

Fulness

Great salvation: *David Lillie*

Moses and Elijah: *David Matthews*

Eternal judgement: *John Noble*

The question why? *Roger Forster*

Resurrection: *Graham Perrins*

First fruits: *Charles Schmitt*

The Millenium: *John MacLauchlan*



Fulness Volume 19.

Editor Graham Perrins
Sub Editor Mick Inkpen
Coordinator Maurice Smith

Designed at Our House
by Mick Inkpen and Nick Butterworth
5 Erroll Road Romford Essex

All enquiries to Mike Blount
47 Copse Road Cobham Surrey England.

Articles are copyright to Fulness

Printed in England by HPH Print Limited

Subscription rates

Prices given below are inclusive of post and packing.

Single copies 62p each.

Back issues (up to and including volume 14)
42p each. Volume 15 onwards 62p each.

1 copy quarterly (total 4): £2.48 per annum.

5 copies quarterly (total 20): £11.30 per annum.

Bulk orders of 11 copies or more will be invoiced.

Special rates for bookshops.

Prices above apply to the UK and anywhere
in the world except USA and Canada:

1 copy quarterly (total 4): \$6.00 per annum.

Please send international money order for
foreign subscriptions.

Editorial

The end of the age

The perfecting of God's purposes for creation, for man and his salvation, are embraced theologically in the word eschatology, which means 'discourse about the last things'. The word covers such matters as the resurrection, the second coming of Christ, the millenium, judgment, and the new heaven and earth.

The christian believes that history is not self-evolving but God-controlled, not aimless but moving towards an appointed destiny. Fascism and Communism have both borrowed from this concept of an eschatology of history for, as John A. T. Robinson has pointed out, 'men have found that they cannot live without an eschatology'.

There is a growing awareness in the Church of the importance of this subject. If we are living in the 'end-times' then we need an adequate 'end-time theology'. Where the Church fails to think deeply the cults have a hey-day. Here we have an area filled with dry orthodoxy, dogmatic speculation and divisive extremism.

Our understanding of eschatology reflects upon our understanding of God himself and of his relationship to man. The God of the ultimate is the God of the now. The future is not unconnected with the present. Judgments at the end relate to our present response to God. Blessings to come are linked with our present work and obedience. The 'last things', therefore, cannot be divorced from our present encounter with God. We must not view them as abstract ideas. The second coming is a hope that purifies now. We are already tasting the powers of the age to come. The finale is never distant but always 'at hand', 'right at the door'.

The study of eschatology is relevant. Future goals shape our present thought and action. God's goals are intended to grip our inner man, to motivate our daily living, to lift us over the barriers of disappointment and despair.

C. H. Dodd invented the phrase 'realised eschatology'. He emphasised that the powers of the age to come had already invaded this age in the person of Christ. In declaring that the kingdom of God had come, 'the eschaton has moved from the future to the present, from the sphere of expectation into that of realised experience'.

The finality of God's purposes are fully expressed in Jesus. In this sense, in Christ, the end has come. All that God has for man — his ultimate restoration and blessing — has been realised in Christ. But what is true of Christ's ministry on earth, and more particularly of his present reign in glory, has yet to be made true in the Church. Our 'eschaton' is still future; we, along with creation, await a point in time when what has already been fulfilled in Christ becomes ultimate reality for us.

This awareness of the end-time already having found expression in Christ and already making its impact and influence upon the here and now, makes our anticipation of the end, not a fearful staring into the unknown, but rather the eager anticipation of seeing him in full glory and of being made like him.

Graham Perrins

Great salvation

In the ministry of Jesus and the apostles, God's love for sinners and the forgiveness he offers through Christ was always in evidence, but the main burden of their message was the Kingdom of God, particularly in the sense of a coming universal recognition of Christ as king and of submission to his authority. To give attention only to the subjective side of salvation (i.e. what Christ has done for us sinners), is to ignore the fact that the message he preached was the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Attempts have been made to distinguish between the gospel which Jesus preached and that preached by Paul and the other apostles after Pentecost. But the distinction does not stand up to scripture. There are, for example, four references in the last few chapters of the Acts to the preaching of 'the gospel of the Kingdom', including one in the very last verse of the book, which tells us that in his lodging in Rome Paul 'lived . . . two whole years . . . preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ'.

Even the meaning of the word salvation has commonly been standardised in line with this subjective view. It may be true that when Jude in his short epistle referred to our common salvation he had in mind the basic truth of justification by faith. But if the passages in the New Testament where the word 'salvation' appears are studied with care, it will be found that often much more than this is implied. Take, as an important example, the question in Hebrews 2:3: 'How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?' For years I assumed that this was a

by David Lillie

warning to the ungodly, and as a young man I even carried a gospel banner bearing this text. For in my soundly evangelical upbringing I do not recall ever hearing this and other similar warning passages being applied to the people of God in this age. Are we not 'safe and secure from all alarm'?

Yet the day came when, on making a closer study of the Hebrew epistle, I saw that in its entirety it is addressed to 'holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call' (Heb 1:3). Justification is foundational. But what is in view in the opening chapters of Hebrews is the coming Kingdom of God, and the 'great salvation' of Hebrews 2:3 is the prospect of involvement of the 'many sons' in that Kingdom. This Kingdom vision is consistently sustained throughout the whole epistle; and there are also repeated warnings that disobedience and unbelief can disqualify heirs of salvation from entering into the promised inheritance.

This, of course, is what our Lord taught, and some expositors have dared to put that part of his teaching behind a dispensational fence so that it is applied only to the Jews and not to the Church. However, what are they to make of Peter's exhortation to 'make sure your calling and election . . . thus there will be richly provided for you entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ', which is undoubtedly addressed to Christians in this age? (See 2 Peter 1:10-11 Amplified Version.) And of this from Paul's second letter to Timothy: 'Therefore I endure everything for the

elect's sake, that they may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory. The saying is true: If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself' (2 Tim 2:10-13).

These conditional 'ifs' remain an integral part of the gospel of the Kingdom as preached by the Lord and by the apostles both before and after Pentecost. And the neglect of Hebrews 2:3 which is to bring a just retribution is the failure to pay attention to those things which God has spoken to us in his son in these last days, relative to his coming kingdom and to his requirements of those who are to be partakers therein.

There is, of course, a real sense in which the Kingdom is intended to be operational now, for the Lord spoke of the Kingdom of God as being in the midst of you (Luke 17:21). Yet he also taught his disciples to pray, 'Thy kingdom come; thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth.' There is no contradiction here, for the Greek word *basileia*, translated *kingdom* in our English New Testament, has as its primary meaning the authority with which a particular person is invested, and only in a secondary sense is it related to the people or territory over which he rules.

While Jesus was on earth he revealed in a unique way the moral and spiritual authority which he possessed as given him by the Father, yet at that time he made no attempt to assert his authority against the political pretensions of Rome. Indeed, with scant regard to the political or social consequences,



he openly taught his disciples the laws of his kingdom, and proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and sent them forth to proclaim the same message. The world at large might still be saying, 'We have no king but Caesar' (and Jesus himself taught obedience to the temporal authorities and that men should render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's), but Jesus never lost sight of his divinely appointed destiny as the King of kings, and was content to await his appointed time.

That time could not come until first he had offered up his sinless human life as an offering for the redemption of fallen man. And when from the darkness that surrounded the hill of Calvary he cried, not in despair but in triumph, 'It is finished,' all that remained was for his Father to answer from heaven; and this he did when on the third day he raised his son from the dead. Therefore, as Paul triumphantly announces, 'God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.' (Phil 2:9-11). Already in heaven he has been crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, but as yet we do not see everything in subjection to him (Heb 2:8, 9). Satan has not yet admitted defeat; in fact he is still with increasing determination making his bid for the throne of the universe.

The epicentre of this great conflict is this world, and essentially it is a conflict between Christ and Satan. On Satan's side there is a well-organised force made up of

principalities and powers, world rulers of this present darkness, and spiritual hosts in the heavenly places. (See Ephesians 6:12). If he had so chosen, the Lord could have taken on this confederation of darkness single-handed; but his choice was otherwise. We need to remember that when he told his disciples, 'I will build my Church,' this announcement was given in direct connection with this endtime conflict. For he continues: 'and the powers of death shall not prevail against it [i.e. his Church]. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' (Matt 16:18, 19).

His church is in fact the instrument he created and chose for his use in this conflict. The conflict is in progress now, and has yet to reach its climax. This is no time for the saints of God to opt out on the pretext of ignorance and weakness! It is for such people that the warnings of Hebrews are intended. The great salvation of Hebrews 2:3 is the high calling of participation with Christ in his kingdom; it is a prize to be gained by those who are faithfully involved in this conflict for the throne 'for Christ's sake'.

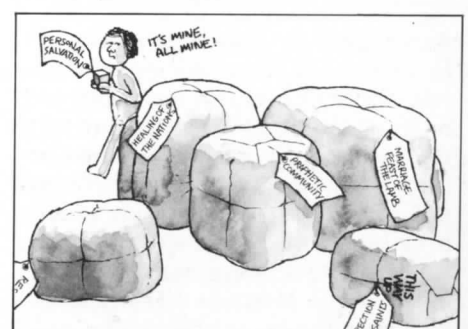
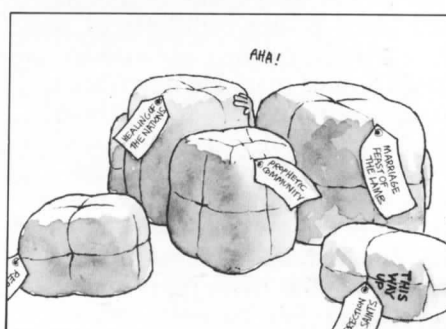
All this is opened up in that great church epistle to the Ephesians. In chapter one Paul tells those to whom he writes that his prayer for them is that they might be enlightened, that they might know, 'the hope to which he [the Father] called you, and what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints' (verse 18). That prayer culminates in the disclosure that Christ in resurrection has become

'head over all things for the Church which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all'. Paul brings together 'this age' and 'the age to come' in what he earlier referred to as 'the plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things in earth' (1:10).

This is the great hope which is to sustain the saints in the age-long conflict with the powers of darkness. And although Paul is fully aware of the limitations of their pre-glorified state, there is no hint anywhere that these limitations impose on them the inevitability of defeat or even of stalemate in the conflict. Quite the contrary! Victory is assumed, and with such a glorious prospect in view they are spoken of as being already blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (1:3). Paul's prayer continues: 'and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead.' (1:19, 20).

No wonder he ends this first doctrinal part of the epistle with the triumphant doxology, 'Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations' (3:20, 21).

Failure is possible, of course, or the warnings of Hebrews and other scriptures would be pointless. But victory is the norm, provided we set our sights on Christ and his coming kingdom and, to use J. B. Phillips' apt phrase, 'give up our small ambitions'.



