

Fulness

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Fulness



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EDITORIAL



Graham Perrins

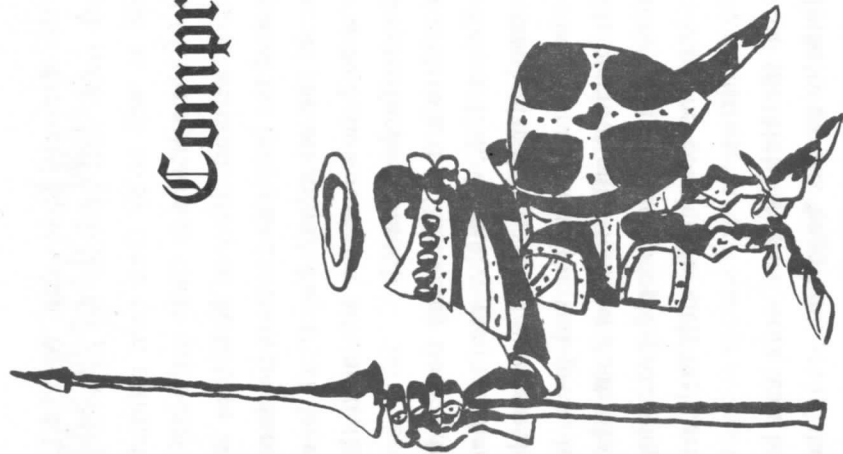
Increasing vision, new beginnings, some present day dangers, plus our fascinating story of the Remnant. These are the themes emphasized in the following pages. We face a tremendous opportunity and challenge. God awaits a people who will be prepared and equipped to finalise his redemptive programme. The Church is only as strong as each member. The generation that will inherit God's all will be made up of individual overcomers. God's requirements for this final generation are God's requirements for each one of us.

Thank God we can have greater vision, make fresh starts, and overcome the difficulties. Let not a sense of shame or unworthiness hold us back. God will help us to leave our failures behind, just as the morning shakes off the dark night, reminding us daily that our God is a God of new beginnings.

Each day our prayer can be that of Jabez, 'Grant me wide territories, extend my land'.

Do not make age an excuse. I have met young stick-in-the-muds dithering at the edge of God's unknown inheritance just as the Israelites of old. This is not a matter of age but of spirit. Anna demonstrated it at 84, and Caleb at 85! A remnant must go through, a generation must overcome. 'Don't settle for less than God's best, believe for more, believe for more.' The writer to the Hebrews urges us to 'press on unto perfection' ■
this, God willing, is what we propose to do'.

Are You Comprehensively Covered?



asks Hugh Thompson

In 1968 a number of areas in Britain were ruined by flood. Many householders discovered to their horror that their property was not insured against such an eventuality. They were not covered.

In April 1970 the whole world intently watched the

phenomenal recovery of the damaged space-ship, Apollo 13. In this case the astronauts were well covered by experts at Mission Control in Houston as well as by their own intimate knowledge and experience of the systems of their space-craft.

A question we must face without delay is this: Are we covered in every respect against the intensified satanic pressures we are sure to experience in the seventies? For if we leave ourselves even partially exposed how can we attain to the fullness of God's glorious purpose for his Church?

Broadly speaking, we could call the fifties 'the decade of evangelism' — Harringay, Kelvin Hall, Wembly, etc. — when the need of new birth was emphasized. The sixties were surely 'the decade of renewal' when much attention was given to baptism in the Spirit and his precious gifts. Without doubt this decade will be a time of testing of Spirit-filled people, producing steadfastness in those who stay the course. To such the Lord will grant powerful, effective ministries.

These successive phases of the Holy Spirit's work can be seen in Jesus' experience. Initially he was 'begotten . . . of the Spirit' (Matt. 1:20 literal); the identical term being used by Jesus in John 3:5, 7 in telling Nicodemus of how a man is introduced into God's Kingdom. Then, at about 30 years of age he was 'anointed' (CHRISTed) by the oncoming of the Spirit (Matt. 3:16, Luke 4:18). Immediately after, he, 'full of the Spirit', was 'led by the Spirit' into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Luke 4:1). Forty days later he returned 'in the power of the Spirit' to effect a supernatural Messianic ministry of making men whole and free. (Luke 4:14, 18-21).

His way of handling the devil at that time of testing teaches us vital lessons for our situation in this hour. We select two key thoughts from Matthew 4:1-11.

The Written Word

One important factor in the Lord's defeat of the enemy was his consistent use of God's written word. The term 'the living word' seems to be very popular in many full-gospel groups these days. The expression in itself is harmless, but it is being applied in subtle and dangerous ways. Yes, it is true that 'the written code kills' — as God designed that the law should do — while 'the Spirit gives life'; but it is not the Spirit divorced from his own scriptures. Let every liberal evangelical please note that Jesus did not say: 'Now the gist of the message in Deuteronomy is such-and-such'; but rather he quoted Moses verbatim.

From time to time we encounter groups of Spirit-filled believers who rarely open the Bible in their gatherings. Such dear brethren are spiritually unguarded and are easy prey for religious spirits. Experience alone can leave us vulnerable. Bear in mind that Jesus had recently had a glorious experience. Let us follow the good example of the early apostles in their preaching. While they testified of their experience: 'We have seen the risen Messiah', they also took great care to root their doctrine in Old Testament statements.

We are continually meeting those who insist that believer's baptism is only valid if performed under a certain formula concocted from various forms of words used in the book of Acts. They say that a believer's identification with Christ in his death is merely 'the baptism of John' if Jesus' own words in Matthew 28:19 are used'. Although some of the advocates of such a theory can speak and write at great length on the subject, we have found that they are unable to face Biblical objections. Their normal escape is in the excuse: 'Ah, well now';

of course, you will never see this except by revelation'. But we insist that it must be revelation through the Word of God, not instead of it.

Some readers might be asking, 'But does it matter?' For a long time we have remained neutral on the question ourselves, but of late we have discovered cases of spiritual bondage that have obviously been directly related to such a re-baptism. For instance, four people in one church could not understand why their brakes were always on at times when the assembly was in general liberty. When they and the fair-minded elders sought the Lord he indicated that this event had been the occasion of the opening of the door to the enemy. On putting this right with the Lord, release was experienced and, in addition, the church received answers to prayer about other long-standing problems.

Then there is another unhealthy aspect of this 'living word' fashion. It can cause inordinate attachment to the person of a teacher as well as to a doctrine or a practice. 'You need to tune in to his ministry', the admirer will advise the uninitiated hearer. Or, 'He wasn't on his real wave-length tonight'. Such a ministry is bound to gather to itself an exclusive following of those who have had some sort of 'inner light' which they cannot explain in black-on-white Bible words.

Centred in God

Of course, our Lord Jesus was not aimlessly slinging proof-texts at Satan. Each verse he used had been made alive to him by the Holy Spirit and was a personal testimony. All three

quotations described his true heart-attitude. This is our second vital key.

- 'Man shall . . . live . . . by every word . . . from God'. (Matt. 4:4)
- 'You shall not tempt . . . God'. (4:7)
- 'Worship . . . God'. (4:10)

In other words, he lived completely in God.

