

# *new covenant* **Choice**

**May we be  
bound together  
in the fire of  
Divine Love**

**Catherine  
of Sienna**

**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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# NEW COVENANT HEREDITY

GEORGE W. NORTH

'My heart is full of Christ and longs  
Its glorious matter to declare,  
Of Him shall be my loftiest songs,  
I cannot from His praise forbear' wrote Wesley.

There is a verse in James' Epistle that says 'Love covereth a multitude of iniquities'. How wonderful to know that. Whether or not we have acknowledged or even recognized this, it is so, and has been so with us all our lives. This is one of the great features of God's love, it is so very great, vast and sufficient enough to cover all man's sin. James' statement is, in a way, a summary of all God's dealings with men under the Old Covenant: He covered all their iniquities. This is all He proposed to do at that time indeed He could do no other under that Covenant, the provision for more than covering was not then available. Precisely for this reason the Lord brought in the New Covenant.

## NOT A COVER UP

When God brought in the first covenant, He introduced to man the word atonement, He spoke of atonement for sin. Sometimes He used the indefinite article with the word atonement - 'an atonement', implying that there are many different atonements. There are, and we find that they were of different kinds and made in a variety of ways for specific and immediate needs and sometimes in great emergencies. Atonements were always made to placate God and to escape His righteous wrath because of sin. Once a year THE atonement had to be made, this covered all the unknown sin of all the people for one year only and that only upon certain conditions. Now because the word atonement means 'to cover', it does not mean that atonement was a great cover up: in fact it meant the exact opposite. Forgiveness was only granted by God upon the ground of the atonement if the sin was acknowledged and confessed before Him. Only upon that condition could the great annual atonement take effect. Provision was thereby made for sins of ignorance, with this proviso - that all known sin had previously been atoned for personally by each individual. Atonement was not a cover UP it was a covering OVER. Atonement bridged the gap till the great reconciliation should be brought in. God mercifully provided this covering for Israel until the time when Christ should come and completely take away sin and a new covenant could be established with man.

## BY THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

This new covenant is now in force, God is not dealing with men under the Old Covenant terms any more, the period of covering over sin is now past. Yet there are many, far too many, people existing with an Old Covenant mentality about sin as if the Christ had not come. There is no doubt that they have a genuine experience of God's love and grace that cannot be questioned, but it is far short of what God intends in Christ. To talk with them is to discover they are blessed, some very blessed of God, yet there is this and that still left undone in them and covered over. Deep down inside there lie wounds, unhealed hurts, ugly scars from former clashes with some person or other, bitter memories and the like which sour the soul and spoil the life. Beloved, there is a place beyond and above all that into which God can lift everyone, when such things do not exist, where bitterness is turned to sweetness and hurts and wounds are healed and scars are removed; totally eliminated from the mind and heart and memory. God says He will put a new heart in you, and purge your mind so that there will be no scars left in it. The prophet Isaiah said in his 53rd chapter that 'He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed': for 'stripes' read 'scars', 'with His scars we are healed'. Amen. The Lord Jesus is the perfect Saviour, he is the minister of perfect healing to the heart. A saint of God was once approached and asked to address a meeting during the course of a conference, which he did. After the meeting he was approached again, this time with the complaint that he had not upheld 'the doctrine'. He replied 'I don't know about the doctrine, I met the 'doctor' and He made a perfect cure'.

## ...SINS OF THE FATHERS VISITED

When Isaiah made that great prophetic statement in his 53rd chapter he revealed that God was moving forward through the centuries a new day. He was going to bring in His glorious New Covenant, and it was going to be based upon the new thing He was going to do. Under the Old Covenant people inherited and bore scars and suffered torments and deprivations for what their mothers and fathers did. This had been incorporated by God into the old covenant - He plainly told them that he would visit the sins of the fathers

upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him, but He would show mercy unto thousands of them that loved Him and kept His commandments. Those people not only suffered for their own sins, they suffered because of their fathers sins also. The captivity and banishment of the children of Israel to Babylon was an example of this. Because men refused to keep the Sabbath day holy at God's instigation, they were carried away into captivity by the Babylonians. For seventy years the sons and daughters of sinful parents had to suffer and bear punishment in a foreign land. What a terrible and undeserved tragedy; it was not their fault, it was their parents fault. Doubtless they were sinners themselves, but the seventy years banishment was the result of their fathers sins. We know only too well that people do suffer as a result of the sins of others. The story of the human race is one long record of the sins of the fathers' being visited upon the children. Not one generation has escaped this - everybody has been adversely effected by Adam's sin in the garden, even Jesus Christ had to be punished for it. He bears scars as a result of it, but thank God by those scars we are healed.

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### ...THE ANSWER IS IN A NEW FAMILY

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God is a family God, Jeremiah commences his 31st chapter on this note: 'I will be the God of all the families of Israel'. What a lovely approach to a chapter in which He is going to unfold to Israel His intention to bring in a new covenant. No less in the new covenant than in the old, God moves in the family idea, this is because the family idea is incorporated in Himself: God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. God started like this in the beginning as He said, He made man in His own likeness, after His own image. The Lord reminds Jeremiah that 'the people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel' He says, Israel who didn't deserve it found grace in God's sight, when God went all out to cause him to rest. This covenant that God is preparing to announce is going to be sheerest grace and Jeremiah goes reaching back into his memories and also the memories of Israel. 'The Lord appeared of old unto me' he says, 'Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee'. Everything is being announced from this great heart of love. Surely everybody ought to be drawn by a love that endures for ever and is committing itself to great promises.

He speaks with the heart of a father and a husband and what a precious promise the Lord makes relating to fathers and their children. 'In those days they shall say no more that their fathers have eaten a sour grape and the childrens teeth are set on edge'. It is a quaint proverb and O so very perceptive - men and women and boys and girls suffer because of their fathers misdeed and follies. 'There is not going to be any of this' God says, 'when I bring in my new covenant'. Then what is wrong with so many people who are claiming to be in the New Covenant, how is it that they complain or confess that

there is a whole host of things wrong with their lives? Was God wrong? Did He not tell the truth about the New Covenant? Was He trying to deceive men and women? We need to know. So many dear people, claiming to be God's children, are seeking unto 'memory healers', 'soul clinics', some are even undergoing 'psycho-therapy', while others practise yoga. Upon inquiring it is found that these dear ones are suffering from all sorts of nervous, mental, physical, and associated disorders, and are doing these things to find help. Why? Under the New Covenant, God has provided total deliverance from whatever kind of physical or spiritual 'father' we may have had? In this promise there is guarantee that whatsoever has been passed on from father to child shall not be the ruination of that child's life.

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### I WILL MAKE ALL THINGS NEW

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The gospel message is this; 'I make a new covenant'. A precious brother referred to something that has almost become a modern proverb - 'sweeping things under the carpet': we all understand what it means and that it goes on, but God does not do that. Some do because they are trying to deceive, not all do it for that reason though, they do so because they don't know there is an immediate and eternal deliverance from all those things. Listen to this gospel; the New Covenant is God's promise to you that whatever your father has been or still is, though he is a drunkard, who knocks your mother about and raped you and forced you to have incestuous relationships with him before you ever knew enough or had strength enough to resist him, you can be healed and delivered from every effect those things have on you. You may have or have had a heartless woman for a mother, who rejected you before you were born and has shown you no love since - you may be living under the most disadvantageous circumstances imaginable - it makes no matter. God loves you and will enter into this covenant with you. We are living in a most terrible age rapidly putrifying in its own sin. The great panjandrums of society say that children have got to be sexually educated when they reach the age that they (mark you) have decided. You may have a daughter or a son that you know is not yet ready for such things and will not be perhaps for some years, but he or she has got to have it rammed into them - the educationalists say so. We're not discussing whether or not there should be sex education, undoubtedly there should, provided it is given at the right time by the right people. A certain young woman who went through university once said to me 'If you only knew some of these people who are training to be teachers of the nations children as I know them. Many of them are sexual perverts, they are on drugs, they believe in permissiveness in all its forms and practise it, they are perverts'. Thank God everyone is not like that, but everyone knows that these things are on the increase in our society. This nation is heaping up trouble to itself. The tragedy of it all is revealed in our law courts, by our prisons, our hospitals, our mental clinics and hospitals, by broken homes, increased divorce, terrorism, violence, 'gays', AIDS,

the toll is terrible. Even 'Christianity' or 'Christian teaching' makes allowance for these things and accomodates many of them to the shame of the true Church.

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## RADICAL - THE NEW REVELATION

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In the midst of all this, God's New Covenant in Christ is good news to hear indeed. The old word atonement is not to be found in, God has turned from the method it implies and has removed it from the pages of the New Testament. All the other great doctrines fundamental to salvation are there but not the word atonement. The thought of covering over was not in God's mind when He covenanted with men in Christ. Redemption is there, sanctification is there, so is salvation, regeneration is there too, so is reconciliation. These latter two were spoken of doctrinally in the Old Testament. That may come as a great surprise to some, but it is the truth. The New Covenant is radically new. It is so dynamic and radical that though it could be referred to in the Old Covenant some of the things in it could not be included in the Old Covenant, they were too radically fundamental.

Probably the most important difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant lies in these two revelations. The one tells of total acceptance of man by God; the other tells of new birth whereby we may be born of God. This is the glory of the new revelation. Despite what a man may have done personally and whatever his father before him may have done and however these things may have affected him, God can give any man a completely new life, free from sin and the effects of it. A man, a gospel preacher, trying to make a point in his limited gospel once said, 'you can take a nail out of a piece of wood but you cannot take out the hole it has made'. He was quite wrong of course. What he said is true of the piece of wood, but it is not true of a man when God re-makes him. God makes a new creation of anyone who will enter into this New Covenant with Him. In this miracle of grace and power all things become new. This also is part of the newness of the covenant.

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## AS ETERNAL AS GOD HIMSELF

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In the last chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews the writer refers to the 'blood of the Everlasting Covenant'. He is speaking of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is perfect, he says the blood of the perfect man, it makes perfect. The Everlasting Covenant is the covenant of perfection, as everlasting as the blood in which it was established. This covenant is the fundamental agreement between the members of the Godhead and is as eternal as God Himself. Every agreement God has made with man has been made by virtue of this covenant and in strict accordance with it. Since the beginning of creation this covenant has been applied and adapted by God to meet His plans for man and His requirements of them.

At whatever point in time God did that a new period commenced during which God dealt with man on the terms which He Himself stated them. Before the present covenant of grace commenced, the covenant in force was the covenant of Law. Into that covenant the Lord incorporated the previous covenants He had made, such as the covenant He made with Noah and the covenant He made with Abraham. Likewise when bringing in the New Covenant, having dispensed with the sacerdotal Levitical code by the cross, God incorporated into the New Covenant very much of the old. All covenants are statements of basic truth and are the minimal conditions man must fulfil in order to inherit the blessings promised by God in the covenant. If any man did not keep the covenant, he excluded himself from it: he could not nullify it in God's heart or prevent others from keeping it; he may hinder them but he could not disqualify them. To hinder others from keeping covenant with God is a very serious matter and in view of the stern warnings of Christ, should be regarded with great fear. Beloved, God never makes idle threats.

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## ADVANCEMENT TO GREATER THINGS

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Within the terms of the covenant and upon the fulfilment of its basic requirements, there is ample scope for individual advancement to greater things. This is possible because each covenant of whatever order and whenever made was a temporary measure, an adaptation of the highest of all covenants, namely, the Everlasting Covenant. We find examples of this in the Old Testament. God covenanted with Abraham on two separate occasions and in different elements, once by sacrifice and once by circumcision. Both were in flesh and blood, the first in flesh and blood of animals and birds - on behalf of God, the second in His own flesh and blood, on behalf of Himself. Faithful, Abraham, favoured of God, fulfilled all God required of him, but oh! how much further that precious man went with God than just the fulfilment of the two conditions the covenants required of him. Abraham saw the day of Christ, it is not said Sarah did, though she was with her husband in the covenants, so too were Ishmael and Eliezer. All the males in Abraham's camp were brought into the covenant of circumcision, but we would be hard put to it to say what happened to them beyond that.