Yet we dare not underestimate the ferocity of Satan's resistance. He hates the Church with everything he has got, and is literally hell-bent for its destruction, for he knows it stands in the way of the fulfilment of his avowed intention to set his throne on high. Paul was keenly alive to this, and in the closing section of the Ephesian epistle he exhorts the saints: 'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, and the powers, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places' (See 6:10-18).

It is seemingly paradoxical that following this exhortation highlighting the formidable nature of the conflict in which the Church is now engaged, there is the concluding benediction in the words, 'Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.' Peace in the midst of such a conflict? That is what Paul says. Did not the Lord himself promise his peace to those who loved him and kept his commandments? The fact is that it is those who opt out of the conflict for the throne of the universe who are often the most troubled and distressed.

Before concluding I must draw attention to the fact that Ephesians is not addressed to Christians individually, although many who have had to stand on their own have taken strength from this wonderful book. But essentially Ephesians is addressed to the whole Church as *one body*. It is the address of a Commanding Officer to his chosen soldiers who, at his direction and under his command, are collectively engaged in mortal combat with the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. We are, in fact, brought back to our Lord's great declaration, 'I will build my Church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it.'

As we look at what is generally known as the Church limping its way through history, we might well be in doubt as to the outcome of the struggle. Can this really be the Church to which our Lord referred? Surely not! For the Church which is to smash down the gate of Hades is not an institution; it is Christ's living Body. It is not a crumbling ruin, but the most powerful

organism in the whole universe; and it will yet be recognised as such by the watching world, and by the satanic hosts.

Encouragingly, over the past two or three hundred years there has been a gradual process of recovery among the people of God as to the lost consciousness of the Body. And more recently there has been an increasing awareness that this is totally relevant in relation to God's plans for his Kingdom. The message in Ephesians, and indeed the dominant theme throughout the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation, is the good news of the Kingdom addressed to one, indivisible, integrated community of saints whose only mark of identity is that they are the Body of Christ. That Body is now emerging from the obscurity imposed on it by traditional forms and attitudes which are incongruous to its nature.

This process is not to be identified with the 'reformation' of the institutional structures of Christendom as such; nor by their ecumenical endeavours, however commendable these may be. For the Body of Christ is not to be identified with any one, or some, or all of these institutions, although many of its living members are still found within them. Nor will it be entrusted to any worldwide confederation of apostles or prophets, though the apostolic and prophetic ministries will doubtless emerge to fulfil their part along with other ministries which the Lord has given to his Church. The whole operation is entirely in the hands of the one Head, and hence it will be carried through without the endless complications and confusion and frustration which marks the efforts of men as they struggle to bring about the unity of the Church.

Does the vision which the apostle John had on the isle of Patmos, as recorded in Revelation 1-3, throw some light on this great endtime event? John heard a voice behind him, and when he turned to see who it was who spoke to him he saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the candlesticks one like a son of man. He describes in considerable detail the appearance and clothing of this person, who so enthralled him that he falls at his feet as one dead. It is to be noted that it is the seven golden candlesticks which he first sees; and later he is told that these represent the seven churches. As seven is the number of completion, and gold is

the symbol of divinity, these golden candlesticks together represent the united testimony of divinely appointed local churches. And as John looks at them, the one like a son of man appears in view in the midst of them, for it is by this light that they shine. John is told, 'Write what you see, what is, and what is to take place hereafter.'

This John does; and in the following two chapters 'what is' is faithfully recorded, as the messages to the seven churches in Asia are set out one by one. It is not an impressive picture, and in many respects suggests the course of Church history down the centuries to the present time. 'What is to take place hereafter' is suggested in the messages to the overcomers (those who conquer) with which each of these letters is concluded. In the last of these, appended to the letter to Laodicea, the Lord's promise to the overcomer is, 'I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat with my Father on his throne.'

In the emergence of the Body of Christ, the Lord has to speak initially to the ones and the twos; but what he is after ultimately, is the fulfilment of John's vision of the seven golden candlesticks and of the one like a son of man who is in the midst of them. This is the Church of the overcomers who are to sit with him on the throne of the universe.

Throughout the New Testament Abraham is referred to as the great prototype of the man of faith. Jesus himself said, 'Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it, and was glad.' When all around were preoccupied with the things of this earth, Abraham broke through dispensational barriers to walk with his Lord in Kingdom life. He is the great biblical prototype of the man of faith. In Hebrews 6 the holy brethren are exhorted to be imitators of those like him who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.

What a thrill to realise that what Abraham was as one lonely pioneer, his spiritual progeny, who are declared to be innumerable as the stars of the heaven, are to be collectively. They are to be an overcoming company who will share the throne of the universe with Christ the King! This is 'great salvation' indeed! Who would wish to settle for anything less than this?

If life in the Kingdom of God presents you with practical problems that you feel could be aired on this page, please write to Gerald Coates and John Noble at 47 Copse Road, Cobham, Surrey.

Q&A

John Noble and Gerald Coates

Q. I have gained the impression from various recipes and odd articles in Fulness that you are quite deeply involved in the wholefood scene. Do all the contributors subscribe to this current trend?

A. The short answer to this question is 'no'. I think we can safely say that the majority of writers and ministries who are involved with *Fulness* believe in sensible eating which simply means a varied diet with moderation in mind. One or two folk take the thing more seriously, but even then we have observed that they are quite happy to eat what is set before them and could not be called fanatics. On our travels we have noticed in the more affluent societies that many people are becoming over-sensitive in the area of diet and health, spending considerable sums of money and time. In many cases, whilst avoiding the problems which occur with wrong eating habits, they seem to suffer from all kinds of fears and neuroses which are not of God. Our great concern as Christians should be to learn to eat sensibly.

Q. I have observed in some house-groups that, with the emphasis on relationships, people have neglected their relationship with God. In some cases it seems that folk are welcomed into fellowship without any real experience of salvation. Is this general throughout such groups?

A. At times we need almost to over-emphasise things for a period in order for them to take their rightful place. Most people in touch with God are very much aware that he has been saying that we need to get

it together at family and friendship level. The evangelical emphasis on the personal relationship with Jesus has led to an individualism which not only undercuts community life, but ironically undermines the personal relationship itself. Such individualism prevents us opening up to each other for correction with the result that often our relationship with God remains shallow.

As to whether it is a general pattern that people who have no experience of God are being welcomed into groups, we can only share our own experience. It seems to us that this has happened far more in denominational churches with a leaning towards a social gospel, than it has in the so-called charismatic or housechurch groups, where much more emphasis is placed on subjective experience.

Having said all that we are very much aware of the need for a deepening acknowledgement of the lordship of Christ throughout the Church, and that the renewal movement must go deeper yet if we are to see God's purposes accomplished.

Q. There is a great deal of talk about the kingdom of God coming to earth, and the inference is that a company of people will reach perfection before the return of Christ. Do you subscribe to this teaching, and do you really think that we can be better than past generations like those of Wesley and the early church?

A. There are many passages of scripture, particularly among the prophets and in the book of Revelation, that indicate a great awakening in the earth before the

return of Jesus. They lead us to expect that the triumph of Jesus on the cross was such that it has delivered us not only from the guilt of sin, but also from its power.

The Lord's prayer in John 17 was that the glory which he had should be seen in an earthly people, and that the kingdom should be established in unity on the earth. We can believe that that prayer will be answered.

As to whether we can be better than any other generation, the answer is clearly 'no'. God only accepts one standard, and that is perfection—'to be perfect even as I am perfect'—and through repentance any deficit in our lives is made up by his grace. What we can do is build on the foundation that other generations have left us and with their help take the work of God forward allowing grace to do its perfect work.

If we really see that it started with grace and finishes with grace, then we can believe that Jesus' death and resurrection provides us with a hope for a harvest of which he was the first-fruit.

In the last chapter in the first epistle of Corinthians we see that even the last enemy, which is death, will be overcome, not only by Jesus, but by people who are relying on him. They 'shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye', and those who have died in past generations will be raised with them. What the Lord Jesus accomplished on the cross is far more excessive than we have ever comprehended.

Moses & Elijah

by David Matthews

It is an amazing fact that we seem to have an inbuilt capacity to hear only what we have always heard. Nowhere is this more true than in the realm of scripture reading. How many of us have read the account of the transfiguration only ever to hear that 'they saw no man save Jesus only'. We are like children with a well worn story, so thrilled with its beginning and so secure in a well-known ending that the body of the story has become somewhat hazy.

Certainly in the moving drama of Christ's transfiguration, we have the most thrilling of all endings. Christ, aglow with glory, stands on the mountain, the law, the prophets and the apostles all faded into obscurity. Jesus himself remains as the complete centre of all vision, full of his father's glory, the very centre of the universe. All of history, past, present and future, for one moment in time is encapsulated on a small hill in a remote Roman province. How good it would be to stay there. Peter's reaction exactly! It is good to know that we will all live happily ever after, or words to that effect, but there is a middle part to our story.

If we read the transfiguration as a prophetic manifestation rather than a strange isolated manifestation of power, we have before us a beau-

tiful description of Christ and his Church.

As we look at it more closely we can identify our own location in the narrative. 'When they were fully awake they saw his glory.' Here we are precisely, just about coming-to from our deep sleep of spiritual poverty. 'He is Lord' has taken on more meaning than it ever had before. It seems as if every fibre of our being is alive with the fact of Christ's glory. No longer can we be content with dull mouthing of credal truth. We have awakened—the Church that seemed in slumber has now risen from its knees, and dry bones are responding with the fruit of new birth! What an explosion there has been of dance, drama and exuberant joy, all in harmonious affirmation of Peter's words at Pentecost. 'This same Jesus God has glorified.' Peter's clarity is becoming ours. It is all too self evident—risen, ascended, glorified!

It is good to remember that it was not the disciples' awakening that triggered the transfiguration, and it is not our awareness of Christ's glory that has glorified him. No, we have simply awakened to the central reality of all existence. We also have beheld his glory and have with all the saints, past and present, foreseen the consummation of all things. How good it is to be alive to God as he breaks into our history and our generation.

Jesus was not alone. In all this celestial glory there were two men standing with him. With these two men Christ discussed his crucifixion and subsequent ascension in glory.

We are not told what they actually said, but it is recorded that Moses and Elijah stood on the mount in complete harmony and fellowship with Jesus. How did the disciples know their identity? Why Moses and Elijah? Why not David the King and Abraham the father of the nation?

I have known this portion of scripture for many years and yet it is only recently that I have asked the simple question, why Moses and Elijah? They are there because they represent the foundational ministries in Israel's history, Moses representing the law, the government of God, and Elijah the prophets, the voice and heart of God. Moreover they pre-figure the two ministries essential to the Church in every generation moving on in glory to the mountain of God.

