

The
Representative
Man

G. W. North

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First Published 1976

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The text

This edition is based on the texts of Mr North's books which first appeared on the website of Lanark Christian Fellowship many years ago.

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Contents

Birth.....	6
Increase	17
Grace	26
Anointing	38
Power	45
Ministry	62

Birth

To some it may be entirely new to think of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Representative Man. That He ever was and is the only begotten, eternal Son of God, and the only Saviour of men we devoutly believe; but that God also set Him forth as an Example unto all His people may be a completely new thought.

Men of grace understand clearly that no man is regenerated by following His example, or by trying to obey His teaching. Only as we trust implicitly and absolutely in His blood and all that He accomplished for us on the cross are we saved. Yet, once in this understanding and experience, we are subsequently pointed to the example of

Jesus' life, that, being born of God, we also may live unto our heavenly Father. Lesser men than Jesus, be they never so great and honourable, are not set forth by God to be our prime example; He is. With this in mind we will look into scripture to discover the man Christ Jesus as our Example.

Of the four Gospels, one is generally acknowledged to be the Gospel of the Son of Man, viz., the Gospel according to St. Luke. We will therefore turn to this Gospel and trace through its opening chapters something of the wonders of the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed there as a Man of the Spirit. Perhaps we have not sufficiently recognised that the Lord Jesus Christ was totally dependent on the Holy Spirit. As recorded in John's Gospel, He' Himself said that He was utterly dependent upon the Father. There never has been on earth a more totally dependent Man than Jesus Christ; He said

He could not do anything except His Father showed Him. Have you ever thought about that? He said, 'I can of my own self do nothing.' Never in all His earthly walk did He say, 'I'm God manifest in the flesh and I can do so and so and so.' As a matter of fact He said, 'My Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.' He also said that the actual words He spoke were not His own but the Father's; so humbly and gloriously did the Lord Jesus live a life of total dependence upon the Father.

Now He did all this by the Holy Spirit. No man can live this life of inward knowledge of the Father, in the same sense in which the Lord Jesus did, unless he also, as Jesus, recognises and is dependent upon the Holy Spirit. This is the real reason why the Holy Spirit came. He is the only One who can show us the way by which we can know the Father, and Jesus Christ whom He sent.

Firstly, we must learn how Jesus Christ, The Representative Man, the Son of God, became the earthly child of His heavenly Father by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The account of this happening is to be found in the familiar verses of the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 1: 26-35:— 'And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold,

thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost... There it is! 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.' That is how Jesus was born. He would not have been the Son of the Highest unless the power of the Highest by the Holy Spirit had come upon Mary. We must get that clear. The power of the Highest came upon Mary with the coming of the Holy Ghost upon her. A scripture elsewhere records that she was

found with child of the Holy Ghost. The angel also said, 'Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' Hallelujah! God took great pains to write this book of the New Testament, beloved. He never gave us any of it until the blood of His Son was shed. It may also be truly said that the Old Testament was written because Jesus was coming and would die for the sins of the whole world. It is as though every word was written with a pen dipped in His blood, and for that reason is precious beyond compare.

When we pause to think over the statement made by the angel, it is an amazing thing that he did not use the word 'babe' or 'child' with the word 'holy' when he was so obviously speaking of Jesus. The messenger said, 'holy thing.' How truly this Bible of ours keeps the great wonders of God ever freshly

before our eyes, that they may be applied to our hearts. For when Jesus was born, a holy thing was born also. God hereby introduced to men's understanding something entirely new and breathtakingly glorious; that new and holy thing has come to stay. Beyond substantiating in flesh and blood the union of God and man in the person of the Son, the holy thing that the Lord God has given unto us is the eternal truth of this unique conception, and birth, and life. It came at that time to stay forever in the Spirit. The secret working of the Spirit within us is a holy thing to be eternally treasured. The Lord God the Father has not only given unto man a Son by birth, but has also given birth to a wonderful new revelation, a marvellous holy thing superseding all else ever known by man. The Son and the holy thing are one; but except those within whom it is revealed no-one knows the sublime secret. No man can be a son of God unless he is born of the

Holy Spirit of God. That is how Jesus began in the flesh. The Holy Ghost. He had to begin on earth that way, and that is how we too must begin.

The Greek word translated in this verse as 'power' is the same word which is translated 'power' in Acts 1:8. There we are told, 'You shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you'; or better in the Greek (as here), 'You shall receive the power of Holy Spirit coming upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me.' (Jesus called Himself the Faithful and True Witness, in one of the letters in the opening chapters of the Revelation). The Holy Ghost came down upon that woman and God took over her fleshly abilities, overshadowing all her properties and potentials with the power of the Highest. Thereby this glorious Jesus Christ of God came forth into manhood in

our flesh. How unspeakably holy and precious this is.

Everybody has to begin here. To have and to live eternal life we all must know an experience at a definite time in life when the Holy Ghost comes on us, and we are born from above of the Holy Spirit. To this end God's overshadowing wings come upon us, and we are effectively cut off from all men as the Word of God is spoken to the inward sensibilities. When he is 'thus being honoured to receive the Word of God a man must attend to the Word of God alone; at that time he must pay no attention to what he feels, or what he thinks, or what mere men say or have said. All must know that this glorious birth from heaven is by the Holy Ghost exclusively. You may be sure that if the Son of God Himself had to start there, every son of man must start there too.