King David was another of the great men who excelled with God. Born an Israelite he was brought into the covenant by Jesse, his father, and lived among his people under the basic terms of the covenant given by Moses at Sinai. But oh! how much further than that this man went, he grew and grew, till he reached marvellous heights and became a man of great spiritual stature. In one of his psalms he wrote that he was born in Jerusalem, the city of the great king, which seems very strange, for he was born in Bethlehem. Indeed that little hamlet was famous in Israel and later in the Church, because both he and

the Lord Jesus were born there. True as that is, David said of Jerusalem that ALL his springs were there, and that when the people were numbered (to what censorship was he alluding?) his name was to be included among those who were born there. Though born under the Old Covenant, did he progress beyond the terms of that covenant into privileges not generally granted until the New Covenant was brought in? Listen to him as he speaks again in 2nd Samuel, chapter 23: these are not the words of a youth with plenty of beliefs, but few years, he is an old man mature in the ways of the Lord speaking out of a pure heart and a lifetime of experience.

These be the last words of David, the son of Jesse, the man raised up on high (by God and in the eyes of the people) the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel. 'The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and his word was in my tongue: the God of Israel said (the Rock of Israel spake to me) He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God: and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds: as the tender grass springing out of the earth by the clear shining after rain'. How wonderful. It's a wonderful thing when God speaks like that through a man, but listen further - 'Though my house be not so with God'. That was tragic, he had a wife but she was not like him; he had children, but they were not like him; think of Absalom over whom David broke his heart. David was alone in this; after a lifetime of ministry he was alone and he knew it. Why? Let him continue. 'But God has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, this is all my salvation and all my desire, though He make it not to grow'. David was at rest, having entered into a personal covenant with God, he was content. What he was saying is, 'Thy will be done'. He had gone far beyond everyone else in his generation into a personal covenant with God, that was all his salvation and desire. David was not content to rest in the covenant made at Sinai, that was wonderful, he shared in it with all Israel, but he wanted more, something much more personal. This inner urge drove him on, and because of it, by God's grace, like the apostle Paul continues later, he just about outstripped all his contemporaries in his own nation.

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## BOUNDLESS PROSPECTS

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There seems to be no limits short of God Himself and His position and authority, to which a man may go in personal relationship and covenant with God. So long as a man is content to be a man, a son of God, and does not think he is THE son of God or anything remotely like that, the prospects for him within the terms of the New Covenant are boundless. When David said of Jerusalem 'I was born there', and then went on to address the city itself, saying 'all my springs are in thee', he was making clear to all that his mother and father were not the source of his spiritual life. The God of the city of God, the greatest Father and King of all was his father. How wonderful of David to

say that; he could have been a very bitter man. Jesse, his earthly father, a good man no doubt, had greatly wronged his young son David by discounting him. On the day Samuel came to the farm to anoint one of Jesses' sons to be king, he quite deliberately did not call David to the ceremony, instead he sent him out and away to mind the sheep. It must have caused young David some pain to know that his father didn't even consider him to be worth bothering about. What a slight, how embittered David could have been. But David's springs were not in his father or his mother, something had happened to him which had broken the heredity link and changed the source of his spiritual life.

David began one of his songs like this, 'My heart is inditing a good matter, I will speak of the things that I have made touching the King'. He didn't speak of things Abraham or Moses or Joshua had made, they were great enough for anyone to speak about, but good as they were, he had things of his own to say, and he said them. What wonderful things they were: his heart within him did not make trouble or fountain up misery or complaints, he was free from all those things. And if he could be so free why cannot all God's children be free of such things? One of the things that most quickly comes and takes strongest root in the heart of a man is bitterness, it is very powerful and makes vigorous growth till it makes the whole heart sour. Worse, it affects many others also and unless dealt with can soon ruin a church. When bitterness is in a life and wells up in a heart, it is of no use trying to control it, or justify it, or cure it. The only way to deal with it is to let God change your heart. Do not try to cure bitterness, it is a result, a symptom, go for the root. Palliatives only cover over the trouble, for a while and not last long, your troubles will come again soon. Bitterness will not dwell alone in any heart either, it will increase to more and more ungodliness.

There is deliverance from this though, there is no need to be bitter for the rest of life. God will do a radical work which will both take away the root and the ground in which it is growing. He will give you newness of heart, your thinking and imagination and desires and affections will be new; God will renew everything within you, making a complete change of personality. There is a place in God where all sin and everything connected with it goes from the heart like the night fleeing before the day, leaving no remnants behind. Most people underestimate the powers of God, even preachers bring psychology to bear on people and not the gospel. But psychology being human can only move from the outward to the inward not from the inward to the outward. God alone can do that and when He does He sets man free, utterly free, and He wants to do it. When He does this, that great strong ego will not be rising all the time, and what you have inherited from your mother and father will be refined. What we inherit naturally from father and mother, we all have in common, but that has very little to do with what is meant by being born of Jerusalem which is from above.

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## LEAVE ALL - AND COME AFTER ME

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So much that the Lord Jesus said on earth was directed to this end. He was always trying to get His men to accept the truth. Leave your father, leave your mother, leave your wife, leave them and come after Me. Was He only trying to recruit disciples or was He attempting to do more than that? More, doubtless. He knows that unless a man leaves his parents in the same way He left His mother and all related people, he will not go very far. He said to Mary, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' All he had from her was flesh and blood, screened from her sin by the Holy Spirit. He was born from above and He saw His mother as she truly was, the means whereby He received human nature. He left her. All men must do this, we all must leave our parentage in this same spiritual sense, we have been cut off. We must not keep on digging back into our parentage as though that was our curse, 'My mother is this, my father is that, used to get depressions - I get depressions, he had a murderous temper - I have a murderous temper'. There is deliverance from these things in Christ. Too often parents have to bear the blame for things for which they ought not to be blamed. The Lord Jesus did not stay in Heaven and sympathize with man, He came down here to do something about mens needs. All any man need do in order to have his needs met is believe Him. That is absolutely necessary, He needs you to believe in Him and believe that He can set you free from whatever it is. Men and women harbour and nurture the things that mother did or father did in order to justify themselves in feeling bitter against them. God will not justify that position though. There is no justification for anything - except a pure heart and a new life from God. His justification is for that and unto that in every man.

Do not say, 'Doesn't he care if I'm bruised, and hurt and broken?' He cares enough to heal you once and for all here and now, that's how He cares. But if a man gets into his mind that he must keep going to counsellors who probe around and help a little bit this week and a little more next week and so on that in a month he will never come to true faith. This treadmill has been trodden by hundreds and thousands of people, tragically that is what they have been taught to believe. What all men have to learn is that the power of Jesus Christ is instantaneous in application and dynamic in results. But man has to believe that and believe it receptively, if he does not he shall not have it, he cannot. 'Believe and you will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living'. He will do it when you believe, He is not for covering anything over, but for cleaning everything out. It would not matter if a man had actually crucified Him, He would still have loved him and delivered him. When the day dawns when, like David, you can say 'God has made an everlasting covenant with me, ordered in all things and sure' it will be done. It must be very personal though. Within the framework of the New Covenant you have to enter into personal covenant with God.

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## DIRECT DYNAMIC CONTACT

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It used to be said of the Rolls Royce company that if anyone bought one of their motor cars they would go to any place in the world and repair it under guarantee, on one proviso - namely that nobody else had tried to do so. If any attempt was made by anyone other than their appointed man, the covenant was void. The lesson is obvious. Do not go to God and say 'O God, I've tried and tried'. He will not say 'Great, carry on trying'. Neither will He say 'Sorry, but you have broken the covenant, I will not help you'. His name is neither Rolls nor Royce, His name is Love. God knows you have struggled and tried, to no avail, now stop all the struggling and listen to Him. 'I make all things new' He says. Why not believe Him? Do not let your heart become entrenched in unbelief, go to Him and say 'O God, I'm sorry I haven't believed you, I've gone the other way, opposite to what you have said'. If that is so, tell Him: it may not be your fault entirely, He knows all about that, you may have been taught wrongly, led astray by someone else. There is only one way, direct, dynamic contact with the Lord Jesus. He sets you free from everything and everybody harmful to you and your well-being in perfect holiness before Him for ever.

God makes a new creation, He neither covers up or patches up the old, He destroys it: 'A new heart will I give you, a new spirit will I put within you', He says. He will put His own Spirit in you and cause you to walk in His ways, not your father's and mother's way, and certainly not your own: His. Everything within will be new. Think of that. Everything about you will change. You will know that you can never think or feel harshly about anyone again. Beloved, don't you see that your poor old dad, your dear old mum needed help too? The source of your trouble was the source of theirs. They do not need blaming any more than you do, they need pity. The world teaches you to apportion blame and get angry, but not He - Jesus says 'I'll set you free'. When God gets hold of you and does His work in you, beloved, you have a past, He blots out those old things, roots them all out.

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## POWER FROM ON HIGH

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He does something with memory too, He has to and He has to do it suddenly and completely. To Him it is all very simple: memory is a faculty of the heart, He gives a new heart complete! He does not say 'Well, I'll do what I can for you now, but you'll have to come back again next week, just keep coming, if you keep coming long enough, in a few years perhaps, I might manage it'. There is power from on high beloved, and it can come on you now. Just admit you've been wrong, don't say 'I'm hurt', say 'Oh, Lord, I can see it has been sin'. There is a hurt, of course it hurts, God knows that sin always brings hurt but just to heal hurt is only to relieve you, it would be a cover up. God has to wipe it all out sin and

all. God forbid that any one of us should hold one thing against his mother or his father, or anyone else.

The tragedy of the first birth is that it connects you with the first sin and the great fall, but God has slain the first birth life by the cross, it is really death. So far as God is concerned, it no longer exists: let your heart rise to that. If you have been thinking harshly about someone, you had better repent and say 'Oh God, bless him, Father, bless her'. You might say 'Well, it's not quite like that, you see, they're not dead - I'm having to live with them'. Exactly, it is the living not the dead with whom we have to deal and you can be right with them if you will let God make YOU right, Let God fill you with His life now, if not the devil will load you up with the past. You can be free from sin right there in your circumstances, in your own conditions, IN them, not out of them. Blessed be the name of the Lord. We sing, 'More than a conqueror, that's what I am'. Amen. 'I'm a new creation, I'm a brand new man'. Are you? Well, if you have never really been a brand new man in the way God makes a man new and free, if you are still shackled to the past, let the Lord break you free now. If you believe Him, believe Him now, make your personal response. G.W.N.

## TRUTH

### Qualifications for Learning

Ruskin, in reference to painters, declares that 'A person false at heart may, when it suits his purposes, seize a stray truth here or there; but the relations of truth, its perfectness, that which makes it wholesome truth, he can never perceive. As wholeness and wholesomeness go together, so also sight with sincerity; it is only the constant desire of, and submissiveness to truth, which can measure its strange angles, and mark its infinite aspects, and fit them and knit them into the strength of sacred invention'.

The like remark, with keener edge, applies to those who would be disciples in Christ's school, or aspire to be teachers in His Church.

C.H. SPURGEON

I know of none so dangerous as the truth of God received carnally.

JOHN BUNYAN

He who has not knelt before God in utter self-abasement, has not yet begun to know Him in a saving way.

J. STUART HOLDEN

Thy Word is very pure: therefore Thy servant loveth it. I am small and despised: yet I do not forget Thy precepts. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is truth.

Psalms 119:140-142

## EDITOR

### WEDDING STATEMENT

At the request of some Fellowship leaders present at my daughter's wedding, I have included the following introductory statement given by Mr. G.W. North at the ceremony.

'Dearly beloved, we are gathered here this day in the presence of God, to witness the joining together of this man and this woman in the holy estate of matrimony. This is a Christian marriage, for both Andrew and Sarah have become children of God by a new birth from above through the Spirit of God, according to His stated will for all men.

