

# *new covenant* Voice

I PLACE NO VALUE ON ANYTHING I HAVE OR MAY POSSESS, EXCEPT IN RELATION TO THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST. IF ANYTHING WILL ADVANCE THE INTERESTS OF THE KINGDOM, IT SHALL BE GIVEN AWAY OR KEPT, ONLY AS BY GIVING OR KEEPING IT I SHALL MOST PROMOTE THE GLORY OF HIM TO WHOM I OWE ALL MY HOPES IN TIME AND ETERNITY.

FROM DAVID LIVINGSTONE'S JOURNAL

**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**

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# PROMOTED TO GLORY

## GEORGE W. NORTH

An address given in the evening meeting following the funeral of a dear friend.

It was late morning, about mid-day. The kerbside was lined with cars, so were the side roads. The Church was full. Somebody, a passer-by, asked 'Who's being married?'. 'It isn't a wedding, it's a funeral', somebody said. A funeral! But where were the mourners? Everyone was looking so happy. A stream of joyful people came out through the doors: the wife, so newly widowed, was wearing a white hat specially bought for the occasion! What was going on? A funeral? It was more like a wedding! Restrained joy, suitable to the occasion was flowing everywhere - an undercurrent which could neither be denied or resisted. Mourners? These were not mourners, they were more like special guests called to a celebration. That is just how they felt too. Everyone was in as near a state of elation as could be, it was such an honour to be there. This was an occasion impossible to forget and long to be treasured.

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### PROMOTED

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The Church building had been borrowed for the occasion; we knew the crowds wishing to attend would be far too great to accommodate in the house. The service had been inspiring; we sat together like a huge family and rose as one to praise and worship the Lord in memory of the saint called home. A voice called out 'Hallelujah' - brother Willie was rejoicing. The word to us all was 'thy brother shall rise again!' To the wife, 'thy husband shall rise again' - to the children, 'thy father shall rise again'. 'Believest thou this?' 'Yea Lord': sorrow was swallowed up in a joy of which the world knows nothing and cannot understand. In common with the world the saints mourn their departed, but lay their bodies in the ground with hope, because death to God's children is a promotion.

My mother used to tell the story of a wonderful occasion in the Albert Hall which had greatly effected her in her younger days. The Salvation Army had rented the famous hall for a meeting and were holding a special service there. My mother told me this story upon several occasions and it greatly affected me as it had done her. The nation had suffered a great disaster, (it was the loss of the Titanic I think) it was a terrible tragedy. Many Salvationists had lost their lives in the shipwreck and 'The Army' booked the famous Hall for the memorial service. Except for some fifty or so seats at the front of the hall, the place was packed from floor to roof, people had gathered

from every part, eager to thank God for the lives laid down in course of duty, while going about their business for Him. All eyes seemed to be fastened on those front seats left empty except for a laurel wreath which lay on each of them. Every wreath was crossed with a sash bearing the inscription, 'Soldier ...' or 'Captain ...' or 'Sergeant ...' followed by a name, and then, whatever the name or rank, they all bore one last word, 'Promoted'.

The Salvation Army had got it right - Promoted! Tears mingled with joy, sorrow was suffused with glory that day. Faith was triumphant. God was over all. Death is intended by satan to disfigure and dishonour God's creation, we feel it is something not of God. However for His children, God has turned death into triumph, for them it is only a temporary thing, a precious and wonderful phase through which we pass into His presence. This is a future experience for us, but let us at this moment rejoice in the Lord, magnifying His name; in face of death the Church triumphant sings, 'Worthy the Lamb'.

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### SYMBOLS

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Life and death as humans know them, real as they may appear, are symbols. Beyond the universe lies the reality we humans enter upon when leaving this world. Those who by God's grace enter into eternal life while still down here, know this reality now. To all these it is a glorious thing to be 'absent from the body and present with the Lord', for the change, far greater than physical death can make, has already taken place. All outward things as we know them now shall one day be changed and what a glorious day that will be; these who by God's grace have received that holy life shall see the Lord face to face and be with Him then for ever. There are times when all of us sit down and think about these things and wonder what and when all this shall be, but it is difficult, almost impossible to imagine what it can be like. Glorious occasions when the sense of the nearness of the Lord and of precious intimacy with Him has been so very vivid, surpassing all words, are known to us all. Wonderful times of refreshing, when Christ has become more real to us than anybody else, are granted to all God's children. At such times we become aware that we know Him better than we know anybody else in the world - better than we know our parents, or children, or our wives, or our husbands, or ourselves. That is how it should be, it is what God intends; especially at these times, when loved ones are called home and we are left behind here on this earth. Funerals have a message for us all: it is this - 'it is not your turn yet, know the Lord better down here, it won't be long'.

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## SPIRITUAL

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Recall how Paul thought about this, he said he counted everything but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Getting to know Christ excels everything else on earth, nothing is greater than this; the effect of this on the heart is to carry it off and away unto Him. I know a young lady who once said she got very worried when this thing happened to her young man. 'When you get all spiritual, I FEEL I've lost you', she said - alas she didn't want her young man to get so spiritual because she wasn't in the same spirit with him. What a tragedy. Perhaps she didn't quite know how to express her feelings about it, but 'you get all spiritual' is a very expressive phrase isn't it? That is what we have to become in the end though! Spiritual. When we have left this earth we are all going to have spiritual bodies, glorious bodies - because they will be bodies for glory and therefore bodies of glory like His. Think of having a body so full of glory that it cannot be called anything other than a glorious body; the real substance of us will then be manifest. This simply must be; everything which is the opposite of glory must go, we must be rid of it because it has come from sin and the fall - everything, so it all has to go.

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## CHANGED

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Some things, though in themselves they are not of glory, are being used of God to bless us whilst we are still in this body. He over-rules for us in everything to ensure that this is so, but everything other than this which comes as from our own hands or the hands of others to us is anti-God. Such things if received, can only bring condemnation and misery and shame and bitterness and loss to us; nevertheless by grace there can be restoration to joy, and glory can begin to glow within the spirit again. What a glorious thing it will be to have a body of glory. Even Jesus Christ Himself was transfigured when the bright cloud of glory descended on the mountain and encompassed Him, and at this present moment within the heart of love, He is so glorious now. His face shines with it. 'The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' transfixed and transfigured Paul - so full and real is it. Christ our Lord is overflowing full of glory, and His desire is that we should share in that glory with Him. Once we see these things and get them in true perspective, death and all associated with it cannot harm us, because it cannot really touch us. Why do you think a man of God like Paul says, 'I want to depart - I want to go, I want to die'? Do you think he was suicidal or that he needed to see a psychiatrist, or do you think he had the real thing?

I was once speaking to an elderly lady, she was looking at me all smiles, 'Oh, I WANT to die' she said, 'I think I shall be the next you know'. She was and she went. I thought 'Isn't that glorious?'

Wonderful! After all death is only a stepping stone to glory. How God has changed everything for His beloved. He has already changed death and now He changes our thinking about it. He can and does because He has changed our hearts toward it. Isn't it great to be able to talk about death like that? All the fear has gone.

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## REJOICING?

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While I was sitting at the communion table worshipping God one Sunday morning many years ago, I was filled with grateful love and wonder as the glory of God surged through my soul. A simple question had formed in my mind, 'where have all my sins gone?' 'I don't know', I answered myself, 'I don't know - God took them'. All in one thought, and the glory flooded me. God had taken them from me and I didn't know where they had gone and I still don't know to this day. What a precious and glorious thing this is beloved, to think about it should cause our hearts to leap for joy within us. Perhaps you came into this meeting not knowing quite what to expect following this morning's events when we committed our dear brother's body to the ground. Let me ask you a question or two. Are your hearts rejoicing in the Lord? What if it had been your body? What would you do if you knew your hour was fast approaching? These are not odious questions, nor is this morbid thinking, it is absolute sanity. God is expecting us to look at death and say, 'So what if it were I?' Does the thought strike terror to your heart? If so, there is something wrong, very wrong, something from which you must be delivered.

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## MOCKED?

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For the believer, death has already been overcome, by His death and resurrection Christ has destroyed it; this is something to understand and enjoy. 'Oh death, where is thy sting', we can almost hear Paul's heart singing; there is no sting in death for the saint. Laugh at it, sing around the grave. Amen. Child of God, mock death. Death mocks at everybody else. I was once told by his widow about a strong, highly successful business man who was a really tough character - until his mother died. When death took her, it shattered him, frightened him to death, he was destroyed. His business life was finished, he was broken, he couldn't go to work any more. His wife said it was awful, he stood in his front room shouting at death, 'Death, death, come and get me'. He was on the borderline - nearly gone - frightened to the point of insanity. 'Death, come on, come and get me', he kept repeating it (adopting the stance of a prize fighter), madder than anyone could think. Does death strike terror into your heart like that? Successful, tough, progressive? - not when the reaper comes - you know you'r not. He cannot be overcome, nor can he be evaded, everybody is appointed to meet him.

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## SINGING?

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I remember when my mother went. I sat on her bed and told her what the doctors had told me, 'They say you can't stay with us any longer Mum'. She looked at me - I was her last baby - and I looked at her - she was my only mother - in silence. After a while I said, 'Are you afraid?' 'No', she said, 'no'. I took hold of her hand and said slowly 'Mum, I'd rather you went than stay here with us and be ill, you go, I'll follow', and soon she was gone. She slipped into a coma, but not before she had heard the celestial singing and went out at the last straight into the arms of Jesus. It was the same with my dad. He had pneumonia with complications, and in the end he too fell into a coma. We stood around silent and I felt he was slipping from me. Suddenly he sat up and started to sing: 'My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul. It is well, with my soul, it is well, it is well, with my soul'. Then he sank into his pillows and said no more. I stooped over him and said in his ear, 'Are you alright Dad?' 'Yes', he nodded, and was soon gone. Both my parents went singing into the arms of Jesus. What did your parents do?

We don't have to go the way of our parents; if they went wrong, we don't have to. If they went right you are very blessed, but if not, make sure your children are shown the way. How does it stand with you? Are you clear in this? We have everything to go on for - everything to move into, but do not presume on time. Time does not belong to you, it belongs to God, you and I only have grace and opportunity. God can foreclose on you any time, time is His, and you will have to account for it and how you have used it since you have had your opportunity. Hurry up, stir yourself, get into line, God is moving to His set purposes in the lives of every one of us beloved. Move into reality now and thank Him for the marvellous opportunity to do so.

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## HERITAGE

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It is far better to pass into the presence of Jesus and be with Him for ever than to remain here. Like his Lord, Paul hated his life in this world. Do you? Please, for your own safety and good, do not ignore this question, you must answer it. Do you have this same knowledge and revelation of truth, or are you propping yourself up on your favourite text? The Bible is not for that, the Bible of God is to bring us to the God of the Bible. The love of God is to bring us to the God of Love; the peace of God is to bring us to the God of peace; the salvation of God is to bring us to the God of salvation. You do see that don't you? Everything is to bring us to God. Your heritage is not daily readings and saying your prayers and like things, your heritage is God. God Himself. God, the

Eternal, the Almighty, the tender lover of Calvary. God. Oh, how shall I explain this? What shall I say about Him? You and I are to be brought out of all the shortcomings, the lonelinesses, the losses, the coldnesses, out of this knowledge of sin and the world - unto HIM. Our knowledge must be knowledge of God, that's what it's all about. Amen and Amen.

