organism being perfectly poised in proper relationship to other living creatures and organisms around about. God has equipped our bodies with powers to resist the encroachment of foreign organisms in unhelpful numbers. Disease is the breakdown of the equipoise between these opposing powers. Spiritually there is a very real counterpart to this condition. We are to understand that though there are contrary spiritual agents, powers and forces at work, God is able to grace us to live in proper relationship with those things and thus maintain spiritual wholeness.

NO SURPRISE

We should not be surprised to find in this parable of the sower several allusions to destructive forces, at work to annihilate or render fruitless the seed sown into hearts by the sower. In another parable, Jesus spoke of good seed sown in a field and then the immediate activity of an enemy, involving the sowing of false seeds (tares). Jesus spoke from supreme knowledge concerning all things and certainly concerning the powers arrayed against His will and purpose in lives. It is sobering to realize some little portion of the incredible magnitude of our spiritual enemies. The famous trio of words describing them are, 'the world, the flesh and the devil'. Most certainly they exist, most surely we will make headway against their workings, by the Lord's help, and thankfully we can rejoice in the fact that God has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus.

HONEYMOON

Perhaps a little of our trouble in spiritual development can be attributed to an early perplexity. After a seeming 'honeymoon', the babe in Christ finds opposition rising in some form. In the Old Testament days, a newly married man was exempted from going to war for one year, he was to remain at home and enjoy his wife! This was a kindly law and when we marry the Lord Jesus in our hearts, doubtless He often spares us from spiritual warfare, keeping things at bay, fighting on our behalf. Later, in various ways, He begins to remove His hand so that we shall begin to face oppositions that test and try us. This is all part of spiritual growth, and we are to expect such things. The book of Acts finds the early church in favour with all in Jerusalem for several months before the healing of the lame man provoked the beginnings of opposition which was to harden into persecution. They had their honeymoon too!

OPPOSITION IN THREE FORMS

In the parable of the sower we find the Lord referring to three main forms of opposition. Obviously these are described parabolically, but in His interpretation, He speaks plainly as to what they were. The devil, devouring the word sown on wayside ground, is the first mentioned. Then He shows how shallowness of profession gives occasion for significant lacks, which cause fruitlessness when the heat of opposition comes. Finally he speaks of thorns and thistles growing up and choking the seed. Thinking of the trio of words referred to earlier, it might be said that the first in order of mention is the devil, the second, the flesh, and finally the thorns and thistles are 'the world'.

THE DEVIL

Consider first the activity of the devil. How attentively the birds watch at times of ploughing and sowing! We have all seen their swift descent and search for seed lying on the surface of the ground. Apparently the devil is awake to the activity of the sower as he moves about sending His word into hearts. How swiftly does the devil move into unwary, hardened hearts, to bear away that sown in it of God. How poignant are the words in Luke 8:12 'then cometh the devil'. The adversary himself, active to 'take away the word out of their hearts lest they should believe and be saved'. It is obvious from these statements that the wicked one is intent on swallowing up the word. He uses many ways to accomplish this, such as counter argument, mockery, even by inciting a certain indifference. He can inhabit a heart that is hard and unyielding, and swiftly dispose of any word sent into it by the Lord Jesus.

Let us notice the different names given to the enemy in each record of the parable. In Luke he is called 'diablos', the devil. This means the accuser or the slanderer. In Matthew he is 'the wicked one', this name refers to his nature which inspires to evil, he constantly incites to acts of malignancy against God, to foster pain, grief and breakdown of all that is wholesome and good. In Mark he is referred to as 'satan'. This name means the adversary. Here then is the enemy. He is not an influence only, he is a person. He is satan, the adversary of God, and of all that God has done. He is intrinsically evil by nature, there is no good in him. All of his influences lead to the fostering of tragedy and grief without hope. The mind set of this evil spirit is to cast aspersions upon the being and integrity of God. He is the slanderer against Him and the originator of all such accusations. Wherever he is active he devours the truth about God if he can. He will leave the heart in its hard, indifferent states towards God, and perpetuate barrenness if permitted so to do.

It is heartbreaking to sow the word of God and find no response save disinterest. A hard indifferent heart is one into which the seed falls, and immediately the callous feet of man's ideas tread down the precious word, bruising it, and then comes the devil and takes away even that which remains. We have all known people like this, to whom we have spoken the word, with whom we have shared the Lord, but there was

no receptiveness at all, just disinterest. Perhaps then we heard of others tramping through that person's heart with their philosophies, and found that there was no remembrance in their heart of the precious seed sown, it was all devoured by the enemy.

We ought to note that the more direct attacks of the devil himself came at this beginning stage, at the time of sowing. He seems to have more direct access at that point, before anything has begun, whilst later oppositions come by more indirect means and the difficulties are more subtle. The wicked one has his day when things are in their inception, when the word of promise is being sown. He apparently has certain rights to intervene at such points, whereas later the oppositions are surreptitious. It is noticeable, how fierce the battle is as God seeks to gain a beginning. The lines are clearly drawn, the issues starkly delineated. The fowls of the air are not known for their silence as they swoop to devour, they plunge with certain intent, and so does the wicked one.

PRESSURES AND TESTING

Now let us consider the stony ground. Here are new lessons as to oppositions that arise when hearts open and entertain the Lord's word. Thank God that all ground is not the domain of the devil, and ground prepared is able to receive the word, yielding to it. We are confronted with people who 'fall away' as we look at this section. We hear of this frequently happening in evangelistic crusades: first a joyous response to the message, but in a little while the shrivelling up to nothing of all that promised so much. Jesus shows that the cause of this was the fact that there was no depth of earth. 'No depth' - let's lay the emphasis there for a moment. All would have been well though had not the sun arisen and the heat come. Luke's account refers to this rising of the sun as temptation, while Mark's speaks of 'affliction and persecution', and in Matthew's it is described as 'tribulation and persecution'. So we have four words which describe that which exposes the lack of depth in the heart and the shallowness of the root: temptation, affliction, persecution and tribulation.

It is certain that no corn of wheat can come to full growth without the heat of the sun coming upon it. The sun does become almost unbearably hot at certain points in the year in some climates. With this in view, the wise farmer plants appropriate crops in various locations, according to the tolerance of the seed. The comings of times of testing are as certain as the dawning of each new day. If all is as it should be, then that very sun will ripen the seed to fruitfulness. Sadly, if all is not right, those same bright beams of the sun will cause the infant plant to wither and die.

There are times when we need to reaffirm the necessity of times of much sunshine. Spiritually speaking, there seems to be a tendency in our day in the churches to say such searching trials ought not to be. There is no doubt that the shallow concepts which abound as orthodox doctrines would be certain to screen out all thought of such adversities. To truly believe that testings and trials are part of God's path for His own, would certainly assure the demise of these shallow concepts, for they themselves have no root nor depth, they are not really reaching the true issues of the heart. Scripture cries 'deep calleth unto deep', and the call of the Lord would reach into the very fount of man's being, not merely scratch its surface.

The three words which Jesus takes up in the parable (translated as four in the A.V.) are: firstly, 'thlipsis', translated 'affliction and tribulation' carrying with it the thought of pressure; secondly, 'pierasmoi', translated 'temptation', which contains

the sense of testing and trial with a view to proving the value of the substance under examination; thirdly, 'diogmos', translated 'persecution', and having the meaning of pursuing and harrassment.

THE INEVITABILITY OF TESTINGS

The same sun rises upon all seed sown. These pressures, testings and harrassments which oppose will rise from time to time and come upon all who have the seed of God in their hearts. If we could see the tender care of God our Father, we would most certainly find that all such pressures, in their multitudinous forms, are only allowed under His watchful eye and restraining hand. We know from nature itself that the increasing intensity of the sun upon the fields is perfectly timed with the growth states of the plants. Intense heat does not come in the spring when the plants are young, but later, when the grain is able to bear it, and be brought to perfect ripeness by it. There are degrees of suffering, testing and pressure in the lives of saints. As we go on with God, the intensity of opposition and troubles will increase. The maturer states of spiritual life carry with them such sensibilities of the sufferings of the world, of grief at the workings of sin in souls. Jesus suffered right through His life, not in His body only, but more so inwardly, and in many different ways; He Himself being made perfect by the things which He suffered.