Only God-centredness, and nothing less, will see us right through to God's perfect goal. So many revivals have run aground because the men who channelled the blessing got side-tracked through some selfish motive: popularity, money, lust, fear. They had not been fully 'homed in God', and the devil knew their nakedness.

Notice carefully the devil's misuse of Psalm 91:11-12. It is a cunning attempt to persuade Jesus to come out from under cover of his Father's hand. 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down (i.e. from the pinnacle of the temple); for it is written, He will give his angels charge of you and on their hands they will bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone'. (Matt. 4:6). In point of fact Satan was coaxing him to be presumptuous and to tempt God.

Psalms 90 and 91 are obviously twin songs and have much to say on this matter of covering; so the adversary knew better than to quote any of the context!

- 'Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations'. (90:1)
- 'He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, My refuge and my fortress'. (91:1-2)

□ 'He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler'. (91:4)

□ 'Because you have the Lord your refuge, the Most High your habitation . . . ' (91:9)

In the earlier psalm, Moses is bewailing the spiritual nakedness and defeat of the children of Israel in the wilderness. Because of their rebellious unbelief they were all dying at a relatively early age — on average, in their seventies — without entering the land of promise. He ends by praying for blessing on the next generation. The following psalm, which still finds them in tents (verse 10), is evidently God's answer to this prayer. Whilst all the adults are being felled in thousands by plague and pestilence, there are those who have learnt how to live 'homed in God'. To such he promises long life, by enabling them to tread down every demonic opposition, be it lion or serpent (91:16-13). Naturally Satan ended his quote before that verse!

There will be those in the final generation of this age who will never taste death, even though the plagues described in the book of Revelation will then be scourging the earth. A remnant of people who will overcome the enemy however he chooses to attack, and who will go on like Enoch into resurrection fullness.

And the secret? They keep covered! Remember, the promise. 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you' is only half a verse. The necessary condition is that you first 'submit yourselves to God', for he resists the proud and presumptuous. (James 4:6-7)

Don't Presume

Let us here briefly list some of the common forms of

presumption which can expose us to the enemy; and note how we can maintain our standing in victory.

1. Don't bite off more than you can chew. That is, do not presume to go beyond the God-appointed bounds of your ministry.

□ 'I will not give you any of (Esau's) land'. (Deut. 2:5)

□ 'I will not give you any of (Moab's) land'. (2:9)

□ 'I have given (Og) and all his people and his land into your hand'. (3:2)

□ 'I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you; begin to take possession'. (2:31)

□ 'Forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia'. (Acts 16:16)

2. Avoid copying other men's successful methods, but keep within the limits of your faith.

□ 'By faith the people crossed the Red Sea, as if on dry land; but the Egyptians, when they attempted the same, were drowned'. (Heb. 11:29)

3. Refrain from mechanical repetition of your own successful methods. e.g. II Sam. 5:17-25. The Philistines adopted an identical position on two successive occasions. But David sought the Lord afresh each time. 'Attack' was God's first command, but 'Ambush' was his second.

4. Don't excuse sin: but bring it immediately out into the light. Then the blood of Jesus cleanses its guilt away. It was Achan's theft that caused Israel's fall at Ai. The lying of Ananias and Sapphira brought their utter collapse. Saul's breach of promise to the Gibeonites produced famine in

David's reign.

5. Abstain from mere catch-phrases.

'Sprinkling the Blood', 'Pleading the Name', 'Wearing the Armour'. If there is disobedience or unbelief in my heart, I may whoop these war-cries at the top of my lungs, but the enemy will spot my exposure.

6. Don't jest at the devil.

□ 'Be sober . . . resist (the devil) firm in your faith'.
(1 Peter 5:8-9)

□ 'The arch-angel Michael . . . did not presume to . . . revile . . . him'. (Jude 9)

7. Beware of impatience: wait God's time.

Jacob's blessing had been divinely promised to him, but he took it prematurely, and suffered as a result. In contrast David refused to kill the Lord's anointed and Joseph refused to commit adultery as a short-cut to promised rulership.

□ 'Not a novice (to be appointed as an elder), lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil'.
(1 Tim. 3:6 RV)

How to Stay Covered

We will now outline some basic ways to maintain divine protection. As you meditate on these the Lord will doubtless add other practical details for your personal blessing.

[Please pardon the hackneyed style of alliterative P-shooting; but even Solomon found the need of well-chosen words that

would prick like goads and hold fast in his hearers' minds like well-hammered nails. (Eccl. 12:10-11)].

1. PRAYER

Take the story of Exodus 17 as an example. As soon as God's people had experienced supernatural drinking from the Rock, the enemy swooped down on them. Joshua and his troops kept Amalek under control only during the times that the hands of Moses were upraised to God's throne. Jehovah was their Banner and Protector. The chapter ends with a caution. This descendant of Esau, the carnal man, will always be around looking for a fight. (Gen. 36:12, Heb. 12:16). So keep praying!

The first church continued daily in prayer. But all too many pentecostal groups are easing up on intercession. Many a revival, born out of the birth-pangs of travail, has been choked to death through lack of the oxygen of prayer. An elder of one flourishing full-gospel church commented with grief: 'So many visit us and then go home to try to copy us. But they forget that we prayed for this for years, at times weeping on our faces before the Lord'.

2. PEACE

'Let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which you were called in the one body'. (Col. 3:15, literal).

One friend told us how a stranger, boasting himself to be an apostle, offered to lay hands on him for further blessing in his ministry. His heart felt uneasy at the suggestion, having noticed the man's restlessness. However, he agreed, not wishing to appear proud — after all, he always needed further blessing. Over the next few days he noticed that a cloud had settled over his spirit until prayer became almost impossible. When the Lord reminded him of this incident he confessed the matter and so recovered his joy and liberty in Christ. Later he learned of the

wreckage left in the wake of this man's itinerant ministry, proving him to be a charlatan.

③ PANOPLY (Ephesians 6:10-20)

'Be strong in the Lord' for he is the covering. 'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its lusts'. (Rom. 13:14)

Consider, as a sample, 'the belt of integrity'. How good that Joseph was covered by this during those days when the temptress persistently urged him with lustful suggestions. Otherwise he would have succumbed and so forfeited his right to the throne.

④ PURPOSE OF HEART

'I am doing a great work and I cannot come down', was the determined answer of Nehemiah (6:3). 'Should such a man as I flee?', he thundered at his opponent who suggested he ought to hide in the temple. (6:11)

Shammah one of David's mighty men, refused to be budged from his lentil patch by the Philistines (2 Sam. 23:11-12). He resolutely defended this piece of God's Canaan from the invader. One friend has suggested that his covering was a pair of lead boots!

⑤ PARTNERSHIP: Right relationship of husbands and wives.

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 deals with a specific aspect of covering – the literal veil. This subject has a host of minor problems into which we must not be drawn at present. I offer my thoughts without being dogmatic, working on the principle that all God's rules are very practical. This is well illustrated in the Mosaic laws about sanitation, quarantine and diet.

Since 'there is neither male or female . . . in Christ Jesus' a woman may pray and prophesy in church. (Galations 3:28). Also, because 'we all with unveiled face reflect . . . the glory

of the Lord' she may pray bare-headed (2 Cor. 3:18 margin). That is, providing there are no other considerations.