Thank God Jesus can turn death into a friend to you; ask Paul! Means of death such as disease or torture are dreadful things we all shrink from and wish to be spared. But what if you were to lie down tonight and sleep and not wake up?! 'Oh, surely not, I have a family to bring up, there is so much I wish to do. I have responsibilities; I MUST see to this ...'. Listen, God is a husband to the widow and a Father to the fatherless. He is a wife to the husband, a friend to the friendless. Do you not believe that? If you do, please do not say these other things or try to hang on to life, all these things have been taken into account by God. He knows His responsibilities, and He fulfils them. If it were God's time for you tonight, wouldn't you like to lie down and wake up in another world looking into Jesus' face? Wouldn't you like to step off the other side of life's sea onto shore and find it heaven? Wouldn't you like to? I would. Are you ready to go? Are your affairs in order? When the time comes beloved, are you going triumphantly? Are you? Are you going in fear or in glory?

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## AFTERGLOW?

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A certain Lakeland poet said that we come into this world trailing clouds of glory. I doubt it; but when you go out of it, will you leave an afterglow? The test of what you were when you were here is what you leave behind when you go. Will people's hearts warm and glow at the remembrance of us? Will their memories and stories of us be sweet? We all must leave a legacy of some sort. When you go will you, as our dear brother, leave behind a church in your house saying, 'Whatever are we going to do without him?' Will you? Is your life vital? Does it really count? Is it going to mean anything in the end? Is it? Are you going to affect and influence the lives of others for God - give up everything for Him, even hand over your wife to Him so that He's got to keep her, or else! Faced with our brother's sudden passing and the challenge of his life, what are you intending to do? God who is solid good and absolute reality, cares not whether you have a halfpenny in your pocket or a million pounds in the bank. He loves you. Do you know this God? Have you met Him like this, are you on these sorts of terms with Him? In the deep realities of your life, right down there in the place where you think and plan and desire, where you dream your dreams, do you enact fantasies of sin, or live out God's righteousness? Down in there you either abide with the devil or God. What do you plan deep down there inside brother? How are you there sister? Is it all love and sweetness, does truthfulness, honesty and righteousness abide there? You live deep down there in some state or other and someone is living

there with you - God or satan - as your source and inspiration of life, some man or woman as your companion. Whoever is the source of your life is your god, you can only have one. The issues stand clear, whoever it is and however it is with you will decide your destiny when you go. Face it; if Jesus has been with you, you will go to be with Jesus; you are ready to go. Hallelujah!

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## ENOUGH?

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In His great love, God at times comes down here and there to take someone home, 'You've had enough son', He says, 'come up here with me'. No-one knows when the moment will arrive when he or she has had enough or done enough. God alone knows that. We do not know if or when we have done too much or not enough, whether we have taken on too much, or tried to do too much of this, that or the other. God knows though, and one of these times we shall lie down as others have, and it will be for the last time. What joy it will be then to know that I shall rise again like my brother. Foretastes of bliss are given to hearts to prepare and comfort them and make them ready for this. Christ brings resurrection to all His own, rising in the heart of every true believer. No wonder Paul said 'We are beside ourselves', this is how a man becomes. Unless this is so, we are all shut up inside, prisoners who cannot get out and away from self. The death of Jesus Christ is all about breaking the powers that bind us, slaying self dead, so that the chains we call shyness or reserve or inability or inhibitions or any other thing, can hold us no longer; then shall we glorify God as we ought. Let others call these things what they will, God calls it SELF; I. He doesn't need to analyse me and help me to understand myself, in one great master stroke by the cross, He liberates me that I might in measure understand God - at least understand His ways. Oh what a release, what relief it is to come into this realm beloved, it is the highest, the best, the most excellent. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. The heart wants to jump and shout and sing, and to rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS. In the same letter in which Paul said 'I want to get away from this - I want to die - I'm only staying here for your sake', he said, 'rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice'. Oh, our God brings rich abundant life. You are in it are you?

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## FAITH

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Did you know that all the time you are living in the body you are living in a tent - just as Israel did when they emigrated from Egypt to Canaan? 'We walk by faith not by sight', Paul says to the Corinthians, and he had Israel in mind. Of old they walked by sight. The Israelites saw the cloud and followed it - they walked by sight. They walked by faith also of course, but faith of a different order than ours, we walk by faith alone, not by sight. Faith? What faith? Tell me what it is, describe it to me. It is that same

principle or faculty (call it what you will) by which we know we are children of God. It is a KNOWING faculty, a LIVING power, an INWARD knowledge, an ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY within. By this we know how and where to walk. This word tabernacle or tent is used about Jesus by John, 'The Word (speaking about Jesus) was made flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us' he says. Jesus was God living in a tabernacle among men. He lived and walked in His glorious tabernacle among men who like Him were also living in tabernacles, and when at the end He had finished His work in His earthly tabernacle, God took Him and His tabernacle up to heaven. At that time he both altered the tabernacle and changed its location, and He did it with a purpose.

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## TRANSFERRED

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In the day Solomon finished building the temple and made God's house permanent in Israel - they brought up the tabernacle with all its furnishings and put all in the new building; that is the last we know of it. The tabernacle was absorbed into the temple; Hallelujah. Now we know what is going to happen to us; these tabernacles of ours are going to be changed and taken up into the temple and if the Lord comes tonight - it will all be done quickly. 'Even so, Lord Jesus, come' does not specially mean 'come tonight' (though that would be wonderful), it means He's coming so quickly that none will be able to do anything about it. It will be too late to change then, the only change will be wrought by Him, He comes QUICKLY. AMEN. 'Come quickly Lord'. Hallelujah. That's how you'd like to die isn't it? You don't want to die a long lingering death do you? You don't want to contract some terrible disease so that you're gradually eaten away over many years. You want to die quickly when you do die don't you? Yes, of course, that would be wonderful. 'Come then Lord, come quickly'. Amen. His coming shall be like lightning, in a moment, the twinkling of an eye. That's how God really wants us to understand this, and if we're moving in this realm, He'll take this tabernacle up into the temple in a flash. Are you ready? Provided that sin has been dealt with - provided that you've been washed in the blood of Jesus - provided that God is dwelling right in there on a throne of grace in your heart - provided all this, then you are ready.

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## WORKING

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Through the years the fourth chapter of the first Thessalonian Epistle has wrought comfort to the sorrowing hearts of millions of people. God intended it should, that is why it was written and we could scarcely do better than read it together now. The apostle tells us to 'Study to be quiet and to do your own business'. Sadly, there are some people who never do anything for God eventually, because they always think they ought to be doing something somewhere else. Many think they can serve God better in some other

place, not where they are, and finish up by accomplishing very little for God. What a pity. 'Do your own business, and work with your hands, as we commanded you, that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, that ye may have lack of nothing'. It may be thought that this is a strange introduction to instruction regarding the Second Coming, but that's the way Paul commences. He does so in case we should be deceived into thinking in a 'airy-fairy' manner, believing that church or group activities and prophecies and singing and nice little things like that are all that God requires of us. All this seems very ordinary doesn't it? It is all about work - learning to do it. Why?

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## SLEEP

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The simple answer is to be found in his reference to sleep. 'I would not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope, for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him'. Sleep is a very normal, logical experience isn't it? When a man has finished his day's toil, his labour done, he goes home to his rest - to bed and to sleep. He has done his work, his rest is well-earned, he sleeps in peace. God wants us all to sleep like that in Jesus, but not yet; before we do that He wants us to work for Him, to earn our rest that when the time comes we shall sleep well. We need not be over-concerned with any theories being advanced about 'soul-sleep' and where we go and what state we are in following our life work here. Think of this sleep as resting from the labours of the day and honestly earned in the sight of God, there is nothing to be feared in that, the rather it should be welcomed. Our brother is sleeping, resting from his labours, his work shall follow him. Time will have run its course before they all shall arrive where he is, he must rest now. Sleep is the best way to rest. Our brother is not dead, he is sleeping, that's how we should think of it. Hallelujah! Isn't that lovely?

Isn't it just wonderful to know that all who sleep in Jesus are coming back with Him to greet those who remain till He comes? 'This we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep'. How gloriously right that is, that is the privilege of those who have already gone, no-one SHOULD precede them. These are they who have gone with Him through the portals of death to their rest in Him, they have earned the privilege of being first, theirs is the rightful honour of returning with Him, they have been waiting for our coming. This isn't morbidity, it's absolute joy. Except He comes soon, many of us shall have the glory of going to sleep in Jesus and share the privilege and honour of seeing and hearing and accompanying Him first at His return. There may be some mighty men on the earth at that time, but they will not be elevated or raised before any of those who have gone before. Glory be to God.

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## READY?

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Now no young person should start thinking 'these old people have an unfair advantage, I'm only 20, these are 70' - or any thought similar to these. That kind of thinking is perfectly natural, but it is not based on fact. Nobody has a guaranteed life span, no-one knows how long he or she is going to live or how much or how long the world will continue. When I was a boy they were telling me Jesus was coming back any minute. I can hardly be called a boy now and they still say He is coming any minute, in fact they seem to be saying it with more insistence than ever, though I thought it was being said about as insistently as possible then. If you will take the advice of an older brother, do not get strung up about these things, and do not get caught up with everything that is being said. Do not be moved by slogans, rather let your soul be fixed in God. Get into Him, into His thinking, into His love, and let Him abide in you and yours. We can so get into Him that He feels us, knows us and loves to respond to our approaches as we to His. 'The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air'. Amen. 'And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words'. Now go straight on into the next chapter. 'But of the times and the seasons brethren ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day, we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others'.

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## REST

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Paul is using this word sleep in a different sense now. We are not to sleep as others, he says. 'What is this kind of sleep?' Whenever someone falls asleep for the last time physically, whoever the person is, we normally say 'he's dead'. But when Paul says we are not to sleep as others, he does not mean that we are not to give up our breath as the unsaved person does, that is die in the same way as others - he means we are not to be spiritually dead as they are. These 'others' of whom he speaks are so fast asleep to God, so already dead to Him, that we must on no account be like them. It would be most grievous to Him if we were. We are not to sleep like those 'others' who have no hope and are filled with sorrow and haunted by fear at the passing of a loved one. The sleep Paul is commending is the response of the soul to the call of the Lord Jesus 'Come, come to your rest'.

Understand aright, whatever may be the circumstances of our own or a loved one's passing, everything turns to gratitude then. Think of Stephen; he said 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge' - and they were stoning him! Having said that, 'he fell asleep' says Luke. Isn't that lovely? They would have said 'we stoned him to death' - the man of God says, 'he fell asleep'. He had worked hard and was so tired of this world at the end that he went to sleep. They murdered him - he fell asleep. When we see this we will not blame the murderers, though murderers they may be. Understanding takes away all complaints, the soul will never get bitter. Somebody may hurt you, knock you down, someone you love may get hit by a car - which God forbid (nobody wants these things of course), but you'll never get bitter; you won't get bitter if somebody just annoys you, or if they smack your face, or if they steal your job away from you. You will never get bitter and resentful toward God or about events of life if you believe he (or she) has just gone to sleep, just say, 'I'll just go to sleep one day too - I'll join him there'. Amen.