In the Old Testament it is said of both that in the last days they will be restored. (e.g. Deut 18 and Mal 4). Also in Revelation 11 the 'two witnesses' have power to perform the two signs always associated with Moses and Elijah, namely to cause drought and turn

waters into blood. So Moses and Elijah not only represent the Old Covenant, but they also foreshadow the New. In them we see the healthy tension between order and freedom, structure and life, law and grace. Not only do they represent the foundational ministries necessary to the progress of the Church; they are also types of God's dealings with every believer. Moses caring for the sheep completely identified with them; Elijah with his 'thus says the Lord' which precludes all excuses. Apostolic and prophetic ministry to the whole body is simply a reflection of the same dealing of God in every individual believer. If we can get a hold of that it will save the whole subject from becoming impersonal. God's foundation for the Church is essentially the same as that for every member. There are times when I need a shepherd to lift me and carry me along, there are other times when I think I need a shepherd and God sends a prophet! He sees that I need to be disturbed rather than consoled.

We all of course have our preferences and there are some who feel quite at home with a man calling down fire from heaven. We mistake Elijah's strength as self-confidence and strong will and Moses' meekness as uncertainty and weakness. If these two ministries are vital to the whole body and to each member then we must also see that a mature man will know how to move in both these areas in dealing with himself and with others. This will save us from the either/or position and I hope eventually from the 'I am of Paul, I am Cephas' mentality which has divided and is dividing the body of Christ.

Moses and Elijah have some things that are common and basic to all ministry. For example, both stood on the 'mountain of God' and both 'saw God'. Yet out of that common and foundational experience of God their respective ministries develop distinct dissimilarities that are all part of the plan of God. Both men receive the 'word of the Lord'. Elijah immediately delivers the goods because for him the vital importance is to communicate to men the heart and mind of God. Moses, on the other hand, hesitates; even with the burning bush he is not too sure. He is meticulous about knowing the basis of his authority and is not convinced even by a direct miracle that he has any right to speak to God's Israel.

(There are not too many Moses' around today!)

Elijah on the other hand, rather than waiting for a sign, produces one. He calls down fire from heaven onto a water sodden sacrifice which catches alight and is consumed! Undoubtedly Elijah is the picture of confidence. He seemingly turns a nation back to God and then slays all the false prophets of Baal. Haven't all of us, if only in our dreams, seen ourselves there on the mountain like Elijah, scattering the powers of darkness?

Meanwhile, back at the burning bush, Moses is still dithering. Presented with the opportunity of a lifetime, a burning bush, the audible presence of God, he still doesn't want to become a leader. For forty years he has been a mere shepherd; the headiness of youth long forgotten; that memorable day when he killed the Egyptian (was it accidental?) for the sake of his fellow Israelites only to be confronted by two of them shortly afterwards with the stinging rebuke, 'Who made you a ruler over us?' That caused him to run. He had learnt to adjust. At least sheep didn't talk back. By now he had forgotten how to communicate. Forty years with only his own thoughts had tempered the zeal of youthful enthusiasm. But during those years God had moulded into Moses a rugged meekness that, once moved in the right direction, would not give way, even before the gates of hell. A meekness that one day would walk up a lonely hill and die, in seeming contradiction of all God's promises, because he was so completely identified with the people of God.

Elijah does not seem to have this sense of identification with God's people. He is not only sure that 'he alone is left' as a true remnant, but, what is more astounding, the implications of such a thought don't seem to bother him too much. You get the feeling that if God had made Elijah the same offer as he made to Moses—to wipe out the nation and start all over again with him—Elijah would have said yes. I, for one, am glad that God only makes offers like that to the right people! Time and again we see that the main thrust of Elijah's ministry is to represent God to the people. Whereas Moses represents the people before God.

We are in urgent need of both types of ministry today. And as in their

day, so today 'Moses and Elijah' will have to face opposition and overcome unbelief. Prophets, it seems, do not handle opposition too well. Elijah displays such strength and boldness on the Mount Carmel, but one short threatening note from Jezebel and he runs, scared for his life, and then sits moping, wishing to end it all. We need to see that in our prophets. We and they need to be reminded of their humanity. Somewhere it is reassuring that a man who can call down the fire of God knows what it is to be frightened and insecure. That kind of prophet I can trust. That kind of strength is safe. Recklessness is one of the main signs of a false prophet.

I am not asking for prophetic men who always play it safe (such, I doubt, could ever be the way of a prophet), but rather that their prophetic strength is God-given and not the result of strong self-will. We need communities that will allow the prophet to function in all his powerful diversity both to pull down and to build up. The prophet on the other hand needs a loving community where he in all his apparent weakness is accepted and covered.

Moses on the other hand faced much opposition and yet seemed to find depth of character and strength within himself that he was previously unaware of. He faced opposition from his wife, his elders, Israel and his co-workers. In all of this God vindicated him, and never once do you hear Moses saying, 'I told you so.' How we need men who can hold through with us, men who, knowing that our opposition to them is fleshly and carnal, will not run away and leave us to our own foolish devices. Such men are not arrogant; they are like Moses, manifestly meek (not weak!), men who will and do lay down their lives for the people of God.

If the Church is to grow and function she must learn to accept such wide divergence of ministry. The problem is that all around there are groups who have got themselves into an either/or dilemma, seemingly unable to reconcile the pragmatism of Moses with the charisma of Elijah. God glorified both on the mount of transfiguration and in so doing is saying to us that both are essential to our progress to the mountain of God and the final consummation of all things.



Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take! The clouds ye so much dread Are big with mercy; and shall break In blessings on your head...

John Noble on the subject of eternal judgement

'... And so God's judgment will come upon this generation, as it did upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, with fire and brimstone and burning...' The scene is London's theatreland, with yours truly and his mates on a soap box, trying to save the world. We'd read how Whitfield had done it and how Finney had done it, and now it was our turn, but somehow we couldn't quite get the same results.

Folk did not fall down smitten in numbers, nor was London turned upside down. Oh, occasionally someone signed one of our cards, but we seldom saw them after that, and if we did they usually ended up being a real nuisance, more interested in what they could get out of us than in making Jesus Lord of their lives.

What, then, was wrong with our approach? We certainly didn't lack sincerity, nor did we lack bible knowledge; but these were not enough. Having become a christian, I quickly imbibed the views of those with whom I associated, and saw eternal judgment only as God's means of eradicating the wicked and everything associated with them. But I could not justify my theology with what I felt God was really like. Of course I chose to ignore a number of scriptures that didn't quite fit into my textual line of argument, and to question or to be unsure of things was almost as awful as murder or adultery.

These days I'm not quite so sure of my theological position and there are things I don't understand, but I'm more secure than ever because I know the Lord a lot better and I feel I have touched his heart on the matter. However, let's begin at the beginning.

Judgment is something to do with growing up in the christian faith; it's to do with pressing on to maturity. Let me take you to an oft quoted passage at the start of Hebrews, chapter 6. 'Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrines of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God, with instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.' The writer here makes it plain that he believes an understanding of these principles is fundamental to going on with God. In earlier verses he indicates that these are 'the milk' which nourishes but eventually, and in God's time, must give place to 'strong meat'.

Many preachers and christian writers refer to this passage and use it to expound, one by one, the principles outlined, but so often we only benefit mentally; all we have grasped is a system of theology. This is not sufficient, for each of these doctrines is an experience. These truths must get into the heart; they must become flesh, an

actual part of our living as well as our thinking.

Repentance from dead works can only truly be said to be laid as a foundation in my life when I am enjoying the fruit of the action. So it is with faith, baptism, laying on of hands and even resurrection. This line of teaching may raise a few questions. Baptism and laying on of hands some would say, is a physical act of obedience, nothing to do with experience, and resurrection is something yet to be felt. Most would probably agree that faith is experiential, but scripture makes clear the fact that our whole foundation must be in life and reality, not merely in theory.

Take baptism for instance. Peter writes, 'Baptism also now saves us...' and those who push baptismal regeneration have a hey-day with this one, but what is more in keeping with scripture, and what was in Peter's mind when he wrote this, was that, through active faith and obedience, baptism will bring faith, a definite experience of salvation. Baptism without experience is like an orange without any juice — something of a disappointment, to say the least. So it is with laying on of hands. Constant applications of hands for baptism in the Spirit or for healing without results produces hardening of the heart and eventually destroys faith. Laying on of hands is not a doctrine to be talked about; it is an action

which, when mingled with faith, produces an experience. Resurrection is the same. Paul's desire was to know him and the power of his resurrection, not only in some final way after death or at the second coming, but beginning now. This pulsating life imparted by the Spirit is at work in resurrection power now, and it will go on working until, in a generation of saints, it breaks the death barrier once and for all. Praise God!

This brings us to eternal judgment, the last of the foundations outlined in the Hebrews 6 passage. It seems that there is something of a progression here, though not necessarily a rigid one. We start with a realisation that our own efforts are futile, and as we receive forgiveness so faith rises in our hearts, and we want to be in on what God is doing. The next natural step is baptism, after which we partake of the Holy Spirit, through laying on of hands, enabling us to live in the power of this new resurrection life. From here on we welcome God's judgment. Our old man, and all that is associated with him, is dead, crucified with Christ. As we continue in this revelation so we grow into mature sons of God, enjoying his blessings and embracing his discipline, knowing that all things work together for good to those who are called by him. 'Well,' you might say, 'It isn't quite as simple as that for most Christians,' and I would agree with you.

Most of us were born under a 'love' gospel. We were told about God's love and it appealed to us. Living in a world of little love we were overjoyed with what appeared to be a boundless ocean of it in God. But no one really made it clear that God's love is a mixture of overwhelming grace and burning truth, and that you can't have one without the other. Sooner or later we meet with this other aspect of God's nature, and most of us 'squeal like stuck pigs'. We are brought to an abrupt halt, as the light dawns that God means what he says about sin and starts his refining work in us.

Of course, other generations have been born under a 'judgment' gospel and have lived their lives in awe of a holy God, never really knowing him as dad (*abba*), a father who is warm and kind, holding us to his breast. Without the full expression of both these qualities the Church will only move at half throttle and will never accomplish

all of God's purposes for her.

Judgment begins at the house of the Lord, not in the heart of London's West End. When I see that his 'judgments are true and righteous altogether', when I understand that the 'law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul' and that the 'fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever', then with tears I can take it to others and warn them to 'flee from the wrath to come'; to escape God's judgment by embracing it; to find life by losing it. All this will be endorsed by my own experience.

The light began to dawn for me some years ago when, dissatisfied, I laid down all my so-called understanding of the subject. 'Lord, teach me what eternal judgment means,' I prayed. My mind rang with hypothetical questions. What will happen to the pygmies? Will the fire be the same intensity for all, or will there be degrees of punishment? How can God look on the wicked burning in hell for ever and ever? etc., etc. Well, I may disappoint you — I still don't have the answer to many of these puzzles. But they're not so important as they were; they've receded into the background since God said in answer to my prayer, 'Let's start with you, son.'