It is essential that we be disabused of the idea that it is unjust of God to permit pressures, pursuings and testings to come upon us. The Hebrews letter tells us that such an attitude is common to an illegitimate child, whilst those truly born of God are graced to 'lift up the hands that hang down, and to strengthen the feeble knees'. We need more of the soldier language amongst us - 'endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ', says Paul. The advent of pressures can serve to drive our roots deeper, through the soil of churches, fellowships and so on, and into God! Times of adversity will inevitably hit fellowships, no matter how spiritual they are. Breakdown will occur, and even some rents in the seamless robe of fellowship, but it is a fact that the subtle links with things that are OF Him, but not HIM which have sustained our souls must be severed, so that our inward arms should grasp Him the more, who is THE Life.

Times of testing and pressure are seasonal, and they arise because of the word being rooted in hearts. They come in an immense variety, and usually they are intensely personal. They may well be as varied as there are different individuals, coming often times along the line of personal idiosyncracies, according to the type of soul we are. They are part of spiritual life, God is over them all. The soul that passes through them is much strengthened thereby, though it feels like a battered vessel having just come through a storm. Afterward, there is a new assurance in the heart, a steadier hold upon the eternal, and a deeper love for God.

THE WORLD

We come finally to a third form of opposition. If the first was the devil, and the second more along the lines of 'the flesh', then we could say that this third is indeed the drawings of 'the world'. Jesus said that the devil 'catcheth away' what was sown in hearts. Those in shallow ground, under pressure 'fall away', but those in whom the thorns and thistles of worldliness grow are 'choked away'. Notice how in the first and third the activity is from without, whilst in the second the falling away is because of lack within of total yieldedness to the word. In any event the result is the same unfruitfulness.

The first time we come across thorns and thistles in scripture is in Genesis 3. They are forever symbolic of that which is cursed, and Jesus was crowned mockingly with a crown fashioned from thorns. It seems that the lovers of Jesus are destined, in this life, to live among thorny products of this world, and to be to her Beloved a fragrant and pure flower, in surroundings sharp and callous (Song of Solomon 2:2). The earth, and that fashioned in it by man, has the curse of God upon it. Man labours to eke out some order and comfort for himself, apart from God, and finds all yields thorns and thistles in the end, his hard won order and comfort cut, and wounds him even whilst he enjoys them. How foolish to dedicate one's life to the bringing forth of such a fruitless crop.

THIS WORLD OR THAT TO COME?

God's seed sown in our hearts is from another world, from above. It is our privilege to receive and nourish that seed in our inward man and bring forth fruit, of which this world is not worthy. That our hearts should yield up an increase of the cursed things of this world is sacrilege. The purpose and possibility of our lives is that we yield up a crop of many obediences worked out in the field of our personality, in the capacities of our minds, the affectional side of our nature and the volitional too, in fact, in every department, the fruit of obedience unto God.

The opposing forces of the world are called by Jesus the 'cares, riches and pleasures', and the 'deceitfulness of riches'. In the Luke account we are told that 'when they have heard, they go forth ... and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this world and bring no fruit to perfection'. How graphically these words describe the progress unto uselessness. A sad spectacle. The word is received, finds a home in the heart, the person goes forth expecting to bring forth fruit to it, but as Mark's says, there is an 'entering in' of worldly things including 'the lusts of other things'. There is the possibility of preoccupation with this present world to the detriment of the realm of God and His Spirit.

'All that is in the world is not of the Father', says John. It is an arresting statement. It shocks the spiritually sensitive heart. It should make us tread carefully through this alien order of the world in which we live. The word John uses is 'kosmos' and it refers to an order of things. The word 'cosmetic' comes from this - a lady orders her face in a certain way, embellishes it, some would say she makes it more attractive, enhancing its finer features and seeking to hide its blemishes. This seems to be a fine parable of everything in this world and the way man orders things in civilization itself. We cannot go out of this world, but we must have grace from God to live in it, resisting its subtle pulls, using it, but not letting it use us.

THIS AGE OR THAT TO COME?

There is another word in scripture which is translated 'world'. It is this word that Jesus used in the parable. It is the word 'aionos', meaning 'age' - 'the cares of THIS age' (Mk. 4:19) from which is derived our word aeon. This word is used in the Matthew account, but that of Luke is a little different - 'the cares and riches and pleasures of THIS life'. To any thoughtful heart considering these words, the issue is plain. There is the possibility of spiritual fruitlessness in this life and the loss of reward in the life ('age') to come if we allow our hearts to become swallowed up by the things of this age. perhaps there is also the possibility of loss of position and place in the age to come, though this is not the point in question in the parable.

It seems to be certain that all the Lord's people will find the pulls of the world laying hold upon them. In earlier stages of spiritual life, these things are readily perceived by the would-be victim. Later, the threads are subtle which would tie the saint of God to worldly considerations and seek to prevent the Lord's servant from nourishing in his heart unto the full fruit, precious possibilities of the promises of God. The claims of the value system and cultural pattern in that part of the world in which we live press in hard at times. The conflict for the soil of our lives is on! Will this age have some of the field of our hearts?

Jesus speaks of the 'cares' of this world. It seems that this word 'cares' is connected with the idea of being drawn in different directions, causing a soul to become distracted. How often the world encroaches upon our consciousness, thrusting itself before our eyes and seeking to claim our attention. To be distracted is to be torn in two or more different directions, which can cause double-mindedness; where conflict arises between differing viewpoints, confusion ensues. If we turn to the Spirit of God, He will lead us to examine the various demands being made upon us, but enable us to put them into perspective and order of priority and He will also enable us to choose the highest and the better part. Certain of us need to take ourselves in hand with a firm grip. The distraction caused by the blandishments of this world leads the unwary soul into perplexity. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

DIFFICULTIES ATTACHED TO RICHES

Now Jesus speaks of the 'riches' of this world. They are detrimental to spiritual growth. It is certain that there are few who are rich, who are able to maintain their souls in simplicity of holy loving with God first in all things. The problem lies in the fact that when there are plenty of this world's goods, the heart naturally, but subtly, sinks back to trusting in those things, resting in what it possesses. The need to look to God, to depend upon Him is not so apparent to the rich. Perhaps it is at this point we could introduce the thought of the 'deceitfulness of riches'. Those who are rich in goods, in talents, in money, find that their very success and very ability deceives. They rest in those things, not in God. And not only this, the fact of success and riches and ability contain within themselves the seeds of their own destruction. The diligence, self-sacrifice, hard work and practice which were vital in contributing to gain and success need not now be maintained, the tendency to relax steals over the soul. We are not advocating a grinding poverty as being a prerequisite for spirituality and godliness in writing these things. Rather, we are re-iterating a truth which Jesus states in this parable. The prosperity doctrine so much set forth in certain quarters today is merely an attempt to spiritualize worldliness and materialism, making it acceptable practice to be a lover of this world. To the truly spiritual this doctrine is nauseous, as are its effects, as people pursue its myth and become callous toward those who have not, and blame them for their so-called 'failure to achieve their full potential'!

It is at this point we comment upon this word of Jesus, 'the lusts of other things entering ...'. How attractively the world clothes itself in order to draw the unsuspecting. The desires are appealed to, they are drawn and enlarged in the unwary. Many are drawn away from the heart of God by the exciting of the desires to embrace the securities, successes and satisfactions that this world offers. The heart of the matter is not so much the existence of thorns and thistles, but that they should have a welcome and room

and grow up in the human heart. We cannot go out of the world, we have to move around in it, handling its things all the time, but we should not have it in our hearts! Paul speaks of the world being crucified out of his heart, and he himself being crucified out of the world! Apparently there was no acreage in his heart for the world, and the world knew that he was not its man. He had stifled, at the threshold of his life, the drawings of the world and kept himself unto God in the midst of it.