We have come together with joy and thankfulness, to hear their solemn vows, and prayerfully seek for them the blessing of God, upon that which they do this day before Him.

Marriage is that holy estate instituted by God in the beginning for the increase of mankind according to His will and for the help and blessing each ought to have of the other. It is honourable before God, and may not be entered into lightly before Him, nor illegally before men. Scripture records that it was confirmed by Christ's words and hallowed by His gracious presence; chiefest of all it is set forth by apostles as signifying the mystical spiritual union between the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. Therefore marriage ought not to be entered into unadvisedly but thoughtfully, prayerfully, with reverence, in utter dependence upon God.

Marriage was ordained by God that man and woman may live together in holiness and love as being one before Him, so that natural instincts and affections may be directed aright and find full expression in purity and honour in His sight: that homes may be established in the grace of Christ: that children may be born, nurtured and brought up in the fear of the Lord, and in the knowledge of salvation. Marriage was ordained also for the welfare of the human race, that children should be protected and find security in the bonds of love and kinship the home affords.

Into this holy estate and with sacred intentions Andrew Stewart Ledger and Sarah Elizabeth Mary Norris come now to be joined'.

Editor

# WHAT IS THIS BAPTISM? - PART TWO

BERNARD HULL

It was omitted in the last issue to state that 'What is this Baptism', was an article in two parts. My apology. JFN, Editor.

## 'YOU'

Who is meant by 'you'? Is it anyone at all? Are there special qualifications implied? An examination of the context will cast light on this. As we know, John Baptist spoke of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit during much preaching. We discover that 'Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about went out to hear him'. This included Pharisees and Sadducees. I think that we could say that he had a mixed audience! Could the promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit include all those gathering to hear John Baptist? In the Matthew account of what happened, it seems that the word of promise came to the Pharisees and Sadducees, but only if they would fulfil certain requirements. John declares them to be a 'generation of vipers'. He is stating both their parenthood and the particular likeness to the serpent they have manifested, having poisonous tongues. These who listened to John had to bring forth fruits which demonstrated their repentance. Proof was required to justify the belief that they were turning from their old ways. They had to cease from trusting in earthly blood lines as though blood links with Abraham were acceptable to God. God was in process of laying the axe to the root of the trees grown up among human kind. Evil and good, religious and irreligious, all must come under the scrutiny of God and the judgement of the axe. Let none trust in that which now comes to judgement, rather, let all repent and become obedient to God and fulfil all that which he demands.

## FRUITFULNESS

Examining the things said by John Baptist we come to realize that there is great stringency in that which is required in those who would receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Repentance is more than a turning around. It is to do with change of inward attitudes of mind, a cutting down of that which has grown up, a demolishing of hideaways which have been erected. It is not some casual switch which John preaches; but something deeply serious. John fixes the basis of this baptism as being not only an escape from wrath to come, but also the fulfilment of a great burden in the heart to become able to bear fruit which is acceptable to God. It is vital that we note this fact. So often nowadays the baptism in the Spirit is being linked with 'power'. This is one of the reasons why it is good for us to examine the first reference to the subject. We find no suggestion in the text of 'power'. The whole section is bathed in the

atmosphere of holiness. Holiness of life is essential for acceptance with God, the bearing of fruits of holiness which He will receive. Three times in John's ministry the subject of fruit is mentioned. Firstly, 'fruits unto repentance', not that which was like the morning dew which disappeared as soon as the sun was up (Hos. 13:3)). Genuineness apparent is the truth in view, no charades based upon a temporary anxiety of heart. Then again, 'every tree which bringeth forth not good fruit shall be hewn down' (Matt. 3:10). Jesus, later in His ministry, spoke of a good and honest heart being the one which is the ground which will bear fruit unto Him who sows in it. A repentant heart is one that is beginning to move back into the states of intrinsic worth. God made man intrinsically good and from that state he departed. The heart bearing fruits of repentance is coming back into line with its original states, allying itself with God's original intention and departing from the travesty which it has become by the fall. Repentance before God is a heart becoming good ground.

Finally, fruit is mentioned the third time as wheat gathered into God's garner. The sense of permanent arrival is suggested in this. Coming to the place where we belong. The life has arrived into God's garner, it has come into the states for which it was originally made, states of holiness acceptable to God: 'Be ye holy as I am holy'. Peter cites this in the context of fruitfulness (1 Pet. 1:16 cf v23).

The whole weight of the testimony of John Baptist's ministry demands a statement to the effect that the 'you' who shall be most certainly baptized in the Holy Spirit, by the Lord Jesus, are those whose hearts have been moved away from sin most deeply. All deceit has been rejected and the heart moves after holiness. It implies a thirst for holy states. The power mentioned later by Jesus in Acts 1:8 is the power to become holy and to maintain holiness acceptable to God. Not temporarily nor merely outwardly, but rather that which is known inwardly and experienced day by day as issuing in external living.

If the above be truth and truly reflecting the qualifications needed in those who would be baptized in the Holy Spirit by Jesus then it is sobering to consider what may be happening to those who seek the 'baptism' but not on these scriptural grounds. What spirit do such persons move into? What spirit is it which moves upon them? Do they just receive some release of speaking with tongues which may or may not be from God? These questions are posed, but not answered. Certainly if they inspire in us a seriousness of approach to the matter and bring us to God on right grounds, we shall be much profited by asking them.

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## 'WITH/IN'

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The next word of our study is a beautiful one, though one which seems to confuse the translators of the scriptures. You notice that our section is titled 'With/In'. 'He shall baptize you with/in the Holy Spirit ...'. Well, which is it, with or in? You'll agree that there is quite a difference between something being with you or in you? Of course, if something be with you, then it will not be in you. If something is 'in' you then it is most certainly 'with' you also. Therefore 'in' is better than 'with' as far as our subject is concerned. We must look into the original language to get some help as to the true meaning of our word. In the Greek language the word is 'en', a preposition frequently found in the New Testament. Thomas Newberry was a great Christian scholar of the nineteenth century. He produced a Bible most helpful for those who wish to study the scriptures closely. In it he placed a diagram which displays the usage of Greek prepositions. It comprises a cube with arrows which lead into it or away from it or resting upon or under it and so on. By this means he shows the meanings of various prepositions. Where then do we find our little preposition 'en' as regards this cube? In the most secure place possible! Not alongside, i.e. 'with', but right in the centre of the cube! He also makes this statement that the preposition 'en' means 'In, at the centre of and at rest'. Well, isn't this good news indeed? The Lord Jesus baptizes us 'in, with a sense of being at rest within' the Holy Spirit. This is a thorough work isn't it? Much better than the Spirit of God being 'with' us. In John's gospel chapter fourteen, verse seventeen, Jesus makes this distinction clearly Himself. The comforted shall know the presence of the Comforter 'in' them, not only 'with' them as up to then had been their experience.

Let us be absolutely clear that the Spirit of God can only be 'in' us in the sense of which we are speaking when we are ourselves baptized by the Lord Jesus 'In' to the Holy Spirit. He puts us 'in' that we ourselves may have His true indwelling presence. The Holy Spirit is a person into Whom God the Son places us and in that act, we ourselves find that He is in us. Perhaps in these days when so much is emphasized concerning the outward so-called signs of the Spirit, it is very needful to lay stress upon this that is hidden in the heart, this is the point in time when a person knows the truth that their life is hid with Christ in God. This is the secret of spiritual security. True safety in God.

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## ONE LITTLE WORD

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Assuredly there is a wealth of meaning in one little word. Here is God's will summed up in one of the smallest of words. He desires to baptize us in to His own Spirit. Not only so, but to put us there with a sense of belonging there, resting, not moving, but at the centre of things in God. In counselling many

people over the years, it is noticeable how often the words 'with' and 'in' come up as descriptive of their sense of spiritual life. The testimony of many is that they know that God is WITH them. There is no doubt in their testimony, they know for certain. However, often these same people have grave doubts as to whether He is truly IN them. The abiding witness of His living presence in their hearts by the Holy Spirit is unknown by so many. Likewise they have no real sense of security in living in this world, no real knowledge that they are truly 'in HIM'. These two go together, hand in glove. 'You in me and I in you'. 'I in you and you in me'. Here are the two blessed sides of the truth expressed by the Lord. There are many who tell themselves that Christ is within, the Bible says so and this and that text declares it and therefore it must be so. But what if they had no Bible? Surely we do not have to prop ourselves up with some mental self-help though it be based in some texts of scripture? The witness should be 'in' a man or woman - this is basic. It should be known instinctively though the mind may not agree, yet the inward man registers that God is there for His Spirit witnesses with the spirit of that man. The whole revelation of the New Testament hinges upon these little words. Perhaps it is an over simplification to say that the Old Testament was God 'with us' and the New Testament 'in us', but we are well on the way to basic understanding if we can see that fact. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is God bringing the spiritual personality of men and women into Himself to abide. Not to go out again, but to rest there in God as belonging. A man will only truly know that He is 'in Christ' when he is baptized into Him in the Holy Spirit.

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## THE HOLY SPIRIT

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The Holy Spirit is God. The baptism promised is one which brings man into God. Because there is power in God, then power must be included in the baptism. However, the emphasis of scripture lies in persons and personality. It is the living person of man being brought into God Himself, who is a person. The thing God has in view is the blending of beings. Perhaps all too swiftly we make abstract that which God intends to be both personal and intimate. We would distance that which is so very close. So, we find the plan is that God the Son should baptize us into God the Spirit. God the Son is the agent and God the Spirit the substance into which He brings us.

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## MAKE SURE IT IS HOLY

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HOLY Spirit is that into which we come, not just Spirit. So many folk speak of 'baptism in the Spirit', but this is not that which the Lord does, He baptizes us in the Holy Spirit. There are many spirits, evil and angelic, just as there are many human spirits. As far as we know, all angelic spirits which are free to move about the spiritual world are benign. Scripture records the fact that there are other angelic spirits which changed their states and

are incarcerated, awaiting judgement. Evil spirits of various types exist and are at liberty within bounds to operate in the spiritual atmosphere of this earth. All spirits have characteristics. There are unclean evil spirits - uncleanness is their dominant characteristic. There are clairvoyant spirits, the searching out and disclosing of apparently secret knowledge is a characteristic trait of these. So we could go on, but what of the Holy Spirit? Firstly, note clearly that all other spirits are created. God the Holy Spirit is God, and therefore the Holy Spirit is the Uncreated Spirit. His uncreatedness is not the dominant characteristic in view of our text. In the text He is specifically named as the Holy Spirit. In fact, the original language of these words says, 'He shall baptize you in Spirit Holy'. There is no definite article and the word 'Spirit' precedes the word 'Holy'. It is obvious that the dominant characteristic of this spirit is holiness. He IS Spirit Holy. When a human spirit (person) is placed in the Holy Spirit in this baptism, to that human being is imparted the dominant characteristic of the Holy Spirit as well as others that are in Him. There is an impartation of holiness, a separating unto God of the spirit of that man. It is a baptism into holiness and nothing less than this is acceptable to God. This Spirit is the sanctifying Spirit, His activity in the heart and life of a man and woman is ever to gather their powers and personality into God and hold them there.

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### DON'T GO OUT!

The Spirit of God is constantly active in the soul of man in sanctifying action but co-operation on the part of man is vital. It is not all God: man has his part to play. It is possible for a person to move from the states of holiness into another spirit, back into the old way, but it is a process involving deliberate acts of turning from God. When Paul heard news of the goings on in Corinth, and wrote to their condition, he knew that they had moved away from the grace of the Spirit of God into another spirit. He knew that the behaviour appearing in the Church at Corinth could not possibly be the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. In the lives of human beings, spirit cannot long remain hidden. The manner of spirit a man is of will soon be seen. It is possible for a man to rise up of himself and act in the power and demonstration of his own spirit, even if he has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. The subtle temptations the devil sends to a soul are geared to make that soul rise up and act independently in their own spirit, but we must learn to remain immersed in God. If a person begins to act in their own spirit, they are already coming under the influence of 'another spirit', which if they persist in following and do not obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit, which will surely be present to move them back into God, then in time they will actually receive that other spirit (2 Cor. 11:4).

