

ONE BAPTISM

G. W. North

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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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1- THE END OF ALL FLESH

'I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all.'
(Ephesians 4:1-6)

Reading the above words from the pen of Tychicus under the dictation of the apostle Paul, we acquaint ourselves with the title and thematic ground of this book. The whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation declares with one voice that there is only

one Baptism, although the privilege of actually saying so is given exclusively to the apostle Paul. Within these pages, an attempt is made to arrive at a clear assessment of the truth expressed in the phrase, 'One Baptism', by examining it in:

1. Type, as it is illustrated in the Old Testament;
2. The immediate context in which the phrase is found;
3. The wider background of the book in which that context and the passage itself are set;
4. The whole revelation of the New Testament of which that book is a part.

There could hardly be found a more simple and straightforward, yet profound, statement of truth than the above passage. Perhaps one of the most surprising features of it to modern minds is that the apostle

makes no attempt to explain or expound it to his readers; it must therefore be assumed that they knew exactly what he meant.

When a direct categorical statement on any subject is made in the Bible by any man under inspiration of God, it is absolutely true; nothing said anywhere else in scripture on that subject can be in any way contrary to it, either in word or in spirit. Other things may be and often are said, additional to or explanatory of it, but never contradictory to it. God says that there is 'One Baptism'; that is precisely what He means. He does not mean that there are two or three baptisms when He says that there is one. He says what He means, and He expects us to believe what He says. Moreover, having once said that there is one baptism, He does not say anything anywhere else that in any

degree contradicts that statement. It is either true or false.

This one baptism is fully illustrated in scripture by four outstanding types, all to be found in the Old Testament. At first reading these may appear to have very little in common with the One Baptism spoken of by Paul, but closer examination discloses their usefulness in this connection. Although each is to be found in the Old Testament, it is the New Testament which informs us that the first and second of them were indeed of the nature of a baptism. This procedure may seem a little surprising, but it is not unusual with God; indeed it was very necessary that He should employ this method, and for the following reason: primitive historical facts recorded in ancient times, even though given under inspiration, were not always at

the time of writing accorded their fullest spiritual meaning. This was simply because:

1. Their true spiritual value, proper meaning and fullest implications were not at the time of writing properly assessed and appreciated.

2. Their necessary place and function in the overall plan of God was not then fully revealed and so could not be known by those who wrote of them.

3. The recording of the facts was controlled by God with a view to the future when other men, under the same inspiration and control, yet in a better position to understand, would recognize their true significance and be able to correlate them into a whole, thus giving them their greatest meaning.

In I Corinthians 15:46, Paul states a principle which is most helpful to us at this point. To

gain fullest benefit from it we will momentarily alter the word 'natural' to 'material'; doing so will not harm the sacred text we love, but will demonstrate more easily the truth we seek. The apostle says, 'that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual'. Altering the word in thought for our immediate purposes has in no way strained the truth; in fact it has enhanced it, for the principle is true of both. In addition to what is so simply stated here, God has supplied vital information about a key factor which underlies all His works of creation. Whether they be vegetable, mineral or abstract, everything physical or material reveals this same principle. To quote Hebrews 11:3, things which are seen 'were not made of things which do appear', but 'from the creation of the world, the invisible

things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made', Romans 1:20. So although throughout the whole universe the first thing to strike the eye, or by any means impress itself on the sense of the observer may be that which is natural or material, we understand afterwards that all is quite secondary to the spiritual. The spiritual is always first and can be no other, although it is never seen or understood first. The text is dealing with the order of human understanding and approach to reality, not the order of logic and eternal truth.

In fact, there is no order of truth in God in this respect, for in Him natural and spiritual are one. Nevertheless, to us who belong to a lower order, that which is first is natural (physical or material) and can be no other. We always understand that which is spiritual

afterwards or lastly, and only through and because of its manifestation. But scripture clearly reveals that firstly it is God: 'In the beginning God', and 'all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made'. It was God who created the whole of this material, physical and natural world in which we live, and underlying all that God does is God Himself; because this is so, there is spiritual meaning and significance in everything. Even though since the fall of Lucifer — and man his victim — everything may be evil affected: in the beginning the earth was formed and the ages fitted together by the Word of God. Originally everything is a manifestation of or a projection from spiritual reality. It is God's intention that His material creation should lead us to an awareness, if not an

understanding of Himself, the original Spiritual Life from whence it came.

Because of this, historical biblical events have a typical value and hold spiritual meaning for modern man. We may learn spiritual lessons from all things; as the seraphim said in Isaiah's hearing, 'the whole earth is full of Thy glory'. God had these records made, that by them He may set forth the principles and ways from which He never deviates in any age. As we pursue our theme through the Bible, we shall discover this to be true of all the illustrations we shall examine. Each is a historical event of such importance that it is totally impossible to exaggerate any one of them. Yet true as this is, it is doubtful that any but God Himself has ever correctly evaluated them or understands their fullest spiritual meaning. Certainly, in the physical or national or

personal lives of those who were involved in them, they were absolutely miraculous.

However, although they were real happenings of tremendous magnitude when they took place, they are of even greater import in typical meaning. At the conclusion, when we gather all together into the relative positions they hold within the eternal plan of God, we shall be amazed at such an overwhelming revelation of His grace and wisdom.

The first of these illustrations is the well-known story of the Flood, found in the book of Genesis. At first glance this event may seem to have no connection with baptism whatsoever. However, Peter in his first epistle, chapter 3, verses 20 and 21, leaves us in no doubt about it at all — 'the like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us'. He majors chiefly on the Ark (of

salvation) and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and proceeds to draw lessons from the historic event relative to the ordinance; he also arrives at certain basic conclusions. A study of Peter's whole ministry, taking special note of his sayings on the subject of water baptism, is most rewarding. It reveals that his reason for insisting on the ordinance was based on his appreciation of that work Christ wrought at Calvary, which finds particular illustration by the miracle of the Flood.

The apostle was a primitive man, elemental in nature, fundamental in beliefs, and simple and radical in all that he said and did. He did not have a formal education, and had no opportunity to gain the cultural and social finesse of a Saul of Tarsus; his background and training was Galilee, his companions the fishing community. He had not sat at the

feet of Gamaliel, nor had he known the student body of Tarsus University.

Nevertheless he was among the chiefest of the apostles, if not the very chief, and from the day of his regeneration he lived and moved with tremendous power and authority in rugged primal things. Both in his writings and in his speakings he dealt with simple basic truths in a manner thoroughly consistent with his personality. He was the natural leader among the twelve apostles. He also held the foremost place among the 'chosen three', as did the Tachmonite among David's three mighty men (II Samuel 23:8). It is therefore only to be expected that in the matter of baptism Peter should adduce fundamental truths from the elemental facts of the Flood, and authoritatively apply them to us with forthrightness.

The story of the Flood is important. It is recorded in Genesis 6,7 and 8, and also referred to in other parts of scripture. It all began when God warned Noah that He was about to destroy the earth with a flood, and instructed him to build an Ark. Strange as it may seem, although God told him about it and what to do, He never told him when it should happen. The only indication Noah had about the time of the event was bound up in the meaning of a name borne by one of his blood-relations. Noah came of a very distinguished family; his great-grandfather was Enoch, a man who walked with God. He was a prophet in close communion with his Lord, and when his wife gave birth to their first son, he named him Methuselah, which meant 'when he is dead it shall be sent', or 'when he is dead it shall come to pass'.

It was a prophetic name, but nobody, it seems, knew exactly what it indicated. Was it a pointer to Enoch? Did it refer to Enoch's death? God answered that problem by removing Enoch from the scene; he did not die, God took him; so everyone knew that name was not a hidden reference to the father's death: it must be the living son. This man Methuselah lived longer on earth than any other man before or since, and by his longevity God showed forth His grace in a most remarkable way. As the name indicates, the year that Methuselah died the Flood came. All the while he was alive, people had warning from God that something was impending, though for much of the time they knew not what.

Noah, Methuselah's great grandson, was a 'preacher of righteousness' during an age, or day (nearly a millennium) of grace. This is

very wonderful and appears so much more wonderful to us than to them, for we know the much more glorious truth that our blessed Lord was actually 'The Word made flesh'. The importance of Methuselah is that he in his day was also a word in flesh; all he had to do to declare God's word was live. He was Enoch's great prophecy to all mankind. In him mercy and judgement were met together; mercy in that all the while he lived the flood of judgement was withheld; judgement in that shortly after his death the Flood came. He outlived his son Lamech, Noah's father, by five years, thus continuing the testimony right up to the actual time of the Flood. Of course as soon as God warned Noah of the coming deluge, he knew immediately why his great grandfather received his name.

It was during the last century of this man's life that Noah, being moved with fear, prepared the Ark for the time to come. His reason for doing so was twofold: 1. saving his house; 2. preservation of life for the unknown future. He built the House of salvation according to God's specifications on a large, yet limited, scale; it was large enough to hold all those God intended to save from that creation, yet its human occupants were limited to one family, and the reason for this was plainly stated by God: Noah was just, perfect in his generation, and he walked with God, righteous among the men of his day. His family was the last surviving family unit which was perfect in its generation, and represented to God His original design in marriage. In common with his forebears,

Noah had preserved the godly line, keeping the righteous seed unmixed.

In his day Sons of God were marrying daughters of men, with the result that all sorts of abominations were taking place on the earth. The pure line had been preserved, but Noah was the last of it, so to prevent its extermination God determined to save him. God's Spirit had long striven with man in an effort to save him from himself, but despite all God's efforts, original sin had erupted into unrestrained sexual lust, and carried away all flesh to total depravity. 'Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually'; corruption and violence reigned throughout the whole race of men. Repentance and grief gripped the heart of God that He had ever created man on the earth, so with reluctance He took the decision to destroy them. When there

remains not even one good imagination in the thought of any heart, there is only one course to take — utter destruction — so the Lord took it.

There is always an intrinsic rightness about the way God does things. This is strikingly revealed by the particular form of judgement wherewith He finally closed that antediluvian era. The Flood was an absolutely perfect portrayal of God's repentance. True repentance, in whomsoever it is found, is always accompanied by uttermost grief, and the insight afforded us here into God's terrible grief is amazing beyond words. How truly Paul speaks when he says, 'godly sorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of', godly sorrow is immeasurable; it is the foundation of all true repentance. This account of the Flood provides us with an

insight into the mystery of the sorrow which caused God to pass sentence and execute judgement upon the world of the ungodly. If the enormity of the Flood is anything to go by, God was broken-hearted, and if its intensity is likewise an indication of His feelings, then He was very angry also. Who can imagine what the breaking up of the fountains of the deep and the openings of the windows of heaven betokened? If God intended to give us a revelation of the great flood of grief and indignation welling up in His stricken heart, He has certainly succeeded. Elements of wrath and judgement are always present in the truth of the Baptism, and inescapably so, for besides being principles affecting moral action, they are also fundamental and necessary to the truth of salvation. What was blessing and deliverance to Noah's family, was curse and

destruction to multitudes of others. Even so, God never judges with impunity, nor pours out punishment with pleasure. As witnessed by this story, destruction, when executed by Him, is accompanied by an unparalleled and overwhelming testimony to His heart-brokenness. All of God is always in all that He does.

How graphically the basic principles of salvation are woven into the factual information given us by the Spirit concerning the Flood. The persons around whom the story revolves, and the method of salvation used, as well as the Flood itself, have much to teach us. But even though we seek to gain maximum benefit from the story, we can only briefly touch upon it here. When Noah had completed the Ark, God's moment for putting salvation into effect for the righteous family had arrived, so this He proceeded to

do. At this point we find a surprising illustration of a well-loved New Testament statement recorded for us by Paul in II Corinthians 5.19, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself', for the invitation to enter the Ark seems to have come from within the Ark: 'Come thou into the Ark'. God did not direct or command them to go into the Ark, but called them into it as though He were already inside.

Noah had built the Ark for God: he was God's representative. He did it by faith, that is as though it were God doing it. But although he had worked upon it and in it, he never attempted to go and take up residence therein until he was invited to do so by God. From the moment this call came to Noah and his family, to the time they were finally shut in, seven days elapsed. During that

period, under God's instructions, Noah gathered into the Ark many pairs of selected animals and birds and 'creeping things' from the lower orders of creation. Upon completion of this, 'the Lord shut him in, and the Flood was forty days upon the earth, and the waters increased', until the old creation was entirely blotted out.

Making allowance for the fact that all types have their shortcomings, and therefore cannot possibly be absolutely exact, we may see that in a very real sense Noah and his family were baptized into the Ark. More than that also, the type shows that Noah's family were baptized unto him in the Ark, for had the Flood not come, they would not have been with him in the Ark of salvation. This is the first Biblical hint of the truth of baptismal-regeneration. All Noah's sons had previously been born to him upon the earth;

now, by the Flood, in the Ark, they were in a figure born again to him. All the floods of God's judgement beat upon that vessel, but all within were safe, whereas had they stayed outside they would have been but dead men. Instead, by God's grace, they were being preserved alive in order to populate the 'new earth' that should appear when the judgement was past. To use a New Testament quotation, and suiting it to the type, by God's will they alone were predestined to be the eight new people 'in the regeneration', that is the regenerated earth.

The figure is plain, its teaching simple, its logic powerful, its force primitive. If we are to be saved, we must be baptized into Christ. As then, there was no place of safety or life outside the Ark, so now there is no place or hope of safety and life outside of Christ. To

understand properly what God is seeking to teach us by the figure, it is necessary to observe that neither the thought of forgiveness of sins nor of atonement is referred to in this whole passage. There is no talk of blood and sacrifice, or of worship and praise; God is not dealing here with sin, but with its evil results and manifestations. He is judging the flesh; that is men and women in whom sin had run its uncontrolled course to the full. It is in contrast with such condition that God pronounced Noah's family to be the perfect generation.

Looking at that latest generation, now safe within the Ark, and tracing back their lineage through Noah, Lamech, Methuselah and Enoch, we come to Jared, Mahaleel, Cainan, Enos, Seth and eventually Adam. This is the spiritual line perfectly preserved from fleshly sin, kept and approved of God from the

beginning of creation. But parallel with this there runs another genealogy also; this line in all its generations is traced with great precision in Genesis 4. Glancing at it we see that this is a much shorter record indeed. Proceeding from Adam through Cain to Enoch, it continues via Irad to Mehujael, and then to Methusael and Lamech; there the lineage stops. This is very strange: it is cut off dead; there is no continuation beyond that point. By this God has made known to us something of great magnitude, through which He intends to teach us an unforgettable lesson. This genealogy represents the line of 'the flesh', coming down from Adam through Cain; upon examining it we find some names exactly the same as those in the spiritual line. One is so surprisingly like Methuselah, that we are

driven to the conclusion that it is almost an exact copy of its spiritual counterpart.

What we have discovered provides us with a striking illustration of the parable of the wheat and the tares, spoken by the Lord in Matthew 13. We note that directly preceding His exposition of the parable to the disciples, the Lord says, 'I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world'. This quotation in itself is an adaptation and amplification of David's statement in Psalm 78:2, in which psalm he briefly interprets to Israel their history. The psalmist writes purposely to exhibit to the nation their inherent Jacobean qualities; commencing with Jacob, he says, 'I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old'. He then proceeds to point out to them the tragic failures of the flesh as

contrasted with the unfailing grace and mercy of God shown to the nation. On the other hand the Lord Jesus deals with the flesh in another way; He traces everything back to satan, for He is not, as David, just dealing with dark sayings of old, but with things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Jesus did not come to deal with nationalistic Jacobean manifestations of flesh only, but with 'Flesh' in its entirety. The 'Flesh' in its ethically bad sense did not originate with Jacob, but with Adam; it is a demonstration in human flesh and blood of the original sin of Lucifer. Sin was introduced and reproduced by satan in Adam by means of the temptation through Eve, with the intention of degenerating the whole human race. When speaking in Matthew, the Lord deals with what we have found in the type we are studying. From

Adam downwards the fleshly line, as opposed to the spiritual seed, descended to utter destruction through Cain in the way set out above.

The Lord in His parable said, 'Let both grow together until the harvest', (Matthew 13:30). 'The harvest is the end of the age', verse 39. Different ages run different courses and have different beginnings and gospels and endings. The Lord is speaking of this present age and future consummation when fire is to be the medium of judgement, but basic spiritual elements never vary in any age this side of 'the regeneration'. Although media of judgement may vary from age to age, basic principles of judgement can never alter. God frequently changes interim means, but never eternal principles or ultimate ends. Nor is this surprising, for eternal principles cannot be changed, and neither can ultimate

ends. Destinies are not decided in an arbitrary manner; they result from the outworkings of principles; these in turn become laws governing and producing the succession of events that unavoidably proceeds to an inescapable destination. We have an example of these things set before us in the history of Sodom and Gomorrah. In those twin cities of sin, men burned in their lust one toward another and reaped the due reward of their sin. Their end could not be other than fire; they had burned, so they must be burned.

Thus in the parable we find that, as to the inexperienced eye, dandelion while in growth is practically indistinguishable from wheat, and must grow together with it undisturbed until harvest and the judgement of fire, so does the fleshly line of Cain appear similar in many respects to the spiritual line of Seth;

they developed together until the Flood. The man of the fleshly line has many features seemingly identical with the spiritual man, having both an Enoch and a Lamech of whom to boast, but there the similarity ends. Enoch of Cain's line did not beget a Methuselah, but a Methusael, for unlike his spiritual namesake, carnal Enoch was not in the habit of walking with God. Through the spiritual prophet Enoch (to adapt a precious New Testament phrase) 'God spake unto us (that age) through a son', Methuselah. But not so with Enoch of the fleshly line; because his progeny proved to be so vastly different from those of his spiritual namesake, the line is cut short and destroyed. It goes as far as Lamech, the man of wild power — that is savagery and violence — and then to death; and there it is left. That is the end of all flesh — it is

unforgivable, there is no resurrection for it. The baptismal judgement, as the Flood so graphically indicates, is epochal, age-abiding, eternal. But Lamech of the godly line produced a Noah and an Ark of salvation and a generation ready for a new heaven and a new earth.

As we have earlier seen, this type of the One Baptism is not set forth as a treatise upon forgiveness and atonement, but as something far greater. By it God is not teaching forgiveness because of imputed righteousness through atonement; there is no mention of blood here. Not until the Flood has subsided, the Ark vacated and the 'new earth' entered and occupied, is there any hint of sacrifice in connection with this event. The Saving-Ark typifies unto us salvation from the old (man) creation into the new (man) creation. When at the

invitation of God that family first crossed the threshold of the Ark, they stepped out of the old world of the flesh; when they stepped back over that same threshold nearly a year later they were in the new order of the Spirit. Of course, all is highly figurative to us, but then everything connected with actual water baptism is as surely figurative to this day; the spiritual truth is what we seek.

Turning back in our Bibles to Genesis 1:6 and 7, and reading of God's activities on the second day of creation, we find that they included the making of a firmament. His purpose in so doing was to divide the waters upon which His Spirit was moving. He called the firmament heaven. Apparently its function at that early stage of God's preparation for the advent of man was to divide the waters which were above the firmament from the waters which were

under it, later called seas. We may not know all God's purposes in doing this, but upon reading the story of the Flood, we can see one very clear reason for it: those waters were stored up above the firmament in the beginning that they should later be poured out through the opened windows of heaven to deluge and inundate the whole earth.

Peter, writing in his second epistle, leaves little room for doubt that the Flood effected unimagined changes in this planet; indeed, perhaps in the whole universe also, for he speaks of the heavens as well. So great is the change, that he refers to the antediluvian state as 'the world that then was', and to this present order of things as 'the heavens and the earth which are now'. Just as the existing heaven and earth are being kept in store, reserved unto fiery judgement at the end of the age, so surely those waters which

God had gathered up above the firmament were kept in store for use in the judgement that overflowed the world of the ungodly then. All of this lends weight to the probability that it was in much more than a figurative sense, though certainly in that, that the righteous generation went forth from the Ark at last to inhabit the (new) earth.

What is at least as wonderful, if not more wonderful still, is the miracle that appears to have taken place within the Ark itself. We know that previously there had never been any such vessel in existence, for it had been constructed at God's command, to God's specifications. But beyond that, although in a limited sense, both it and all within it represented a new creation. The whole company of men and animals and birds within that peculiar vessel lived together as

though they were one new family. This is a wondrous illustration of the truth that 'if any man be in Christ he is a new creature', or as it could as well be rendered, 'if any man be in Christ there is a new creation'. In a manner also it sets forth an illustration of the answer to Christ's prayer 'that they all may be one'; this is the first and deepest reason for the Baptism in the Spirit.

It was a most fascinatingly novel and miraculous experience, for by God's command a remnant of the whole animate air-breathing creation was gathered within that floating 'world'. In a sense it was Paradise regained, or the millennium anticipated. Inside there the curse and sin and death were non-existent (although as we know they were only held in abeyance). 'In all that holy mountain' nothing harmed or hurt, or stung, and none preyed upon

another; it floated serenely above earth's highest hills in perfect peace and rest. God and Noah, and the righteous family, together with restored creation, were in perfect harmony within that new creation, the Ark. For them it was a kind of predestination in there — a conforming to the original pattern and state of creation 'as it was in the beginning'. Not a great deal of imagination is required for us to realize the degree of amazement with which the family of God lived in such close contact with the animals. Perfect in its generations under its head, Noah, it enjoyed absolute liberty and safety, although confined with beasts that in their natural environment would have rent and torn and devoured them. Instead of enmity and bloodshed, all within the Ark was peace and rest and love and enjoyment. The law of

the jungle was non-existent. What a heaven on earth!

The type is suggestive rather than comprehensive, limited rather than expansive, but what a wealth of instruction it holds for us concerning the truth of the Baptism. It is beautifully expressive of the limited comprehensions of the mind that first listens to the gospel, and responds from the heart to the drawings of the Spirit to Christ for salvation. In the initial stages of its response to the gospel, mansoul does not generally grasp all the great riches of the fullness of Christ. Generally a need is felt, a desire is acknowledged, a door is open, a call heard, then a decision is taken, entrance is made and salvation is assured to the penitent heart. The first realizations gained in the initial experience of the One Baptism are rescue and preservation from death, and

life begun in Christ. Much of the truth typically set before us above will not at first be known; exploration and understanding of that will be a later achievement; to get into Christ is the major concern. The Baptism in the Spirit must be plainly understood to be regeneration. As Noah and his family responded to God's invitation, entered the Ark and were brought ultimately to the discovery of a new world, so also must we all go on to discover, become partakers of, and taste the powers of the world to come.