PLEASURE LOVERS OR LOVERS OF GOD

Is it true, especially in Western society in our day, that the world presents itself more attractively than at any other time? Now you do not need to go out into it, it comes right into your home via such things as the television. How careful we should be concerning the electronic wizardry of our day. Remember Jesus' word, that it was the entering in of the world which choked the word. His final word on the matter mentions the 'pleasures' of the world. The word is 'hedone', from which we get our word hedonist - a lover of pleasure. A prominent Australian personality, a film star and public figure, commenting on Australian society, admitted that the average

person here lived for pleasure, work being a necessary evil. The interviewer did not disagree with his assessment, a sad commentary on this young land celebrating its bicentennial. However, this worldly mentality creeps into church life, saying 'everything is for my pleasure', whereas we know that 'for His pleasure we were created'!

Well, it has been a rather cursory and superficial glance at our subject in the parable, but to what conclusions do we come concerning this spiritual opposition? The fight is on, that is clear. The battle lines are drawn, the enemies are recognizable; the devil, self, and the world. We are to expect attacks and we are to resist them, mostly by having heart states that are utterly open and receptive to the Lord in a profound obedience. The seed sown into good ground yielded its crop to God in the face of these various attacks and it is good to know that. Good ground has no hard rocks of prejudice, its roots are deep, and no room is permitted in it for the sowings of this present age. The enemy without, the fowls of the air, were overcome and the enemy within, the flesh, had no place, and the world around about was triumphed over. Thank God we can bring forth to God in the midst of these oppositions and that they are all part of the proving of what we are. BH

A-Z

SMALL BIBLE WORDS

G = GLORY

NEW TESTAMENT

Chambers dictionary definition =

(A) n - renoun: exalted or triumphant honour: the occasion of praise: an object of supreme pride: splendour: resplendent brightness: summit of attainment: property or qualification ... a burst of sunlight ...

(B) The presence of God: the manifestation of God in heaven to the blessed in heaven: a representation of the heavens opened: Heaven.

OLD TESTAMENT

There are 8 different Hebrew words in the OLD TESTAMENT. The principal three are:

1. hod. 'renoun, glory' anything for which a being is admired.

Applied to God in Ps.148:13
To a horse in Job 39:20

2. eiparah. 'Splendour, beauty, glory'

Applied to God, Isaiah 60:19
And to Israel, Isaiah 46:13
The crown that wisdom gives, Proverbs 9:9
The hoary head, Proverbs 16:31

3. kabod. 'Weight, honour, glory' (the word commonly used)

It is frequently applied to God, as in 'the God of glory', Ps.29:3; to Jehovah as 'the King of Glory', Ps.24:7-9; 'the glory of Jehovah' that appeared on Mount Sinai and that filled the tabernacle, Exodus 24:16-17; 40:34-35, and the future temple, Ezek. 43:2-5.

In the NEW TESTAMENT

DOXA = glory (from dokeo to seem) primarily signifies an opinion, estimate and hence, the honour resulting from a good opinion. (W.E. VINES 'exposition of NT words')

It is applied to created things 1 Cor. 15:41
To man as the 'glory of God' 1 Cor. 11:7

The mortal glory of Christ on earth John 1:14; 11:40. Christ speaks of the glory He had from eternity with the Father, and His acquired glory which He graciously shares with His joint heirs. John 17:5, 22, 24. Every tongue shall confess His Lordship to the glory of God the Father, Phil.2:11. His glory shall be revealed on earth, Matt. 25:31; 1 Pet.4:13; Rev. 17:14; 19:16; 1 Cor. 2:8.

GLORY belongs to God, Acts 7:2; 2 Cor. 4:6, 15. In Him all the divine attributes shine in infinite perfection. Christians in acknowledging this, and owning that from Him come all their blessings, joyfully ascribe to Him 'Praise and honour, glory and power, for ever and ever', Rom. 11:36; Gal. 1:5, 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18. (Morrish's new and concise Bible dictionary)

The visible manifestation of glory seems connected with light.

Mount of Transfiguration Matt. 17:2
God dwells in light 1 Tim. 6:16
In the New Jerusalem, 'The Lamb is the light thereof' Rev. 21:33
When Jesus was revealed to Saul on the Road to Damascus, he was blinded by 'the glory of the light'. Acts 22:11. ED

GEORGE W. NORTH

JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HER. IF THOU KNEWEST THE GIFT OF GOD, AND WHO IT IS THAT SAITH TO THEE, GIVE ME TO DRINK; THOU WoulDEST HAVE ASKED OF HIM, AND HE WOULD HAD GIVEN THEE LIVING WATER (John 4:10)

IN THE LAST DAY, THAT GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST, JESUS STOOD AND CRIED, SAYING, IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME UNTO ME, AND DRINK. HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME, AS THE SCRIPTURE HATH SAID, OUT OF HIS BELLY SHALL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER. (BUT THIS SPAKE HE OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH THEY THAT BELIEVE ON HIM SHOULD RECEIVE; FOR THE HOLY GHOST WAS NOT YET GIVEN; BECAUSE THAT JESUS WAS NOT YET GLORIFIED) (John 7:37-39)

When making these two statements, the Lord Jesus drew attention to truth which certainly needs reasserting and clarifying these days. At first reading, it may be more than a little surprising that on both these occasions the Lord either directly said or purposely implied that by drinking of Him we receive the Holy Spirit. On the face of it this is a strange pronouncement. Surely it is more reasonable to think that if we drink of a person we shall receive the spirit of that person and not the spirit of another. It would seem impossible that the spirit of a person other than the person of whom we drink could be imparted by that person, yet this is exactly what we are expected to believe and receive. The mind would argue that although it is possible for a person to give gifts and bestow blessings upon others it is not possible to impart to anyone a person other than one's self. But that is precisely what Christ claims He came to do. He did not say drink of Me and receive Me, but drink of Me and receive the Spirit. This assertion is heartily backed up by John, who in his writings quite clearly agrees and states that this is so. John is speaking out of his own experience and sets out to explain and prove to all that what he says is truth.

THE WORD WAS GOD

'In the beginning was the Word', he says, 'and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God ... in Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness: and the darkness comprehendeth it not'. No-one else writes like that in scripture. Among the Gospel writers, John is unique, he says the Word is God; he does not say the Word is Father, or that the word is Son, or that the word is Holy Spirit: the Word is God, he says.

Perhaps it is a pity that men had so to contend for the deity of Christ that it was deemed necessary to capitalize the letter w to W in these opening verses of his Gospel. It was done with the best of intentions and for this reason we are greatly indebted to them. Our forebears battled so effectively for truth that their spirit is forever immortalized in the very print of the sacred page. Grateful as we must always be for this and for those men, their work has unwittingly and unintentionally led to the obscuring of a truth which is quite as important as the one they have emphasized.

A careful comparison of scripture reveals that the word Logos, often translated as 'Word' throughout the New Testament, is not always capitalized as it is in these verses. There is nothing in the Greek manuscripts to suggest that it should be capitalized; neither is there any scriptural authority for translating it with a capital in John's writings: it was done for spiritual and theological reasons entirely. Those reasons are not far to seek and are most commendable - the word logos was translated with a capital whenever it referred to the person of Christ. John testifies in his Gospel that our wonderful Lord, 'The Word, was made flesh', and in the Revelation, that His name is called 'The Word of God'.

If any objection should be raised to the latter designation it would be to ask why the name is not written entirely in capitals; or better still 'His name is called THE WORD - GOD'. That is the point John is making - the word which, (or who) was with God and is God was made flesh: in other words he is saying God was made Jesus and that Jesus is God; darkness cannot comprehend this truth. What is more serious for us is that many who claim to have light, and say they are of that light and are walking in the light, do not comprehend the truth as relating to our subject and what John is saying. Though not directly related to our theme, a further thing which could again be noted with profit is the way the insertion of the parenthesis tends to obscure certain aspects of truth. By omitting the parenthesis we are free to enjoy something more of the Father than the retention of the brackets allows. All grammatical insertions in the text were put there by translators and interpreters which means that we are under no obligation to be bound by them. By reading the verse and omitting the parenthesis we see that the words 'full of grace and truth' are as much attributed by John to the Father as to the Son. A personable conclusion then emerges, namely this, the Son is full of grace and truth because the Father is full of grace and truth - naturally! 'The glory as of an only begotten with a Father full of grace and truth'. This would mean that all the while He was in the flesh Jesus found His Father to be full of grace and truth toward Him.