'Let a man examine himself' the scripture says in 1 Corinthians 11 v 28. 'For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves fairly we should not be judged by the Lord; we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world.' Wow! Agreeing with God's assessment of me frees me from condemnation and brings healing to mind and body and may even keep me from dying prematurely.

Judgment appears in a new light now. God's burning truth becomes the antibiotic which purges my body and soul of the virus sin wherever it attacks me. He is dedicated to eradicating it from the earth, leaving it pure and inhabitable, safe and secure for life in eternity, and he's prepared to work on me right now.

Oh that in me the sacred fire Might now begin to glow;
Burn up the dross of base desire,
And make the mountains flow.
Refining fire go through my heart,
Illuminate my soul;

Scatter thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole.

Oh, they understood these things in Wesley's day, then? Yes, many did; certainly he did. It was this that brought conviction to his preaching, sinners to their knees and saints to maturity. So I began to quietly ask God to deal with me in love, to let me know the pain of his purging now, rather than suffer the indignation of his wrath later. We must go through the fire now or then; the choice is ours, but through it we must go.

For some, all but the spirit, which is born of God, will be burned; they'll have nothing to show for their efforts. Their lives will have been lived in self-centredness, in self-protection, holding on to their old ways with little or no fruit in years of christianity. Father, start afresh in me. Start today; I know I can trust you.

So I have begun to find my security in God's continued judgment on my life and in the application of his grace, which constantly makes me acceptable and gives me new strength. The law of the Lord is perfect. This unchanging, unyielding rock-like side of the Lord's character which from the other side of Calvary can look so formidable, is now my tower, my hiding place; I run in and take cover. When the devil points to my failures and weaknesses, I can happily agree with him, knowing that I've nothing to hide from Father — we're working on them together.

But it doesn't end here. If we learn to judge ourselves truly, then we can judge others. Matthew 18 and all the implications of Church discipline can be faced and appreciated. Thus we will move into an ordered kingdom where there is grace and truth fully in operation. We will face our truths together without being hurt unduly, and we will help one another to grow and to live in harmony. Should we, or perhaps I should say, *when* we succeed in this, then we are to judge and rule in the earth and heavens with angelic legions under our command, and with Jesus on the throne, the lamb at the centre of it all. For in him we are not simply given back what Adam lost, but we are elevated to share in his very kinship. He who became a little lower than the angels has taken a human body into the glory so that we can follow and share in his treasures.

I.D.

Bernard Cope puts a face to the name of Roger Davin



The first real conversation I had with Roger Davin was across the lunch table one day last year, when he was in England with his brand new wife, Jane, on what you might call a busman's honeymoon.

Jane had appeared in Roger's life not two years before, when she came to his fellowship to confess her desire for a deeper walk with God through a deeper walk with fellow christians. She knew this was the place for her because she had heard Roger speak at her university. She had liked what she heard. And as a matter of fact she liked what she saw too! Roger did not need long to decide 'Me Davin - you Jane', and since their marriage in 1977 she has been his regular travelling companion.

They returned to England this past summer to minister at the Kingdom Life conference, and the two weeks they were spending afterwards with John and Christine Noble - just across the road from my home - afforded me my opportunity to talk with him again and gather all the details for this ID at the same time.

I wasn't going to stand in his way when Roger himself suggested that we conduct the interview on the golf course. Golf, as I soon learnt, is the most recent addition to a

range of sports that Roger particularly enjoys, along with racket ball (an American version of squash), basketball and American football, all of which he enthuses about, both as spectator and as participant.

It was a particularly warm and sunny September morning when we hauled our clubs from the boot of my car and made for the course. On the first tee, we um'd and ah'd about what form the interview should take. On the second we concentrated on his backswing. On the third and fourth we tended to forget about IDs, but during the next few holes we did at least give it a try. Then around the eighth, by mutual consent, we decided to put the whole subject of interviews right out of our minds and give ourselves to enjoying the scenery, each other's company, and admittedly the golf.

So it was mid-afternoon when two weary Arnold Palmers finally sat down in the living room back at home, to face up to their responsibilities.

Roger grew up in Meadowlands, a small town near Duluth in the north of Minnesota USA. That much I had managed to ask about back on the golf course. As we thrashed about in the undergrowth searching for a lost ball ('Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen'), he had talked of his rural childhood. Then back in the living room, in less fraught circumstances, he explained in detail.

Roger lived with his parents, two brothers and one sister, in a home that had no running water, and which was heated in the very cold winters by wood fires. Not too startling perhaps, but we are talking about the USA in the 1960s. For Roger it meant daily trips carrying buckets of water from the pump at the bottom of the hill; and further trips, up a bigger hill, carrying more buckets of water for the cattle, who downed it in vast quantities with total lack of consideration for the little chap's legs. You will have correctly assumed already that he also got arm and back ache from chopping firewood.

But there were plenty of compensations. The state of Minnesota is aptly described as the 'land of 10,000 lakes', and Roger delighted in the wilderness of wooded countryside that spread for hundreds of square miles around his home - where canoe and paddle

are still the only acceptable means of transportation.

When Roger was sixteen, his father was tragically killed in an industrial accident at work. The new house he had been building with the help of his son was abandoned, and the family bought a caravan home, where at least it was no longer necessary to trudge up and down hills for water, or wear out axes chopping wood.

Just before his father's death Roger had become a christian. Although his parents were unsaved it was christian friends of the family who invited Roger to a Bible camp, where for the first time he heard the gospel preached 'in a way that reached me'. He suddenly became acutely aware of his own guilt before a holy God, and just as suddenly saw that Jesus had died to remove it. As he bowed to him as Lord, he had a very real experience of God, when for one thing he spoke in tongues without ever having heard that such a thing existed.

Back home Roger was alone in his faith. There were no other christians in the local community, and after a while it became a struggle for the young convert to hold on to what had been so dramatically real to him at the beginning.

Without the benefits of fellowship, his mind began to turn to other things. In 1968 Roger finished high school, and with no plans to go to college he embarked experimentally on a career in computers at the local branch of a large bank. But when he won a scholarship to study music and then drama at junior college, computers were forgotten, and he concentrated on studying the trumpet and music theory, whilst also developing an enthusiasm for playing the guitar.

During college days the Lord searched him out again. Roger was thrilled to rediscover his first love, especially as he now had christian friends around him who shared his feelings. Yet the Lord began to reveal His purposes to Roger in terms which his friends did not understand. In a country where Bible schools and seminaries abound, and where college courses are the prerequisite of just about every conceivable career, they were reluctant to agree with this young student who seemed so convinced that a 'man of God' need not have undergone the formal training.

After the two year course at junior college Roger went on to Minneapolis University to complete his studies for a degree. But he dropped out one year short of graduation, because although he loved drama, so much of what was being propagated in the contemporary theatre was at variance with his beliefs.

By leaving college Roger made himself automatically eligible for military service, and he was immediately drafted. But being registered as a conscientious objector he was ineligible by law for combat duty in Vietnam, and was, incidentally, quite outspoken in his opposition to that war. Instead he was posted to serve for two years at a mission in Duluth, the largest inland port in the world, on the shores of Lake Superior. Here he worked amongst alcoholics and down-and-outs, and particularly enjoyed getting involved with the young people in the area.

In fact he began to feel increasingly that Duluth was to be his home, as in addition to his government work at the mission, the Lord was providing opportunities for him to minister in local schools, colleges and coffee houses. He sang and shared with whoever came to listen, and sometimes dared to 'punch them between the eyes', telling them that they really did not know what 'love' was, in spite of all the flower power of the day.

By the time Roger had fulfilled his obligation to the government, his roots were down; not so much in the city of Duluth as in the city of God in Duluth, springing up around him there. Though as yet only a metaphoric handful, those few people were precious to Roger. He had fathered them all through the early days of their faith; they were the first people he had been able to envision with the truth and life he had discovered in the face of opposition and misunderstanding whilst at college some years before. Those exciting but frustrating experiences now seemed well worthwhile.

The group grew in stature, and they grew slowly but surely in numbers, to the present round one hundred. It is quite evident that Roger finds particular satisfaction in the knowledge that they grew without losing any of their original personality, purpose or perspective. Rather, in the process all three characteristics were enhanced.

As men matured under his covering,

he was in turn able to be covered by them — in areas of his life that had previously remained untouched. As we strode down one fairway on the you-know-where, Roger had emphasised that the last few years, since these developments have taken place, have been the most significant and exciting of his life.

With Roger's background in music and drama, it is hardly surprising that one string to the fellowship's bow is its creativity, and capacity for presenting theatrical productions in a variety of forms — serious plays, simple Greek drama, humour, interviews, parodies, satires, readings and concerts, to repeat no more than the selection that Roger effortlessly reeled off to me as examples. A recent production, which was received with particular enthusiasm by the local community, was a parody of the film 'Rocky'. And they have a small orchestra too.

Roger's own brand of dramatics seems to find its way into his ministry occasionally. One minute you are listening to a thirty-year-old American, and the next perhaps it's an ageing English sage well past his

allotted three score and ten, or maybe a tiny tot just starting school. And his background trumpet playing at meetings, in the course of worship, blessed me no end every time I heard it.

As the fellowship in Duluth has developed, particularly in the realm of community life, and as other leaders have come to the fore, Roger has felt freer to travel around the States in response to invitations to speak, and in the pursuit of deeper relationships with other church leaders and their flocks. He now pays regular visits to six such groups who look to him for covering, and to many more where he is a frequent 'visiting speaker'. Half of his time is now spent in itinerant ministry.

When I asked Roger how he liked to relax, sure enough it was trumpet playing that got a mention, and he enjoys reading too. Given half a chance I think he would love to get back in a canoe on any one of those ten thousand lakes. I find the idea quite appealing myself; but that would be the least of my reasons for wishing that Duluth, Minnesota was not quite so far away.



THE QUESTION WHY?



BY ROGER FORSTER

I wonder if you have ever invaded the shrine of a modern scientific laboratory. It is most inspiring to see the mysterious signs, symbols and sacred utensils, and to be initiated into the deep secrets of science by a white-coated priest. You may ask innumerable questions concerning the complex knowledge which promises enlightenment to all its devotees; about the ultimate meaning of all things.

Why does the computer whirr, buzz and flash lights? Why does this atom react when bombarded by particles? Why does the genetic code change when an ovum is fertilized under certain conditions? Satisfactory answers ensue. Every effect about which we ask has a cause which our priestly scientists can explain.

Noticing an old battered kettle, steaming away over a bunsen burner, we ask, 'And why is that kettle boiling?' To which we receive the illuminating reply, 'Gas and air are mixing together and combustion is taking place. Energy is released in the form of heat which is transferred to the water causing its molecules to move faster as the temperature rises. At a crucial point, 100 degrees centigrade to be exact, a change of state occurs and the resulting steam, requiring more room, pushes the lid off the kettle and so the kettle is boiling.'