What a tremendous thing this is. It needs the power from on High to bring forth children of God. It is not by the oratory of men, or the knowledge of theology, or the doctrines under which he is brought up that a man is born; it is accomplished solely by the power of God coming upon a man or upon a woman. All began with the speaking of the word and the coming of the Holy Spirit; in 'this realm everything comes from the Holy Ghost. Amen!

There can be no doubt that the person of the Holy Ghost has been far too much neglected by us. It would be a tragedy if the Holy Ghost was as neglectful of us as we of Him. It is almost as though men think He ought not to be mentioned; or that all talk about Him must be abandoned in favour of Jesus Christ because it is wrong to talk about the Holy Ghost. It is a major tragedy in a person's life to be brought up under that

kind of preaching. For decades if not centuries, it seems, men have been deadly scared to mention the Holy Ghost lest to do so should be to rob the Lord Jesus of His rightful glory; whereas, in order that man should behold His glory as the only begotten of the Father, the angel said to Mary, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon you.' Similarly, when He comes on men today, that which is formed in them shall be called Jesus, the Son of God. Glory be to God in the Highest. What a favour then is bestowed upon us that such a holy thing should be to mortal man. When the Holy Ghost comes upon a man (or a woman) with the power of the Highest, making all within gloriously new, he finds that he is in Christ and Christ in him; he is a new creation. From that moment onwards, everything is of God; old things are passed away, and all things within are new and truly glorious. When a man is brought there he has made a good beginning, but it

is only a beginning. Sadly enough, some people seem to get as far as that and then make a withdrawal or a stop, whereas one of the reasons why we have the precious Bible is to reveal unto us that God makes a pointed start and goes right through to an appointed end.

Increase

The next point of importance is disclosed to us in the second chapter. Speaking of Jesus, it says in v. 40, 'The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit.' He came from the Spirit so, not surprisingly, He waxed strong in His spirit. Growth is important, but to wax strong in spirit is equally important. Growth into weakness is of no value: growth must be with and unto strength. 'Big and strong' is a testimony of health, and is surely the way

of the Holy Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus was born to be great, and, understanding rightly what life is all about, so are we. If every son of God by new birth could only see into what God has for him in the future, he would gladly forsake everything else on earth in order to attain it. The unparalleled greatness of God's destiny for us on earth is so wonderful that if we knew all its fullness we would have no more collusion with this world at all. We would gladly say with Paul, 'I am dead to the world and it is dead to me.' We would not want to sin again, or make allowance for or feed the fleshly appetites, or waste money or spend time to accumulate possessions in this world any more. God's desire is that we should be so absorbed with HIM and His desires for us, that we should give all attention to the need to grow stronger and stronger unto all

greatness in Spirit. He has made every provision for it, and sent the Spirit for that purpose.

Earlier in the chapter we see something of this greatness to which the child of the Spirit is predestined in this life. Again it is the Holy Spirit who is authorising and inspiring the truth about the Lord Jesus, through the lips of Simeon, v. 32, 'A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory....., This was added to by the prophetess Anna who 'spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption.' So we see that He was to be both a light and the glory before the eyes of all those who were looking for redemption. Now, as then, there are many who are looking for redemption. But how shall they see without a light, and how shall there be light without glory, and how shall men in darkness and shame know redemption sufficiently to want it, if there be no light and glory in the world?

Matt. 5:14, Phil. 2:15, Romans 8: 30. God has called us with the high and holy calling of sons, having predestined us unto it whilst here on earth. Aspire with all your heart to this position, wax strong in spirit and grow up into it as did your Lord.

How you develop physically is not of chiefest importance. We are told in scripture that bodily exercise only profiteth little, or for a little (time). Grow strong in spirit; be filled with wisdom; and let grace be the mark of your person and presence during this period. Strength; growth; these two go together and so do wisdom and grace. Wisdom apart from grace makes a child precocious, unbearable, proud, so these two must go together also. Grace poured into the life causes a man of wisdom and understanding to speak and act with concern for the ignorant, and the weak, and the dwarfed. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all

the babes born of the Spirit on the upward way to manhood and true power had grown this way, into this kind of youth? God has a great future on this earth for us all, beloved.

One of the greatest tragedies of our day is that many want to become men before they are youths (or, for that matter, even before they are born), and are wishing to run before they can walk. The Holy Spirit comes, doing a marvellous work in them, but then inadvisably the axiom 'Saved to Serve' is forced on them. Something so true in principle is thus propounded to them to their hurt.

Consequently, poor babes in their 'napkins' are pushed out prematurely to do some 'service' or 'work' when they are hardly able to walk, leave alone to serve as they should or would. But when Jesus was born He was not directly pushed out, while still a babe, to serve men. Father knew that was not right,

so He did not expect it of His Son; neither does He expect it from His lesser sons. Time for growth into a strong, healthy, wise and gracious spirit would have prevented many, many people from becoming spiritual and psychological wreckage. Many men and women lie out on the scrap heap today, broken; smashed; because these things we see so plainly written of our Lord and Saviour have been ignored. Hot-headed men with ill-conceived advice have led many to an untimely end in this way. 'Not a novice,' says Paul, 'not a novice.'