The New Testament furnishes us with many instances of truth within truth. As we know, much more lies beyond primary impressions or initial understanding than we can at once grasp. The words of the famous text in Matthew 11:28, as well as being linked with our theme, are also a good example of this very thing 'Come unto me all ye'. Whilst

He was visibly manifest on earth, our straitened Lord at times perforce used limited statements when speaking to people. But even when He did speak plainly, the things He said could only be understood by His hearers according to known standards of interpretation and their ability to apply them. For instance, when He said 'come unto me', they could easily respond and come to Him; they knew what He meant; they could see Him, touch Him, believe and follow Him, and many did just that. They comprehended all they understood Him to mean by His words, but deeper than everything they could be expected to understand, there lay a greater meaning and a higher invitation awaiting clearer understanding.

The Lord used a word here which means both 'Unto' and 'Into'. To those who first

heard the invitation it could only mean 'come unto me'. Their minds just could not interpret it to mean anything else; but to men of spiritual enlightenment who know eternal truth, it means 'come into me' — a far greater thing. So also with the word in John 14:1. To us He is saying (and it makes complete sense), 'believe also into me'. He is not just setting God and Himself forth here as the object of faith, someone upon whom faith can finally rest, as the limitation of the word 'in' would suggest; He is saying something vastly greater than that. The power of the word 'into' used here makes clear that He is inviting people to enter Him; 'Ye believe in God, believe also into me'. He is revealing God and Himself as the eternal life and abiding-place of mansoul into which we can and must enter.

It is almost certain that the apostles at that time could not begin to understand the things implicit in His speech. Indeed the whole of this section of John is a revelation of their abysmal ignorance of both their Lord and His sayings. It was not that He deliberately used words which they could not understand; He spoke to them simply and plainly in language which they normally used, but He could not convey to them the things He meant. How could they come into Him, or believe into Him? Only by the Baptism in the Spirit, but at that time this was not available to them. The Lord had not undergone it Himself, so as yet it had not been created for them; He dared not minimize the truth though. He just had to express it in ways acceptable to their minds, even though He knew that only later would

they enter in and understand with their spirits.

Before closing this chapter, we should note something further from Peter's use of the story of the Flood. He impresses upon us that baptism in water should be a man's spontaneous response to the gospel. At the same time he is careful to make clear that baptism in water must not be construed to mean something God never intended. The act of water baptism does not mean that thereby a man's sins are forgiven and his filth washed away. Even though in the great prototype of the Flood, the end of all flesh with its corruption and filthiness and violence came before God, He never dealt with it there, nor could He. What took place there was a judgement representing both the final judgement wherein God ends all His judgements upon the world, and the

judgement which took place at the cross. The eternal judgement dealing with flesh and sin took place at Calvary; God dealt with everything there in the death of Christ. But this is not generally the first thing that engages the mind of the newly-converted person. He is usually taken up with an overwhelming sense of thankfulness to God for His exceeding grace in saving him from the ultimate penalty of his sins.

Whilst this great sense of gratitude is still upon him, the believer should be impressed with the need for immediate baptism. There is a very real link between salvation and baptism, and it is stated for us by no less a person than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved'. This is a remarkably plain and ungarnished statement which cannot be disregarded if we, like Him, are

going to fulfil all righteousness. Now while it is quite true that he that believeth not shall not be saved, it is not true that he who is not baptized in water shall not be saved.

Salvation does not rest upon water baptism, but the salvation / regeneration which we preach does rest upon being baptized into Christ. Seeing then that baptism in water is used by the Lord as a symbol and picture of that Spiritual Baptism, it can hardly be expected that sincere persons who experience the latter would or should quibble about submitting to the former.

Moreover, as we are informed in Acts 2 that those who gladly received Peter's word on the day of Pentecost were baptized, it cannot be said that anyone refusing such baptism is one spirit with the early Church.

It is obvious that from John Baptist onwards into the commencement of the Church age,

it was normal practice that when a person received the word, he or she also received baptism. In fact baptism is so identified with heart-faith that in some cases it is spoken of as though it were that faith; repentance and baptism are linked together in scripture as one would normally link repentance and faith. This is most enlightening, and upon reflection it is most natural; repentance, faith, baptism are three progressive steps in a natural progress. Not that baptism is to be regarded or in any way made to be a substitute for faith, it is an expression of heart-obedience to faith. This is very sweetly shown to us by the uncomplicated person of Lydia of Philippi. That lady, responding to the preached word of Paul immediately desired to be baptized as an expression of her faithfulness to the Lord.

At this point the question ought to be asked — should faithfulness be judged in beginners today, how many new converts would be found faithful in God's eyes upon the same basis. This raises another issue, best faced at this juncture, for it is the answer to the question begged above, namely this: baptism should be regarded as the first step in true discipleship, and urged upon people as the immediate response of the obedient heart to the Lord. The idea that converts should not be baptized until they have been catechized or indoctrinated is quite a modern innovation; it finds neither precedent in scripture, nor support from the apostles. Under the apostles' ministry all believers were either commanded or exhorted, certainly they were expected, to be baptized immediately upon salvation.

It appears that this principle and practice of immediacy was first instituted in Jewry by John Baptist. It was afterwards given a degree of permanence by the Lord Himself, when baptism was conducted in His name during the period of His personal ministry among men. The disciples administered the rite under the authority of His anointing as an ordinance of His kingdom on earth, and continued the same tradition of immediacy which they had learned originally from His forerunner. It is not surprising then, that after the Lord's return to heaven, His apostles continued the ordinance in the same way, as an authoritative ordinance divinely established in the Church; it became common practice. The apostles perfectly understood the words of the Lord Jesus recorded in Matthew 28:18-20, and applied them literally and liberally to all men. From

their acts it is plainly to be seen that these men fulfilled the commission in the order Jesus set forth. Still under His authority and in His presence they went and preached, made disciples, baptized and taught them. Now both in the nature of things, as also in scriptural order, this is shown to be exactly right. The Lord places baptism before teaching, and does so in order to teach us that obedience is better esteemed with God than acquired knowledge, indeed it is the most important lesson of all, and fundamental to the gaining of all spiritual knowledge from God. Baptism must be a thing of the heart rather than of the intellect, a provoked response rather than a studiously considered step. The fact that occasionally one may hear such remarks as, 'I wish I had waited until I understood more about it before I was baptized', does not

mean that the person saying so was wrong to have been baptized. The fact that he or she spontaneously responded to this word of the Lord is a commendation to that heart and not a cause for criticism. As long as a person is truly the Lord's, he or she is absolutely correct in desiring to be baptized immediately. It is a good thing in beginners that affections and emotions and desires should outstrip the intellect; that is just the response God wants. The answer of a good conscience towards God is eagerly watched for in heaven, for it is not the mind but the spirit of man that moves his conscience. This is of prime importance when considering water baptism.

A desire to obey the primary urge when moving in the things of God is a most commendable thing. It is as correct as the desire which urged and moved the Lord

Jesus Himself to be baptized in His day, and thus fulfil all righteousness at that time. To know and move in such a way is to be in the true experience of faith and at that stage nothing better could be desired or required of any man. All the evidences of the reconstituted heart are being exhibited by the burning desire to be baptized. It has been made righteous, and without intelligently knowing it is so, the heart is instinctively desiring to act like Jesus and fulfil all the righteousness it knows — which is to be obedient.

It is significant that Paul, when dealing with baptism in Romans 6, speaks of 'obeying from the heart that form (type, mould) of doctrine which was delivered you, or unto which you were delivered' (Gk.). Then and thereby a man is made free from sin and becomes a servant of righteousness, and

finds no reason why he should not be immersed in water. The form into which we are delivered is Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection (His baptism, Luke 12:50), which form He typified and exhibited to us by His baptism in water at His first public appearance. Until that baptism He was not known or identified before men, and had no public recognition. Apparently this kind of spontaneous response is what had taken place in the lives of the Roman saints to whom Paul wrote saying that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. In common with all the saints of their day, they had heard, believed and been baptized, but it seems that it was only when Paul wrote to them concerning it that the full intellectual grasp of the spiritual meaning of the rite became clear to their understanding.

2 - IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA

The event under consideration in this chapter is really an abstraction from the story found in Exodus chapters 12-14. Chiefly it is that part which deals with the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. The key to this second Old Testament illustration of the One Baptism is to be found in I Corinthians 10:1 and 2: '...all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea'. Not the slightest hint is to be found in Exodus that either the Lord or Israel then looked upon it as a baptism. We should not have known had God not told us His heart about it, and to this day we cannot say that Israel ever knew it was their baptism. This fact, beside revealing unsuspected truth, points out the

possibility that people do not know what the Baptism is, or what it accomplishes, or when it takes place. As with the Children of Israel in their day, many today know something great has happened to them, but because it is not called Baptism in Spirit, they do not know how to describe it.

The great historic event we study here is of quite a different character from the one we considered in the previous chapter. From it we are to learn a new lesson about the One Baptism we may share with our Lord Jesus Christ.

The first Corinthian letter is most valuable; it speaks very emphatically on a variety of spiritual issues, and the verse quoted above is an unexpected corroboration of the vital truth spoken of in chapter 12 verse 13 — 'by (Gk. 'in') one Spirit are we all baptized into one body'. This means that it is by means or

use of the Spirit that the Lord Jesus baptizes us into His Body. Comparison of these scriptures concerning the fundamental Baptism leads us to note first of all that the Baptism of the New Covenant is greatly superior to that of the Old. The New Testament Baptism is an experience wherein the spirits of men are immersed in the Spirit of God and thereby baptized into Christ's body. The Old Testament baptism was an outward event; it took place in the physical realm only; it was entirely inadequate, even if God had desired it, to baptize the Children of Israel into Moses' body. Obviously such a thing was not possible; God did not intend that it should be. Moses had neither died nor risen again for Israel; furthermore, in the very nature of things, they could not enter into him and have a share in his exact life, and even if that had been possible, it would

have been a quality of life no different from that which they had already.

But God did intend that their baptism should give them a sense of oneness and of belonging to a homogeneous body of people with a visible head. They were to be a new national family, 'born again' to go into their inheritance and develop their own culture in a new land. Therefore the Lord enforced baptism upon them by causing them to go through the sea, baptizing them in the cloud in the process. He did this to show all men that He cannot depart from basic principles of life. Throughout the entire history of Redemption, God's provision of new life for His people has always been through Baptism in the Spirit, and can be no other. Quite unmistakably by this the Lord in type set the Baptism centrally and basically in the history of the Old Covenant people. At the same

time He did something else of equal importance also; He set the Spirit and the water in their respective positions in relationship to the Baptism. In God's ordering, each receives its proper emphasis; this enables us to get things into true spiritual perspective. The order as here stated is 'in the cloud and in the sea'.

There can be no doubting where the importance lies in God's eyes. The thing He accomplished so simply at the Red Sea was the all-important baptism in the cloud, the type of the Holy Ghost. The spiritual lessons derived from this event gain in significance when it is realised that water was not used in this baptism at all. It was staged upon the bed of the Sea; geographically the Red Sea was the location where all was accomplished, but the water of the Sea was not used. As a matter of fact, in each of the

four typical instances of the One Baptism we consider in this book, the watery element is comparatively negligible. It had a part to play, but it was only of minor importance; in no case were the people involved actually immersed in it. Each instance is designed to show that the actual baptism is entirely in the Spirit, for every one of those being baptized remained thoroughly dry throughout. Then as now, the water, being an outward element of minimal importance, was only used by God to point and insist on the Baptism in the Spirit.

When the people of old 'passed through the waters,' they did not get wet; the water did not even touch them; it was no longer there. God took His people through the sea, walking upon the sea bed in order that thereupon He might baptize them in the Spirit. As plainly as possible the Lord is

showing us that only as we are baptized in the Spirit are we baptized into His death and resurrection. As surely as the cloud typifies the Holy Spirit, so the Red Sea typifies the Lord's death and burial from which He emerged in resurrection.

This is sincerely brought home to our hearts by the fact that Moses was told to stretch out his rod over the Sea. How majestically he did so — like a monarch stretching forth his sceptre over his kingdom. That rod speaks of the cross, Christ's sceptre, by which He took away the sting of death, which is sin. Death was rendered harmless for us, and in the Spirit we are baptized into the now harmless path which King Jesus has opened for us into fullness of life. When a man is baptized in the Holy Spirit, he is baptized into the body of Jesus Christ, and there is no other way into Him than through

His own death and resurrection. It is only when a man is prepared to share in that death and resurrection, and thus make it his own, that he can be so baptized.

Here let us pause to recognize two simple facts of great importance: 1. That which is but one event or experience in the New Covenant is perforce typified by many events and experiences in the Old. 2. As a general rule, New Covenant truth must never be conceived in limited Old Covenant ideas. It is a feature of the Bible that exactly the reverse is intended by God. The Old Testament may be thought of in some aspects as a gradual approach to the New.

Bearing these things in mind, we notice that God's work of salvation in bringing Israel out of Egypt involved two distinct events:

1. The Lord's passover in Egypt.

2. The Children of Israel's passover of the Red Sea.

Now these two events are unavoidably divided by some three days of time. Because of this, and because they are recorded as independent happenings, each complete in itself, we are in danger of thinking that they are unconnected, whereas they are but one. As surely as the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord are two distinct events, each complete in itself yet but one, so also are these one. In both cases the events are manifestly interdependent; one would have been quite ineffective without the other. God passed over the Children of Israel that they in turn might pass over the Sea; the latter was the completion of the former, and was planned to be such. The correct interpretation of the type requires that they both be regarded as one event, two halves

of one whole. Only the compulsory time factor divided them; this was simply due to the fact that it was physically impossible for them to cross over the Red Sea the same night as the Lord passed over them. The only thing that gave spiritual value to any of the physical acts or events in which the Children of Israel participated, or made them of any eternal worth to the persons involved in them, was faith. This is clearly shown in the famous eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

In Egypt the Children of Israel sprinkled the blood of the slain lamb upon the lintels and sideposts of the houses to indicate to God that they were inside eating its flesh. There was no spiritual value in the lamb, nor in its blood, nor in its roast flesh. The virtue and value of all lay in the fact that they did exactly what God told them to do in the way He told them to do it. But sadly, even so,

their action in no way effected any change in their own inward lives and personalities; everything was outward. It is obvious from the reading that no deep spiritual change took place in them as a consequence of their act. They still remained a nation of rebellious murmurers, full of fleshly lusts, worldly, cowardly and disobedient. Yet for all that, the events we are studying have much of spiritual value to teach those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Comparison at this point with the facts discovered in the type of Noah and the Ark reveals that in the earlier event only the word of God was involved, but on this occasion we see that other elements are involved in the transaction. These are the blood, the Spirit and the water; in Egypt the Lamb and the blood, at the Red Sea the Spirit and the water. In this we find an

advance from the original idea, resulting in an expansion of truth. Whereas in Genesis it was a simple invitation, 'Come ... into the Ark', here it is, 'baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea'. The Ark was yet on dry ground without a sign of the imminent water-floods anywhere to be seen when the Lord gave the command to the Noahic family. But the Holy Ghost introduces us to this Mosaic type at the point of the nation's union with God in the cloud and in the Sea. The idea of association in death is brought in here.

Earlier in the course of writing the first epistle to the Corinthians, in chapter 5 verse 7, Paul speaks very briefly about God's passover in Egypt, saying 'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us'. He only just touches on it and leaves it, passing on to mention the historic event in chapter 10 as

an illustration to point the truth that in one Spirit we are all baptized into His Body. By the fact that the cloud was in the Sea, that is in the place where the water should have been, we learn that the Red Sea became for the Children of Israel the water of the Spirit. Typically, when the Children of Israel came up out of the Sea on the other side they were 'born of water and the Spirit'. Typically also they underwent their first experience of 'the washing of water by the word,' and by those two means illustrate that profound Baptism for which the blood of Christ was shed. From a unique passage in John's first epistle, chapter 5 verses 7 and 8, we will abstract a few words — 'for there are three that bear record ... the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree in one. There is not another statement like this in the whole of scripture, and as an illustration

of it the type we are at present examining could not be bettered. John also says in verse 6, 'it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth', and in this account of the twin passovers he is surely bearing witness to invariable and eternal truth. This epochal event makes it very clear, for from this whole story we learn that the blood without the Spirit and the water is quite insufficient for regeneration.

Reading in the psalms, we discover how often David insists that it was through the miracle wrought at the crossing of the Red Sea that God gained a name and fame among the nations; Rahab is a witness to this, as she says herself in Joshua 2:10. The blood was shed in Egypt, but for all its immediate effect there, it was quite useless for full deliverance apart from the Spirit and the water. Quite obviously God did not

intend that it should be anything other than the first and most fundamental of three vital elements necessary to their salvation. It was He who led the people to the Red Sea, carrying Joseph's bones, following the pillar of cloud and fire; it was He who commanded them to encamp there and wait for the way of salvation unto life to appear through the waters. Whether in Old or New, the principles are unchanged and unchangeable; the blood apart from the Spirit and the water was never envisaged or provided by God as anything other than the prime, basic factor of redemption. For New Testament salvation involving regeneration from sin to righteousness, self to Christ, and death to life, the Spirit and the water are as vital and necessary as the blood.

It is clearly shown in the book of Genesis that originally, as the Spirit moved upon the

waters, the whole earth was generated out from them by the word of God. In the same way we find this principle to be operative again at the Flood. Before the renewed earth could come forth, the Spirit (the Dove) had to move upon the face of the waters. This is a preview of the regeneration, for we note that it came from Noah within the Ark, prefiguring the giving of the Spirit through Christ. In this event also we have it exactly the same; the cloud, typifying the Spirit, moves into and stands over the Sea, and eventually up out of the waters came the nation. They entered through the way initially opened up by Moses' rod, which represents the cross; it was God's word to them, 'the logos of the cross', as Paul put it in I Corinthians 1:18. We see by these things that the original idea, elements and method used by God in creation were later adapted

to and administered as baptism; they have always been present in all God's ways of bringing to birth and life.

But here a striking contrast must be taken into account; in the two major Old Testament crises of original Creation and the subsequent re-creation by the Flood, baptism is shown as an outward experience or spectacle, but in the New Testament both an inward and outward experience are alluded to — 'in one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit'. Although this is an entirely spiritual experience, needing no outward element at all, its truth is set forth in language that brings to mind both an outward and an inward experience. To be in Christ's Body we must have an immersion into and in Spirit; to have the Spirit of that Body we must drink in and into the Spirit.

This is a simultaneous event, implying an outward and an inward immersion — Christ is baptized into me and I into Him — it is synchronous.

The Baptism of the New Testament, although it is always associated with an inward experience, 'made to drink into', is explained to our minds by means of language pertaining to an outward figure, 'baptized', which is almost invariably associated in our thinking with immersion in water. It is worthy of note that on the day of Pentecost, those who observed the 120 after that initial Baptism, associated their condition with drinking (Acts 2.13). It is as we inwardly drink of the Spirit that the inner man is, as it were, outwardly baptized, that is plunged by the Lord into the larger divine manhood of His Body. The Baptism is an inward baptism because the New Covenant

is an inward covenant, and is effected in us and Himself by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Baptizer. He accomplishes this by baptizing the entire inward manhood into a shared spiritual nature union with Himself, resulting in an individual soul-personality likeness to Himself in the Holy Spirit.

Until the moment this takes place in a man the Holy Ghost is outside that person, although for some time He may have been moving upon him. This is why, in keeping with the original truth shown in Genesis and Exodus, the idea of an outward baptism is always used; but in the comparable New Testament experience this is only wrought in us as we 'drink in' the Holy Spirit. The in-drinking and the Baptism are one; the drinking is effected in the Baptism, and the Baptism by the drinking. It all takes place together, the initiative being with the Lord

and the initiation ours. In the one Spirit we are baptized into the one body — His.

Although this truth was not revealed to Noah who built the Ark, nor yet to Moses who wrote the story, this One Baptism into one body was well typified by Noah's action while still within the Ark. The dove that represents the Holy Spirit was 'sent forth' from Noah within the vessel as it rested upon the mountains of Ararat. Of course, the dove had been with him there all the time, and in this knowledge we have a faint intimation of a further thing that the Ark prefigures to us. It is not Christ after the flesh — Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary — who baptizes us in the Spirit, but Christ after the Spirit — Jesus of the New Jerusalem, the Son of God. It was as though the righteous family was baptized into one body — the Ark — by Noah, the head of that Ark. This

ancient event, so scorned by the mockers, holds so much wealth of meaningful incident and detail that we could linger on it to still greater profit. But we must return to the later story, for the composite type is cumulative, gathering truth from all four illustrations and finally presenting one complete picture. We see, then, that by Noah God presents the simple truth of an open door, and by Moses the more advanced truth of an open way. In process of doing this, He also showed something of how that door was opened and what took place in Jesus' death and what it accomplished in the spirit world.

The Children of Israel had to go through the waters for three reasons:

1. That therein they might be baptized into (Gk.) Moses.

2. In order that Pharaoh and his host should be destroyed.

3. So that the people might be safe from destruction, or recapture and return to slavery in Egypt.

When the Children of Israel passed through the sea together, they became Moses' people in a special way. In every ordinary way they had always been his people. Moses had been born a Hebrew; in the day he had returned to Egypt from his forty years' exile he did so because he wished to go back to his brethren there. They were his flesh and blood; but in the Cloud in the Sea Israel became his people in a peculiar way, not formerly possible. So much so indeed, that God later called them Moses' people, Exodus 32:7. We see by this to what great extent Moses typified the Lord Jesus. But we

also see the limitations of Moses; his ordinary humanity prevented his people from being baptized into him; nevertheless, whether or not he or they realized it, unto Moses they were certainly a baptized nation as they stood together on the resurrection side of the Red Sea following their passover.