'Oh,' you reply, 'I only wanted to know why the kettle is boiling.' Encouraged by the response our scientific guide waxes into a fascinating description of the technological processes by which the gas is converted from the chance collocations of chemicals which we call coal and so conveyed to the laboratory. 'Furthermore,' he continues, 'the coal is extracted from the earth after some vast diluvian forest has sunk into its carboniferous coffin thousands of centuries earlier. Well, you did

want to know why the kettle was boiling, didn't you?'

Feeling that your lecture has left you a little dry, you turn to the brown-overalled individual who is standing in the corner of the laboratory, leaning on a broom. He is the man who really runs the place. 'Can you tell me why the kettle is boiling?' 'Of course, mate,' he replies, 'I want a cup of tea, don't I?'

This is an equally good answer, if you happen to be thirsty. It is not concerned with cause and effect but rather with purpose, an area outside the province of science. Only the person who put the kettle on can tell why he did so. Only God can tell us why he made the universe and why we are in it. This is revelation, not investigation.

Now, says Paul, God has done this. The eternal purpose, God's purpose for the creation, is found in Christ. When we come to Christ, owning his Lordship, we intuitively know that we have found the answer, but often we are unable to explain what we sense inside ourselves. We know Christ is the eternal answer, for we are aware that our hearts, into which he has placed eternity, are now completed. We are aware that we have arrived in Christ. We are conscious of direction for the first time, but it takes a life-time to verbalise its content.

The whole Ephesian epistle describes this purpose of God in seven ways.

The aspect of sonship

Chapter 1: 4, 5. The word translated

'purpose' is made up from two Greek words, meaning 'beautiful' and 'thought'. God's beautiful thought was also his greatest ever, for when contemplating the creation of man he did not decide to make him into a psychedelic angel. Nor did he construct a supersonic beast. God pre-destined man to be conformed to the image of his Son, to bear his own character.

The highest end that any creature could have, is to give his creator pleasure as does a son to a father just by being his son. The greatest pleasure is to give pleasure to the highest (Ps. 149:4), that is, God. Every day that we give our Father our presence and our voice ('Let me see your face, let me hear your voice', Song of Solomon 2:14), we are fulfilling the eternal purpose. Every action of Jesus moulding our character draws out the Father's admiration till 'That's my boy' sounds around us, as it did on Jesus' baptismal day. Sin has destroyed this father and son relationship, and much was required to restore it. The obedient death of God's son was the price.

The fulness of God

Chapter 1:23. While Jesus was on earth we saw expressed in a human body 'the fulness of the Godhead'. There was nothing missing in this revelation of the Godhead, but its mode of expression was restricted to a young, male, Jewish, first-century dimension. Now Christ dwells in the body of his Church. Christ is now experienced in male and female bodies, in young and old people, in grey hair and wrinkled faces, in white, black, yellow and brown skins. In rice fields and factories the fulness of the personality of our God may now be seen. No wonder we get excited about seeing each other; we see something of the beauty of our Lord, even if it is yet imperfect.

God's workmanship

Chapter 2:10. The third aspect of the purpose of our creation is that we should be God's workmanship. Any work for a Greek tended to be a work of art, and indeed this Greek word for workmanship sounds like 'poem'. That the human race should express God's beauty was the original intention. Sin permeates our actions and relationships with so much ugliness that even our 'rightness' appears repellent and our 'goodness' unattractive. Holiness is beautiful, not cold and austere. The holy garments of the high priests were said to be of beauty and glory since they were festooned with gold, full of colours and carrying fruit and bells on their fringes. Crowning all was the inscription, 'Holiness to the Lord'. A right action has more to it than being right. In front of me on my desk is a home made card with a picture of a cross and matchstick men, together with a verse. It came with a small gift of money. It took time, thought and care worth more than the money; the card was not necessary but made the gift beautiful. I remember a friend taking the wrapper off some chocolate that he had been given and finding a bank note slipped under the paper just at the moment he needed it for his fare. That was beautiful giving and made a poem out of the prosaic.

The temple: God's home

Chapter 2:21, 22. God has always wanted to be at home with man. When he walked with Adam in the garden I'm sure they spoke of building a home for God, of making the garden of Eden into a garden-city. At any rate this is what appears in Revelation at the end of the age, where it repeats that God's tabernacle is with men. This intention of God is already recovered in the Church where God's Spirit is making his presence intensely known. If you look at my home and see footprints on the mantelpiece and coffee cups under the chairs you get an impression of what sort of person I am. So when people come to God's home, the people of God, they get impressions of what God is like.

But there is more to it than this. God's home is also a temple, a place where he is worshipped. The Lord is enthroned upon the praises of Israel. As we worship the Lord, his presence is revealed and intensified. A home is a place of

love; so is a temple, for worship is simply making love to the Almighty. He is great, he is like Jesus; he washes feet, he gives friendship to fishermen, he says, 'Forgive, they know not what they do.' So God is there; we bow in the presence of his majesty. We don't know if we are in heaven or on earth, and it hardly matters, for we shall worship and love him for ever in the new heaven and the new earth.

God's manifest wisdom

Chapter 3: 10, 11. God's wisdom is manifold, many coloured we could say. Part of God's purpose is to reveal through us his wisdom, what and how he thinks, what his judgments and discernments are. Consequently, sometimes God is doing something in me which I don't understand; it's too big to grasp fully. The prophets experienced this in their preaching and writing. They didn't fully understand what they prophesied, even though they inquired into it. They were serving later generations.

Hosea must have felt confused when his wife whom God had told him to marry played the adulteress, and left him with three children of which at least the third was not his son. Nevertheless, I can see him sitting lonely at home, saying to himself, 'We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.' One day God tells him to go to the slave market and buy back his wife who is being sold off at half price. He does so and loves her till she becomes a complete woman. Then God says, 'Go and tell my people that they have treated me as your wife treated you. You are just the man, in fact the only one, who can preach it, because you yourself are the message.'

When Christ returns and takes up his peculiar possession, amongst them Hosea, and calls them his jewels, he will get special pleasure out of each separate colour and shape, according to the specific wisdom that each of our lives has expressed. We will be the many-coloured jewels representing this many-coloured wisdom.

The body in action

Chapter 4:16. John Wesley said, 'God does nothing but by prayer.' In other words it's co-operative, this kingdom business! Paul says we are co-workers. We are Christ's body

for the extension of his mission in the world. And even in the age to come Christ will be glorified in the saints and marvelled at in all who have believed. What adventure does he wish to accomplish through you? Keep two thousand children alive by prayer, like George Muller? Legislate for forty years for the freedom of the slaves, as did Wilberforce? Run labour exchanges, orphanages, write educational and spiritual books, found schools and evangelize Great Britain as no one before or since, as did John Wesley? Sing songs to God, as did David and thousands of modern day counterparts? What is the adventure God will do through you?

And what a way he does it! A flow of love through the different members of his body, members perhaps even unknown to each other working together to demonstrate that he is at work over and above it all! I love the encouragement in Paul's statement that we are knit together. Knitting is just lots of holes held together by wool. Christ is the wool that joins us; we are nothing more than holes. Everything is of Christ. Well, we never were very much anyway! This is the best way to experience body life.

The spotless bride

Chapter 5:25-27. God is love, and man's greatest faculty is to be able to love; above all, to love him and enjoy being loved by him. Love is the biggest time-waster there has ever been, so we will need eternity for it, contemplating the beautiful vision of Christ in his glory and being lost in the atonement. Not as eastern mysticism, which denies self-consciousness, as when a drop of water falls into the ocean and is absorbed, but rather as when the husband and wife are one flesh, never more distinctly two, and conscious of that fact in loving. Old-age wrinkles are going, adolescent spots are vanishing. There will be a beautiful bride for his forthcoming wedding. Come, Lord, quickly; we want to be at the wedding. It is a strange bride who has to be dragged to the altar, a stranger bridegroom who would drag her there unwilling. Certainly Jesus won't; he waits for our cry of anticipation, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' He waits for our holy kingdom living which hastens the day of the kingdom, and looks for our obedience to preach the gospel to all the world.

Maurice Smith Dripping on

'It's the wedding on Saturday, Eileen.' She said she knew it was, and what was I really getting at? 'I think we ought to stay to the end this time,' I suggested. Without more ado Eileen agreed, and for the first time since we became christians we planned not to leave a secular wedding at the end of the meal and before the revelling began.

It wasn't quite as easy as that in practice. Over the coffee the bridegroom's father lightly commented, 'You'll be off soon then, Maurice?' I had obviously established a reputation for getting well clear before anything too dreadful happened. (I shudder to think what they usually said about me after I had taken my polite leave; but for years I had consoled myself with the thought that I was giving a good christian witness). The host was a bit startled, but somehow faintly pleased, when I stated that I had decided to stay on for a while.

We left the restaurant and retired upstairs to the ballroom. It was darker than I had anticipated and the dim light was diffused in several different colours. Furthermore, the illuminations did not remain stationary for long, but somehow managed to swirl and dip, circling the room and giving the whole place a sense of movement and drama. The noise was tumultuous to my tender eardrums and I remember thinking, 'So this is a disco; however did I get here?'

My conditioned mind was an easy target for textual bombardment: 'Men loved darkness rather than light . . .'; 'Friendship with the world is enmity with God' . . . oh, my goodness!

I advanced cautiously to the bar, ordered drinks and then retreated to the comparative safety of a corner table. Under cover of semi-darkness I sat and prayed.

It went something like this: 'Lord, help. These lights! Help me to cope, Lord.'

'Don't tell me lies,' the Lord said. 'You like the lights.'

Now that's a little below the belt, I thought. I felt that, as a christian, I wasn't supposed to enjoy the lights flashing on and off, so I told him I didn't; but for him to come back and confront me with the truth — well I mean . . .

'Now just relax; be yourself, Maurice, and trust your inner life (the way you tell others to). The Holy Spirit is living in you, remember, and he is not grieved yet. Opt out of all those arbitrary standards now, and start living.' 'Okay. Well, here goes, but I hope it works as well in here as it does at the prayer meeting!'

'Hello, who are you?' The question belonged to a girl of about ten or eleven years old; she was a rather more plump edition of Lena Zavaroni — and (if I've got to be honest) Lena has always been a favourite of mine since that first appearance on *Opportunity Knocks*. 'My name is Maurice and I'm the uncle of the bridegroom.' She went on to tell me about her dad and her mum, her cat and her dog and even her budgerigar. Time began to pass by and dancers began to sway somewhere out in the middle distance. I was grateful that Lena kept talking. She was giving my wife and myself a temporary haven of shelter behind her huge personality.

I saw her father beckon to me with a friendly wave and I joined him at his table. He wanted to know if his daughter was being a nuisance. 'Oh no,' I assured him. 'She is helping me immensely.' The thought of his daughter helping anyone obviously had a profound effect upon him, for he leaned attentively forward as I continued by telling him that I felt like a fish out of water and that I hadn't visited a function like this for years.