Oh, if only we had properly understood the sanity of the whole principle of growth and development and maturity underlying such instruction, we would not have acted so hastily or pressed so hard upon babes to serve. Before we talk about 'power for service,' let us dwell and insist upon the true work of the Spirit in the life of a man. Let us

be more keen to see a man filled with wisdom and have the grace of God upon him, than to see him serving on dizzy peaks of 'power'. We had better be 'strong' than 'powerful'. Only the strong can bear power. Only the wise know how to use it. Only the gracious can be trusted with it. To be filled with the wisdom of the Spirit is better than to be filled with the power. The order of scripture and in the person of Jesus is the true one. For Him the power ministry was deferred in favour of His growth.

Development into all the proper God/man's indispensable spiritual qualities by far precedes in importance any works of power. Grace is to bring us up into manhood. Its presence and work must mark our developing years, as well as originally bring us to truth. Grace is shown to us in order that it might be revealed to men, having already worked, and still working in us.

'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world,' has done so in order 'that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.' This is the thing we must understand. We are to "be' before we may 'do' or 'go' or 'work'. We must grow in grace; the blessings, the favours, the wonders of God. O beloved, are you giving attention to this? If you only knew it, the Divine favour is toward you in all situations and conditions. Think of this — the Son of God had to go grubbing about on the floor of a carpenter's workroom. Think of it. Jesus did that. Praise Him! I bless God that He did not send forth some jumped up young 'jackanapes' who was thinking he was going to convert the world in five minutes. Father left Him back there in Nazareth that He should grow, and get strong in Spirit, and

be wise and gracious at home. Because they receive a gift, some people think they are going to convert everybody with it. The thing for us to realise about all this is that the Lord Himself had to abide content and lowly in spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that counts. You realise, don't you, beloved, that everything vital about you is in and of the Spirit? It is there, in the end, where you will have to take your stand; there, first and last, is where you must be strong. In the course of life, when the tides are running against you and the devil is fighting hard and all sorts of unaccountable things are happening, it is in the Spirit where you will have to make your stand, and standing, be strong, and wise, and gracious to all. We shall presently see the benefit of this period of private development in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Grace

The next lesson we are afforded from this examination of the earthly life of our Lord is to be found in this same chapter, v. 41:—
'Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them

questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. And when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them. And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.'

Let us here notice one of those exquisite touches of the Holy Spirit which make the written Word of God so delightful to all His people. 'Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.. .

And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it... And when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' (vv. 41, 43, 48, 49). It is evident that by the time Jesus was twelve years of age the family of Nazareth had become a little palace of love. It seems that Joseph had been accepted by Jesus even as Joseph had accepted Him. What a blessing is acceptance, and by contrast what a desperate pity is rejection. Joseph and Mary are called Jesus' parents. Perhaps Jesus had even been calling him 'Daddy,' even though He knew positively well that Joseph was not His father. The Holy Spirit makes this quite

plain in v. 43 where we see the distinction finely drawn by Him, 'Joseph and His mother.' She was His mother but he was not Jesus' father. Searching for and discovering the boy sitting in the temple among the doctors of the Law, we find Mary saying, 'Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.' But to this the child Jesus, with absolute clarity of understanding, replies, 'How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' Perhaps they did not understand what He was meaning.

Quite firmly and politely Jesus was correcting the trend and implications of family jargon. It was fitting that He should be a son of the household at Nazareth, but He knew also that, at the very moment in which they found Him, He was sitting in His true Father's House, and that both in it and for it He had a special work to do at a future

date. Yet how graciously He uses His wisdom and strength. How wisely and gently He corrects the mistake. Even at this stage of His growth, His strength and wisdom and grace already appear in all their glory as He states the truth. He spoke truth in love: that is grace. He was strong to withstand error, but gracious to avoid the sin of adopting a wrong attitude, which latter sad state is the arrogance of knowledge. His Father's business was not carpentry, even though He had devised the cross. But Joseph was not hurt by such grace; neither was Mary offended by the implied rebuke; and He was only twelve. How long is it since you were born again? Are you conscious you have been born again and are alive for a purpose? 'I must be about my Father's business,' He said, but He was not yet allowed to do the work for which He knew He was born. For another eighteen years He had to go back to

Nazareth and do a mundane job properly there. Amen!

He was already a great teacher with a marvellous future as a public figure, but He was not sent to anything other than the normal Rabbinical School. Not the way of publicity for Jesus. He had to go back to the carpenter's bench, and there learn skill and life poking about with bits of wood and finding how things fit together in a world other than spiritual. As v. 51 so aptly says, He learned all these things right down there at home in subjection to His parents, where every young man ought to be in order to learn how to live and work. Oh God, we do need to get these things right and to straighten out our thinking; Thou knowest! Mary and Joseph did not understand what He was saying, but nevertheless He went down with them to Nazareth and the carpenter's shop and was subject unto them

there at home. Thus He gave Himself to the next eighteen years of obscure growth; and thereby, we read, 'Jesus increased.' By going down with them and being subject to them He increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. That is the way to increase. He had grown but He grew more; He was strong but He got stronger; He was wise but He needed to get wiser; He already had unmerited favour upon Him, and yet how much more gracious He became.