In Egypt Moses had become their flesh and blood saviour. It was he who had spoken of the lamb, and ordered its blood to be shed and sprinkled, and its flesh roasted and eaten. By this he had become unto them something of a redeemer. But they could no more be baptized into their saviour than they could eat his flesh and drink his blood: they could not become part of him; the act did not work any spiritual transformation in them. Even though the obedience of faith gave their passover some spiritual value, they themselves were not thereby and

thereafter in (within) Moses, nor was he formed in them. But this is exactly what is effected in us by the Baptism, because by it we are not only brought immediately into all that took place at Calvary and Pentecost, but also into all the results of that experience. Spiritually / historically God worked out in Christ what before He had only physically / historically set forth by Moses. Now in this lies a great lesson, for here before us is the reason for the vast difference between the Old and New Covenants. Faith was the sole virtue in them to which God imputed spiritual worth which they never actually had. But with us it is entirely different. Not so much the faith, indispensable and praiseworthy as it is, but the results of faith are the greater things, that is the actual life of Christ in us.

God has never varied the basic principles of truth inwrought by Him in baptism; they are forever fixed; He has no need to change them, and indeed cannot do so, for the baptism is one of God's invariables. His ideas become principles of working; His thoughts become words and works, and a world appears and takes shape before our eyes. The truth remains the same, though its application may vary considerably in different ages. The underlying order to be found in historic truth as it was revealed in Moses' day remains unchanged to this day, for all is based upon and exists in and sets forth one whole; first the Passover, then the Baptism. That is the order we see in the person and work of our Lord Jesus also, Calvary — Pentecost; with an unavoidable lapse of time separating the bloodshed from the baptism upon both occasions. As with

the first historic event, so also with the second; the bloodshed and the baptism are but two parts of the one experience. The difference between them lies chiefly in the fact that, better than Israel, we may now indeed be baptized into Jesus. He is the eternal Lamb who laid down His life in order that the sheep may have it, which latter is quite impossible apart from being so baptized. It was as though at Calvary His flesh was removed in order that we may enter into that which was within the flesh (spoken of as a veil in Tabernacle imagery), that is the Spirit, thereby becoming members of His body, of His flesh and bones. Here let us avail ourselves of yet another delightful insight into something more of the eternal truth this figure holds for us. Perhaps surprisingly, we find upon reading Exodus 12 that the main emphasis of Moses is the lamb

and not the blood. There are three times as many direct references to the lamb as to its blood in this chapter. To the Israelites the blood was to be but a token, like the bow was to Noah; God's real concern was that they stayed inside their houses and ate the flesh of the lamb. Their charge, therefore, was to eat the roast flesh from which the blood had been drained and sprinkled upon doorpost and lintel. There in plain view, it was a token to God both of their faith and their faithfulness; it indicated to Him that according to His desire they were inside, eating the lamb. Thus in a figure they were made to set forth the present necessity laid upon us to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Lamb. To this we add the fact that the Children of Israel were also charged with the custody and removal of Joseph's bones to the Promised Land. In this we see how the

phrase quoted above 'of His flesh and of His bones', is also beautifully re-phrased in this foreshadowing of the spiritual substance of His Body.

Bearing in mind that all now is spiritual, and all then was physical, at their baptism the Children of Israel were as nearly as the type can show 'of His flesh and of His bones'. 'A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have', said Jesus to His people after His resurrection. His Spirit must have flesh and bones (that is a body) in which to live; so it is that we, being baptized in the Spirit, are formed into the spiritual body of which He is the Head. It is a great mystery, but it is nevertheless true that He is 're-housed' and re-formed in us in the flesh in a way that was not possible with Moses and his people. Still, for all that, God had them go through an experience whereby they were typically

baptized unto each other; Moses unto them and they unto him, because at all times and in all peoples God speaks and shows one truth.

Now all this, correctly enough, is set into the unfolding account of the beginning of the national life of Israel. In the same chapter 12 that exalts the lamb and its blood, God says 'this shall be unto you the beginning ... the first', for He intended that by the events we have been examining, Israel should have its birth as a nation. When Jacob went down to Joseph in Egypt, Israel was a large family group or clan comprised of small families, numbering seventy souls in all, with one paternal head. During their stay there, these families had developed into tribes, and when those tribes left Egypt they had grown sufficiently to become a nation, but they were not then recognized as such. They

were not accorded any distinctive recognition in Egypt as a nation in its own right. They were the Egyptians' slaves, and at the time of the Exodus the males were scattered among the nationals finding materials for brick-making.

We see then that the Children of Israel had their national beginning by means of the Passover and the passage of the Sea. The nation was 'born in a day' as they came out of Egypt. Again, it is the same invariable picture of the true baptismal-regeneration. In Egypt only a comparatively small specified group was saved from destruction. Each one of this group was someone's firstborn, foreshadowing the eternal truth of 'the Church of the firstborn ones which are written in heaven', of which we cannot here speak particularly. But at the Red Sea they were all without exception baptized unto

Moses. By this we understand the importance of the position the One Baptism holds in the whole scheme of New Testament salvation. Historically / spiritually it happened at the conclusion of Christ's earthly life, that in the Spirit it may be established for the Church as the means and time of its beginning.

During the earthly life of our Lord Jesus, the Baptism was still only possible of typical illustration. When He was baptized in Jordan, it was as Israel's Messiah. At that time He was presented to them by water only (1 John 5:6), and quite rightly so, for water is an entirely insufficient medium for the spiritual purpose of God to be fulfilled therein. He could only 'come' in flesh by water; He could not thereby 'come' in Spirit. Though in Jordan the Lord remained true to and moved consistently in line with eternal

truth, so that again over the water the dove appeared, He could not yet 'come' to His people as He wished.

Perhaps this appearance of the dove held for John a twofold significance: (1) to mark out the Lord Jesus; (2) to emphasize that everything still was part of the Old Testament where all is symbolic. Although he craved for it, he could have no part in the greater Baptism he sought, saying to the Lord, 'I have need to be baptized of thee'. The people at that time could not be baptized into Jesus Christ, nor He into them, nor was it God's intention then. Not by water nor yet by such a baptist could God's plan be put into effect. What took place then was but a type of things not known as yet. The Lord, whose body was there dipped in water, was looking forward to His personal Baptism in Spirit (perhaps praying for it, who

knows?) and His re-formation into a new Body of regenerate spirits, each of whom, as He their Head, should be baptized with the same Baptism as He. In that Baptism, by eternal ordination, He was to be the only Baptist, because in the nature of things He is the only one who could possibly administer that Baptism.

This is the uniqueness of Jesus' Baptism. He alone, of all who have been associated either with the rite or the experience of baptism, both initiated it by undergoing it and also administers it. The Lord Jesus is and always has been the only true Baptizer; He even had to baptize Himself into His own death at Calvary. He had to do it; it was absolutely necessary that He should, for until then He had never been real Man as He found him to be on the earth when He came. His special birth had prevented that

from happening. He was God's second Man, the Lord from heaven manifested on earth, heaven's Man, real Man as God had intended Man to be; but spiritually Jesus was not the earth Man as He found him when He came, for earth Man was spiritually fallen Adam.

Old, old Adam had been bad enough in the beginning, but on his unbroken passage through millennia of sin and violence he had become worse in every successive generation. Jesus was the second man directly made by God. We speak of His coming as an advent, not a creation; differently from Adam who was made of dust, He was made of a woman. He was a new kind of Man, and therefore could not be Man as He found him, for all men born on the earth between the creation of the first man and the advent of the second were not

Man as God meant him to be. By spiritual heredity all men are born children of fallen Adam, but He was the direct child of God the Father, unfallen; He was and is 'the quickening Spirit' — 'born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth' into His heredity.

In its origin His manhood was not of the Earth, earthy, nor was He of satan, satanic by spiritual heredity, He was the Lord of glory. Therefore, in order to reach man as He found him to be, and remake him as He wanted him to be, He had to become Adam and somehow end Adam's line; that is, He must become the last Adam. But because He was God's second Man by supernatural birth, He could not be a second Adam during His life. From the moment of his fall in Eden, down through the ages, Adam had become more than a person, he had become a

nature and way of life, a prototype, a kind. This Adam Man, by normal procreation, immediately became Cain and Abel, and in them is revealed to be a split, lustful, murderous dual-personality, worsening in his progeny unto unpardonable sin and total depravity, as the Flood and Babel and Sodom and Gomorrah heartbreakingly reveal. So it was that Jesus came into the world as the wonderful second Man, born by the power of the Spirit direct from God in order that at Calvary He should personalize old Adam, thereby becoming last Adam, destroying him in the act.

In Jesus God made a new start; it was and still is exactly as He says 'I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end'. In His first, that is His natural birth (for only His conception was supernatural, not His birth), the Spirit makes

clear the truth written by John, 'this is He that came by water and blood ... there are three that bear record ... the Spirit and the water and the blood'. The first part of the quotation is true of us all; every man born of flesh on the earth comes by water and blood, and every natural birth is a kind of baptism; it is only through the waters that the babe, formed of and from the blood, has its birth, as all known simple biological facts and laws of nature demonstrate. Thus in procreation, as well as in the original creation of the universe, all harmoniously extols the basic principle which may be defined as 'baptismal generation'. Therefore in His natural birth Jesus, in common with all men, had to come by water and blood. But Jesus' supernaturalness lay in the fact that, although His birth was natural, His generation was not, and herein lies the truth

of the second part of the quotation above, 'there are three that bear witness (or record), the Spirit and the water and the blood'. The Babe of Bethlehem was generated by the Father, because the Spirit came on Mary in order that Jesus may be both the Son of God and the true Son of Man, as God intended men to be. All other men born of woman came by water and blood only; they do not come into the world by the Spirit. In their birth is to be found the dual witness, water and blood, but in His is the treble witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood.

To be the second man as God intended (and so much more as the God-Man), wonderful as that is, would of itself still have been insufficient qualification for Jesus to have effected man's redemption. For if Jesus had only been that, He would unavoidably have

condemned all other men, because He immeasurably outclassed them. Who could attain unto Him? He could not even be an example to unregenerate man, for to be a true example one must also be a sample of the whole, and this He certainly was not. There was not, nor ever had been another like Him, so how could God expect of any man the same standards He expected of His Son? Jesus knew He could not set the Adam-man an example, so He never attempted it. During His earth life He could not even reach men in their basic state, nor could they reach Him in His; they did not know Him, nor had they ever really seen Him, as John 14:9 so plainly shows. He accomplished much by becoming (a) man; He took his flesh, his humanity, his low estate, his environment and much of his limitation; in His humility He took so much, but not all. He had to take

much, much more in order to become all Man as Man really is; to do that He must take his sin and all his sinful Adam-nature-self. To reach and deal with and enter and possess man, so that He could have him eternally, the second Man had to become the last, literally the last Adam. He must head up and become that loathsome, depraved, unredeemable, ultimate totality of all corruption and iniquity, Man, the end-product of Adam's unholy alliance with satan; He must be condemned and rejected and forsaken by God, absolutely deserving of the extremest punishment that divine justice could give. But this He could never become, for He did no sin. So God made Him to be sin. It was for this He became both Man's and Jehovah's servant, that He should, as God, render the highest service that had ever been rendered either to God or man.

As second man He was straitened all His life unto Calvary, the point where and when He should become the last Adam. It was to be the supreme moment of His life, so He moved to it with all the unparalleled majesty of God. It was to be His baptism, the moment of utter dedication to the purpose of eternal life, the reason for His first birth, superseding both that and His water baptism as the heavens are higher than the earth. All that had gone before was only leading up to this, and had held or could hold only symbolic or lesser meanings to Him as He underwent in His heart what later He achieved in the flesh and Spirit in utter reality. The Cross / death Baptism was His only possible hope and means of becoming last Adam as he really was; dead, utterly dead — death itself. Man is not just dead, he is death; Jesus is life and Man is death.

Physical death is a representation to man of his historic spiritual state before God. It may be a hard lesson to learn, but it is a true one. As is a corpse to man, so is man's inward state to God.

Man in himself is either life or death according to whether or not he has been baptized with Christ's Baptism. He was baptized, utterly plunged into spiritual death by Adam in Eden, and since then has remained totally immersed in it. The original sin of Adam has manifested itself increasingly in ever-worsening ways as successive generations of men have worked out their own damnation. Satan is working in them, willing and doing his own displeasure. To reach and regenerate Man the Lord, having redeemed him on the cross, was baptized into Adam, the Old Man. There

was no other way for Jesus to become Adam to God for man.

He as deliberately chose to be baptized into death on the cross as Adam chose to plunge the whole human race into death in the garden. The Man Christ Jesus was His own baptizer; His God left Him on the cross to do it Himself, and He did it. His Name be for ever praised! There in the loneliness, having first finished everything God gave Him to do as a man, assuming His Godhead, He dismissed His own Spirit and passed away from His body. He did it voluntarily; there was nothing else to do; He had reached the ultimate point and had concluded the reason for living. In the Godhead He was the Resurrection and the Life; it was always understood there; but among men it was not known — He had to prove it to them. Not even the thieves, so physically close on

crosses either side of Him, could see it, neither could John and His mother, Mary, who each had so loyally stood by Him; it was dark. But angel eyes beheld Him, and Father received His Spirit; so He moved into a new position. He became death and burial, God's new death and burial into which we may be baptized by the power of God. As He was then and there baptized into Adam-man, so, in successive order to Jesus Christ, may we be baptized into that Manhood of which He was the second in line to appear on earth. The new Man is not only who, but also what Jesus really is; therefore, being baptized into Him, we become new Man as He is. John later takes up these three simple words and makes them one of the wonderful recurring themes of his first epistle — 'as He is'.

Jesus lost His limitations in death. By death He was unstraitened, able to do what He

had lived for, so that if any man will be baptized with His Baptism, that is die His death as God grants him the priceless precious privilege, he may also enter into all the results of it according to God's promise. This then is the one true Baptism. It results in, and immediately achieves, the free merging and flowing of a man's spirit into, and within Christ. For by this Baptism God incorporates the spirit of Man into, and in and with His own. 'We know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true and that we are in Him that is true, even in His Son; this is the true God and eternal life'. Amen. So it is.

Thinking of all this in terms of the type before us, on reading Ephesians 1:7 and 12-14, we find Paul setting forth the correct relationship of the truth embraced within

this Baptism. In the earlier verse Paul says, 'we have redemption through His blood ... in Him', and then in the later verses tells us that the seal of saving faith is the Holy Spirit. Thus the blood and the Baptism are related in the context of being 'in Him', which is the theme of the chapter, and indeed also of all the book. For this is precisely what the Baptism does; it baptizes us into Christ, the Beloved, by the way He made for us through His blood. Therefore we have the redemption, which in experience is nothing other than full enjoyment of the total life of Jesus, the Beloved. Beside many other things this means complete freedom from the bondage of having to exist in sin, even though we live in a world of men under the power and dominion of the devil. This is what God intends us to understand by the type.

It would have been utterly useless for Israel to have slain the lamb and eaten its flesh within their blood-sprinkled hovels, if the baptism had not been planned for them by the Lord. For that baptism was both the final way of escape for the nation, and the sealing to them of the reason for the sprinkling of the blood; beside which it was in fact the only logical thing to do. For God to have slain Pharaoh's firstborn just in order to redeem His own firstborn, and not to have done anything about Pharaoh himself, would have achieved little. Besides which, God had not made promise to Abraham that He would slay Egypt's firstborn, but He had promised him a land, and that land lay beyond the Red Sea. How thorough God is; how true to basic principles and original promises, as well as to unborn peoples. He was not only seeking firstborn sons by

sprinkling, but also a whole firstborn body of people by the baptism. In the fulness of the work wrought by God and shown in the type, not only was Pharaoh's firstborn (that is, old or first Adam) destroyed, but also Pharaoh himself and all his host and his chosen captains (principalities and powers). Thus the interdependence of the bloodshed and this Baptism is revealed. The one has no effective existence in reality without the other, and each ought never to be conceived of or preached about apart from the other, as being of itself sufficient to regenerate. Each by itself would have been inefficient because insufficient, but being one they are each perfectly suited to the end God had in view when instituting them.

The Hebrews letter brings out this truth to perfection in the second chapter. Verse 3 reminds us that our salvation is so great that

we must not in any way neglect it. In verses 6-10 we find a précis on the theme of man, culminating with Jesus bringing many sons to glory; here Jesus' suffering and death was brought into view. Then the writer sweeps on to tell us that through that same death the devil was destroyed and deliverance accomplished for all those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. All this, we observe, is accompanied with signs and wonders and miracles and gifts (distributions) of the Holy Ghost according to His own will, by which God bore witness to the preached word. Combining all this with the words in Colossians 2:8-3:3, especially 2:15, we are afforded a sight into what the Baptism wherewith He was baptized really is, and what it accomplished for us.

It is more particularly this aspect of the Baptism that Israel's experience in the Red Sea emphasizes. It sets forth the Baptism as God's means of destroying Satan and his hosts as well as His way of bringing many sons unto glory (Exodus 15:1, 6, 11 and 16:7-10 and 24:16). More than that, we are redeemed from the world (Egypt) also. People cannot really enjoy Egypt and desire to live there when once the redemption has been truly manifest in them as regeneration. In the last analysis there is no such person as a worldly Christian; a man is either a worldling or a Christian. That Israel did indeed lust after 'leeks and garlic' after their passover, and desired to go back to Egypt, is because they were not regenerate. Their experiences were outward only. The goodness and blessing of God were extended to them all the time, and He was

constantly working on their behalf with signs and miracles and wonders, but their evil hearts of unbelief still remained. Theirs was an obedience of faith in response to signs and wonders and divers miracles; God did not give the Holy Ghost to them, for at that time it was not His will to do so. The age of the Spirit had not yet come. God was dealing with them in respect of the Covenant He had made with Abraham His friend; it was sheerest grace displayed in sovereignty of purpose. He had spoken and was bringing it to pass. Which consideration begs a question, and introduces us to the matter of sin.

We have touched on the subject of sin in this chapter, but this particular type does not major on sin, nor redemption from it, for it is not in view here. As their behaviour showed, sin was present, for since Adam it is

in every man, though not then defined as such. The reason for this is very simple, and for the key to the answer we must as usual turn to the New Testament. In Romans 5:13,14, Paul tells us that sin was in the world from Adam to Moses, and that death was reigning during that time. Sin, though there, was not imputed to anyone because the law had not been given, Romans 3:19,20. At the time of the actual Exodus, the Children of Israel were entirely without God's law, as were the Egyptians. Pharaoh (and indeed each of them) was tested by the word of God. He rejected the spoken word and paid the penalty. Of course, sin was in the hearts and actions of all men, but God was dealing with their naturalness rather than their sins. Ephesians 2:1-3 speaks of the Gentiles being 'by nature the children of wrath' as well as being 'dead in trespasses

and sins'. Therefore, because He had not given His law to Pharaoh, He did not, nor could He in all fairness, judge the Egyptians upon whether or not they kept it. Instead He said to Pharaoh, 'Let my people go', and because Pharaoh did not do it, he had to pay the penalty of disobedience.

We find the same absence of any reference to sin even when we consider Israel and the lamb. The lamb was not slain as an offering for sin, neither was its blood given upon an altar, nor sprinkled upon a Mercy Seat for atonement. Sin was not in view, for it had not been exposed by the Law, and therefore it could not be dealt with even in the sense of being covered. Everything turned on the acceptance or rejection of the word of God, as indeed it still does. But at Sinai God added to all the words He had ever spoken, and also codified basic spiritual and social

principles into a written law for righteousness. From that moment, because God's word had become written, man's responsibility became twofold; he had to believe, receive and obey both the spoken and also the written word. When the Law, with its long list of prohibitions, was given to the nation, the era which may be called the era of imputation came of age.

It had always been of course. Commencing with Adam in the garden, it had been an understood thing with God that righteousness should be imputed to everyone who obeyed Him, and unrighteousness to all who refused to obey His word. This is brought out quite clearly to us Hebrews chapter 11, but from the time of the giving of the Law onwards, it became an established principle among men. To break one of God's commandments in the realm of

personal hygiene, or social relationships, or religious rites, was to be a sinner in God's sight. The incredible and detailed magnitude of the principle of sin that lay in the act of disobedience in the Garden was extensively revealed by the giving of the law. It was not fully revealed by the Law however; it required the death of Christ to reveal fully what depths of iniquity lay undiscovered in sin. Even so, Paul says it was by the Law that he discovered indwelling sin. It was by imputed sin that his inherent sin was discovered. Inherent sin was never imputed to anyone, nor can it be. To seek to impute sin which is already there, having been received by inheritance from Adam through our forbears, would be the height of folly and confusion. Sin was imputed to a man and revealed to his consciousness as guilt whenever and wherever the legal code was

broken by that person. Sin was by commission or omission according to the commandments and ordinances of God.

Here let us see the wisdom of God in ordering the lamb to be slain and its blood sprinkled and its flesh eaten in Egypt. It was all because in a not very distant future He was going to take up the lamb and its blood and systematize its use and function by law for His people in Canaan. But being wise after the event, we must not impute to the slain lamb(s) in Egypt a function it never fulfilled, or a virtue it never possessed, or a meaning God did not intend. God did not at that time save His people from their sins but brought them 'out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage', as He had said. At the same time and by the same miracle, He also destroyed the master bondman and his hosts

3- TO POSSESS

This chapter is taken up with another major crisis in the history of the Children of Israel. True to the divine principle of baptism, we shall discover the Lord repeating His former works, though with a different purpose in view, and as we may say, in a diminutive form. The first event concerned a universal flood, the second a small Sea; this one concerns the river Jordan. The account of the miracle with which we are here concerned is to be found in the book of Joshua, Moses' successor. Joshua, the name of the man chosen of God to lead His people over the river into the Promised Land, is the Hebrew form of the name that God gave to his Son — Jesus. Because of this, the book holds special significance for us, and if for

our purpose we think of it as the book of Jesus, we shall perhaps be the more able to receive and apply its message to ourselves. The particular subject matter we need lies within the compass of the first five chapters, and contains yet more of the glories of the person of our Saviour and of the greatness of the salvation into which He has brought us.

Approaching the river from the wilderness through the land of Moab, which lay on the east side of Jordan, the Children of Israel found that the Promised Land lay westward from them over on the other side of the waters. To enter the land of the promise and make it their possession, they had to cross the river, which at the time they reached it was in full flood. It was harvest time: Jordan always overflowed its banks during the harvest period. The story of this crossing,

called a pass-over, furnishes us with another marvellous insight into the glorious fulness of the One Baptism. The country which they were to possess was already occupied by seven nations, each of which was greater in power and numbers than themselves.