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### MAINTAIN IT!

The state of being baptized in the holy Spirit must be maintained. In a number of places in the New

Testament where the word 'baptize' is mentioned, it is linked with another preposition - it is the 'eis' in the Greek, which means 'into'. In One Corinthians chapter twelve, Paul uses the word baptize. 'By (in-) one Spirit are (were) we all baptized into (eis) one body'. We are put into Christ, into His body, into His life and it is anticipated that we will remain where we have been put! If, in these days, we were to testify concerning our spiritual life in scriptural terms, we would be on far clearer ground. For example, if we are asked 'where do you live?' - 'In Christ' should be the answer! Another asks 'where is your heart's treasure?' - you say 'in Christ'. 'Where is your past?' - 'in Christ' comes the answer. 'Your present?' 'Your future?' - the answer comes the same for all. 'How did you get into Christ?' 'I was baptized into Him in the One Baptism in the Holy Spirit and I am learning to stay exactly where I have been put, in Him!' Now we are not advocating a trick of speech based in scriptural terms, but the testimony of a life which is maintaining itself in Christ by the Spirit as is intended he should. It is not a matter of theoretical placement in Christ, but of genuine witness of an honest godly life that walks with God. Abiding in Him in the Holy Spirit is the basic secret of spiritual life and growth. To 'go no more out' should be the quiet, set, intention of our hearts.

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### AND FIRE

We come now to the end of our text. Not only is this baptism in the Holy Spirit, but also in fire. God is bent on bringing mankind back into original states. Could it be that this fire is in fact God Himself? The Hebrews writer tells us that our God is a consuming fire. If, in our text, God is intended by the word fire, then we can say that it is God the Son baptizing us into God the Spirit and into God the Father, the great original flame. This is far beyond our comprehension isn't it? However, there is no clear indication in the text that God is meant by the 'fire'.

It is certain that we can link the thought of purification with fire. The first time in all scripture that fire is mentioned is concerning the judgement which fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Destruction unto purification was the object in view. The fires that fell that day purified the earth of terribly defiling influences. Homosexuality pervaded those two cities; sin of all kinds was common. Licentiousness abounded on every side, but the fire of God destroyed it all! Let us take careful instruction from this. The baptism in fire purifies a man's soul from sin. It destroys the sin and purifies the soul from sins effects. Fire devours. A sign recently noticed in a wild-life park here in Australia read 'Areas of this park are regularly set on fire so that vermin and disease may be prevented from taking hold'. There is no doubt that in the soul baptized in Holy Spirit and fire there are real experiences on a regular basis of the purifying fire; vermin and disease of spiritual kinds are thereby kept at bay.

The word 'consuming' is linked with consummation. To 'consume' means 'to use up utterly'. I like that.

We can think of it as devouring and destroying all that is evil as previously mentioned, but we can also think of it in its positive form as a soul being baptized into the grace which uses him up for God. Surely this is that state in which a soul is coming to true consummation? When it is being use up by God for God. A truly baptized person is one who continues to dwell in the consuming fire, constantly purified thereby and steadily consumed in loving service to God. The bush which Moses saw on the Mount of God is a parable of this. Constantly burning, used up and yet not destroyed. The Spirit baptized saints of God live on His holy mount, they are in Mount Sion and the bush is a just picture of them indeed. Those who live in God upon His mount will be just like it, burning, alight, being used and yet not going out as being exhausted. God intends to use us up! He intends to consume us and as we are His will, we shall be consummated for He is consummated in us.

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### SOME INSTRUCTIVE ABSENCES

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We have now come to the end of our brief study in the text of scripture. Before we conclude though, we ought to note the fact that certain things are not stated in this first reference to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the light of emphasis nowadays promoted concerning this baptism, these absences are instructive. Surely there is something wrong when things insisted upon as essential to the baptism in the Holy Spirit do not occur as mentioned in the first reference to the subject in scripture? How often the unessential becomes vital, the peripheral becomes central. For instance, consider the fact that nowhere in this text is the subject of the gifts of the Spirit mentioned. Nowhere is the subject of power mentioned either. Then again, where is the mention in the text of things promoted nowadays as evidences of the Spirit baptism? Things like 'warm feelings down the spine!' Tinglings and shakings of various sorts. In some circles these are sought and preached up as essential elements of proof that the event has taken place. What shall we say to these things? The fact that they are not there in the text does not mean that they MAY NOT happen, but it certainly means that they do not HAVE TO happen!

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### ARE TONGUES ESSENTIAL?

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First of all we note that there is no mention of this gift of speaking in tongues in the text, nor, in fact, of any other gift, but only of the Spirit Himself as being given. Now, if the hermeneutical law of first mention be valid, and everything vital to a subject in scripture is included in its first reference, then ought not tongues to be there? We are told by numerous spiritual leaders that the gift of speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but if so, why is this not stated by John Baptist when introducing the subject? Nor for that matter is it mentioned by anyone else in scripture, rather these spiritual leaders have inferred it from certain scriptures in the book of

Acts. The fact that when certain ones were baptized in the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, including tongues, were manifested in them, does not set a precedent that should be developed into a law that therefore such should happen to everyone as the evidence of the experience. Man has made this assumption. Let us come to grips with this fact and throw off the ideas of man which call things proven which God does not mention. Perhaps we should note too that all the gifts of the Spirit were already in operation prior to the baptism in the Holy Spirit, saving the gift of tongues. In the Old Testament and in the gospel accounts, we can trace the use of the word of wisdom, of knowledge, discernment of spirits, miracles and healings, prophecy, indeed all were being operated from time to time. They cannot be proof then of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. However, let those seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit not despise these precious gifts, but expect that they shall be made manifest in their lives as God shall please to give them and they themselves shall covet them. Nothing God has made available to us is useless, but for our good and to the equipping of us for spiritual usefulness. It is both arrogant, and insulting to God, to spurn that which He gives, yet many do that as they consider the wrong emphasis of others just mentioned. Let nothing God would give us be rejected then, but received with gladness of heart.

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### WHAT ABOUT THE POWER?

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The common idea put forward is that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to give power for service. Now, if this were legitimate the idea of power should be found in the first reference. It is not there. Let us see that the apostles of the Lord were empowered for their service prior to their being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself both authorized them and enabled them to serve. After they had gone forth and served as His emissaries and when He was going to His Father in ascension, then and only then, did He mention power as related to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 is the famous scripture. Both historically and scripturally this is the second reference to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The first reference emphasises holiness of life unto fruitfulness. First holiness, and then the mention of power. If the apostles were already given power by the Lord for their ministry with Him on the earth, what was this power going to do for them of which He spoke before He ascended? What did they lack? The answer is simple, they had now discovered that they lacked the ability (power) TO BE what He wanted them to be. The power He promised was not for service, but ability to be witnesses unto Him. Their beings were going to display Him! It was power which, working in them, would conform them to His image and likeness as they co-operated with it. For those apostles, this promise would have been most wonderful. They had received power to move in gifts previously, it had not borne them through though in the nitty gritty of life. Now they were to receive the power to live, the power to be in the likeness of their Lord. Now, for us there need be no division between these two 'powers'. When

we receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit it is power for both. Let us get the order right though. Power for life and secondly power for gifts and ministry. Properly speaking, the one should rise from the other as a natural corollary of it.

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## TINGLINGS AND SHAKINGS?

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In recent years in certain quarters a strange promotion has been taking pace. Some would say that the things being promoted are foolish and even dangerous. Basically what is being set forth is the probability, and in some circles, the necessity of tinglings and shakings to occur in the body of a person as a verification of the movings of the Holy Spirit. Written in bald terms like this it does seem a little peculiar. It seems that so many are looking for physical proof of the activities of God in their lives. 'I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and I know, because when I go to meetings where the Spirit of God is working, I feel tingles in my hands, or I shake bodily'. This is pretty typical of that which some folk seem to experience and base their belief upon. Others speak of being 'slain in the spirit'. It refers to them falling down 'under the power' when the Spirit of God is purported to have moved upon them. Another idea currently being promoted is this:- 'If God wants you to prophesy, then it is likely that you will feel pressure in the muscles around your mouth, this is the prompting of God to make you speak'. Yet another:- 'If God wants you to lay hands upon someone, then you will feel heat in your hands and a tingling to transfer the power'. These are a sample of current ideas being promoted. They pose a serious question to searching hearts.

Following our thought through concerning our text, if the phenomena being advocated as mentioned above were basic to the baptism in the Holy Spirit and to life in the Spirit, then they ought to be mentioned right in the beginning. They should be in the text we are considering. What a surprise then, to discover that these things are not mentioned or even suggested! An examination of the New Testament will reveal that there is virtually no reference to such things. This

in itself does not mean that such things may not occur, but certainly they should neither be sought, expected, or promoted. Promotion of such, which directs attention to bodily and physical feeling will most certainly lead to the spurious. The devil is an expert at bringing about these sorts of things. Experience has shown the writer and many other ministers of God that such physical manifestations as shakings and tinglings are often more likely to indicate the activity of psychic spirits rather than the movings of the Spirit of God. Warm feelings up the spine may or may not occur, certainly he is a fool and on dangerous ground who validates his spiritual experience upon such shaky ground. Tingles down the arms may possibly be experienced, but hopefully our considerations here have helped us to see more clearly that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is something much more than physical feelings and sensations. It is that which is wrought by God in the inward personality of man. This may be accompanied by certain physical feelings, but it is the inward assurance that God has come and wrought His work within, which is the fundamental and basic witness. This is then confirmed by outward change of life, a deliverance from sin and holiness in manner of living.

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## LIMITED SCOPE

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It is with purpose that this article has been limited to a close examination of the first reference in scripture to our subject. It should rid our hearts of confusion. The test lies in the beginnings of things. That which shall become is that which was. God brings the life in the end to that which was from the beginning. Gifts shall pass away, but the immersion into God and His holiness shall not. Feelings may come and go, tingles may be present or not, nevertheless they were not there in the beginnings and neither shall they be there at the end. Everything shall be swallowed up in the perfection of spiritual life and knowledge in God. The seed contains the fruit, and the seed is immersion into God. The fruit:- a whole life submerged in Him, impregnated with Him, manifesting Him. This is the true baptism in the Holy Spirit and anything less than this God never meant to be. B.H.

### 'STOP GABRIEL!'

'After a solemn pause, Mr. Whitefield thus addressed this numerous auditory: 'The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold and ascend to heaven. Shall he ascend and not bear with him the news of one sinner among all this multitude reclaimed from the error of his ways?' To give greater effect to this exclamation he stamped with his foot, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and with gushing tears cried aloud, 'Stop, Gabriel! Stop, Gabriel! stop, ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God!' He then in the most simple but energetic language described what he called a Saviour's dying love to sinful man, so that almost all the assembly melted into tears. This address was accompanied with such animated yet natural action that it surpassed any thing I ever saw or heard from any other preacher'.

This is the remarkable testimony to Whitefield's superior power as a pulpit orator.

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# THE WAGON TRAIN

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The following article was taken from a cassette recording and has been printed by permission of Mr. Edgar Parkyns.

The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is the greatest love letter in the whole Bible, written from the Bridegroom to the Bride. He didn't write a book while here on earth, but after He had gone, sent a letter to His Bride. It was written in code, for He did not want those who did not know Him to understand.

Now I want to tell you a story. I made it up myself so I can guarantee its veracity!

During the years 1850 to 1890 there was a tremendous trek westward over the plains from Eastern United States to the far West, as folk went out looking for new homes in that magnificent territory.