Apparently, getting 'down' to work and being in subjection is God's method of increase. It may have been thought that increase is only in or by what is called 'the ministry'. Many young men think (and say to an older brother), 'I'd love to go round with you, brother, I would like to serve my apprenticeship with you.' Then come knowledgeable quotes, related to Bible texts, such as, 'He sent them out two by

two'; or, 'Paul had a party of brethren with him'; or again, 'Paul took young Timothy with him.' There are so many quotable scriptures, correct enough in all conscience; but Jesus went down and was subject to Joseph and Mary.

Go home and learn to be lowly, humble, teachable, obedient. Be shown how to stick one bit of wood in another. Learn how to be patient with lumps of timber, for if you can master the art of living piously with your family and working skilfully in the occupation God has chosen for you, you will become more or less basically qualified to do all the other things He plans for you in the future. Learn to be a good son. When God sent forth His Son He sent forth a Man! Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man. If I could whisper in the ears of leaders of fellowships and churches and ask, 'Who among you has

increased in wisdom and stature and favour with God and man,' I wonder who would be the ones named? Do you think it would be the spectacularly gifted ones who would be listed? I wonder!

When God begins a work in a man He perfects it. When you start in the Spirit you have to stay in the Spirit. Jesus was in and never out of the Spirit. Turn to Galatians 3, v. 1, and you will find this word: 'O foolish Galatians, Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before Whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?' Many are so bewitched, they stop running, or get off course. Jesus did not do that. It is unthinkable, but if Jesus Christ the boy of

twelve had insisted on His independence and said, 'I'm going to be about my Father's business; goodbye Mary and goodbye Joseph, I'm going out preaching,' everybody standing around with their mouths wide open listening to this marvellous boy might have thought it wonderful and said, 'Hallelujah!' But if He had gone then He would have been in sin; abhorrent as the thought is, He would have been in the flesh as surely as His name was Jesus.

What a tremendous thing this is then, beloved. Having begun in the Spirit, stay in the Spirit. Walk in glorious obedience and subjection. See that you increase in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God 'and man. Not that by so doing you are trying to curry favour with anyone — a man must die to all such vanities — but that the unmistakable sweetness and glory, which only comes upon the man who abides

exclusively in the grace of God, may be with you. When this grace of God is upon you, every look, word, thought and deed will 'be grace. This is that in which Jesus had to grow. Primarily, He 'had to go out into the world to be the Man of grace, and this He later did, so that afterwards men could write of Him, 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.' O, 'hallelujah, all must be of and in and by grace! Grace must be upon you, so that everything is in grace and of grace, and ministered to a man as favour from God without condescension. Oh, when you preach to men let it be favour to them. When you put your hand on them 'and tell the demon to come out of them, and when you put your hand on them 'to be healed, it is again favour to them; and when you go into their home it is favour to them, and all from God. Not that when staying in anyone's home you are to be a horribly ingratiating person; everybody knows you are a sinner if

you do that. The naturalness of you is to be grace, because it has been your babyhood and your boyhood and has become your manhood. Make no 'mistake about it, he is no man of 'God except he has the grace of God upon him. Just to hear such a one speak brings grace to the ears, and to look upon his face is a gracious benediction of God. There are no thunderclouds of inward storms there, his heart is at rest, and nothing but the glory of the Spirit and power of God is in him, developing his soul and bringing him into all the inward states of the Life that was Jesus Christ manifest in the flesh. Sin and unholiness and fleshliness and worldliness cannot be there. Whether you bend and pick up a shaving from the floor, or whether you go and speak a word or give a command in the midst of men, or whether you sit and teach the doctors or whatever you do, all must be in and by the favour of this God-granted life. A human being is far

more than a sermon; God speaks in a son. That is more than a gift of the Spirit, or a miracle, or a blessing. A babe and son and man of the Spirit is what the Father seeks to make everyone. Know this, that because the glorious and splendid One, Who is our rightful, only, final, and highest Example lived like that, so must we.

Anointing

Now we will turn to the next thing by which we shall learn more of our blessed Lord. In Luke 3:1-2, we have an insight into the heart of God and Luke, and are privileged to enjoy the flavour of real Bible humour. Here is set forth a list of names, beginning with the Emperor and passing down from him through kings and priests of local importance and renown. All the royal,

governmental and religious power of that New Testament world is here represented, but instead of informing them, quite deliberately, 'the Word of God came unto John . . . in the wilderness.' It did not come to Caesar, nor any of these other men, but to John, a man filled with the Holy Ghost. Everything to do with this life of Jesus is of HIM, the Holy Ghost. Now that is typical of God. Do you see the pattern? Can you see the majestic sweetness of Him? Tiberias Caesar may be exalted in his imperial majesty and adulated in his worldly status among men, but God will pass him by when He would send His Word, leaving him in the sandy desert of his court. The man to whom the Word of God comes, though he be clothed with a leathern girdle and a camel skin and eat wild honey and locusts, will stand up as in the heavenly palaces and become the flaming power of God to his generation. That is what will happen, end

praise God for it. This is how it always happens, for it is part of the whole principle and pattern of God's ways. In much the same way it all happened to a Man scraping up shavings from a carpenter's floor in Nazareth when He was about thirty years of age — Jesus the Son of God. That is the way God does it. This John came out of the depths of the desert unto Jordan preaching the Word, whilst all the celebrities were talking worldly wisdom or religious jargon. To John went out multitudes of people, to hear the Word and to be baptised of him; and among them came Jesus, the Son of God, born of the Spirit. He was about to experience a further gift from His Father, which was as necessary to Him for His life work and redemptive act, as was His birth for His life on earth.

