

new covenant Voice

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you: I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Ezekiel 36 v.26

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

DISCERNMENT

GEORGE W. NORTH

1 CORINTHIANS

Reading this epistle, it becomes obvious that Paul wrote it out of necessity. If they continued as they were, the Corinthian church was heading for total disintegration: it was heart-sickening to Paul. These people were his children: he could not close his eyes to what was happening. The most saddening thing about it was that it ought not, should never, have been. Sin was at the root of it, of course, but Paul says surprisingly little about that, and when he does it is not in a doctrinal or causal sense: sins, particular sins, or their effects, or church sins and their results seem to have been his concern more. Paul did not want to be just a teacher to them, he was their 'father', and he wrote with a father's love. Toward the end of the epistle he spoke of this love - obviously it was his own standard of life. Having been taught it by Christ, he had set it for himself and had achieved it; what a standard it is! Before he draws the chapter to a close, he introduces words and phrases which point out his reason for writing - 'knowledge'; 'in part'; 'a child'; 'a man'; 'we see'. He was concerned for his children; the church had remained a church of children, carnal children - spiritually they had never grown up.

IGNORANCE

In great sermons Paul wrote to these Corinthians as to an infant church; as a father should, he had correction in mind, indeed at one point he asked them whether he should come to them with a rod; but that was not what he wanted to do. He knew and said that they were living in a world of ignorance; the princes of this world were ignorant, they had no discernment at all, the proof of this being the way they treated the Lord of glory - they crucified Him. They would not have done so if they had known who Jesus was - they had no discernment at all. Saying this, Paul was stating one of the many reasons why God did not destroy the world, or at least the Jews and the Romans when they murdered His Son - they did not discern who He was. Because of His discerning heart, in great mercy, and with wonderful love, God extended grace to them all, Jew and Gentile - the very fact that he was writing this letter to the people of Corinth being proof of it.

Their ignorance was inexcusable, though the church has no excuse for ignorance, he was not prepared to accept their behaviour; love them as he did, there was neither reason nor excuse for any of the things they were doing. Were the princes of the church as ignorant as the princes of this world?

FOLLY

The list of things they failed to discern grows longer and longer as the epistle unfolds, leaving the mind wondering whether the catalogue was ever completed. At one point Paul says, 'I spare you'; at another he expresses total surprise as though he found it difficult to believe their folly - perhaps stupidity. He devotes one chapter to expressions of incredulity - again and again he asks them, 'Know you not?' It seems they had no, or very little, discernment at all, and their knowledge appears to have been abysmal; so bad was the situation that he has to re-state the gospel to them, and tell them once more what salvation really is. There is no excuse for acting in the same way as the world, or as the princes of the world. They do not have the Spirit of God, nor have any of them received a (new) spirit from Him. The 'princes' of this world, like the 'commoners' of this world, only have the spirit of man, therefore they only understand the things of man, and that to a limited extent, as most would confess. They see nothing, and know nothing, of what God has prepared for them that love Him, and apparently neither did the church at Corinth, for they did not seem to know many, if any, of the things that are so freely given to us of God.

This dearth of vital knowledge was the cause of most of the many things troubling them. Of spiritual discernment there seems to have been none, 'He that is spiritual discerns all things', said Paul; therefore how could they claim to have the mind of Christ? And if His MIND be absent, how could He be there? Paul himself could only lay claim to knowing in part, but they seemed unable to say even that. They could not even see that the Church of God is indivisible and does not bear the name of any man. They had divided themselves up into followers of Paul, or of Apollos or Cephas - or of Christ, claimed some. They had never properly known their calling and election, or that they had been baptized into one body. It appears also that they were ignorant about many things they ought to have known connected with the 'Second Coming'. Paul even went so far as saying that questions being asked among them by some were the questions of fools.

ABILITY

Discernment! What a great ability this is; it seems so rare, yet it is one of the most essential qualities of the new spirit with which we are born into the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Discernment is a most vital part of the

make-up of the new man God creates when He creates anyone in the image of Himself. It is general to all, yet it is so uncommon to find it operating among God's children. It is not a special gift; there is a special gift (popularly called 'charismatic') which some have, but this is given for special reasons and uses; this is not the new-nature gift. The charismatic gift is extra to the birth gift with which each individual person is born into the body of Christ. The Lord bestows the special gift on some as being part of the ability with which He endows His body as a whole, but not to every individual. This He does that His works may be done in the earth, and He does so according to His own will. Alas, it seems that even though they had been blessed with both kinds of discernment, these poor Corinthians had got themselves into a dreadful mess - they did not know how to conduct themselves in the most simple of church functions.

ORDINANCES

Even in some of the basic ordinances of the Church they had gone wrong. There are six of these in all, and Paul takes these up one after another, seeking to restore them to the original position and dignity in the Church of Christ. In order, these are: Marriage, Baptism, Headcovering, the Lord's Supper, Spiritual Gifts, the Collection. The first of these is natural, God ordained it from the beginning, and all Paul says about it is to support and to safeguard it. The second is historical, and he sees no need to expatiate upon it here. The third is cultural, that is historical and customary, it is vested with spiritual significance, based upon order in God. The fourth is revelatory and new, an institution for the Church, ordained by Christ Himself. The fifth is functional and ministerial; the sixth is social. All are by apostolic authority. None of these apply to anyone outside of the Church - that is anyone not born of the Spirit of God, but upon God's children they are obligatory.

All ordinances of the Church, delivered to us by the original apostles of Christ raised up by God, must be regarded as laws. They are as binding upon the Church as Moses' ordinances were upon Israel. As surely as Moses was raised up of God, so was Paul; to ignore what Moses said meant death, spiritual and physical. Likewise to ignore what Paul says is death to the soul; in the case of the fourth ordinance, self-administered physical death also, possibly. Paul's statement concerning the difference between fathers and teachers is as true as it is profound, and is very relevant to the situation he was addressing. Many, if not most, of the errors believed in and promoted and practised in the churches arise from ordinances which have been laid down by false teachers. Paul was the 'father' of the Corinthian church, and in that capacity, and in peculiar love, he wrote this epistle. It is therefore of some significance that he brought up one of the ordinances of Christ, and with thankfulness said he personally had baptized but a handful of them. Quite obviously, considering the spiritual climate of the church, he was very thankful that his contribution to any

imaginary physical grounds for schisms in the church was so minimal.

All the ordinances he had delivered to them (indeed any church) were inspired mediations from Christ, and should have been regarded by all as being as profitable to them as anything Moses had delivered to Israel of old. At points in his epistle, Paul drew their attention to this - 'I delivered unto you that which I also received'. He had been as receptive and obedient in these matters as he had expected his children to be when the revelations were delivered to the churches. He himself had received much from men as from the Lord in the beginning, fully confident that they were being delivered to him from Christ in and through these men; he never questioned them, though he was questioned by them. Besides this he had been caught up to heaven, where he saw and heard things unspeakable. Would it not be reasonable to think that a man so elevated and honoured and blessed would have been properly taught (and if necessary lovingly corrected if he had been wrong) the truth for the churches he was labouring to found? The Church is God's; a love-gift to His Son, not Paul's. God the Father made Paul a father, showing and telling him how to behave and what to say. Paul did and said just that, eventually passing on to the churches all the things in which he had been instructed, reserving to himself only that which he had been forbidden to speak or would have been unlawful to utter.

REBELLION

Lack of discernment leads to awful mistakes and horrible blunders, the development of heartless attitudes, shocking behaviour, and unimaginable sins. Sadly many of these emerged in the Corinthian church. Discernment is the eyes of the heart, seeing everything with love, which, though confronted with evil things, unfailingly thinks the loving thing; being aware of the evil, it can think no evil as of itself. As the eye is the handmaid of love, so is discernment to the spirit. Without discernment a church ends up in confusion; hearts become callous, ordinances are flouted, institutions are abused, reasons are invalidated, truth is ignored or treated as error, or as of no importance. Wherever this happens the members of that church make accusations against Bible authors. This epistle reveals it all; there is no ground for excuse. Passage of time has not brought further light, nor has it increased knowledge of the truth. Instead it has brought a plethora of man's opinions which, becoming counsel and oft repeated, has been accepted as truth, preventing knowledge and darkening understanding to the point of believing that the attitude of the majority is proof of validity, whereas church history shows that the exact opposite is the case.

Perhaps the most hotly contested of the apostles' ordinances is the third here mentioned, namely headcovering. Reasons (excuses) for abandoning it are based upon such complaints as, 'If you cover your head I

feel condemned: and I shall not be brought under condemnation by anybody'. Such reasoning is as erroneous as it is pathetic, for it is saying, 'Because I am rebelling against Scripture, so must you'. Other objections, such as 'Just as though a piece of rag (straw, felt or whatever) makes any difference' - or - 'My husband is my covering', are equally as perverse and should find no place in the obedient spirit. Neither Paul nor any other Bible author says any of these things, or anything of the sort, nor is leave given to destroy symbolic meaning, and believe the untruth. What he does say is, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are IN CHRIST JESUS WHO WALK not after the flesh but after the Spirit, for the LAW of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death'. The law of the spirit of death is the cause of all rebellion against God's word. The person who thinks and speaks in the spirit, if not in the exact terms stated here, is in rebellion against the ordination of God. All such members of all the churches should remember that conviction and condemnation, though not synonymous, are allied words - the difference between them in experience is minuscule. Conviction must lead to repentance and forgiveness, or it will most certainly end in condemnation. God condemns sin in the flesh; and is not headcovering a thing of the flesh? Unless God is obeyed in the flesh in the Church, flesh ceases to be innocent spiritual flesh and becomes carnal. Carnal flesh is nothing other than the display of carnal mind, it is the parade of a rebellious spirit, which in the Church is completely unacceptable.