I want you to imagine that a young bridegroom has gone out West to prepare a home for himself and his bride, and in due course he is going to receive her. (Do you get the analogy? The picture is of Christ going on before to prepare for the Bride) The bride stays in New York for some time getting ready and she joins a wagon train going West. It's rather a mixed wagon train - there are people of all kinds in it, but the only way of course to cross such an area is in such company. Her bridegroom has sent her a letter from way out West, but it doesn't arrive in time to meet her as she sets off. It reaches her after she has begun her journey and has experienced a few skirmishes with the Red Indians in the Great Lakes area. She finds that her letter has been opened. Those responsible in the camp have examined it. But not being able to understand much of it, because it's written in code, they let her have it. She holds at last 'The Coded Love-Letter'.

As soon as camp is formed for the night, and she can get away into her covered wagon, she lights the kerosene lamp and reads her Beloved's letter.

What a portrait is there in the opening page! How her heart thrills at this glorious description! And then there are some very straight words of exhortation to her - how she is to behave, and keep herself pure. She takes all that to heart for she realizes that there are many temptations as well as dangers on this journey. But then she comes to a section of the letter which bewilders her - all about beasts and horns and mountains, and all kinds of horrors, and it just doesn't make sense. So she hurries through that and reads the closing part of the letter, and she's thrilled at what she reads there - the time when her Beloved will meet her. He comes onto the scene with a host of glorious riders and takes her to be with himself. There's a description of the heavenly home and the glories that will follow. She's thrilled with her letter, and puts it away with a thankful heart.

At the earliest opportunity, when they've formed camp again and the wagons are drawn into a ring, she gets away and looks at her letter again. Still that middle section puzzles her. Whoever is this woman in scarlet? And what on earth is this terrible beast? "I hope I don't meet him!" she thinks. She struggles with it day after day, and she gets more and more separated from the rest of the camp. They wonder whatever's happening to her, until someone says "Look here, there are a couple of Jesuit priests in the camp. Why not go to one of them and tell him what's troubling you?" So when the camp is formed, she goes to meet the Jesuit priest.

She shows him the letter and tells him her problem: "I've got a letter. It's a beautiful letter, and I know it's from my husband, and there's a lovely portrait of him at the beginning, and a beautiful picture of the home I'm going to, but the middle part puzzles me so badly - I can't make head or tail of it!"

"Oh, my dear" he says, "I'm sorry to see you so worried. Perhaps I can help you. I know your husband quite well and the leader of our whole party knows him very well - he's one of his closest friends, so let me have a look at your letter. I'll be able to explain it for you." So this Jesuit, a Spaniard whose name happens to be Alcazar, takes the letter and looks at it and in due course comes back to her with these words:



"My dear, there's nothing for you to worry about. Your husband is writing about the things that took place just when we were leaving New York, only the letter didn't reach you in time. It's all over now. You remember those skirmishes with the Indians? That's what he was writing about. So don't worry any more. Now come and join in with the rest of the party. We'd like to see you at the camp fire."

She says "Oh, thank you sir. Can I have my letter back?"

He says "Well I don't think it's good for you. It's obviously been making you ill." And it is with great difficulty that she at last gets it back from him, with half a promise not to read it any more.

But she's not content. She thinks "What on earth did my Beloved write this long and incomprehensible letter to me for, if it was all about those few little fights we had with Indians at the beginning of our journey? He's nowhere in sight yet and I don't know what troubles we'll meet. Surely he'd have written something more sensible than that?" Eventually she goes to the other Jesuit priest whose name is Ribera, a Jesuit of the seventeenth century, with the same tale, and she adds: "The other priest says it all happened at the beginning" and she gives her reasons why she doesn't feel that is a sound explanation.

"Well, my dear, let me have a look at it. I'm sure I can find a sensible explanation for it." She says, "You will let me have it back, won't you?" "Oh yes" he replies, "with my notes on the bottom."

In due course he brings it back to her and comments on the portrait at the beginning, and the happy times at the end. She asks him about the middle part, and he says: "My dear, there's nothing there to worry you. It's all in the future. Why worry about that? It's not going to happen until after your husband has met you and taken you out of the way." "Oh, thank you" she replies "I've never looked at it that way. Are you sure?" "Oh, yes. I have spiritual light on it. You can take it on my authority that it's all in the future. You'll be caught away before any of these things happen." Oh, thank you. But what about that great beast that comes out of the sea?" "My dear, you'll never see him. He lives in a lake on the far side of the Rocky Mountains. Now come along and enjoy yourself with the rest of us. Stop worrying about it. You can take those little words of exhortation at the beginning, but as for the rest, don't worry, you'll never see it happen.

And so she thanks him and accepts this very reasonable explanation especially on such strong authority, and presently begins to join in the fun. There's a magnificent woman in scarlet there who introduces her to the leader of the group, who's been longing to meet her for a long time. They have some grand parties together and soon she's in the thick of the fun and wondering why ever she moped away trying to understand the incomprehensible letter, when really it didn't concern her at all.



She knows from high authority now that it doesn't concern her - the Jesuit priest said so. Why worry? She forgets the promises she's made to her Beloved - they fade into the background. She's more and more enamoured with the leader of the party. He tells her about her husband, in fact he says: "I'm his best friend. I know all his secrets and I'm here operating on his behalf. So you can trust me." And she does trust him. Until one night after the revelry she's almost seduced, and flees away, shaken and in tears, out to the perimeter of the camp, overwhelmed, in darkness and shame and confusion. Out there she sees against the skyline two men keeping guard, and presently they draw near and say: "You should be back in camp you know, it's not safe for you out here." She says "I can't go back - I can't trust anybody. They all profess to be my friends, but they all deceive me. I can't go back there!" "You must, you know, your husband told you to go that way." "I don't know what to do. Can you help me? It's my husband's letter that puzzles me." They say: "I daresay that we could explain that letter to you. We know your husband well and we promised to keep guard of this camp, and we'll try and look after you as best we can. But wouldn't it be better if you found out the meaning for yourself?" "I've tried - but I can't." "Look, if we explain it to you, you may not believe us. Have you got any of your husband's old letters?" "Yes, a whole bundle full." "Right! Do this - go back and re-read your husband's old letters and look for clues and we think that you'll find the meaning of this one that you're holding."

There are the old letters - Genesis to Jude. The clues are all there.

So she goes back, thanking them and this time keeping herself separate from the revelries of the camp - especially from that scarlet woman! She looks in the old

letters and she begins to find clue after clue. She looks again at her husband's letter and it begins to make sense, and she realizes that the very people who had deceived her and almost seduced her are written about in the letter, but she had failed to recognize them. "Oh, to think that my husband warned me this way and I didn't take any notice, I was so stupid and blind!" Then she begins to notice the terrain as they cross a river, as they reach a mountain, as they meet a dangerous party of Indians, and she looks into the letter, and there they are, fitting into place one after another.

Oh, the excitement of it! She's getting near the end of the journey. She can keep herself pure now as she looks at the book and watches the events as they pass by. Her whole attitude has changed. She now has a new joy and a new assurance that she never had before. She feels that she's in control of the situation. She watches those two men at the exterior of the camp as they keep guard, and she signals them happily. They can see that she's going to endure to the end. Situations get tense, the enemies are drawing in. The evil in the camp is coming to light. Disaster seems to be rushing in on every hand. But suddenly over the horizon comes her Beloved, with a thousand cavalry with him, riding across the hills to her rescue, taking her home. At last her troubles are over; her letter has done its work.

I suggest to you that that is what this book is about. From the Bridegroom to the Bride, showing her things that must shortly come to pass, but also things right up to the Second Coming. It is written in code language so that other folk will not understand. But those who will follow their Bible and not read other books too much will get to know what it is all about, and will be warned in their time.



# I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

NORMAN MEETEN

God is one hundred per cent committed to the Church. He is not primarily concerned about missionary societies, para church movements or groups in themselves; but only as they are related to, and expressions of the Church.

When Jesus was on the earth - God was in Christ. All that God did was accomplished through Jesus. He was God incarnate, the Word made flesh. All that God did was in and through Him. Of course that was also true prior to the incarnation. 'All things were made by him; and without Him was not anything made that was made' (John 1:3). The same truth is revealed in Colossians 1:16/20. In our day He is the Head of the Church. He is the same great head that graced the incarnate Son of God. The Church is His Body.

The Apostle Paul has a number of pictures that illustrate the nature and function of the Church:

1. The BUILDING - 'the habitation of God through the Spirit'
2. The BODY - through whom He seeks to express the life of His Son Jesus
3. The BRIDE - whom He is preparing to marry His Son

The New Testament reveals the way whereby a person can become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. This is illustrated in two ways:

By New Birth. We are born into the Church from above (see John 3).

By being Baptized into the Body by the Spirit (see 1 Cor. 12:13).

There is no other way in. All other ways would be described by Jesus as the way of 'the thief and the robber'. Jesus said 'I am the Way'.

We cannot inherit the position from our parents. Water baptism or confirmation does not do it. It is not the outward washing of water but the inward renewing by the Holy Ghost that accomplishes it. Paul to Titus says a similar thing. 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Tit. 3:5 - see also 1 Pet. 3:21). Not by good works; not by church membership or conformity to a doctrinal formula; all such methods are inadequate. They are human. The True Church is Divine and must be initiated by the Spirit:

Born of the Spirit  
Baptized by the Spirit

Where human methods are used and accepted as substitutes we end up with a bastard church, which is no church.

In Matthew 16:13f Jesus has reached the pinnacle of His teaching. His concern is that they should recognize Him and understand His Eternal purpose.

Jesus the 'Son of Man..'-'the Son of the Living God..' Jesus-Saviour. Christ-the anointed one. He had come to save His people from their sins, that He might reveal Himself IN them and thus make them His Church.

Jesus declares a number of things that are foundational in the building of the Church. It is vital that we should understand these things.

## 1. ROCK

'...Upon this rock I will build my Church...'

The mistaken interpretation of this verse - that Peter was the rock - is all too obvious in the light of scripture as a whole. Natural man is of the nature of sand - as illustrated by Jesus in Matt. 7:24/27. Anything built upon such foundations will inevitably fall. The Apostle Paul tells us that there is only one foundation - that is 'Jesus Christ the Lord'. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid...' (1 Cor. 3:11).

The same truth is revealed again and again in the Old Testament. Psalm 62 is but one of many examples:

'He only is my rock and my salvation..' (v2)

'He only is my rock; He is my defence..' (v6)

'In God is my salvation and my glory: the ROCK..' (v7)

Jesus is the great foundation - or chief corner-stone - Headstone of the Church, as Peter himself later taught in 1 Peter 2:4/8.

Only when the great Rock-foundation stone is truly laid, can there be any real going on unto 'perfection' (Heb. 6:1/4).

'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are His' (2 Tim. 2:19).

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## 2. REVELATION

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'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven..'

It is impossible to understand or appreciate the things of God unless they are revealed unto us by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9f).

Peter's understanding of what was revealed to him was inadequate. It was a revelation 'to him'. It did not change him. Within moments because of his failure to comprehend what was happening or what Jesus was saying, he was liasing with 'the enemy' of Christ to frustrate God's eternal plan of redemption. 'Get thee behind me satan for thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men' (Matt. 16:23).

A revelation to a man doesn't change a man. All men have a revelation of God to them. God reveals Himself in nature. Paul speaks of this in Romans 1/2. The scriptures reveal unto us God in Christ. The Incarnate Christ was the greatest revelation of God to man that the world has ever known. But no one recognized Him or knew Him therefore they were not 'saved'. That was why Paul said 'I know no man after the flesh, no not even Christ'. Only those who know Him after the Spirit become the Church. They have a revelation of Christ in them.

'It pleased God who separated me from my mothers womb and called me by His grace to reveal His Son in me'. (EV) Not 'TO' me. This revolutionized Saul of Tarsus. It slew him so that by the Spirit, he became another man, 'a new creation' and thus a living member of the Body of Christ. Until this happens we know nothing of the church.

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## 3. RELATIONSHIP

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'But whom say YE that I am?'