Nevertheless, by oft-repeated promises, God had given the land to them for an inheritance. He had brought them to its borders fully intending to bring them right into it and make good to them all the things He had led them to believe in over the years. All He had meant when He made the original promises to Abraham, repeating them to Isaac and Jacob and Moses, He was about to fulfil.

Centuries before, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the three great national patriarchs, had lived in this land, but we are told that even though God had promised it to them, they

had only been strangers in it. Moses, who had brought them to Jordan, had never dwelt in the land at all; he was only granted a fleeting glimpse of it before God took him away from the earth. All four of these men had received the promises of God, and in faith of God's word had embraced them; perhaps also they had dimly seen the fulfilment of them afar off, but now the redeemed nation was about to enter in to possess the land and realize the promises. Most probably it was a time of mixed emotions for many, for behind them, strewn across the wilderness of tragedy, lay a lost generation, a multitude of men and women of their own flesh and blood, who had failed to reach their desired haven. Fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers, brothers and sisters, had died, overthrown in the wilderness for

lusting after evil things, or practising idolatry, or fornication, or murmuring and tempting God. Yet they all had been included by God when He originally described the Children of Israel as His firstborn, to whom belonged the birthright and the 'double portion' of the inheritance. They all should have known both the joys of absolute deliverance from Egypt and also the wealth and blessings of unlimited possessions in the land of Promise, plus the immeasurable glory of having God as their God. But like Esau of old, they had despised their birthright, selling it for less than a 'mess of pottage', and had finally died, victims of their own lusts and disobedience, tasting bitterly of God's breach of promise action against them in the desert. They 'failed of the grace of God' and fell in the wilderness as carcasses, some for

burning, some for burial, but all for banishment.

What a dreadful anti-climax it had all been. They had left Egypt in such glorious victory; Canaan was only a few days' march across the desert, they should soon have been there; their God would supply all their need. Instead of this, frustration, bitterness, defeat, death; a harvest of hate. Refusals, disobedience, murders, rebellions, stubbornness, jealousy, presumption had welled up from within their hearts against God, until long-deserved judgement from the Lord quelled their insurrection and stilled their murmurs and complaints. The Lord had been preparing the Children of Israel for possession, but in the process of learning obedience a whole generation had died. For them and for God it had been an unspeakable tragedy. Nevertheless we see

God's mercy in it all, for although that whole first generation had to pass away, it was in order that a new generation might take its place and receive the blessings which their fathers had forfeited. What a significant thing this is, full of plainest truth; if we will allow it to speak to our hearts, it will teach us a great lesson. But for the moment we will defer developing this precious truth, and examine something more of the dreadful loss suffered by that first generation of people who were the original passers-over. The Hebrews letter, from which we may gather so much knowledge of the tragic affair, informs us that unto them was the gospel preached and the promises given, as well as unto their children. Yet they failed totally to grasp what everything was about, and what God was doing. It was an onerous and enormous mistake; but the fearfulness

of it all is that the mistake made by that first privileged generation did not die with them; it is still tragically common among us to this day. In their self-centred ambition to possess what God had promised, they completely disregarded what He wanted from them in return for His faithfulness. Let no man be misled over this, for the lesson is vitally important. The entire Hebrews book is written as a precautionary, as well as an explanatory epistle, and the warnings that God gives in it are placed there to keep us from making the same mistakes as the Children of Israel. They made all these sinful errors because they failed to grasp the magnitude of the great salvation spoken of in Hebrews 2:3. It is utterly impossible for God to convey all His fulness of intention in words, but let us make sure that we do not fail like those of old to apprehend what God

means by His statements in this our day. We must give earnest heed to the things we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip, for unto us as well as unto them is this gospel preached. It is a far more serious matter for us, because beyond what He promised to Israel, God intends to give us HIMSELF and all He has in a much more personal way.

The greatest promise made to the Children of Israel was not possession of the land, as their carnal minds mistakenly believed, nor yet was it self-fulfillment in terms of material things after which their craving hearts wrongly lusted. The chiefest joy and blessing designed for them was that in Canaan they should fully inherit and possess God, as God fully inherited and possessed them. That was the reason why He had made His promises, He included the lesser in the

greater, but if this was known unto the Children of Israel, it was little accounted of by them. The thought that seemed to possess them rose from the anticipation of possessing cities they had not built, fields they had not sown, trees they had not planted, and cattle they had not reared, in a land full of blossoms and fruit they had not produced, flowing with milk and honey. It was perfectly natural that they should visualize all this in their imagination, but utterly carnal that it should take precedence over the desire to have God for Himself. Their slavish hearts and downtrodden souls sought a Canaan-paradise, but they did not want God and His righteousness. This was all so disappointingly revealed after only a comparatively few days' journey through the wilderness immediately upon their departure from Egypt, and long before they

drew near to the Promised Land. Delivered from satan and Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea they surely were, but not from self and sin, as the records in Exodus and Numbers all too clearly show. And who among us knows but that had he been there in an unregenerate and piteous state as they, he may not himself have been like them, even though, with them, he had enjoyed as many favours of God?

In Numbers 14 we see how God's dealings with that generation reached such a climax that He absolutely abandoned all hope and intention of bringing them into the land. It happened as the result of the undeservedly evil report of the land which rose from the evil unbelieving hearts of ten of the chief rulers of the people. This fell upon the ears of the people like a death-knell; it sounded so true to their equally unbelieving hearts,

that they rejected the good report given by Joshua and Caleb. This awful national habit of tempting God had persistently developed by the people from the moment when Moses first announced his gospel to them in Egypt. From the very first they had never really believed God. And although since then He had done so many miracles for them, they still did not believe, but openly rebelled against Him. So when they eventually accepted the lies about the Promised Land, God finally said 'enough'. In grief and anger He reluctantly pronounced judgement upon them and refused to let them go one step further towards their goal; instead He turned them all to wandering in the wilderness, and the responsible males to death. It was all so paradoxical; the exact opposite of all their original hopes and the absolute antithesis of all God's promises.

Virtually a whole generation of males and multitudes of females lost the promises and missed the blessing. Worse still, for the next forty years the entire nation, including many innocent children, became nomads; homeless, frustrated roamers, bitter of soul and sick at heart because of deferred hope. It was because of this that the passage of Jordan had become necessary. It need not to have taken place at all, had the 'first-born' been true to their calling; it only became necessary to the second generation because of their forefathers' unbelief. As a result it is written into scripture as an event which took place in the nation of Israel quite separate in time from the crossing of the Red Sea. But it need not be thought, nor ought it to be taught, that by this God intends to convey to the reader the idea of a second experience through which all people must pass, for He

had never originally planned it so. He plainly intended that the actual people He brought out of Egypt should enter Canaan, as Exodus 3:7,8, 16-18 and 6:1-8 clearly show. Why then, we may ask, did it not happen as God intended?

God does not make promises without intending to keep them. When He originally promised the land to Abraham, He brought him into it. To whom God makes promises, He commits Himself thereby to fulfil those promises; He is not a man that He should lie. That first generation of men who refused to go into the land sealed their own doom. God's refusal to let them enter later was manifestly right also; what happened subsequently in the wilderness was proof enough that He was absolutely justified in His action. All the sin lying latent in their hearts was fully manifested under

wilderness conditions. Although it was not seen when God made the decision to turn them into the wilderness, it was nevertheless there, and had been from the very beginning. Sin and rebellion lay in their very nature. Despite all God's love, they could not believe and so they could not enter in. But God is faithful; He keeps His promise to the faithful heart; so in the second generation He brought the nation again to the borders of the land of His choice for them. This time they who had been robbed of the blessings by their fathers' sin, had the opportunity to enter in to what their fathers had rejected. The choice was theirs now. They had sought the Promised Land long enough, now for the first time they were to have opportunity to believe, obey and enter for themselves.

When a person seeks truth for the truth's sake and not in order to explain personal experience, it is often seen that what may have been reached or gained in some experience subsequent to conversion was what God intended to be obtained in the original experience and, for His will in the matter, was there to be taken at that time. Certainly when seeking principles of truth in matters of Bible interpretation, it becomes increasingly clear that the crossing of Jordan should not be preached doctrinally as a second experience properly so-called. Neither should it be taught as being an experience different from, subsequent to and consequent upon new birth. At first glance it may appear to permit of such interpretation, but closer examination of the facts makes it obvious that it was neither a second nor a first experience. As we

proceed, we shall see that it was an unique, distinctive event, in fact the only one of its order.

Having brought the Israelites out of Egypt, God did not immediately lead them into Canaan. Had He wished, He could quite easily have taken them more swiftly to their promised home, but instead, for many necessary reasons, He delayed the journey. To Him the time factor was not important; His attitude to time and journeyings is luminously and parabolically revealed in Exodus 19:4. There He speaks of the whole period and labours of the prolonged operation of deliverance from Egypt, as bearing and bringing the Children of Israel on eagles' wings to Himself. Apparently it was just one swift, simple, sure solution to their need, which in execution brought total satisfaction to His own heart. It is equally

certain that meeting the host on Canaan's shore decades later, He could have said the same thing to that second generation concerning their journeyings.

Upon leaving the Red Sea, the Children of Israel faced a journey to Canaan which, though tedious, could have been accomplished without undue haste within fourteen days. However, having many things to teach them, the Lord took a more leisurely pace and halted them for a number of months at Sinai. There He imparted unto them His handwritten law for righteousness, together with instructions for making and furnishing Him a Tabernacle. He was their God and He wished to dwell among them. He wanted to come right down to their level and have His own tent just as they all had theirs; further, if their hearts were willing for this, He also wanted to have some of them

as household servants. This was a very precious thought to His heart — those people must have been unspeakably dear to Him, but they were ignorant of Him and of His ways. They had no love for Him at all; they could not even endure to wait forty days needed by Moses to receive all his instructions and learn the design for God's house. Even at that early stage of the journey their impatient hearts broke out into open rebellion at the delay, and utterly rejected both God and Moses. In open insult they deliberately substituted a calf of gold for God their glory, and foolishly denied all intentions of going on to any Promised Land. It is almost unbelievable that within a few weeks of their thrilling exodus from the house of bondage, they should publicly exhibit such abysmal depths of inbred sin, and seek to go back to Egypt, but they did.

To Egypt they would have returned except that God brought them out, and as far as He was concerned that was that; they were going to stay out. He made quite plain to Moses that. He would rather destroy them than that they should go back there. True it is that in the future their implacable attitude and repeated acts of temptation would finally result in God prohibiting them from Canaan, but even though He did not allow them to enter there, they could not go back to Egypt. God's will was set. If they would not go forward, they certainly could not go back.

Against the Lord's original intention, forty years of wandering intervened between deliverance from Egypt and entrance into Canaan, and it was entirely the fault of the Children of Israel. 'They could not enter in because of unbelief', we are told. It was not

a momentary doubt that lost them the land; it was the final evil demonstration of a set disposition to disbelieve God that cost them their inheritance. God refused them permission to enter Canaan because they were in that unregenerate, hardhearted, rebellious, cynical condition which always turns all God's gracious truth into a lie. So instead of entering in, they were sent into the deserts until all those men worked out their own sin and died in shame in the wilderness. In that generation the inevitable outworking of sin and the consequent severity of God against it is displayed to the full. But extending far beyond His severity, we see also His innate goodness, for having exterminated the rebels, and eliminated the rebellion, He gave the next generation the opportunity to obtain all their fathers refused to have. Of this generation some

had been babes, or at the most lads, when they passed over the Red Sea, and some had not even been born. They were, as near as typology can prefigure, a new race of men, and it is of this new generation of men that the book of Joshua treats.

In the preceding book of Deuteronomy we find this nation gathered on the wilderness side of Jordan with the long years of waiting, wasting, wandering and wickedness far behind them. They are standing listening to Moses reading to them the Law, together with the ordinances and the commandments and the judgements of God. It was as though they stood where their fathers had stood years ago at Sinai; for they are listening to the second giving of the Law. Now, differently from that past occasion, the floods of Jordan flowed at their feet, barring them from the Promised Land, and their

baptism lay immediately before them. Their fathers' baptism had lain behind them when they had heard that same Law, but this generation was being shown the truth that the baptism and the giving of the Law were somehow joined. God had intended that the original people who had shed and sheltered behind the blood and eaten the lamb and had been baptized into life in the cloud and in the Sea, should also be the people of the Law and the Land and the Lord. His purpose had been to lead them from Sinai into the land. When they refused to go in, He had to bring about His purpose another way.

Man's disobedience and irregularity of behaviour always confuses his understanding of doctrine and experience of truth; but it never confuses God. To receive the Law, they must also receive the baptism. The works of Sinai and Pentecost are just as

much one as the work of Calvary and Pentecost are one. In the actual process of the Baptism in the Spirit a man is baptized into all that Christ wrought on the cross, and all that Christ wrought there is baptized into him. The supreme reason why Christ wrought His work on the cross was to demonstrate the utter rightness of righteousness against the extreme sinfulness of sin. The Lord there vindicated Sinai and showed the righteousness of the Law in all its moral, ethical and philosophical rectitude, and also in its judgements. At the same time He justified the Levitical system of sacrifice, showing that it was really an amazing display of grace. Under that system He exacted less than the price of his sin from every man, taking but a token sacrifice from him whilst accepting all his gratitude as a thank-offering. The supreme revelation of

the cross is hereby shown to be love. The complete work that Jesus wrought there, even if it could be fully known, is far too great to examine here, but we must not fail to notice that the supreme reason for the cross was the declaration of God's righteousness. So it is that at his Pentecost, a man has the Law written in his heart; it must be, for otherwise it cannot be made new. See Hebrews 8:11 and II Corinthians 3:3-6.

Returning to the type, we see that Israel at Jordan received the Law and went into their baptism, and this accomplished their passover (Joshua 5). The order here is reversed from that which took place originally. When first introduced it was Passover, Baptism, Law, but sin and disobedience had necessitated a different order. This may explain much that appears to be so irregular in many modern so-called

'baptisms' or 'births' or conversions. But in whatever order the three come, they form a unity of experience and therefore must be kept together, for they agree in one. They have a joint testimony because they form one whole work. As far as was humanly possible, that generation of people was going into the baptism with the Law ringing in their ears. It was repeated unto their hearts and put into their minds as well as Moses, the mediator of that Old Covenant, was able to do it. In type they were going to be baptized into Jesus (Joshua), and for that they must be baptized into heart and mind law in the flesh, not stone and Book Law in an ark. As with their fathers before them, they must experience a personal passover. With their forbears it had been unto Moses in the cloud and in the Sea; with them it was to be unto Joshua in the cloud and in the

Jordan. The cloud is not mentioned here, but we know that it was there, for God had said that it should be with them; they would not have attempted to go over Jordan without its clear leading to show them the way (Exodus 40:38). Obviously then, this crossing was to be to these people the most important journey they would ever make.

Of all the men of the former generation who had passed over the Red Sea, only Joshua and Caleb remained at this time. It is also probable, indeed almost certain, that some of the women who passed over Jordan had also experienced the exodus passover. All these would be elderly survivors of husbands or brothers who, over the years, had died off as a result of their folly and disobedience, but to the vast majority it was an entirely new experience; however, these women are not under consideration here.

This is not because they are of no importance; on the contrary, the very fact that they were now entering into what their husbands or brothers had rejected proves their value in God's eyes. The reason why those who belonged to a former generation and baptism were accorded the second baptism is simply this — they were women. Under Mosaic jurisdiction the female never bore the responsibility for making spiritual or legal decisions; therefore unless they were partners to their husbands' sins and decisions (as in the case of Achan and his wife and family), they never had to bear the punishments for them. All decisions and responsibilities at that time lay firmly upon the shoulders of the male. Taking this into account, the whole episode is brought into correct focus.

We see then that it was as a newborn race that Israel came to Jordan. Their fathers a generation before had come to the Red Sea, just as though they had been but newly born. Had that first generation behaved as God intended, they would have gone into the land by one baptism only, for neither the journey demanded, nor did they need, nor did God intend them to cross over Jordan. He had not planned more than one baptism for them any more than He has for any man, but He did plan and insist upon one. That is why Moses firstly led toward and Joshua finally brought Israel through Jordan. There was no evading it; both Moses and Joshua insist on one baptism per person, and it is seen to be the same with both John Baptist, Moses' representative, and Jesus, for each insisted upon the one baptism he ministered. So just as their fathers before

them, the unbaptized sons of Israel had to face it in their day; the whole host must be baptized. It was an absolutely new and unique experience to them — their one and only passover-baptism.

We have seen that of the former responsible males, none but Joshua and Caleb remain alive. They had wholly followed the Lord, and because of this they both had special roles to fill in the future of the nation, and were preserved with a purpose. Joshua, we know, was elected of God to take the place of Moses as leader of the people, and became a type of Jesus; Caleb represents the true Israelite in whom there is no guile. Neither of them needed any such thing as a second experience of the baptism in either of its elements. Caleb is the perfect type of the one who, together with his Lord, steps straight out of Egypt into Canaan, which is

God's intention and provision for every man. Caleb's inheritance was already known to him; he had already trodden on it and in his heart he was living in it. God testified that he had quite another spirit in him from all his contemporaries who had died by the way in the wilderness.

When these factors are taken into account, it becomes clearer than ever that what is so often preached as clear Bible proof of the need of a second experience leading to a second blessing, is in fact proof of the exact opposite. It is only the application of the first experience to a second generation. It was necessary because that first generation of unbelievers had to be annihilated. That being so, how could they undergo a second blessing baptism? Indeed they were cut off by God precisely so that they should not be

said or held to have experienced a first and second experience.

By this the Lord Himself has emphatically precluded:

1. the possibility of experiencing the Baptism in the Spirit as a second blessing;
2. the propriety of using this event as a basis for preaching it.

To understand correctly the true spiritual meaning and importance of this passage of Jordan, we must once again leap the time-gap of forty years, and in thought substitute Jordan for the Red Sea. As we have seen, it was God's intention to lead His people directly from Egypt to Canaan. Only disobedience had delayed it, so now, the cause for the delay being removed, the delay in time, or the time-lapse, for the completion of the exercise may also itself be removed from our thinking. This is what is

meant by leaping the time-gap. For the purposes of what God is trying to teach us it is as though the Children of Israel had stepped into the Red Sea from Goshen and had stepped ashore in Canaan. Yet there are certain differences in the two crossings which we must observe in order that we should learn just how much spiritual meaning lies within this national baptism.

This time there is no Pharaoh with his host of chariots in hot pursuit of the people so lately escaped from the house of bondage; the nation no longer felt that they were slaves. There was no fear in their hearts; recapture and re-enslavement had died out of their thinking, and they no longer had any desire to return to Egypt. That land was by now but a bitter memory in the minds of a few people, mostly elderly women. For a long while now Israel had been a victorious

people, approaching the land wherein their days were going to be as the days of heaven on earth. Already they had encountered and conquered some of the giants their fathers had so feared to face, God's own personal Tabernacle was with them, and the Ark of the Covenant with His throne upon it was in their midst. They were His chosen people, His personal charge. He ruled over them in mercy, and His 'standard', the pillar of cloud and fire, towered above and over them day and night. They were an entirely different company from that which had earlier fled in fear from Pharaoh. Standing confidently at the waters' edge with the echoes of Moses' voice ringing in their memories, they calmly waited to pass over the river and possess their possessions.

They also had a new leader. By divine appointment Joshua now replaced Moses,

who through disobedience, because of the weakness of the flesh, had been refused entrance into the land. He who gave the Law could not give the Land, and in this God is teaching us yet more of His eternal truth. He had originally given the land to Abraham by promise; it was an entirely undeserved favour, unmixed with legal qualification, and so before God could fulfil that promise, Moses must be removed. This same principle is revealed by Paul in Galatians 3:17, 18. The inheritance could not be given to them as of law, so Moses, the giver and the representative of the Law, had to go. God took him out of the way. He did not appoint Joshua over Moses' head, as though to demote law and exalt grace, neither did He appoint a junior above a senior, but He first removed Moses because his work was fulfilled. Moses had acted as schoolmaster

or pedagogue to bring Israel to Christ (Joshua), and therefore his work was done. There are other reasons why Moses must give way to Joshua, and perhaps not the least of these lies in the meanings of their names — and not just in their respective meaning only, but also in a further thing, perhaps not at first noted. Moses' name was given him as a baby by an Egyptian princess. In that name she described the action whereby he became hers, and being a heathen did so in terms of her superstitious beliefs; Moses means 'drawn out'. He was thereby named as a child of Egypt and a son of the Nile-god, with all the superstitious connotations and fleshly undertones and worldly ambitions that such a name could mean. Therefore, great as he became, Moses could not be allowed to lead God's people into the land of Promise, for in that

land God intended all the reproach of Egypt to be rolled away. The entrance, conquest and occupation of Canaan was to be accomplished as the dispensation of the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham, and not even an Egyptian name could be connected with it.

In personal stature Moses had no equal in Israel. God was not dealing in personalities when He substituted Joshua for Moses. Neither before nor after Moses was there another prophet better than he; it was his name that was at fault, for not only was its origin wrong, but its meaning was too limited. 'Drawn out' only signified one aspect of the great work being wrought by God in the earth for His people; it is partial, incomplete. Also it is somewhat negative, like the words 'Thou shalt not', in which the law of Moses was couched. The move to

bring His people out of Egypt was only preparation, a necessary prelude to bringing them into Canaan. God had no intention of bringing them into that land under the lawgiver, for that would seem to display inconsistency and a lack of concern for the promotion of eternal truth on His part. It would have been in retrospect a betrayal of Abraham and in prospect a denial of Jesus. Joshua, on the other hand, is a typically Israelitish name meaning Jehovah / Saviour, or Salvation of Jehovah. The truth is that the salvation of Jehovah which He had in mind for the Children of Israel was not a state of being just 'drawn out' of Egypt or of being just across the Red Sea, but right in Canaan. In himself as a man Joshua was no greater than, if as great as Moses, but in the plan of God he had to fill a more positive role. He must be a type of Jesus leading his people

into personal experience of the fulfilment of the Promise and the promises. He was chosen of the Lord to divide unto the people their inheritance and this is just what he did. Careful study of the opening chapters of Joshua's book will yield instructions of much value to those who wish to learn more detailed truth about our great salvation. Enlightening and desirable as this is, we shall not give time and space to indulge ourselves in it all here, but continue to pursue the main line of truth upon which we are set. This turns around the magnification of the person of Joshua and the work which he typically accomplished when he was chosen to represent Jesus Christ to us. This is brought into focus in chapter 3, where we discover that in the passage of Jordan, Joshua is very closely associated with the Ark, which is here called 'the Ark of the

Covenant'. The place of their association is in Jordan, the river of death; Joshua and the Covenant are revealed as one there. At this vital juncture of the revelation of the mystery it is important for us to note this: so close is their union that as the account unfolds, the point of emphasis moves constantly from the one to the other.