Wouldn't you like your departure to be like that, just falling asleep? Don't sleep now as those 'others' sleep; they don't know, they can't see God's signs, they do not hear or see the moving of God's Spirit or understand anything about salvation. They are unconscious of those things but they are very aware of their lusts, their base appetites, and the world. The price index, stocks and shares, the cost of hash, the price of beer, politics, the Common Market; people are very much alive to all these. Beware beloved, these are all part of the elements of a world now dead. In God's economy whether the price index goes up or down, or whether the dollar exchange rate is beneficial, or how the pound is floating matters little - these things cannot effect eternal life. The index of Christlikeness is the only thing that counts. Like Jesus - like Jesus - like Jesus; let it ring through the mind, more like Him today than yesterday. More tomorrow, more again the next day and the morrow after, rising all the time up and up because you're alive, awake, wide awake.

This is how it is to be with us beloved, then when we lie down at last and never rise again, Jesus will say, 'Thy brother shall rise, thy brother shall rise again'. Comfort and joy and glory will fill the souls of those left behind then and they will want to come and join you. Is that how your heart is now? If you had to hand over your loved ones to someone to look after, to whom would you want to give them? - to Jesus wouldn't you? Not to the church or to some brother, much as you love them and however they should

feel their responsibilities. There's something lovely about handing them over to Jesus. Let that be your last will and testament.

This personal relationship we have with Jesus Christ is so tremendous and real. When you lay yourself down to sleep tonight, how will you, and where will you wake up in the morning? What if you had found a day like today or if your wife had found a day like today, whichever of you it was, would your heart rejoice and rise up and praise the Lord? What a wonderful day it has been. Of course eyes have been red - tears have been there, our emotions have been mixed, but the predominant note has been of joy, the joy of the Lord, and of the great love of God. Jesus has prior claims on us all; His call is first and final, we understand this and it sets us free. We have no grumbles, no complaints, none at all, we are His; we are His, we are His. Whether we wake or sleep, in the morning we are His!

Some time ago I wrote a letter to a mother and father who had written to me saying that their son had died. God met him at a recent conference and blessed him mightily and not long after had taken him home. Some time before this, the son had led his parents out of a dead nominal christian profession into life in Christ, and they were so grateful to him and to the Lord. Quite naturally there was a note of sorrow about the letter, they were grieved, so I wrote 'Do you know why Jesus took him? He took him because He loves him and He took him because He loves you'.

Not long before He died, the Lord Jesus said to His apostles, 'Ye now have sorrow, but I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you; and at that day ye shall ask me nothing'. His intention in saying this was that the joy of seeing Him again after He had died should kindle joy in their hearts at the moment of speaking - the joy of KNOWING they should see Him again. He wanted the joy of that future reunion to sustain them through the hours of their grief at His pain and in the moment of His death, and through the dark days that followed. Believing Him, trusting Him in what He says brings understanding to the heart when the event takes place. Then the heart ceases to question Him and rests in hope and joy. The questioning 'Why?' is not spoken to challenge His authority or to question His wisdom, or to cast doubts on His love and righteousness, but to wonder why it should be him or her and not me - rather a questioning of self than of Him. Beloved (let me speak it tenderly at this moment) the Lord took him because He loves you both - him and you.

G. W. N.

QUESTION ..... What is the chief end of man?

ANSWER ..... Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY (1643)

# WE WOULD SEE JESUS

## NORMAN MEETEN

'Sir, we would see Jesus' (John 12:21). This was the desire of 'certain Greeks'. One could debate their motives. For many it would be out of curiosity, for the majority in Jesus' day (also today) it would be for what they could get out of Him. The desire for some problem to be solved, or need to be met. But for the other remnant, it would be the expression of a deep inner longing to encounter Truth in reality - the discovery of a life-long quest. Such would have drawn the wise men of old. Such would clarify the inexplicable keeping of Mimosa, the true story told by Amy Carmichael of an Indian girl who learned to trust God, outside her culture, until she discovered Jesus. This would explain the many remarkable moves of God amongst unreached people - some of which are recorded by Don Richardson in his book 'Eternity in their hearts'. All these experiences can only be seen as a fulfilment of the same indefinable desire - 'Sir, we would see Jesus'. Such encounter is fundamental to genuine Christian experience.

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### WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH

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Now in the context of the statement there is an essential condition that regulates such encounter. It is seen in the answer which Jesus gave to this amazing request (John 12:24/25).

'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal'. Herein we have the law of God's Spirit that regulates God's dealings with man. God is a God of Law. He works by divine principles. It is the discovery of these principles that will bring us into line with God's will and way of doing things. Only then can we expect to receive the desire of our hearts: 'Sir, we would see Jesus', and know God's approval. Much of what happens in the Church in these days is far removed from God's approved ways. Little wonder there is negligible result of eternal value for all our efforts. God has a 'pattern', that is why He said to Moses 'Do everything according to the pattern revealed in the mount'. If a woman is making a jumper, with the desire to have it like the picture she has seen in the pattern book, then she must follow the pattern. Or a man, building a house, must follow the blueprint to attain his desired end. The only way we will ever 'see Jesus' with our inward, spiritual eye, is by 'dying'. This is the truth that is consistently repeated in the scripture from the beginning to the end. Let us consider some relevant scriptures:

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### SHOW ME YOUR GLORY

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Exodus 33: Moses is commissioned to 'bring up this people', but he realizes the impossibility and futility of the task unless God Himself go with Him. The Lord assures Moses; 'My presence will go with you ... and I will give you rest'. Moses wanting to be doubly sure says 'Show me your glory'. To this request, God responded, instructing Moses that he might see His glory in His backward parts, but He adds 'You cannot see my face; for no man can see the face of God and live'.

Charles Wesley wrote many years later:

To Thee, great God of love, I bow,  
And prostrate in Thy sight adore;  
By faith I see Thee passing now;  
I have, but still I ask for more:  
A glimpse of love cannot suffice,  
My soul for all Thy presence cries.

I cannot see Thy face, and live,  
Then let me see Thy face, and die!  
Now, Lord, my gasping spirit receive;  
Give me on eagle's wings to fly,  
With eagle's eyes on Thee to gaze,  
And plunge into the glorious blaze.

The fulness of my great reward  
A blest eternity shall be,  
But hast Thou not on earth prepared  
Some better thing than this for me?  
What, but one drop! One transient sight!  
I want a sun, a sea of light.

His longing for a true revelation of Jesus was more important than life itself. No man can see the face of Jesus, unless he is prepared to 'fall into the ground and die'.

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### I SAW THE LORD

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We have another example of this truth in Isaiah 6. Isaiah's encounter with God, recorded here, revolutionized his whole life - it made him 'another man'. The foul-mouthed aristocrat became the prophet of God, to whom was entrusted the revelation of the Messiah. The Messiah, who would manifest Himself in the flesh and ultimately die, so that all men might 'know Him' and see Him as He is.

Twice in the first six verses of this passage, Isaiah records 'I saw the Lord, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts'. Having seen Him, he then saw himself:

'I am undone ... I am a man of unclean lips ...'

He knew who he was and what he was - SIN, and because he was sin, he knew he was dead.

The apostle Paul, in the New Testament, writing to the Ephesian Church, states that we also need to be quickened to life.

'You are dead in trespasses and sins ... There is no life in you ... You are dead'.

Whereupon God sent the seraphim with the live coal to purge Isaiah's sin - foretelling the moment when the Holy Spirit would take the coals from the altar of Calvary - the blood of Jesus - and purge/take away our sin, setting us free to rise up into resurrection life to serve Him.

'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?'

'Here I am, send me'.

The only man qualified to 'go' is the man who has died - the man who has seen Jesus. This great truth finds enlargement in Acts 9:1/9, the record of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

Although Saul of Tarsus was a sincere man, theologically educated, doctrinally sound; he had never seen Jesus. Oh yes! Like many of his contemporaries he had more than likely seen him 'after the flesh', but never after the Spirit. Like the Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke in John 9 - they said 'we see', but in fact they were blind - 'seeing they saw not'. Saul was en route to Damascus to arrest all who were 'of the way' of Jesus; when God, by His grace, sovereignly intervened and invade his life. 'Suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven'.

He saw. He heard. He died!

The Damascus Road was his Calvary.

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## NEW CREATION

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The street called Straight was his tomb - he neither ate nor drank. Dead men don't! The ministration of the Spirit by Ananias was his resurrection. The same Spirit that was given on the day of Pentecost. Saul became a 'new man'. It wasn't Saul. He was a 'New Creation'! That alone enabled him to write later to the Corinthian Church. 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creation. Old things are passed away, behold all things become new'. The 'old' had passed away. Saul was dead. The 'New man' went forth and preached Christ.

That was the explanation of Paul's life. It is also the explanation to the life of every other spiritual man. Saul of Tarsus saw Jesus and died.

The new man Paul rose up to reveal Jesus. 'You received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus'. The only man who has the ability to reveal Jesus is the man who has seen Jesus and died. 'No longer I but Christ ...'.

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## RESURRECTION LIFE

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Let us turn now to John the Apostle. We find him on the Isle of Patmos for the 'testimony of Jesus' (Rev. 1). The Book is commonly known as the Revelation of John the Divine. John says it is 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ'. But it was his because he had died - he had seen Jesus. We are told that John turned to 'see' the voice that spake unto him. What, or rather, who he 'saw' was beyond description. The word 'ONE' is not in the original script. There are no words adequate to do justice to that revelation. He could only 'liken' it. The wonderful thing to notice is that it is all 'in the midst of the church'. The ultimate of the revelation was 'His face'.

'His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength'

'And when I saw HIM I fell at His feet as dead'

You cannot see the face of God and live.

One short look into the sun and you are blind - blind to everything. One glimpse of His face and you are blind to all other things.

'Who is more blind than my servant?' said the Prophet.

We emphasize the fact 'once I was blind and now I see'. John could have said 'once I could see, now I am blind, yea, more - dead'. Then the great 'I AM' stretched out his right hand and touched him and revealed Himself to him:

'I am the first and the last - the Resurrection and the Life - the Ultimate of all things'

John was raised up into that Resurrection Life. Only then was he commissioned to communicate what he has seen; JESUS.

'Sir, we would see Jesus'

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## BEHOLD, I SEE THE SON OF GOD

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The first great martyr of the Church, Stephen, embodied this truth. He was the Testimony of Jesus. The word 'Testimony - witness' equals MARTYR. As the enemies of the gospel 'gnashed upon him with their teeth' and stoned him (Acts 7:54ff), he 'full of the Holy Ghost, looked steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and JESUS...'. He said 'Behold I see the Son of God standing at the right hand of God'. As

they stoned him to death, their purposes were thwarted, as at Calvary, instead of destroying the Testimony they magnified it. In his death he cried 'Lord lay not this sin to their charge'. It could have been Jesus speaking:

'Father forgive them for they know not what they do'

It was Jesus - for both in Spirit and now in body Stephen died. He saw Jesus.

'You cannot see the face of God and live'

JESUS LIVES.