CONDEMNATION

The earliest demonstration of this unacceptability in the Church is written down by Luke, for our learning, in the Acts of the Apostles. When Ananias and his wife decided to try and deceive the church at Jerusalem, they were immediately condemned and executed by the Spirit of God through Peter. They were not even allowed opportunity to repent of their sin. No-one pleaded with them, satan had filled their heart and they had lied to the Holy Ghost - and they died for it. They were arraigned, convicted and condemned by Peter, by the Holy Ghost and by the Church, and by the Church they were buried after Peter had passed sentence upon each of them separately. There was perfect accord between the Church and God about it, no-one said Ananias and Sapphira should not have felt condemned, they did, and under the full weight of that condemnation also died.

There had been no edict passed nor ordinance made and stated about the matter of money and possession, there was nothing in writing concerning ordinances in the Church at that time. Ananias and Sapphira had not offended against law, they had sinned against the Holy Ghost, and the Church of God and against the spirit of the body of Christ, and they were condemned out of hand. How is it then, that people must not be made to feel condemned in churches today? This talk never

came from God, but from false comforters who, by their counsel, darken knowledge. Sometimes the Lord's words to the woman taken in adultery, 'Neither do I condemn thee', are quoted in support of flagrant misbehaviour in churches. But this is a total misapprehension, a complete misapplication of the situation. There was no Church in those days, so no ordinances had been made about it; the woman was wrong, totally wrong, and the way the Lord dealt with her and what He said to her was for all the world, - 'Go and sin no more'. The ordinance made by Paul was not for the world, on the contrary the ordinance given for and to the Church of God is not for the unsaved. To the outsider Peter would have acted in the same way as the Lord did, but to the insiders he said things which in the end brought about their deaths, with the Lord's approval.

HOLINESS

It is written of the Lord Jesus that He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows BECAUSE HE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS, and hated iniquity. It is also written of people that they either were or should be lovers of truth. People are under the illusion that so long as they love God all is well and right, but not so, the Church must love righteousness, holiness, truth, indeed every virtue as well; and who will deny that it is virtuous to love and obey the ordinances of God? When He was in Palestine of old, the Lord Jesus ordained something for His disciples which was most distasteful to the flesh; 'If any man compel thee to go a mile with him, go two - if he takes one garment let him take two'. Seeing these things be so, shall the churches, who say they love Him and speak of being filled with the Spirit, refuse to obey this or any other particular ordinance for love of the flesh or for fashion's sake?

It is to the shame of the Corinthian church that their spiritual father and teacher should need to call someone in the company a fool. The concern this person was voicing about the body he would have when he rose from the dead reveals the great lack of understanding among them all. Some did not even have the knowledge of God, and very few understood daily dying, or what he meant when he said, 'I die daily'. He gave them to understand that if the dead rise not there was no profit (spiritual) for any man in this world, either here and now or in the future. The only way to spiritual profit from having lived on this earth is via the cross and the Resurrection. In this and related issues, whether directly connected to this or that particular ordinance (and they are a whole) a man and a woman must die daily to be raised daily. Could they discern what this death and resurrection is? Did they understand the difference between the cure for all original sin in a man, is by the permanent death of the old man without resurrection? This was effected by Christ - for us all. Whereas I myself, as distinct from the old man, must die daily to myself, and to the sins I would commit - that is my own sins - that is the sins I would commit if I should live.

DYING DAILY

This daily dying and resurrection is of the NATURAL man - the natural self. The man I would be as being born of my particular father and mother and developing my own natural talents and tastes to and for my own satisfaction - has to die. Paul was telling them that if they knew what it was to die and rise again every day, still being in the same body, they would not be asking such foolish questions. God only chooses the 'are nots' to bring to naught the things 'that are'. Only when a person is not, can He deal with any person who is; persons and things go together. This matter of death and resurrection that lay at the heart of all the problems at Corinth, and also lies at the root of the majority of all the problems and sins in any church. It is a very vexed question among so many.

Knowing this, Paul wrote another epistle to the Corinthians in which he expounds the secret of daily dying very thoroughly, if not exhaustively. Whether it be the 'old

man' or the old 'me', if he is uncrucified he is an active troublemaker in any church. The old man is the embodiment of Satan's nature, his agent in the churches, the uncrucified 'I'. His ally is 'me'; 'I', 'my natural self', as apart from and distinct from the old man, am a potential source of trouble and disruption among the saints at all times. Here then is the true position; the old man must be crucified dead and buried for all eternity: the former me must die and be raised up again daily; the new me can then be, must be, offered to God. This alone is both Christ-like and Pauline-like, and therefore acceptable to God. Blessed indeed are they whose eyes and understanding are opened to this, those whose senses are exercised to discern between good and evil. As the risen Christ, whether in local or world-wide situation, these now live for revelation of Christ and for the publication of the gospel. The result will be the salvation of sinners unto and into the life of Christ, unto the building up of the Church.

Copyright © G.W.North 1993

HOLINESS-THE ONE FOUNDATION FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

LES WHEELDON

Man is a moral being, created in the image of God. When he was created, he was placed in an environment of moral choice. This moral choice was absolutely clear. God gave him liberty to do everything, except to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man was placed in a world of moral choice from the beginning.

It is common for many to blame the devil for sin. It is true that the devil tempted Eve, who in turn offered the forbidden fruit to her husband, but if Lucifer had not fallen, if there had been no devil, man would still have been placed in a world of moral choice. Man must face up to his own responsibility for his present condition. No doubt the devil had a part to play in man's downfall, but the root of sin is that man CHOSE to sin.

Let me then define sin and holiness:

SIN is not a substance, it is not physical. It dwells in the spirit of a man. It is a stain, an inner cancer that lies in the heart of every man that is born. It is an inner tendency:

1. To disobey all authority.
2. To indulge in selfish desires in preference to every other demand. It is the captivity of a man to follow the appetites of his body and soul. It is imprisonment to lust.

HOLINESS is not a substance, it is not physical any more than sin is. It is inner purity, inner health, that lies in the heart of everyone that is born again. It is an inner tendency:

1. To obey.
2. To deny self and carnal appetites, in favour of a higher will and purpose in the person of Jesus Christ.

In saying that sin is a tendency, this is not to diminish the awfulness of sin. This 'tendency' is both more and less than some of the great sins that have been committed by men. It is less than sins like murder and adultery, because not all men who have sin in their hearts have actually murdered others or actually committed adultery. But sin is far, far more than these individual acts of sin, in that in this tendency lies all the potential to commit every sin that has ever been committed. In other words, the fact of sin in the human heart places the best and the worst of men on the same level before God. All men are guilty before God, and are worthy of hell. All men are far worse than they can ever confess. This is why men can only bear the revelation of their own sin if it is combined at once with the revelation of mercy and grace in Christ to remove their sin. The revelation of the awfulness of sin would drive a man to distraction and madness. It is for this reason that God has

committed the ministry of conviction of sin to His wisest and most skillful servant - the Holy Spirit.

It will have been noticed by some that sin lies in the heart of all who are born, while holiness lies in the heart of all those who are born from above. Does God hold a man responsible for things over which he has no control, ie his birth? God does not hold me responsible for being born a sinner, but He will hold each man responsible for developing his own personal path of sin, and, most of all, He will hold each man responsible for remaining in sin.

This is precisely the central thing over which we do have a choice, and fundamentally the central issue which God has placed as the great moral choice for man on earth. Just as in the garden, all moral choices were reduced to one, so now we have only one matter over which God will ultimately judge all men. God has reduced man's moral quest to one basic issue. This is, 'Will you repent and believe in Jesus Christ?' On the basis of this one choice, God has promised to change the entire inner life of a man, from being a sinner to being a holy one (saint). Just as in the garden man had only one choice, so in the earth man has only one choice, to either accept Christ for inner cleansing and transformation of the heart, or to reject Him for a life of sin. Because of God's mercy to man in Christ, man himself will personally be responsible for his eternal destiny. If any man goes to hell, it is because he wants to and has chosen to.

Everyone of us must face up to this basic fact: 'I am what I am by my own deliberate choice'. Men must face their own sin, and cease to blame the devil, demons, the world, mother, father, husband or wife, or even the church! All of these will play a part in the shaping of a life, but the root factor in every life lies in the heart of the individual.

Adam was faced with one choice, but he did not fully know the side effects of his choice, or rather he did not believe God. Satan told the woman that she would not die, thus inferring that God was not as strict as He had declared. This lie is quite common today. Many have decided that God is not quite serious when He talks about hell, and that really man will not go to hell as a consequence of sin. Let there be no doubts about this. God's word is clear. To reject Christ is to suffer eternal separation from God, and this is what will follow, in the same way that Adam did die on the day and in the very moment that he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam was faced with one choice, but he did not believe and could not have fully known all that would follow from that one choice. He did not know that he would lose:

Physical life on earth - he would grow old and die

Eternity with God

Health

Paradise

Authority over the devil

Control over his own feelings and actions

All of these depended on Adam maintaining an inner walk of holiness, an inner walk with God. No doubt the same is true today. Many who profess Christ have never repented and believed Christ for deliverance from the prison of inward sin. They do not realize that because of this, they will not enjoy:

Access to God, priesthood, a life of prayer

Intercession

Worship

First love

Authority over the devil

Eternity with God

Both these lists are almost unending. Who can measure the awful consequences of sin, and the wonderful blessings of holiness?