Watching closely as we follow the progress of the Children of Israel over Jordan on their way into the Promised Land, we shall see how some of the finer details of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ are pinpointed and highlighted. The outstanding lesson to learn is that the living Jesus, in leading His people into their inheritance, first stands, then stands firm, and remains standing in Covenant with them in His death; this He does in order to bring them by resurrection into His life.

Now we know that the Ark represented the crux of all the bloodshed and sacrifices and offerings of the Law. All that was ever done under law according to the Levitical code was done unto Him who sat on His merciful throne on the Ark. Spiritually the Mercy Seat and He who sat on it was the end of the Law in a twofold way, namely objectively and finally. Objectively it was the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believed, and this was so because annually the blood of atonement was sprinkled there. Finally it was the end of the Law because there the Law ceased. Beyond that, it had no jurisdiction. All over Israel it had jurisdiction, but from that point upwards it had no power over anyone. Neither sin nor legal code has any dominion in heaven, and from the Mercy Seat upwards all was heaven. The Law was in the Ark; the Mercy Seat was upon

that; the cloud was upon that; God appeared in that; and all was glory. That is finality. God was not under the Law but over it; the Law was under Him; it was in His body (the Ark), His Being.

Ordinarily the Ark was set in its exact position within the veil which covered the Holiest of All at the east end of the Tabernacle, but on this occasion it stood in Jordan; it was in transit. According to God's instructions it was wrapped within its veil, covered with sealskin, spread over with a cloth wholly of blue, its staves in place, the blood but a stain upon its throne, with the living cloud resting upon it and spreading far out over the river, the way, and the people. What more could God have done to show us (even if they did not then understand it) the glory of the Lord in death, and the wonder of that Baptism wherewith we are baptized?

Here we see Jesus in all His glorious humanity, the Lord of life reigning over all in His brief death. Having dealt with sin where sin abounded, He deals with death where death abounded, that He might show us grace where grace abounds, and give us life, because life abounds; all is of His humanity. How intimately the veil wrapped the Ark in Jordan. Just so, in death, the flesh of our Lord did not hang distantly from Him as the veil hung remotely some little distance from the Ark when set in the Tabernacle. The veil represented His flesh, and at Calvary the flesh and Spirit were especially one; they had each to serve the other for God's purposes there. The Invisible became the Visible especially for this, and by this picture we see how Jesus lived unto and in and through death. How appropriate now also is the covering of sealskin (note, not badger-

skin but sealskin; the seal is a water animal), for He was born for this Baptism which, though it come in into His soul, should never be able to flood or destroy Him. Outside and around all, like an outer cloak, clung the cloth 'wholly of blue'. All was wrapped up in, yet revealed as total love. Above the Ark stood the cloud, as though it were the impenetrable density of heavenly love filling all space, reaching down from the blue infinity of heaven like the finger of God pointing out the Ark. All was love; love above and love below with the cloud in between: Father, Holy Ghost, Son, God so loved His people. He so wanted them to have eternal life (their inheritance) that He gave His Son. The whole scene presents God's view of Calvary. It is Christ's death as related to the priesthood. Joshua / Jesus is there, but he is only associated with the Ark,

he is not carrying it. The priests are carrying it. In Jordan the Ark is Christ offered without spot to God through the eternal Spirit, and there passing by within sight of it were the people. It was invisible, yet it was visible; they saw it yet didn't see it. In a figure they could look upon God as though they had no conscience of sin, and by Christ pass over into their possessions, a nation of priests.

Approaching it all from another angle, we see how clearly too this prefigures Jesus' own water baptism in that same Jordan so long afterwards. As we examine it afresh, we find that all was just the same then, and confess with awe that whenever God appears, whatever be His purpose, eternal truth can never vary. The Gospels show us Jesus in the water — the Holy Ghost coming upon Him there and Father so lovingly and so gladly owning and presenting Him to the

people. Then as always, all was enveloped in and overshadowed by love, for even so, that baptism was only a picture of the greater to follow. In fulfilment of this greatest Baptism, as though anticipating Calvary, the feet of the priests that bore the Ark stood on dry land; in the sides of the Ark were the wooden crosspieces, the staves upon which all was hung. All the love of God ever shown over the millennia was revealed by the cross. By the way of the cross He went into death, and by its virtue and power made death a way for all His people. Now denuded of all power of evil and terrors of hell, this death and resurrection way represents only the overpowering goodness of God and the glorious blessings of heaven. The whole scene is a setting forth of 'Christ crucified.. .the power of God, and the wisdom of God'. Yet the feet of those priests did get wet. The

outer waters of the floods of death did come in unto His soul. He had to taste death for every man, but the great eternal spirit of Him drove back the floods, stopped the river and stood mid-stream to hold back the waters and make the royal highway for His spiritual house to pass over.

The blood on the Mercy Seat in Jordan was but a stain. It was not the bright crimson of blood in circulation, but the deep purple-brown stain of blood long shed. It was the blood of a past atonement, and it spoke of redemption previously accomplished; the sacrifice had been accepted, righteousness was established and declared. God was reigning in grace, because in the figure, Jesus who died was standing there alive, and His throne was for ever and ever. It was the blood of a past sacrifice perpetuated. At the seat of it all was the blood, and at the heart

of it all was love, but the root of it all was the Law for righteousness lying as sacred treasure at the bottom of the Ark. The blood-seed and foundation of His life was righteousness; not just negative sinlessness, but positive sin-overcoming-and-destroying righteousness. The New Covenant was in His blood. If love is the bond of perfectness, then it is because righteousness is the sceptre of correct living and just rule. All this and much more in hidden meaning stood there in Jordan, and as Joshua drew everyone's attention to the Ark that day, he himself began to be magnified in everyone's eyes (chapter 3: 3, 6, 8, 11, 13-15 & 17).

Joshua was pointing to God's earthly throne, for it was in order to bear the throne upon its lid that the box was made. It was the treasure-chest of heaven and earth, holding within it the two tablets of stone which bore

God's own handwriting. Treasured up at the heart of the nation, the law-stones were guarded from humankind and prevented from idolatrous worship by the presence of God. Had He departed from His throne, His very handiwork must surely have become an idol, and the Law He wrote would have become His rival. In fact, later this did actually happen: Israel sinfully worshipped the fact that they had the Law of God, and lost the God of the Law. Perhaps from this we ought to learn a lesson and be warned of the danger of allowing Bible-worship to substitute Him in our hearts. But whatever the failure in a later day, when Joshua pointed to the Ark, God was reigning there. This was probably the greatest thing Joshua ever did in all his life. It is not surprising therefore to find that our Lord also did something similar to this. During His lifetime

on earth, and especially as He neared the end of His ministry, the Lord referred increasingly to His cross; to Him it was absolutely crucial. Although only the barest facts of this are recorded by the four Gospel writers. They present enough detail for us to understand that the Lord made His meaning abundantly clear: the cross and the grave were the goal of His earthly life. Following their accounts of the crucifixion, each of the writers passes on to the story of the resurrection, and some to record the ascension, and one goes on to point to His enthronement in glory. Having faithfully fulfilled his task, Luke was chosen of God to take up and continue the story in the Acts of the Apostles. He first refers back to the Lord's crucifixion and enthronement, showing that it was with a view to the outpouring of the Spirit and the birth of the

Church, and then goes on to record the history of its growth and spread. But it is through the epistles of the apostles that the living glorified Lord really teaches us the full and spiritual meaning of the value of His triumphant death. Consistently with this whole scheme of revelation and true to the type, John Baptist, when baptizing Jesus in water, pointed Him out as the Lamb of God while He was still in the world. John was Moses' representative, and it was Moses who, while still in Egypt (the world), pointed Israel to the lamb and its blood; but his successor, Joshua, that is the one who was raised up in his stead to represent the living Jesus, points to the Ark / Throne.

Reading the New Testament, we find that following the ascension and enthronement of the Lord Jesus, all the writers do this same thing, Peter leading the way on the

day of Pentecost. How vital and indispensable all this is, for although while hanging on the cross the Lord did all the work necessary for our total redemption and reconciliation, it was not until He returned to heaven and was enthroned in glory that the gospel of His grace could be fully preached. The gospel for the present day is declared from the eternal throne and not as from Galilee or Judea, or even the historic cross. When Paul said 'we preach Christ crucified', he meant that we preach the living Christ, who, having been once crucified, now baptizes in the Holy Ghost into all the virtues of the cross. This is the particular aspect of truth which is so plainly being revealed at Jordan. Of old the people waiting in fear at the Red Sea for their baptism unto Moses, were fleeing from Pharaoh and the power and dominion of his

throne. At that time Pharaoh was the great king over all the earth; but to the nation under Joshua, Pharaoh was nothing but a memory; he and his powers and principalities had been very effectively destroyed forty years earlier. Under Joshua it is the Lord enthroned on the Ark of the Covenant who is the centre of all thoughts and the object of everyone's vision. He is the Lord of all the Earth. The result is that no-one is running away from a pursuing host or casting fearful glances behind. Instead, in perfect peace, the great King of kings is majestically supervising His people's passover into the Promised Land. In the process of the unfolding type He is teaching us something of the scope of the eternal work which He wrought at Calvary in relationship to the throne of God. Far beyond what they saw or what was

witnessed centuries later at Calvary, we see that in His death the Lord Jesus set up His throne.

The gospel preached to us is not a partial one. It is not just the story of the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, but also of His ascension and enthronement, His glorification and Kingdom and coming again, and things too numerous to be completely known or mentioned by any man. Because of this, it is to the throne that we are pointed at this time and not to the blood, important and indispensable though it is. The Mercy Seat on which the blood was sprinkled was the more important thing, for it was in order to be sprinkled on the throne that the blood was shed. Joshua did not say, 'When you see the blood ...', but 'When you see the Ark, go after it'. It is God who had to see the blood; He said so in Egypt — 'When I

see the blood I will pass over you'. At that time it was painted on the houses in which they were sheltering, eating the lamb. It was public blood; not only God but everybody saw it. But on the Mercy Seat it was private blood, God's exclusively; only He saw it. In Egypt what they received by virtue of it was seen and known, but sprinkled there on the Mercy Seat it speaks of what God got from it. Far beyond what Israel saw or could have anticipated when the Lord insisted that they shed and sprinkled the blood in Egypt, all was anticipatory of and consistent with the future thing that He intended to do in Canaan. When the blood was originally shed at His command, He had not fully revealed His purpose concerning it; unknown to them then, He planned to have the blood always in His sight, and whether or not the people at Jordan realized it, that was the thing

which mattered most to them on their day of baptism.

God was keeping His sovereign word and oath to them — the Covenant He had made with Abraham. They could not see the blood under which lay the tables of the Covenant. They possibly did not even know then that the Law for righteousness which lay in the Ark was God's confirmation of the original promise made to Abraham, but it was. Had they known, it was the proof that they were certainly going to live in the land. God gave it them to be the Law for righteousness that He required of them, that by it they may live in the land of His promise into which they were now passing. All they had to do at Joshua's command was to trace the dim outlines of God's earthly throne under its many veils and follow the King through the flood and over the river to possess their

possessions in full realization of all the promises of God.

Sometimes in our fervent evangelical zeal, and because of deepest heartfelt appreciation of the eternal worth of the precious blood of Christ we may endanger the objective which He had in view when He shed it. Due to fear lest the vital truths of our redemption be filched from us by humanistic tendencies or modernistic teaching, we give the blood an over-emphasis neither intended by God nor needed by man. Such fears need not be. A sane spiritual approach to both the whole and the wholeness of the Bible concedes nothing to unbelief. Faith grows the stronger for the thought, and truth flourishes by investigation and thrives on honesty.

The relationship of the blood and the throne is as vital as the relationship of the blood

and the cross. The blood had to be shed, for it is the only remedy for sin. Except it had been outpoured at Calvary there could be no redemption, no conclusive fulfilment of and justification for all the shed blood of past atonements, and no present reconciliation brought in. In the whole plan of reconciliation the blood in Jesus' veins had to become the blood of His cross, which in turn had to be brought in by Him to become blood on the throne. The throne was before the blood was, and the blood was before the cross was. Both the blood and the cross were, indeed just had to be, because of the throne. By use and means of the cross the redeeming blood was shed; from the cross it was sprinkled on the throne. Jesus used the cross for the throne; it was totally necessary to the throne and Him that sits on it. Apart from the blood on the throne there could be

no redemption. Sprinkled there it had reached its ultimate end and achieved its greatest work.

It is totally erroneous to think or preach that redemption was completed or that reconciliation was fully effected at the cross. Without belittling for one moment the complete and consummate work that Jesus accomplished there, we must see most clearly that no-one would have been saved except the blood shed at Calvary had been carried up and on to the throne. The two actions are indispensable parts of a whole in which each is necessary to the other or else could have no meaning to us. So it was that Joshua in the day of his magnification in the eyes of Israel, shows his magnificence by turning all eyes to the Ark.

Among the many things God accomplished by this man at that time, two were of

outstanding value to the Children of Israel:
(1) He cut everything down to size; (2) He put all things into perspective; that is He showed things up for what they really were. This was especially necessary in connection with Jordan, for to Israel it represented death. Now Jordan does not represent physical death, although erroneously it is pressed into that meaning from time to time. Quite contrary to the popular ideas all too often versified for use as hymns, Jordan does not represent the physical death which came by sin and is now the common end of all flesh, but the royal spiritual death that came by Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the Life. It is an entirely new death, being spoken of in Romans 6 as 'His death'; it is the death into which all must be baptized if ever they are to become men as God requires. Since the memorable day when Israel crossed Jordan,

it has represented the Lord's death. The Lord Jesus used physical death as a means to reveal the death He died to sin for us. His death is the immediate death to the sin-death of man and the eventual death to his physical death too. By means of physical death the great Spirit, Jesus the God-Man, proved that He could not be overcome and slain as were others. He did this by first taking man's sin-death upon Him and then entering the realms of physical death in order that He might reach the place where all other human spirits lay dead, slain by satan and sin.

One of the main reasons why the Children of Israel were brought to Jordan when it was in flood was to set forth this lesson. Before their eyes the waters (of death) were first cut back to proper proportions, so that the main stream (the real death) should be

revealed. It was there, and not in the deceptive floodwaters, that the true business of 'His death' was really transacted and established. The feet of the priests did not 'stand firm' until they rested on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, though they momentarily paused as soon as the soles of their feet rested in its floodwaters. Of all the people, they alone got their feet wet; no-one else did; they took the first unseeable, adventurous steps — for all the others it was firm, dry walking. As nearly as possible God has shown us by this how truly Jesus 'tasted death' for every man, and then stood firm in His death that every son of God should cross over 'dry' unto glory. Hallelujah, what a man calls death is not the real death at all. In His love the Lord has revealed all to us so that we shall not be deceived or held by terrors.

Let us watch it all happening as it is recorded in the story. When the feet of the Ark-bearing priests touched the brim of the water, straight away things really began to happen. Immediately the floods started to assuage, and as the waters receded, before their eyes the river assumed its correct size, falling into true shape and taking its proper course; very soon it disappeared altogether, leaving the bed bare and dry. The waters were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth. Then, with majestic pace, the priests proceeded into the midst of the river bed. The waters had either fled helter-skelter downstream to the sea of death, or piling up somewhere back upstream away from His presence, had refused to come near His face. It was an amazing spectacle — a miracle wrought in a physical element; yet viewing it today we

see the wonder of the Lord's working for us in the far more important realm of the Spirit. Pausing to cast back a reflective glance to Noah, we note that terminologically the flooding of Jordan strangely links up with the original Flood. Pondering further we can see that the second of our illustrations also joins with the first and this third illustration of the Baptism to reveal just one event, for Jordan was swollen almost to flood proportions, and was like a sizeable inland sea. So Noah's flood and Moses' sea and Joshua's river are as one for the telling of the story of the true Baptism, each speaking the same thing in another way. Thereby they provide the opportunity of examining that Baptism in three different aspects of its amazing fulness. The exactitude of God in this speaks with inexorable logic. God does not wander from the original truth when further

outlining or illustrating new ideas of a definitive nature connected with it. Instead, as we see here, when bringing in another new aspect of eternal truth, He also hints at and includes things revealed of old. This is He who says that 'the wise scribe who is instructed into the Kingdom of Heaven bringeth forth out of his treasures things new and old', for He Himself does it. In this way we see the whole in perspective and are instructed into the continuity, progression and development of the doctrine of the Baptism.

The crossing of Jordan took place 'very far from the city Adam'. Undoubtedly the spot was chosen most carefully by God in order to speak most powerfully and unmistakably to our hearts. The introduction of this name is of great significance, for as the fact of the flooding river links us with the tragedy of the

Flood, so does the name Adam carry us back beyond the Flood to the greater tragedy that originally made it necessary. Adam provides us with the key to the special emphasis given by God to this particular illustration of the Baptism. It is the only place in scripture where we find that name attached to a city. Apart from the fact that it was hard by Zaretan, we know nothing about it, except that the waters of Jordan piled up a long way from it. It is as though God was saying with amazing insistence that in passing over Jordan's flood, they were leaving all of old Adam behind; a long way behind; altogether behind. There was no passover for him, for it was he who passed the whole human race over to satan, who flooded humanity with sin. Moreover, the Children of Israel were not going over Jordan just to settle down and rest in Adam again. They could not

possess the land or inherit the promises of God in old Adam; neither in any connection with him nor anywhere near him. Never again! Adam, with his legacy of sin and death is finished. What a terrible legacy it was.

Yet linking Adam with Joshua, God is bringing to the fore the real lesson of this chapter, for Joshua represents Jesus, the last Adam. So we have before us the first, old, evil Adam, and the last, new, good Adam. The one in whom sin began in man, and the One who as a Man ended sin. First Adam became a sinner and commenced it among men; the last Adam was made sin to end it among men. In this incident we may also find an interesting pictorial comment upon that difficult scripture which says, 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive'. Jordan, the river of death, flowed by

Adam into the world and flooded out upon and into all men (Romans 5:12). Adam died and left all men in death, but our Joshua leads through death into the chosen life of God for His people. God finished Adam by Christ. That is the chief reason why on the cross He cried, 'It is finished'. So much was ended there — it was the terminal point of much more than we know, and the pivotal point of all time. Then and there God brought to judgement and death the elusive Old Man of satan and sin; there He finally nailed him down and buried him.

Until that moment Adam had lived on in the human race unchallengeable and unassailable as the nature of sin in man. Physically Adam died at the age of 930 years, but in spiritual nature he lived on in the race for millennia until a new spiritual nature from God came and destroyed him. Only

Abraham among men has outlived Adam spiritually. Abraham became the new 'father' in Adam's place because he was the man of obedient faith as against the disobedience and unbelief of Adam. By this he has lived on spiritually far longer than Adam in man, for at Calvary Adam was crucified and slain and buried, but at the same time Abraham was justified. Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus' day, 'and', says Jesus, 'he saw it and was glad'. Until the cross Adam and Abraham co-existed as spiritual 'fathers' in the race, producing two kinds of person, which at times co-existed as dual natures in one person. Since Calvary, however, Adam has been slain, so that no man need live now as a split personality, having two different springs of spiritual nature rising and warring within his one human nature.

When the Lord Jesus came into the world, He was born of Abraham's seed; physically He was born in the likeness of sinful flesh, but spiritually He was born in the image of God. This was accomplished by using the seed of the woman, Genesis 3:15, instead of the seed of man. Even in so doing God had to use the highest power (Gk. 'dunamis') he had, overshadowing Mary with the Holy Ghost in order to bring forth His Son of Man. It is very doubtful that the seed of the woman is in and of itself less tainted by sin than man's, but in exact contrast to Eve, who believed the word of satan, Mary believed the word of God by the angel. That word being mixed with faith in her, became the human life-seed from which the babe Jesus was generated. So apart from man, and being all-powerfully operated upon by the Holy Ghost, Mary brought forth her firstborn

son. Whatever else God did in commencing in Mary the birth-cycle which resulted in the babe of Bethlehem, He certainly showed by Christ that old Adam was finished with; that degenerate man was not the father of the spiritual or natural life of the carpenter of Nazareth. God's utter rejection of Adam is nowhere more plainly shown than in the birth of Jesus Christ; nor is that fact more openly exhibited than in His death.

The Lord Jesus on the cross dealt with all the original and cumulative characteristics of the sinful man; He bore his curse, carried his sins, took his punishment, died his death and buried him in his grave. More, much more, He superseded him — blotted him out. He nullified the accumulated power and effects of his continuing existence during the thousands of years which had run their course between his rejection in Eden and

Calvary. More than that, He made those years themselves to appear as though they had never been, for we read that Jesus is the second man. The Lord who created the first man, Himself became the second. So again, in order to understand truth so vital to us, we have to leap the time gap, for this thing is spiritual. What we seek to demonstrate is entirely in the realm of Spirit. This is why it is always the Spirit that bears witness, for the Spirit is constant; things are always consistent in meaning and interpretation as well as constant in power in the kingdom of the Spirit.

In the man Christ Jesus, God finished that old Adam, but continued with man. By the life that He lived Jesus showed that by His birth He had ended the inevitability of the continuity of the Old Adam nature and manhood of sin. Much more, by carrying

that life over into His death in our behalf, He also finished that old nature for us forever. It was to show us this that the Ark stood firm in Jordan, where it remained central in the stream of death until all the people had passed clean over into the land of promise; it was first in but last out. He is Alpha and Omega whenever He appears. In keeping with this Joshua fills two roles at Jordan: he standing with the Ark in the centre as the last Adam and he leads many sons unto the glory of Canaan as the second Man.