We are distinctly told by the Lord Jesus Himself what happened to Him in Jordan.

The Holy Ghost through Luke has faithfully recorded the words for us in chapter 4, v. 18; Jesus says, 'The Lord... hath anointed me.' It is of greater importance than at first may be realised that we fully understand what took place in Jordan. To deal with all at this time is not our purpose. We will simply note that only physically was Jesus baptised, and that in water; spiritually He was not baptised, but anointed. He was not baptised in Spirit because He did not need to be; He was not a sinner. He had no sins to confess, for He did not sin. Let that sink deep, deep down into your heart. The baptism with or in the Holy Spirit deals with sin. The thorough immersion of the entire being in the Holy Ghost is God's remedy for all sin. Every person needs to be baptised, dipped down and held in the Holy Ghost; so that the blessed fiery Spirit should burn the rottenness of sin out of the very marrow of the bones of his inward man. But that done,

he still needs to be anointed with the Spirit as was Jesus

Our experience of baptism in the Spirit was equated in the person of the Lord with birth. Birth and baptism are one. His generation into flesh was by a type of baptism in Spirit, taking place in His mother Mary, whereby the sin factor present in human procreation was effectively screened from being transmitted to Him. His generation is equated in us with regeneration. It is our comparable experience. But behold, being born of the Spirit as He was, He did not suddenly at thirty years of age say, 'Well, I'm thirty years old, it's time I got out and did something in the world; please pray for me, I'm going out to evangelise, or to be a missionary.' Even Jesus could not do that. But the terrible tragedy is that so many lesser sons than He do just that. Jesus did not just decide He could be a minister or

preacher sent from heaven. He had to wait till He was anointed. Who is it that decides how and when a man should become a minister? None but the Father, as in Jesus' case, anointing Him with the Holy Ghost for the purpose. Although He was eager to serve while still only twelve years of age He had to commence His schooling in scriptures instead. By the time He was fifteen He must have been well read in the Word and about the most qualified person on earth to teach the Bible. But the Lord God, His Father, did not send Him out to become a Bible Teacher. He had not come to teach the Bible; He had come to teach us God. There are not many teachers doing that today. So many are teaching the Bible in one way or another, but who among men is teaching us God by life and revelation?

Example before ministry is God's order. Jesus had to stand in Jordan, praying into an

opened heaven, whence in response to His prayer the tender Spirit descended dove-like upon Him; He had to receive the Anointing for His ministry, and hear His approving Father say, 'Thou art My beloved Son.' Father was ever so pleased with HIM; sufficiently so, apparently, to let Him be about Father's business as He had always wished. He could send Him now, even to the ends of the earth if He so desired. He could now go on to His nearing doom, but three years away in time. When Father is pleased with a man He can send him to the biggest heartbreak of his life; to betrayal, treachery, death; anything.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if, after you have lived thirty years in the Spirit, the Father could say to you, 'I'm pleased with you, son.' What a life you must already have lived in order for such a commendation. Bless God! O grant that it may be so of everyone of us.

This occasion in the life of Jesus is the only one upon which the Holy Ghost is seen in bodily form. He comes down as a dove upon the Lamb and John sees Him settle onto the glorious person of the Lord Jesus. The prophet's wondering eyes, filled with amazement, continue to watch steadily, as the dove, remaining there, loses its own distinctive form and becomes absorbed into the waiting person of the Son, and disappears from view. His distinctive form melts away, but His presence and power remain. Such a Man as this, under this glorious, extra, permanent and heavenly anointing may now go Out into the ministry of God.

Power

But not yet; not quite yet, for in the life of the Representative Man everything had to be just perfect. At the beginning of the chapter and directly following the record of His baptism and anointing we read, 'And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost....' There it is. So we learn by this that the Holy Spirit's fullness has not reached its greatest degree and dimension and possibility in any of us until we are anointed. He was the Child of the Spirit. He was anointed of the Spirit. He was full of the Holy Ghost. Let us be very honest now. How many men of our acquaintance are full of the Holy Spirit according to this standard? His is the standard. God's only standard is Jesus. There He is, set forth before us full of the Holy Ghost, with Father saying, 'I'm ever so pleased with you, Son.' Bless the Name of the Lord.

I want this precious One to bring me out of all my lack, and out of all the littlenesses of men, that would scale me down to something dwarf-like while preaching greatness to me, saying that is What is meant by being filled. I need someone to raise up my heart and send it soaring up and away unto the ideal of God — Jesus. I do not want anything less. If I have anything less it can only be allowed in me temporarily as a stepping-stone to this. But I do not want to stop there. If I be less than God's man it may only be permitted because in the time-order of growth I must have a beginning. But there must also be a growing; and, oh, I must have a going on and up into all the fullness of God. Amen! Father, be pleased with me. Oh, to wrap my arms around Father's neck and love and love Him, and be pleased with Him and He with me. How can a man wish for anything better? The inner craving to be about Father's business always arrives at a

point of culmination, a moment when it is brought to fullness. God always brings a man to a place where He pours forth from heaven upon him in sacred anointing, when the lovely Dove-Spirit comes down upon him, and his empowering is all from that Dove. Empowering is hereby seen to be by gentleness added to gentleness, grace upon grace, power coming upon power, Spirit coming upon Spirit, God coming upon God. Hallelujah! This is the thing that God is after in each life. The Holy Ghost lost the distinctive shape of the Dove and took the form of a man, even Jesus. Glory be to God. Why do we all live and breathe if not for this?