But, then, she is also a member of an earthly social order. She must honour her husband, her head, before mankind and angels. Note verse 3 in RSV – 'The head of every woman is her husband'. The Greek words in our paragraph can be legitimately rendered 'husband' and 'wife' throughout.

Paul is evidently referring to current custom. He mentions what 'nature' teaches. This means 'custom' since biology gives us no moral instruction about a beatnik's long hair!

Evidently these ladies gathered in church already veiled and only uncovered their faces when they uttered prophecies or prayers. By so doing they dishonoured their 'heads', namely their husbands. (verse 4). At the same time they displayed their own natural glory, their hair – their natural veil: verse 15. 'Judge for yourselves; is it proper . . . ?' Since modern Western millinery has no such meaning today, this question of decency doesn't arise with us. Shall we return to the practice of slavery because it is so frequently mentioned with complacency in the New Testament epistles? But at that time there was no such custom as a veiled wife uncovering her face during the time she was publicly praying or prophesying.

Paul is apparently asking these sisters to forego their New Covenant privilege of the unveiled face, because the marital veil was a piece of etiquette which signified something to angelic creatures who were looking on. Seraphim veil not only their faces but their feet also. (Isaiah 6:2). The marital veil indicated that a wife would be physically intimate only with her husband. In the same way the church, still veiled in flesh, is allowed a spiritual intimacy with her heavenly Bridegroom which is denied to the angelic orders.

While appearing to lead the assembled church by her prayer or prophesying, the wife indicated by her veil that she still acknowledged the headship of her man. Just as mere clichés won't protect us, mere hats or headscarves will avail nothing if the heart-attitude is wrong. A rebellious spirit and a nagging tongue towards her husband will uncover a woman, veil or no veil. Let us never forget that it was because she acted independently of her husband that Eve opened the gate to Satan originally.

Some say: 'I won't cast out demons in the presence of bare-headed women, because of the angels'. But we have observed that hatless sisters have shared in the ministry of exorcism without any back-lash from the enemy when these ladies have acknowledged the headship of their husbands.

Need we comment on the contradiction of an ornate and spacious hat worn in the same outfit as an ultra-mini loin-cloth?

On the basis of Romans 14:1-6, those sisters who feel that they are thereby honouring the Lord should wear a head-scarf while praying and prophesying. On the other hand those who wear head-gear superstitiously, ought to think twice. A tiny dolly is perfectly harmless in itself, but if I hang it in my car and believe in it for protective luck, I bring myself under a certain measure of occult bondage. We can testify of many we have met who endured years of spiritual limitation because they virtually idolized their hats. We repeat, it is the heart's attitude towards the Lord and one's husband that is of primary importance: the rest we will leave an open question.

6. PASTORAL CARE

'Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls'. (Heb. 13:17). This counsel is given to those who have gone forth to Jesus 'outside the camp', having

rejected the leadership of High Priest and Sanhedrin of Old Testament order. 'Likewise you that are younger be subject to the elders'. (1 Peter 5:5).

'Take heed to yourselves', Paul advised the elders of the Ephesian church, 'and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians After my departure fierce wolves will come in Therefore be alert' (Acts 20:28-31).

So long as Nehemiah, the man with God's vision and prayer burden for Jerusalem, was governor, the enemies Tobiah and Sanballat had to keep their distance. But during his spell away in Persia the city was robbed of his anointed guardianship, and Tobiah installed himself in the very temple of God while Sanballat intermarried into the High Priest's family (13:4-7,28).

God is raising up today a spiritual leadership. The men he will use will not be intent on building old denominational folds or some new society of their own but will 'tend the flock of GOD not as domineering but being examples to the flock'. (1 Pet. 5:3).

7. PRAISE

'Rejoice in the Lord always', even in prison; 'with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God will keep (literally, 'garrison', i.e. a military cover) your hearts and your minds' (Phil. 4:4-7).

'Have no anxiety about anything', because when you worry you have lowered the shield of faith and exposed your heart.

'The mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit'. (Isaiah 61:3) You cannot sing and worry at the same time!

GLORIOUS PROSPECT

Having done all, let us stand, not collapse!

Thus, tried and proved, we can receive ministries with which

to move on into God's strategy for our generation, namely to bring Christ's body to fulness of stature, and to bring in the kingdom. ■

(Bible quotations from R.S.V.)

new beginnings

by Graham Perrins

A recent issue of the 'Reader's Digest' contains an article on 'America's Troubled Churches' and shows how 'without the approval of church authorities, thousands of clergy and laymen are seeking a return to the simplicity and fellowship of the early Christians who talked, worshipped and ate together in the homes and catacombs of Rome. They operate in groups of from half a dozen to 40 or 50 people, occasionally more. As with the early Christians their services tend to be informal gatherings held in private homes or sometimes in a secular hall. There are prayers, reading of scriptures, sometimes a short talk and a discussion, often conducted over a meal'.

break-through---

The late Tom Rees in his book 'Break-through' has this to say: 'In the midst of this alarming fall-away from organised religion, a new and exciting thing is taking place — the most exciting and significant thing that has happened in the spiritual world since the 18th century — common people are meeting regularly in one another's homes to pray, and read the Bible, and are discovering for themselves exactly what the Christian gospel is, which 2,000 years ago turned the world upside down. Yes, and these groups are an explosive breakthrough into the

homes and hearts of multitudes who are without God, or hope. Countless individuals and whole families are finding forgiveness of sin and new life in Christ. For every church that closes down, ten new Bible Cells spring up'.

...into homes

A penetrating insight into what is happening today was given by the Archbishop of Canterbury in a lecture on 'Renewal of the Church in Unity'. We quote an extract: 'Let me end with a reference to one further theme — a brief reference. There is amongst many Christians I know, especially young Christians, a great impatience with what they call 'institutionalism'. That is very understandable. And that impatience leads to the creation of Christian fellowships of worship and service and study, outside the Church's institutional life. This is the sort of thing that happens. There are Christians who aren't interested in Church services or in Church buildings or in all the elaborate and costly paraphernalia of traditional Christian organisation. What do they do? They meet in one another's houses. They carry with them ideas very much derived from the whole Christian tradition. They worship together, they pray together, they study together, they discuss life's problems together, and they act in concert with any other group of Christians, whether within or without the traditional pattern of things. Now such developments are sometimes called 'non-Church' Christianity. I believe it is a mistake to use or to acquiesce in the term 'non-Church' Christianity because if they are Christians possessing the tradition of faith and the Scriptures and sacramental life as they do in the cases which I have been describing, they are the Church. They are the Church, and it is so important for us to

be clear that the Church does not mean buildings into which people are collected but it means the people of God themselves, the Baptised community of the people who use the Scriptures, share in the Lord's Supper, know Jesus as divine Lord and try to serve him. And in the apostolic age there were not Church buildings but there was the people of God. What is sometimes called 'non-Church Christianity', in the forms of which I am thinking, is not properly so-called. Call it 'extra-mural Christianity'; I think that's a better name for it. Perhaps the best name of all is 'experimental Christianity'. I think that is a good name for it!