Jesus wasn't primarily concerned about what other people thought or said. Many people live by a second hand relationship to Jesus Christ. It is dependent upon the faith of others, parents, Sunday School teachers, Ministers, faithful friend etc. All such relationships are inadequate. It is not personal. In John 4 the men of Samaria believed because of the testimony of the woman who had met Jesus. Her transformed life was such a challenge to them that they believed. But they did not have a personal encounter with Jesus until He came and lived amongst them. Then they said to the woman: 'Now we believe, not because you told us, but because we have heard Him ourselves'. That is fundamental if we are to 'know Him' and become a member of His Church. That experience brought them into a first hand relationship with Jesus Christ. That is what happened on the day of Pentecost.

'They were ALL filled with the Holy Ghost...' Acts 2:4  
'It sat upon EACH of them...' (v3)

Each individual member was personally encountered and baptized into the corporate Body of Christ.

The Apostle Paul speaks in the same vein in 1 Cor. 12:18 - 'But now hath God set the members, EVERY ONE of them in the Body as it hath pleased Him'.

This aspect of truth is also amply illustrated in the Gospel record by the way in which Jesus cared for and ministered to individuals - 'a certain man', 'a certain woman' - from every walk of life and strata of society. He was preparing living stones for the Building, living members for the Body, a Bride for Himself.

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## 4. RENUNCIATION

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'If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me'

When Jesus died upon the Cross He laid the foundation stone of the Church. Or to use another analogy, 'He fell as a corn of wheat into the ground and died'.

The Day of Pentecost was the day of 'first fruits'. It was the day when the first 120 'living stones' were placed upon the 'foundation stone'.

No cross no church

No cross no crown

The principles that regulate the life and ministry of Jesus are the same principles that must regulate our lives and work. Here we have the secret of evangelism - whose end in view, is the Church. Where this divine principle is overlooked or ignored for a more modern approach we will fail to have the Church. It doesn't matter how successful man's efforts are, unless the cross - the power of God unto salvation, is the central core - all will be in vain.

'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose ...'

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## 5. RESURRECTION

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'... and be raised the third day'

The Church is a manifestation of resurrection living. It is the Christ life. 'If ye then be risen with Christ ... Christ is our life' (Col. 3:1/4).

Paul says 'If Christ be not raised from the dead then we are of all men most miserable' (1 Cor. 15:17,19).

In Matthew 17:9 Jesus commands the disciples to 'tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead'.

Man communicates what he is. 'What a man is in his heart, that will he speak'. We minister the spirit of which we are.

The greatest hinderance to the spread of the gospel is not Marxism, not Islam, not Hinduism or materialism but compromised Christianity; those who say they are Christians, but behave as if they were not. We reproduce after our own kind. That is the Law of the Spirit. Every seed brings forth after its own kind. Man was originally destined to reproduce after the likeness and image of Jesus, but after the fall he began to 'bring forth after his own kind'.

The Church is a company of people who have been 'changed into the same image' - that is of Jesus. They have received resurrection life and therefore have the ability, by the Spirit, to bring forth fruit unto God'.

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## 6. REALIZATION

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'I will give unto you the keys ...'

Jesus declares that he would invest the Church with authority to co-operate with, and continue in, 'all that he had begun both to do and teach' (Acts 1:1). In Matt. 16:19 the words are addressed to Peter. But Matt. 18:17/9 makes it quite clear that these words apply to the whole church. Both in the teaching and ministry of Jesus, also of the Apostle Paul, we have examples of God's desire for man's co-operation. This was indeed true from the beginning when God authorized man to tend the garden.

Jesus shared His ministry at the feeding of the five thousand. Paul in speaking of the Body of Christ in 1 Cor. 12:21 says 'The head cannot say to the feet I have no need of thee'.

Jesus said 'The Lord hath need of him' speaking of the ass upon which He was to ride triumphantly into Jerusalem.

The Church's privilege is to bear His Name (Acts 9:15).

The Church's privilege is to bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our body (2 Cor. 4:10). We are authorized to be His sons - and given the ability to be His witnesses.

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## 7. REWARD

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Finally Jesus says 'He shall reward every man according to his works'. We are not saved by works but 'We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them' (Eph. 2:10).

'Ultimately every man's work shall be manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is' (1 Cor. 3:13).

'That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit'.

The flesh reaps corruption. The Spirit reaps life everlasting. Only those who are in the Spirit are of the true Church. They alone have the ability to minister the Spirit. It is impossible to do spiritual work apart from the Spirit. The Church is the repository of the Spirit. As Jesus' Body was the Temple of God so we are reminded 'your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost' (1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:19 & 2 Cor. 6:16).

The Church is ordained to be the manifestation of Jesus Christ and 'to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church' (Col. 1:24).

God is seeking men and women who will be committed as He is: 'I will build my Church', and co-operate with Him in the perfecting of the same. Such will receive their reward.

'Well done thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord'. N.M.

### THE DYING OF THE LORD JESUS

'ALWAYS BEARING ABOUT IN THE BODY THE DYING OF JESUS, THAT THE LIFE ALSO OF JESUS MAY BE MANIFESTED IN OUR BODY'. 'SO THEN DEATH WORKETH IN US, BUT LIFE IN YOU' - 2 Corinthians 4:10,12.

Paul here is very bold in speaking of the intimate union that there was between Christ living in him, and the life he lived in the flesh, with all its suffering.

We often speak of our abiding in Christ. But we forget that that means the abiding in a crucified Christ. Many believers appear to think that when once they have claimed Christ's death in the fellowship of the cross, and have counted themselves as crucified with Him, they may now consider it as past and done with. They do not understand that it is in the crucified Christ, and in the fellowship of His death, that they are to abide daily and unceasingly.

ANDREW MURRAY

# WITH NO DARKNESS AT ALL - PART SIX

GEORGE W. NORTH

Deliverance as such is not to be regarded as an end in itself. It is negative and partial, and should always lead on to the positive and ultimate. We may think of this 'ultimate' as being in a permanent state of deliverance, which is no doubt what Paul had in mind when he wrote: 'Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us' (2 Cor. 1:10).

This 'ultimate' which God has in mind for His people can best be expressed in terms of 'light':-

'If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light' (Luke 11:36).

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## GREAT LIGHT !

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This great theme of light runs from the beginning to the end of the Scriptures. In the beginning of the Old Testament there was darkness upon the face of the deep. God said, 'let there be light' - and there was light. In the New Testament Simeon took the young child Jesus into his arms and speaking by inspiration said: 'A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel'. At the start of His ministry, Jesus came to Galilee of the Gentiles (How gracious of Him to start there!) and we read: 'The people which sat in darkness saw great light: and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up'.

Our Lord referred to Himself as 'the light of the world'. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all ... and His ultimate for us is that we shall be like Him, portrayed by John in his revelation of the ultimate things by a vision of the new Jerusalem, 'having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal ... and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof'.

We must return to the beginning. Into the original situation of light, as we know, satan intervened. Still in the context of light, Jesus said: 'I beheld satan as 'light-ning' fall from heaven'. And through his own fall that old serpent engineered the fall of mankind also; and the human race was plunged into darkness. And to continue to keep man in darkness Paul reveals that, remarkably, 'Satan himself (and his ministers) is transformed into an angel of light'. For the duration of the church-age, satan's whole purpose in masquerading as an angel of light is to keep men from the true light.

It was this terrible state of darkness that prompted the Lord to speak about His ultimate purpose for His children to be 'full of light'. You remember: He was speaking about casting out devils by the finger of God and He goes on to say this:

'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto MY HOUSE whence I came out ... then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first' (Luke 11:24,26).

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## UTTER CHEEK!

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There are two things of special import here. First, the Lord is speaking about the last state of a man. Satan's objective is that the last state shall be worse than the first, possessed not by one unclean spirit but by seven others as well; the Lord's objective is that man shall be 'full of light, having no part dark' - the whole absolutely full of light.

The other thing to notice is the terrible state of affairs here portrayed in the evil spirit's manner of speaking. The utter cheek of it! 'I will return unto MY HOUSE' ... Just think of it: that an unclean spirit, a devil, should call a human being 'my house'! That he should speak in the manner of mortals and say to seven other evil spirits of his acquaintance: 'How about coming along to my place?' What a terrible thing. What blasphemy! Oh the bland presumption of it! The Lord wants us to see this; this is darkness indeed.

In the first few chapters of Genesis we have the 'old creation' state or order. In the book of Revelation, John, by the inspiration of the Spirit, gives us a picture of the 'new creation' state. The trouble is that in the first three chapters our Lord has to complain that as Adam fell in the old state, so the church has fallen in the new:

'Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent' (Rev. 2:4-5).

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## FIRST LOVE

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We notice that this 'fall' of the church is set not only in the context of light, with the possible

consequence of the church's light represented by the candlestick being removed; but also it is set in the context of the 'first works'. What are these first works? We must go back to the Gospels to find out ...

When Jesus began His ministry Matthew says:

'The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up ...'

All the rest of chapter four, i.e. verses 17-25 is a description of the way in which the light began to spring up. Luke refers to our Lord as the 'dayspring from on high'; the 'sun-rising'. He was the Sun of righteousness arising with healing in His wings - and that is exactly what Matthew describes in these remaining verses. When this Light 'sprang up', the people realized that they need not continue in sickness, in demon-possession, palsies, torments, depressions and distresses. They saw that such things were all part of the kingdom of darkness, the hellish malice of the devil, that which is stored up in his heart of bitterness against God and inflicted upon the human race.

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## FIRST WORKS

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They saw that they need not continue in this thralldom. No wonder the crowds followed Him; He was indeed the light of the world. Thus the Lord begins to reveal the great objective towards which He is moving; that of bringing people out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of heaven; out of the kingdom of sin into the kingdom of God.

Now notice the next move at the beginning of chapter 5. Seeing the multitudes, Jesus went up into a mountain; and when He was seated, His disciples came unto Him and He began to teach them. 'Ye are the light of the world', He said, 'A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid'. Here He was, Himself the light of the world, sitting on a hill; here, we may say, was the ultimate heavenly city in embryo on the earth; Jesus enthroned in the highest place and His disciples gathered around Him, themselves destined to be the lights of the world. Oh what a wonderful thing this is; and this is what the Lord Jesus was moving towards.

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## STARS...

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In Luke chapter six, we have a similar scene. Jesus goes up into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God, and when it was day He called His disciples unto Him and of them He chose twelve, whom He also named apostles. Then He came down with them and stood in the plain amongst a great multitude of people who had come to be healed of their diseases; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits and they too were healed. And Luke adds: 'And the whole multitude sought to touch Him; for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all'.

It is noteworthy however, that though he called His apostles in the sixth chapter, He did not send them out to preach and to heal the sick until the ninth chapter. First they had to learn the lessons He taught in the intervening verses. He applied some of the lessons of the sermon on the mount; He told some of the parables of the kingdom which they must understand before He sent them out. Would God that we all understood the parables of the kingdom before we launch out into the ministry of deliverance! We need to know about the tares and the wheat; about good and bad fish; about the pearl, and so on.

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## ... AND CANDLESTICKS

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Eventually He did call His twelve together and gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases. And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. This is what they were to do; and at the end of this chapter, He reminds them that no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Jesus Himself had put His hand to the plough and He had no intention either of turning back or being diverted by men from His goal. He was ploughing a straight furrow across the surface of the field, the field which is the world, and He was ploughing it straight to the place called Calvary. There He fell, the corn of wheat into the ground and there He died.

Later He appointed seventy others and these he sent into every place whither He Himself would come - I would love to think that He could send me for that same purpose! These seventy - not elect apostles - went out as He told them and returned with great jubilation, saying, 'Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name'. They had healed the sick and brought the kingdom of heaven to men.

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## ...SATAN FELL

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These men were allowed to see by this light which had dawned upon them that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. What a tremendous privilege was theirs! Satan had brought such darkness, it had persisted so long and no-one seemed to be able to do anything about it; but now Jesus had given them authority to prove that in His name and by His commission they could go forth and bring men into the first stages of light. Not to the final stage of light; that is the new Jerusalem. Healing and deliverance are the initial phases of light for those who are sitting in darkness.