Excepting this event we are not told anywhere that Jesus was full of the Holy Ghost. This is not to suggest that He was not full of the Spirit either before or after this remark, but to point out the precise and

special things that take place in a person at such time. God is especially drawing our attention to the fact that Jesus was a Spirit-filled person at that time; and now, filled, anointed, He returns from Jordan, 'and was led by the Spirit.' In these words is revealed to us the secret of a fully-used life; 'led by the Spirit.' Many people today are seeking guidance. Among the most popular books upon Christian bookstalls are those about guidance. All men seek guidance. Many are the requests that come seeking prayer for guidance. Jesus did not need guidance; when He was filled with the Spirit, He was led of the Spirit. From that moment His path was assured. He was to be the Way. Born; filled; anointed; led. That is the order of truth. The feature of Jesus' life following His anointing was the leading of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost comes to be Leader. When He comes to us He comes in Jesus' name to bring leadership to our lives. Failure to

understand this fundamental point has resulted in much squandering of life and time, beside dissipation of power. On all sides from people seeking guidance one hears such expressions as, 'I have put out a fleece.' Apparently a place has been reached where guidance is needed before another step be taken, so in some way or another something is laid out in much the same way as Gideon of old laid out his famous fleece because he needed assurance about God's word. It seems everybody has a fleece out. One man (and that in the old covenant, mark you) put out a fleece, and apparently set the fashion for all time — for all God's children. They think this is a good, proper, scriptural way to receive spiritual guidance. But he who needs this kind of guidance lacks leadership. It seems that with the coming of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost all such extraneous means of guidance passed away. Certainly the reference to casting lots

in Acts 1: 26 seems to be the final one in the entire Bible. The reason for this is that guidance is usually dependent upon outward 'signs', 'words', etc., but leadership is from within. The Holy Ghost guides from within, leading with power from the inward man. The Lord Jesus is both our Leader and Example in this. We must look to Him, not to the Old Testament examples, great as they were.

Reading that verse in Isaiah 53, which says 'He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter,' we may conjure up visions of horrible men leading Jesus on to death. But He was not really led of them, He was led of the Spirit. That He was led by those 'awful' Roman soldiers was purely of secondary importance. He was led by the Spirit as a Lamb to the slaughter. No wonder His Father had insisted that in those days of youth He stay in Nazareth and grow in grace

and wisdom and be strong in Spirit. Let us see and understand this very clearly. Too many people are wanting to push out too many others before they are strong enough to go, with the result that they crack up or break down. So many pitiful wrecks are to be found strung out round the world, smashed and ruined, because these great cardinal truths have not been recognised.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about this leadership is where the Spirit led HIM. It may be that we have never seen that the Holy Ghost sometimes leads into the wilderness. What He never does is lead us into the wilderness of sin nor leave us in the wilderness of carnality, but He does at some time lead all God's sons unto the wilderness of temptation, a place of conflict with and victory over the devil. We are not led of the Spirit and lost in the wilderness at the same time. Jesus was not lost, or going round in

frustrating circles in the wilderness, but led of the Spirit to accomplish the next thing chosen by His Father for Him to do.

Forty days and forty nights He was there with the wild beasts. Tempted, tempted, tempted; no food day in, day out: in the presence of wild beasts and under the power of the devil. But how can this be? The Spirit-filled Son of God; surrounded by wild beasts; 'that cannot be right,' one is tempted to think. But it was right. For the next few years He was always to have wild beasts around Him, and in far worse conditions than these, and the beasts were to be men; human beings existing in a spiritual wilderness. Look at Peter. Look at Judas. Listen to John, the beloved disciple, talking like a son of thunder and saying in effect, 'Let's kill them; let's call down fire from heaven; that's the way, let's blast a way through for our Lord.' These were the

favoured apostles, chosen to be the foundation of the Church. Further, He was absolutely surrounded by wild beasts on the cross. Psalm 22, with reference to His cross, speaks of bulls of Bashan and unicorns. All His life He was hounded by Herod, a man that was a fox. So a Lamb went out with the wild beasts and proved that all the wild beasts could not eat Him, nor men touch Him, for the gentle, tender Dove was upon Him and in Him. Hallelujah! All this time He was learning obedience. He was still full of the Spirit out there in the wilderness. He had been led there by the Spirit for those forty days of terrible testing that culminated in the three great temptations which summed up and pointed all the devil could at that time level at Him. This is why He went out there all alone except for God. He must meet the devil and defeat him for the purposes of the ministry to which He was called and which He must fulfil. It was all in

order that the Man in whom God is well-pleased should enter the ministry having personally defeated that old serpent the devil, for in the course of that ministry He had to be able to say to demons, 'Come out,' and be sure that they would come out of their victims. And this is precisely what did happen. His ministry in this field was really only a mopping-up campaign. He had won the decisive battle out in the wilderness; the dragon had been overcome there. This is why you never read of Jesus saying to a demon, 'I bind your power,' or some such thing. He bound it in the wilderness long before He attempted to loose people in the land. He bound the strong man in the desert. He says that you cannot get into a strong man's house until you first bind the strong man. It is truth. So He went out there and bound the strong man. He went to the cross finally and destroyed him, the Hebrews' letter says — 'He destroyed him

that had the power of death '—but in the wilderness He bound him that had the power of bringing sicknesses, and diseases, and dementia, and lunacy, and depressions, and darkneses on people.