experimental christianity

'Now, Harvey Cox, whom I have quoted two nights already, has something to say about this, and Harvey Cox in the 'Secular City' writes this: "The real cleavage in Christendom today is not between Catholic and Protestant but between traditional and experimental forms of Church life, and if the Church leaders do not wake up to this fact there will come a division in Christendom as big as that which started in the 16th Century". I am, of course, expected to tremble when I hear those words! Well, I do not tremble, there is no need for Christian people to tremble. What is needed is mutual understanding and not impatience. Those who belong to Christianity in its institutional forms must be very patient and ready to learn from the extra-mural or experimental Christians. We must understand why they dislike institutionalism so much, and there is good reason why they should. We must realise how the 'experimentalists' are trying to embody the Church as the people of God living near to Christ and plunged into the life of the community

rather like what the first Christians were coming to do. But then the 'experimentalists' or 'extra-mural' Christians on their part must realise that the church-goers, the people in the pews, the people employed in the old set-up, are sometimes Christians and not just kinds of pharasaic heathen. Some of them really are Christians from whom something about the Christian faith and life can be learnt, and of course, the 'experimentalist' and 'extra-mural' Christians do, if they are to have any success at all, draw very heavily on what has come down to them through that main stream of Christian life; a main stream that is never, in any generation, able to avoid some kind of institutional forms. Is not the real moral, that the Church as the people of God does include a good deal of variety. It includes people in great Gothic Renaissance Church buildings; it includes people in very novel, startling kinds of church buildings, and it includes a good many Christians in no sort of buildings at all, worshipping and praying in their own houses. What matters is that they should all know themselves to be the people of God. To belong to the people of God, does not require elaborate organisations, but it does require faithfulness to those things that Christ himself gave to his people for their unity with Him and with one another; the Apostolic tradition of teaching which came to be embodied in the creeds; the sacraments of union with Christ and with the other members of the Church; and the Scriptures that bear witness to Christ. These things were once-for-all given by Christ to his people and they will stand for all time once again because Christianity is about a historic reconciliation. It is because Christianity is about a historic word of reconciliation once wrought by Christ that there are historic sacraments and a historic ministry and they will be there to the end, though we will understand them in the coming plenitude

of the Church better by far than we understand them now.'

Why into homes?

These extracts serve to show that even if house groups are as old as the New Testament, there has in our own time been a staggering increase in the numbers of people who are choosing to meet in this way. Some Christians may be content with the way things are at present. They point to a 'successful' church with good meetings and an effective outreach and say 'Why change?' Many people have offered a similar objection to the baptism in the Spirit. They refer to godly men with ministries owned of God who have not been baptised in the Spirit. Experience shows that when such men are baptised in the Spirit they enter into a new dimension and an even deeper experience of God. So, with house groups. Where these have been brought into being by a definite leading of the Lord, believers can experience a new dimension of fellowship, a new experience of membership in the body of Christ.

No doubt these groups would give a variety of reasons for their existence. Some are 'come-outers' who regard traditional Christianity as heading for the gigantic 'harlot system'. Others have no intention of moving out of traditional circles, but admitting a certain dissatisfaction with 'status quo', attend house groups to help fill in the gaps. Some have left the institutional church because they could not get on with their minister or for some other negative reason. Whatever the motive may be, it is essential that all who have moved into home groups should understand that this step is in itself incomplete.

because of frustration? ---

When David escaped from Saul to the cave of Adullam, he was joined by 'everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented'. It was a sense of desperate need that drove those men to join with David. Under the old order they could see no hope for themselves, but with David there was the possibility of something better. These men needed to make a fresh start. They needed purpose in life. Today with so many moving into 'Adullam's cave' there is the danger of not realising that something more is required than dissatisfaction with tradition. Something more is required than a sense of frustration or need. We must see what God is after in all this.

---or obedience! ---

1 Samuel 22:2 tells how David became captain over them. These malcontents may have been rebels under Saul's reign but in their new sphere they were prepared to submit to David's leadership. They were ready to throw in their lot with this one who moved under God's anointing. They identified themselves with all that David represented. A great sense of need, an indefinable feeling for something better may drive us out of Saul's realm, but it is only a true yielding and surrender to David that will make life worthwhile in a new sphere. David's men were fully committed, they were mighty in battle and determined to stay with David come what may. See 1 Samuel 26:6, 2 Samuel 23:13, 1 Chronicles 12. Those who view house meetings as a pleasant alternative to church services are seriously

misunderstanding what God is doing. They will find no real satisfaction from them until there is a true committal to the Lord's leadership and purpose at this particular time.

a new phase ---

It must be born in mind that it was not only the men who rallied to David who required a new start and purpose. God himself was just as anxious for new beginnings. Saul had been rejected as God's instrument in the kingdom. David was anointed to fulfill God's purposes and a new stage in the advance of the kingdom was about to unfold. Saul neither appreciated nor understood this fact, and although David's 400 soon grew to 600 they still seemed so pitifully small and insignificant that it was hard to see how they could be a serious threat to the existing order. Yet these small beginnings were of God. David's 400 men were a remnant company who paved the way for a new order and a new phase in the kingdom of God. We need to see the events of our day to be part of God's work in preparing a remnant that will ultimately bring in a new phase, we trust the final phase of God's kingdom purposes.

Christians throughout the denominations have been experiencing the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Many churches have missed the purpose behind this resurgence of life. Individuals have been blessed, but the life of churches in the main has gone on virtually unchanged. This spells out tragedy, for these gifts and experiences were designed to revolutionize the functioning of the body.

Some house groups seem to have been started in order to provide a respectable addition to the church's curriculum. But respectable is how such groups will remain unless all concerned

see themselves caught up in the purpose of God for our generation, and are prepared to have both tradition and doctrine shattered in the process of pioneering.

The baptism and gifts of the Spirit, together with the emergence of house groups are stages in God's programme of recovery. God desires to change the life and function of his Church, not merely to add something extra to an out-dated and over-loaded programme. We must return to the simplicity and to the dynamic of New Testament Christianity if we are to make any impact upon our generation.

One other point needs making clear. The emphasis on smaller groups is not a denial of the need for larger gatherings of God's people. Oh to see in this country the thousands gathering together for open air worship as they are doing in the Argentine. It is a particular need of small groups that they keep a wide vision of the church and so guard against exclusivism. This can be done by coming together in larger numbers as the Spirit directs.

---of commando units

Some are concerned about their consecrated buildings! If only we could wipe the slate clean! No denominations, no temples, no sanctified property. With only a New Testament in our hands, how and where would we start Church life? It would be the most natural and spontaneous thing to begin in the family circle, the place where we live. It is only because we have identified church life with special buildings that the idea of house churches becomes disturbing to some folk.

Essentially these groups are commando units forging a new way in the Spirit. There may well be casualties and failures,

but it is a tremendous thrill to be committed to what God is doing and to know that through the difficulties and trials of new beginnings, God is preparing a people for fresh understanding of his word and clearer revelation of himself.

It is not enough to jump onto the bandwagon. We must have a positive vision of the way things are moving, and see that this world wide activity is indicative of a mighty sifting and shaking of the Church so that only the unshakeable will remain. ■



by Maurice Smith

'Where there is no vision the people perish' — go to pieces (Proverbs 29:18). We must always be coming into new light, for true light brings life.... it is the 'light of life'.

