

fulness

fulness came into being as a result of a clear command from the Lord. We trust that many will share our joy in its advent, and stand with us in prayer that God's purpose for its ministry may be fully accomplished.

We believe that we stand near the end of this age, when 'we are all to come to unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself' Ephesians 4:13.

As pointed out elsewhere in this issue, we live in the time of an 'emerging church', a time of new beginnings. The denominations have failed to meet the challenge of the hour, and God is doing a new thing.

We trust to minister to personal needs, and to further understanding of the corporate life of God's people, so that, 'we shall grow in all ways into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each separate part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has built itself up, in love'. Ephesians 4:15, 16. Also we shall cover prophecy as it relates to the church of the end time, believing that there is a glorious future for the church not merely after the return of Christ but preceeding it.

Publishing as occasion demands, we do not intend to be safe and respectable. Rather, to be provocative and challenging. Many of the articles will be exploratory, touching truths that are not covered by any other periodicals in this country. On many things we have no doubt a lot to learn, but we have open hearts and minds, and would love you to join us in the quest for His fulness.

Today's Move of the Spirit

by Graham Perrins

IN REVELATION 2:11 we read our Lord's statement 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' This phrase calls the hearers to be particularly attentive. How vital that we understand what Jesus is saying to this present generation of church life. It is possible that we are so caught up in the day to day activities and the routine of life, that we miss the main emphasis of his current ministry.

Usually there is a particular truth that God would bring to bear upon his people at a particular time, a course of action that he would have them take now. So that no generation of church life is a duplicate of what has gone before. Each generation fits into the overall purpose of God, and salvation history progressively moves to its glorious climax.

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fulness

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We must embrace what God has said to our forefathers but at the same time move on into our own inheritance.

God's directives for today must not be confused with the course of Christendom. Denominational Christianity marches not homeward but Romeward. As with past generations it will only be a remnant who will hold to God's full purpose. The Lord's desire surely involves more than a revival of denominational church life? Is God really interested in preserving status quo? It may well be that the best answer to prayer for many churches today, lies not in revival, but in a change of direction, and in the receiving of a new vision. Most churches today even in revival setting are neither capable of containing, nor furthering this final outpouring of the Holy Spirit. God is doing a new thing, something radical, something that reaches into the fullness of his redemptive programme. Praise God! It will be too big for any denomination to hold! Sweeping through man-made barriers and limitations it will bring about the unity that Jesus has been praying for, and the world has been waiting to see!

The house church

One interesting feature of the present move of the Holy Spirit that is worthy of close consideration is the stress on the more informal gatherings of God's people. This could well have a greater import than at first sight seems possible. How often the simplest truths of God's word are either ignored, despised or made difficult. The church in the house was a vital feature of New Testament Christianity. In Romans 16:3-5 Paul greets Prisca and Aquilla, and the church in their house, cf. v14 and 15. In Colossians 4:15 greetings are given to

Nympha and the church in her house. Philemon was also host to the church, Philemon 2. In the Acts of the Apostles it is evident that the church although witnessing in both Temple and synagogue, used the home as the centre of fellowship, ministry and worship. Notice Acts 8:3, 'Saul laid waste the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.'

Other passages of Scripture are also to be interpreted in the light of the church in the home, such as Titus 1:11, 'deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake' (A.V.). Also 2 John 10, 'If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting.'

The church continued to be centred around the homes of believers for nearly 300 years. It could have built special buildings, for there were periods of peace. There was certainly money available for such ventures if such had been the mind of the Lord. Other cults and religions were building their shrines, and the Jews went on building their synagogues. Christians remained in the house, and never was the church so healthy as in those early formative stages. Jesus had said, 'I will build my church.' It is instructive to note the site he chose.

Fellowship

The setting of the church in the home brings certain advantages that are unobtainable in orthodox church buildings; chief of which is the recovery of fellowship. How often the blessing we have received in the informal atmosphere of house parties, conferences and holiday gatherings has been frustrated upon our return to 'normal meet-

ings'. This serves to show that orthodox Christianity invariably hinders and limits the free flow of the Spirit of God. The home can keep us in an atmosphere where fellowship is fostered and encouraged.

Fellowship can be defined as 'sharing in or with, participation, communion'. We all have something of Jesus to share with each other, and in the home it is easier for a true priesthood of believers to develop and mature. In the early church this fellowship probably reached its zenith in the Agape or love-feast. Study the following passages: Acts 2:42; 20:7-11; 1 Corinthians 10:14-22; 11:17-34. Communion or the Lord's Supper was a part of the love feast. From what can be pieced together from the New Testament and historians it is probable that groups of Christians would gather together in homes, bringing food with them. Before the meal, one member would break the loaf, and the bread would be shared. The meal proper would then commence. After supper the cup was also taken and passed round, thus the elements were an integral part of a fellowship meal.

The whole of this time would be spent in discourse, dialogue, and free exchange. See John 13 to 17 and Acts 20. The gifts of the Spirit would operate and there would be no strict time limits for start and finish! All this is a far cry from the artificial separation of the communion elements from their original setting. It is not that one cannot have a good meeting in a church building, but it is well nigh impossible in such places to get down to the informal intimacy of such gatherings as were normal in the New Testament times. Some of the dangers of this kind of fellowship are outlined in 1 Corinthians 11, but the dangers should

not put us off the definite advantages, any more than we would allow abuses to deter us from speaking in tongues.

Families

Alongside the word 'fellowship' we can put the word family. God is concerned with family units. Today we witness the rapid deterioration of family life. Tragically, even Christians are not exempt from this decline. The Gospel embraces the family unit as we see it from Acts 2:39, 'For the promise is to you and to your children'; 11:14, 'he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and your household'; 16:31, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household'; 18:8, 'Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with all his household'. God reveals himself as Father. We are brothers and sisters, his household. Christianity must be brought back into the family circle, into our everyday home life. 'Be given to hospitality', is Paul's exhortation. Our home is not only our castle, it is the site of God's church. What a salutary influence we bring into our homes when we make them places of prayer, worship and fellowship.

We may be able to hide our feelings behind the hymn book in our public services, but we expose our real condition when we fellowship on the closer level of the home. How often in the round of meetings our deepest needs remain unnoticed and untouched. Now with a more personal contact we can be encouraged to open up on our problems and fears, sharing one another's burdens in the love of the Lord.

Wait for it!

If we have not already discovered the blessings associated with this kind of fellowship, let us not with over-enthusiasm rush to commence a house church! There must be vision and understanding of what God is after. I have been to some so-called house fellowships where on a Sunday morning the table is placed in the centre, the elements standing lonely sentinels in a white desert, the chairs neatly placed in rows, and the assembled guests whisper their pious salutations! The meeting proceeds on the lines of a Brethren style service. God forbid! We had better stay put if that is all we see in a house church! No sir! When we come together it is not for another meeting, but for family fellowship. That is entirely different. We are widening the family circle by placing a few more chairs around the fireplace.