'Where on earth have you been hiding yourself, then? What do you do for a living? Don't you have



business parties?' The questions poured in.

'I'm a preacher,' I said rather lamely.

'Well, you certainly don't look like one,' he said appreciatively. 'What do you preach about?'

I couldn't believe it. Here was the man warmly and genuinely asking me to tell him the good news. I moved in cautiously but easily; it seemed so natural to be sitting there talking about the personal relationship that I enjoyed with Jesus and relating how the well-known carpenter was one and the same with God the creator of the very world in which we were sitting down together. He was 'strangely moved', as the old methodists used to say. I didn't push him through on a decision right then, but I knew he'd never be the same again. He thanked me sincerely and said how good it was to be able to consider these things in such an open manner. 'I'm going to carefully consider what you've said — and, by the way, if my daughter makes herself a nuisance send her straight back here.'

I returned to my corner table and noticed that the place was livening up considerably. Young people were vigorously moving their shoulders, ribcages, hips and anything else that felt in sympathy with the pulsating rhythm of the recorded rock band.

Lena advanced once again and I prepared to escape into dialogue as quickly as possible; far gone were the days when Eileen and I were first on the floor at the Hornsey Town Hall. 'Christians don't dance, Maurice,' was one of the first chains put on me when I became a christian.

Lena had other ideas, however; she had apparently run out of domestic conversation.

'Why don't you dance?' she demanded. 'You can't sit there all evening.'

That's just what I had intended to do, although one insubordinate foot was thoroughly enjoying itself out of sight beneath the table. 'Come on, you'll like it!' and there she was, dragging at my arm whilst I endeavoured to sit firm and shrug it all off calmly.

I totally underestimated her tenacity, and I could see that if I didn't yield, then I was very soon going to become the centre of attraction. I eased to the very edge of the floor hoping that the swirling lights might not reach that far, but no such luck! Someone from the centre ring, where thirty or more young people were girating furiously, shouted across to me: 'Hey, you can do this easily; come on in here . . .' (They'd obviously spotted that I was a cool mover!).

Well, there I was, rocking with the best of them and wondering why on earth I'd made so much fuss about it all. I was singing at the top of my voice, like so many others, and I was still in touch with the Lord. I burst forth into tongues and praised him in the dance. The Holy Spirit kept rising within me and I felt ready for anything. I soon got it.

'Excuse me,' insisted a blunt Scottish brogue as a middle-aged man pushed into the circle alongside of me. 'About how old are you?'

I went a little cold. 'I've been found out,' I thought, and kept moving as nonchalantly as possible whilst breathlessly answering, 'About fifty,' as though I'd said twenty-five.

As we kept dancing, my new acquaintance managed to communicate that he'd been watching me enjoying myself and had decided that if I could join in the fun so could he. He had come down to London from Glasgow and was preparing to sit it out as usual for a few hours and be a spectator. 'You must have lots of experience to be able to join in so easily. I

suppose you mix a lot in business and . . .' Yes, you've guessed it, he asked me what my occupation was.

The timing could not have been better, for as we rolled and lurched, I was able to pump my arm vertically heavenwards and, with a clenched fist and a laughing countenance, shout in time with the music, 'I'm a minister!' Just like the samaritans who dodged the issue by declaring that their fathers worshipped on the mountain, so my friend desperately tried to avoid a close encounter of any kind by assuring me that he was a good presbyterian and regularly went to church on Sundays. I was at it again, this time under the coloured lights, surrounded by young people, openly shouting out that I was not talking about going to a place of worship, but actually worshipping Jesus all the time in everything we do, even dancing. Ears were straining to hear, but I was not preaching sideways at anyone, just living.

Hours later I realised that the Lord had engineered it all. I wouldn't be surprised if he hadn't even given little Lena a shove in my direction. So, thank you, Lord, for another lesson begun. Thank you, Eileen, for coming, and thank you, irrepressible Lena, whom I may never meet again. I've learned that, providing I am moving within the measure of my faith and in peace with God, there are no places that are exempt from the influence of men filled with his spirit.

It was Watchman Nee who gave such profound advice to a fellow Chinaman, when he was asked if he was allowed to go to the cinema now that he was a christian. Nine out of ten people I know would have given him a 'yes' or a 'no', according to their theology. There was no such legalism in Nee. 'I should ask the Lord if he's happy to go,' he said, 'and if he's going I should go along with him; otherwise I'd stay at home.'



Resurrection

Graham Perrins

'We look for the resurrection of the dead' is the clear statement of the Nicene Creed. Putting it in a more personal way the Apostles Creed says, 'I believe in the resurrection.' At the heart of our faith both individually and corporately lies this dominating confession.

Earlier than both these credal statements we have the testimony of Paul, who saw belief in the resurrection as our strength and courage in the face of death. 'Now we don't want you, my brothers, to be in any doubt about those who fall asleep in death, or to grieve over them like men who have no hope.

After all, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again from death, then we can believe that God will just as surely bring with Jesus all who are asleep in him . . . So by all means use this message to encourage one another' (1 Thess 4:13-18).

John saw the hope of the resurrection as a powerful motivating force for godly living. 'We don't know what we shall become in the future. We only know that, if reality were to break through, we should reflect his likeness, for we should see him

as he really is! Everyone who has at heart a hope like that keeps himself pure, for he knows how pure Christ is' (1 John 3:2, 3).

A contemporary writer, C. F. Evans, affirms, 'To a greater extent than it is anything else, christianity, at least the christianity of the New Testament, is a religion of resurrection.'

From the apostles to our own day the resurrection has been the hope sustaining and quickening the Church's faith. God may well have acted decisively in the history of mankind in the person of Christ,

but the finale has yet to be seen. Towering on the sky line of the future is the ultimate expression of God's redemptive power. The sons of God will be manifested in resurrection bodies. Then everything will be set free. The cry, 'It is finished,' which began at the cross will ring with glorious finality through every nook and cranny in the universe. The song of freedom will proclaim that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

Till that time the people of God have a deep yearning that this corruption should put on incorruption and this mortality put on immortality. Nature itself echoes this longing. The eruptive cry of the mountains, the heaving swell of the seas, the aching groan of the wind-torn branch, all bear witness to a protracted travail. We have no passive hope. Man and nature unite, not only in awaiting this day, but in sharing the pain of childbirth that will bring it to pass.

Such an intense belief in the miraculous intervention of God at the end of this age is no idle daydream floated on the clouds of man's fancy. It arises directly out of the contact of the early disciples with the risen Christ himself. Belief in the resurrection is rooted in history. Christ himself has risen from the dead.

The apostles were no out of work theologians; they were down to earth disciples. Their lives had been shattered by Christ's death, and all their human aspirations had died with him. Then they encountered their risen Lord. It was his resurrection that brought the broken jigsaw of life together again.

The first consequence of knowing that Jesus had risen from the dead, and had been seen by many witnesses, was undoubtedly one of unbounded joy. A greater understanding was to follow. It was probably not until the day of Pentecost that the full significance of Christ's resurrection for their own lives and for mankind in general began to grip them fully. The outpouring of the Spirit was a proof that Christ had risen. 'Christ is the man Jesus, whom God raised up, a fact of which all of us are eye-witnesses! He has been raised to the right hand of God; he has received from the Father and poured out upon us the promised Holy Spirit; that is what you may now see and hear!' (Acts 2:31-33).

What makes Pentecost even more meaningful is that the Spirit outpoured was the same Spirit who had raised Christ from the dead. In a real sense Pentecost was the extension of the resurrection of Christ. There was now a direct relationship between the risen Christ and his people. The Spirit of resurrection had been outpoured and was now continuing his ministry to the body of Christ.

The new birth itself is an expression of resurrection life invading our sphere of death. 'In his great mercy we men have been born again into a life full of hope, through Christ's rising again from the dead!' (1 Pet 1:3). 'Flesh gives birth to flesh and spirit gives birth to spirit . . . The wind blows where it likes; you can hear the sound of it, but you have no idea where it comes from and where it goes. Nor can you tell how a man is born by the wind of the Spirit' (John 3:6-8).

The Holy Spirit, then, is the agent in our own new birth into resurrection life, and in Ephesians 1 this initiating experience is described as a sealing with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance. The word 'pledge' describes a legal concept from the language of commerce. It involves a payment made by which the person concerned undertakes to make a further payment to the recipient. It is a down payment given as security for the rest.

What that down payment is designed to secure is more fully described in 2 Corinthians, where Paul specifically links the pledge with God's purpose to clothe us with our resurrection body. 'He has given us the living guarantee (pledge) of the Spirit in our hearts . . . In this present frame we sigh with deep longing for the heavenly house, for we do not want to face utter nakedness when death destroys our present dwelling — these bodies of ours. So long as we are clothed in this temporary dwelling we have a painful longing, not because we want to get rid of these 'clothes' but because we want to know the full cover of the permanent house that will be ours. We want our transitory life to be absorbed into the life that is eternal. Now the power that has planned this experience from us is God, and he has given us his Spirit as a guarantee (pledge) of its truth' (1 Cor 1:22 and 5:1-5).

Another definition of our experience of the Spirit is seen in the word 'firstfruits'. 'It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste (firstfruits) of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies' (Romans 8:23).

Here again the context is of an eager waiting for our adoption as sons, which is expressed in the redemption of the body. The Spirit within us is both earnest and foretaste of the resurrection to come. The glories of that final day explode into the here and now. Miracles and healings are significant invasions that herald the ultimate victory of life over death.

Our continuing walk in Christ is to be an increasing exploration of resurrection life. Paul prays in Ephesians 1 that we may know how 'tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God. That power is the same divine energy which was demonstrated in Christ when he raised him from the dead'. No wonder in Philippians 3 he can declare that his constant ambition was to know Christ and the power shown by his resurrection. To the Romans he reveals that 'once the Spirit of him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead lives within you he will by that same Spirit quicken your mortal bodies', i.e. 'bring to your whole being new strength and vitality' (Romans 8:11).

Three times in the Old Testament the coming upon men of the Holy Spirit is described as 'being clothed' (Judges 6:34, 1 Chron 12:18, 2 Chron 24:20). It is the same idea that Jesus uses to describe the experience of Pentecost. 'You will be clothed with power from on high' (Luke 24:29).

All these were preliminary anticipations of the greater outpouring of the Spirit that will end this present age. Then there will be such a clothing of the saints with the Spirit of power that not only will our mortal bodies be quickened but they will be entirely transformed and fashioned after his glorious body (Phil 3:21).

Such is our hope and such is the power of his Spirit towards us.

Scripture quotations are from J. B. Phillips

FIRST FRUITS

Charles Schmitt

The end-time intent of God for this present age sounds as the clearest and loudest note in all the prophetic scriptures. And what is even more exciting is the realisation that this dominant theme of divine truth is spoken directly into our generation.