'He being dead yet speaketh'

Stephen was the corn of wheat that fell into the

ground and died. Paul was the fruit.

'Sir, we would see Jesus'

Do we really want to 'see Jesus'?

As we embrace the truth that makes this possible, in the Spirit, so we can live in the assurance that the ultimate will be ours.

'Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is' (1 John 3:2).

'As for me I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness' (Ps. 17:15).  
N.M.

## EDITOR

### A-Z SMALL BIBLE WORDS

B = BLESS

In the Bible 'blessing' means primarily the active outgoing of divine goodwill or grace which results in prosperity and happiness amongst man. In the Old Testament this prosperity or blessedness is usually measured in material things - long life, increase of family, crops and herds, peace, wealth (Gen. 1:22, Deut 33:11, 2 Sam. 6:11).

Jesus gives a much more profound and spiritual interpretation to the term blessedness in the Beatitudes (Matt. 2-12) and elsewhere. Even when the blessing is pronounced by men it is to be understood that it is a divine blessing that is to be imparted. Two outstanding examples of this in the Old Testament are found in Genesis chapter 27 (Isaac's blessing of Jacob) and Numbers 23 (Balaam's blessing of Israel). Here the word is spoken prophetically and has a self-fulfilling potency and power. This could not be recalled.

The action of blessing was often that of LAYING ON OF HANDS, an action used by Jesus Himself (Matt. 19:15). Sometimes it was that of uplifting of the hands (Lev. 9:22). Finally the circle is complete when man blesses God (Psalm 124). God's blessing is not to return to Him void: it is reciprocated by the churches response 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' (2 Cor. 1:3, Rev. 7:12 etc.).

### THE BIBLE SAYS: THERE'S A RIGHT WAY TO GO

THE WAY OF PEACE THEY DO NOT KNOW

There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death - the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

A man's steps are ordered by the Lord; how then can man understand his way? - I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself, that is not in man who walks to direct his steps - all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way - and God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh has corrupted their way upon the earth - he sets himself in a way that is not good.

The way of the faithless is their ruin - therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way and be sated with their own devices - the way of the wicked will perish - the way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but He loves him who pursues righteousness.

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

REFERENCES: Rom. 3:17, Prov. 16:25, Matt. 7:13/14, Prov. 20:24, Jer. 10:23, Isa. 53:6, Gen. 6:12, Psa. 36:4, Prov. 13:15, Prov. 1:31, Psa. 1:6, Prov. 15:9, Psa. 139:23/24.

REFLECTIONS OF THE PSALMS

C.S. LEWIS

A man can't be always defending the truth; there must be a time to feed on it.

# WITH NO DARKNESS AT ALL - PART FIVE

GEORGE W. NORTH

What a glorious difference there is between Israel's anointed and favourite king and The Anointed One. David announced his hatred of the lame and blind (2 Sam. 5:6-8); Jesus announced His manifest love and grace to the same class of people ... 'the recovering of sight to the blind' (Luke 4:18). Carrying the comparison further, we note that the people living in Jerusalem in David's time were Jebusites, that is, Gentiles; and it is in the context of Jesus' relationship and mission to the Gentiles that Matthew relates the miracle of Matt. 12:23, and the effect of it in the hearts of the witnesses. They asked in amazement: 'Is not this the Son of David?' David had appointed them in hatred to death; Jesus appointed and ministered to them in love to life. That was the amazing contrast.

David knew only one way of interpreting his Lord Jehovah's great dislike of the maladies that afflict mankind; that was extermination. How violently men lived in those days! He was not God's son but Jesse's; his limitations were quite human; he could not separate the malady from the victim, especially if the victims were Jebusites!

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## AN AMAZING CONTRAST

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Christ's interpretation and application of God's hatred and rejection of the devil's inflictions upon humanity amounted to an entirely new revelation of God. It was eminently superior to David's, expressing deep compassion for all men above all that David knew or could know. In the Lord Jesus Christ the kingdom of God is revealed in its highest personal form. Jesus destroys the devil's work without destroying his victim; that is His genius.

Jesus outshines and excels all other men, embodying all the virtues which shine partially and intermittently through their lives; gathering up and revealing to perfection, in one, those qualities which make men glorious.

What an astonishing and awful variety of devils there is, to be sure! In this case the demon was blind and dumb; that is, it worked and manifested these twin evils in the person in whom it dwelt; whether as the result of some medically known disease(s) or not, who can tell? What must be recognized is that many who suffer in these and similar ways today are likewise victims of the devil's malice and are languishing in their present unenviable state precisely because of this, not knowing either the cause or the cure of their piteous condition.

So, having previously distinguished in general between demon possession (being thoroughly demonised, or a demoniac), and demonic interference, let us here proceed further to distinguish between things that differ within the compass and meaning of the latter classification.

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## AN ASTONISHING VARIETY

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Within this purposely loose and all-embracing term we may gather together the many various and variable states clearly traceable in scripture. These range through every imaginable state of sickness and malady of spirit, soul and body, known and unknown to man, from his birth to his death, and may be listed as follows:-

1. Temporary, periodic, or spasmodic possession. King Saul is the classic illustration of this condition. The evil spirits departed from him whenever David played his harp in the king's presence, but returned again later. (Perhaps the relationship between music and demon activity could be profitably explored!)
2. Bondage. The woman who was 'bent double and could in no wise lift herself up', whose experience we have previously quoted, is an example of this.
3. Vexation. A state of harassment, with the thought of 'to be crowded with', referred to in Acts 5:16, '...sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits'.
4. Oppression. Peter speaks of this in Acts 10:38, and the word used means 'to be overpowered'.
5. Lodgement. Although strictly speaking this is not a condition actually named in scripture, it nevertheless seems a useful classification.

Now, whether a person's condition falls into one or more of these categories, it is almost certain that it can be attributed to one or other (or more than one) of a comparatively few causes, and it may be well that we note these:-

- a. Heredity. There are what may be called 'family demons'. In extreme cases, some people are undoubtedly possessed or at least affected from the time of their birth. Others are infected at a very early age within their own family circle, so that symptoms and patterns of behaviour in parents often repeat themselves in their offspring. As personal

habits and traits of mother and father are passed on to daughter and son, so also are the signs of demon trouble. How often, for instance, do the tempers or depressions of a mother re-appear in exactly the same pattern, or sometimes in a worsened form, in her daughter.

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### AN OPEN INVITATION ...

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b. Abandonment. Generally speaking, a person becomes possessed by what he abandons to. Abandonment is only safe when it is unto God and His kingdom, as revealed in the scriptures. It cannot be overstressed that any opening up of the personality in excessive drinking, drug-taking, dancing (especially when it is but an adaptation of tribal dances which are patently part of ceremonies directed to the invocation of deified spirits), gambling, uncontrolled fits of temper, bouts of unrestrained emotion, undisciplined and promiscuous sex indulgence, especially in illicit and perverted forms - all these are certain to invite demonic interference leading in some cases, if persisted in, to entire possession.

c. Shock. This is closely allied to abandonment in that in its most potent forms it renders the shocked person powerless to control himself. Spirits that 'wander through dry places seeking rest' often seize upon the state created by some severe shock as an opportunity for entrance into a person who would otherwise be beyond their reach. Any condition that demotes the personality, leaving it uncontrolled by the will, presents an open and unguarded door to these evil things.

d. False religions. Quite apart from the acknowledged heathen religions which enslave the greater part of humanity in satan's chains, we must beware of certain deadly modern cults which teach heresies undoubtedly inspired by satan - to say nothing of all that is represented by 'Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth' referred to in John's revelation of the last days.

It may be laid down in general that any religious form or practice not based on the full word of God in the New Testament is liable to be infected and subtly pervaded by demons. All religions or cults that un-deify Christ in their teachings, or in any degree promote another 'person' or 'way' above or beside Christ, or which in any way undermine the salvation which alone is by grace through faith in the blood of the cross, have, to say the least, been infected by doctrines of demons, and are therefore major media of demon possession and interference among men all over the world.

e. Secret societies. The Christian gospel brings everything out into the open and insists that all be transacted in the light. 'This thing was not done in a corner' said Paul. Any society which contrary to God's word requires an oath for membership and for the

safeguarding of its activities is doubly wrong, and despite all protestations to the contrary, pagan. All forms of exclusiveness, even those that purport to be most biblical and spiritual, are wrong and ultimately succeed in producing the correct atmosphere for the activity of evil spirits which love the darkness.

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### ... TO DEMONIC INTERFERENCE

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f. Spiritualism - more correctly called Spiritism. Subtly enough, this cursed practice, forbidden by God, masquerades sometimes under the guise of Christian Spiritualism, and many unsuspecting souls are ensnared thereby. Perhaps the greatest shame in connection with this is that high ranking clerics, under cover of patronising and promoting investigations into the means of healing, should lead their unwitting flocks into the treacherous and poisonous pastures of psychic research. It may be that the blind are leading the blind, but the results are pathetic and too serious to be ignored.

Psychic power is not God's power, the adjective itself demonstrating the fact. It is soulish and therefore human. Spiritualistic and psychic healing display the truth that often the good is the enemy of the best, in that good health is substituted and offered in the place of God Himself, whilst supposedly being administered in His name. And this is the worse for the fact that the majority of people blandly assume that because healing is good in effect it must be of God. But good or evil is discerned and decided by motive and intention as well as by result and effect. As strongly as God insists that we are not to do evil that good may come of it, so also may we not do good that evil may result. Bait to be effective must be good, that is, palatable to the victim it is designed to tempt into the net or onto the hook for captivity or destruction.

Now psychic people are not to be blamed for that fact. Such people are born into this world unexplainably possessing powers beyond human understanding. When a person discovers himself to be possessed of such powers, he should immediately seek cleansing in the blood of Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit into the life of God, who will then seal up all the avenues of his being against interference from evil spirits.

Then let him abide in Christ and walk in the Spirit, with a pure heart in fervent love of the brethren, having purified his soul in obeying the truth; and let him humbly check his 'revelations' or knowledge with sound and mature brethren which were in Christ before him. Thus, all extra-sensory perception well safe-guarded against, the soulish will be eliminated and the life of the Holy Spirit will be established in regularity before God and in the church of Jesus Christ.

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## SICKNESS IS NOT SIN

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But let all such people know also, and with comfort, that the prophets of old were often called 'seers'; not so much because they saw into the future, but rather that under the hand of God they could 'see' into the true state of things as they were in God's sight and were able to pronounce upon them by the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

In connection with this whole matter of Spiritism, a host of seemingly harmless practices, sometimes thought to be games, ply the devil's trade among the unwary. Palm reading, teacup reading, fortune telling, astrology - and within this context, zodiacal signs under which a person is supposed to be born etc. - glass-moving, table-rapping, levitation and many similar and associated things all pave the way for demons to possess or interfere with any who engage in their practice. They are proven and acknowledged grounds of devil-activity and must be left severely alone.

g. Black magic. This is quite open devil worship. Its success depends upon co-operation with satan by every possible means known to man, stopping at nothing. It needs no advocacy to show that this is both demon inspired and controlled. Even reading about or undue investigation into the filthy and nefarious practices of this evil thing can be sufficient to trap and destroy the most well meaning soul. Beyond 'Dangerous keep out' the notice must read, 'Disastrous, do not under any circumstances think about it'. Nevertheless, there is total deliverance in Christ even from this blackest of all demon activity.