How vital too that the house where meetings are regularly held is a home where the husband manages his own household well, 'keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church?' (1 Timothy 3:4 and 5).

There are many other weighty considerations as to why the church should change its centre from special buildings to the home. Finance is not the least of them. Whilst it is true that God will see that his work will prosper and not go short of needed funds, we have a responsibility not to squander what he graciously gives. The amount of money needed to build a church, and the annual upkeep is considerable. The amount of money tied up in buildings throughout the land is astronomical. It really is a case of priorities. In these last desperate days we must support God's men, not bricks

and mortar.

Persecution must also be kept in mind. If we were to be placed in the ring with a champion boxer in the opposite corner, we would not wait until the last minute to get ourselves into trim. No good sitting on our stool in the corner hurriedly catching up on our text book, 'The Art of In-Fighting'. By then it would be too late! All this preparation must go on months before. We have no guarantee that this country will be immune from attack. The Communists have driven home the lesson that denominational Christianity is exposed Christianity, it has not stood up to the test. We must establish a church that can go through persecution, that is adaptable, where there is no reliance upon one-man ministry. The house church is not exempt from attack, as we see from the Acts, but it is certainly better equipped.

God has his time

There is at present a tremendous move of God throughout the land. In many ways it passes unnoticed, perhaps because of its small beginnings. I have only touched on one aspect of this move. Not all Christians will see the house church in the same way at the same time. Some may not have reached the place of utter frustration and desperation regarding their own denominational church. Others may well have come to this point but are not sure of God's timing regarding alternative measures. Certainly his will can only be interpreted on an individual basis. The house church is neither a panacea nor a final step. It is a preparatory step that brings its own problems. But it is a step that will help to bring the church out of its denominational chains, out of the realm of tradition and prejudice. It will help to bring the

church into the place where it can begin to listen to God's voice with a fresh sensitivity, with a growing awareness of the fellow members of the body and the mutual functioning together. It will help bring the church to the place where God can develop his end-time purpose.

..and his men

There is today an emerging church. Many such companies have come into being. One desperate need at this time is for leadership and ministry that understands the genuine heart cry of God's people, their deep dissatisfaction with status quo that even revival will do little or nothing to allay. Oh! for those with relevant ministries, voices for the hour in which we live! God will surely speak, and raise up those who will pioneer a fresh pathway, who will help to bring together a people who can bring to fruition the travail of both church and world for a manifestation of life that reaches to the stature of the fulness of Christ!

Quotations are from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise stated.



נְשִׁיָּאָר הַשְּׂוֹרָב

A REMNANT

SHALL

RETURN

BY TED CRICK

 'AS FOR GOD, his way is perfect' declared the psalmist, and immediately goes on to say, he 'maketh my way perfect' (Psalm 18:30, 32). God has had from the beginning a glorious end in view, and he has been walking along a carefully planned and clearly defined pathway to reach that goal. There have been no deviations, except the one all-inclusive deviation of redemption's history. Even this is all part of God's pre-

determined course as he has moved on 'unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,' as the hymn writer graphically expresses it, toward the fulfilment of his heart's objective. This objective is expressively summed up in God's revelation to Paul in Ephesians 1:10 that 'he might gather together in one all things in Christ'.

▶ THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE

The life and nature of Jesus, who is God himself, filling everyone and everything, is the ultimate objective of God's heart. To this end everything is planned and timed by him. In another scripture in the Old Testament, the first chapter of Ezekiel, we see that the Spirit of God only moves straight forward: 'The four living creatures turned not when they went, but they went straight forward' (also verses 8, 12 and 17). So today God is still going straight forward by his Spirit's power and government, towards that long-awaited consummation.

▶ WHAT IS GOD DOING?

This immediately raises the question, 'Can we know what God is doing today; can we tell just where we are in God's eternal programme?' Can we intelligently co-operate with God in what he is doing in the earth today? Can we see what we should be doing now, and, equally important, be utterly clear as to what will happen, speaking on general terms, next year, the year after, and the years after that? This so that we can walk a steady straight course with God, not having to make one emergency adjustment after another through life when we realise that God has moved on, and we are left standing, or else we have shot off down a side street while God has continued straight on along the main highway. We have to return to the highway at precisely the same place that we left it, in order to be in the

ways of God once again.

Remember, friends, that Enoch walked with God. God did not walk with Enoch. He found out where God was, which way he was going, and Enoch walked with him into translation glory. This is God's full and glorious purpose for the Church today, for you and me as members of that living organism.

Yes, I am sure that we can know what God is doing today. We can see the direction that he is taking. We can understand intelligently, and co-operate diligently with God, if we will set our hearts to do so, and if we are prepared to be obedient to all that he reveals to us. Remember that we have got to walk with God. He does not adjust himself to our ideas, prejudices, inhibitions and ignorance, but he will graciously deal with and remove these stumbling blocks in our lives as we set our hearts to walk with him.

▶ MAKING KNOWN HIS WAYS!

'He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel' (Psalm 103:7). The children of Israel never understood the ways of God and never understood the wonders in Egypt (Psalm 106:7), but Moses, who at the beginning seemed equally perplexed, cried out in desperation, 'Show me now thy way, that I may know thee' (Exodus 33:13), and God answered that prayer wonderfully... 'He made known his ways unto Moses'. Incidentally, having prayed that prayer, Moses immediately goes on to pray, 'Show me thy glory' (verse 18). It is as though it was not sufficient to know God's way, but he must have complete assurance of God's ability and power to reach the end, to accomplish the objective. Even this request God accedes to in the measure that Moses is able to comprehend it.

NOW WALK HIS WAY

'Show me thy ways O Lord; teach me thy paths' (Psalm 25:4). 'Show me thy ways,' this demands revelation from the Lord. 'Teach me thy paths' requires instruction, humility and obedience. It is surely possible to begin with some knowledge of God's paths, and yet to refuse to walk in his way. May God find us prepared and willing for both. The Word of God plainly declares that it is better never to begin on God's pathway, than to turn aside after having had revelation and experience of his love and grace.

This is all very relevant to the subject in hand, because God's ways are constant and reliable. His ways are always in keeping with his character. There are principles behind all his dealings with his people and mankind. Once we begin to grasp and to see these principles, we are beginning to come to an understanding of his ways.

CALLED TO ACCOUNT

One of the basic principles of God in his wisdom and sovereignty is what I would call the principle of the 'Remnant'. It is not an eternal principle but it does operate throughout the entire history of God's plan for redeeming mankind, and is made necessary because of certain factors accompanying God's strategy in putting away Satan, sin and selfishness from his creation.

Basic to this principle is the fact that God has from the dawn of man's creation divided time itself into distinct parts which some have called 'dispensations'. This word, which occurs four times in the New Testament, and most notably in Ephesians 1:10, really has nothing to do with time itself, but

with administration. It is translated 'stewardship' in Luke 16:2, 3 and 4, where the unwise and unfaithful steward was called by his master to account for his stewardship - the way in which he had administered his master's household and possessions.