My question to you must be direct - Are you holy? Have you been cleansed? Have you made the supreme moral choice - to ask God to create in you a clean heart? (Psalm 51). Holiness is entered into by an act of strong repentance, under conviction of sin. It is brought about by a yearning after Christ, for closeness to Him, with a hatred of everything that could cloud your walk with Him. Holiness is imparted by baptism with the Spirit (Acts 15:8). Holiness is maintained by a constant walk of self denial, of walking with Christ, and by a refusal of sin in all its forms.

It might be thought that if believers would realize all that they are losing through compromise with sin, they would rise up and seek God for true holiness. But holiness can never be attained by secondary means, which would be sheer deviousness, and subtlety worthy of the devil. It is for this reason that every man's moral choice lies in his personal reaction to the person of Jesus Christ. Will you choose sin and self, or Christ?

'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve' (Joshua 24:15)

Choose holiness, hate sin, destroy every idol, every object of compromise, every avenue of carnal indulgence. Choose Christ, let Him cleanse you through and through. The consequences are incalculable, and the foundation is sure.

'Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity' (2 Tim. 2:19).

Copyright © L.Wheeldon 1993

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

GEORGE W. NORTH

2 Peter 1. *‘There came such a voice to HIM from the excellent glory, Thou art My Son, in Thee I am well pleased’.* When God said this to His Son He had excellent reasons for doing so, for Jesus had been living such an excellent life. His Father had every reason to be well pleased with HIM. This same phenomenon occurred three times during the life of the Lord Jesus; first at the commencement of His ministry; here at the midway point; and again, in John 12, at the closing phase of His ministry, just preceding the cross. The significant thing about each of these words from heaven is that His Father was praising Him, telling Him that hitherto His life had more than fulfilled His Father’s expectations of Him. To Jesus this was worth everything, it was the aim of His life, the standard of all endeavour.

Matthew 13. In this chapter the Lord is making a parabolic statement of the kind of response we may expect from preaching the Word. It is also an explanation of the results He had obtained by preaching. Furthermore it is an indication of what we may expect throughout this age in course of our lesser ministry. It is a sevenfold, pictorial review, each parable presenting one aspect of the Kingdom of Heaven. Four parables were spoken publicly, these four cover areas of the working of the word in relation to the Kingdom of Heaven. The other three were spoken privately to the disciples following the Lord’s interpretation of the second parable to them. The central parable is of the Leaven, which term is later defined for us by the Lord as, Doctrine. (Mark 4:2 informs us that these parables were spoken by the Lord as DOCTRINAL pictures, and they should be read as that. This understood, the significance of placing the fourth doctrinal parable central to the whole becomes apparent.) From their content it becomes obvious that the parables consist of three pairs, to which the seventh was obviously added as being the logical outcome of the gospel age. The Sower and the Wheat and Tares comprise the first pair: The Mustard Seed and the Leaven the second: The Treasure in the Field and the Pearl of Great Price are the third: while the Drag Net rounds off the whole. Within this frame we have a precis in picture form of the institution, progression and completion of gospel ministry in its Kingdom aspect during this age.

TWO SOWERS

During the process of this teaching the Lord reveals the universality of the sphere of the ministry thus: in three parables, 2, 3, 5, the Lord mentions ‘the field’, which is the world, and in a fourth, implies it. Also, in the seventh He mentions ‘the sea’ of humanity. So we see that the sphere of His operation, as well as the presentation of the Word is world-wide, covering the whole of humanity. By the first parable we learn that the Lord Himself is the moving agent in planting the Word in human beings - the soil of the world. By

the second we learn that the devil is the opposing enemy of God and man, seeking to defeat the Lord’s purposes by planting his tares among the wheat. We, therefore, further see that in the world of humanity, two ‘sowers’ are at work.

By dividing up humanity into four kinds of soil, the Lord, in the first parable, makes plain what His objective is. Thereby He shows just what He expects, giving the end results again in a fourfold manner - ‘fruit’. The second parable sets forth the devil’s work in the kingdom; just what his object is is not disclosed; perhaps just sheer confusion - certainly hindrance (but never ultimate success) is what the Lord expects of him. In the next two parables the Lord unfolds two contrasting pictures, each of which in its way, whether outward or inward, shows the development of His purposes by ‘sowing’: the one is outward and obvious, the other is inward and hidden. Outwardly, over the period of the Kingdom age, the seed of God’s planting will grow phenomenally, outgrowing all other seeds and sowings entirely. The Lord is filling some detail into the picture. ‘Keep your eyes on the Kingdom’, He is saying. This tree is phenomenal, exceeding all natural expectations of it as a tree; what a monstrous size in the midst of normal mustard plants. Things must be kept in perspective, and viewed with understanding. What He showed of the Kingdom in the second parable as being a mixture of tares and wheat, by changing the picture He now shows as being only birds lodging in the branches of the tree. Fowls of the air do lodge in trees, they lodge in the many various branches of the kingdom worldwide, but they are no more part of it than birds are part of the tree. The tree is greater than the birds and, unless people are very greatly confused in mind, they see that the tree in no way suffers from their presence. What seems to some to be equality of standing in parable two is revealed in parable three to be anything but that. As those tares stand among the wheat, so fowls lodge in branches, but as tares and wheat grow together till the end of the age, so shall fowls find lodging in the tree till the end. To some the Kingdom may appear to be a growing place for the children of the devil, but the children of God are there as well - and first. The discerning eye sees things differently though; trees and birds cannot be mistaken, they are utterly distinct and entirely different: fowls lodge, the tree grows. Fowls come in from all quarters, the tree grows from one garden and from its own roots! The Lord is clarifying His people’s understanding.

LEAVEN

The fourth parable, at the centre of the seven and placed next to the parable of outward growth lies at the heart of the doctrinal teaching behind every picture in the sevenfold whole. The leaven hidden within by the woman unceasingly works throughout each and all of the three measures of meal till the whole is leavened. Three measures

of meal, spirit, soul and body, comprise the whole of man; inwardly and outwardly. The woman represents the Holy Ghost; He is always associated with that which is female in the Godhead, whether in the human or in the spiritual sense (Mary is the illustration of the former, and the Bride of the latter). By this parable the Lord turns the eye from outward aspiration to inward knowledge. By observing and comparing soils and wheat and tares and trees and birds, no man can judge who, or of what sort he is, there must be inward proof. 'What and who is working in me?', he must ask. As well as seed-sowing by Christ, there must also be inner working by the Spirit. It is He who comes and works with power, teaching the whole person, filling each being, and bringing about all that the Lord desires in and for the true children of the Kingdom.

THE PEARL

The fifth and sixth parables are as obviously related as are the former pairs: they refer to Christ's methods in the world of men relating to His purposes in redemption. He told the fifth parable purposely to show the totality of the sphere of the Redemption: namely the world. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. The Treasure He wanted, and still wants, is in the world, therefore according to His own standards of strict honesty and righteousness, whatever the cost. The figure He did not mention, 'all he had', He said - it is not estimable. The sixth parable reveals the selectivity of God's dealings with men. To do so the Lord introduces the person of the merchant man himself - they were to think of him as a person seeking goodly pearls. Pearls are part of the hidden treasure and he wanted them. One pearl he specially wanted, it was a special pearl and of great price. To obtain it he had to sell all he had. The pearl is the Church, it cost HIM everything, as did the treasure. He bought the world and, doing so, thereby purchased the right to select what He wanted - 'is it not lawful for a man to do as he likes with his own?', He once said.

Throughout the parables so far examined there has been a progression of thought as well as a development of

teaching. The first five have this in common, they are all land-based; in the sixth there is a noticeable change of element from land to sea. It is probable that the Lord did this in preparation for the final picture He wishes to present. In this seventh parable the sphere of operation is the sea. As fishermen cast the drag-net into the sea, so the gospel drag-net is cast into the entire sea of humanity, and is now being drawn throughout the whole world-mass of men. The net is submerged, it needs to be to do its work, and it will remain so until the end of this age; when it is finally brought to shore the gospel era will end. What is in the net will be unknown until that day, when it will then be found to contain evil as well as good. The day of sorting out will surely come, angels have been already appointed to do it.

TREASURES OLD AND NEW

These parables are perfectly designed to set forth various aspects of basic truth: each one presents a different view of the Kingdom of Heaven and is indispensable to the proper understanding of the mystery of that kingdom. This sevenfold picture of the kingdom embraces all kinds of activities and reveals the different persons and powers now at work in the world: it also shows that through it all the Lord is bringing all His purposes to fruition. Though much seems to be contradictory to that fact, it is nevertheless true. The Lord told the parables in order to provide us with a background of knowledge and give us understanding so that we should know what is going on during this age.

At the conclusion of them the Lord asked, 'Have you understood ALL these things?' They said, 'Yes, Lord'. Then He said to them, 'Therefore every scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man - a householder - which bringeth forth out of his treasure both new and old'. That is precisely what He had just been doing. There are things both new and old in these parables, things of the old and things of the new testaments, things of the past, the present and of the future. What a blessed virtue is understanding.