GOD THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH

Having established that in the beginning the Word was God and only God, John goes on to say that the Word was made flesh. We know from Luke's Gospel that God accomplished this manifestation of Himself in flesh by the miracle of virgin birth. The word was made flesh in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit and being made flesh was called Jesus; we see then how it was that the Word was both God and Jesus namely by the Spirit. Three chapters later John presents Jesus, (God manifest in flesh) at the well, holding conversation with a Samaritan woman and saying to her 'God is Spirit'. The procession of truth so far is 1. The Word was God; 2. God the Word was made flesh; 3. God the Word in flesh says He is Spirit - paradoxically Spirit is the substance of God our Rock. It is not therefore surprising to find Jesus later saying, 1. 'The Words I speak unto you they are Spirit and they are life', and 2. 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you'. To human minds it is another paradox to

discover that Jesus identified Himself as being God: Spirit and life and flesh and blood. This is a mystery but these things grasped, we may now address ourselves to our theme.

Each one of the three members of the Godhead, whether He be Father, Son or Holy Spirit, is Spirit and truth, and grace and truth. It would be impossible for any person of the Trinity to differ from the other in essential being and be God. The one person of the Trinity who may be said to differ in any way from the others is the Lord Jesus Christ. The difference lies only in the fact that He was incarnated and the other two were not. They manifested themselves in flesh at times, but manifestation is not the same as incarnation - Jesus was incarnate God. In this lay the difference, but it was not an essential or basic spiritual difference. This incarnation is an indication of the great lengths to which God was prepared to go in His immeasurable love. Each member of the Trinity has his own distinctive personality, but in essential being they are one, and this essential being is Spirit - God.

GOD IN FLESH SAYS HE IS SPIRIT

This is why each member of the Godhead is able to impart each or both of the other members to those who find favour with Him, hence Jesus' words to the woman: 'If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water'. Had the Gospel of John been in existence then and the woman had read it she would have discovered that, 'God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life'. The one who was himself the gift of God was talking to her, telling her He would give her a gift. She had come to get water so Jesus took up water and used it as a figure of the Spirit. 'Ask of Me', He said, 'I will give you living water'. He was speaking of the Spirit: the words in John 7:39 assure us of this. The association of water with the Spirit was not made up on the spot, it was an accepted, time-honoured association. Isaiah had used the figure hundreds of years before. God said He would give drink to His people, 'Rivers'. He said, 'I will pour water on him that is thirsty'. 'I will pour (out) My Spirit'. He spoke in that figure then. Water and the Spirit are closely associated in scripture by God, no less at Samaria for eternal life than in Israel for revival.

The Lord's purpose at the well that day was to acquaint the woman, and indeed all of us, that in order to have eternal life we must 1. ask Him for the gift of the Holy Spirit: 2. drink of Him in order to receive Him. Each person of the Godhead is able to impart the other. The natural order is: The Father gives the Son: the Son gives the Spirit: the Holy Spirit gives, or rather brings, the Father and the Son.

Now all of this is spoken by the Son. John is not theorizing, but is simply recording what Jesus says - note SAYS, not said - He is still saying it. His words to the eleven just before Gethsemane must be thoroughly grasped, 'I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter (14:16) ... even the Spirit of truth (14:17) ... which proceedeth from the Father (15:26)'. The Lord had informed them by then of His departure and they were inconsolable: imagine their joy then when He spoke of another comforter from the Father. Whether or not they grasped what He was saying or missed His meaning we cannot tell, but they were to have two comforters, Jesus and the Spirit. Perhaps their greatest joy was the promise He gave

them of His own presence with them, 'I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you'. They did not know the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, and they only knew the comforter Jesus in measure, nor could they know Him as He is after the Spirit until the Holy Spirit came.

The easiest thing to do when reading this scripture is to think of the Holy Spirit as a substitute for Jesus, He is not. The Holy Spirit is not the Third Person of the Godhead sent to take the place of the Second Person, and certainly not the place of the First. With regard to Himself, the Lord Jesus made this very clear: we all need to make sure we grasp the full import of what He meant when He said 'I will come to you'. He can only come to us - that is into us - by the Holy Spirit. It was the only way he could come into the world as a proper human being in the first place.

God did not find it easy to make people understand the things of the Spirit: it is no easier now than then because, as Paul says, 'the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit' - they are spiritually discerned. It is beyond natural power to understand: 1. How the Spirit could come upon Mary that Christ should be born, and 2. That Christ should say 'Drink of Me and receive the Holy Spirit', and 3. That having drunk of the Holy Spirit, Christ should come into a person, but it is true. Christ cannot come into a man except: 1. That man will receive the Spirit AS the Holy Spirit: 2. Christ cannot come to a man in the way he desires unless He comes into the man.

To many people, no chapter in the Bible is more dearly loved than John 14; it is packed full of wonderful truth. To some it is precious for its words about Christ's second advent - 'I will come again'. Precious as that is we can allow ourselves to be so conditioned by this truth that we lose sight of equal, if not more important, truth in the chapter. The fact is that what is called the second coming is not so: by the Lord's own testimony in the chapter, it is the third of His comings. As we know His first coming, that is, in the flesh was at Bethlehem Ephrathah - the prophet, speaking of this, said, 'Out of thee shall he come forth unto Me'. We ought to bear in mind God's claim concerning Christ's nativity, He came forth unto God from Mary's womb, not to men - that is Christ's first New Testament coming. In that upper room the Lord spoke of two more comings, in the flesh and another coming by the Spirit. The first spoken of is His coming to receive us as the end of this age, 'I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also': He will come in the flesh then though not by incarnation; this coming is generally known and taught as the second coming. There is another coming mentioned also: 'Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you': this took place in the room where the disciples had shut themselves in away from the enemies of Christ. During the period between resurrection and ascension, He often went away and came again to various persons and for different purposes. There is also a third coming, this took place ten days after His ascension on the day of Pentecost. The Lord referred to this in these words, 'I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you': this coming is permanent.

HIS COMING

The first mention of His coming is that He is coming FOR us, but His second and third references are that He is coming TO us - a different thing altogether. More definitely the most vital of these is His promise not to leave us comfortless, for by this He commits Himself to come INTO us by the Spirit. To the individual this particular coming is the most

important of all the comings of Christ. This is really His first and final coming IN to the believer: in point of time this must occur between His first bodily coming and His second bodily coming. Every man and woman on this earth must know that except this other very real coming takes place in his or her life, the other two comings of Christ are in vain as far as he or she are concerned. The first advent was necessary to make this possible, and the last advent is to reap the harvest of it. It may be that this coming of Christ finds insufficient emphasis among us because the first and last advents are bodily advents, that is to say, Christ came in a human body the first time and will return in a human body the last time also. These two advents are world-shattering events, epochal and time-changing having to do with God's overall plans with this world and the ages to come; but this spiritual coming is not bodily and visible, but invisible; it is all the more epochal for that.

'I go away and come unto you', He said, and finally He had to do that, for if He wanted to come unto them in the way He wanted and they needed, He had to return to His Father. At His first advent He came forth from Mary's womb unto His Father to do His Father's will in this world. He did not come into men during the whole of that time, He only came into their presence. He could not come into man because the very body He had assumed for God's glory prevented Him from doing so. Beside this, before He came spiritually to men to complete the work of salvation. He also had to come forth bodily from the grave to the Father. This is why immediately following His resurrection He would not allow anyone to touch Him. To complete His mission He had first to present Himself in heaven and to God in the same spotless condition in which He left heaven originally, except He did this the second coming could not take place. Christ's first coming to man was in flesh, but His second coming to man is in Spirit, the mode of His eternal being, in which He had always dwelt, one God with His Father and the Holy Spirit. That is how He wished to come to all His own that He should dwell on earth in them too.