So these dispensations of time merely emphasize the different ways and forms in which God administers creation. Man may not even agree as to how many there were, or are, or where they begin and end in some cases. But the basic fact of God's changing ways of dealing with mankind is evident to the reader of scripture.

AS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH...

Let us agree for the moment that there are at least seven of these changing periods of administration. In the beginning God seemingly left man's conscience to be the umpire in his relationship with God, but because of sin's swift cancerous growth, even the conscience of man became corrupt and defiled, and could no longer lead men back to God. So much so that in Noah's day God had to say 'that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually' and that age ended in disaster and judgement by the Flood. Right at the end of that age God found one man and his family upon whom he could pour his grace, namely Noah, of whom God said, 'Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God'. So when the judgement came, Noah was the key to the continuance of God's purpose. Here is the first 'remnant' vessel of scripture, and moreover a man of whom our Lord specifically tells us that as it was in his days, 'so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.'

The rest of mankind failed, but God preserved

for himself one man who accomplished the purpose of that age. He received grace, became justified, maintained a pure outward testimony toward man (Genesis 6:9 - perfect = without blemish) and inwardly he habitually walked with God.

Yet after the Flood, even Noah was corrupted together with his seed, and the curse was renewed on mankind. After an interval God introduced by means of his chosen man Abraham, and his family of Israel, his new way of dealing with men. If man's conscience could no longer lead him, revealing right from wrong, then he must be ruled by God-given laws. So at Sinai, through Moses, the age of law was introduced.

The people swore that they would keep this law, but alas, they could not. After a long chequered and inglorious history the age of law closed in shattering failure and judgement when the law leaders took and crucified the Lord of Glory at Calvary.

➤ **MORE GRACE - YET MORE SIN . . .**

Once again however, God found a remnant company, who did receive grace and revelation, and who entered into God's purpose. Through the eleven disciples and a number of others, the purposes of God were secured. In the passing of the old dispensation, they laid hold of the new one just ahead, and paved the way for the onward march of God through Pentecost, the founding of the Church, and the day of grace. This New Testament remnant is especially highlighted by people like Simeon, Anna, Zacharias and their prophetic utterances.

You will notice that each age brings in a higher mode of administration - conscience, law, grace - and each in its turn brings greater responsibility

upon those who live in that age, and greater judgement upon failure. Thus Hebrews warns us: 'Look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God' (Chapter 12:15) and later, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven' (verse 25). Whose voice then shook the earth, but now, at the end of this Christ and grace rejecting age, the heavens and the earth shall be utterly shaken.

In spite of all the fulness of the revelation of God's love through Calvary, in spite of the Holy Spirit's world-wide witness to Christ, in spite of the experience of hundreds of years of civilization and gospel preaching, we are on the verge of the greatest rebellion against God and universal collapse that time has yet seen. What awful responsibility lies upon the final generation of men and women - wholly Godless - that this age has produced. Christ crucified and the Holy Spirit rejected, the Church of God martyred... what is left now but for the judgement of God to fall and consume the wicked of this earth according to his word?

➤ **.. BUT GOD VICTORIOUS!**

Yet God will not be defeated. He cannot be frustrated. This age began with a plan and a purpose, the success of which was guaranteed by the triumph of our Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. The Amplified New Testament says: 'The purpose is that through the Church the complicated, many-sided wisdom of God in all its infinite variety and innumerable aspects might now be made known to the angelic rulers and authorities (principalities and powers) in the heavenly sphere. This is in accordance with the terms of the eternal and timeless purpose which

He has realised and carried into effect, in the person of Christ Jesus our Lord' Ephesians 3:10, 11.

THE PIVOTAL AGE

This age of grace extending from Calvary to Olivet is not only the next age after the age of law, but it is the pivotal age of God's whole eternal purpose and programme. Every age before it, as demonstrated in the beginning by Abel's offering of blood in worship, and continued through Abraham and the offering of Isaac, and Moses with the pass-over lamb, pointed forward to the lamb of God at Calvary, and found their fulfilment in Christ. Every subsequent age derives its nature and character from the absolute victory of our Lord Jesus at Calvary, and in and through the Church's absolute victory over Satan, sin and self. The foundation of the ages lies within this age in which we are privileged to live. There is such a challenge behind it. Few have ever grasped or accomplished the mighty and awe-inspiring purpose of God which belongs to this time.

This is confirmed in 1 Corinthians 10:11 by Paul's warning word to the Church: 'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.' This is an inadequate translation, and should be read, 'upon whom the ends of the ages are come'. The word translated 'ends' here signifies 'not the ending of a departed state, but the arrival of a complete or perfect one' (Bullinger's Lexicon). This is the age of the perfecting of God's purposes although there will be further ages in front of us necessary for the full development and exhibition of the perfect work which God has wrought through Christ and the Church in this present age.

REALISATION

It is for this reason that Satan's fury has been continuously directed against the Church down through this age, because he is fully aware of what happened at Calvary; that his authority was taken from him and given to Christ, and that his power was broken and his hold over mankind brought to an end. His desperate rearguard action through the age has been to prevent the saints of God from coming to a practical and intelligent understanding and possession of this fact, lest they rise up as one man to enforce the decree of Calvary and bring about his final downfall but this they will do, hallelujah!

It falls upon the final generation of the Church to enter into and complete God's purpose in this age. As with all past ages, this one has been sadly and tragically marred by the departure, decay, decline and defeat, in a very large measure, of the vessel which had been formed by God for this specific purpose, the vessel which Paul calls 'the Church of the living God'. In spite of this decline down through almost two thousand years, the Lord has preserved a remnant sometimes reduced to very small numbers and very great weakness.

This overcoming remnant, which includes all our martyred brothers and sisters and the persecuted disciples of past generations, has been the 'seed royal' of God within the Church. These are the true sons and daughters of the King of kings, and to them we owe a tribute of thanksgiving for their faithfulness in their day, even as we are encouraged by their example to serve God faithfully in our own generation.

The issue confronting the Church today is not, how can we survive, but, how are we to implement the victory and all-inclusive triumph of Calvary: and how are we to fulfil this glorious ministry of bringing back the King, overthrowing the present ruler, the principalities and powers of darkness, and establishing the throne and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, the earth's redeemer and rightful king? This was God's purpose from the beginning, and it shall be accomplished.

Surely it will be by the working out of the same principle that has brought previous ages to their climax: a remnant within the Church shall return according to the many promises and prophecies of scripture, both Old and New Testaments alike confirming this wonderful truth.

RECOVERY

The word 'return' demands first of all a starting point and a turning point in order to arrive back at the beginning. This may seem to be stating the obvious, but we find in spiritual things that very often the obvious is not so obvious, and here we have such a case. The starting point of the Church's history was the day of Pentecost, and the place was in Jerusalem. We cannot return either to the place or time, but it is possible, and indeed it must be that the Church which is his Body returns to the governing principles and condition that marked the launching of the Church upon the sea of time.