Copyright © G.W.North 1993

TIMES OF REFRESHING

BERNARD HULL

The will of God for each local church is that times of refreshing should come from the presence of the Lord. This is to be recognized simply as the coming of Jesus Christ amongst men by the medium of the Holy Spirit. 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you' (Acts 3:19-20).

This is a tremendous promise. It was given straight

from the heart of God by Peter and has possibly been overlooked by many of us for years; nevertheless it is infallibly true.

SEASONS

In all forms of life there are times and seasons which are absolutely vital to growth. Throughout all animate life we recognize the heartbeat, the inhaling and exhaling of breath, the regular, rhythmic throb of growth. To be

successful the farmer must co-operate unreservedly with this rhythm of the natural creation, and, doing so, would expect a harvest. It is the same also in human relationships; if a child is to be expected of a marriage union, then husband and wife must co-operate with this order and rhythm which the Lord has established, for it is impossible to break God's laws and expect fruit. Notice that God's intention is not just one, but many 'times of refreshing', not necessarily consistent but, nevertheless, regular times in the life of the Church of God in each locality when there are real moves of the Spirit, outpourings from on high. Glory be to God for His abundance of grace in this matter.

The word that Peter uses in this verse is quite distinctive - 'refreshings', literally 'up-soul'. It is a glorious resurrection word. In a healthy church we are to expect regular times when the Holy Ghost is outpoured upon us and refreshed souls 'go-up' as though being resurrected from sleep into which they have fallen, and also those who have never known newness of life are quickened by the Spirit into new birth. Thus there is vitally connected the refreshing of those born of God in the Church and the adding by God of those freshly born.

RESURRECTION

The worst feature of the common fallacy being preached among us today is that we are already in the outpoured state and that this sudden effusion of gifts and preoccupation with the Holy Ghost is in itself all that is meant by an outpouring. This cannot be the whole truth, for 'He shall send Jesus Christ' is the promise. When this happens our preoccupation will be with Himself, more than with His Agency, the blessed Spirit, and the result will be resurrection life in the midst, not the modified and dressed-up carnality of the flesh. When the Holy Ghost comes down men and women go up - times of 'up-soul' from the Lord's presence; and the lifting up into newness of life. Are there times like this in your own church, when there are regular moves of expansion by refreshings and real new birth in your midst? Such occasions must not be confused with crusades or the like, because they are initiated entirely by the Holy Ghost - they are times when, through His Body, the Church, God moves in on an area or locality and the impotent are raised into newness of life and activity. The event that prompted this promise was the raising of the impotent man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. This man was well-known to them all in Jerusalem. He had lain there many a year - possibly Jesus had often passed him by in the days of His flesh. Now by Peter's ministrations this cripple had become a man raised up by the power of God which had gone through him. He experienced the healing virtue of the resurrected Christ and was raised up because refreshing was in the midst.

In these days many are idealistically dividing soul and spirit; the word 'soulish' is much in vogue; the critical faculties work overtime in judging so-and-so as soulish and so-and-so as spiritual, and many sit in meetings in this

destructive frame of mind, being negative in the extreme and totally unproductive for God. How re-invigorating then to discover in Scripture a promise of souls 'going up' when they experience resurrection of the soul - the soul of men utterly swallowed up in the spiritual life and movings of God. In Acts 2:27-31 we read of Jesus' soul being laid low in the bonds of death and darkness, but behold - the power of the Father was let loose from on high and Jesus knew His own time of refreshing - 'up-soul'. He was raised up into newness of life by the spiritual resurrection. Up He went, out of the environs of sin, hell, the grave and darkness, and passing through the heavens ascended to the highest point of all. Now He is the resurrected One, Himself refreshed in soul, and from His presence refreshings now come.

REFRESHING

When we are recipients of refreshings from the presence of the Lord we can expect at least two things to happen. Firstly, the individual believers will know a real uplift of spiritual life in their souls. Whereas they were in some degree of soul sleep, now they know consciously a sweet breath of resurrection life from high reviving them in faith, love and good works. Secondly, there will be outpourings of the Holy Spirit to effect new birth in those who hitherto had no life and whom the Lord will draw to His refreshed Church, or who will be sought out by Him through those whom He has refreshed. Thus we see that refreshings and outpourings are not synonymous terms. The refreshings are for God's inheritance, His Church, and the outpourings are upon men and women in the locality who are brought to faith by the drawings of the Father through the Spirit. Refreshings on the Church bring 'up-soul', re-awakening, while outpourings of the Spirit bring spirit-births. This distinction should be kept in view and both refreshings and outpourings should be sought by us in our churches and localities. It is possible that both may begin simultaneously in our church and locality or, alternatively, firstly God's refreshings in the Church leading to outpourings and expansions in the Church by spirit-birth.

Let us also bear in mind that the moment of spirit-birth also means the spiritual resurrection of the soul. When the enthroned Christ sent that first outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, among those who first received were Peter and John. They were spirit-born (regenerated) and they in their soul consciousness were raised up simultaneously. They were now utterly refreshing to be with. Their presence had power and influence in it. Quickened in spirit and raised up in heavenly places in their conscious life, was it surprising that through their presence this man who had been incapacitated from his mother's womb should be the recipient of such blessing and God's bountiful provision outpoured so freely?

Unless there are refreshings in the midst, powerlessness will predominate and we will be conscious

of little resurrection life. The soul is the area of self-knowledge or consciousness in the life. Therefore, the refreshed soul's consciousness is of the powers of the world to come, awakened unto righteousness and sensitive to heavenly things. A person who is conscious thus will be a trumpet giving a certain sound whenever they speak. They will be speaking of that of which they are aware and the word shall be with power, and the dead shall be raised from their immobility and state of sin; their spirits spoken into life by the prophetic word are likened to eagles soaring in the heavens.

NEW LIFE

The imminent presence of God in the midst is imperative. Have we discovered the power of presence? We have all experienced inexplicable sensations of anxiety or unhappiness, or peace and joy, when in the company and presence of some kind of inner power. To be in some people's presence is a benediction, while another's powerful personality is often a cause of fear. When Jesus is present truly He makes things new. Wherever He moved while in the limited body of His flesh things changed, He left healings and deliverances behind Him wherever He went, and in that future day when He descends from heaven everything shall be changed also. He will come with a shout and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive shall be caught up to be with Him in the air and the elements of the old heaven and earth shall simply be dissolved; and the thing which shall accomplish all this is His coming. What a powerful presencing this will be. By this the old order gives way to the new. God grant us a full realization of this principle in every church and fellowship we represent - when He comes in real refreshing presence that which is not ordained to resurrection is made over to destruction awaiting annihilation. Beloved, we must have this new order of things in our midst else we shall remain or degenerate into impotent religious worshippers. We could shout it from the housetops - wherever Jesus comes in power all things are made new, old things pass away. How far have we strayed from this? We may have prophecies, gifts, preachings and sing Wesley hymns and shout - but in our midst do our eyes rest on lives that have been made new in the last few days because they came into the presence of the Lord and were eternally changed?

In these verses there is a logical succession of ideas: resurrection (v22); restitution (v21); refreshing (v19). The preoccupation in apostolic preaching was resurrection because this was their soul consciousness of the life they were living. Everywhere they went they were experiencing the uprisings and quickenings of Jesus, the New Man. Their speech was phrased in the language of that resurrected Man: 'Rise up' was their watchword. They saw that all downtrodden ones who were brought low were entitled to resurrection of their inward man into newness of life and the restoration to all things promised by the prophets. Restoration and restitution of what God promised by the prophets - the restoration of manhood, the

resurrection of a new race of men, regenerated and conformed to their own Heavenly Adam. This is the main thrust of the prophetic stream which first flowed through the opened mouth of Adam and Eve who believed they had 'gotten A MAN from the Lord'. We know that Cain, their firstborn, was not God's choice, but even so it appears there was some hint of knowledge that there was to be A NEW MAN. The restoration is quite impossible apart from this new race of beings. God's new creation could not be Himself, nor yet a mere man, but an entirely new company, hitherto unknown, not angels nor any other form of created being but a new creation conceived in, and produced from, the inner heart and mind of God. Resurrection should be the mainspring of all prophetic ministry: Peter said 'a prophet shall the Lord send', and - through Him in resurrection - quickening from on high. In many places prophecy has been so defiled by men that it is a carnal shadow of the quickening word it ought to be, namely the word that refreshes and brings life out of death. When times of refreshing come amongst the saints it results in a new order of things - a spiritual rebirth, the times in the Church when God adds to the number in clear and definite moves generated of His Spirit. At such times long extended persuasive approaches to people trying to talk them out of their sin are replaced by definite repentance resulting in the sealing of the Spirit. No one can read the Book of Acts without noticing the regular and ever-expanding moves of God in those early years - outpourings leading to foundation, followed by consolidation, then outgoings, those regular rhythms which we associate with the living organism of the Church.

QUICKENING LIFE

May the Lord grant us sanity of mind in these days to lay hold on God for these same kind of movings. His Son died and rose again for them. What does it profit, brethren, if we received gifts and blessings and gain rich understanding of Scripture, with revelation also, and do not have this resurrection ministry in our midst? The presence of the Lord must be so vital and real that we know and feel ourselves to be a new race of beings - God's peculiar people - which are neither mere men, nor angels, nor beasts nor yet devils. Each one should be a living sacrifice, quickened from above and alive from the dead, through whom the new creating prophetic word pours forth, and from whose presence flows the river of life. Let it be known that unless the prophetic ministry is raised up among us in the true stream, there can be no real movings of the kind we need - men who speak the word which brings life and construction, or death and destruction, raised up of God and flowing in the ministry of the Eternal Word. God cause us to magnify this prophetic ministry. Men confuse it with foretelling, with such phrases as 'My dear children ... this', and 'My little children ... that'. Beloved, the spirit-quickening word cleanses the reasonings, smashes the arguments, commands response, reaches the spirits of men and commands them rise up, leave sin and self and the world. That is the glorious revelation prepared for those

who move in this stream, they see obedient spirits rise up one spirit with God and the souls go up in consciousness of Life eternal. When this ministry prevails in the churches God will bring people in to hear it and live. He will see to it that the hungry shall come and be fed, they shall listen and hear and live, for they shall hear His voice.