It is quite hopeless to sit around our bonfire-of-truth hoping that it will never go out. We can sit and prod our past revelation trying to make a few sparks fly, and maybe, now and again, produce a lick of flame or touch of revival over which we can warm ourselves with satisfaction. This is not enough. We need to be adding new fuel to the fire so that it is continually a new fire. It is not that we are despairing of the old vision, but adding to it as God gives more light.

I do not believe any person, or any group, has got the whole truth, and indeed, when this is implied, we soon sense death in

the ministry; the light has become darkness. At the moment there are many major truths from which we may derive much nourishment. We may not be able to see just how one aspect of truth relates to the other, but God is making the picture clearer every day. It would be tragic to select one current theme as though all else were wrong or irrelevant.

Perhaps if I am more specific over various revelations the point will be grasped more easily. □

Sonship

I am sure that the great truth of 'sonship' is increasingly in the vision of many; that God chose his only son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to be the first-born of many sons. These sons are being prepared and will soon be manifested and walk the earth in great power. Many are seeing this and reaching out after such a high calling. Others, no doubt, have become enmeshed in a manifested -sons denomination, thinking this is the truth for the hour. Truth always carries with it the risk of spiritual pride and so we always need to be watchful and prayerful at times of revelation. □

The Bride

There is another note being sounded out; that of 'the Bride' — a vision calling for a company of those wedded to Jesus and watching for his return, with attendant purification of their lives. Many have seen through the deception that all those who have 'made a decision', will be whisked away, to some palatial house up in the sky, before the great tribulation comes. Sad to say, many in orthodox circles still cling to this escapist doctrine. Rightly stressing the need for a bridal vision and response, in

order to meet the bridegroom, it is easy to pay little heed to the call to 'sonship' with its message of authority and power. □

The Local Church

Then there is the ever-increasing voice proclaiming the true nature of the local church. Buildings are not churches, but the believers themselves are the church. The church is a body, all in need of one another, from the least to the greatest. Homes replacing buildings, family meals replacing morsels of bread and thimblefuls of wine, gifts flowing from every member. Not 'meetings' any more but living, Holy Ghost arranged fellowship.

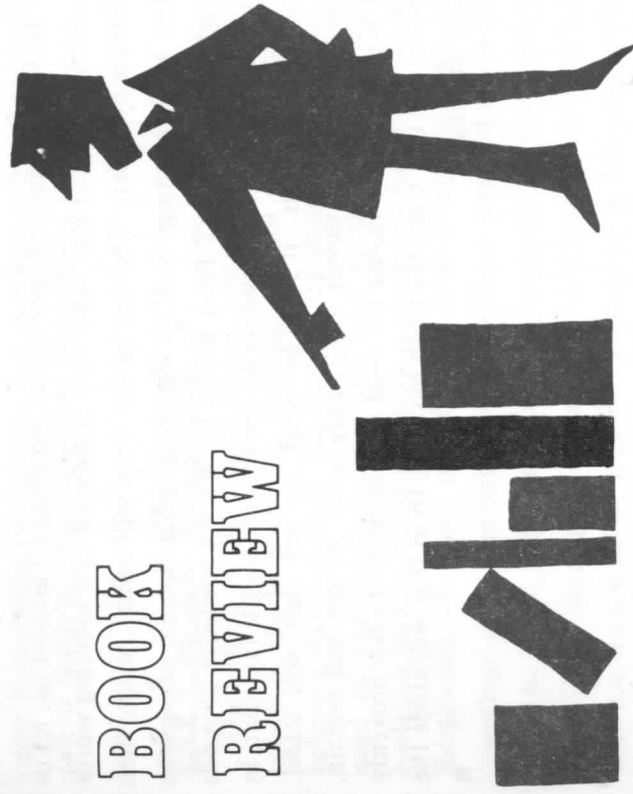
As we reach the climax of the ages surely we shall find the Holy Ghost leading us into all truth and recovering everything that has been lost. We may be called upon by the Lord, within the sphere of our ministry, to emphasise one particular truth which has become our burden, but we dare not make that facet to be the complete picture, or encourage others to form up with that truth as a central feature. The one great Architect and Master-builder has all the pieces in his hands. He will, in his own way and time, reveal everything, using his ministers to build the final building according to his pattern. We are aware that things are rapidly reaching finality.... 'and the thing was done suddenly'.

I am concerned that none of us are found sitting around fanning the embers of our emphasis, whilst the full blaze goes up somewhere else. We can be wide open to all new light without being gullible, if we are led by the indwelling witness of our spirit and the written word of God. We have a very wonderful Father and it is perfectly safe to trust him and not fear that all else but our revelation is from the wrong source. □

In view of the end-time events occurring all around us, let us remember, in closing, some very significant and sobering words written by Peter: 'The day of the Lord will come... seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be' (2 Peter 3:10,11). When knowledge abounds (and knowledge **is** necessary) we are sobered by the fact that, in the final analysis, it will be what we **are** that will stand. Knowledge shall vanish away, only what we **are** will remain. It is important to realise the need for obedience to our heavenly vision, for it is what the truth has done to us that will abide the final shaking. ■

BOOK

REVIEW



Hugh Thompson

Recently a keen young Christian visited our home with his wife. At the end of the meeting he made request for prayer concerning lust that had vexed him down the years.

During the brief prayer he slid off the settee onto his knees as an unclean spirit screamed out of him. Inside a minute he was rejoicing that the Lord had set him free. 'It felt as if it was being drawn out through my forehead . . . and to think that until very recently I had argued that a Spirit-filled believer couldn't possibly be indwelt by a demon . . . It was my reading of 'Five Five Fifty-five' a little while ago that clinched

it for me'.

This book by Maurice Smith is a paper-back published by Christian Literature Crusade at 7/6d. 'This is essentially a book of experiences', the author explains in the preface. The style runs freely, the descriptions are frank, the experiences are varied, the message is clear. Since it begins at the beginning, the man in the street will read it with interest. In fact he will read it right through tracing the course of Maurice's quest for reality. New birth, the church, deliverance from lust, gifts of healings, and the sudden discovery that he is really crucified with Christ; all these are described in a living way that helps the reader in his own personal search.

We have selected a few sentences to whet your appetite.

'This unveiling of my private life may shock the reader, but these personal disclosures are necessary in order that others may realise that openly facing a problem is half-way to overcoming it. Vague generalisations would help no-one.'

For most of my life I have been plagued with a sex problem. It made no difference to me where I was; a prayer meeting was no different from a business cocktail party. If one of the opposite sex was sitting in any sort of exposed position, then the place became hell on earth to me.

Will power was useless. I had either been fighting the sin with all I had, or else trying to leave it for God to do, according to my doctrinal view at the time, or my degree of despair.

All I knew was, that up until then nothing had worked . . . Evil spirits indeed! Where did they think we were, in the

heart of Africa dealing with witch-doctors? I was still waxing eloquent against the idea of evil spirits having anything to do with Christians.