In actual fact, the Church has been on this return journey, however slow it may seem to be, for hundreds of years. It reached its furthest point of departure during the 'dark ages', and since the days of Wycliffe, Tyndale and others, we can trace a continual work of restoration in the Church. Firstly

came the recovery of the Word of God itself, and from then on came a gradual unveiling of the truths of the scriptures: justification by faith came by Luther, sanctification by Wesley, the true nature of the Church and its ministries was brought out by the early 'brethren' movement, the social responsibility of the gospel by Booth and The Salvation Army, and the place and work of the Holy Spirit came from the 'pentecostal' movement as a whole, together with the truth of Holy Spirit baptism. All this can be seen as the recovery of separate jewels of truth, to which the Church has returned, and which have been set in the crown of the Church once again. But still the Lord is restoring, still the Church is returning, and still it is true that there is yet more light and truth to break forth from the Word.

A FULL RETURN

I believe it remains for this generation to take up and use to the full the value of these past recoveries of truth and to add to them that which is needed to make the return and restoration complete. The restoring of the Holy Spirit to his place of unique sovereignty in the individual life and in the Church must be completed in order for him to fulfil his ministry of exalting our beloved Lord and Saviour to the place and honour which the Father has given him in this age, and for the Church to accomplish its divine purpose in the earth before the age closes.

Much has been revealed in recent days concerning the Person and work of the Holy Spirit in magnifying our Lord Jesus Christ, but still we are experiencing far too little of his power in our ministries and testimony to the Lord. It is this combination, his person, and his authority and

power, that will dominate the close of this age and the present order of things.

This means the final displacement and dethronement of man in the things of God, and the replacing of human energy and resources by divine energy and power. Here is the significance of the Lord's word to Zechariah concerning the building of the latter house by the remnant: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts,' until the Church has fully recovered the secret of bringing pure Holy Spirit energy into operation in its 'housebuilding ministry'. Until this happens, the Church has not returned to its first principles, and its commission cannot be completed.

FROM BABYLON...

Where shall this remnant return from? When God's people departed from the glory of Solomon's kingdom of rest and righteousness, they finally ended up in captivity and bondage in Babylon. From the days of Rehoboam, Solomon's son until Zedekiah whom Nebuchadnezzar took into captivity, God spoke to, pleaded with, and warned his people to obey his word to return to their first love, their true husband; but their hearts were set on idolatrous relations with the world and its gods until, in the tragic final words of 2 Chronicles 36:16, 'there was no remedy', and God gave them the desires of their hearts, and sent them into captivity in Babylon.

'Babylon' means confusion, and this is the condition when God's people consort with the world in any form. 'These things happened unto them for ensamples', says Paul, and, as with Israel, so with the Church; but with this vital difference: Israel

was given into the hands of an earthly tyrant, but the Church has sold itself into the hands of the heavenly tyrant. Because we are not an earthly body, we could not be given into earthly captivity, but the principalities and powers in heavenly places are the true enemies that have wrought havoc in the Church these many generations.

In other words, our conflict has been with the true king of Babylon and his cohorts. It is they who have invaded, captured, and enslaved the people of God through this age. Instead of the Church being one glorious vessel of Holy Spirit possession and activity, it has given place to many spirits, evil spirits of all kinds and denominations; and this is Babylon - this is utter confusion.

VIA CONTRITION...

In a cry to God for deliverance, in Isaiah 26:13, this wicked condition is acknowledged by the prophet; 'O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.' Here is clear recognition of the condition, then comes confession, repentance and a returning to his Lordship alone. A remnant shall return out of the confusion of the ages, out of the dominion of every foul spirit of hell, and come once again through recognition, repentance and confession to a place of utter Holy Spirit government, a purified condition where our Lord Jesus Christ truly is Lord of every part of their nature and being.

This is the ultimate significance of the call to God's people in the last days to come out of Babylon. It may involve many different outward adjustments and the leaving of impure associations, but it is this inward deliverance that must govern every-

thing, otherwise everything is futile. The command of scripture to those facing conditions such as we are today, is to 'follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart' (2 Timothy 2:22).

***..TO GLORY**

The position to which the remnant shall return is beautifully expressed in Psalm 133 as brethren dwelling together in unity and peace; this is like the picture of the High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ under the glory of the full anointing and all the priestly members, every one in their place, under that priesthood and anointing; one Spirit filling, governing, pervading all. There is no Babylon, no false or evil spirit there. But the enemy has enticed the beloved of their Lord from that precious place of unbounded blessing; but still, 'a remnant shall return'.

***AND PERFECTION!**

It is absolutely vital that we see by revelation from God that this return is marked by, and accompanied with, a deep and utter work of purification in every individual who makes up part of the glorious remnant. In one of the great remnant books of the Old Testament - that of Malachi - this work of God is given greater emphasis. In chapter three, the promise is given that a messenger of the covenant will come to prepare the way before the Lord, and when his work is done, the Lord will suddenly come to his temple.

When the messenger comes, he will be like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap, to refine fully and purify the true priestly company. With all my heart I believe that this is the chief work and purpose of the Holy Spirit's outpouring today upon many

song supplement

Wonderful Days

fulness

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WONDERFUL DAYS

Norene C. Nicholls

1. Wonderful days,
glorious days, These

days in which we live; Days of the Spirit out-

poured, Days of a mag - ni - fied Lord;

Days when God's hand shall be
seen,

Moving in power su - preme Marvelous days

Miracle days, Lord use me in these days.

2. Wonderful days, glorious days,

These days in which we live;

Days when the fear of the Lord,

Goes hand in hand with the Word;

Days of mixed judgement and grace

On all humanity's race;

Treacherous days, perilous days,

Lord, keep me in these days.

3. Wonderful days, glorious days,

These days in which we live;

Days of such unequalled power,

Fully reserved to this hour;

Days when God's fulness is known

In those who dwell at His throne;

Powerful days, challenging days,

Lord, use me in these days.

prepared hearts. He is the true messenger of the covenant, using many vessels for his work of making ready a people prepared for the Lord. And the work is going on in the fires of life; the depth of hearts; domestic circumstances; church and fellowship problems; in problems of work and environment; here the purifying work of the Holy Spirit is challenging, changing, transforming those who are submissive to his ways and embrace his purposes.

Most of the passages of the Old Testament that speak of the return of the remnant major on this theme of the purifying work of God within them and upon them. There is a further gem in Zechariah 13:9, where the Lord says, 'and I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God.'

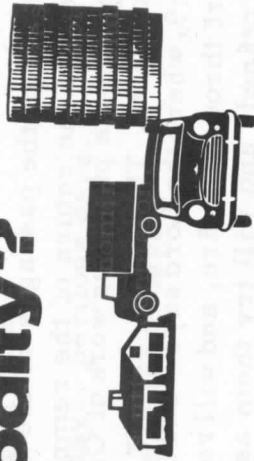
There is a deep work of God going on today in the lives of many believers that is after this order, and this is one of the surest and clearest evidences that the day is at hand for our beloved Lord to claim full possession of his own, and reveal his glory in all the earth.