At this point it is advisable to pause and ask - are we experiencing such times as this? Is the Lord's presence so real in the midst that new birth takes place regularly because waters of the Eternal Ocean are rolling in and engulfing souls into resurrection life? If not, why not? Honesty is imperative here, for the promise is sure and the principles of the Lord are beyond question. How thrilled we should be about that.

REPENTANCE

Now we must consider the significance of the words 'so that' in our text, they are so important. The original reads: 'Repent ... be converted SO THAT your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you' (Acts 3:19,20). There are certain conditions which must be fulfilled ere we shall come to regular times of refreshing in the Church. These conditions are not so attractive as some would like them to be, but the same God who gives the promise also gave the conditions for its fulfilment and will never change them. He changed none of His principles for His only Begotten, so it is morally certain that He will not do so for us, but He will give grace abundant for the time of need from the throne of Grace that His will may be done.

The first condition is repentance. To repent is to change your mind. The following instruction 'to be converted' is made contingent upon the former. Conversion is to 'change direction or course', an entirely impossible thing unless a change of mind has formerly taken place. The fountain of all creation is the mind of God, the Word He spoke came from His mind, in the same way our behaviour patterns spring from the mind that is in us. There can be no change of life without change of mind. Repentance is fundamental to times of refreshing, indeed to receiving anything from God. I must confess that my own mind has undergone change on this matter. When first I entered into the life of God I believed very much in God's will to outpour the Spirit regularly, but afterwards I began to adopt that mental stance prevalent among so many in the country today that assumes, or says, 'We are already in it'. Pride, mental arrogance and highmindedness debase us, as though that which is generally seen country-wide is God's norm. However, due to God's grace moving upon me in His unremitting way, I began to return to the same love and understanding which I had from Him at first. I had need of a change of mind, and He gave it me. In so many things we all need this, indeed our minds need to be changed totally. It is easy to say that 'revival' is an Old Covenant word, and

that revival is God's norm. Of course it is; but unless all the evidences of it are in our midst, to say in the same breath that we are in that revival state is nothing but crass folly - carnal-mindedness. What is our mental attitude to this message concerning times of refreshing? Do we believe that we are in them, or do we agree that we need them, and by God's grace will co-operate with Him to obtain them? The basic need amongst us is to have a changed mind about it; without that faith cannot come. Faith must be operative in the mind as well as the other faculties of the inward man. Faith is the response of the inward man to the Lord and to what He is saying. For this the mind must be utterly responsive to the will of God and delivered from all objections, arguments and carnal attitudes. Only when our minds change will feelings truly alter so that desire moves after the will of God. Only waiting on God about this matter will effect such a change in our thinking. Tarrying in His presence will give God the opportunity to re-shape our thinking in this matter, and not only this, but also all other faculties of the mind. Repentance subsists as a state, not merely as an initial experience. God refashions our thought-life through the revelation of His Spirit; when we allow Him to do so He brings in the consistent life which consists in the permanently converted state. God can only outpour refreshings of Himself upon those who are in this state of repentance, those whose eyes look up to Him, waiting on Him in faith, shut up to Him alone, knowingly convinced that this is His will. The outpouring of the Spirit can only be given when the company with whom we gather move into line with the will of God. It is of no use to ask God to outpour if you are not prepared to bring the whole of your life into accord with His will. Conversion, that real state of changed behaviour, attitude and life, will naturally follow on from this work of God done in the heart that is brought to repentance so that 'Sins are blotted out'; thereby the ground is cleared for the moved of God so desperately needed among us. It must be confessed with sorrow and shame that sin is still evident in many quarters. There is no other conclusion to which an honest man or woman can come, for the promise is so clear yet it is not being fulfilled in church experience. If there are no refreshings then the only reasonable conclusion is that the obstruction in the way is sin. We may be sure that the thing that prevents outpourings is sin, be it of the objectionable, grosser type or just the more general subtle one of unbelief. When sins are blotted out the blessing will come, and not before.

WAITING ON GOD

Waiting on God is one of the most vital necessities of the present day Church. Merely outward kneeling before Him for an hour or two per week is insufficient. Waiting on God has to do with the inward disposition of the whole heart to God. The proper relationship which should exist between God and man is that of creature looking up to and waiting on Creator as to the Source of all. The basic sin of the world is the self-exaltation of the creature to the position of God, for this renders the true Creator God obsolete. If we wish to return to the purposes of God in the world of man

we must then return to the simplicity of creaturehood. Dependence on God, waiting with a holy 'naivety' for Him to move and pour out from on high. This waiting upon God in hope is the ground in which faith will flourish; the interior eye will be opened, the revelation of the Spirit will increase and wisdom will abound; the things of this world will lose their lustre and shall no longer dominate hearts. Beside this, fear of man, with its consequent evil of looking for honour from men, will disappear and all will be replaced by the unveiling of the Invisible to the interior eye. This is our great need; to behold the Invisible, to live our lives as seeing Him. The psalmist in Psalm 39 instructs us in the way that the fire begins to burn; it was while he was musing that his thinking was straightened out about God and himself and all men. God rectifies our thinking. It is most salutary to notice the Church's one-mindedness which is so prevalent demonstrated in the Acts, they became of one mind with God. We are apt to think that single-mindedness is only a group of people becoming one-mind with each other, but it is possible to have mental agreement with one another and yet be a million miles away from the mind of God. They came to unity in and about the mind of God; this was the secret of their boldness.

The mark of a person's growth in grace is that his mind becomes renewed successively up into God's own mind so that he becomes fully persuaded of all God's thoughts and deeds. The result is that his heart becomes feelingly aware of what God has wrought in the resurrection and enthronement of His Son, and is super-conscious of the person and presence of the Invisible. The man has a living consciousness of the state of change in the invisible world, a knowledge that the invisible power of sin has been broken and dethroned, and that righteousness has triumphed in the heavens. Now the Holy Spirit is freely given without measure and hangs 'o'er all the thirsty land' ready to fall upon and flow out through lives sacrificially given over unto God. Truly the spiritual Rock whence Living Water flows is everywhere to be found. Of old when Israel wandered in the wilderness they needed above all to find water and wherever they made camp there it was. They never saw that spiritual Rock, but whenever they needed it there the water appeared and flowed unto them. We know that Rock was Christ. The brooding immanence of the Spirit of God becomes a vital reality to those who wait on God. As their hearts move along with Him in this path their spirits take flight and they lay hold on God, moving out into intercessions both expressed and inexpressible. At such times the Invisible becomes almost visible and the intangible tangible. With the resultant decrease of the activities of the mind the groanings and desires and longings of the 'hidden' (invisible) man of the heart become audible and blend with the desire of the Eternal God. Until then these inward movings of the invisible man are quenched by the reasonings of the questioning mind. We have all to discover that in this realm as all other the mind must follow spirit, not the spirit the mind. Once man's spirit moves with and after God his mind is restored to its proper place and function, he is becoming re-aligned and

adjusted. It is impossible to over-emphasize this need to wait on God. A man must do it with faith; it will certainly mean periods of prolonged quietness. He must not be deterred by this, for this is nothing but the silence of God. Let him but continue and surely the fire will burn. Incidental things and worries great and small will vanish from his spirit, making way for his desires to be brought into sweet union with the heart of God in the deepest levels of human consciousness, unshakeable and profound.

THE COST

It is not possible to talk concerning these things without realizing that this ministry will cost a man everything. If a man chooses this way of life (and to move in another is folly) then he must be prepared for a real conversion to take place in himself involving change of course, as well as change of behaviour. Jesus, as described in Philippians 2, thought in a new, different way from all mankind in obedience unto death. Be ready then for a change in life-style, wherein things formerly acceptable become obsolete. Things hitherto lawful will become unlawful and, if continued, will be sin. Tastes will change, and so will our use of time. So drastic will be the renovation that even the records once listened to will become an offence to our spirit, and levity, frivolity and sarcasm will be banished from our idea of humour. Nothing will be allowed that grieves away the Spirit of God from His present intentions and movings in the churches unto the salvation of men. All this is nothing other than the Lord Jesus purging His floor so that we, being sensitized to the mind of the Spirit, shall live our lives to the glory of God. With the gentle Dove abiding undisturbed within our breasts, we shall be a holy people separated unto the Lord. In Noah's day the dove left the ark but had to return again, for there was no place of rest anywhere to be found, but thousands of years later she found sweet repose in union with the pure and undefiled Lamb of God, whose sole aim was to fulfil all righteousness. Beloved, let us also fulfil all righteousness that we too may know the comfort and glory of the blessed Spirit residing within. Let moral rectitude return to the heart and restitution be made, let sin be cast out and He shall come. The Gentle Spirit is easily grieved, but so swiftly returns when men turn in humble brokenness and confession of their need to God.