John was caught up in the Spirit and caused to stand in the day of the Lord. From that place in the prophetic scheme of things, he turns to look just behind him to view the final generation that will appear just before the dawning of the day of the Lord. And into that generation he speaks the prophetic word, 'The time is at hand'. To them he speaks of things 'which must shortly take place'.

One of John's most exciting end-time predictions to this generation concerns God's final harvest in the earth, to be gathered up in the last days. For these are to be days of unlimited spiritual outpouring. What has barely begun in this present charismatic visitation, will yet be climaxed just ahead of us in the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit ever seen upon the face of all the earth. And the full fruits of this harvest are displayed for us in Revelation chapter 7. Here we see the whole corporate man, comprising both Jew and Gentile, gloriously joined together 'in one body', as 'one new man' 'from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues', coming up out of the great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. What an inspiring vision!

In yet a further vision of this final

divine purpose, John sees the 'first fruits' brought forth upon the earth—first fruits of the plenteous harvest that is just about to be reaped. In Revelation chapter 14, John describes this spearhead of men and women as 'first fruits to God and to the Lamb', peculiarly set apart for the Lord himself. First fruits are an interesting happening. Somehow first fruits heed the call to perfection first. And as such they are the prophetic forerunners, the spearhead of the harvest that is to follow. There is within first fruits an early response to God's call to maturity. And by the ancient command of God they are peculiarly his!

The first fruits of Revelation chapter 14 are 'the ones who have not been defiled with women; they are virgins'. In other words, in them is found a complete intolerance of fallen Babylon in all her forms—social, political, economic and spiritual. Here are virgin hearts before God.

In his prophetic writings, John uses two Greek present participles that give us the twin keys to the prompt obedience and radical abandon of this holy band. Here are men and women who are 'the ones continually following the Lamb wherever he goes'. Such men and women are continually dogging the footsteps of Jesus; they have pure and passionate hearts wholly given over to the pursuit of him! Here is 'first love' at its best! Little wonder that these are endowed first to respond to the Lord's call to perfection. Our

greatest danger even in the christian life is the loss of that prompt virgin love, that heart passion, that spring-time affection for Jesus. Without it we are but the dull, listless, lifeless lot of average christendom. The Lord's spirit longs to kindle that holy, passionate fire ever within our breasts.

The second key to 'first fruits' is found in the descriptive phrase, 'they are blameless'. Literally 'they are without stain'. In Revelation 22:14 we are given the reason for this purity. 'Blessed are those who are continually washing their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life . . .' Here lies the key to a continual virgin love for Jesus: a continual brokenness before him and a continual washing in his precious blood. How easy is it for us to gather calcium hardness around our hearts and consciences—little things unconfessed; small matters (and some not-so-small) undealt with; those 'little foxes that spoil the vines'.

The Holy Spirit is presently showering the earth with his presence. But the divine intent is for a deluge! Abundant fruit is presently being borne. But the purpose of God is for an unparalleled harvest! The Lord Jesus is presently pleased to call forth, just for himself, the prophetic first fruits of that great harvest, a prophetic herald of the victory about to be born. And these are shaping up to be those among us who are passionately dogging his steps, in sensitive tune with him, following him with clean hands and a pure heart. O Lord Jesus, I want to be in that number.

In a word (werd) prep./adj./n. (colloq.) Regular feature (not all Gk.) in printed publication, lucid, free of obscurity, radical (of the roots), concise, enlightened, particular, source of which can be traced from original Jn. (abbr.) MacLauchlan.

IN A WORD

The basic idea behind the Greek word *pleroma*, normally translated 'fulness', is that of completion. It is used of the crew and cargo of a ship, the ship's complement. It describes the entire contents of a vessel, and is used of a patch which makes up a deficiency in a garment. Thus the word 'fulness', strangely enough, implies limitation, for it refers to all that a given receptacle can contain! It is not to be taken as an absolute term anywhere in the New Testament. It has to do with all that man is designed to embody and express of God. Man is the vessel; God is the complement. When man fully embodies and expresses his creator, we have the fulness, the completion, of God's purpose for man.

Colossians 1:19, in a context of the incarnate work of Christ (v 20), describes how Jesus embodied and expressed the fulness of God. Here was the perfect man, doing all the Father intended, filled with God, and expressing him perfectly. In contrast, Colossians 2:9 expresses, not an historical fact, but an eternal one: Jesus is eternally the full expression of God in bodily form. Hence man's 'shape' and 'appearance' (Gen 1:26) is modelled on him. Man is designed to be his fulness, that is, the representation and expression of God in and to his material creation.

It is not surprising, therefore, that so magnificent a description of the total supremacy of the risen Christ as is found in Ephesians 1:20-22 is immediately followed by a reference to the Church as 'the fulness of him who fills all in all'. Jesus fills all the creation of God. But how? By means of the Church. The Church visible and extant on earth is to express the total lordship and kingdom of the invisible Christ. Ephesians 4 describes something of the process by which this comes about. The risen Christ gives men as gifts to his Church, men who stimulate and equip the body for growth, until it becomes 'the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ'. Jesus is thus fully expressed on earth.

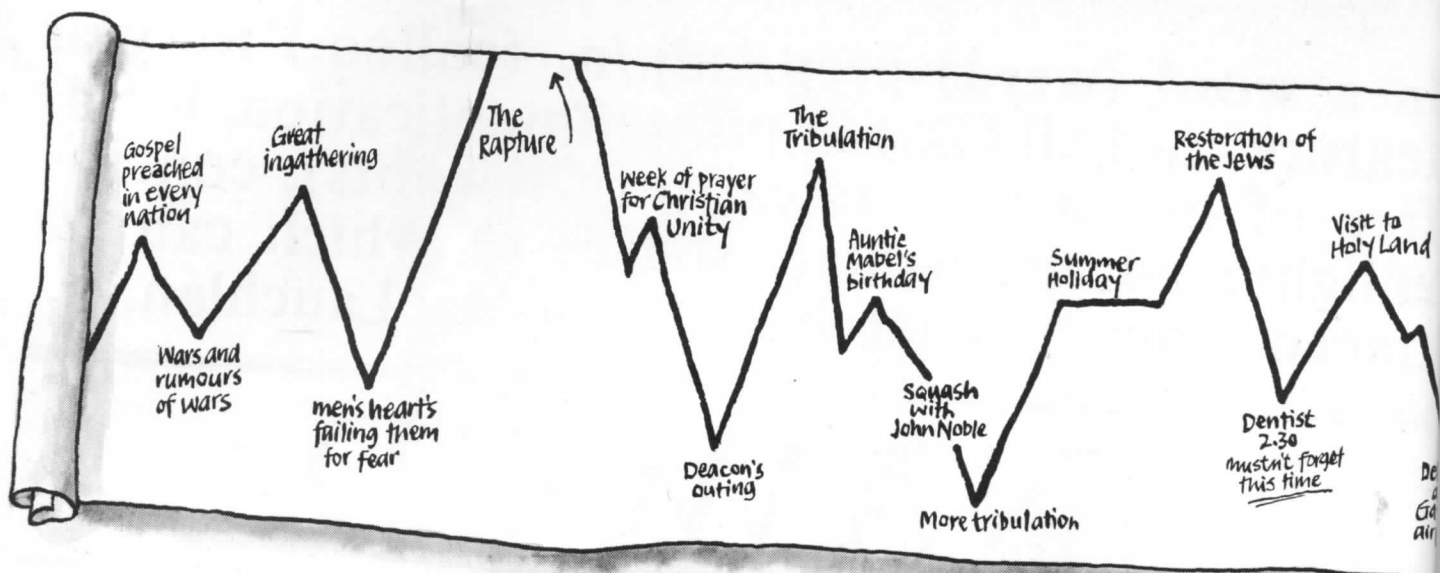
The process of development involves progressively receiving, out of Jesus' fulness, a constant flow of the grace of God (John 1:16). All that he is must be poured into the Church. Only a responsive, believing people, who know their calling, can be 'completed' by God. Paul prayed for this (Eph 3:14-20). The impossible must happen: a people must know the unknowable, express the inexpressible, be 'filled up' (completed), leading to (the embodiment and expression of) all the fulness of God.

Can the infinite and absolute God be contained within a finite body of

people? In absolute terms, the answer must, of course, be 'no'. But, as I said at the beginning, 'fulness' has to do with completion, with contents. God has designed and created man to embody and express him in the midst of the *material* creation. Hence the fulness of God in man is achieved when this purpose is realised. When we see the full complement of God in man, all of the invisible God that man is designed to take and express visibly, this is 'fulness'. It is thus noteworthy that 'fulness' has to do with consummation.

We do not now have 'the fulness of the Spirit', but we are 'filled with' the Spirit, a term which pays due regard to the limitations of our capacity! Fulness is when all God's heart is satisfied.

Our goal must be that expressed more fully elsewhere in this issue. We are heading for 'a stewardship which will be the fulness (completion) of every climactic point of history, the lifting up of all things to come under Christ's headship'. Thus Ephesians 1:10 describes it, using a word for 'times' (*kairoi*) which indicates definite events, not mere passage of time. All of history will be fulfilled when the completed Church administers the rule of Christ, uniting things in heaven and things on earth in him.



The Millenium

by John MacLauchlan

The goal of all the prophets is the Messianic Kingdom, a time when the warring kingdoms of man will be superseded by the full manifestation of the kingdom of God, a time when iniquity will be banished, all injustice righted, and the rule of God's King will be seen throughout all the earth. Indeed, the work of Jesus was most misunderstood because it apparently lacked this characteristic. True, he demonstrated the power and benevolence of God, but where was the subduing of the nations, where was the defeat of Roman oppression, where was the rule over the whole world? To Jesus, the time of such full manifestation was not yet; it depended upon the emergence of a people who corporately would embody and display the reality of his kingdom.