▶ **WHERE...WHEN...HOW...WHO?**

The author has shown something in the above article of where the remnant returns from, and where it returns to. In subsequent issues, as the Lord directs, it is hoped to show when they shall return; how they shall return; and who it will be that shall return.



Is Eternal Life a Commodity?



by Maurice Smith

IT HAS BEEN coming to me in quite a new way that eternal life is not some commodity that we possess. Familiar scriptures have come alive concerning this matter. These scriptures have revealed to me just how much eternal life is bound up with Jesus Christ. It is so easy to become doctrinaire and to see our Christian life as an object which we get from Jesus. It is but a short step from here to dissociating it from him altogether and soon we are back walking in the flesh.

Let us pursue this a little more.

1 John 5 verse 12 tells us that 'He that hath the Son has life.' The Revised Version says, '... has the life.' In John 11 verse 25 Jesus says, 'I am the life.' We actually share the life, his life. He is eternal life. No Son - no life. Jesus Christ and eternal life are inseparable. We are so very used to thinking that we who have come into a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ have ourselves got eternal life. Is it not more true to say that we have been brought into Christ, who is our life, and that we are now linked to him?

Quit false humility...

Perhaps you think that I am splitting unnecessary doctrinal hairs; but I do not believe so, for it is on this very subtle issue that Satan has deceived the church and kept her grovelling in so much false humility. Wallowing in the delusion that she can never be like her Lord, when in fact this is God's very purpose for his children. I am greatly interested in the increase of Christian experience. In other words, that we Christians become as distinct in mode of living and in power as the early church, and go on to exceed them. I firmly believe that the full process of recovered truth will bring about such Christianity. We shall know the truth and the truth shall set us completely free to walk as he walked. And he walked always in the Spirit!

...and live and walk in the Spirit

If we accept what the word of God says about our eternal life, we shall come through to what God requires at this end of the age. We must stand clearly and resolutely upon his word which may take us against all traditional teachings of unbelief. As part of that great argument in Romans which

says, 'We are sinners - we are justified - we are dead to sin - we are free from law - we now live in Christ'; Paul states in chapter 8: 'We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwells in us.' The first step towards realising the potential that is ours in Christ, is to unreservedly accept that we do share his life. The Spirit is now our normal habitat, we have to move out of the Spirit to get into the flesh! This is a complete reversal of most orthodox teaching and at once takes us out of negativity into a positive attitude. We now have to abide where we actually are, (see John 15), and learn to walk by faith there. We are to stop constantly trying to get where God has already placed us - an impossible task!

Forsake individualism...

Another serious aspect of seeing our new life apart from Jesus - as something we receive from him - has been the spread of individualism. This has been a deadly enemy of the divine plan since the beginning. God has seen to it that we are baptised by one Spirit into one body. That surely means that we who have been immersed in the Holy Spirit, share the same life in the same body. It means that your eternal life is part of my eternal life. We are, if you like, wrapped up in the one bundle of life. I am more than ever convinced that as the end of the age approaches we shall see the emergence of a glorious church, which is his body, not just a body - the fullness of him that fills all in all - a body where all the members are properly related to each other and functioning alongside each other. Gone are all the thoughts of my personal anointing as we come to fullness together. Surely the anointing is upon Jesus (the Head), and runs down upon all the other members of the body, (Psalm 133); being careful, you will notice, not to have any

contact with the flesh, even to the extent of running down the beard! Beloved Christian, what we have, we have together, and this will become much more evident in these last days. The great imitation will become more and more visibly one by means of outward organisation, whilst ours is a unity of the Spirit.

...and be a unique Christian

I can now rest into the fact that I am not the whole body; that I have not to be a pale imitation of some successful minister. We are nothing without each other. We have been personally chosen, and placed in the body, by the Lord. We all have a unique ministry and should get on walking in the Spirit; in our ministry; in the body; without comparison or condemnation. A relaxed church at last! If we are settled on both these points:

1. I am alive in Christ and actually share his life;
 2. I am a unique, but related member of his body;
- then we shall be in a far better position to hear his voice, and obey. We shall be in a better position to stop worrying about ourselves and to care for others. We shall be free to seek the greater gifts that he is bestowing, in order to bring the church to cleansing and maturity.

God is supremely interested to bring the church into fullness at just the right time for the end of this present age, and as we learn to rest into him, he will bring forth fruit and gift to that end. This is no plea for inactivity, but we have to learn to be at rest and receptive before we can be effectively active!



Esther

A Parable for Such a Time as This

by Hugh Thompson

The gripping story of the book of Esther reads almost like an amplified version of Jesus' parable in Luke 18:1-8. In the former we find the queen making supplication to the world dictator for her people - God's people - to be vindicated of their enemy (chapter 4:8). In the latter we have a widow pleading with an unrighteous judge 'Avenge me of mine adversary'. The Lord hastens to add that his

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Father is not unjust and will avenge his own elect speedily. Our God is the Judge of all the earth and will do right as Abraham affirmed when interceding for Lot and his family in Sodom (Genesis 18:25). But he waits for advocates like Abraham who will come to Court and rehearse before him his own Word of righteousness.

It is time for the people of God to sue for their rights; 'Lord, your statute book says that Satan is the illegal occupant of the kingdoms of this world. He must go! We come to ask for his eviction from this situation'. The Almighty Judge waits for that cry.

We will approach this book as a parable of the way in which 'the saints of the heavenly places take the kingdom', (Daniel 7:18,22,27 - literal translation). Ahasuerus will represent the authority of God's Throne; Haman will depict Satan, who comes 'to steal and to kill and to destroy' (John 10:10); Mordecai will stand for the Holy Spirit; and Esther will be the company of overcomers out of every tribe and nation who will enter fully into their throne rights at the culmination of the age.

A VACANCY chapter 1

Heaven's great eternal King once displayed 'the riches of his glorious Kingdom and the Honour of his exalted Majesty many days' when Jesus walked amongst men and they 'beheld his glory'. The Kingdom of God was among them (Matthew 12:28), and some received of his fulness, grace for grace. There was 'wine of the kingdom (margin) in abundance according to the bounty of the king', but no one was compelled to drink - only those who were

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thirsty came (John 7:37-39). So there is no point our arguing with other Christians about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. When once they are thirsty they will discover that drinking of the Spirit is distinct from being converted. The vessels being diverse one from another, we should testify to the fact of our baptism in the Spirit rather than magnifying the details of how it happened.

Jehovah's Old Covenant wife, natural Israel, like Vashti refused to come to his banquet of grace, and so had her 'royal estate' confiscated. 'The kingdom of God (was) taken away from (her) and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof' (Matthew 21:43; 22:8-9). Glory to God that this invitation could now come to our unworthy ears: 'Come unto me and drink abundantly'.