Again it is as though those centuries of sin, failure, frustration, disappointment, toil, pain, bondage, heartache, Egypt, taskmasters, Pharaoh, and the wilderness had never existed. Adam the first commenced sin; Adam the last ended it. The first man lost paradise, the second gained Canaan for all the children of God. Even

though men seem yet to be cast in the mould of Adam the first, they who by spiritual heredity are the children of God in the line and nature of the second man, may know sweetness far above Adam's lost paradise and Joshua's Canaan, for our Jesus is the Leader of all the file of God's sons who with Him share jointly in all the Father has.

What a glorious insight all this affords us into the character of God. He has always stood with His people. No-one would have thought it wrong if the Ark, instead of standing still in Jordan, had continued on leading the people into Canaan. But had it done so, the type would not have been true, although no-one would have known it, for none knew that what was happening was in fact a prefiguring of a greater reality yet to be revealed. God's concern is that we by this should get a clear sight of the truth that

Jesus stayed long enough in death for the whole multitude of the redeemed to pass over. So vital is this truth, that by God's own commands the memorials of it were retained to Israel in a peculiar way.

From the very place where the feet of the priests that bore the Ark stood firm in Jordan, twelve fore-ordained men bore a stone apiece over with them onto the other bank to build a cairn at Gilgal. Similarly, Joshua built a cairn in the exact hallowed spot midstream where the feet of the priests that bore the Ark stood firm in Jordan, and from whence the twelve other memorial stones were taken. The floods eventually returned and swamped from view the stones which Joshua erected, so that no-one could see the path through the mighty waters, but the identical erection built by Joshua's command at Gilgal remained. It

bore visible testimony to succeeding generations that God dried up the waters of Jordan before His people as He did the waters of the Red Sea before their fathers. In this way the Lord links the two crossings as one. By these two witnesses everybody's thoughts were to be directed to four things — Egypt, Red Sea, Jordan, Canaan. To us the truth abides clear. Jesus did not come up out of death until He had completely dealt with and finished all our enemies and brought every one of His people into His life in God through His death for them. Sin, Judgement, Death, Adam, Pharaoh, Principalities, Powers, everything was overcome in that one solitary act. It abides as total as it is eternal.

The people passed over as 'new creatures', baptized unto Joshua, no longer now to be wilderness wanderers, any more than they

were ever again to be Egyptian slaves. In Canaan they were no more in the wilds than in the world; they had not only passed over, but also 'out of' and 'into'. God had not brought them out of Egypt to live as nomads in the wilderness, but to possess their possessions in fulfilment of His promises. But man has to learn his old nature and see the justice and righteousness of God in condemning it to the cross. He may not like the lesson, but in so learning he will also be taught the grace and love of Christ in taking it to the cross for him. Moses had already said that God led them into the wilderness to prove them and know what was in their heart, and to make them know that man can only live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. But this is a very hard lesson for man to learn, and a painful one, for natural carnal man wants to live by every

word that proceeds out of his own mouth. He loves to decide for himself, gainsay the word of God, make fear or his better knowledge the plea when it is only pride, unbelief and rebellion that generate his refusal to do as God says. A man always has to learn that it is his own evil heart of unbelief which causes him to live in a wilderness. He also has to learn that only by baptism into Christ can he discover his Promised Land and enter into his possessions.

As we have seen, when the Children of Israel came up out of Jordan, they were not allowed to stay 'just over' on its bank. In any case it was impossible, for the river was in flood, so they pitched their camp in Gilgal. There the cairn of stones was erected, and there the Lord kept them until some further things upon which He insisted should be

fulfilled. The significance of what took place during those early days at Gilgal must not be regarded as something taking place some time much later than or subsequent to the baptism. All that took place at Gilgal at that time, whether in the natural or spiritual realms, is directly connected with the Jordan crossing, and must be regarded as taking place in the one true Baptism. The New Testament shows that by it God synchronizes many things which may not be consciously realized as having been wrought thereby, and which cannot be shown as simultaneous in the type. The things listed in Joshua 5 have great spiritual significance for us. They are as follows:

1. Israel was circumcised;
2. They kept the passover;
3. They ceased to eat Manna and ate the old corn of the land;

4. The captain of the Lord's host assumed command.

These four are closely linked by God with one another and with the passage of Jordan. It is, therefore, vital that we come to an understanding of what it was that God accomplished at Gilgal, for spiritually it is at this precise place and in this experience that the true Baptism 'lands' us. Firstly God revived and reinstated the neglected sign of the Covenant — Circumcision. Gilgal means 'rolling', and God brought them there with the intention of rolling away from them what He called 'the reproach of Egypt', and it could only be accomplished by this means. It was in keeping His Covenant with Abraham that He had brought them into the Promised Land. At Gilgal God enforced circumcision upon them, for circumcision, besides being the sign of the Covenant, was

the seal of their faith in the promises of God, and it had to be cut into their mortal bodies. The Baptism in the Spirit is for this purpose — it accomplishes heart-circumcision, the initial putting away of the filth of the flesh and the inscription in the heart of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

The Baptism in the Spirit is to produce men of the Spirit, who live in the Spirit, and possess the promises of God. The flesh cannot inherit the promises, hence the circumcising Baptism. The reproach of Egypt is fixed permanently in the flesh; 'the world' and 'the flesh' cannot be separated, for without the flesh there could be no world. Worldliness is the indulgence and expression of the lusts of the flesh in the earth, and a man is not out of the world until his flesh is circumcised from him with the circumcision of Christ. This 'circumcision of Christ' is not

to be confused with the ceremonial circumcision which took place in His boyhood. It is rather to be thought of as the spiritual power with which He invested the cross in taking there all His perfection of life manifest in the flesh. The fact of His birth as the Son of God, together with the accumulated virtue of His private life as Jesus of Nazareth and His public life as the Christ (during which He proved too strong to succumb to either the direct or indirect temptations of the devil) gave power to His cross to become God's 'sharp knife' for circumcision. We may see how truly this is highlighted by examining the two major occasions in His life when He was directly confronted with the choice of doing: (a) the devil's will, or (b) His own.

In the first, when He was tempted in the wilderness at the beginning of His ministry, it

was in the three realms of all human existence — spirit, soul and body. This only proved that He was indeed fit for the immediate ministry unto which He had just been anointed. Had He failed in either test, it would have been through the flesh or self-indulgence. To have sought bread for His body, or the keeping and protection of angels for Himself, or to have hoped for life or gain or 'blessing' on the devil's terms, or even at his suggestion, would have been of the flesh; He refused point blank. So also in Gethsemane, where He underwent the second test. This time He proved that He was fit for the ministry of Reconciliation immediately to hand, and ultimately for the ministry of mediation which lay beyond resurrection. To have insisted on doing His own will and having things His own way would have been then, as at any other time,

nothing but 'flesh'. This complete absence of desire for self-fulfilment, total refusal to gratify mental, emotional, spiritual and bodily desires for solely selfish ends is indeed truest proof of heart circumcision. His testings proved how truly the world, the flesh and the devil were cut off from Him. This utter refusal on His part either to live or die for self gave power to His cross to become the instrument of God unto circumcision. To receive it all we must be baptized into His death.

By circumcision this baptism was directly linked with the original covenant promise to Abraham. Canaan was the land of promise given originally to him by God, wherein all God's promises to him were to find fulfilment. Insisting upon this before anything else should take place, the Lord was beginning again at the beginning and

showing the deep fundamental importance of the Baptism — what it is, what it deals with, and the means by which it is accomplished. At the same time He also showed that the Passover was secondary in importance to circumcision, for it is plain that the feast may only be kept by people already in the covenant of circumcision. This order of truth is strikingly brought out in Colossians 2 by Paul, where he speaks of circumcision in verse 11, and then afterwards of the spoiling of principalities and powers in verse 15. Going on from that point, he first tells us of our completeness in Him who is the head of them all, showing that all was accomplished by the cross and death and burial and resurrection of Christ. Thus we find that what We have discussed of the Red Sea and Jordan is joined in one in the New Testament doctrine of Christ. In

Him all is dealt with at once, for all was done by Him in one glorious act.

The wandering man of the wilderness is an uncircumcised man. He may be out of Egypt, but he is also out of a personal experience of the covenant which is most vital to him.

Man's salvation rests only in the fact that God covenanted to save him; apart from that covenant he has no hope at all. The important thing was to be not only out of the world, but also in God's covenanted Salvation in the Promised Land, otherwise there was no point in bringing them out of Egypt. That is why, after forty years of wandering, the only way into Canaan for them was by baptism, just as for their fathers the final episode of the exodus from Egypt was by the Red Sea. Following our earlier practice of putting the two incidents together, we arrive at the truth. God had

told them in Egypt that they were to keep the Passover when they were come to the Land; it was never conceived or instituted as a wilderness feast. So although the Passover came first in *national* history, upon crossing Jordan it was placed in its correct position by the Lord, that is secondary to and dependent upon personal circumcision.

Long before the institution of the Passover, the Lord, in Abraham, constituted membership of the race in the sign of circumcision — 'the seal of the faith'. The race was fathered in circumcision. Born in circumcision, it was emancipated in the Passover which was to be 'kept' annually only in remembrance of a past redemption by blood, water and Spirit, but circumcision is an intensely individual thing. By its very nature it has to be a personal, intimate experience, not a national ritual kept by all

at once on one special day of the year; circumcision was almost certainly being ministered to someone every day of the year throughout the whole nation. Thus as God intended, it became the basic 'common' ritual of everyday life and not a special religious festival. Individuals were personally, privately brought into the covenant by circumcision, and thereby qualified to eat the lamb; no-one else was allowed the privilege. The penalty for eating the Passover uncircumcised was death. God does not allow uncircumcision to accompany possession. At Gilgal His perfect will was applied to His people. All being adjusted to the eternal order, we discover that circumcision precedes the Passover; the reason for this being that it is the greater of the two.

Rectifying their disorder and putting all things in proper perspective, God caused them to keep the Passover in the bond of the Covenant as He originally intended. It is only as we accept the implications of this that we may arrive at the full message of the type, for the Lord Jesus combined both the Circumcision and the Passover at the cross. When dying as the Passover Lamb, He not only shed the Lamb's passover blood, He also forged the sharp knife of circumcision for use in connection with the One Baptism. It was as improper to keep the Passover and be uncircumcised as it was to be circumcised and not keep the Passover. Upon reading the New Testament, we find that the work of the cross seems to point the fact that, beyond impropriety, in the realm of the Spirit it is impossible also.

The third thing recorded at this point is just as surely joined to the Passover as the Passover was to Circumcision, and by the Passover is linked with it: 'The Manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land'. This was something else the Lord had been aiming to do. Manna was a mystery, as its name signifies; it had been their wilderness food. Supplied originally by God as a temporary measure, it was intended only to be a short-term provision until His people should reach 'the land of corn and wine'. He had no more intended them to live the rest of their lives on Manna than He had originally intended them to live for forty years in the wilderness; He had always had something better in mind for them. Their fathers had once said that their souls loathed 'this light food'; it was a strong expression, but they felt they wanted

something more solid and meaty, and of greater variety than the Manna, and God had lovingly provided some better thing for these their children but not in the wilderness. Manna, we are told, was really angels' food. Small, white, wafer-thin and honey-like, it was an emergency ration only. God's real intention and provision for them was the corn of the land, so He brought the nation over Jordan in the time of barley harvest. Now although this was so, we must note that upon entrance into the land they did not eat of their own immediate reaping and threshing. Likewise they did not eat of the stores laid up by dint of their own self-effort; they were not allowed to eat new corn either, but 'the old corn of the land'. It was the new food for a new people in a new land.

Manna represents Jesus in the body of His flesh as He is revealed in the Gospels, an entirely unknown entity, unknowable in quantity and quality. They never could understand what He meant when He said, 'My Father is in Me', or 'I and My Father are one'. Who was He? What was He? Was He really three in one and one in three?

Reading John 14, we find Jesus saying to Philip, 'Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me?' No-one apparently knew Jesus Christ after the flesh. He was a complete mystery even to His disciples before Pentecost. Consistently with this whole truth, we read in John chapter 6 that having fed the multitude in the wilderness, Jesus, in talking with those who came after Him, made reference to this Manna. He said, 'Moses gave *you* not that bread in the wilderness, but my Father

giveth *you* the true bread from heaven'. He was speaking of Himself, but they were mystified, for He had deliberately changed the figure from Manna to Old Corn or Bread, that is from the wilderness food to the food of the promised land. Of old in the wilderness His Father had given Manna, or angels' food to the Children of Israel, but now He was offering them His very own food if they would have it. They were actually being given the opportunity of accepting God's living, life-giving bread — Jesus. Jesus is the Bread of God, the original 'Old Corn' of the land, but they had no appetite or taste for Him.

Old Corn, gathered up and stored from an old or past harvest is not for the old man; he seeks to feed on small, white, round, sweet, seed-like things gathered in the morning dew, tasting like honey, mixed and milled

together for staple diet, the result of the ritual of the self-effort of early rising and much searching. True it was better than hunting for straw and stubble in Egyptian slavery, but it was not God's best, except under the circumstances. Miraculous it was, but not mature. God-given and guaranteed, it was created fresh every morning from heaven, with a glory sweet and precious among men, but not yet the Jesus ascended up into the former and everlasting glory that He had with His Father before the world was. The bread of the new man is the Jesus in and of the Spirit, not Jesus in the flesh, though both are essentially the same for they are one.

At the time of speaking Jesus was God's bread, but not yet man's, for the simple reason that He had not yet died and risen again. Moreover, those to whom He was

speaking were all as yet unborn — their nature was Old Man. The risen, glorified Lord of the Acts and the Epistles and the Revelation is the new man's true bread. He is God the Father's bread; the Father feeds on the Son even as the Son feeds on and lives by the Father — each is food to the other. So when upon crossing Jordan and being circumcised and partaking of the passover lamb they ate of the old corn of the land, the Children of Israel ate new food. Thus it is that in progression of true spiritual thought, as well as in scriptural order, we pass from the truth of circumcision to the passover and then on to the provision of the old corn of the land. From there it is but a step, and fourthly we are brought to see and recognize the captain of the Lord's host. Joshua, out walking one day, sees a man with a drawn sword in his hand.

Approaching him, Joshua is warned not to draw nigh but to take his shoes from off his feet because he is standing on holy ground. When Joshua asked this man if he was on Israel's side or for their enemies, he replied, 'As Captain of the Lord's host am I now come'. Hitherto Joshua had been recognized as Israel's captain, but now a heavenly captain appears and Joshua on earth had to give place to him. Something like this also happened to Jesus in the flesh. The two on the Emmaus road as good as said so: 'We trusted that it had been He that had redeemed Israel', they said of the earthly Jesus to the unrecognized 'Stranger'. But He soon identified Himself to be the same Jesus when they broke bread at Emmaus and thus He was referred to by the angels later on the mount of Ascension.

He had said earlier in the guest chamber in Jerusalem before His crucifixion, 'I will come to you ... at that day'. So on 'that day' of Pentecost He came by the Spirit to take up His rightful place at the head of His people. According to the heavenly revelation, that day coincided with the Lamb standing in the midst of the throne with the book in His hands, and breaking the first seal, so that the rider on the white horse should go forth conquering and to conquer. By the Spirit, Jesus of earth who had become Jesus of the heavens came all unseen, yet now to be known in all fulness to His people as Captain of the Lord's host. He was the same Jesus of Nazareth they had followed on earth, come back to lead them on in victory unto victory. So in the type before us we see Joshua the man-captain on earth bowing and yielding to this Man-Captain from heaven. It is a

picture, though not yet the fullest picture, of what happened on the day of Pentecost. 'At that day' Jesus came to them with the sword of the Spirit in His hand to lead His people on to complete victory and full possession of their inheritance. Whilst He was with them in the flesh they rejoiced and entered into His blessings and shared in His ministry; now they were to enter into that which was their own. Having been faithful in that which was another Man's (His) they were given their own, and how truly they inherited and lived in it all in His name and power, and for His sake. Thus we see the way that circumcision finds its fuller outcome in victory under the personal captaincy of Jesus. We are to find our inheritance among all them who are sanctified; we are on holy ground. All the hosts and powers of darkness that have invested Mansoul are indeed defeated and

destroyed in this Baptism, and we are to prove it so.

Finally, and in connection with this, before we leave this account of the Children of Israel at Gilgal, we will notice one thing more. The opening verses of this fifth chapter show quite clearly the defeated condition of the Canaanites. All that the people of God needed to do was to act with the moral courage of faith, in the spiritual power of Christ, under His leadership, and possession was assured. The inhabitants of the land were shut up in fear and trembling. The news of what God had done for His people in delivering them from Pharaoh had preceded them. Oh why then had they wasted their time in the wilderness of internal strifes and rebellion and revolution for forty years? All the nations in Canaan already knew and had known in their hearts

for forty years that they were defeated; the defeat of the major power at the Red Sea had also been the death-knell to all other powers. All these knew it, and were afraid of the Children of Israel, yet the Children of Israel had been afraid of them. How paradoxical is the spiritual state to which disobedience degrades us! Nevertheless, we see that not only was their heavenly Joshua come to them at this time, but their enemies were found to be without power also. Our risen Lord has told us that all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth, 'Go ye into all the world', He said, 'and preach the gospel to every creature', and 'lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world'. When the Ark of the Lord of all the earth had gone over Jordan before the Children of Israel it was immediately followed by the armed men leading the rest of the nation on

their way into the promised land. They were going to possess Canaan by conquest as well as by promise and gift. From this fact we have much to learn, because for us Canaan represents Mansoul. By crossing over in this order they staked their claim to the land in its entirety; they were in. So it is with us in regeneration. At the immediate point of our birth / Baptism the new life and manhood is assured; the soul is saved; the future is secured; the ultimate destiny is fixed; yet possession of all our possessions in the immediate and progressive future depends entirely upon obedience to our heavenly Jesus. Each individual of old had to possess his own inheritance for himself. At the time of crossing they all knew beyond question that they were the people of God and the extent of their land, but no-one knew as yet the particular lot of his inheritance. This

each of them had to discover and possess for himself.

Whatever it meant to them then, today we must understand that the extent of 'the land' we are to possess is the entirety of the soul-state of the proper man, Christ Jesus. Each individual is promised and privileged, and therefore must possess the glory of that blessed state in his own soul; that is the fulness of the length and depth and breadth and height of the promise. But knowing it for himself he may not therein rest content, for the battle must be joined until all regenerate spirits commonly enjoy in their own souls Jesus' personal soul-life; this is 'the lot of our inheritance'. Not knowing the exact number of souls that are saved or are yet to be saved, our commission is to press on until all are in possession of their souls — until no power or state foreign to those

known and enjoyed by our one Lord shall remain in the soul of any redeemed person. We all must enjoy our common heritage; in our souls all the promises of God for us in Christ Jesus must find fulfilment. The Lord seals us with His Spirit that this should be so, telling us that all God's promises are in Him 'Yes' and in Him 'Amen'.

In Jesus every one of God's promises was fulfilled as well as all the Law and the commandments and ordinances. He lived His eternal life in and by these to the glory of God the Father, that we who are in Him may also glorify God as they are fulfilled in us as our own conscious experience of eternal life. They were fulfilled in and enjoyed by Him to God's glory and it was precisely in this accomplishment that His soul-life lay: these same experiences that He knew are also our inheritance, for this is the life He laid down

in order that we might have it. We do not fully inherit our land, that is the full possibilities and capacities of our souls, whilst living on this earth, unless by His Spirit we are enjoying His spotless soul-life. Being spiritually regenerated by the Baptism, we have to possess (take in possession) our own souls. We are saved from sin because He, having preserved His own soul from sin grants us to know and show forth His own victorious living. Our eternal spiritual inheritance is God, not a land; because He came to us as a Man we may truly inherit Him. Only as we do so shall we surely inherit true and fullest manhood here and now.

Because Israel of old became obsessed with their land and their possessions and not with the God of all the earth, they comparatively soon lost what they had gained. By this let us be warned in our day.

We must not allow the present popular trend of preaching, which over-emphasizes the emergence and manifestation of the sons of God and their inheritance, and their ministry and gifts and joys and blessings and soul-states, to become the main content of our ministry, lest running on unchecked to its logical end, it should so fill our vision that we lose sight of Him. Should we do that we shall lose all. The subtle danger is all the more insidious because it lies unseen and unrecognized beneath the surface of such phrases as 'Body-ministry', 'Deliverance', etc. Talk about milk and honey, and vines and wines and pomegranates and inheritances and possessions could, if unwatched, result in the exact opposite of what is intended. God's purpose is to shift the soul from self to Christ, not from Christ to self. Ministry must be of Him and not of subjective experience,

though the two must never be divorced. The latter is manifestly subject to the former, because it is and ever must be the proper enjoyment of it. I must be in Christ, not dwelling in self, or in mere joy or blessings or a hundred other additional soul-states that His salvation provides, wonderful and real in me as they are. Perhaps one of the biggest lessons we have to learn in these days is that which John on Patmos points out for all who have eyes to see, as well as ears to hear. When he saw the Lord revealed in the midst of the churches, John says that His body was covered. Head and hands and feet were exposed, but the body was thoroughly clothed from head to foot; it was obviously there, but hidden. Let us all agree to let it remain so. We are told to hold the Head, not the body, for the body is us. We are to hold

and enjoy the experience of the Head; it is only for this that the Body exists at all.

We must therefore note the relationship between the destruction of the devil and all his hosts in the earlier picture of this Baptism and the full conquest of the land. This latter entailed many battles with many powers and princes until all had rest, while the former was a cataclysmic judgement resulting in total annihilation. A full study of the book of Joshua with this in mind would be out of place here, so confining ourselves strictly to the theme, we note that all the time the Children of Israel maintained the order of God and destroyed everything, leaving nothing to breathe, all was well. The joint lesson of the Flood, the Red Sea and Jordan is totality — complete, constant destruction. To disregard this fundamental lesson is finally to lose all. The Children of

Israel proceeded in utter victory all the time they practised utter destruction. God ordered complete extermination of all the former inhabitants of Canaan, but altering that to partial extermination with a degree of subjugation, the Children of Israel brought about their own undoing. The land was never totally cleared of the seven nations that previously indwelt it, and was therefore never fully occupied by Israel alone.