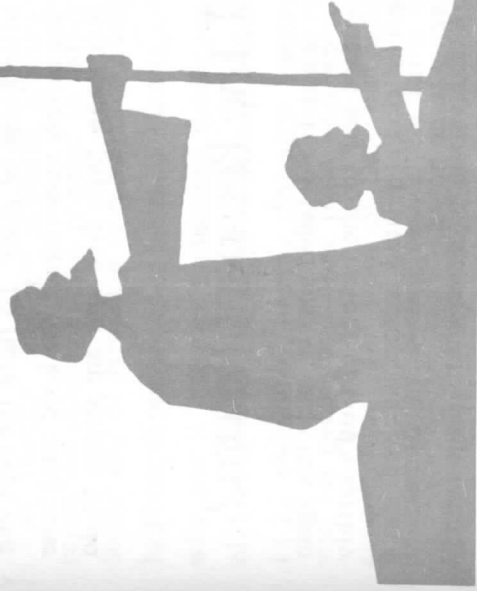
Right up until that evening I had hardly countenanced the presence of evil spirits in England, let alone in myself! Yet, now, deep within my heart, I knew we had arrived at the truth.

Willingly I knelt down in that very small lounge and I noticed that the clock said just on midnight. Eddie began to pray softly but firmly, and I willed this foul thing away from me in co-operation, as best I knew how. From right down in the pit of my stomach something began to rise. It felt like a dark green slimy substance and it came right up through my chest, as it were, and straight out of my head. Then it was as though someone came along with a sack of pure white flour and poured it down into my body, I felt clean and I knew I had been delivered'.

Get yourself a copy, and a spare one to lend to friends; either from your local Bible bookshop or from 'Fulness'.

□

A Remnant Shall Return



This is the second in a series of articles.

by TED CRICK

A return movement of God has been going on in a general way over many generations, but there comes a point in time when this crystallises into a final all inclusive work of the Holy Spirit. If God allows his people to go into captivity because of their disobedience and unfaithfulness, it is not for their ultimate destruction, but for their deliverance through chastening and purifying. For this purpose he fixes a time limit, a period. In the

case of Israel it was seventy years, during which time God was working to cleanse and deliver a remnant from their idolatry.

The church likewise has had its long 'seventy years' of captivity and chastisement, but now, at the end of the age, at the end of its chastising era, a remnant must return to its first estate to build the latter house of glory. To fulfil the type and pattern of things in the earthly vessel Israel, the Lord must raise up again a people that know their God and are strong to do exploits.

How Shall The Remnant Return ?

This vital question demands a detailed answer, and once again we look to the scriptures and to the history of God's earthly people. There are several closely related factors involved, and a clear sequence of events to be noted.

Through Travail

Whenever the time has come for God to do a new thing in the earth in grace or judgment, his first need has been a man, or men, to see and understand what he is about to do. A man who will enter into deepest heart sympathy with, and become committed to, the revealed purpose of God. For this reason God says specifically in Amos 3:7 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets'. He revealed to Noah his intention to judge the earth, to Abraham his imminent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and to Moses his intention to deliver his people Israel. There are continual examples of this through Old and New Testament scriptures.

DANIEL...

The most significant example concerning our immediate subject is Daniel. This man, who was himself a pioneer, embodied in his life, not merely the survival, but the utter triumph of a remnant company.

At exactly the right moment of time God gave Daniel revelation concerning his purpose to gather a remnant people to the city of Jerusalem to rebuild his dwelling place. If Daniel had been in possession of Jeremiah's writings from the beginning, why was it he never understood before (he was now 87 years old) what seems to us to be plainly declared in Jeremiah 25: 11, 12 and 29:10; namely that after seventy years God would visit his people and bring them back again? This point merits consideration. The word of Daniel in chapter 9:2 'I Daniel understood by books' carries the force of perception; the Hebrew means to separate or distinguish. We can only perceive what God reveals when he reveals it.

Daniel received this revelation from God and it revolutionised his whole way of thinking, praying, and believing; for the time was at hand. It appears, chronologically speaking, that only two years elapsed from the time of this revelation until the decree of Cyrus to the Jews to go up and rebuild the temple. As Daniel was apparently still serving the king it would seem likely that Cyrus was influenced by Daniel in his decision.

... a man of prayer

Be that as it may, the vital matter is the effect upon Daniel, who set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes. Then

follows that mighty, remnant recovering prayer, surely a revelation of Holy Spirit intercession, that not only secured its immediate answer but brought the whole of heaven into co-operating activity. Gabriel himself came to instruct Daniel in matters concerning not only **his** day but right down to our time, and even to the end of this age.

A man entered into the travail of the Spirit of God with vision, understanding, boldness and assurance of God's will; with prayer and supplications beseeching God to fulfil his purpose. Daniel was so burdened that he could not eat, or be merry in outward form, until this burden was answered from heaven. It does not tell us how long he prayed or fasted on this occasion, but he stayed before God until he got his answer, and what an answer it was!

So it has ever been and so it is today. Revelation 12:1,2 is our counterpart today, the woman with child travelling in birth, and pained to be delivered. Daniel travelled for a child to be born, a remnant company that should return. He, like the woman of Revelation, could not go up. This work belongs to a new generation, a new vessel of God's forming. The travail is his, the prayers, the supplications, the fastings, the sackcloth and ashes, the burden is on his heart. Friends, when God has a travelling people like this in the church, then surely the time has come for a glorious return. Not to Jerusalem, not to Pentecost, but to that very filling with all the fulness of God for which Paul also bowed his knees and stormed the gates of heaven in his day. That prayer will surely find its full answer now in those who perceive these things, and set their faces and hearts to see them realised.

Through Leadership...

'And God sent me before you, to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance'. (Genesis 45:7 R.V.)

Every great recovery of God has been ushered in by men whom God has prepared for that hour and need. The present move is no exception. However, in the case of the church, God has from the beginning revealed the full nature of its leadership, which holds good until the work is completed. Ephesians 4 says that God gave 'some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting.... for the edifying of the body.... till we all come.... unto a perfect man.... unto the fulness of Christ'. We have not yet reached that perfection, that fulness, therefore the work of these ministries is not yet complete. Although we see little evidence of their presence in pure Holy Spirit power at the moment, these ministries must be restored by the Lord, in order that his purpose may be fulfilled.

Even though the prophets are mentioned second in this list, it is evident that the prophet's ministry is the key to the release of the others. If God does nothing except he reveals his secrets to his servants the prophets, then this recovery must first of all be heralded throughout the earth by a body of prophets raised up by God for this very purpose. There is always a prophetic instrument that goes before the Lord to prepare his ways, of whom John the Baptist and Elijah are supreme examples.

I have in my possession a copy of a prophecy written in the year 1619 that was found among the papers of Dr. Charles Price. In the course of this prophecy it is declared 'but a prophet,

and the most prophetic generation will the Most High raise up, who shall deliver my people.... Thus Moses, Joshua and Aaron may be considered types of some upon whom the same Spirit will come, yet in greater proportion. Whereby they shall make way for the ransomed to **return** to Zion, but none shall stand under God, but those who have become 'tried' stones after the pattern and similitude of Christ. This will be a fiery trial through which very few will be able to pass or bear up in it: Whereby the waiters for this visible breaking forth are strictly charged to hold fast, and wait together in the unity of pure love:'. .