A NEW APPOINTMENT chapter 2

Adopted

'Esther... had neither father nor mother, and... Mordecai took her for his own daughter.' Praise God, we were not left as 'Orphans' either (John 14:17-18 margin), for 'the Spirit of adoption' (Romans 8:15) assures our spirits that we are children of God. What a privilege! And ever since that thrilling moment when he first gave us that 'witness' he has kept vigil over us every day while we are purified 'by the washing of the water with the word' (Ephesians 5:26-27). The end he has in view is a corporate Bride who has no trace of the acne pimples of immaturity or the wrinkled lines of age.

Loved

Not only did Esther find favour in everyone's eyes at court, but she was loved of the king. Here

lies a clue as to her success in later days. We, too, must revel in the fact that the Lord loves us with an unchanging Calvary love if we are to enter confidently into the calling of the intercessor. If you would be 'praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God' (Jude 20-21).

Purified

Myrrh played a primary part in her purification. This gum, used to embalm Jesus' body (John 19:39) aptly represents the subjective work of the cross in the believer's life, severing him from his natural self-centred, independent, soulish ways.

Silent

Mordecai had instructed her to keep her nationality secret. Similarly, Paul and his missionary party were 'forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the Word in Asia' (Acts 16:6,7), 'and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.' We too, must observe the restraint of the Spirit if we are to become mature intercessors. Maybe this lesson is more easily learnt in Communist and Muslim lands, but here in the West we are always tempted to blurt out sacred secrets in newsletters and magazine reports. And like Paul we must resist the urge to move by mere natural sympathy into every needy situation, even though whole provinces have not heard the gospel. When committed to the ministry of prayer we must not be cluttered up with good works that are not of the Holy Spirit's prompting.

Informed

Mordecai supplied her with vital information that her natural senses had not been able to tell her. Gifts of discernment, knowledge and wisdom, are

precious tools of the Spirit, not for the entertainment of 'pentecostal' groups, but to put us in possession of key facts about immediate enemy activity against the kingdom of God. Such knowledge was later to have important repercussions at a crucial hour in her legal business with the king (Chapter 6). A 'handful' of necessary characteristics: loved, adopted, purified, silent, informed.

THE ENEMY'S SCHEME chapter 3

Four years after Esther was crowned (2:16; compare 3:7), a dastardly plot was hatched behind the scenes of which she was unaware. In this chapter there is depicted for us a 'handful' of the adversary's characteristics.

Desirous of worship

As Lucifer originally held supreme command in God's universe (Ezekiel 28:13-14; Isaiah 14:12-13), so here Haman was given the highest government post in the world wide kingdom. The enemy longs for worship; he even asked Jesus to give him reverence. Both of the end-time books, Daniel and Revelation, tell us that Satan's last grand schemes will be with the view to securing universal homage. Revelation 13:15-17; 'As many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their forehead; and that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast, or the number of his name.' Also the story of the fiery furnace in Daniel 3 is a clear description of end-time pressures on people to worship the devil, (the word 'worship' occurs ten times). God's eye is upon those conscientious objectors represented

by Mordecai, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and he will vindicate them.

We cannot afford to be careless at this point, and suppose that the devil only gets worship during the Black Mass of the Satanists' mystic ritual. There are many subtle ways by which he achieves his objective. Human appetites can give him his wishes, for some make a god of their belly (Philippians 3:19). On the other hand, ascetism, (a feature of Buddhism) is 'will worship' (Colossians 2:23). And mammon's attractive glitter captures others. To whom am I really yielding my body and mind? To the world's dazzling image, or to the living God? The three Hebrews in Babylon's civil service 'yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.' (Daniel 3:28). 'Present your bodies... be not fashioned according to this age: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind ... which is your spiritual worship'. (Romans 12:1-2 margin).

In his ultimate world wide sway Satan will aim to make everyone conform. We had better practice being NON-conformists in simple matters, such as diet, (Daniel 1:8-21), lest by compromising a little here and a little there we find it impossible to change course in that hour of trial.

The Holy Ghost will never bow to the devil; nor will a Spirit filled saint give in to 'the world', 'for the Spirit lusteth against the flesh'. Then, 'Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the flesh.'

Full of wrath

This description of Haman in 3:5 parallels the 'great wrath' that the devil will manifest at the end (Revelation 12:12).

Superstitious

Haman's use of the occult practise of the throwing of the dice to determine the date for the extermination of the Jewish race reminds us of Hitler's recourse to soothsayers and of fatal blunders he made in the War on the strength of such spiritistic advice even against the rational counsel of his aides.

Under control

Haman was given the go-ahead by the Sovereign to do as he pleased with the Jews. Almost instinctively we think of the divine permission afforded Satan to molest Job. According to James 5:7-11, the story of that man of God is an end-time message. Just as Satan had to ask to have Peter for sifting, so John tells us that it will be granted to the final world governor 'to make war with the saints and to overcome them' (Revelation 13:7), while all the mass of mankind 'that dwell on the earth shall worship him' ('out of every tribe and people and tongue and nation').

The opposer

The reason which Haman gave for his desired genocide of the Jewish nation was that this people, dispersed through every province of the king's dominion, had laws 'diverse from those of every people'. And it is for this same reason that saints through the centuries have 'suffered as Christians' because the laws of God's kingdom are a violation of the course of nature and of the religious laws of men. Sometimes missionaries have been accosted for healing in the Name of Jesus without official medical credentials. Let us beware of being so much at home in the routine laws of the universe that we seem awkward strangers to the supernatural.

ural laws of the kingdom, namely, 'the law of faith', 'the law of the Spirit of life', 'the law of liberty'; such laws as 'the other cheek' and 'the second mile'.

AROUSSED & ADJUSTED chapter 4

In these next two chapters we are presented with yet another 'handful' of features, the five essentials in 'limbering-up' for the fight.

Given the burden

Mordecai was deeply grieved over the enemy's intentions. But Esther considered his dressing in sackcloth as 'infra-dig'. At times 'proper' congregations have registered similar shock when someone started to weep with a spiritual burden. But soon Mordecai had communicated his concern to her. In Romans 8:22, 23, 26 we read of the Spirit's groaning within the spirit of the intercessor. Paul and Epaphras knew this Holy Ghost burden when praying for the Colossian converts: 'I labour also, striving (Greek-AGONIZO) according to his working, which worketh in me in power' (Colossians 1:29 margin); 'always striving (same Greek word) for you in his prayers, with much labour' (Colossians 4:12, 13).

Willing to die

Mordecai impressed upon her the urgency of the hour. Even if she failed to fulfil her calling, God would certainly send relief and deliverance to his people from elsewhere - but she herself would lose out woefully. However, she dare not rush into the throne-room in a neurotic frenzy. She must weigh up the whole matter quietly for three days and three nights, the very period that Jesus' body lay in the tomb. 'If I perish, I perish' were appropriate words. It is imperative that we come to the end of ourselves

before we can begin to exert influence in prayer. Moses and Paul (Exodus 32:32; Romans 9:3) took the needs of people so seriously that they were prepared to die for them. Unless the last generation of overcomers 'loved not their lives (Greek-PSUCHE-soul or natural longings) unto the death', they could not defeat the fierce onslaughts of the adversary (Revelation 12:11).