Conquest, sadly enough, was mixed with compromise which inevitably ultimately turned conquest into defeat.

The secret of utter victory is first to understand the devastating all-comprehensive power and intention of the cross, and then to carry it over into every situation of life. Paul, in I Corinthians 15, says 'thanks be to God who giveth us the victory'. Note the definiteness of it — not a

victory, but *the* victory'. He also says in Romans 8 that we are 'more than conquerors'. What a glorious position! To fight a battle and win it is to be a conqueror, but if one lives in the blessing and glory of a former victory, enjoying what is won, he is more than a conqueror, he is a ruler and sharer of the spoil. Scripture assures us that Jesus divides the spoil with the strong. He won the victory and gives it to us, inviting us to live and rule in it with Him; His is a shared victory. This is His eternal life, which is the gift of God to us. There are too many people fighting too many battles, struggling to get the victory in their own lives, when they ought to be resting and ruling with Him. Because Paul needed not to fight his own battles, he was free to fight for other people. He had great conflict he said, but it was for the Colossians and the Laodiceans and

others in need, not for himself. Like His Lord, he was free from his own inner conflicts, so that he could fight for the world of men that they also might enter into the victory of Jesus.

Certain it is that we shall never in this life, if ever, fully understand the mystery of Jesus' work at Calvary, and there will almost certainly be occasions when we are pressed out of measure beyond strength so that we even despair of our life, but this need not be because of inner conflicts. Jesus knew such times. Those who have experienced the true Baptism are crucified with Christ unto His death and resurrection within themselves, so that they can and do live by His faith and not their own. To such people inner conflict can only arise if they seek to re-introduce their own self-life again. Subtle or blatant assertion of one's own will, or questioning

the wisdom of God, or disobeying the word of God, or seeking one's own interests will most certainly do it. Seeking one's own life and finding it destroys the work of God in the soul. By such things spiritual gifts sink into psychic powers (spectacular but not spiritual, and if persisted in, self-destructive), or fleshly demonstrations, or else they disappear entirely. But let a person seek nothing else except to fulfil and achieve the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, which is that same high(est) calling of God to which Jesus responded and followed throughout all His life on earth, and he shall entirely possess all his possessions — for that is exactly how our Joshua / Jesus possessed His.

4- THE CLOAK FROM ON HIGH

The second book of Kings furnishes us with our fourth and final Old Testament illustration of the One True Baptism; it is to be found in chapter 2. This is a most important chapter, for by it the events we have been studying are linked with the New Testament in a most peculiar and direct way. Astonishingly enough, the link with the past is also directly established in verse 1 — Gilgal. Immediately we are at the very same spot where the Children of Israel first encamped upon emerging from Jordan. So once more, in order to obtain the fullest benefit from what these scriptures have to teach us, we must leap the time-gap. The Gilgal link is the intimation that the story now unfolding must be regarded as a direct

continuation of what took place at Gilgal in Joshua's day.

The connection with the New Testament lies in the amazing identity of language and similarity of ideas found in this chapter with the writings in the New Testament concerning the Baptism in the Spirit. Such well-known words as 'tarry' (thrice repeated), 'head', 'mantle', 'the spirit', together with a wealth of other detail, are here set in the background of Elijah's translation and ascension into heaven. In general pattern this is all so like that which happened between the Lord and His chosen apostles and disciples during the vital Passover and Pentecost of the Gospels and Acts, that the obvious connection is too suggestive and apparent to be mistaken. The particular truth under emphasis here is the Church's need of the enduement of power

from on high, and the way in which God has met that need. The names of the two men around whom the account turns have a significant meaning: Elijah, who represents the Lord Jesus — 'My God is Jah' or 'Jehovah'; Elisha, who represents the Church — 'Salvation of my God'. Through these two men we are to learn that the salvation which God has provided for the Church is greater than has been portrayed by the other three illustrations.

The almost cryptic statements of this chapter give rise to the same general impression encountered upon reading the Gospel accounts of the closing hours the Lord Jesus spent with His apostles on earth. He was pressing on to the time of His departure from this world, and one of the noticeable things about Him then is the desire He had for the human companionship

of His apostles, especially the chosen three. Yet He knew that He must leave them all. 'Little children', He said, 'whither I go ye cannot come'. We find it to be somewhat like this with Elijah also. As he went on his last journey in company with Elisha, he said, 'Tarry here ... the Lord hath sent me to Bethel' — but Elisha would not tarry at Gilgal.

The Gilgal experience as recounted in the book of Joshua was preparatory to all that followed in the Promised Land, but vital as it is, it does not complete in man the work which God wishes to do for him. In order to live out on earth the eternal life in the Spirit to the very fullest possible degree, a man must also know the enduement of power from on high, the sacred anointing for service. Elisha in his day knew that. In order to follow the successful ministry of Elijah

and accomplish all that was still needed in Israel, Elisha knew that he personally needed something more than he already had.

For a long time there had lain deep in his heart an unspoken desire. Later it was to rise to his lips and find confession in the crisis hour beyond Jordan, but as yet it lay unexpressed within him. He knew that beyond what he already had, he needed another spirit, and Elijah's behaviour and words at this time stirred within him the latent desire; it must be now. This, plus the growing determination to have what he desired, drove him on to reply with such vehemence to Elijah, 'As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee'. So off they go together to Bethel; 'the house of God'.

While they were there the sons of the prophets made some very significant remarks to Elisha wherein they likened Elijah's removal from him to the removal of a head from a body. This was no strange news to Elisha, who was equally a prophet with them; he lived so close to his master, that he already knew about it, and had anticipated all they said. He deeply regretted the expected loss of his 'head', but knew it was of no use to attempt to prevent it. Instead, knowing its certainty, he wanted above all to make sure that when that 'head' was removed, the spirit of the head should be retained by and remain in him, 'the body'. More than that, without fail he wanted to receive a double portion of it. That is why the command to tarry at the house of God fell on deaf ears indeed. The sons of the prophets may elect to tarry there

and be content with what they had, but that was not his choice. Anyway, Elisha was not a son of a prophet by natural generation — he knew he had been chosen of God, and he intended to go further and ensure to himself the knowledge of 'sonship'. He wanted the double portion of the firstborn as proof of it. What a wonderful example he is to us in this; he truly had things in proper perspective. From this man we may learn many much needed lessons. But for the greatest significance of his historic tenacity of purpose, let us examine some New Testament scriptures.

Following the words quoted above from John's Gospel, the Lord proceeds to speak to the apostles about 'His Father's house', John 14:2. He says that in it there are 'many mansions' or abiding places — halls of residence — places where God dwells

eternally. The word here translated 'mansions', is also translated 'abode' lower down in this same chapter, 'We will come and make our abode with him', verse 23. This is one of the most glorious promises the Lord ever made concerning the purposes of the Baptism in the Spirit, and by it He made clear what is 'the double portion' of the firstborn in the New Covenant. The inheritance of those who are the firstborn of God by the Holy Spirit is both the Father and the Son. This constitutes a double portion of such magnitude that its fulness can never be comprehended nor measured; it cannot be adequately presented, even in the most glorious scriptures deliberately penned for that specific purpose. For instance, Jesus' teaching in this particular section is far greater in import and deeper in meaning than may at first be realized. General ideas

concerning the Lord's words in verses 2 and 3 may perhaps be fairly stated as 'the Lord has gone back to heaven where He is now preparing a place for all those who are saved, and one day when His preparations are completed, He will come back again for them. Having received them to Himself, He will install each soul into its heavenly abode, where, in company with all the saved, it will dwell with Him for evermore'. The element of truth in this is very real, and as far as it goes is correct, but it does not go far enough to embrace the greater truth that the Lord is here seeking to fix in our hearts.

What the Lord is really saying here is that the important thing for His disciples to know is that they are part of and therefore have a place in the city which is God's abode for eternity. This is the whole point of regeneration. It is of far greater importance

that a man should know he is God's dwelling-place than to know where he himself is going to dwell for ever. The knowledge of the greater wonder swallows up all need for concern about the lesser. When Jesus said, 'I go to prepare a place for you', He did not go immediately home but directly to Calvary. All that He did there was done as preparation for us to follow Him there afterwards. He had to go to the cross and endure death alone first in order that He may prepare it for Peter and all others of us in faith to go there afterwards.

Already there is a Man with the Father; He has gone to Him rising from the earth through death and resurrection. That Man was God on earth, and when He left the Earth and entered heaven, He did so as the one human being in whom God in all completeness had always dwelt. The grace

of God to us in regeneration is that we, too, as He (unworthy though we are) may be God's abode(s) on the earth. To ensure that we belong to and are part of the Father's house in that heavenly realm in the eternal future, we must here and now already on the earth be His habitation. If this is not so with us here, we have no ground for entertaining any hope of it happening hereafter. For it to be so then it must be so now. The regenerate and Spirit-filled sons of God are abiding-places or mansions: for that very purpose He infills on the earth those whom He would indwell in eternity, thus assuring them of abiding in Father's House for ever. The glorious truth is that as Father with the Son abides in them now, each is a vital part of His heavenly house, being already one of His mansions or abodes.

Despite the fact that they had been with their Master for over three years, those to whom Jesus spoke at that time did not know Him, consequently they could not understand what He was talking about. It is sadly true that very little of the deepest significance of the Lord's teachings was understood by His apostles while He was yet on earth. Prior to the day of Pentecost, the greatest revelations of God relating to eternity were not given to men. Only God knew the end from the beginning, and He chose to hold back the revelation of His eternal abode until He should enlighten the apostles and prophets of the New Covenant about it all. We must bear in mind that in interpreting scripture, we have first to see the beginning from the end, for it is only by doing so that we can see the end from the beginning. It is quite impossible to interpret

typology unless we first know the end to which God is moving, for all is designed to reveal that. We must always remember, when reading the Old Testament, that God was creating or engineering from His original thought a type of the end which He had in view, prefiguring and foreshadowing eternal things so that all history may conform to and teach one thing.

At Bethel we reach the point where the first hint of the wonderful head / body relationship between Christ and His Church is introduced into the story. The connection is most significant here, for Bethel was a place where many other precious things also occurred. It is the name conferred by Jacob upon the town formerly called Luz, where he dreamed of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven with the angels of God passing up and down upon it. He so revered the spot

and cherished the experience, that he called the place 'the House of God'. Erecting and anointing his stony pillow for a memorial, he stood and made vows there unto the Lord. At the time it happened he was a fearful fugitive, fleeing from his brother's wrath. He was a complicated man, but deeper than all else in his heart lay a desire to go to the land of his father to seek a bride. Bethel was for him a place of rest and revelation en route to heart's desire.

Turning to the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ given through John, the prisoner of Patmos, we read of his vision of New Jerusalem, the beautiful Bridal City. It was God's great house of many mansions descending from God out of heaven, the city where He dwells with His Lamb in the midst of His people in the New Creation for ever. Jacob was seeking a bride when fleeing to

Syria, and seeking her he came upon the House of God. Jesus said that He came to be about His Father's business; at the same time He was seeking a bride: further still, He declared that He would build the Church which is His body. How wonderfully the whole truth takes shape before our eyes and how closely all is linked in the type as Elijah and Elisha press on to their united baptism. John shows us His Lord's conception and revelation of New Jerusalem, the city in the heavenlies which is to be the metropolis of the New Creation. Beyond that, the city is also Father's House and the Bride of Christ; more, it is also the Church of the firstborn ones; even more, it is the Father's family, and even more still, it is the Body of Christ. She finally comes down from God out of heaven to be the New Earth(ly) House of God, the Tabernacle of which the Father and

the Son are the inner Temple. It is the Royal City, the Temple City, the Priestly City, the Treasure City, the City of Love and Life and Light, the Glory of the New Creation. It far exceeds in beauty Jacob's Bethel or David's Jerusalem, or Solomon's temple, and to be a mansion therein is far greater than possessing all the possessions of the Joshua-type traditions of men, and all else beside. But Elijah cannot stop at Bethel, and neither will Elisha tarry there, so on they go to the next place appointed of the Lord — Jericho. Possibly to Elisha this was a very puzzling part of the journey. A glance at the map makes it obvious that, except it was the will of the Lord that Elijah should go to Jericho via Bethel, it was the very last way he ought to have gone. Jericho is quite near to Gilgal, a distance of perhaps under five miles as the crow flies, lying south and slightly west

across a tributary of Jordan; but Bethel lay about twenty miles almost due west and just a little north of their original starting-point. It was a very long way round indeed, except God had some purpose in it. Elijah was expecting his translation to heaven, so surely he would not have wanted to prolong the journey needlessly. All this must mean that there was some very real reason why he took this roundabout route to Jericho. Looking further, we see that the way back from Bethel to Jericho lay past, perhaps even through Ai.

This was to be a historic journey indeed, for Ai held great spiritual meaning and emotional memories for the Children of Israel. In the first place this was ground over which Abraham, their early progenitor, had travelled in the beginning when, at the call of God, he had originally entered the

Promised Land. On a mountain somewhere between Bethel and Ai, the great man had builded an altar to the Lord and had called on His name. It was the second of a series of altars that Abraham was to build in the land given him by God, and according to the record, marked the spot where for the very first time he called on the Lord. It was a new experience for him in his discovery of God; at that time he was only a beginner, a pilgrim stepping out into the life that later earned him the title 'the father of the faithful'. High upon the mountain, standing there by his altar that day, he could see Ai on one side and Bethel on the other, but he wanted neither of them. They could not attract his permanent attention, for Ai means 'a heap of ruins' and Bethel 'house of God'; but he was looking for a 'city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is

God'. He preferred therefore to continue living in a tent, rather than accept or live in a city that was anything less than the best or lower than the highest.

On the other hand, at the point of the story before us, Elijah was finishing his course, and Elisha was about to be launched on his.

What a wonderful idea it was then to take Elisha over such hallowed ground, for how much could be learned from the life of the great man of faith and his experiences. Then again it was from Jordan to Gilgal, to Jericho, to Ai, that Joshua had led the triumphant army of Israel upon their original invasion and conquest of Canaan. How great this man Abraham is; everything that is of vital worth seems at some point to link up with him somewhere, and not less here than anywhere, for Israel's possession of the Promised Land under Joshua was only

possible as a consequence of brave Abraham's lone faith. From him who had been as good as dead sprang the conquering seed that under Joshua came in to possess the land that God had originally promised to Abraham.

Over this ground of sacred memory and victorious faith Elijah led Elisha on their last journey together. Perhaps the absence of conversation from the narrative is intended to suggest that it was in contemplative mood that the two friends made their way to Jericho. Certainly nothing is mentioned of any conversation they might possibly have had; only the way they went, not what they said is recorded. It was as though the master, by taking his servant this long, hard way round, was testing the patience and endurance of Elisha's personal faith and also showing his pupil where the true riches and

glories of his inheritance were rooted. Ai was the place where everything was conditionally given to God's people of old, whereas previously at Jericho all was to have been unreservedly God's. It was to Jericho that they were going, but their approach to Ai was in the exact opposite direction from that in which Joshua led the nation generations before. Under Joshua's leadership Israel proceeded from Jericho's resounding victory to Ai's delayed conquest. Whatever Elisha gained from the exercise, this reversal of direction on the part of Elijah seems to have been for the purpose of showing us, if not his companion, that all is sure if first all is the Lord's. It is a reinforcement of the same principle we have already seen concerning the relative importance of the two eternal dwelling-places, God's and man's. God's interests

must come first; this perhaps is one of the greatest lessons we can ever learn. Oneness is the great secret of God, and in all life's lessons it is this He is seeking to teach us.

And so to Jericho the two prophets came, the place of total devotion to God, where Israel was tested as to their preparedness for the utter destruction of all flesh, which, so we are told, was exactly the reason for the Flood. At that time God said, 'the end of all flesh is come before me', and He instructed Noah to build an ark in which He would save the one man and family which He found to be righteous. Here, centuries later, we find God developing His plans. Moving on from His original revelation through Noah and his Ark, the Lord subsequently, through Abraham, brought forth for Himself a people in the midst of whom He was going to dwell on the earth.

After the passage of centuries, having delivered them from Egypt, He led them in the wilderness and through Jordan into the land by another Ark, with the intention of eliminating all carnality from among them there. This He does by testing, finding, pointing, singling, killing and burning out Achan and his family from the nation, that no flesh should glory in His presence. What an unforgettable lesson this is. Elijah took Elisha to Jericho along this historic route, and if the younger man learned the lesson afforded, the long journey was well worth it. The name Jericho means 'city of the moon'. Whatever connotations that may have had in Canaanite culture, or whether it meant anything to Elisha, we cannot tell, but there is certainly something here for us to learn. Elijah was the prophet of fire, who during the reigns of several Israelitish kings, had

illuminated and dominated the spiritual and national scene like a great burning sun. But his day was ending; he had run his course, and was now going to be removed to his heavenly home so that Elisha should take his place. To be required to follow on in the steps of such a great master would be enough to daunt the heart of any disciple, however privileged he may be. Compared with Elijah, in the eyes of men Elisha must have appeared only some pale moon to a brilliant sun. Elisha's was an unenviable task; it seems that he alone of all the Old Testament prophets was called upon to fill such a role. But although history showed no precedents, he truly determined in his heart that he would be a worthy successor of Elijah; above all he wanted a double portion of the spirit of his master and head.

It had all started on the day when Elijah, in obedience to God's command to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his room, had implemented God's choice by casting his cloak over the man. This had provoked an immediate response in Elisha; his spirit rose to the full implications of the honour done to him and from that day he left all and followed Elijah. He knew somehow that one day the cloak was to be his, but as he followed and served Elijah, beyond the cloak he wanted in every way to reflect his Elijah. So great was his devotion to and admiration for that man, that his one desire was to magnify him, even though only as a moon its sun.

It is an extraordinary fact that this is the only place in scripture where a prophet was called by this method. This is how Elisha knew that he had been specially chosen. He

was not anointed in the ordinary way. Beyond that which it signified, he had also been clothed. Beyond being a prophet, he was to be *the* prophet in Elijah's room. We cannot fail to see that in a most remarkable way Elisha typifies the apostles of Jesus of Nazareth. They were not anointed by their Master in the way that prophets are ordinarily anointed. They were prophets, and more than prophets, apostles, yet prior to Pentecost they moved and served as though anointed in a special way, and so they were. They, like Elisha, were called from their occupations and at times temporarily wore and bore their Master's cloak of power, but not until Pentecost did they wear it permanently. They, as Elisha, were cloaked, not anointed. He the Christ was the Anointed, and by His call and within His cloak they functioned until the day it all

became theirs, and they found themselves anointed prophets in Jesus' name. But to proceed with our story!

Whatever the inward feelings of Elijah and Elisha at that time, neither of them could stay at Jericho. The great urge in the soul of Elijah was to go where the Lord sent him, and this was matched in Elisha's heart by the equal determination to go with him all the way; each man was only prepared to accept the inevitable. So when the sons of the prophets repeat to Elisha the already familiar word of knowledge about Elijah's departure, his reply was the same as before, 'I know, hold ye your peace'; Elisha knew that by divine election he was the spiritual heir of this prophet. Consistent with this, his master's repeated 'Tarry' continued to meet with the same uncompromising repetition of the vow, 'As the Lord liveth and as thy soul

liveth, I will not leave thee'. So the scene is set. In this determination of spirit, each bent upon his own business and watched by fifty men of the sons of the prophets, they together turn their faces toward Jordan and stride out upon the last stage of their journey.

Perhaps Elijah led Elisha to the exact spot where formerly the nation came up out of Jordan into their inheritance; who can tell? It is known that Bethabara, the spot where John baptized, means 'the place of crossing', and perhaps we can hardly afford to miss the force of these implicit ideas. But be that as it may, it is certain that all these tremendous events took place somewhere in the same vicinity; however, the territorial or geographical significance is not the chief factor linking these events together; it is the spiritual link that is so important. It was God

who chose the place for Israel's 'baptism' in Canaan, and sent Elijah to Jordan, and at a later date John to Bethabara and Jesus to His baptism there. It is He who wove the events of Israel's history into this pattern. History is His-story, and here in His story of Elijah and Elisha He has chosen to give us a preview of the vital and indispensable enduement of power from on high which came upon those who tarried in the upper room in Jerusalem to be baptized in the Holy Ghost and fire.

The significance of this passage of Jordan is unmistakable. We could not anywhere be told or shown more plainly the relationship between Calvary and Pentecost, or that the power of Pentecost is the power of Calvary. They are identical, as I Corinthians 1:18, 23 and 24 so simply show; the power of Pentecost (Acts 1:8) is the power of the cross and of the Christ crucified. The

crucified Christ is the power. Going to the cross, He endued it with power so that it became effectual to Himself and to us, and He is now both Christ crucified and Christ *the* power of God. All the events that took place at that time are to be understood as one, inseparably one, even as this whole incident when considered together with the other three we have examined before, is revealed to bear a part with them of one baptism. Standing at Jordan's brink, Elijah took his mantle in his hand and with it smote the waters. Before their eyes, in a way now familiar to us, at their feet emerged a dry path over unto the further bank. Crossing over the river bed and through the waters together, they continued their journey on the other side, whilst the disrupted river closed its waters behind them again and returned to its former flow.

It was over there beyond Jordan that the great miracle of the translation of Elijah to heaven and the transference of his spirit and power to Elisha was to take place.

Relating this to the person of the Lord Jesus, and with a view to deepening our own experience of His grace, we will turn to the New Testament and observe His actions as He drew nearer to His final hours with them before Calvary. All about Him the multitudes were milling around, busy about their preparations for the national feast, so He withdrew Himself from them in order that His final hours should be given over to the task of trying to make His own understand the importance and power of His death. The importance and power of His life they already knew, or they thought they did. They had openly rebelled against the thought of His assassination, and consistently refused

to accept the fact that His death could, in any way, be at all beneficial either to themselves or to mankind. To them His death could not possibly mean anything other than disaster. They had no idea that it was the most vital part of His life work, and to have suggested such a thing to them would have evoked nothing but unbelief.