These are the first works which, first the Lord Himself, then the apostles and then the seventy were called to do. But within the first century the Lord has to complain to the churches that His people have fallen, they have left their first love, they no longer do the 'first works'. They were not without works, good works no doubt, even (according to a suggestion Rev. 2:2) moving in the gifts of the Spirit, able to discern which were true apostles and

false. Yet, even so, they had left their first love; they were fallen; they could not do the first works. First love and first works go together.

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### ...MAN FELL

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It is a sad thing when the light that is in the churches is darkness. Apparently if the 'first works' are not there, then the candlestick, source of light, will be removed, as He said it would be. Maybe there are still plenty of candlesticks of a sort; but it is doubtful if they are golden. Perhaps they are brass like the shields that Rehoboam substituted for Solomon's gold ones. Brass candlesticks, giving forth a brazen kind of light; and often plenty of works like sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. All this indicates that the first love had gone; that first real 'agape' love for Jesus Himself. It is gone. The first love and the first works ...

But there is an answer to all this. God's answer. God's answer to the fall of man consequent on the fall of Satan is the fall of God! Peter uses this actual phrase:

'As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning!'

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### THE CHURCH FELL...

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The Holy Ghost; God the Holy Ghost fell! This great 'fall of God' was with purposeful love for His church, purposeful wrath against the devil, creating a great delivering army that would come against the evil conditions amongst men. The Holy Ghost fell on that great day of Pentecost in order that the kingdoms of darkness, of bondage, of slavery, of devil-possession, of Hell might be ousted, crushed and broken by the kingdoms of light, of heaven, of God, of power, of possession by the Holy Spirit. That mankind might experience freedom from the bondage of malicious imprisonments and sufferings that no man ought to go through.

The Holy Ghost fell because the kingdom of God is 'In the Holy Ghost', not outside it; as Paul says: 'The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in - 'within' - the Holy Ghost'.

Jesus came to set men free. But we must not take deliverance from these bondages as the ultimate. Such deliverance, though so great, is really only a minor thing in relation to God's intended end-product. It is the ultimate that God has always in mind. This ultimate is revealed to us in the book of Revelation.

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### ...THE HOLY GHOST FELL, TOO!

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John was given a vision of the Son of man, the light of the world. There He was standing, His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. He was all glorious, glorious from head to foot with flaming light. And in His hand the seven stars - and we can imagine as His hand would move around there would be the impression of a great constellation of stars moving around the sun ... His countenance shining as the sun in his strength ... Then, in addition, the seven golden candlesticks.

First the great radiant centre-piece, the Lord Himself, shining, burning, glorious; then the seven stars, lesser lights, a great constellation; then the seven golden candlesticks on earth. From the Sun down to the stars and on to the churches on the earth, each one related to Him in the heavenlies. It is all a great heavenly new creation order.

Over in the end of the book we have the same thing pictured as the city of light, new Jerusalem. The city is strong, its gates are wide open, the people are fearless, it is a marvellous place to dwell in - a city of light. That all this has relevance to the church-age is underlined by the fact that outside the city there are the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, the murderers ... and we are told further that nothing at any time that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie shall enter into the city.

God's ultimate, we have said, is that we may remain in a state of full deliverance, full of light, with no darkness at all in us. It is this that God has ordained will keep out all evil. Darkness cannot enter where there is fulness of light. Unclean spirits still walk about, their companions with them, seeking to re-enter what once they regarded as 'their house'. But the light will keep them out. They will not be able even to get near.

Delivered, I am to live in a state of permanent deliverance - full of light, with no darkness at all. The glory of that full light which burns, shines and radiates will make it impossible for any darkness to enter in. Everyone, in every one of the churches, should be in this state, in a constant state of deliverance! The whole body full of light, having no part dark, the whole full of light, cleansed from all that is evil, filled with all that is good, filled with God. G.W.N.

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### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A life of unbroken victory over sin is the purpose of God for every child of His redeemed by the blood of Christ. However, God does not make it impossible for His children to sin: He always makes it possible for them NOT to sin. Defeat may happen in the life of the Christian, but it need not.

ALAN REDPATH

## A-Z SMALL BIBLE WORDS

### C-CHURCH - EKKLĒSIA

This word, though common enough in ancient Greek, was never used in a religious sense: it meant a political assembly, city council or parliament, and is used in that sense by the Town Clerk in Acts 19:39. The religious use of the word is rendered in the AV sometimes by 'congregation', sometimes by 'assembly'.

The Old Testament:- The word 'church' does not occur in the Old Testament, but the idea of a people of God is very prominent indeed and is generally expressed in Hebrew by Qahal or Edah (Lev. 8:4; Num. 8:9; Ps. 111:1; and Num. 1:18; Deut. 5:22; 1 King 8:14f), and two important ideas emerge 1. The people of God are APPOINTED and CALLED, they are His people because He has appointed and called them. 2. They are heirs to the privileges of the covenant. The early Christians who knew their Old Testament scriptures, were never in danger of thinking of the church as a human institution.

The New Testament:- In the gospels EKKLĒSIA occurs only in Matt. (16:18, twice in Matt. 18:17). CHURCH is referred to by Jesus under the figures FLOCK (Mat. 26:31), LITTLE FLOCK (Ik. 12:32) and the VINE (John 15). In the Acts and Epistles, EKKLĒSIA is much commoner. First used of the early community of believers (Acts 5:11), the word is soon used in two senses, in the singular of local churches in different cities (Acts 8:3; 18:22; 20:17) and private houses (1 Cor. 14:19; Col. 4:15), but also of the whole church (Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13). The church is one, and even when the plural (EKKLĒSIA) is used (Gal. 1:2). The church is not 'ours' but God's - the Church of God (1 Cor. 1:2) the Church of Christ (Rom. 16:16), the Church of God in Christ (1 Thess. 2:14).

Various metaphors are used for the Church

BODY (1 Cor. 12:12f; Eph. 1:22; Eph. 5:23 - Christ the Head Cf. Col. 1:18,24).

THE BRIDE (Eph. 5:23f; Cf Rev. 21:2 - Christ the Bridegroom).

THE TEMPLE OR SPIRITUAL HOUSE (1 Cor. 3:16f; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:20f - Christ the Corner Stone 1 Pet. 2:5; 1 Tim. 3:15; Cf 1 Cor. 3:11 - the foundation).

THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD OR HOLY NATION (1 Pet. 2:5,9.)

The Church is the fellowship of believers, married to Christ, led by the Spirit, and exercising Christ's priestly ministry among men. Editor

## THE BIBLE SAYS: GOD HAS NO FAVOURITES!

For there is no respect of persons with God.

'Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other ...'

'But how should man be just with God?' 'There is none righteous, no, not one ...' '...There is none that doeth good, no, not one' 'For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all'

'Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness ...' 'But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'

'Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness ... not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?'

'Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!'

'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, But unto Thy name give glory, For Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake'.

REFERENCES: Rom.2:11; Luke 18:10/14; Job 9:2; Rom. 3:10 & 12; Rom.11:32; Rom.11:22; Rom.5:8; Rom.2:4; Psal.107:8; Psal.115:1. Editor

### GEMS FROM THE LETTERS OF SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

Let us, however matters frame, cast over the affairs of the bride upon the Bridegroom: 'the government is upon His shoulder', and He can bear us all well enough.

All I do now is to hold out a lame faith to Christ, like a beggar holding out a stump, instead of an arm or leg, and cry 'Lord Jesus, work a miracle'.

# THE ROLE OF MARRIED WOMEN AND MOTHERS

NORMAN MEETEN

I was asked recently what was the priority of the married woman and mother? How does she relate to the Church and the work of the Kingdom of God?

If a woman believes that God has called her to marriage; then her calling and priority is to her husband, home and children.

Women who have a career, prior to marriage, find it more difficult to adjust to this thought than others. Formerly she will have been self-sufficient - making her own decisions, pursuing her own life, with little need of reference to others. Once she is married, her role and calling takes on a different order. She is subject to her husband 'in all things'. That is God's order! Of course the man, the husband, has the greater responsibility in making himself worthy of such a position.

Three times the Apostle Paul says: 'A man is to be even as Christ to his wife'. That is a tall order, a high standard; but he must realize that marriage is to portray to the world the relationship between Christ and His Church.

For many women 'the Home' can seem like a prison, with little opportunity to give expression to the life of Christ within her. But it all depends on the way you look at it. It can be either hell or heaven - a prison or a platform for a wonderful ministry. I believe that a home can be, or should be, a wonderful mission field.

First of all the woman can be the making of her husband. It is often said that behind every successful man in public, there is a supportive, faithful wife in secret. It has been written 'Winston Churchill was the man that he was because of Clementine - his wife'. How much more that should be true of Christian couples.

Secondly, in the caring for and upbringing of children; who knows if one is cultivating a John Wesley, George Muller, Jonathan Edwards or a Billy Graham? Susanna Wesley spent much time with her children. Charles, the poet and John, the preacher, were just a token of her fruitfulness. Thousands upon thousands have been saved because of her faithfulness. She is but one example.

As children develop and grow there is an ever widening field of opportunity. Contacts with school friends, school teachers and parents constantly increase. As a result of my wife's faithfulness and prayer in this realm, to our three boys, she has had many contacts. Today, a former member of staff from the boys' school is, along with his family, a

missionary in South India, teaching at Hebron School, Ootacamund.

Although our boys would be the first to admit they have a long way to go; testimonies of their lives in school has been commented upon by many. The credit goes primarily to my wife's faithfulness. From the first days of our married life she embraced the priorities. She hasn't always found it easy. We could have put our boys into boarding school and she could have travelled with me, which would be her natural choice, but she has been convinced that her priority as a wife and mother has been her home, and family. This is not an exclusive or selfish position in that ours is an open home. The scriptures exhort us 'to be given to hospitality', which again leads to endless opportunities of evangelism and caring for other people.

Hebrews 13:2 says 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares'.

At one stage we had some furniture that needed re-upholstering. Although invited to join a Bible Study group at the same time, Jenny felt constrained of the Lord to go to the upholstery class. One of the confirmations of the rightness of that decision and the fruitfulness thereof, was the response of the wife of a local doctor. Many other women, especially unmarried's who need encouragement and counsel come. A warm, loving home, is a wonderful context in which to find help. What testimony is it, if a woman called to marriage, neglects her primary responsibility? What will she have to share with others if her own home is in ruins, husband estranged and children hell bound?

The greatest testimony a Christian woman can have is that she is victorious in her domestic situation. That will give her a positive message for the majority of other women who find themselves in exactly the same situation. So often we seek to create un-natural venues and platforms for the work of the Lord instead of recognizing the ones that are already there - tailor made, by God, for those who have eyes to see and the faith to embrace them. Any woman who embraces the calling whereunto God has called her and by His grace seeks to live to the full in His will, will inevitably be a real testimony to Jesus and a positive asset to His Church. Such will develop and mature into true 'mothers in Israel'. As the years go by and the children grow up, fresh doors of opportunity and challenge will emerge. Only those who have embraced God's will in the present and proved themselves, will be equipped and ready for all that God has in the future. Live to the full in the calling in which you are called.

I am often asked if married women should continue to work, i.e. secular work. Ideally - no. That is my conviction and considered opinion. I believe many of the social and moral problems that we have today are the result of a pattern cultivated during the last great war which have continued, viz - the working wife/mother. There are always exceptions. But we should be careful that we do not allow the exceptions to become the norm.

I believe that God instituted the family and established an order for the good of mankind. That order (under the guise of enlightenment and progress) is being prostituted to man's folly. The enemy is doing everything possible to destroy it. The Church is the great alternative society. As a result of redemption God has made it possible for the original design to be reinstated. Married women and mothers in our Christian community can do much to ratify that.