Come together

Corporate fasting played a strategic role. Jehoshaphat had applied this principle with real success (2 Chronicles 20:3,4), and that first post-Pentecost revival resulted from the church's praying together (Acts 4:23-31). There is a need in this generation for spiritual leaders to summon God's people to pray and fast together. Those Jews were already off their food, but now they assembled to fast with a determined purpose.



ACTION...IN SLOW MOTION chapter 5

Serene

Now, and not before, she was ready to 'draw near to the throne'. Had she stood there biting her finger-nails, with her knees knocking through fear, that despot would have ordered her execution there and then. But her peaceful deportment made her very attractive in the eyes of the king. In all she made only five requests over the period of several weeks. The first and second were invitations to her sovereign to her banquet table: before ever she lodged her plea for her doomed people. What majestic bearing! So few Christians ever seem to enter into rest from all soulful busy-ness and panic. Oh, that we might so relax in him that our King might say: 'Thou hast ravished my heart with one look of thine eyes' (Song of Solomon 4:9 margin); nay, that we might crucify every anxious thought

that we compel him to protest: 'Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me' (Song of Solomon 6:5).

Haman was invited to the banquets too, although we are told that the first banquet was prepared for the king - 'him' not 'them'. Of course, he had to be in on the second feast to hear his death-sentence in answer to the queen's third prayer. At first Haman thought everything was going his way, just as Satan must think when the saints are 'wasting' time in adoring the Lord instead of praying and witnessing, to use Judas Iscariot's reasoning (John 12:4,5).

Feasting the King

For God's sake we must not let our so-called 'Revival Prayer Meetings' become heavy and legal and devoid of praise. We can afford to be prodigal in the time we give to singing the Lord's praises, when it is in the Spirit. As a result the supplication will be free-flowing and living.

Hear a parable: A certain businessman went abroad for some weeks. As soon as he returns home he greets his wife with cries of: 'Do this and get that... sew on this button and find that driving licence'. But later he discovers that the tasks are still undone, half done or reluctantly done. But had he on arrival given his spouse due attention, ex-tolling her beauty and praising her industry and diligence, would he not have had all his pressing chores attended to, some even without asking?... Agreed, the Lord does not resemble the housewife wanting to be 'battered up'; but, rather, we can learn from the wrong approach of the businessman!

In Chapter 1 the king was offering his wine; now

he is receiving the wine of his queen.

A SEASON OF REFRESHING chapter 6

Just in time

The king's insomnia gave occasion for the previous 'word of knowledge' of Mordecai to be recalled. Mordecai received belated public recognition because of this.

Winds of change

We live in such a time of 'Renewal'. The Holy Spirit is openly talked about and honoured in a living way even in very traditional and fashionable historic churches. But this is not the visitation of God for which we long. Esther's intercession had not yet got into gear; her people were still under threat of extermination. But already Haman had begun to fall.

THE OVERCOMER MOVES IN chapter 7

Carte Blanche

Queen Esther had been given a *carte blanche*, and now she strikes at the roots of the evil problem. 'What is thy request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be performed.' This reflects those golden promises of Jesus in John 14:13, 14; 15:7; 16:23 - blank cheques for prayer: 'Whatsoever ye shall ask... If ye shall ask anything... Ask whatever ye will... If ye shall ask anything'. The only limits that are set - indeed, the only limits that need to be set - are that the suppliant abides in Christ and His Words, and that he asks according to Jesus' Name (i.e. His true nature and authority).

At a conference in Cornwall in November 1966, Dr. Derek Prince recounted an incident from his missionary spell in Kenya that followed the pattern of Esther's methods with very far reaching results.

In 1960 with only two years to go to independence, refugee missionaries were arriving from Congo reporting the terrifying aftermath of that country's Independence. Much prayer was being offered by prayer-groups in many areas in Kenya. The Princes had been enjoying a week of fellowship with two hundred native believers. On this last evening they had a four hour meeting, the last two hours of which were a season of extreme liberty in worship under an unusual anointing of the Spirit. The heavens were open! Suddenly the Spirit of God prompted him to tell them not to squander this blessed anointing, but to pray for their country. As he moved to the platform his wife tugged his coat-tail to whisper in his ear the identical message. Calling them to order he announced the mind of the Lord, then led them in an intercessory prayer, voicing on their behalf a heart-cry for Heaven's mercy on Kenya. During this united prayer a Kenyan brother saw a vision which he presently described to the whole assembly. A black man of an ugly countenance had been riding straight at him on a red horse, followed by other sinister negro characters on red mounts; but as the prayer prevailed this entire army was deflected to the North, riding out of the picture. Within a short time it was discovered that the Communists had planned a take-over of all Africa, using Zanzibar in the East as their base for operations. Kenya was their first target and considerable quantities of arms had been successfully smuggled into government buildings and from there secretly distributed through the land. This unearthing of their plot prevented the coup from taking place. In October 1966 Dr. Prince had read a supplement of The Times devoted to the new African nations which rated Kenya as by far the most stable, economically, socially and politically.

It had been just one prayer, but it had been on target. And this had sprung out of a protracted period of uninhibited ministry to the Lord.

Go on—ask!

We deplored dreary 'prayer-meetings' in chapter five, but surely gay 'glory-meetings' are not the alternatives. By that we mean when the whole time is spent in joyous abandonment, with a sprinkling of exhortive testimonies that have the 'we-are-rich -and-increased-with-good-and-have-need-of-nothing' ring about them. The devil's teeth may well water at a perpetual banquet, but he is terrified when we start asking for his overthrow (James 4:7). We cannot afford to squander the anointing 'at such a time as this'.

The deceiver cast down

When Esther moved in, Haman was cast out. In a day yet to come the Manchild - that end-time company of overcomers - will be suddenly snatched across the heavens into the throne (Revelation 12:5). At that point the world's deceiver, 'that old serpent', will be permanently evicted from the presence of the King of Kings (Revelation 12:9). Never again will he present himself among the sons of God on heaven's high court days (as in Job 1:6; 2:1). But we have plenty of scope for practice in the meantime. Lesser victories, such as the expelling of a few evil spirits from one human life, causes the devil's kingdom to totter. When the seventy disciples rejoiced that even the demons were subject to them in Jesus' name, the Lord described to them how it appeared to him: 'I beheld Satan falling as lightning from Heaven.' (Luke 10:17-18). He could not have been referring to Satan's personal expulsion from heaven, for that was still to come. And it is unlikely that he had in mind

Lucifer's initial loss of his high post in God's government when he was 'cast... as profane out of the mountain of God', (Ezekiel 28:16); it would be too much of an anti-climax for him to follow their testimony - 'We have just CAST OUT demons', with the observation - 'Long ago I (merely) SAW Satan fall'. The more obvious explanation would be: 'I was watching Satan's kingdom diminishing as you were removing some of his troops'. 'I saw Jones crash disastrously just now', we might say of a chess-player who has just lost several valuable pieces, even although he personally still sits securely on his high stool!