In this ministry He was a Man full of the Holy Ghost, dictating to the devil. You may say, 'But surely He did this because He was God.' Yes, that is quite right, but God humbled Himself, to teach us how every man should do it. He humbled Himself, we are told, and took upon Himself the form of a slave.

'Being found in fashion as a man' He did not go around saying, 'Look here, I'm God!' His favourite description of Himself was 'Son of Man.' Jesus Christ did everything as a Man by the same means by which men like you and I can do it. He was born of the Spirit; anointed by the Spirit; full of the Spirit; led by the Spirit; and by the Spirit victorious over that great opposing spirit, the devil.

That is how you and I can do it. We all can do it providing we will go God's way.

At this point let us pause to gather comfort for our souls in contemplation of the ways and experiences of this wonderful God-Man. When we are sorely tormented, and tossed, and tried, and not knowing which way to look or where to turn, remember Jesus. It may not be generally realised that our blessed Lord, during the time of these awful tests at the devil's hands, was actually under Satan's power, but He was. Who carried Jesus away and put Him on a pinnacle of the temple? None other than the devil. Jesus did not go there Himself. We are not told that angels took Him there, and He most certainly did not climb that pinnacle Himself. It says that the devil set Him on that pinnacle of the temple. It is astonishing to believe that He was actually under the power of Satan for that purpose. Do not

read too much into it but believe what the scripture says. The devil put Him there, your Bible says so. The devil also took Him up into an exceedingly high mountain; not in His imagination; there is nothing imaginary about this thing, it was actual. See! When the devil got Jesus there upon that temple steeple he said, 'Cast yourself down.' In other words Jesus was at that moment tempted by the devil to commit suicide!

'Go on,' says the devil to many a man, 'cast yourself down, destroy yourself.' We know how the devil falsified the word originally intended as blessing to us from God; he did it oh so subtly; he just omitted a few vital words from the original promise, that is all. It sounded right but it was wrong. But even if the devil actually quotes the word of God verbatim it is still wrong, because it is he who is quoting it. Do not make too much of it if in quoting the Bible you accidentally

leave out a word or two; it is the deliberate omission or addition of words that is wrong. This was evil; because as well as being manipulated it was quoted from a wrong motive in the heart of him who said it. It is the motive in the heart and the end in view that decides what is really being said, and whose word it is, God's or the devil's. The spirit in which a thing is said, the attitude of the heart, is the deciding factor as to what is meant.

But the glory of all this is that at the vital point of decision, the precise moment preceding the end in view or the action aimed at, Jesus said, 'No.' In this He has given us the example and shown us the way to act in temptation. When the tempter's power is strong and we are being powerfully operated upon by him, and seem irresistibly borne along under his will to terrible depths of sin, or heights of pride or desire, the sin

has not marked us if at the crucial moment we say 'No.' Temptation has no meaning and is of no value unless it has power to attract or impel or carry toward the object of desire. But having accomplished this it has not yet become sin in us. Our will and consent must be procured in the matter before sin is either practised or imputed. The Lord Jesus is our example here. So the devil left Him. Apparently on top of the temple. How He got down we are not told. But we do know that angels came and ministered to Him, so perhaps they got Him down. The devil had tempted the Lord to step outside the angels' charge over Him, and had He obeyed Satan He would have missed the true angelic ministry. By presuming to act as though He could not fail to have it He would surely have lost it. The ministry of angels is for people who live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, and are led of the Spirit. Amen! All heaven's hosts crowd

around to minister to the sons of God. What a glorious thing this is! Abiding there, how safe you are.

We will proceed one step further and see the end of this great truth, in verses 13 and 14. 'When the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit.' There is the word again, 'the power' (Greek — 'dunamis'). After that He was the Man of power among men. Hast thou power? Jesus' first use of power was to bind the devil. That is the example set by Jesus; first render the devil impotent to prevent your works. How far reaching all this is. How many of us have done it? We will not resort to any 'trumpet-blowing', but how many of us have done it? Herein lies the secret of the successful ministry of Jesus; this was how He got glory on earth among men. This is the truth, the way and

the Life of the Spirit of God as set forth by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ministry

Let us observe Him now as He returns in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. We read that His fame goes out through all the region round about. 'And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.' How truly He has earned it. In any man wisdom, grace, power deserve fame, especially when he has defeated the devil. So He goes home to Nazareth. That is the place to go when you are talking of wisdom, grace and power; go to the place where you have been brought up. It is there first you must stand the test and show that you are full of the power of the Spirit. 'I've got the power,' says someone, 'I'm going out to the Amazon!'