It was for this reason that He returned to heaven and God the Father, to ask of Him on our behalf the great favour, that the Holy Spirit may be given to men and the new dispensation of God in man may be instituted. While Jesus was on earth He had to remain outside His own. His name signifies that - Emmanuel = 'God with us': true as it was it fell far far short of what He wanted. He had to let it remain that way and be content with it for a while though; His followers felt that was good enough, wonderful in fact. His talk of going away was heart-breaking to them. Never having known spiritual fellowship with Him, they were content with what they had, for that was indescribably better than anything they had ever known. Their Lord knew better than they thought. He yearned for them and longed that they should enter into that spiritual fellowship with Him which exists only in the Spirit. They must have the Holy Spirit. He must come to them, if He came and they received Him, then He, Jesus, could come to them too. To have Jesus for ever they must receive Him personally in His eternal form and substance which is spirit: this is God's will for all men and can only be by the person of the HOLY Spirit.

RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus was telling them that as He had to come into human flesh by the Holy Spirit, so He has to come (again) into other human flesh by the Holy Spirit. This is quite consistent with the whole revelation of God in scripture from Genesis to the Revelation; as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be. Unless the Spirit had first been moving upon the face of the deep there could have been no creation, and unless He

had first come upon Mary with power, and overshadowed her, Jesus could never have been born. So in line with spiritual order, unless the Holy Spirit first be given to men, Jesus cannot come into them and be formed in their personality. This may be contrary to accepted ideas in certain quarters, which may be summed up as follows. 'first you must receive Jesus as your Saviour and afterwards (sometimes years afterwards) you can receive the Holy Spirit as your empowerer'. Though this is nowhere substantiated in scripture, it is nonetheless tenaciously held by many for all that.

On the day of Pentecost when the apostles received the Holy Spirit, they had no doubt about how things were. Listen afresh to Peter. 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'. This statement would have been naked sophistry if by his words he did not mean they would be baptized in the Spirit. Worse still it would have been plain deception if he should have added 'afterwards'. But note that Peter did not tell anyone to receive Jesus, he told them to receive the Holy Spirit. He did not say 'first receive Jesus and then be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit afterwards'. In the preceding prophetic ministry he had impressed on them the fact that the man Jesus was truly the Messiah of whom David wrote and that He had been raised from the dead and exalted by God to be Lord and Christ. They had to accept those facts, even though until that moment of time many, if not all of them, had categorically denied them: apparently they accepted Peter's words without reserve, for they cried out 'men and brethren what shall we do?' To that question Peter made the answer stated above, in which, surprisingly enough, he did not tell them that they must accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour, nor did he even hint at it. In other words, Peter did not insist upon, neither did they experience, two receptions, firstly the Lord Jesus, secondly the Holy Spirit, they were exhorted to make one reception - the Holy Spirit - simultaneously with Him they received Jesus.

In what is perhaps his finest passage about the Holy Spirit, Paul says much the same thing. 'Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His'. The obvious link between the incoming and indwelling of the Spirit and having the Spirit of Christ is too noticeable to be missed. Nor should the order of truth be missed either, the Spirit of God first, the Spirit of Christ next and as a result the work of the Holy Spirit is first to bring in Christ and then develop life which springs from the Spirit of Christ in a person with the result that the spirit, soul and body becomes Christlike. Christ only comes into an individual by the Holy Spirit, and unless He is first received, or Christ be received simultaneously with Him, the Lord cannot enter and reside within anyone. Without saying it in those exact phrases, Christ made this very clear to those invited guests who remained with Him in the upper room after Judas' departure. Here are His words and thoughts on the subject selected from John 14:16-23:

'The Father shall give you another comforter. He shall be in you ... I will come to you ... Because I live ye shall live also ... We (Father and I) will come unto him and make our abode with him'.

All this when the Holy Spirit comes. Beyond, far beyond, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit or even the Father coming alone, they all come, and they come together, all three of them, and all at once.

HIS INDWELLING

This is initially what the Lord taught the woman of Samaria: first she must recognize Him for who he was, the gift of God: then she must ask of Him living water, the Holy Spirit: He knew that only by the coming of the Holy Spirit to her could He Himself enter her, or, indeed, anyone else. Though speaking under different circumstances, and to a non-disciple, and without such full detail, He said the same thing in Samaria as in Jerusalem, and for the same reason.

This surely is all that longing hearts could ever crave for, the possibility of conscious enjoyment of His indwelling them as He indwelt the Father must have been more than compensatory to them for all their momentary loss. Wonderingly they accepted His word, resigned themselves to their imagined irreparable loss and after a few days proved that what He said was true. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came as He promised, and the Father and the Son came too. The Christ came to them and baptized them in the Spirit. He formed His body of them and came into it, into each one of His members. They were indwelt: they lived: they had power, Jesus had come, it was perfect. GWN

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WITNESSES

BERNARD HULL

Martyrdom is something that has always existed in the annals of the Christian church. Probably, in all her history, there has not been the passing of a generation without there being those who have suffered, even unto death, for the truth. Others have died for different causes, for certain belief systems, but there is something utterly distinctive concerning those who give themselves even unto death for the church. The true martyrs did not die for the Christian cause, nor for the belief system which Jesus brought to men. True martyrs are not opposed and persecuted because of their faithfulness to certain historical facts concerning the birth, life and death of Jesus. There is much more to it than adherence to a philosophy.

FAITHFUL TO THE TRUTH OF GOD, NOT AN IDEA

Looking down these last nineteen centuries and examining church history we discover a common denominator which exists in the lives of those who were opposed, persecuted and who sometimes died. Virtually none of them perished for faithfulness to their denomination or belief system. Rather, opposition, hardening into persecution and sometimes culminating in death, was mostly on account of their faithful testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. We could therefore say that they were the Holy Spirit's witnesses. Where there is no activity of the Holy Spirit there will be no stirring up of the devil. Satan is not bothered by a religion which contents itself in a mere ritualism and enjoyment of historic facts about its founder but knows nothing of the transforming power of that Man of Calvary.

Think for a moment. Is a repeated recital of well known facts and phrases from the lips of men with unchanged lives, who do not know the power of those words, going to trouble the powers of darkness? Certainly not. They will abide content as long as nothing is known of the power of the Holy Spirit to apply the Life and Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus here and now in this present time.

Beginning with Stephen, the first of the many martyrs, and continuing down the centuries we find them all testifying both by life and lip to the activity of the Spirit of God within them to make Jesus Christ real. Stephen sums up his message before the opposing council in Acts 7. 'Ye do always resist

the Holy Spirit'. It is the same today. It was the same in the days of Fenelon who gave brave testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit purifying and perfecting lives and was banished to Cambrai. What of Madam Guyon who suffered persecution and imprisonment at the hands of those in the very church of which she was part? George Fox suffered along with his friends because they testified to the present power of God to purify and fill with the Holy Spirit. It was the ritualistic priests who opposed and persecuted. Michael De Molinos suffered years in a prison cell for his witness to the workings of the Spirit of God making Jesus real in his life and day. Those in fellowship with the Wesleys suffered much opposition because they knew the power of the Holy Spirit to cleanse from sin and keep them free from it too. We could go on with other names also: they were sore troubled in their time by oppositions which mainly came from the churches, not from the world.

OPPOSITION FROM ORTHODOXY

It is sobering to consider that most opposition to the fresh workings of the Spirit of God have come from the church and not the world. Some books have been written seeking to disprove the fact of Jesus, generally speaking the world cares little about a powerless church. However the church cares much when folk stand forth and testify to the living working of the Spirit of God! In Stephen's day the opposers to his life and message were from two main camps, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. They were the rationalists and the ritualists of religion in their day. Their spirit is with us still! It is so often in the churches: the carnal mind dressed in religious garb. The Sadducees troubled Jesus very little in the days of His flesh. However when the testimony to the resurrection, to the present working of the Spirit, was faithfully borne by the Apostles, trouble ensued. These Sadducees believed neither in angel, nor spirit nor in the resurrection! No wonder they were troubled and stirred to destroy (if they could) that movement which testified powerfully to all three! Just think of those living witnesses to resurrection life standing before the council: transformed fishermen and their friends, living evidence of the Holy Spirit's ability to bring spiritual resurrection now! The Sadducean spirit, around us still, seeks to rationalize systematically any present moving of God. Often it cynically awaits the collapse of the testimony of those who give witness of newness of life. It explains away the perfections of Divine

providence in the lives of others by calling it 'coincidence', and so we could go on! Perhaps of them it could be said, 'having form of godliness but denying the power thereof'.