Let us not lose heart in this prayer warfare. As we confidently persist we can systematically drive out the foe, for 'this kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer'. Calvary is our confidence; for everything opposed to the kingdom has gone to the tree, (see Esther 2:23, 7:10, 9:13-14).

REVIVAL chapter 8

The overcomer had established her position firmly at the throne and now gave Mordecai the pre-eminent place. Where the Spirit is Lord, there is liberty.

Be prepared

As Esther again took her place in the presence of the king, she presented request number four asking for a new deal for her people. The Jews had endured nine weeks of suspense (3:12 compare 8:9) before the hopeful provisions of this new decree were read in their hearing. It granted them a three fold right. They were not to strike out in defence of their homes and loved ones straight away. Rather they were to 'be ready'. They were permitted to 'gather themselves together' and then to 'save

themselves from that crooked generation'. We in our turn, have been exhorted not to forsake 'the assembling of ourselves together... as (we) see the day drawing nigh'.

You'll be repaid

The third point in the edict was the promise of compensation. The bigger the opponent, the greater would be the spoil. This gospel promise is woven into the warp and woof of all Scripture. Even in Moses' law this grand provision was made. If a man had robbed his neighbour or defamed him by falsehood, in presenting his trespass offering to the Lord he was also to restore the loss in full and add a twenty per cent interest to the wronged neighbour. Why then should we complain about the way in which people misuse us? Through the cross of Jesus - sufficient sacrifice! - We shall have full restoration and more. If God allowed Satan to rob Job of everything, he also saw to it that Job ended with twice as much as he had at first. Glory! If the grimmest days of tribulation are still to come, so also are the greatest spoils. Why should the theologians want to have us secretly raptured away before that period? For we cannot be reimbursed unless first we are robbed!

A glorious awakening

That great day of warfare was still some months ahead, and the threat of the enemy's stored up vengeance was still a reality, when every province felt the impact of a glorious revival. Such a season is always a time of gladness and feasting because the Holy Ghost is openly exalted. In a summer issue of 'The Herald of His Coming' in 1967, George Davis reported a visit he had paid to Swansea in 1905 to see first-hand the meetings conducted by Evan Roberts. There was deep con-

viction in the services, yet he described Roberts' manner as being 'as happy as a Yankee at a ball game'.

The fear of God gripped multitudes of Gentile hearts throughout the world and they turned to the true God, as converts to Judaism, 'many became Jews'. They thereby exposed themselves to the coming persecution from the Hamanites. This was also the order of the day in that time of special visitation of God in the early days of the church at Jerusalem, when God dramatically judges hypocritical Ananias and his deceptive wife. 'Great fear came upon... all that heard these things... no man durst join himself to them; and the believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women'. We, too, expect to see such an outcome to our prayers.

TAKING THE KINGDOM chapter 9 Satan never quits

When Joshua entered the land the fear of Jehovah fell on the Canaanites, (Joshua 2:11; 9:24; etc.). And now, once more, the enemies of Israel lost their nerve (9:1-3). Yet, although they knew their defeat was sure, these foes of the Jews were so blinded that 75,810 of them battled on regardless, and were totally overthrown. These 'tares' were now ripe for judgement. So it will be at the end of the age.

All things are now ready

Immediately following the battle days were appointed for feasts of celebration of the victory. And it will be just prior to 'the marriage supper of the Lamb' and 'the great supper of God' that the Lord Jesus will return with the army of heaven and join his army on earth to conclusively defeat

the adversaries, (see Revelation 19:9, 14, 15, and compare Matthew 22:1-14). Meanwhile he delays until 'his wife hath made herself ready'.

There were three phases in his prayer for the converts of the apostles (John 17:20-26): a. 'That they may all be one' (verse 21) - not merely uniformity through tradition or practice of doctrine, but - 'even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee', a unity of life. b. 'That they may be perfected (or matured) into one' (verse 23) - that will be through the operation of the fivefold ministries of Ephesians 4:11-14 and all spiritual gifts, 1 Corinthians 12:8-11 - 'that the world may know'... So it has to be openly recognizable to outsiders. c. Only after that will the rapture of the Church take place: 'I will that, where I am, they also may be with me' (verse 24).

In the light of the facts it is interesting that this ninth chapter of Esther makes repeated reference to the gathering together of the people of God against that eventful day. Isaiah promises (Isaiah 52:8) that Zion's watchman 'shall see, eye to eye, when the Lord returneth to Zion.'

Finish them off

Esther's fifth and final request was for the utter extermination of Haman's household. This is in the same spirit that will prevail among the members of the Lord's government when they shall begin to judge together with him in the kingdom age, (see Revelation 19:19-20:4; and compare Matthew 13:41-43). They will have no truck with rebellion!

Now we can celebrate

The invitation to rejoice and hold festival was issued jointly by Mordecai and Esther, compare

'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us' (Acts 15:28). The invitation to the final feast is similarly proffered in Revelation 22:17; The Spirit and the Bride say, Come'.

GOD'S MAN IS GLORIFIED chapter 10

This brief chapter is an apt analogy of the setting up of the kingdom upon the physical return of Jesus (here represented by Mordecai). In all things he must have the pre-eminence, because of his loving care for 'the multitude of his brethren', including the new proselytes of the recent awakening (8:17), seeking their good and speaking peace to them all. Glory! What a prospect. 'Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end... from henceforth even for ever'. Hallelujah!

IT'S ALL IN HAND—

BUT IT WON'T JUST HAPPEN!

End-time events are all in God's sovereign control, especially 'that day and hour' of his Son's return. But we have seen that it is by their intercession that the saints are to take the kingdom, and bring the King back. Because it is to be in God's appointed time we are enabled to REST. But we are not encouraged to take our EASE, for the programme of the Almighty will not work out by itself. We need the Spirit of God to lay upon us the challenge of the hour.

In his sovereign planning God had his deliverer to hand for forty years; but Moses was not commissioned to release the Hebrew slaves until they began to sigh and groan to him (Exodus 2:23-25, 3:7-8), after some generations of 'grinning and bearing it'.

Also God's intercessory instrument was already

installed at the Persian Court several years; but she was not called to function in this capacity until the Jews began to fast together with real concern about their plight.

He also has his 'Manchild' hidden within the body of the Church; but this 'avant gard' will only be released for their end-time task when the woman travails as the Dragon breathes his fury against her.

We are praying for latter rain in its end-time season (Zechariah 10:1). Let us recognise that this outpouring is needful to ripen the grain. In the current season of renewal many are being 'sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise' (Ephesians 1:13). Let us kneel alongside Paul to pray that those very people may be strengthened by the Spirit so that they become robust enough to apprehend the boundless resources of Christ and 'be filled unto ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD' (Ephesians 3:14-19) and 'we all attain unto the unity of the faith... to mature manhood (R.S.V.)... to... FULLNESS' (Ephesians 4:13).



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