In *Fulness*, vol. 14 I have traced the link in identity between the corporate people of God and the one man Jesus. This identification with the whole people of God was intensely real to the Lord, and forms the basis for the whole New Testament theology of union with Christ in his death, resurrection and reign. Such victory has been accomplished (Eph. 2:6), but the manifestation of the Messianic Kingdom depends on its practical outworking in a people on earth. Daniel saw the Son of Man coming into his kingdom, ruling over all

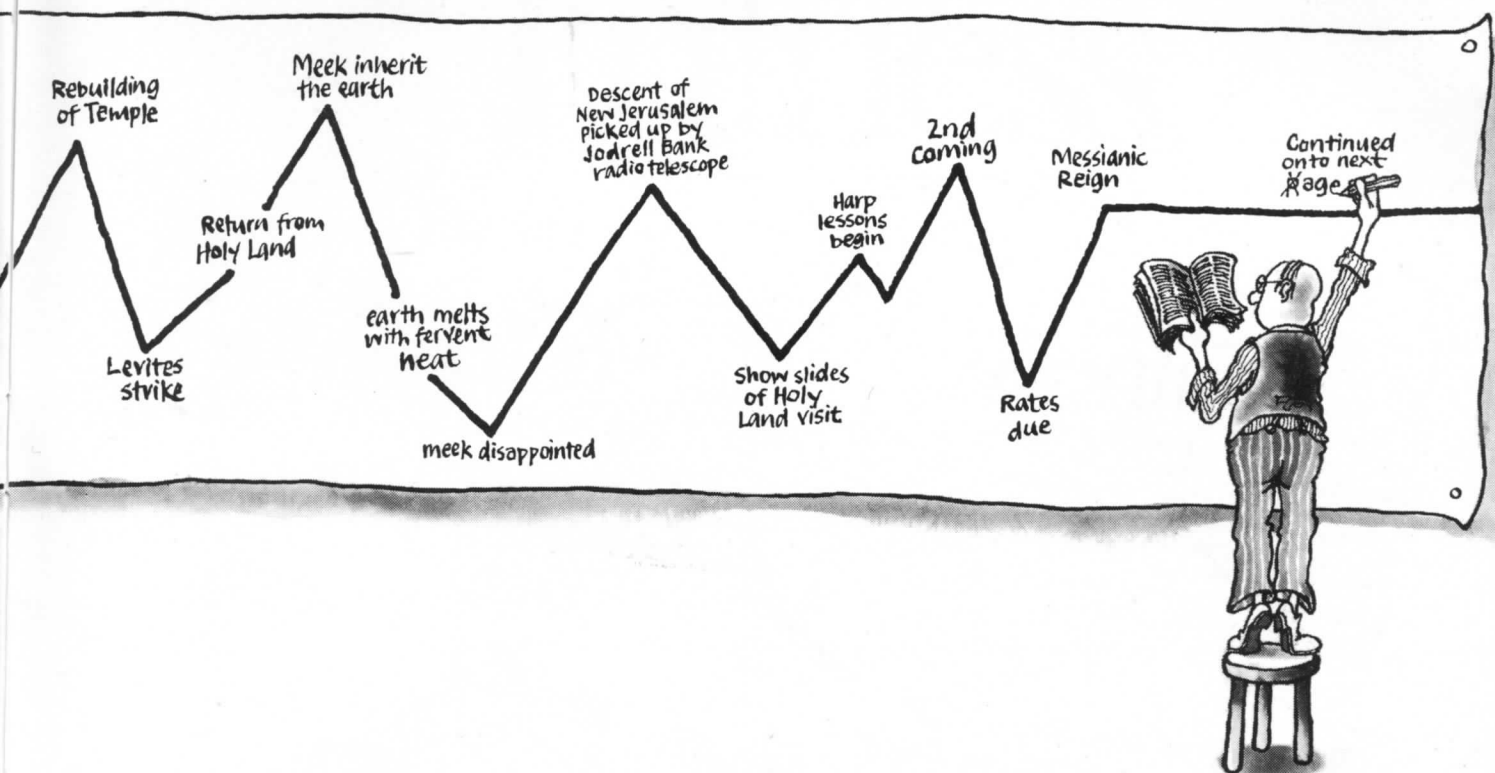
the earth (Dan 7:13, 14), but linked this one with 'the people of the saints of the Most High' (vv 18, 22), indicating that their victory would be won against opposition (vv 19-21).

The rule of the Messiah is inextricably tied up with the full victory of the people of God; it is only by such victory that his rule is made visible. Jesus' total victory, his current ascendancy over every enemy, both in this age and in the one to come, is described in Eph. 1:20-22. This marvellous description evokes a response of praise and faith in every heart where the Holy Spirit is at work. But that response should continue when we read what follows: the Church is 'the fulness of him who fills all in all'. The extant Church exists to embody and express on earth the total reign of the Christ of God! Indeed, when Christ is 'made visible' in all his lordship and splendour before the eyes of the entire world, then the Church also 'will be made visible with him in glory' (Col 3:4). We now experience the throne of God (Eph 2:6), but as far as the recognition of the world is concerned our rule and reign with Christ is invisible. But it will be made fully manifest at the hour when Jesus is seen to govern the whole earth. His Kingdom is reality now (John 18:36, 37); we are now guided into that reality

by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; Acts 1:8); but a day will come when this reality will be seen by all the world. This will be the prophesied Messianic reign.

Indeed, it is vital to see that the Messianic Kingdom has to do with manifestation, visibility and outworking on earth. The Kingdom of God already exists in reality. Satan is already defeated (John 12:31, 16:11; Matt 12:29), but the full earthly effect of this reality is yet to come. Heaven must be translated into earth. 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' It is the Church that accomplishes this translation, for it is the Church that links heaven and earth (Eph 1:23; Rev 5:10; 1 Cor 15:20-28). Sometimes it appears in the prophets that the Messianic Kingdom will come very soon; at other times it appears more remote. In fact, we are wrong to tie it in to a fixed time-scale, a pre-determined chronological prophetic programme. The consummation will come when a people emerge who so enter into Christ's victory that they rule and reign with him.

The Millenium of Revelation 20:1-6 is to be identified with this future, manifest rule of Christ over the earth. This interpretation, and indeed the whole concept of a future earthly reign, has been discredited in theological opinion



by dispensationalism, with its fables of Jewish restoration, a reign from literal Jerusalem, a restored sacrificial system, and so on. But we must not allow the unwarranted literalism of such recent and superficial prophetic opinion to cause us to lose sight of the purpose of God. God created the material dimension in order to express himself in a new sphere. He made man as the pinnacle of this creation, in his shape and appearance (Gen 1:26), 'with the same physical form as the deity, of which he is a moulded three-dimensional embodiment, delineated and exteriorised' (Humbert). This means that man is the representative and the representation of God in relation to the material creation. And man was made to rule over the works of God's hands.

If we do not yet 'see' the dominion of man described in Psalm 8, we do 'see' Jesus as we look at the invisible reality, and we know that he guarantees the full realisation of man's rule (Heb 2:5-9; 2 Cor 4:18). God's purpose is not to release man from earth into a totally unrelated sphere, but that he should enter in spirit into the heavens, and interpret and translate that invisible reality into the sphere of earth. The seen is derived from the unseen (Heb 11:3), and is a reflection of the invisible realm

(Heb 9:23). God's purpose is to build us into a city, a new Jerusalem, and bring that down out of the unseen, making it visible and extant on earth (Rev 21:2). Only in this way will the purpose for man's creation be realised.

The climax of the Revelation is the same as the goal of all the prophets: the rule of the Messiah, in union with his people, over all the earth. Chapters 21 and 22 are to be taken as an expanded description of chapter 20, and not as a description of 'eternity'. The sphere of activity is clearly the face of this earth. The promises of resurrection given to 'him who overcomes' in Revelation 2 and 3 are realised in these chapters, as the victorious saints come to life and reign with Christ for a thousand years. A people has possessed the heavenlies, but not in order to ignore the earth. Rather, they bring heaven to earth and realise the heart and burden of their God for these works of his hands. Babylon, the world-system at enmity with God, has been judged, and Jerusalem, the city of God, man relating as God intended, takes its place.

The basic characteristic of the Millenium is that the unrighteous governments of men will be replaced by the perfect, just rule of the Christ of God. This necessitates a strong rule with 'a rod of iron' (Rev 19:15). The very nations are

judged (Matt 25:31-46), and there is justice also for the humblest individual on earth. The resurrected saints share this rule, interpreting the principles of heaven into the sphere of earth, administering and judging alongside their Lord (Rev 2:26, 27; 20:4; Luke 19:11-27). The benefits of the Messiah are made available to the whole of mankind, and the kingdom of God is demonstrated before them. Thus there begins a period of great social change and renewal as the nations, cities and industries of man are directed into God's ways. The people of God, and Christ himself, are visibly vindicated and seen in resurrection glory (Col 1:1-3), walking face-to-face among mortal men, shepherding and directing their lives and affairs.

We need not be literalistic about the duration of the 'thousand years'. But relative to the three-and-a-half years of the period of prior manifestation of the first fruits of this rule (Rev 11 and 12; 14:1), this period is vast. We may be sure that it will realise all God's will for earth.

On what lies beyond it, scripture is silent. We must make God's declared goal our goal, and we may rest in the certainty that whatever occurs after the 'thousand years' will be full of the goodness and beauty of the God and King we love and serve.

Fulness

Man's inhumanity to God: *David Matthews*
 Sacred and secular: *Maurice Smith*
 What is the word of God?: *George Tarleton*
 The nation: *Gerald Coates*
 Breaking bread: *John MacLauchlan*
 The call of God: *Ian Farr*
 Life—the secret ingredient: *Nick Butterworth*
 The hope of his calling: *Tony Pullin*

“Many of the ideas and traditions to which I had been accustomed, although having no real basis in the scriptures, had become so sacred, that like the cows of India, no one dared to touch them, even when they were actually doing harm.”

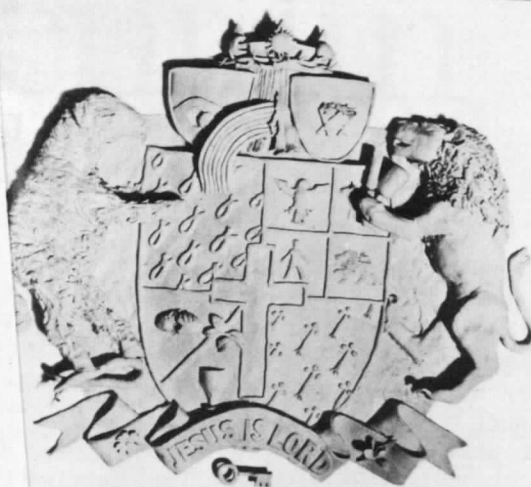
These back issues of *Fulness* deal with two widely differing subjects.

Volume 13, on 'sacred cows' tackles the controversial area of christian tradition and includes articles on the bible, breaking bread and the call to missionary work.

Volume 15 examines various aspects of the character of Jesus with contributions on his humanity, his aggressive love, his forgiving nature and his willingness to accept limitation.

Fulness

Discovering the real Jesus: *John Noble*
 Forgiveness: *Maurice Smith*
 Jesus is Lord: *Graham Perrins*
 The limitations of Jesus: *Jim Hamann*
 Son of man: *David Lillie*
 Aggressive love: *Roger Darcin*
 The friendship of Jesus: *Ian Farr*
 Changed into his likeness: *Nick Butterworth*



In each case the contributors have taken a refreshing new look at fundamental issues and both volumes contain a wealth of personal insight.

Copies of these, along with a complete list of *Fulness* back issues may be obtained from: Mike Blount, 47 Copse Road, Cobham, Surrey, England.

For prices see the inside front cover of this issue.

Fulness volume 19 price 50p