FIRST RATIONALISM AND THEN RITUALISM!

Opposition which hardens into persecution will also come from the Pharisees. As in the days of Stephen, so today, they are the orthodox believers whose faith lies in the ritual of their religious practices. How penetratively Stephen spoke through that belief system of theirs, it was a house of cards. He pointed out the fact that ritualistic orthodoxy had, in the history of the Jewish nation, slain the prophets of God, those who were the witness of the present speaking of the Holy Spirit. The battle lines were drawn, the protagonists faced one another. Dead religion full of orthodoxy, full of 'dead mens' bones', of memories, of memorials to past moves of God, readied itself to slay the living testimony fresh from God by the Spirit, in the life of Stephen. Stephen was of the long line of those who had experienced the living God in their very flesh. He was a man of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, whose testimony could not be refuted. He was an embodiment of what he preached. They could not argue him away, so were forced to either lock him up, or, better still, remove him permanently - perhaps that would be the end of the matter.

LIFE OUT OF DEATH!

Hallelujah! How could that be the end of the matter? The living God cannot be removed. Stephen may be silenced, but where the seed dies a Paul (Saul) stands by who shall be the witness 'par excellence' as to the present workings of the Spirit of God. Oh the wisdom of God, praise Him for the generosity of His ways! We ourselves are called to be of this noble line of witnesses. Those who are truly fair to look upon. Do we know the workings of the Holy Spirit in our hearts? To what do we bear witness? Are we faithful to a ritualistic religious system, do we abide in a tutored unbelief which spurns the miracle of an inward new birth, the receiving of a new nature and becoming now, in this day, a new creature?

Let us reflect again on some of the witnesses who have gone before. What of the early pentecostal folk? Those in the early part of this century who were spurned, who suffered opposition even to the burning of their houses because they had experienced something of the work of the Holy Spirit, particularly in His gifts and other supernatural workings. They suffered from people in other churches, even in their own, but not from those in the world! John Wesley and his band suffered from the orthodox churches about them because they gave clear testimony to the power of God to make

hearts clean from sin and to empower unto a life free from continuing in sin any more. They were ostracised for their testimony. Outcasts indeed, witnesses of the Holy Spirit.

BONDAGE TO A MOULD

In church circles today a certain orthodoxy is present. How safe to rest in the evangelical mould, or the charismatic mould. How rapidly the acceptable belief system is fashioned and becomes the 'bench mark' by which all is tested. Perhaps some of us are being harrassed by such an orthodoxy; perhaps we have suffered a little opposition for those things we witness to being within the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish in a believing heart. Maybe in our day the opposition will not harden into out and out persecution, but be that as it may, most certainly the Holy Spirit seeks those who will witness unto those things which are His power to do. I have to examine myself, 'Of what am I a witness? To whom do I testify? Is my testimony faithful to the death, burial, resurrection, ascension and glorification of the Lord Jesus? Am I in that noble line of true witnesses who can say, I am crucified with Christ, the old man of sin in me was buried with Him. By the power of the Holy Spirit I am alive unto God and am 'of resurrection'. He has made me holy, giving me a clean heart and indwells me thereby enabling me to live free from sin'.

TRUE WITNESS

It is possible to be a false witness to the Holy Spirit. The extent of His workings can be underestimated or even overestimated. Perhaps in our day this is taking place in certain circles. Most certainly any understanding person examining things carefully can discern that often emphasis is misplaced, the lesser elements being emphasized to the detriment of the essential. No man walking with God has any desire to be opposed because he is perverting the truth and being a false witness. There is a great need in our day that men will search out and find what is the true witness of the Spirit of God, what He is commissioned of the Father and the Son to accomplish in lives and then to speak that forth without fear, proving the message by their lives. Such people shall be opposed, even ostracised, but what does it matter? We are called to be witnesses to the Father who loves us, to the Son who saves us and to the Spirit who sanctifies us. The temptation to dilute the message, to make it acceptable must be resisted. When opposition to the message of the workings of God in power came in Acts 4, the whole church poured out their hearts to God with one accord and asked for boldness to continue the witness and that God would do more there and then in lives to corroborate the message! Now may the enemy be trembling as the Holy Spirit's witnesses stand forth in our day and fearlessly by quality of life and testimony in word, show forth the extent of the work He is able to do.

BH

Love is kindled in a flame, and ardency is its life. Flame is the air which true Christian experience breathes. It feeds on fire; it can withstand anything, rather than a feeble flame; but when the surrounding atmosphere is frigid or lukewarm, it dies, chilled and starved to its vitals. True prayer MUST be aflame.

E.M. BOUNDS

DERRICK HARRISON**DIAGNOSIS OF MAN**

THE COMMISSION

Eph. 3:7-9

We have considered the importance of diagnosis, and four simple considerations that will help us in our task. Now we shall consider four principles as to the actual way of working.

The terms of our commission:

1. THE AWAKENING OF THE SOUL

We have to accomplish two things:

- 1) To awaken a sense of need
- ii) To produce conviction of guilt and sin

If we deal with sin before the sense of need is sufficiently developed, we shall most certainly frighten away the soul we are trying to win.

For our own instruction, it is necessary to know how depraved and rebellious are the desires of the unregenerate heart. but in approaching the one we are seeking to lead the better way is to produce a counter attraction and hold up the Water of Life, creating a thirst and desire for true satisfaction. Then we can pass to the deeper question of sin and guilt.

Many come to Christ without any sense of sin at all. A man may come with a sense of deep need, learning later of his sin and the immensity of God's pardoning grace, as well as His saving power. Men come to Christ out of selfish motives, but when we do come, He can change our motives.

Be wary of the intellectual youth who loves to argue and prove to his own satisfaction that Christianity can be smugly dismissed. Such need a strong dosage of Romans Chapter 1.

Avoid discussions on the existence of God - talk about sin. Press the battle to the gate. Get at the question of God through the conscience and the heart.

2. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE MIND

The enlightenment of the awakened. Turn to the Exemplar. All His instructions, very much given in the form of parables, were always made to the understanding, through the channel of the heart, i.e. the story of the Prodigal Son, where the main point is the existence of love, claims and power of a living God, the simplest language is used; no attempt is made to prove anything. The strongest appeal is made to the conscience, will and affections of the heart, thus carrying with it an unanswerable enlightenment and proof to the understanding.

The forces that compel them to action are four - Fear, Hope, Faith and Love. In the ordinary affairs of life, all actions spring from one or more of these secret sources. FEAR of poverty, suffering, failure or shame. HOPE for success, wealth, wisdom and care. FAITH in ourselves, friends, circumstances and

environment. LOVE, gratitude and sympathy - the highest motive of all. These are the secret forces in the mind that impel to action.

As Pascal wisely says - 'The heart has reasons that reason knows nothing of'.

In seeking to enlighten the soul, this is the way: whatever theme is chosen, see to it that its presentation is closely associated with an appeal to the conscience, will and affections of the inquirer.

3. THE LIBERATION OF THE WILL

To turn men from the power of Satan unto God.

Men's minds are full of all kinds of difficulties, some supposed and some real. God will not necessarily answer all a man's questions before He saves him.

The liberation of the will is only another name for repentance. Repentance is as much a gift of God as the forgiveness of sins or eternal life (Acts 5:31).

We must insist that men come to Christ just as they are. Here is the difference between the Old and New Testaments. The Old was 'Thou shalt' or 'Thou shalt not'. The will of the sinner had to do it all. In the New, it is 'Christ received by faith' in place of the effort of the will. Christ does what we cannot. He says 'I will' and not 'thou shalt'. We have but to WILL to believe.

We have but to declare that we may be justified. We have but to confess that we may be forgiven. With the Young Ruler we would have simply cried 'Save me or I die', to have been granted repentance unto life. A few hours later, Jesus did this for Zacchaeus.