...Leaders Who Suffer

This prophetic statement underlines the leading characteristics of every one called to remnant leadership. They are men and women whose lives have had the hand of God upon them from their mother's womb (note Samson especially in this connection), and whose lives have been under the restraint and discipline of God even when they knew him not (Jeremiah 1:5). They are vessels that have been through a life long experience of the purifying fires of God unto the hour of their ministry. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth', said Jesus to Pilate when his ministry reached its climax.

Men and women born for spiritual conflict, with a mind to suffer, able to walk lonely, misunderstood paths and to end their days in rejection if that be God's pathway. From this it can be seen how perfect and sovereign God's timing and ordering of events really is, for such ones must be born and prepared, pruned and disciplined, instructed and released at the moment which the crises demands.

JOSEPH...a man of vision

Joseph is such a leader, a man of vision from early years, vision of the throne, the triumph, the heavenliness of his calling, a man of priestly character and capacity, revealed by his robe of many colours. A man of great love for his father, able to suffer reproach willingly, able to endure, gifted with heavenly wisdom.

'He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant. His feet they hurt with fetters, he was laid in chains of iron, and his soul entered into the iron, until his word (to his cruel brothers) came true, the word of the Lord tried and tested him. The King sent and loosed him.... He made Joseph lord of his house' (Psalm 105:17-21 Amp.). Joseph said 'God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance,' (Genesis 45:7 R.V.) This to cruel brethren who had considered murdering him because of their hatred, to these very same ones he became a saviour and deliverer.

Who would choose such a ministry, who would volunteer? This is God's appointment and prerogative, but such a company, however few, he must have on the earth today.

MOSES...a man of meekness

Moses also was a man sovereignly born and protected, prepared and equipped for this ministry. When he first became aware of his life's calling, he felt able to accomplish it in his own misdirected way. He supposed his brethren would have understood how God by his hand would deliver them, but they understood not (Acts 7:25). No Moses! You must get out to your wilderness and learn God's ways. What volumes have been

written upon the breaking of pride in the human heart, what volumes could still be written. Utter meekness must characterise the man or woman that God would fully use in his work of delivering a people. 'Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth' (Numbers 12:3). He is the meekest of men after his lessons had been learnt. Before he went into the wilderness to have the self life dealt with at its roots, he would have driven Israel out of Egypt by force of character, by natural strength and strategies.

God gave him a flock of sheep, something he'd probably never handled before, and with them, under the hand of God, he learned that God's sheep must be led not driven. 'Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron' (Psalm 77:20). God could not have done that if Moses had not learned the divine art of shepherding in the wilderness. The occasion when God saw that this man was a fit vessel was when Moses led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God. (Exodus 3:1). In that one verse the whole life, character and calling of Moses are epitomised. Instead of supposing that he is the man to deliver God's people he is now quite sure that he is not. He argues with God 'Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?' (Exodus 3:11).

... a man of authority

Meekness leads to authority, authority springs out of meekness. In God's kingdom they are the two hinges upon which everything turns. Immediately God demonstrates the fitness of Moses to deliver his people, he gives him authority to do so. 'What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.' (Exodus 4:2).

Before this Moses had said to God in effect, 'what if I do go, they will not believe me, nor listen to my voice?' reflecting no doubt on his previous forty years. This is a very legitimate question indeed, how will they know? Why should they believe? Every man sent of God will be endowed with unmistakable heavenly authority and Moses must be no exception. The Hebrew word for 'rod' signifies 'a branch whether for correction, ruling, throwing as a lance, or walking as a support'. This rod which up to now had been used to guide the sheep, to correct them, and to rescue them from danger: wielded to slay a mauring wild animal when necessary, or to support the shepherd in his walking, is now seen to have an entirely new significance. When cast down upon the ground it became a writhing venomous serpent from which Moses fled. When picked up at the command of God it became a rod again, the emblem of divine authority.

'I have given you power... over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.' In the New Testament the rod of Moses becomes the spoken word of authority through this overcoming remnant. The true delivering company must actually possess this living authority, exercising it against the Pharaoh of this age for the deliverance of the people of God.

... a man of purity

To the preceding qualifications, God added a vital third, as symbolised in the following verses. 'Put your hand in your bosom' commanded God 'and it became as leprous as snow'. An unsanctified heart is thus abundantly proven. With what horror Moses must have gazed on that hand. 'Am I like that Lord? Is that how you see me?' That was how Isaiah felt when he saw the utter holiness and purity of God. 'Woe is me for I

am undone.' 'I'm finished Lord'. But wait. 'Moses put your hand back again.' This time it became clean, clear, the leprosy had gone. Those hands that had slain at least one man, and perhaps others, reflecting that fouled up leprous heart, were now pure. God worked a miracle of cleansing power according to his own promise 'a new heart also will I give you'. In that moment God cleansed his heart and his hands of sin and he became a vessel meet for the master's use.

In Exodus 4:8, these two vital incidents are called signs, the first and latter sign. If these were not believed by God's people, then Moses was commanded to demonstrate his authority by an act of judgment upon their water supply.

Meekness — Authority — Purity; Through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, these must be the evident marks of a delivering vessel ready for use in the hand of God.

Leaders Who Reign

We are seeking to follow this matter through step by step. Now we come to the crucial matter, how will this leadership function, what is its work? To answer these questions we are going to look at another Old Testament character who takes up the subject at this very juncture. King Hezekiah of Judah. This man was a great remnant leader. We are not shown anything of his earlier life, but it is clear that he had been through the school of preparation previously outlined for such men, and in due time, at the right moment, he was exalted to the throne.

HEZEKIAH...

When Hezekiah came to the throne, he faced a terrible, discouraging situation among the people of God. King Ahaz who had preceded him had been a very wicked king and had virtually turned the nation over to idolatry. He had literally closed the doors of the house of the Lord, and forced idol worship on the people. This is a very fair description of what is happening on every hand today, especially as current religious trends reach their full development.

To Hezekiah, as to Esther, it could well have been said 'maybe you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this'. Hezekiah came from a Godly line, his mother was Abijah whose name means 'my father is the Lord', his grandfather was Zechariah (remembrance of the Lord), who undoubtedly instructed Uzziah in the ways of God (2 Chronicles 26:5). Hezekiah means 'Jehovah has strengthened'.

...a man who opened doors

In the first month of his reign he opened the doors of the house of the Lord, (2 Chronicles 29:3). This is the first responsibility of a remnant leadership, to open up the doors of life. Jesus said 'I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.' How the devil has laboured, how he works today to close the door to life and fellowship with God. Notice there were doors, not one door, true, Jesus is the door, but there are many chambers to be opened. God has been doing this for centuries, but now Satan is attempting to rob the people of God of the blessing and fruit of many generations. Salvation through faith in the blood of Christ alone, is a door that God used

Luther to unfasten. The right and responsibility of every believer to priesthood status, this access God wonderfully used the Brethren to open in a past century. The baptism and fulness of the Holy Spirit for every believer, yet another entrance that God has unlocked. The door of authority and power in the name of Jesus over all his enemies, how Satan is battling to keep this one closed. All these, and other doors, the remnant leadership must open to the people of God, which necessitates that they themselves have first entered in.