Finally, and because it is such a growing thing in our day, mention must be made of homosexuality. We are living in a so-called permissive society, wherein conditions and practices which have been condemned by God and outlawed by former generations, are not only allowed and even legalised, but are regarded as perfectly normal. In some cases the blessing of the church(es) has been bestowed so that these things are now considered acceptable, if not virtuous.

A nation is indeed in a sorry state when it legalises practices contrary to God's moral laws and connives at circumventing His commandments. To call sin sickness is in this case to charge God with being

both ignorant and callous - and this is precisely what the devil wants. God judged Sodom and destroyed it by fire from heaven, not because they were just a poor lot of sick people. The Bible says they were 'sinners exceedingly' before the Lord - and He destroyed them. And in the days when man accepted God's standards as the norms in matter of social behaviour, our law-makers gave the name of Sodom to the sin now promoted to sickness by our medical and religious scientists, and commended as proper behaviour. God help us!

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## SIN IS NOT SICKNESS

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While people so affected must not be treated as social outcasts, they must not be commended in their sin. Nor need they believe that their condition is normal, or that there is no deliverance from their pitiable state. Alas! It has been asserted in some Christian literature that this condition must be accepted; that it cannot be cured in Christians and therefore must be controlled - and lived with! What sort of salvation is this that leaves a man in the grip of such sin or in the possession of this kind of unclean spirit?

Let every man turn his eyes on Jesus of Nazareth and behold God's normal man! Then let him honestly distinguish between what is of sin in himself and what is of the powers of darkness. The former is his own personal responsibility before God, whilst concerning the latter he mostly needs help from some other person(s) ministering to him by the power of the Holy Spirit in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the end a person needing deliverance is shut up by the Spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ, for in so much that is not merely physical, sin and demonic interference are inextricably mixed up and beyond human power to distinguish the one from the other. Only the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, in the life of a fellow Christian can penetrate and divide in the matter.

How grateful we should be that the church militant has been endowed by her risen and glorious Lord with gifts of the Spirit and endued also with working power more than sufficient to deal with all the effects of every kind of demon activity. Therefore, let no man believe he is beyond aid. Jesus Christ, today the same as yesterday, will deliver the imprisoned, the vexed, the bound and the possessed if they will believe Him; that is, take His word about their condition, and trust Him to save them into His life.

G.W.N.

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

Bishop J.C. Ryle

# WHAT IS THIS BAPTISM?

**BERNARD HULL**

More than any of us can understand, that is for sure! Greater than the greatest statements that have been made about it, that too is certain. Something that causes controversy in Christian circles wherever it is introduced, this is also true of it. Shall we add to the confusion by another article? Is it possible to rid ourselves of all prejudice and come in simplicity of heart to the scriptures of truth and see what they say to us concerning this vital matter? Prejudice withers those who have it; they miss hid treasure thereby. Let the hungry gather and be fed, let us all lay aside every narrowing thing that would keep us from having from God all that He would give us.

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## RARITY IMPLIES VALUE

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The phrase 'Baptism in/with the Holy Spirit' is rarely found in scripture. What a discovery this is considering the way in which it is peddled around so freely in certain circles. Could it be that this blessed thing (whatever it is), is so precious, so valuable, that the Lord whispers it but infrequently lest it should become profane? 'You must be born again' is another phrase equally rare. Something has gone wrong, that things so precious have become like toys, played around with by children who know not what they handle. In this way jewels of great worth in spiritual value are treated like cheap glass marbles in a childrens playground. Is this what we have done with precious truth from God? In some cases such profaning of truth may be done unconsciously but it is none the less grievous to God and misleading to both saints and seekers alike.

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## NO BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

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Just to confirm our statement concerning preciousness and rarity, look into the scriptures. Look at the Old Testament first. You will not find our phrase mentioned there at all. More than two thirds of the Bible, spanning millenia and no mention? Here is an amazing fact. There are allusions though; inferences, metaphorical statements, promises concerning something 'to come'. All concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit was future as far as the Old Testament was concerned. No one was baptized in the Holy Spirit in those centuries, not Elijah, nor Isaiah, not a man nor a woman, no matter how godly and precious they were. Yet many a person in Old Testament days experienced something of the Holy Spirit. What happened to them then if it was not the

'baptism' in the Holy Spirit? Special distributions of the Spirit of God were given to them. These equipped them to fulfil the special functions unto which they had been chosen and called by God. That was wonderful, but that was all, whether they were prophets or artificers chosen to build the tabernacle; whether Samson or David, the Spirit was distributed to them unto specific ministerial ends which could only be fulfilled 'by the Spirit'. But none were BAPTIZED in the Holy Spirit, God was saving the best till last!

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## THE PLAIN ANNOUNCEMENT

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When we open the pages of our New Testament at last we find some explicit mention of our subject. Within a page or two of the beginning of the 'gospel' we find the phrase. John the Baptist was the first human being ever to say these words. That is salutary as we recall to mind what manner of man he was. He himself was a baptist but water was the medium he used. This in itself was new, but how much more his announcement concerning the Baptism in the Holy Spirit which was to come. Each of the gospel writers record John's statement. Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16 and John 1:33 are the relevant scriptures. Only once do we find the Lord Jesus mentioning this baptism directly in a phrase; it is after His resurrection whilst speaking to His disciples in Acts 1:5. Notice the fact that at this point the phrase is still in the future tense; still no one had been baptized in the Holy Spirit by the Lord Jesus. Evidently there was that which yet had to take place both in the Lord Jesus and in heaven before He could fulfil the promise. Peter is the only other person to use the phrase in its straightforwardness. He mentions the Spirit baptism in Acts 11:16. He is referring back to the statement Jesus had made and using it in connection with the amazing happenings in the household of Cornelius. Peter states that (amongst other things), those in Cornelius' household were 'Baptized in the Holy Spirit'. God gave to them 'the like gift as He did unto us' (Acts 11:17) says Peter. Now, when we realize that this event in the house of Cornelius took place at least three or four years after Pentecost those that affirm a belief that there was only one 'baptism in the Spirit' and it took place on the day of Pentecost lose credibility for their case. This act of God called by this name is clearly not only something which God did once, an inaugural move bringing the church into being. It is that, but it is much more; it can happen to Gentiles also, to soldiers, servants, all sorts of people at any time in this 'day of grace' in which we live, providing certain necessary criteria are met with.

Here then is the extent of the usage of this phrase in its simple clarity in the New Testament. Paul does mention something like it in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. 'By One Spirit are we all baptized into one body'. He is obviously talking about the same thing, but is not so definite in using the phrase we seek. This means that we only find the phrase three times in scripture; once by John Baptist, once by the Lord Jesus and once by the apostle Peter. Isn't this amazing? I find it so. Let us tread carefully on from this point and examine this truth lest we should be like the children in the playground mentioned earlier.

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## A HELPFUL HERMENEUTIC

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Hermeneutics, here is a good word. What does it mean, especially in connection with our subject? It is a term used in reference to laws of Bible interpretation. Though there is some variation of opinion among them, most theological experts recognize about thirty laws of Bible hermeneutics. One of these laws will help us in the pursuit of our study. It is generally known as the 'law of the first mention'. Simply stated, this law says that the first mention of any subject in the scripture contains within it all the essential elements of truth pertaining to that subject. This is an important principle - bear it in mind as we go ahead and examine carefully the first mention of our subject. There we shall find EVERYTHING basic to the baptism in the Holy Spirit, every essential element will be there just as everything essential to the later growth of a plant is contained within the seed sown. It is true that branches, leaves, buds and fruit will grow out from that seed, but they were all there at the beginning!

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## THE FIRST MENTION

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The first mention of this subject is from John the Baptist. In each of the gospels the statement is recorded. This repetition lends emphasis. God is really wanting to say something; it is important, let every open heart hear it. Other events and teachings recorded by all four gospel writers deal with matters essential to entry into and continuance in spiritual life. If we bring together the four accounts of the words of John Baptist we arrive at this statement - 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire'. Contained in these ten words there must be the essential elements of what this baptism is, who does it, in what element it is done and to whom. Scripture continues in the text adding 'whose fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire'. Here is the expected result of this baptism, it is unto fruitfulness for God's garner and the destruction of all that is not fruit unto God. If a man would be fruitful unto God, one whom the Lord shall gladly gather into His garner,

then he must be baptized in the Holy Spirit and continue in the life and ability thus imparted.

Now let us attempt something very simple; an examination of each of these ten words as they occur in the text. They are specific, surely as we look briefly into each of them we can gather at least some of that truth God wants us to know concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We must neither detract from nor underemphasize that which is written nor add to it but understand it as it is written.

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## 'HE'

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Who is the 'He' of the text? Everyone who is familiar with the scripture will know the answer. Let us confine ourselves to the contextual answer. Firstly John Baptist calls Him 'the Lamb of God' (John 1:29 & 36). Secondly John states that He is 'preferred before me for He was before me (v30). Thirdly, 'He' is the One upon whom the Spirit of God descended and remained (see v33). Fourthly, John states that 'He' is the Son of God (v 34). Fifthly, in Luke 3:16 'He' is described by John as being 'mightier than I'. Sixthly we find that 'He' is the owner of that which has been growing, owner of the land, owner of the threshing floor. Note the repetitive statement that it is 'He' who will baptize, the fan is in 'His' hand, the floor is 'His', the wheat is also 'His', and finally the garner is 'His' too. I love the way that the Lord Jesus is introduced in this manner by John. Gathering these statements together we find that 'He' who baptizes with the Holy Spirit is the Lamb of God who knows intimacy with the dove-like Holy Spirit. 'He' came to take away sin, not merely to cover it as sacrifices of old had done. 'He' is the pre-existent One who was before John and indeed all others. It seems that the whole context is full of the greatness of 'Him'.

How often people seem to make a great mistake right at this first word. They get a hunger for 'the baptism' but not for 'Him'. The quest to obtain begins. They go to this meeting and to that, seeking the ministry of this man and that so that they can 'get' the Spirit. All sorts of phrases are used, laying on of hands is employed. Sincerity may well pervade all hearts concerned, but so often folk fail to receive that which they seek because they have not gone to 'Him'. This baptism is inextricably linked with 'Him'. Through it those who find, find 'Him'. Though people may seek 'Him' FOR the baptism in the Spirit, when they receive from Him they discover that in fact they have truly found 'Him', they have really RECEIVED 'Him' (John 1:12). When the thirsting heart really comes to 'Him' it shall surely receive. HE has the Spirit to give. It is wonderful that He employs men and women as His channels but they are not the source. People get fixed on the channels and miss Him who is the living stream. Perhaps this is an error particularly prevalent in our day. It is an age of 'stars'; pop stars, film stars, sports stars, stars of every type seem to fill the mental firmament of so

many people. Such attitudes spill over into the churches. Folk run hither and thither to this or that 'spiritual star' and all the while the Lord is whispering 'seek ye MY face'. It was Oswald Chambers who stated that he had become firmly convinced of the fact that the last thing people will do is to come in simplicity of heart to the Lord Jesus. They would pray, weep, seek the help of anyone who appeared to have somewhat to offer, but to come to the Lord Himself and drink was at once the hardest and yet the simplest thing of all. The Lord Jesus never fails. He shall baptize in the Spirit those who come to Him. He is Lord, He is Master, He is the Son of God, He is also Lamb who knows the communion of the Holy Spirit. When this Lord Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit it is man being brought into intimate relationship with this One who is greater than all, the One who is before all, the One who takes away sin; man meets God as Lamb and Dove. Is it possible that this baptism in the Holy Spirit has become demeaned in current day usage? It is very possible.