4. THE SAVING OF THE SOUL

We are not only commissioned to awaken and enlighten, but to cause them to receive.

The calling to accomplish so extraordinary a work means, of course, that after patient enquiry and study of the case in hand, we must be able, under the Spirit's guidance, to apply the truth from the Word of God that will exactly meet the need of the seeker. But it means more than that. God has given to us the privilege of helping souls to believe. To lift them, in the arms of faith, into the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is possible to believe for them, and to influence them by our very faith.

Christians can experience agony of soul for others and so plead for them with strong cryings and tears.

Paul was amazed that such an honour was entrusted to him. It is such a dynamic thing that sends us to our chamber, bows us in the dust, humbles our hearts and stirs us up to seek God and wait upon Him for the vision, the power, the tenderness of heart and the wisdom that cometh from above.

We cannot present to others the salvation of God as sufficient to satisfy the deepest longings unless we ourselves are drinking of the Living Water, abiding in the Promised Rest, standing fast in the liberty of Christ, and looking forward with joy to the hope of Eternal Life ready to be revealed.

The failure to execute such a commission as this with power may well make us creep in secret places. Until the realization of privileges, opportunities, failures take hold of us, we shall not be successful as fishers of men.

THE SENSE OF NEED

Luke 4:18

There are four definite approaches to the soul along the line of need.

1. THE FIRST INSTINCT IS A DESIRE FOR REST, HAPPINESS AND JOY

These instincts are divinely implanted and we need to present a Saviour who can meet these needs.

Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, ie light and assurance, peace with God, deliverance from sin and iniquity, and finally eternal life - and redemption of our body as well as of our souls.

The desire for rest: Matthew 11:28: Christ offers first of all, rest of soul. The message to the woman that was a sinner (Luke 7 and Matthew 11). Rest to the CONSCIENCE from guilt, to the HEART from sin, to the WILL from rebellion, to the DESIRES from lust, and to the BODY from the results of evil, to the MIND from care, and to the SOUL from the fear of death. Take each of these and by an illustration from life, apply it to the hearer.

The real reason for unrest of course is the absence of anything abiding on which to repose. Trouble, sorrow and care are our schoolmasters to bring men to Christ. Not a sense of sin but a desire for rest has often turned men towards heaven. We have a salvation and a Saviour that can meet that need.

In presenting this aspect of salvation, I have found it good to insist upon the Person of the Saviour as much as upon the facts of this salvation. Though men know it not, their craving for a Person to love, sympathize and help is one of the deepest instincts of the human heart; and it is this instinct that we need to awaken, enlighten, and satisfy.

Closely akin to this longing for rest is the desire for joy: John 4:14. God's purpose for man is his supreme happiness, perfect joy and pleasure for evermore. Joy is unquenchable as with Paul and Silas. In the middle of their pain they sang praises to God. The brutal jailor was soon a weeping penitent. There is great joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner returning to the Lord. To preach effectively the message of joy, we ourselves must find it springing up within our own hearts. The sight of our faces and the joy of our countenances should convict men of their need and turn them to desire the Lord.

2. THE DESIRE FOR POWER

John 8:32-36, Galatians 5:1

To some, the appeal of rest or joy is scarcely an appeal at all. To them the power of sin is the terrible reality. (We are not speaking of guilt

because many have no sense of this, nor their need of forgiveness.) The sense of sin comes later. The soul obtains deliverance, life, power and victory, and then as he is instructed in the things of the Kingdom, he learns the magnitude and the depths of mercy of God in pardoning his transgressions as well as His power in giving deliverance.

The Lord comes to a soul just where he is, as did the good Samaritan.

There are three stages in the conviction of sin:

1. Sin against ourselves.
2. Sin against others.
3. Sin against God.

Initially, a man may only know that he is a slave, but he can be immediately urged to be saved. Salvation is not our apprehension of truth but a Divine bestowal, a gift, a miracle, a work of God. He is LIFE and when this is imparted there will be illumination of the immensity of God's pardoning grace.

Is there any example of any soul being delivered from sin by agnosticism, foreign religions or cults? Only Jesus can deliver from sin. 'Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins'.

We need to present an absolute and immediate salvation from sin to those who are bound. Insist that it can be received in a moment on the basis of the instruction and testimony of the scriptures.

3. THE DESIRE FOR LIGHT AND ASSURANCE

John 8:12

A study of the Lord's life, teaching and miracles, especially in John's gospel discloses the constant appeal he made to this instinct. The desire to be assured of the eternal verities of life and the hereafter lead many into spiritism. Christ is the light of the world. He alone can dispel the awful uncertainties of the future existence. Only He brings 'life and immortality to light'.

Deep down in the human heart is the longing for eternal life, and a life after death. It is only in the gospel that there is such hope.

4. THE DESIRE FOR ETERNAL LIFE

John 3:16

The desire for salvation from fear of death and from the Judgement to come and the desire for Eternal Life.

The concept of judgement to come is a vague idea and the idea of hell scoffed at. We are not dealing with ideas, but facts, and the statements of God about these awful and solemn realities. We must convince men of their truth and reality. We must use the words of scripture (Rev. 20:11-15; 21:8). They will reach the heart, convict, and the terror of the Lord will turn men back to the Lord who is ready to forgive and pardon. Exhort men to flee from the wrath to come.

Two other objects that may be presented as a means of moving men:

Deep down in the human heart there is an instructive craving for the perpetuity of life.

Generally speaking, fear of death is a much more effective and usual means of awakening men. God has set it as a sign-post on the road that leads to judgement. We can use the fact of death as a means of appeal. The fear of death is a real fear, and a cause of great misery. The gospel speaks of victory over death. The death bed for the Christian is a place of victorious triumph.

DH

NOTES AND JOTTINGS EN ROUTE

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

I see more clearly into the phrase 'the knowledge of God'. We are told to increase in it, and truly it is profound.

God knows: in many ways and by many means. There is God's fore-knowledge: that is His ability to know beforehand all events in time and eternity. Because this is so He can predetermine and pre-fix all things, plan all His own movements, and plot all others, and do all things after the counsel of His own will.

Then there is the kind of knowledge referred to in Genesis 22. When Abraham offered up Isaac to Him, He said 'now I know ...'. Even He wants and is determined to know by other means than fore-knowledge, which (to use a phrase) could be equated in us with head-knowledge. He wanted to know by observable proof. It was as if He did not know till then - Abraham proved to God what until then (it would appear) He did not know. Of course He did know by fore-knowledge, but with God all things have to be demonstrated - THAT is the kind of knowledge He requires. Thus when Abraham did what he did - although the actual slaying of Isaac did not take place - it was done in God's sight. Quite useless for Abraham to have SAID that he loved and trusted God; he had to prove it for God to know.

Herein lies a principle of divine life - God so LOVED that He GAVE. The one would have been quite useless apart from the other: God did not just SAY He loved us - we should never have believed it anyway. As in God, so in us; that is divine, and thus, human law. God does not believe us until we prove our faith and love, and He does not expect us to believe Him apart from like action in Him. God proved He loves us, that is the purpose of the gift of Jesus.

Further, we can see this principle outworking in the Lord Jesus also. There can be no doubt that by fore-knowledge He knew all about sin, but we are told that following His birth, life, trial and death He gained a knowledge of sin and all the other connected things (such as stripes, etc.) by personal experience, and so it was by His (this) knowledge that He justifies us. That is why all justification prior to

Calvary was by inferior means to that by which He justifies us now. He could not personally justify us until He had endured the cross. Omnipotently He could and did do so before Calvary, and because of it, future though it was, being God, He could (but only because the cross was eternally fixed in His life as well as in point of time or else He could no longer be righteous). But now justification is the result of Christ's personally finished righteousness. Experimented knowledge by personal proof on Jesus' part is the basis of our justification. Hallelujah!

Now just as God has done this - not expecting us to rely only upon His attestation or professions of love, He has therefore revealed a principle of eternal life and law. Therefore we have to prove ourselves, our love, our faith, our trust to Him, He expects to know by such proof Himself; and He does not 'know' until we do.