THE PRAYER MEETING

Turning at this point to the consideration of practical things and making a suggestion based on experience - it is a good thing to make provision in the weekly meetings of the church or fellowship for regular times of waiting on God in prayer. Someone has said that the spiritual tone and depth of a church is most easily discoverable at the prayer meetings, and reading the record of the history of the Church in the Acts, who will doubt the veracity of the latter statement or the advisability of the first?

Initially it may be discovered that such prayer

meetings are poorly attended, but perseverance and patience are essential qualities in Church leadership, and as God begins to move the prayer meetings will become the 'hub' of all that goes on. When God's consistent movings in depth and power are seen in meetings for prayer, times of waiting upon God and intercession will become the special meetings which people will make every effort to attend. These are not occasions when people pray according to a list, but a gathering (initially at least once a week; it will become more frequent as God begins to move) where the hungry can come together to seek God and call upon His name. One of the popular pleas of the day is for meetings for discussion, or questions-and-answers and such like. Here is the point where spirituality is so often revealed. The prayer meeting should be pre-eminent in the life of any church and the last meeting to be cancelled or substituted by another. If people would begin to wait on God they would discover they had already received the Answer to their vital need, and would speedily find the answers to their questionings also, having no need of discussion to obtain clarity. In the church the writer attends the main meeting for prayer was held on Monday evenings. This arrangement inevitably meant that upon four or five occasions in the year, due to Bank Holidays, the prayer meeting was cancelled. However, since God began His time of refreshing amongst us, by the general consent and desire of all concerned, the prayer meeting was moved to another evening so that the opportunity of being together with God during that week should not be missed. This is indicative of a healthy hunger in the midst. However, an example of a healthier state could be to disregard Bank Holidays entirely!

THE PARADOX

It is to be observed that in every department of the Christian life there are paradoxes. This is such a normal condition of life that the absence of paradox indicates an unhealthy spirit. For example, we behold the shame of the cross, yet paradoxically there we also see the Lord of Glory. The natural state of us all, if we are healthy, is to be satisfied and contented yet hungry for more; having received more, and being contented therewith, we still want to go even deeper. It is wonderful how God has fashioned us to stand on two legs and feet; if we do so we shall be steady. Birds cannot fly on one wing; God formed them with two in order that they should traverse the heavens in liberty and freedom; so we have the inward paradox of two extremes. We all at times feel unwell. We catch influenza, health leaves us, we lose appetite, lassitude sets in. When health begins to return one of the main signs of it is desire for food. Ah - it is a healthy sign - to have a hunger for more of Jesus, yet be contented in His gracious supply. You will find these two wings shall carry you on into real liberty from self and sin into the heaven of a healthy life in Christ.

This matter of standing steady on two legs and feet is the answer to all objections. For example, some object that we should be in a consistent state of being 'in the river

of God's love; not having sporadic outpourings - but does not wisdom indicate the need for both? God brings individuals into the spiritual counterpart of the physical conditions which pertained in His earthly paradise where all seasons blended into one. Then, mist watered everything and rain showers were unknown; the time of fruit, and leaf and bud were always occurring together. Simultaneously, in much the same manner which we now find in Equatorial regions, where the sun is perpetually overhead and seasonal times are almost non-existent, everything was going on at the same time. When an outpouring is in the midst it is to be expected that it will be the cause and the occasion of some men and women getting into the main stream of God's will and never leaving it. Doing so, they are carried on in the most wonderful manner and bring forth life and fruit wherever they go. These are they for whom the Son is overhead perpetually, whose lives are consistently watered from on high by constant distillation from the presence of God. However, alongside this consistently flowing life of abundance, and as a result of it, there are to be definite times of outpouring also. These outpourings are not primarily for them but are bestowed so that others may be partakers of 'up-soul' - resurrection life by the Spirit. The Church is here to be God's opportunity to outpour Himself upon the men and women He so loves. We are not left here selfishly to 'perfect ourselves' but to be, in the truest sense, 'channels only' to others.

SACRIFICE AND CONSUMMATION

These refreshings are signs of God's approval, the sealing of that which pleases Him. In Moses' day, when the Tabernacle was completed and reared 'according to the pattern as the Lord commanded Moses' the Lord presented Himself in it by fire and a cloud of Glory to seal the work. The same thing occurred in Solomon's time. When the Temple was finished, the sacrifices slain and laid out in order, the fire fell, sealing and consummating it all; all had been done according to God's own heart. In all burnt offerings there were two parts - first the beast was slain and washed and laid out in order upon the altar, and secondly the fire consumed and sealed the offering, transforming the sacrifice into an ascending odour, a savour of rest, pleasing unto God. The Fire sealed the sacrifice. We recognize here a vivid picture of the vital association between Calvary and Pentecost. Calvary - the sacrificial Lamb expiring as man for all mankind; and Pentecost - the coming of the fire on those whose allegiance was wholly given to their Messiah Jesus and that sacrifice. This is the explanation for the tongues of fire that sat on their heads, it was the sealing of Calvary, the consummation of the life He laid down for them. Calvary without Pentecost would have been unfinished, unsealed. The outpouring of the fire of the Holy Ghost is the consummation of the fulfilment of all things by Jesus, whether in Life, and Death, and Resurrection and Enthronement, according to the pattern. Refreshings in the midst are God's sealing, confirming and assuring that all is well. Let us therefore fear lest we should come short of this.

We must give ourselves to waiting on God in intercessions and prayer, looking unto Jesus from whom these sealing refreshings do now flow. As the fire fell and transformed the sacrifice to an ascending odour of rest to God, so also when these refreshings are in the midst, though there be many ashes in evidence, there shall be a sweet odour ascending to Him. Are we ready to bring that which shall be turned to ashes as the Lord brings all things to the consummation of fire? Peter tells us that God will pour out His Spirit in the last days, at the end of the age. We are not then to regard the outpouring as the consummation only, but the culmination also. Then shall the end come; the fire shall dissolve all the elements and all things shall be changed. God grant us hearts that are unreservedly abandoned to His will, living sacrifices indeed, thus giving

God the opportunity to outpour Himself in refreshings and all-transforming fire from on high.

Nothing less than such has been described will satisfy the heart of God, and those who are walking close with Him shall feel Him share the burden of His heart with them also; it is an indescribable privilege to be brought into this communion of the heart purposes of God. 'Even so then, Lord, come and lead us in. Draw us to the sharing of those things dear to Thy heart, Thy love for the souls of men, Thy grief at the sight of the corruption of those for whom Jesus died. We cannot bring ourselves in, we covet Thy drawings, our Father, that secure us ever more deeply into Thine eternal will. Amen.'

Copyright © B.M.Hull 1993

THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

GEORGE W. NORTH

Luke 19:1-28

The parable of the pounds, though of a similar nature to the parable of the talents, is really quite different from it. Perhaps the most outstanding difference, at once noticeable, is that each servant receives exactly the same amount of money: one pound. Before recounting the parable, Luke tells us the reason why the Lord told it: this is important, for it gives great help as to the interpretation of it. The parable was an addition to what the people had seen and heard at Jericho. The Lord had asked for, and received, and accepted an invitation from Zaccheus to go to his house for a meal. Hearing the Lord's direct request, Zaccheus jumped down out of his tree and received Him joyfully. Before the Lord left the house, He said to everybody, 'This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost'. The Lord added the parable because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and the people were thinking that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear. They should not have done so - it was sheer assumption. There is no difficulty in deciding that the nobleman of the parable who is going to the far country is the Lord. He is going to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. His concern is obviously that in his absence his business should be maintained, so he calls all his servants, ten in number, and gives them each a pound, telling them to, 'Occupy till I come'. The Lord told this story somewhere between the two cities of Jericho and Jerusalem, hence the importance of the words, 'but his (that is the nobleman's) citizens hated him ... saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us'. Jerusalem was by

right Jesus' city. He was going there - it was full of people who hated Him. He had not yet reached there, but He knew exactly how He would be treated when He did reach there, He would make His final departure for this far country from there. Jericho! No-one could ever have imagined that anyone there could be saved, or that anyone would think of entertaining Jesus there - Jericho was not His city - but a whole household received Him and was saved there, only one though, just one. The only places He went to in Jerusalem were His own house (the temple) and the prison house. He was hated in both. Each city was as evil as the other.

SALVATION

This, then, is the background of the parable and, properly understood, enables us to understand the significance of the difference between the talents and the pounds. The former was about selective giving according to peoples several abilities, but not so here, this is about equal giving to all. Each servant received one pound only, with the injunction - occupy (it) till the lord's return. With the exception of one, every one of them did exactly as the lord said, and received in return authority over cities in the lord's kingdom according to the degree in which the original pound multiplied itself at their hand. The word 'occupy' simply means, to work: they were to work with their pounds - or better, put it to work. That is all the Lord did at Jericho in Zaccheus' house. There was no display of miraculous gifts in the city, all He did was to take salvation to the home. It was all done by His presence - He came to abide. It was Him not His talents - 'today I must

abide'. That was the basic 'pound' He had and used, He was the Saviour. His purpose in going to Jericho was to bring salvation there. The Lord gives this great privilege to ALL His servants alike, everyone must be about their Master's business in this world.