The role of the married woman and mother is a magnificent challenge.

WOMEN RISE TO IT.

N.M.

#### GROWTH IN GRACE

1. Being less and less disposed to **DWELL UPON THE FAULTS** and foibles of others is an evidence of growth in grace.
2. Being less and less disposed to **SPEAK SINCERELY**, or to judge uncharitably of others. A growing delicacy, or tenderness, in speaking of their real or supposed faults, behind their backs, is an evidence of growth in grace.
3. An increasing reluctance to regard or **TREAT ANYONE AS AN ENEMY**, and an increasing ease and naturalness in treating them kindly, in praying for them heartily, and in efforts to do them good, is an evidence of growth in grace.
4. Less and less temptation to **REMEMBER AN INJURY**, and the abatement of all desire to retaliate when injured, is an evidence of growth in grace.
5. A growing readiness and cordiality in **FORGIVING** and burying an injury out of sight, and a kind of moral inability to do otherwise than seek the highest good of those who have injured us most deeply, is an evidence of growth in grace.
6. When we find less and less reluctance to making full confession **TO THOSE WHOM WE HAVE INJURED**, when with increasing readiness we lay our hearts open to be searched, when we take home conviction of wrong-doing, when in such cases, we cannot rest until we have made the fullest reparation within our power ... we have evidence that we are growing in the favour of God.

from **REVIVALS OF RELIGION**, by Charles C. Finney

#### PENTECOSTAL SCENES

William Tennent and Mr. Whitefield were together at Fogg's Manor, when the fires of Pentecost were re-enacted.

Whitefield gives the following graphic description of the scene: 'Look where I would, most of the audience were drowned in tears. The word was sharper than a two-edged sword. Their bitter cries and tears were enough to pierce the hardest heart. O what different visages were then to be seen! Some were struck as pale as death; some were lying on the ground; others wringing their hands; others sinking into the arms of their friends, and most of them lifting up their eyes to heaven, and crying out to God for mercy. I could think of nothing when I looked at them so much as of the great day. They seemed like persons awakened by the last trump, and coming out of their graves to judgement'. In these wonderfully thrilling scenes William Tennent was one of the principle actors. Infidels were confounded, sinners saved, and God honoured.

## STOP PRESS!

### New Covenant Sermons

Many of our readers have asked whether some of our articles could be produced in leaflet form, for use in personal ministry.

The following leaflets are now available at a standard charge of 5p each (Quantity orders - price on application):

The King is dying - G.W. North

Man of God - Norman Meeten

What a Price - Edgar Parkyns

The Kingdom Within Your Grasp - G.W. North

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# new covenant SERMONS

**RON BAILEY****2 TIMOTHY**

John Wesley once commented that 'apostolic succession' was a fiction that never could, and never would be substantiated. He was referring to a particular theory held by some that there is an unbroken link maintained through the physical laying on of hands which guarantees a valid priesthood from Peter, through centuries of Roman Catholicism, and the Anglican church, down to the newest curate. Like many errors it springs from interpreting the New Testament in the light of the Old, and like most errors it has some truth in it. All lies have to have some truth to make them credible. Truth, wrongly applied, is often more dangerous than error.

'There is One Body' Paul writes in Eph. 4. This is not just a pretty, poetic way of expressing an idea, but is a statement of unalterable fact. While it is good to recognize that we are members of One Body horizontally, i.e. throughout the whole world, it's important too to remember that we are members of One Body vertically, i.e. throughout every generation. 'The whole family in the heavens and upon the earth' (Eph. 3:15 lit. GK.). There is only One Body, one family, and at any one time there is only a tiny part of it upon the earth. At a time of great crisis in the early days of the Salvation Army, William counselled his son Bramwell thus, 'In a hundred years it will matter very little what men thought of us, but in a thousand years it will matter very much what God thought of us'. Herein is wisdom.

In this penultimate study in 2 Timothy we shall examine some of the links between one generation, and the next. Like a relay runner finishing his circuit Paul hands on the torch of the testimony to Timothy. In this letter, probably more than any other, we find constant repetitions of 'I' (27 times) and 'thou' (18 times). No other letter is so full of personal allusion, and particular application.

The Greek language is capable of very finely tuned expression and emphasis. Personal pronouns like 'I' and 'thou' are usually built into the verb itself. In 2 Tim. 1:3 'I - thank God' has just one word for 'I thank', and that is the most common way of expression. Greek, however, does have a separate word for 'I' (ego), and when it is used with the verb it has the effect of emphasis, e.g. I - thank God, compared with I thank God. It focuses our attention. In John 14:6 the Lord Jesus did not say 'I - am the way, the truth, and the life ...' He said 'I am the way, the truth, and the life ...'

Among the 18 times that 2 Timothy uses 'thou' 10 of them are emphasized, and among the 27 times 'I' is used are 3 instances where it is emphasized. (In the Newberry Bible emphasized pronouns are printed in Old

English or Gothic characters). Imagine Paul speaking face to face with Timothy. The emphasized 'I's are the equivalent of Paul putting his hand on his own chest, and the emphasized 'thou's are the equivalent of Paul putting his hand on Timothy's shoulder. Let's look at some of them ...

**2 Timothy 1:11****BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT**

The first of Paul's emphatic 'I's has to do with his calling. 'I am appointed a PREACHER ...' this word is only used of Paul (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11) and Noah (2 Pet. 2:5). It is the word for a herald. Such heralds must always be sent (Rom. 10:14,15).

'... and an APOSTLE'. A sent one. In all but two of his letters, and usually in the opening sentences, Paul presents his credentials as an apostle (Rom. 11:13). He was conscious of the message which he held in trust, and of the mission upon which he had been sent. These two words are part of the explanation to the dynamic of his life. The third touches his means.

'... and a TEACHER of the nations' (GK.) It echoes the language of Matt. 28:19,20 'having gone, therefore, disciple all nations ... TEACHING them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you' (GK.) In those critical days teaching would have a vital importance in the churches, and the Pastoral Letters (1 & 2 Tim and Titus) have over 30 references to the subject. These show the importance of 'sound words' (2 Tim. 1:13), and 'sound teaching' (2 Tim 4:3). 'Sound' is the word translated 'whole' in Luke 5:31; 7:10. Orthodox means straight teaching. The kind of teaching which keeps the lives of churches, and individuals straight. Note, however, that Ephesus had more 'straight teaching' than any other church in the record, but lost it's first love, and so was extinguished (Acts 18:28; 19:8-10; 19:20; 20:20,27,31; 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:2; 4:12; and Rev. 2:1-7).

True ortho-doxy can only be maintained by holding true to the pattern of healthy words, IN FAITH AND LOVE (2 Tim. 1:13). All too often a pattern of words is held onto in fear, and party spirit. What survives then is not a healthy body of truth, but a macabre death mask. A perfect, but lifeless copy. Ultimately the 'keeping' or guarding of what has been entrusted to us must be 'by the Holy Ghost, the one who IS dwelling in us' (GK. 2 Tim. 1:14).

This responsibility for heraldic proclamation, ambassadorial authority and faithful transmission of the truth, was not something Paul had taken onto his own shoulders in the spirit of a volunteer. His

conscious testimony is 'I was APPOINTED ...' This word 'appoint' signifies a deliberate act of placing something in a particular place. It's the word used to describe the sick man who was 'LAID daily at the (temple) gate' (Acts 3:2), and of the Lord Jesus in 'I LAY in Sion a stumbling stone ...' (Rom. 9:33). The A.V. translates the same word in 3 different ways in Paul's letters to Timothy, 'putting' in 1 Tim. 1:12; 'ordained' in 1 Tim. 2:7; and 'appointed' in 2 Tim. 1:11. It's also translated as 'set' in 1 Cor. 12:18,28; and 'made' in Acts 20:28. The sense of putting something in a special place, for a special purpose comes through very clearly in 1 Cor. 16:2 where it is translated as 'lay'. Look it up. Do you 'ordain' your finances regularly?

## 2 Timothy 4:1

## LOOK WHO'S TALKING

'I charge thee ...' Paul's authority to speak was a moral authority linked inseparably with who he was, not by title but by relationship. Power is not vested in the person who has the right words, but in the person who has the right testimony (cf Acts 19:13-16).

Paul's relationship with the next generation is expressed in a rich variety of ways. Here are just a few pointers:

as a BEGETTING FATHER he had poured his very life to produce children (1 Cor. 4:15). They became partakers of HIS grace through the gospel (Phil. 1:7). It had been 'given to me for you' (Col. 1:25), but Paul was a faithful link willing to give without limits (cf 1 Thes. 2:8).

as a CHILDBEARING MOTHER he had travailed in birth for them (Gal. 4:19), and like a true mother was ready to suffer again, and again, and again ... until Christ was formed in them.

as a NURSING MOTHER he fed them spiritually at his own breast, giving them not second hand food, but that which had passed through his own being in experience, (MY God shall supply all YOUR need - Phil. 4:19) like a nursing mother cherishing her OWN children (1 Thes. 2:7 gk). See also 2 Cor. 2:4).

as a CARING FATHER he continued to father' them. He encouraged them (paraklaeo) and consoled them, and bore faithful witness to them (1 Thes. 2:11). Love undiluted by sentiment (cf 2 Cor. 12:14).

as a BONDSERVANT he served them for the sake of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 4:5), willing to spend and be spent for them (2 Cor. 12:15). His heart bound up with their welfare as Eli's was with the ark of the covenant (1 Thes. 3:8).

When a man of this calibre of life and commitment says 'follow me' (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1) we may do so safely. When such a man says 'I charge you ...' there is a moral imperative to listen, and obey.

## 2 Timothy 4:6 TO BE CONTINUED... BY YOU!

The last of the emphasized 'I's links Paul, and Timothy together in contrast. In the previous verse the 'thou' is emphasized. Paul says, in effect, 'you do this, because I will not be here to do it'.

Reading the last verses of 2 Timothy could be poignant. Be diligent to come quickly (4:9). Everyone but Luke (the beloved physician) has left (4:10,11). Be diligent to come before winter (4:21). Bring my cloak (4:13). Bring the books, and especially the parchments (4:13). It gives the picture of a lonely old man, wanting some warmer clothing in his prison cell, and something to read.

What makes the difference between that picture and the truth is a thrilling combination of metaphors in verses 6 & 7 which serve as an eloquent commentary on Paul's simple confession in Act 20:24.

'I am ready to be offered' (4:6). The word 'offered' is the Greek word (spendo) which means to pour something out as a drink offering. Even though he was now 'Paul the aged' (Phm. v 9) his life was not allowed to leak away, but was being poured out consciously, and willingly. The word is used only here and in Phil. 2:17. Every last drop was for God.

'The time of my departure is at hand' (4:6). The word 'departure' is the Greek word 'analysis', which is used in Greek poetry as a metaphor for a ship loosing from its moorings, or for an army breaking camp to move on. This was no gloomy comment about 'the end', but an eager anticipation for a 'new beginning' (cf Phil. 1:23).

'I have fought a good fight' (4:7). 'Fought' and 'fight' are from the Greek word 'agon' which is linked with the idea of games-contests, and implies 'to strive as in a contest for a prize, straining every nerve to attain the object' (Vine's p424). It's the word translated as 'race' in Heb. 12:1; as 'strive' in 1 Cor. 9:25, Col 1:29; and 'labouring fervently' in Col 4:12. A strengthened form of it is translated as 'contend earnestly' in Jude v 3.

'I have finished my course' (4:7). The word 'course' is the Greek word for a 'running race'. The phrase is a wonderful echoing of Calvary's victory proclamation 'It is finished'.

'I have watched-over the faith' (4:7 GK.)

Paul's final word of testimony to the next generation is ... 'You fulfil your ministry, because I fulfilled mine'. It abides as the greatest gift that we can bequeath to the next generation; the example of a life filled full, and emptied out. If we can't bequeath this we may leave them wonderful buildings, perfect church government, and precious doctrines, but we shall leave them poor.

R.B.

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