The first place to Visit, beloved, is your Nazareth. They will know there whether or not you have the power. Perhaps before any of us try miracles we ought to try something like this. He went back to the place where He had been brought up and everybody knew Him. He had lived with them, so to them He had to return; He went home; it is as simple as that. Going back among the people that knew Him, in the power of the Spirit, it was soon clear to all that this power He now had was utterly consistent with the grace that had been upon Him all His life.

Now, one of the first things to learn about the use of power is apparently the correct way to interpret and relate the scriptures to oneself. He comes to Nazareth (v. 16), 'Where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book

of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor." One can almost hear Him saying, 'I've been longing to do it for these years, but now I come in the Spirit of the Lord to do so.' He stood there, anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, wanting to heal the broken-hearted, ready to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those that were bruised. Oh, how willing He was to preach the acceptable year of the Lord to them, and now the moment had arrived! When he had read this scripture the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him (v. 20). Not on the Bible, note, but on Him. He closed the book; not finally for all time, but finally for that occasion. He opened it again afterwards, of course, because the book was

written about Him. But the words and the action were significant enough to cause the eyes of everybody in the synagogue to fasten upon HIM; watching, and listening, and waiting. 'He began to say unto them, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.'" That, just that, is what every Spirit-anointed man must be able to do. He was fulfilling the scripture; the word in flesh right there in their presence, able to do the thing He read, their eyes and ears being witness that He had said it. Herein lies the essence of all Bible reading in public by such men. We must learn to take up scripture more for its application to the needs of the moment and its fulfilment in men than for our summarising, or preaching, or teaching. The Spirit-born, -filled, -anointed, -led, -empowered man is the man who fulfils scripture. That, primarily, is His ministry.

One night, following a meeting in a room, two young ladies remained behind after everyone else had gone. Both had demons in them. One knelt for ministry, and as the demon left her she screamed as much in terror as under the torment of the horrible thing that had been indwelling her. The other girl, sitting and watching, was absolutely terrified. She had never seen or heard anything like it before. She could have been told, 'This day is scripture being fulfilled in your ears!' This is what happened when Jesus moved amongst men and women. It is true scriptural ministry. Jesus did not stand up and preach a sermon to them in Nazareth, He just read scripture and said, 'Now this is fulfilled.' Beloved, if you are a preacher of the word, fulfil it in the eyes and ears of the congregation. This is what Spirit-filled men will do. Fulfil the word. Unless it is fulfilled, both the scriptures and all you say will be thought to

be empty words. All must be completely filled out by a life: and only the Spirit-empowered life can do that. The letter kills; only the Spirit gives life.

From Nazareth Jesus went out over that land on a mission of fulfilment; he opened the eyes of the blind, delivered the captives, and ministered to the broken-hearted; because He was so full Himself He could fulfil scripture to them. Do you see Him as His heart goes out to that poor woman following the corpse of the son who is borne dead (as his father before him) to the grave? Imagine the infinite compassion of this Man of the Spirit as He halts the funeral procession, raises the young man from the dead and gives him back to his mother; Jesus' own mother was a widow, and He was her eldest son! Heart-healing is the most wonderful ministry. Have you got such a desire and ministry to build Father's House?

Have you met anyone like a man who is really anointed and filled with the Spirit of God, living and moving in power and compassion? Have you ever met a man like Jesus? Have you? He came back in the power of the Spirit from His victory over Satan. He was full. He had always been full of grace it seems. He had been growing and 'increasing in that for thirty years. Now for three years He was going to move in 'the power'. In those three years He swept over His country like fire from heaven. Oh, God raise up such ministers! Where are they? Put down all others, Lord; put them down. We need men and women filled with the Spirit of God moving only in the leadings of the Spirit.

Maybe it is strange to us today that the assertions Jesus made at Nazareth should evoke such murderous thoughts in His neighbours' hearts. But people do not like

the dead letter closed by a living hand. Leave them with their scriptures and their dreams and hopes and all is well. Say you have come to fulfil them and interest will turn to hate in some quarters. But a man must follow his Lord. Nobody ought to start his preaching career until he can start where Jesus started both geographically and socially, beside scripturally, especially in regard to power. The tale of the desolation all over the whole wide world is the tale of unanointed preachers. Our gospel is not words, it is the power of the Spirit working with and through the preached words unto demonstration in human lives.

This is not the end of the references in Luke's Gospel to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. We have briefly looked at the beginnings of the ways of God in the life of the Man from heaven, believing that the inspired writer presents Him unto us in a

representative manner; our Example. If you have been latterly born of the Spirit, do not start blaming yourself that you are not yet ministering as Jesus. Being born of God — that is, being baptised in the Spirit — set your heart to be all that you may be in His name as outlined in these scriptures. Birth is unto growth and manhood of grace and wisdom and power. The anointing, and the leading of the Spirit is your privileged heritage, that you too may move and fulfil your part in this precious, powerful ministry of the Lord. Though others' lives do have bearing upon our own, look not to others for your prime example, but to the Lord Himself. By the Spirit He will live out the same glorious life and works through us as He did Himself, accomplishing His same powerful ministry within and through all those chosen, as He, to do His Father's will.