REWARD

The reward for faithful use of the pound is phenomenally large, it is bestowed for gain by trading. This trading is not for self-gain, but for the gain of the nobleman. That the servant who uses it properly does eventually gain thereby is incidental to the story, quite obviously the successful servants do benefit greatly from it all, but they did not know they would. This was not offered to them as an incentive to work, they never discovered it until the lord's return, they made the pound their own by doubling it for their master. Those who repeated that, and kept on repeating it without thought of personal gain, found in the end that the more it multiplied the greater became their reward. In the kingdom of the noble Son it will be easily seen who have been the faithful servants and who have not. The faithful ones will have authority over cities; they may not be very talented, indeed may not have any special talent at all, that is not the issue, the Lord never gave them talents, He gave them pounds. Faithfulness is what the Lord was looking for, goodness was reckoned according to faithfulness. Faithfulness brings success, persistent consistent faithfulness brings GREAT success.

THE WICKED SERVANT

Sadly, there is a tragic side to the story. In it there are three kinds of servants, good, faithful servants; good, faithful and industrious servants; and wicked, lazy servants; each one of those is treated with strict justice, and each is either rewarded or judged out of his own mouth. Each servant was also judged upon his personal estimate of his lord - what kind of person he considered his lord to be. The wicked servant was convinced his lord was a wicked man, that he was austere, that he took up what he laid not down, and that he reaped crops where he had not strewn seed. Everything that came out of that servant's mouth showed exactly what he considered his master to be, namely a cheat and a thief, a selfish, stern, hard man, a tyrant who forced his servants to cheat and steal with him and for him. In other words, by his actions as well as his words, this servant was telling his lord that he, the servant, was the better of the two men, for he had refused to be implicated in the lord's practices any longer. He had received the talent, wrapped it up carefully, and kept it somewhere safe and useless and (perhaps he even thought) harmless. Whatever he thought in the day of rewards who can tell? 'Take from him the pound', said the lord, 'give it to him that hath ten pounds' - it was an extra-special award to the industrious servant. Who expected that? That servant was good, faithful, industrious, extra-special. There were protests, even among the faithful, but the lord ignored them; devotion to him and to the service with which

he had been entrusted was the key factor. The lord rewards:

1. What a man knows of him in his heart;
2. What he does as a result of that knowledge.

To be fair to all, the lord judges each. The reward to the faithful ones was this; each of them was allowed to:

1. Keep the original pound (possibly the pounds he accumulated too) he had used so well.
2. Extra to this he was also elevated to be governor over as many cities as pounds he had accumulated; a city for a pound.

The servants were not promised this when given the pounds, they worked with them for their noble lord. They considered that their reward lay in the privilege of service, that was all. Not until their lord returned did they discover that, all unknowingly, they had been working for themselves also. The pound, when given, had been an entrustment, but it was also a test, and in the end it became a wage.

To those who misjudged his action and misunderstood his principles of operation, the lord's words were these, 'Unto everyone which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him'. Apparently that servant who hid his pound lost it! For ever? Was it taken away for ever? Oh, yes, it was not his. The pound was his lord's. When it was given it was given for one reason and for one reason only, that he should occupy it for his lord. He was not given it to keep or to save up, he was told to live in - 'occupy' it. The pound had to be to him as a house, his heart and mind must be in it all the time. How best to use the pound? That must occupy his thoughts always, he must concentrate all his powers on that.

He knew that he himself was not his own, he belonged to his lord. It was a great honour to be entrusted with a pound belonging to his lord, a greater honour still that he should be entrusted with it in his lord's absence. When his lord returned he would be more honourable than ever, he was going away to receive a kingdom; how great he would be.

'IN THE BANK'

That servant was not the one who suffered the most though, a far greater tragedy befell those citizens who would not have the lord to reign over them, 'Bring them hither', he said, 'and slay them before me.' The servant who lost the reward, and the lord's trust, had his pound taken away. Those who would not submit to the reign of the absent lord had their lives taken away.

That servant's loss was due to abuse of privilege; his folly lay in trying to keep what he had been given, instead of using it. He wrapped it up in a napkin and 'laid it up',

apparently he wanted to keep it clean also. The last thing the lord said to this man was, 'Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?' The lord wanted some return from the use of his money, and who would say he was wrong?

By telling the parable the Lord Jesus was saying much, much more than at first appears. It would now not be long before He would be laid up in a tomb, wound with graveclothes and His face wrapped in a napkin. Everybody would think it was for death, but He knew it would be for the 'bank', He was God's pound, all was planned that at His coming He would be able to claim His own with usury. He gave Himself over to His Father that the blessed Holy Spirit, coming to man in His Name, would be able to use His investment of Himself in multiplied thousandfolds. They would all be there waiting for Him at His return.

BY TRADING

Having recorded the parable, Luke says of the Lord, 'And when He had thus spoken, He went before, ascending up to Jerusalem'. He knew that the citizens of that city would send that message of rejection after Him when He left it; such was their hatred. The parable was prophetic as well as practical. He will return, though, He will reward them, He will punish, He will give, He will take away - as the case may be. The question asked of everyone will be, 'What have you gained by trading?' Will it be, 'Thy pound hath gained ...?' Or will it be, 'Thy pound has been preserved - wrapped up and hid?' Unused. Nothing lost, but nothing gained. Not even an attempt at investment, with the hope of some small return? Fellow servant of the Lord, an entrustment from the Lord has been put into our hands. Is it wasted there, has it become useless, will it eventually be lost to you and taken away?

One very important point stands out, too important to be missed or neglected, namely - 'Thou knowest'. All service and its eventual results turns upon a man's 'knowledge' of his lord. The stated knowledge which comes out of the mouth is the standard of the work or lack of it a man does or fails to do. Notice that no promise of any kind was made to the servants by the lord. He never promised reward for industriousness, neither did he offer any advice; with the pound he gave a command, that is all - occupy! Put it to work! But the lazy servant did not do that, he was a wicked man, and what he said showed he believed his lord to be as wicked as he, and at the end told him he knew he was.

The man was not telling the truth; he could not have been, for if he really did believe the lord to be as hard and unscrupulous as he said he was, the man would have handed over the pound to the bank that it should at least earn some interest for this 'grasping lord'. The man was a fraud, he was stripped of everything.

SPENDING

The Lord told this parable, so full of spiritual meaning, because people were thinking that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear. Whatever made them think that is a mystery. How could they know when the Kingdom of God should appear? For that matter, how could they know what and how and when anything to do with God's kingdom should happen? But we have cause to be grateful for their astonishing assumption, for it resulted in this story told for ever as well as their benefit. The Lord has gone away to the far country to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return. He has not yet come back, but in His absence His servants should be serving Him, occupying to the full what He has given us so visibly to enjoy, even life eternal. This is the pound He gives all His servants, it is His own, and He gives it no more to one than to another, but to every one of His servants equally.

Having been received, it must be used. On no account must it be laid up in a napkin and saved, it must be spent. It is axiomatic in the Kingdom of God that he that saveth his life shall lose it; the human life filled with eternal life cannot be kept unless it be occupied - put to use - spent. It is only ours because it was first His, and being ours it IS His. Every one of the lord's servants realized at least one thing, namely, that the pound was not their own, but their lord's; when they faced him at his coming, each one of them said so. When the Lord comes back, it will not only be for His own servants, that is persons, but for His pounds as well. If a man has eternal life he must spend it, for that is the only way to keep it, as the parable so clearly shows. The pound was never really the possession of any of these servants, not even the successful ones, until it was given them with the others they gained.

The wicked servant who started off equal with the others never did have the lord's pound, and at last it was taken from him. 'Take the pound from him', said the lord. It was given to him that had eleven pounds, the original one plus the ten he gained, so that in the end he had twelve pounds. It those days it was a fortune.

EXPENDABLE

The wicked servant lost all because of his wrong estimation of the person of his lord. A man's estimation of Christ determines both his attitude to service and the quality of it. It is an insult and a blatant lie to say that the Lord did not take up what He laid down; it is also a deliberate lie of satan for a man to think and say He reaps where He does not sow. The Gospel is all about Him laying down His life and taking it again, and sowing His life that He should reap it. How deceived can a man be! And how deluded that he can think he should lay up the pound, his expendable life, in a napkin and keep it.

EDITOR

S = SHEEP

Sheep were an important part of the possessions of the ancient Hebrews and other Eastern nations. The first mention in the Bible occurs in Genesis 4:2. They were used in sacrificial offerings, both the adult male (Ex.20:24; 1 Kings 8:63; 2 Chron.29:33) and the lamb, ie 'a male from one to three years old', but young lambs of the first year were more generally used in the offerings (see Ex.29:38; Lev.9:3 & 12:6; Num.28:9).

Sheep and lambs were also very important items of food in the OT world (1 Sam.25:18; 1 Kings 1:19 & 4:23; Ps.44:11). The wool was used for clothing (Lev.13:47; Deut.22:11; Prov.31:13; Job 31:20). 'Rams skins dyed red' were used as a covering for the tabernacle (Ex.25:5). Sheep and lambs were sometimes paid as tribute (2 Kings 3:4). It is very striking to notice the immense numbers of sheep that were reared in Palestine in Bible times.

Shepherds in Palestine and in Eastern countries generally go before their flocks, which they induce to follow by calling to them (cp John 10:4, Ps.77:20; 80:1) though they also drove them (Gen.33:13). The following quotation, by a man called Hartley, writing on life in Greece and Asia during New Testament times, is a clear

illustration of the allusion in John 10:1-16, 'Having had my attention directed last night to the words in John 10:3, I asked my man if it was usual in his country to give names to the sheep. He informed me that it was, and that the sheep obeyed the shepherd when he called them by their names. This morning I had an opportunity of verifying the truth of this remark. Passing by a flock of sheep, I asked the shepherd the same question which I had put to the servant, and he gave me the same answer. I then bade him call one of his sheep. He did so, and it instantly left its pasturing and its companions and ran up to the hands of the shepherd with signs of pleasure, and with prompt obedience, which I had never observed in any other animal. It is also true in this country that 'a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him'. The shepherd told me that many of his sheep were still wild, and they had not yet learned their names, but that by teaching them they would all learn them'.