Taking John 21 as an example of this, we find Jesus saying 'Simon lovest thou Me?'. Finally Peter says, 'Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee'. This being so, why did Jesus ask him? The answer lies in the fact that he must have proof. He knew because He knows all things, but that is insufficient. It is a law in God that nothing is known by Him without its logical proof. Statement leading to belief on the part of the one who hears it is good and necessary, but that alone, without proof, is neither knowledge on the part of the speaker nor of the hearer. God proved to us that He loves us, we must prove to Him that we love Him; Peter, be it said to his eternal glory, did so; so may we. As He is so are we in this world.

One further thought presses upon me here and that is once more the grandeur and superiority of the New Testament over the Old Testament. Abraham was a great man who finally rose to the height of Moriah to prove that he feared God. But the question to which Jesus sought an answer was not 'fearest thou Me?' but 'lovest thou Me?'. See then the vastness of the difference. Jesus was greater than father Abraham, He did not say, 'but that the world may know that I fear the Father' - but, 'that I love the Father' - to this higher, greater height has He lifted us. Not Moriah but Calvary. We can attest (as He) and then prove (as He) our love. Amen. GWN

GLEANINGS FROM MARK 10 AND LUKE 12 CONCERNING ONE BAPTISM

In both these Gospels the Baptism wherewith the Lord was (to be) baptized is introduced in somewhat similar contexts. These, though different, point the same lesson in that the Lord is saying more or less the same thing. In Luke 12:50 the statement follows a reason the Lord gave for His coming to earth; He came, He said, to send fire on the earth. His baptism was vitally connected with the mission, and thereunto He was straitened, hence the baptism. That fire, like the One who came to send it, is human being, burning, blazing with divine life: that is the fire. In Him it was already kindled. The burning desire in Him was to send it everywhere. The question was, when? It was always like this with Him when He observed the situations and needs of men. He so wanted these met, but could not do what He wanted to do, wonderful as it was, all the time He was on earth, His ministry had

its limits. He felt straitened, unable to do what He wanted so desperately to do. So many things He had been able to accomplish, but these, to Him, seemed woefully few and short of His highest ambitions. But it was quite impossible to send fire on the earth before His baptism. There was that in man, even in His choicest apostles, which would quench the fire, if He did give it them. In any case a man could not be given fire just to have it as a gift, a man must be given the fire and become fire. When at last the time should come that He could send fire over the face of all the earth, it must be men as He was a man. He was/is Fire.

Nature itself teaches us this. God's greatest gifts to us in the natural realm are given to become us. Air comes to us in correct balance of oxygen and

nitrogen, inbreathed it deposits them into the bloodstream, which in turn purifies and nourishes the whole body. The same is true of food and drink, eventually it becomes our bodies. And what is true in the physical realm is also true in the aesthetic and intellectual realms, what we think ultimately becomes us. So with the fire, on the day of Pentecost the fire sat upon every one of them - they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, He is fire.

The Lord was baptized into death for this. It was a high price to pay for the privilege of baptizing men and women with the Holy Ghost and fire. But He did not esteem it to be too high. Like the men of whom He later spake He had sat down and counted the cost before He started to build, and He knew He could finish His 'tower'. When He was baptized into death He laid the foundation of everything He intended to do

for man. Everything is raised from that. I, if I be buried with Him in death, can become fire on earth - a person impervious to the things that so terribly contradict the true states of eternal life. They must go for they are the direct opposites of the eternal character of God and would quench the fire, even if He gave it me. I must be baptized into my death in His death. It is not sufficient to be baptized into His death to sin, but also into His death to my old self that cannot stop sinning. He did not lose His life, He laid it down - for me - that I might have it. His physical death was the point of release, He released His life then for me that I might have it. When I am baptized into death, it is into permanent death to my own self and way of living. I may then have partnership with Him in His resurrection, and permanent acquisition of His self and life - which is fire. GWN

LOVE

The saying of the Lord Jesus in John 10:17/18 is well illustrated in the life of Jacob. A man cannot lay down his life in blessing to others unless he receives power to do so. It was not until Jacob had word from the Lord at Jabok that he could lay down his life for Esau. 'As a prince hast thou power with God and with men'. Immediately following this experience, Jacob met his brother Esau, from whom he had stolen both the birthright and the blessing. It was a confrontation he had always feared, but having met with God he could say 'Take my blessing which is brought to thee'. Before he only lived to get and grasp greedily for as much as he could possibly extract from everybody. Perhaps he was mistakenly striving to fulfil to himself the blessing he had stolen from Esau, and to implement the blessing said to lie in the virtue of tithing. Whatever it was, he had lived the life of his nature, everybody does, his bent in life was self-increase, wealth, gain, get, but now it is to give. God had power over him, he had power with God, and consequently had power with men.

All power to bestow eternal blessings upon men turns upon power with God, and is bound up with our ability and desire to lay down our lives for them, that is the pre-requisite. Jesus' greatest blessing was His Life, He had all and came to lay all down for us. Jacob says, after Jabok, 'I have all'. He could now lay down his life. It is quite impossible to lay down our lives until the Lord enables us. We cannot communicate our blessing, much as we try, until we with Him are resurrection and life as Jesus is Resurrection and Life.

Then again this incident is a perfect illustration of John's word in 1 John 4:20 & 21. Jacob had besought the 'Unknown' at Peniel to tell him His name. He knew somehow it must be God, and said so; a new day was breaking for him, the day of God and of Israel. But he could not love this God whom he had not 'seen' if he did not love Esau whom he had both seen and whom he knew. It was like this with John - he had 'seen' Jesus but had not seen God and he knew it. He had to love his 'brother', the man Jesus, before he could love the God Jesus. While the 'wrestling' was on John had not seen Him. (Oh, how Jesus wrestled with this man John, son of thunder, and his brother James, as also with Peter, and indeed with all the rest of the apostles. Thou hast not known Me Philip. He said to that apostle 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father'. 'Ye believe in God, believe also in Me'; how can you love God whom you have not seen if you do not love Me, a brother Man, whom you

have seen?) Afterwards John saw and knew that Jesus is the Son of God, now that God dwelt in him and he in God, he could confess it. That is how John knew it was completely impossible to love God invisible unless you love your visible brother. Jacob found it like that in his day. With John as with Jacob and us all, the heart loves God the Unseen first. Although he says it is impossible for us to love God without loving our brother, he is not implying that we must love our brother BEFORE we love God. It is another of John's pragmatic tests. The IMMEDIATE result of loving God is that we love our brother; this is one of the infallible proofs that we love God. Jacob looked on the face of Esau and said he saw it as though he had seen the face of God - 'and thou was pleased with me' he said. What a wonder that was to Jacob's heart; Esau was pleased with him! Truly the 'day' had broken for him. Now he was loving his brother whom he could see. Oh, how he loved God. The interior barriers of hatred and fear and distrust resulting from deceit, cheating, self-seeking and a score or more other sins, natural to him, had been swept away, and he was flowing with love; outgoing, outgiving love.

One of the great differences between John and other New Testament writers lies in the fact that he appeals (and dogmatically so) to experience rather than to reason. Both in his gospel as well as in his epistles, there is a remarkable and almost total absence of direct reference back to the Hebrew scriptures. He speaks of them but never quotes a text and says 'this is what that means'; or 'here is my authority for saying this'. Yet we see over and over again how the things he records or says fulfil the scriptures perfectly. Thus we infer that John gives us the philosophy of the gospel in that he draws all from personal knowledge, never once saying, 'the scripture says so and so, therefore we know such and such is true'. He says the rather 'we have experienced this and this, so we are absolutely certain that we are right'. Actually what he is doing is basing everything on sonship; our life must be comparable in experience to Jesus Christ's, otherwise we are not God's sons! Paul says the same thing, but because he adduces his evidence from scripture, he does not spend so much time on the emotional and personal aspects of the Christian life as John does. Thus the word 'believed' is not a Pauline word and terms like 'little children' and 'let us love one another' are not to be found in his writings, although the identical essence of it is there. His epistles are lucid expositions, reasonably presented and lavishly documented. John's are loving ejaculations, amplified into feelings of the heart fulsomely pouring out its knowledge. GWN

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