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### 'SHALL'

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'He shall ...'. In the days that John Baptist spoke these words it was for the future. The blessing was 'not yet' save in the mind and intention of God. It was not yet available. John's water baptism was available, the sacrificial system in the temple was functional, and the devout heart that sought to please God could avail itself of these. But the Baptism in the Holy Spirit had yet to be created, it had yet to burst forth. This great immersion was yet in store, like the waters both above and beneath the earth waiting in the days of Noah. As we know, the waters of Noah had to be released. They were kept in place and it needed the word of God to make the breach so that they could pour forth and do their work. Even so in God had been stored up grace such as man had hardly dreamed of. There was to be an immersion in Holy Spirit for man but all was intact and sealed unless the word should come creating a breaking. The Lord Jesus Christ was and is that living Word. Jesus the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit had to be prepared and in Him the way had to be opened through which the Spirit could be poured out. When something is stored up, there needs to be the time of release. A bottle of wine will need to be opened, the Spirit of God is the wine of God and Calvary was the time of opening. Christ became the way in every way. The way back to God for man, the way for the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon man. Whilst Jesus walked upon the earth He could never baptize in the Holy Spirit, all was still in store in those days, it needed the breakings of Calvary, the spilling of His spotless blood that the Spirit should be shed forth from on High. John had to speak of the baptism as future but there would be a day when that which should come would come, and blessed are those who live in the days of its availability and receive. 'He shall', not maybe, or perhaps, but He shall! Here is certainty of promise; from it He will never turn.

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### 'BAPTIZE'

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The word 'baptize' is not common in the scriptures. We have already pointed that fact out. In our text it is used in the future tense, because it was something yet to take place in the lives of those hearing its announcement, providing they qualified to receive it. If we take careful note that the word is only used in reference to two events we shall immediately learn something vital concerning it. The words of John Baptist and those of Jesus in Acts 1:8 without doubt refer to that which took place on the day of Pentecost. Peter's statement in Acts 11:16 also refers to Pentecost and we also deduce that the event in Cornelius' household was of the same order. These are the sole occasions of the mention of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit by name in all scripture. Referring as they do to these two events, we may certainly grasp that this baptism has to do with (1) the inauguration of the Church and (2) initiation into the life of Christ the Head of the Church.

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### INAUGURATION

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Pentecost is generally known as the 'birthday' of the Church. It was the beginning for the one hundred and twenty who received the baptism in the Holy Spirit by their own admission (Acts 11:15). Pentecost was the inauguration of the Church and concerned those coming from a Jewish background. In the household of Cornelius those being brought into the Church were Gentiles by background. 'Inauguration' means 'to make a public exhibition for the first time' (Chambers Dictionary). At Pentecost God publicly exhibited the fact that His Church was not a historical fact, it was in being and men and women from a Jewish background had been placed in it. In Acts 10 God again publicly exhibited the fact of His Church and this time, that He now was including Gentiles in its number. We may gain this lesson from this fact, namely that the 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' must take place in a person's life in order for them to be publicly exhibited to be included by God among the number of those in His Church. Whether or not the experience is called by this name is not the fact under examination, but the thing itself must take place. Praise God that He is not limited to phraseology and does perform this operation in the lives of those who come to Him, though they may understand it in other terms. However, this should not stop us from holding clearly the statement of truth using proper terms if we by His grace have come to see their true use and value.

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### INITIATION

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A second truth concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit was mentioned earlier, it is the fact that by the baptism an initiation takes place. It is of interest to note that in the days of the Lord,

baptisms of various types were practised by other religions. These 'baptisms' were comprised of rites by which a person was initiated into the particular 'mysteries' of that religious group. Some of these baptisms were bloody and vile; they implied a 'passing in' to the realm and dimension of the spirit worshipped, and linked with this they 'passed out' from the former life and associations which they had espoused before. When these initiatory baptisms took place, the person being baptized was also promised knowledge, the secret knowledge that lay in the religion into which they were being brought. As an example of such baptisms, consider the awfulness of being placed in a pit dug in the earth, over which a grid is placed. Then a beast is slaughtered on the grid and the blood pours down upon the one beneath, and thus are they baptized into that particular cult! Praise God that we do not pass through such bloodthirsty things. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is that means by which God initiates us into the life of His Son. We pass into His Spirit and become those who 'know all things' even as has been promised. Some would say that baptism in water is this initiatory rite in God's Church, but how can an act taking place in water accomplish such an initiation unless there be a true and real act of the Lord Jesus to baptize in the Spirit at the self-same moment? Doubtless were this to happen to an individual it would be the ideal Christian experience.

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### DIPPING TO DYE

Moving on further, we find three more meanings attached to the word in those days. Firstly, it was used in reference to the dyeing of a cloth. A garment was taken and dipped, immersed, and submerged in the liquid until the liquid impregnated it. So, we may say that to be baptized was not a vague sprinkling, it was a dipping right into the liquid. Submersion unto impregnation unto emergence in a new state was the object of the exercise. Taking this meaning and inferring spiritual truth from it, what can we do but wonder at the grace of the Lord when we consider His intention to take human persons and immerse them into His own Spirit, to submerge them into Himself until there is total impregnation of their personality with His own Being. In the act of dyeing a cloth, care was taken to ensure a thorough impregnation. The cloth was not casually flung into the dye. Rather, it was taken, soaked in the fluid dye until the colour was permeating all. Once this was accomplished, the cloth was lifted from the dye and its change was obvious to all! Here is the thorough work of God illustrated to us. The spirit of man is put right into the Spirit of God, and that which is in the Spirit of God gets thoroughly into the spirit of that man! Just consider this for a moment - impregnation! Complete absorption of that which is in God into man. Here is the grace of God reaching the sinful states of man, changing him utterly. This is the secret of holiness, here is fundamental change of inward states. It is not merely something 'made over to our account', but rather a tangible change of inward substance. It is God coming into man truly and man emerging into obvious likeness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

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### CLEANSING

In Luke chapter 11:38, we discover another meaning to the word 'Baptism'. It refers to the act of washing. Before eating food a person was expected to dip their hands into water to be made clean so that they could share the food provided. Jesus did not comply with the expectations of those who looked on that day. Ritual cleansing had become a god to them. So, when a person 'baptized' their hands, they 'cleansed' them. This is vital to our subject. A baptism is a cleansing, so Holy Spirit baptism involves an inward cleansing. This is not a ceremonial cleansing of the body, but an internal washing of the spirit by which the inner man is purified in reality. 'Their hearts were purified by faith', was the definition of that which took place in Cornelius' household as far as Peter was concerned, and it took place in the baptism in the Holy Spirit (compare Acts 15:9 with Acts 11:16). Few in the Churches seem to realize this wonderful aspect of the Spirit baptism nowadays. The baptism in the Holy Spirit and inward cleansing from sin are rarely preached as connected, nor is such a cleansing either sought or expected by those who receive their so-called baptism in the Holy Spirit. Yet, here it is, implicit in the use of the word and confirmed by scripture itself.

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### FILLED

Now we come to the third use of the word 'baptism'. This time the connection is with 'filling'. When a small vessel was dipped into the fluid contained in a larger vessel and filled, this act was called 'baptism' in those days. I think this is a wonderful picture. We, the smaller vessel, taken by the Lord Jesus and immersed into God! We, filled with that which He is, that which is in Him! Personality placed into personality. Man put into God and filled with Him. Plato used the word 'baptized' in the context of being 'overwhelmed with questions'! He was 'overwhelmed (baptized) with questions'! How we need to be 'overwhelmed' with God! This is the baptism in the Holy Spirit, those who have experienced it can testify that it was, at the time it occurred, an 'overwhelming' of the soul with God. There was a total self-forgetfulness, an immersing into God, and an infilling which caused the heart to bask in an inward sense of well-being, of acceptance with God, bringing peace and joy which overwhelmed the former sense of uncleanness, inadequacy, uselessness and rejection. For some, this sense of blessedness diminished rapidly as they allowed reasonings to dominate again, doubts creep in and some degree of darkness to veil the Lord's face. Be that as it may, it need not happen. Let all be certain though, that in the true Baptism in the Holy Spirit, this awareness of God Himself coming to gather up the small human vessel into Himself is felt and known implicitly, though maybe not in these terms.

So, let us summarize the meanings of this word baptism. Firstly, it is used of inauguration and initiation. When one is baptized in the Holy Spirit it is their inauguration into God's family and also their initiation into the mystery of the Life of Jesus the Head of the body. At that time they are immersed and submerged into the Spirit of God with a view to total impregnation so that they may emerge clearly in sight as those 'shot through' with the likeness of Christ. Simultaneously they are purified, made inwardly clean in heart. God does it; it is in the impregnation. Then also at that time they are filled, brought into the vast Person of God and made to overflow with Him.

We ought not to pass on from our study of the word 'Baptize' without noticing that it is a verb. This means that it is used in the active sense. It is

something that is done. Now, a person cannot baptize himself in the Holy Spirit. A man did baptize himself in water though. You can find the story in the Old Testament. The man is Naaman. He 'baptized' himself seven times! This is how it is put in the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. In our Bible we read in 2 Kings 5:14 that Naaman 'dipped himself'. He was thus made clean from his leprosy because he obeyed the word of the prophet. Isn't it interesting the way that in this story baptism is linked with cleansing? Now, in the Holy Spirit baptism a man must actively participate, but not by baptizing himself, rather by giving himself over unreservedly to the Baptizer, the Lord Jesus, who will then baptize him. A person thus acted upon by the Lord Jesus will know that it has been done, he will not need to persuade himself of it. He shall know. **B.H.**

## THE ANOINTING - PART FOUR

GEORGE W. NORTH

The Apostle Paul's experience of the anointing is fully exhibited in the scriptures, and his understanding and spiritual grasp of it perfectly revealed in 1 Corinthians 12. He speaks of the body of Christ as 'the Anointed' (vv. 12/13). He does not say or even hint that only the Head, the Lord Jesus, is the Anointed, and the body virtually un-anointed or only spasmodically so, but that the whole is the Anointed.

He does not discuss the Head as apart from the rest of the body at all, but always Head and body as one. This is a great and daring concept and revelation, but it in no way dishonours the Head. It is in the order of creation that the head is the head; but so it is that the hand is the hand and the foot is the foot; and there is no discredit to either of the latter or the former that God has ordered the body thus.

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### A GREAT ...

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Speaking of the uncomely parts, Paul says that upon these we bestow more abundant honour. Moreover, by suggesting two rather incongruous exchanges of conversation he shows the absurdity of supposing any part of the body to be inferior to the other. God has made it that way. Since I am a member of the whole body, I am part of the Anointed - I partake of His anointing.