As the sheep is the emblem of meekness, patience and submission, it is expressly mentioned that our Lord Jesus Christ most of all typifies these particular qualities (Is.53:7; Acts 8:32). The relationship that exists between Christ 'The Chief Shepherd' and His members is beautifully compared to that which is in the East pictured by the shepherds and their flocks.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE ... SELF-CONTROL

GEORGE W. NORTH

When the apostle wrote to the Corinthians, 'I give you to understand', he was about to instruct them concerning God's spiritual gifts to the body of Christ. The chapters which follow are full of great and profitable information and instruction. We must beware of thinking that we need his understanding on these things only - we need it on all things. He commences the ninth chapter with questions which to read leave us in no doubt that he knew he was sure about his calling, and that he was an apostle living in the perfect liberty of Christ. Having stated his grounds for making these claims, he proceeds to reveal

truth about his voluntary addiction to the gospel. In the process of this he speaks of 'necessity being laid on him'; 'woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel', he says. Paul makes no secret of the fact that he was a slave of:

1. God
2. The Church
3. To all man
4. Of Love.

This is the attitude of spirit and mind in which he writes this letter. Paul considered he would have had no

authority to do so unless he loved them and thought of himself as he did. Therefore, the words he wrote in chapter 8 concerning self-discipline have an added force. The vehement power of the closing paragraph of chapter 9, 'I run, I fight, I buffet my body' is self-evident. Paul wrote with power, under the compulsion of love.

NOT WITHOUT LAW

So much is being said these days about liberty - 'I am free'; 'We are not under law'; and many such related phrases, which appear to be right but are not of love or of truth, and it will be no small wonder if in a few years time we do not reap a terrible harvest of completely amoral or immoral behaviour in many lives. The fact that what is said is not being said for this reason does not minimise the danger, but rather increases it. That brethren may believe they are right in what they say ought only to be expected, but this in no way lessens the probability that the crash, when it comes, will be the more catastrophic. To speak of being 'out of bondage', and 'not under law' is to totally ignore such scriptures as 9:21, 'not without law to God but under the law to Christ'.

ONE MAN'S LIBERTY ... ANOTHER'S BONDAGE

This man Paul was of a spirit and attitude greatly needed among us today. Commencing chapter 8 with the words, 'knowledge puffeth up but Love edifieth', he proceeds to deal with the particular problems plaguing the Corinthian church. Doing so, he applies to them a principle which, though not expressed in the following terms, lies fundamental to all church problems; namely, that one man's liberty can be another man's bondage. Every man must realize the difference between: 'my liberty' and another man's bondage, 'my knowledge' and another person's ignorance, 'my salvation' and another's damnation, 'my strength' and another's weakness. As an instance of his own attitude toward all these things - Paul says of meat-eating that if eating meat caused his brother to stumble he would eat no meat while the world was standing. Continuing his instructions on the point, he extends this section about liberty, knowledge, conscience and self-denial to the first verse of chapter 11, where he says, 'Be imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ'. 'Seek to please all men', he says, 'even as I'.

PLEASE GOD

In 10:30 he asks a question which goes like this, 'If I eat meat with thanksgiving why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?'. It seems a very good question. If a man does not have a guilty conscience about anything he does, and in the act of doing it can thank God for it, is it not perfectly alright for him to do it? The answer is, 'No - not always'. The thing to be resolved is not whether it affects me wrongly, but whether it has an evil affect upon another. That other person may be weaker than I, and a brother, or an ignorant idolater, or anyone who does

not understand my action, or may believe I am not right in what I do. God holds me responsible for my actions and the effect of what I do has, or may have, upon others. 'Even Christ pleased not Himself', he says, and we ought not to think that we should live to please ourselves. This may seem to be directly opposite to what he says earlier, but it is not. We shall never be able to please everybody, even Jesus never succeeded in doing that, but by disposition He was concerned for, and wanted to bless and please, everyone. He was not a mere man-pleaser, but He did not disagree with, and fall out with, people if it could be avoided. Christ lived to please men if He could, and please God always. He was never a mere self-pleaser - putting Himself, His likes and dislikes before everyone and everything else. To live to please self is sin. We must live to please God, as did Jesus. If that does not please us, indeed is not our chief pleasure, we most certainly are not God's children. It does not especially please God whether we eat meat or drink wine, or if we do not eat meat or drink wine. Everything created by God is good and nothing is to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving.

We may argue therefrom that we may eat and drink anything, do everything, or do nothing, if we only live to please ourselves. In every thing that is amoral, whatsoever we do, or use, whether we eat or drink, or whether we do not eat or drink, before God and men that act or thing partakes of the motive and attitude of the doer or the user. Things that have no personal life, whatever they are, when used by persons having life become a manifestation of these persons to God and man. Whatsoever we do in secret we do as unto God and ourselves, whatsoever we do in public we do as unto God and men, and, in effect, to ourselves. In the spiritual realm that is as inescapable a law as is gravity in the physical realm. Our manner of life, living itself, is a responsibility - in the Church of God it is a great responsibility.

SELF-DISCIPLINE

The most basic of all things which is either present or wanting in all we do is Love. In all matters, whether in private, or public, at all times, we must please God. In public, so far as is possible, ('as much as in you is'), we must please our neighbour as well: never must we seek only to please ourselves. This is not to say that we must never do anything that brings pleasure to ourselves; to the contrary - we must do all things with good pleasure; but self-pleasing is not to be our first and/or only aim. Self has to be disciplined, tastes have to be trained, some subdued, some eliminated, God-pleasing is our aim. Bringing or giving pleasure to God and pleasure to others should bring pleasure to ourselves. He who has not discovered this has discovered very little. Our liberty must not bring others into bondage, nor our pleasure give them sadness, we may not let our good be evil spoken of.

It is the devil's business to bring up an evil report upon all we do, and sometimes pervert things done with

the best of motives, even an ignorant mistake. It is also true that the weak break down under the weight of a straw, and the dissatisfied find fault with all things, but that is neither the issue at stake nor the point under discussion: excuses must not be sought for disobedience or they will soon be found. These things are only touched upon here. Each particular problem must be treated according to its effect, and must be addressed individually.

REBELLION

The principle involved and upon which all is judged is probably best described under the theological term 'Antinomianism'. Though not defined as such, antinomianism is another word for rebellion. In final analysis it is rejection of the life principles, and therefore the Being of God - living unto myself in the absolute contradiction of the cross. Most disturbingly, this is often practised and encouraged under profession of living in resurrection life and freedom. Christ did always the things that pleased His Father, He said, yet from some people reproaches fell upon Him continually, all of them unjust and undeserved. But at the very least, through all He suffered He had this joy and knowledge, that whatsoever happened unto Him was reward for His righteousness. He never caused anybody to stumble, nor drove anyone further into sin, and as touching this matter, neither did He furnish anybody with an excuse for gluttony or drunkenness, or

give any help to any who by self-pleasing wished to turn truth into a lie. Whether in private or in public He never brazenly indulged Himself under the pretext that He had liberty.

PRINCIPLE OF THE CROSS

It is impossible to do anything to the glory of God that is not primarily conceived and based upon the principle of the cross. Jesus lived on earth to reveal to man the precious principle of death to self by permanent crucifixion. 'I determined not to know anything ... save Christ crucified', said Paul. This pre-crucified Christ displayed Himself as being permanently crucified. Even now, risen from the dead, He thinks of others and orders His whole life for others: the crucified Christ is the reigning Christ. Redemption from self is the only redemption there is, its fundamental cry is, 'not my will but thine be done'. If a man is not redeemed from self he is not redeemed from sin, for sin and self are one. I must live no longer I but Christ; unless this is so I cannot live, and in order to do so the cross must be permanently upon me and I upon it. The Christ that liveth in me is Christ crucified. He does not, cannot, live uncrucified. Crucified, His life flows out, virtually, originally, consistently, eternally God. Paul once said of himself, 'though I be free from all men yet have I made myself slave to all.' 'Go and do thou likewise.

Copyright © G.W.North 1993

Hymns of Eternal Truth

- a selection of hymns written by the Wesley brothers.

Words only edition
(soft back with protective cover) £2.25

Music edition £6.00

Conference Hymns

- a wide selection of hymns (as used at the Summer Conference) suitable for church use.

Words only edition
(soft back with protective cover) £2.25

These costs do not include postage.

Books available from:

Emmaus Print Ministries, 34 Green Lane, Padgate, Warrington, WA1 4JA
Tel/Fax: 0925-810345

Emmaus Print Ministries



34 Green Lane,
Padgate,
Warrington,
Cheshire.

Telephone 0925 810345

Editor John Norris
Production Nigel Cannell

In this issue:

- 1 DISCERNMENT G.W.NORTH
- 4 HOLINESS L.WHEELDON
- 6 PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM
... G.W.NORTH
- 7 TIMES OF REFRESHING B.HULL
- 13 PARABLE OF THE POUNDS .. G.W.NORTH
- 16 FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT G.W.NORTH