...cleansed the temple

'Carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place' (2 Chronicles 29:5). Open up the doors, cleanse the sanctuary, to make it a fit place for God in His holiness to return. When Hezekiah moved boldly with God he found a company of Levites and priests ready to respond to the challenge. 'They gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came.... to cleanse the house of the Lord. And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord, to cleanse it.... they began on the first day of the month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the Lord.... in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.' (verses 15-17).

This speaks of a thorough and complete work beginning in the inner place, the holy place. This has been the work of the Spirit throughout this age, but we have allowed in so much that has made us unsuitable, unusable and unacceptable in the fullest measure. A cry comes from the heart of another great remnant servant, 'Having therefore these promises dearly beloved let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (the inner holy place) perfecting holiness in the fear of God'. This

is God's word to the living temple of the Holy Spirit. This is the supreme objective and the work of the Spirit of Holiness. This is why he has taken up his abode in a new and deeper measure in many open, hungry hearts, because our Lord Jesus has purposed to present to himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle.

'This is the law of the house' says Ezekiel, 'it shall be holy, cleansed and made holy.' True remnant leaders of God will be deeply involved in this work of the Spirit, where necessary using their God given authority to cleanse the temple of defilement. This relates particularly to the working of powers of darkness and evil spirits, for God will not share his temple with any other, or allow it to be defiled in his presence.

...restored worship

Now the purpose of the remnant leadership enters a glorious and positive phase. The setting in order of living worship. First the basis. The foundation of worship as set forth here in types of bulls and goats and animal blood, but only fully realised by those who know they have not been redeemed with the blood of bulls and goats, or with corruptible things such as silver and gold but by the precious blood of Christ. The quantities used here speak of the greatness of the appreciation of Christ by a re-gathered people.

'O Jesus, Lord Jesus, what a wonder you are.'

'You're precious, more precious than gold.'

'How great thou art! How great thou art!'

The sure mark of a move of the Spirit of God is that the Lord Jesus becomes just everything to our hearts, and love for him is kindled to a flame.

From this appreciation the songs begin to flow, the music rises, spirits are released, trumpets are sounded and pure worship flows. How little do we see or taste of this kind of worship today. Yet praise God, his Spirit is restoring worship of this order wherever he finds open and prepared hearts and it is an essential feature of every true recovery by God. Remnant leaders must be prepared to lead the way in this, as did Hezekiah. Even our Lord says he will do this. 'In the midst of the church will I sing thy praise', (Hebrews 2:12. R.V.).

...restored the burnt offering

It is from this background, in this atmosphere that the people of a willing heart offer their whole burnt offerings gladly. In Psalm 11:3 David says, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power', and here indeed is such a day. Not the sin offerings now with which the chapter began, but whole burnt offerings. A people out of quickened, gladdened hearts, rejoicing in a new found love. Presenting their bodies a living sacrifice to God, a glad response to his abounding grace and mercy. 'So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order. And Hezekiah rejoiced. and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly.'

My! what a day of rejoicing. What a reversal of the enemy's power. What an amazing spiritual transformation in a short space of time. The word 'suddenly' has the root meaning of 'instantly'. The same word is used in Malachi 3. 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple', but please note it was to a prepared people. 'God had prepared the people.' A remnant leadership is raised up for a prepared people, prepared by hunger, emptiness, famine, reproach, tears and cries to God.

'My messenger.... he shall prepare the way before me', (Malachi 3:1); 'To make ready a people prepared for the Lord' (Luke 1:17). God is preparing a people for the shining forth of his glory and praise in the earth today. Are you being prepared? Do you want to be? God will take you up this instant if this is truly your heart's desire.

Through Those Who Spread The Good News...

The spontaneous outcome of such joy and blessing is an immediate yearning and longing to share it with all of God's people. It is for them also, and like the lepers of old we must not hold our peace on a day of good tidings. If a few of us can enter into such fellowship, such communion and blessing, what will it be like when the whole body is in the same flow? The call must go out to the whole house of God, to all that have escaped out of the hand of the king of Assyria. (2 Chronicles 30:6).

So the message goes forth: God is doing a new thing. Come and see. Come and share. Come and partake from city to city, tribe to tribe, place to place, denomination to denomination. God is pouring out his Spirit, God is moving afresh. Come and dine. 'But they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them' (verse 10).

Beloved brothers and sisters, is not this the tragic situation today in many churches throughout our land. The need is desperate, the famine is great. Yet when the messengers go in with testimony after testimony of what God is doing, of the outpouring of his Spirit, of the availability of this gift for them, some mock, some pour scorn upon it with theological argument and traditional teachings, some are not willing to face the issues

involved. Very few receive the king's message or messenger.

Nevertheless, divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun, humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. The Amplified says 'Yet a few of Asher', (the word 'divers' simply indicates 'a mortal' man - Strong's Concordance). There were a few who were ready to humble themselves and enter into what God was doing.

...of the Spirit outpoured

Is not this the crux of the matter concerning the church today? Most, if not all of us, have had to humble ourselves and confess that we have been wrong, perhaps in many things, but especially with regard to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Many who have testified to the baptism of the Holy Spirit have been mocked, ridiculed, spoken against and generally avoided. Those of us who have entered into this rich provision of God, now find the same thing happening to us.

Here let me make a plea to any brothers and sisters who may read these pages whose attitude is one of adamant opposition to the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the gift of tongues, or any other precious gift of God's Spirit; or even to those who just tolerate these things or are indifferent to them. In a day when the church is in such desperate need of love, light, power and authority, be very careful not to close the door on the only One who has all the fulness of God to bestow upon his prepared people. We need to know the experience prayed upon the church by Paul, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.... That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.... filled with the Spirit' (Ephesians 3:17,19; 5:18).

The lack of the practical presence, government, and power of

the Holy Spirit in the life of every individual member of the body, has been the great cause of age-long weakness and defeat in the church. Again, let me emphasise at this point; this must be the ultimate point of restoration for the church in this age, in order to consummate God's plan for this dispensation of grace.

...of joy restored

It is also very instructive to note in verse 20 that, in connection with this wonderful move of God's Spirit, there was a mighty flowing forth of the power of God to heal the people (Hebrew for 'heal' - 'to make thoroughly whole'). Jehovah Rapha, according to his promise of Exodus 15:26 and 2 Chronicles 7:14. This also we are experiencing in world wide measure, and we should be looking to him to raise up many more of his children from beds of sickness. 'So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon.... there was not the like in Jerusalem' (2 Chronicles 30:26). Our Solomon took his seat on the throne at the right hand of God nearly 2000 years ago. His anointing in heaven flowed down to the earth (Psalm 133), and set the joy bells ringing, and established a glorious church. A church that has passed through many joyless, unanointed days since, through disobedience. Hezekiah the man strengthened by Jehovah, ushers in a period of triumphant recovery in almost the last days of the existing order of the kingdom. This is surely God's way and purpose for today. ■

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The other 'Introductory List' is made up of names sent in by regular readers of those whom they feel may be interested. These will receive two consecutive issues of the magazine. If they return the form sent with all introductory copies then they will be transferred to our 'Regular List', otherwise no further copies will be sent.

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