The anointing of old was poured upon Aaron's head; from thence it flowed down his robe over the rest of his body. Today our glorified Lord is

anointed above His fellows, and from our Head flows the endowment (or clothing) He promised to us as part of Him - part of the same body of life and power and authority.

We are true sons of God; we are His 'fellows' (Heb. 1:9). This being so, why then do so many of us have such a variable experience of the anointing? The short answer is Self. We are such soulish creatures! We insist yet on judging truth by our experience of it. Few there be who take God at His word, reckon their old man crucified with Christ and disregard their feelings.

The above statements of Paul amount to a repetition of what John says - the anointing remaineth in you. It is not recorded anywhere in the New Testament that the Lord Jesus, or Paul, or Peter - or in fact anybody was re-anointed subsequently to his initial and initiating experience. The gifts and ministries listed in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4 are obviously quite normal functions within the body of the Anointed and require no new anointing for their proper and powerful functioning. We need only to re-discover, believe and obey the indispensable scriptural principles governing the operations of these God-given ministries. The church can and must return to the spiritual norm exhibited in scripture as lived by the early church.

God often marks the beginning of a new age or movement by miraculous signs and manifestations of power. The Creation, or the Exodus, or the Incarnation, or Pentecost itself, seem to suggest that at the beginning of one's own life in the Spirit,

uncommon, even marvellous things may take place. But to argue from this that a new miracle-worker has been raised up destined to world-wide or even local fame, is as highly dangerous as it is basically unscriptural.

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### ... AND DARING CONCEPT

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It is neither unusual nor illogical that a newly baptized babe should work miracles, but let him not therefore assume he is a highly individualistic and remarkably gifted man above his fellows, or sooner or later he will be left wondering why, where and how his 'anointing' has 'evaporated'. Worse than this; a period of unwarrantable introspection may quite easily set in, heralding much mental conflict, sickness and spiritual darkness. All of which can readily be avoided if with all lowliness of mind he learns truth by searching scripture for the Lord's own example, and listens humbly to the voice of the Good Shepherd in his own heart.

Our Lord's life was a clear and important example of everything to do with the anointing. In John 5:19/20 He reveals a spiritual and secret principle governing the function of the anointing in His own life and ministry:-

'... Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth ...'

Following as it does the account of the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, it explains how it was that out of the multitude of sick folk there that day, only one man was healed.

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### WHY ONLY ONE ...

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Being God manifest in the flesh, with ample power to raise even the dead, and having publicly announced He was anointed to the ministry of healing and deliverance, the Lord nevertheless healed but one and left the multitude seeking to solve their own problems at the troubled pool. Why? At other times, as in Luke 4:40/41, He healed every one; and this seems more in keeping with the love of His compassionate heart. In all conscience this surely is a truer picture of our loving Lord? Not so! It is more popular indeed, but no truer than the former.

The explanation is simply this; the Father showed Him to do it. That is all. Jesus' care was more to do His Father's will than to become a public idol. He is man's God in being God's Man. His chief mission was to save - not just to heal; and complete conformity to His Father's will, guidance, directions and revelations was the absolutely indispensable qualification for His full ministry. At this point turn to 1 Timothy 4:9-16. Especially notice verses

10, 14 and 16. We must ensure that the highest calling includes and eclipses the lesser in our lives.

Upon His own confession, Jesus' ability to do anything lay in His obedience to the Father's will and His response to His Father's revelation within Him. We too must realize and never relinquish the fact that the design of the anointing is to make us utterly dependent upon God.

Campaigns for this or that, according to denominational emphasis or light, must continue to reap their inevitable harvest of partial success all the time that God's general will is substituted for the certainties of particular guidance. So also must personal ministries suffer, unless there is whole-hearted return to Jesus' way in the anointing.

Bearing all this in mind it is possible for us to glean from our forebears in the faith, and especially Peter, yet further clues to the continuous, successful and expanding life and ministry they enjoyed by God's favour. Before leaving this earth to take His heavenly seat, Jesus had said to them, 'All authority is given unto me ... and lo I am with you ...' They actually believed this! They proved it by proceeding to act upon it. Tarrying only at His command for God's timetable to be fulfilled in heaven and upon earth, they went out united with Him to do His will and lo! they found Him with all His authority always with them.

On the day Peter and John went together up the temple steps to join others in prayer they had no idea that the moment for the sign-miracle of the new age had come. They never prepared themselves by a special anointing for the ministry, for it was absolutely impossible to anticipate it.

The reading of Acts 3 is convincing proof that it all arose from their relationship with the Lord. Union with Christ was so complete that not one moment of hesitation for thought or prayer intervened between the beggar's request and Peter's response. Giving such as he had, Peter speaks and acts with supreme confidence in the name of Jesus Christ. He never doubted for a moment that what he said would immediately happen. As Jesus formerly acted in His Father's name, so now Peter acts in Jesus' name, and through faith in that name the man was made whole.

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### ... AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA?

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Though Peter was one of the chosen apostles of the Lamb, truth is the same for every man, and we may learn Peter's secret for it is open upon the pages of the Book.

When later, Peter was sent to Cornelius, the Spirit said, 'Go ... nothing doubting'. This command was a sweet mixture of divine rebuke and heavenly comfort. For the first time since his Christ-uniting-identifying-baptism-anointing at Pentecost Peter was

doubting within himself. So the Spirit had to bring him sharply back to the only position from which God can work His greatest works - the doubt-less heart.

Peter was in danger of losing the ministry of the Anointed. The whole of God's plan for Peter's life as well as God's purposes in this world were in jeopardy. Hitherto in scripture, since Pentecost, it is impossible to detect in any of Peter's words or actions the slightest trace of hesitancy or doubt; actually the words of the Holy Ghost 'nothing doubting' fitly describe this man's whole life - even as his Lord's before him.

Certainty, confidence, spontaneity, boldness, marked all his words and actions. Without a second thought, even as without premeditation, he preached, prophesied and pronounced judgement. The Anointed was in him, therefore the anointing was on him, Jesus and Peter were one. Union to the point of identity was the secret. The Lord's prayer in John 17 was proved answered in this ministry; it was God's and man's - Jesus' and Peter's.

When Peter was asked by his enemies by what name or power he had performed this miracle, he re-asserted it was, 'by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth ... EVEN BY HIM', that is, Christ in person - in Peter (Acts 4:10). They concluded that 'these men HAD BEEN with Jesus'. They were quite wrong. These men STILL WERE with Jesus; or rather, Jesus was still with them!

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### GO, DOUBTING NOTHING...

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Past historic contacts and associations with the Christ after the flesh are not valid reasons for miracles. The Christ is living and present and must be known after the Spirit or else He is but a memory. Peter did not rely for power upon the accounts in the book he helped write, nor upon memories, but upon the Anointed within him by the Spirit.

The whole early church lived like this. They as members and He as Head were one. On their part they sacrificed everything to this miraculous union-identity. So had Jesus before them. Nothing was permitted to stand in its way. Ananias and Saphira must go rather than allow the possibility of losing the Spirit of the Lord with them in this manner. Beyond mere theory they were of one heart and soul with each other, and that their Lord's; they had all things common with each other and God. The anointing was bestowed to remain; and nothing and nobody was of any consequence or significance except as related to the abiding anointing.

Complete abandonment and spontaneous boldness marked everything about these people. Thus, in the storm that arose in Acts 4 over the miracle in Acts 3, the only thing the church asked for themselves was 'all boldness'. Mentioned three times in this chapter the word 'boldness' means 'free speech', and is a key to their success. They coveted only to speak freely and boldly of their God.

Their language was not the popular sentiment of Mark 9:24, 'Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief', but rather was it the fulfilment of Mark 11:22-24, 'The faith of God'. They did not doubt in their heart; they were inwardly unified, integrated with their Lord. They lived by faith, and 'all boldness' increased the 'power' promised in Acts 1:8 and received in Acts 2:4 into the 'great power' of Acts 4:32,33.

Now if a man speaks freely and greatly of his God, he must justify his claims by action, or else he will speedily be discredited. What is worse, his God and his gospel will be scorned. The Lord Himself said in condemnation of a certain group, 'they say and do not'; but these anointed ones, to His great delight, said great things and accomplished great things.

They were bold because their unification with their Lord was so complete and progressive. The anointing on His head, in them, was so permanent as well as fundamental that they just got on with His works with never a dream it should or could be otherwise. AND THERE IS NO HINT ANYWHERE THEREAFTER IN SCRIPTURE THAT IN THESE DAYS IT SHOULD BE ANY DIFFERENT.

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### ...THE ANOINTED IS WITHIN YOU

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If a man (or a church) has never known or has lost this precious ministry then there is something basically awry in the personal (or corporate) relationship with the Lord. Either the fullest possible measure intended in the initiating baptism was never properly apprehended and appropriated; or else, it has been dissipated by sinning. Sin may here be called disobedience, or lack of faith, or timidity, or fear, but nevertheless it is sin and must be repented of and forsaken. Otherwise, a lifetime of loss may result in an eternity of forfeiture of possession and position in the new creation. However, honest action resulting in utter return to the Lord on His terms will bring restoration to power and service to any who seek it - or rather, seek Him.

Now a word to those who have never known these things, or but a measure of these blessings, and who seek to enter into all that which we have but barely glimpsed in these pages.

Whatever measure of the Spirit's ministrations or manifestations or indwelling you know or have known, there must at this point be a frank admission that it has not been sufficient for these things. There must also be a clearing of the mind and heart from all sectarian ideas and prejudices both of doctrine and attitude. The blood that cleanses from all sin is sufficient also for this.

Let there be a faithful co-operation with the Lord unto all lengths; possibly a request for the laying on of hands by any man or group able to impart the Spirit and gifts and ministries you do not possess. All reservations (for whatever reasons or

excuses) against any of the gifts of the Spirit, and especially against any particular manifestation, must be honestly renounced and forsaken. More; the gifts must be desired and sought without preferring one above another, for God cannot be glorified apart from this.

Great care must be taken to come to complete heart purity here or desire will prove abortive. Then a definite reception of the Holy Ghost must be made. This involves a complete opening up of the whole being and personality to Him. It must also include an inward act of appropriation by the human spirit wherein heart, mind and will combine in a real transaction with God.

This exercise must be as definite as that whereby the woman took healing from the Lord by clutching the hem of His robe, or as when the roof was torn off and

the palsied man let down to the feet of Jesus. When this is done and the whole spirit, soul and body is yielded up to Him in utter abandonment, the fountain of the knowledge of the Lord's presence will rise within, resulting in streams of praise and gratitude flowing out to God.

The Baptizer needs no assistance. Pressure from without mostly issues in undue emotionalism and ultimate frustration; but the release from within, whilst using the emotions, is a purely spiritual uprising, wholly of God.

In conclusion, Samuel's words to Saul in 1 Samuel 10:6,7, especially verse 7, make a fitting as well as inspiring end to this series - 'And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee'. G.W.N.

### THE WORD OF THE CROSS

The doctrine of the Cross is folly to those who are perishing, because they conceive of some inherent excellence in humanity, whereas the Cross proclaims and justifies God's sentence of death against the human race. The same doctrine is the power of God to those who are in the way of Salvation because it is through faith in Christ's blood alone that a man can be justified from sin, crucified to the old man and united to the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness. To preach the Gospel, then, with wisdom of words, to exalt, that is, the human element, is to take away the power of the Gospel and make it in reality the folly which it is deemed to be by unspiritual man. Compare Rom. 1:6 and 3:22, Eph. 4:22-23, Col. 3:9-10

Comment in Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges on 1 Cor. 1:8

## BIBLE STUDY (3)

RON BAILEY

The story is told, early in this century, of a stranger arriving at a railway station in Wales, looking for 'God's man'. The ticket collector, without hesitation, directed him to the home of a young man called Rees Howells.

The phrase 'man of God' is used constantly throughout the Old Testament (over 70 times), but in the New Testament is only found in Paul's writings to Timothy (1 Tim 6:11, 2 Tim. 3:17). Timothy, who had known the scriptures from childhood (lit. infancy), (2 Tim. 3:15) would know that it was a term of honour given to men who were clearly acknowledged by God to be His servants. The phrase would have brought to Timothy's remembrance some of the heroes of faith. It was only ever used of males, but the truth of it is open to all in Christ, whether male or female.

As a descriptive term it is profound in its simplicity, but then what could be more glorious than to be identified as 'God's man'? Moses was identified thus in Deut. 33:1, Josh. 14:6, 1 Chron. 23:14, Ezra 3:2, as was Samuel in 1 Sam. 9:6-10, Elijah in 1 Kings 17:18, Elisha in 2 Kings 4:7, David in 2 Chron. 8:14 and many others (e.g. Judg. 13:6,8, 1 Sam. 2:27, 1

## BE A MAN, MY SON

2 TIMOTHY

Kings 13:1,4,5,6,7,11,12,14,21,26,29 and 2 Kings 23:16,17).

In 2 Timothy Paul's reference is to the scriptures which are 'God-breathed, and profitable ... so that the MAN OF GOD may be complete, fully equipped to every good work' (lit). By implication he considers that Timothy is a man of God, and that he wants to be a thoroughly equipped one. This study will draw our attention to a few basic facets of a 'man of God' (for more, see Norman Meeten's article, NCV mag. issue 1).

### VISIBILITY

In the Old Testament times the sense of the phrase 'man of God' is clear. All who are so called were prophets. Men whose ear the Lord had opened, and who stood for God and His ways when most others were being carried with the tide. Men conspicuous by their non-conformity. Imagine, as an example, the scene from Daniel 3. In the midst of a sea of prostrate bodies ... three 'sore thumbs'! Men of whom it can surely be said 'God is not ashamed to be called their God'.

God wants His men (and women) to be visible. The word 'manifest' is a key one in the New Testament. Images and likenesses are usually visible. 'Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness' (Gen 1:26) is the expression of God's desire to reveal Himself. It was this likeness of God in mankind that was to have dominion over the earth. In spite of man's 'dominion' over things physically, the creation is still waiting for him to fulfil his real role (Rom. 8:19).

In Paul's first letter to Timothy he has something to say about Timothy's general pattern of life. If men despise Timothy's youth the answer lies, not in calling in the apostle to bring the church to heel, but in being the example (1 Tim. 4:12-16). The consequence of having this man's example visible among them is wonderful. 'In doing this thou shalt ... save to employ the methods of the circus. If the life is visible to God, he will take care to ensure that it is made visible for those who need to see it (compare Gal. 1:15, 16 'it pleased God ... to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles').

Jim Elliott, the Ecuador martyr, used to say that he was studying for the degree A.U.G. 'approved unto God' (2 Tim. 2:15). This verse says, literally 'be diligent to present thyself approved unto God, a workman not ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth'. What we are 'unto God' has the most effect on those who witness our lives. This is clearly expressed in 2 Cor. 2:14,15). When Jim Elliott died the world only saw it in terms of waste, but what he was 'unto God' lingers on. In him there burned what he called the 'Spirit of the great short-lived One'. He was 'unto God' a sweet savour of Christ'. This savour penetrates 'every place'. There is no escape from the scent of what we are unto God. It gets INTO them who are being saved, and INTO them who are perishing (v. 15).

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## PROXIMITY / AUTHORITY

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An old African proverb says 'to hear you must be near'. It is our proximity to our Lord which will cause men to recognize that 'he's one of God's men'. By proximity I mean intimacy of relationship. The 'man of God' was seen to have a specially intimate relationship with God.

Authority is the result of that continuing relationship. Elijah, the man of God, gave the essence of his authority when he introduced himself to Ahab, 'the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand' (1 Kings 17:1). It's good to note the present tenses in this statement. Elijah, physically, was standing before Ahab, but his greater consciousness was that at that very moment he was standing before God. From the consciousness of such a relationship comes the fearlessness of a 'man of God'.

John's gospel introduces John Baptist (John 1:6) with the words 'there was a man sent from (Gk 'para' lit. from the side of) God whose name was John'. Think of a king with his faithful companion in perfect communion. The king speaks a word into the ear of the servant-companion, who carries the word for the king. A voice is just a carrier for the word, hence this man more than any before him was The Voice. The Word has an even closer relationship to the king. It is an expression of what is always within him. It is always 'in the bosom of the Father' (John 1:18). The Voice may lose its strength, and fail. The Word abides forever.

The Roman centurion recognized that authority is based on a continuing relationship. The tenses again illuminate the truth. 'I AM ... under authority, HAVING soldiers under me: and I say ...' (Matt. 8:9). The Jews thought their authority, and privilege was as a result of their ancestry. This gentile saw that it was the consequence of a continuing relationship. Small wonder that it moved the Lord to say 'I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel' (Matt. 8:10).

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## RESPONSIBILITY

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There is an important link between authority, and responsibility. Modern Business Management theory says that if you give a man responsibility without giving him authority, you only give him blameability. God gave these 'men of God' genuine authority, and consequently held them to be responsible. They would be answerable to God for their stewardship. This is always God's way (compare Matt. 10:1 with Matt. 17:17).

There's an important link too between responsibility and maturity. Accepting responsibility is a key feature in maturity. The real man does not seek to avoid his responsibility, but acknowledges it.

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## MATURITY

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One important aspect of manhood is seen in the way that the New Testament contrasts 'man' with 'child'. This thread, on a personal level, runs through Paul's letter to the Corinthians. They were behaving like children. They were ego-centric, enjoying gifts which gave them a high profile in the local church. Who hasn't seen a child lord it over his peers because of some 'gift'? 'It's my bat, and if I'm out I'm taking it home!'. By their behaviour, they revealed their immaturity. By their actions they showed their childish demands for attention, saying, in effect, 'look at me, look at me!'.

On a corporate level, manhood in contrast to childhood, is an important aspect of Paul's letter to the Galatians. Paul contrasts the period under law for Israel, and the age of faith which has come in

with Christ, under the headings of children, and sons. It's good to remember that blood sacrifice, temple choirs, dancers, priestcraft (as distinct from priesthood) were all part of a nation's childhood under God. One of the distinctive aspects of manhood is that the man puts away the things of his childhood.

Amongst the three great New Testament words which refer to the changes God works is one which touches on maturity ...

1. JUSTIFICATION

signifies a change in LEGAL STATUS

2. REGENERATION

signifies a change in NATURE

3. ADOPTION

signifies a change in RELATIONSHIP (Rom. 8:15,23, 9:4, Gal. 4:5, Eph. 1:5) this word literally is the 'son-placing'. Our word 'adoption' hardly does justice to the ideas behind it. When children were lacking in a Roman family the law authorized the head of the household to choose an heir; indeed Emperor Hadrian (of wall-building fame) thought that such 'adopted' sons were preferable to one's own, because they were chosen freely, whereas the latter were the product of chance!!

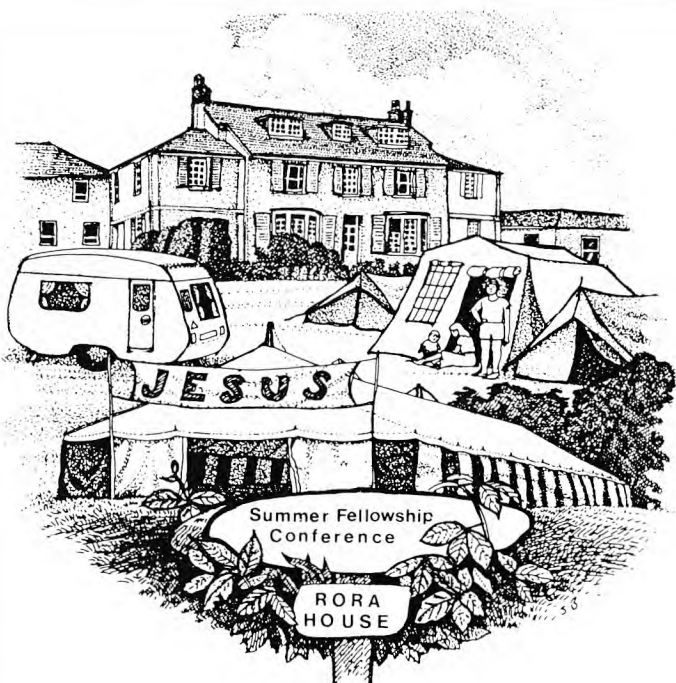
There were certain conditions which had to be fulfilled by the adopter, e.g. he must have no children of his own, and he must be 60 or impotent so that his own marriage could not produce offspring. Such an 'adopted' son would succeed to the family name, property, and the domestic sacrifices of the new family. Consequently such.....

.....'adopted' sons were not the Dr. Barnado babe-in-arms, but mature men who had survived infancy, and gave a prospect of continuing the family line.

Paul tells us more about manhood in 1 Cor. 13. He says 'when I became a man I put away childish things'. HE put them away. He accepted the responsibility for his own behaviour. There is a clear responsibility, having become something, to behave in a manner consistent with that nature. In Ephesians Paul says that in Christ we were taught to put off the old man and his works. We can do what God makes possible. So 'O man of God flee these things; and harass righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patient endurance, meekness' (1 Tim. 6:11 lit Gk. the phrase 'follow-righteousness' in the A.V. is the word usually translated 'persecute' in the New Testament).

We do not have to remain as children. Each one may fulfil all his glorious potential in Christ. To those who are sons belongs the privilege of being full grown men of God.

P.S. The more 'cultured' (or older!!) will know that this study's title comes from Rudyard Kipling's poem 'If...'. As a child, Kipling was left in the care of an evangelical family while his parents returned to India. His sense of abandonment by his parents, together with his sense of outrage at what he judged to be the highly preferential treatment which the natural children of the family received, produced fertile conditions for an implacable hatred for the gospel. This hatred revealed itself in many of his writings. It was crystalized in the poem 'If ...'. The philosophy of which was that the STRONG, not the meek, would inherit the earth. Kipling, like many in our own day, was unable to distinguish between 'maturity' and 'macho-rity'. Such men make 'exceedingly dangerous poetry'.  
R.B.



## SUMMER FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE

The Summer Fellowship Conference takes place again this year in the grounds of Rora House on the south-eastern edge of the Dartmoor National Park in Devon.

If you require further information please contact Mike Cross, Summer Conference Secretary, 5 Talfourd Avenue, Reading, Berks, RG6 2BP.

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