They did not know that Jesus' consummate act was dying. Rising from the grave was not His greatest miracle, although that may appear so to man. After all, given the fact that He is the Resurrection and the Life, rising from the dead was quite natural to Him once He had entered into death: dying was the greatest thing He ever did. But neither the article of death, nor the expiration of His last breath was the great death. Cessation of physical life was but the moment of release into the first step of His

great triumphal procession through the many states of that unseen netherworld. A greater, indeed the greatest death, was His identity with sin: 'He was made sin for us'. To be made that was as death unto Him. To Jesus, death lay primarily in accepting responsibility for the full result of the spiritual condition into which Adam by transgression fell.

The dread of this lay on Him for hours in the Garden, long before He hung on the cross at Calvary, but He finally offered Himself, and His Father accepted Him, as the living sacrifice for sin. This done, on the cross at last God made HIM to be SIN; the life that was lived in the midst of sin without sinning was sacrificed unto Sin and God there. So He hung and continued meekly upon the cross until the Sin-state was terminated. Having accomplished this, He victoriously dismissed

His Spirit into His Father's hands, and completed the whole work by dying physically.

Through His self-initiated and self-controlled physical death He signified that He had finished the spiritual death called Sin. Living through death was His greatest miracle. He had to be sacrificed for sin. Jesus did not die under the burden of sin, He lived under it — strangely enough, in His Spirit, over the top of it. It never slew Him, He brought it to death by overcoming it finally on the cross. But this overcoming was not for Himself. He had always overcome sin and Satan and had successfully resisted all contrary appeals to His mere human nature. On the cross He overcame sin for those other than Himself, who had always been overcome by it. But Jesus' disciples could not know any of these great spiritual truths before He died, for they

were as yet all locked up in Him. All He could do was to inform them of the facts and try His best to teach them by symbolism and parable the things that He could not make them understand by words only. But let us return to the detail of the story in Kings, and follow it through to the end.

We take up the story at the point where the two men continue their walk together on the other side of the river — turning to his servant, the master asks what he should do for him before he was finally taken away from him. For Elisha the moment had arrived; this was a leading question, and it gave Elisha just the opportunity he was seeking. The request was practically trembling on his lips; it had lain so long in the depths of his admiring heart that without hesitation he voiced the matter; 'Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me'. It

was the greatest prayer he knew to pray, but the request was not the easiest thing to grant. 'Thou hast asked a hard thing', Elijah said, 'nevertheless, if thou seest me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so'. With that they lapsed into silence and with this understanding between them continued their walk together, Elijah moving towards his glorification, Elisha concentrating upon the promise. There was nothing else to say or do, the next move was up to God. Suddenly it happened — seemingly from nowhere, Israel's chariot and horses of fire drove straight between them, parting them. This was swiftly followed by a whirlwind which singled out Elijah, encircled him in its powerful embrace and caught him up to heaven. It was almost quicker than the eye could see; he was snatched quickly away

from earth and Elisha, and gone in a moment. But confused as he was, Elisha saw him and cried out, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof'. He had succeeded! Excited, elated, and triumphant, he established his claim to sonship and favour for the answer to his prayer. Believing with all his heart, in the absolute certainty of faith, he rent his clothes from his back, grasped the mantle which had fallen from Elijah, his head, and returned to Jordan.

The absolute vital certainty of that which took place out there beyond the river is this: it all happened because Elisha was in union with his master in life beyond death. This point is impossible of over-magnification or exaggeration. Elijah, the 'head' of Elisha, had ascended to heaven; Elisha, the 'body' of Elijah, remained behind on earth. The

double portion of the spirit now took the place of the 'head' upon it, and the mantle of power clothed it. All had come from the wind and the fire. It is as true a picture of Pentecost as ever any of the prophets saw and presented. Seven things gathered up from the story speak to our hearts of the perfection of God. Jordan (death), Head (Elijah), Body (Elisha), Wind, Fire, Spirit, Mantle. We could require little more than this to speak more plainly or loudly to us of the unity of Calvary and Pentecost, for although these two events are separated by fifty days in time, they are not divided in spiritual reality or in the heart of God, nor can be in the experience of any member of His 'Body'; they are one and must be one in experience.

Standing there beyond Jordan, Elisha needed to do but one more thing in order to

establish himself in Israel as the unique and fully authenticated representation of Elijah: he must come back as from the dead. To the astonishment of the sons of the prophets this is exactly what he did. Watching as Elisha walked up to the further bank of Jordan (probably to the spot where he had earlier crossed with Elijah), they saw him grasp the mantle of 'power from on high' in his hand and as Elijah before him, smite the waters flowing at his feet. At the same time he cried out, 'where is the Lord God of Elijah?' and to their amazement they beheld the scurrying waters flee away. Blessed Elisha; he was a transformed man. It all happened for him exactly the same way as it had done for Elijah before him, and he knew in himself that the unspoken answer to his cry was, 'with you, Elisha'.

Elisha came up from the river to the people in the name and power of 'the Lord God of Elijah'. To him, as to us, Jordan had symbolized both death and resurrection and the consequent emergence of the 'new man' clothed with power from on high. He did not come back from Jordan in his own name and spirit and power and clothing, but in another's. In this a twofold thing is accomplished: (a) Elisha links us back with Caleb, who came out of Egypt right into the Promised Land because he had 'another spirit in him'; (b) he also directly carries the continuity of the type of the One Baptism forward as from Caleb, thereby adding to it and delivering it in fuller development and glory to us who in this day claim to have another Spirit within, even the Spirit of Christ. Elisha came back from Jordan a witness unto Elijah.

It is a remarkable fact, worthy of notice in this connection, that the Lord Jesus Christ never referred to Himself as the 'faithful Witness' and the 'faithful and true Witness' until He was risen from the dead, (Revelation 1:5 and 3:14). This is markedly shown in the first reference, where the statement is linked with 'the first begotten from the dead'; in the second it is directly spoken by the Lord to the angel of the church at Laodicea, 'I am He that liveth and was dead and behold I am alive for evermore', He says, 'Amen'. He is 'THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS', but the Laodiceans were not. The Church was not to Him what Elisha was to Elijah, and He rebuked them and deservedly so. The Lord grants unto His people infinitely greater blessings than Elijah gave to his servant, and if Elisha's experience could so transform

him, how much more changed should we be who claim to be baptized with(in) the Holy Spirit. If Elisha 'rose' from Jordan with a new life of power to be a 'witness' unto Elijah, how much more ought those who now claim to be full of resurrection life and power be witnesses unto the Lord Jesus.

Elisha did not hesitate to ask Elijah for the double portion of his spirit; he knew very well what such a request meant. It was a bold claim. As far as we know Elijah, like Jesus, was a bachelor with no children of his own and no earthly possessions to leave anyone. So Elisha's request was a sure testimony to the fact that he believed himself to be the direct spiritual lineal descendant of Elijah. Elisha held a special place in Elijah's affections and he knew it. He was also fully aware that God had given him to Elijah with the strict instruction that he

was to be anointed prophet in Elijah's room. Knowing that he was already chosen to highest office, he did not fail to grasp to the full the divine favours being conferred upon him, nor allow false modesty to deter him. Finally being associated with his master in his departure from this world, he laid hold of the opportunity presented to him with both hands. He knew that by appointment of God he had certain rights, and he was determined to receive them. 'My father, my father', he had called after the ascending Elijah.

Elisha knew that he was a son. More, he knew that he was the firstborn son, for without hesitation in his heart, or reproof either from God or Elijah, he claimed the double portion which was the inheritance of the firstborn. Neither false humility, nor lack of faith, nor fear, nor pride, nor sloth

withheld him from seeking the favour; all the laws of God governing the right of inheritance were working for and within him. By spiritual heredity, by divine election, by sovereign grace, by the sacred bond of affection and by the desire of his heart he was Elijah's firstborn, indeed his only-begotten, therefore he asked for and received the double portion of Elijah's spirit. Beside this, he also saw and spoke of 'the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof'. It divided between them in preparation for Elijah's home-going, but it touched both of them, Elijah for departure, Elisha for continuance. Elisha knew that he was in the ongoing move of God; the fire had touched him.

The preciousness of it all was that the mantle first cast around him by Elijah was now his by heredity. The temporary had

become the permanent. It was the one thing that the master left behind, perhaps the only earthly possession he had, and it was firmly grasped in Elisha's hand. Instead of a visible Elijah as his lord, he had the double portion of Elijah's spirit upon him as his invisible 'head'. The invisible spirit of Elijah had taken the place of the visible Elijah, and being upon Elisha, they were one, as head and body. So it is with us today, the Spirit and Jesus are one as head upon the body, the Church. There is no difference between them, they are one even as Jesus and the Father are one. Most probably it was in this sense that Elisha understood that Elijah was his 'head', and this being so would explain the pointed vehemence and sensitivity of his reaction over the remark concerning his head in the incident of the boys and the bears. It was an insult to Elijah, his 'head',

the spirit of Elijah that was upon him who was now Elijah's body.

Now this experience did not turn Elisha into another Elijah. He never developed the romantic, fiery personality of his head; but reading the subsequent chapters of his life and exploits, we see that for every miracle that Elijah performed, Elisha performed two. The double portion of spirit apparently worked out in twice as many works of power. Perhaps in this we have a guide as to one way of interpreting the verse in John 14, wherein Jesus says to His apostles, 'the works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do'— 'greater' referring to quantity rather than quality.

Earlier Jesus had made a somewhat similar statement to this concerning His own ministry, saying that He would Himself do greater works than He had already done

(John 5:17-21). But He made this entirely contingent upon the will of His Father to show Him to do them; all evidently was dependent upon this principle of revelation — not desire, nor ability, nor power, nor authority, not even the anointing, nor yet love nor faith are sufficient. Although each is important and all must be there, not one or many, or all of these combined are sufficient for the ministry to which the Lord was sent and for which He was given of God. We cannot doubt that as it was with Him, so must it be for His apostles. Therefore, when making this promise to them, He adds to it the qualifying clauses, 'because I go unto my Father, and whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son', and 'if ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it'. It is important to observe that He does not say,

'the works that I have done', but 'the works that I do shall ye do also'. He is speaking of present not past activity; Jesus is still alive today and fully able and willing to do His works.

Two major dangers springing from a common root attend upon desire to fulfil this promise of the Lord; each is as destructive as the other. They are as follows: presumption to take a promise made exclusively to apostles and make it appear to have been given to all church members; and presumption to believe that because the gospels furnish us with a complete spectrum of the works of Jesus, He is expecting these to be done in exactly the same manner today. To fall into the first error is to find presumption akin to pride, as in Lucifer. There are those who may be called present-day apostles; these are not to be considered

as being equal to the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Let the Church recognize them, and let them recognize their office and in all humility fulfil their calling, but let us not saddle all the saints with a burden they were not intended to bear, lest we be found deserving the Lord's stern reprimand about 'binding burdens grievous to be borne' upon those for whom they were never intended, without touching them ourselves. Our cry must be 'who and where are the apostles of the present-day Church?' We need them, and the cry must be to both God and man. To God, for He alone can give them, and to men for they must recognize them when they are given. We must re-read our New Testament without prejudice, determined to be free from traditions of men and set denominational interpretation, so that the Lord may guide us into all truth written

therein. The Church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone among them.

He is our great Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher; indeed all offices and powers and functions and authorities are His. In fact, He is all, being both Head and Body, for they are only one; the body is His being, His fulness. All the many splendours of the person of our Lord are invested in principle and power and prescribed measure, and placed permanently in the Church, which is to perpetuate Him in the earth until it is translated to glory. Therefore, within the company of redeemed and regenerate members of the apostolic Church, the Lord chooses and sets in the body those who in their calling and measure must bear some of the responsibility and

privileges of His own apostolic calling. These are the present-day apostles of the churches; that they may not be recognized or called by that name is immaterial, it is the office that is important, and they must function in it as such, or else the churches on earth cannot be built as they ought, nor function as they should.

The modern practice of trying to build upon evangelists, pastors and teachers is an error commonly inherited from forebears who equally erroneously believed that the twelve apostles of the Lamb were the only apostles the Lord ever chose. Whereas, although those twelve held an exclusive place in the Church, the apostles' office and calling did not die with them; on the contrary, upon their death the first apostles only vacated their positions for others to fill them. To say the least, this is only common sense, for

commands and promises given exclusively to apostles may only be received and carried out by apostles; for others to attempt to do such things is both presumptive and abortive.

The second presumption is closely allied to the first, and it is the Lord Jesus who shows us the folly of it. We may observe that the blessed Christ, unique and all-glorious though He was, never presumed to know anything as of Himself as a man. To observe His use of the scripture provides us with an object lesson in this. He never read the Bible with a view to discovering a method or pattern to copy. neither did He seek to better the works of the many who had done miracles or shown signs before Him on earth. Instead, He depended utterly upon His Father to show Him what to do, and having accomplished His Father's will, He

publicly disclaimed credit for any of the things He did. He accepted full responsibility for His works, but never took credit or glory for them in any degree. Such phrases as 'my Father doeth the works', or 'the words I speak unto you are not mine but His', or 'I must', were often upon His lips. 'When Jesus knew' is also recorded of Him, which plainly allows the inference that He did not know until it was revealed to Him of His Father. Further, a graduation in manifestation of works of power is also observable in His ministry, so that the greatest demonstration of power came at the end of His life; and all this was in order that the glory should be given to the Father. From this we see the truth of what He meant when He said that what He saw the Father do He also did likewise. It is almost as though the Father had first insisted to Him in principle what He

later applied to His apostles in the Upper Room, 'the works that I do, Jesus, shall ye do also'.

This is most likely true, for it conforms to that which He expresses in prayer to His Father in John 17:8, 'I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me and they have received them...', having said a few moments before, 'I have finished the works which thou gavest me to do'. Surely one of the truest accusations that could be brought against us as ministers of Christ is that so often we fail to accomplish what we attempt to do. The world says that it is better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all, and the degree of wisdom in that saying is beyond question, but if that were God's attitude we should not be saved. If it had been written of Jesus that He tried and failed it would have been in a forgotten

book, the scripture of hell. Jesus said, 'the works that I do shall ye do also'. 'I do', He said, not 'I attempt to do'. The spirit that attempts or wants to try is human; God's Spirit always accomplishes what is His will to do. I AM, I WILL, I CAN, I DO, I SHALL, I HAVE DONE — that is God.

The indispensable factor needed by a human spirit indwelt and identified with God's Spirit for the successful accomplishment of His will is unfailing obedience to the original revelation, plus progressive instruction accorded us as we continue in that will. The New Testament gives the infallible revelation of the eternal truth in a general pattern. Within the scope of that must come personal revelation of the same order as that which the Lord Jesus knew. That what Jesus did He will do again, is a safe assumption, but to say 'I will do what Jesus

did', however praiseworthy the motive, is presumption. We must learn to say, 'I can of mine own self do nothing'. If all God's children were brave enough to stop moving from calculations based on relationship plus understanding of the Bible, and commenced to live a life based on revelation which develops from communion with Him, failure would be practically eliminated from among us.

Especially is this so when we recall that the Lord Jesus is the firstborn from among the dead, and in grace calls us all to share His fulness and glory. There is a precious word in Hebrews 12:23, which ensures this to us by giving us a glimpse into the grace of God. We are told here that we 'are come to... the Church of the firstborn which are written in heaven'. The word 'firstborn' in this passage does not specifically or exclusively refer to

the Lord Jesus, for it is written in the plural and could rightly be translated as 'firstborn ones'. We are not being told here that Jesus is the firstborn and that this Church is His Church; instead God is telling us that the Church is made up of people, every one of whom is a 'firstborn' (son). This, of course, must be so if the Church is His Body, for He is (all of Him) the firstborn. He is not just the firstborn head alone; the firstborn body together with Him the Head, comprises the whole of the firstborn. Therefore the whole Church of Jesus Christ has the right of the firstborn, and in measure ought to be the manifestation of the fulness of the Son, for being given to us, it is given to Him.

When of old Elisha asked of Elijah a double portion of his spirit, he was told by his master that he had asked a hard thing. Elisha was in no way encouraged by Elijah to make

such a request — it was not planted in his heart by his 'head'. Rather it seems that Elijah rebuffed his servant and discouraged the idea; certainly according to the record, he made it plain that his spiritual heir was being difficult. But this is not the case with us; on the contrary it is our Head who first sowed in the heart of His own the idea that they should ask for the Holy Ghost.

However, He found no response in His servants' hearts to this suggestion. The saying, apparently, was too hard or too big for them to grasp — certainly it was 'new'; no-one else had ever said that it was possible to ask for the Holy Ghost.

Throughout Israel's history, the Holy Ghost had been bestowed sovereignly by God's will, not at man's request; no-one had ever asked for the Holy Ghost, so believing their theology rather than Jesus. Though the Lord

had instructed them to ask for the Holy Ghost, they never did what He suggested to them and encouraged them to do. It was absolutely necessary that they should have the Spirit and this the Lord made plain to them, saying that He Himself would ask the Father for the Holy Ghost for them. In this, as usual, He went beyond all Old Testament laws and ideas concerning the firstborn. He promised them so much more than the restrictive commands and promises of the Law could offer, saying, 'at that day we will come unto him and make our abode with him', (John 14:20-23). Pentecost was to be the greatest day of their lives; it was to be the occasion when they entered into their inheritance as sons of God.

In Isaiah's prophecy chapter 9, verse 6, it had been written of the child that was to be born unto us — 'His name shall be called ...

the everlasting Father'. Jesus' name includes within it hints of the everlasting fatherhood of God. This is not readily understandable at first, but He was quite conscious of His oneness with His Father, and said 'I and my Father are one'. He is unquestionably the Son of God, and if He be the Son, how can He at the same time be the Father? The answer to this question may be better understood if we examine the practices of ancient Israel concerning sonship and the distribution of wealth in a family.

It was recognized practice among the families of Israel that upon the decease of the father, a double portion of his total wealth was bestowed on the firstborn son; it was his special inheritance. The purpose for this extra gift was that by it he should be able to fulfil his responsibilities to the family left behind, which were as follows:

1. He must care for (be a husband to) the widowed mother if she outlived her husband.

2. He must care for (be a father to) the younger children.

3. He must be (as he already was) a true brother to his brothers and sisters.

In other words, upon the father's death, the firstborn must fill the role or assume the position of the father; he must become the father-figure and fulfil his father's responsibilities to the family. Now it was for this purpose that the double portion was bestowed; it was the enabling or power (Gk. *dunamis*) given him from on high, or from his head. This enabled him in a very practical way to become the head to the body of family members left behind. Although the father was the head of the whole family, it was the firstborn to whom he was the

immediate head; he was directly next to him in order of life and authority, and because this was so, could rightly be the continuing 'father', for he was the elder brother.

Therefore we see the rightness of the gift, for only by the gift bestowed upon him was he enabled to fulfil the role or office which he held by virtue of his birth. The double portion enabled the firstborn to administer his father's love and bounty as well as to fulfil his father's will. Thereby, as far as was humanly possible, he took his father's place.

Properly understood, this common practice in Israel gives us some guide as to the position that the Lord Jesus held and fulfilled among men. He truly filled and fulfilled the role of the everlasting (age-abiding) Father to men, and especially to the household of faith. Being on earth as the Father's Son, He had within Him the double portion of the

firstborn, for both the Father and the Holy Ghost were in Him, as the scripture says, '... in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily'. He was thus able to administer the will of the Father and use the gifts and distribute the bounty of the double portion as any had need, and discharge His responsibility to His Father and to men. Paul tells us that the head of Christ is God; so we see how He represents the head of the family to us, for as He says, 'all that the Father hath is mine'. The Son that is given has everlastingly become the Father-figure to us, for He eternally disburses Father's bounty to His family. So much then do we learn from the comparison; but by contrast we learn much more. In a manner far superior to that which any earthly heir could or was ever expected to achieve, He excelled all that Moses taught or the Patriarchs

before him practised. Moving the whole concept of inheritance onto a higher plane altogether, He told His apostles that on the day the Holy Ghost came, both He and His Father would come as well. We find then that the basic right of God's first-born is a triple portion; Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the whole blessed Trinity of persons, all God. The Lord is virtually saying, 'We will all come and make you our abode'. The glorious revelation is that by the Holy Ghost the Father dwells in His sons just as He dwells in the Son, and that by the Holy Ghost the sons dwell in the Father as the Son does. That is the miracle of all miracles. The Lord Jesus intends to share with us to the full His own precious heritage and for this He is pleased to call us His brethren. All that He lived and enjoyed of life and power from on high as a

man on this earth He intends to share with His Father's family — He really does.

Observing Him, we see that before He was allowed of the Father to go out into His life of ministry, Jesus had to know a personal symbolic death and resurrection. For this, as Elisha before Him, He went to Jordan. There He submitted to John in order that in His day He too might receive the enduement from His Father on high. According to the unbreakable laws of life, under John's hand He was symbolically baptized into death, that it may be seen that only through death could He rise into the newness of the life of public ministry. This was not the same newness of life that comes to us by the putting away of sin, and cleansing from the filth of the flesh. Jesus' baptism in water did not represent the crucifixion, death and burial of His own Old Man and the

destruction of the ego of self. He did not need it for that, and neither does any other man; but in order to be the perfect example, He did need the anointing or enduement with power for the new phase of ministry into which he entered. From that time forward He would no more return to the carpenter's bench at Nazareth, or as the 'firstborn' continue to provide for, or supervise the family now fatherless at home, nor would He any longer carry on the same duties or live in the same pattern of good works that He had known and fulfilled from His childhood. He put away His former manner of life so completely, and became such an amazingly 'new person', that when later He returned to His hometown and synagogue, everybody marvelled at Him and could hardly believe the evidence of their own eyes and ears.

Because that which Elisha typified in coming up from Jordan was fulfilled by the Lord Himself in His own life and ministry, it is also exemplified unto us by Him as a basic necessity for all the chosen ones. Elisha was identified with Elijah in death, refusing under any circumstances or pressure to be separated from him, therefore he came back from death with Elijah's spirit and power upon him. So also must it be with the true Church; not that we rely for our authority upon a scriptural type, but upon the pattern set by the Lord. Elisha went from Jordan with power unto a new life of ministry and works, and so must it be with the Church, for Christ crucified is the power of God.

Of old the Children of Israel came up out of Jordan under Joshua to take possession of and dwell in the land where they were to inherit all the promises of God. Therein they

were to be taught the art of victorious living. Under their heavenly captain they went forth conquering and to conquer. From victory unto victory the Lord led His baptized people into possession of lands and cities, fruits and flocks and herds in abundance; they enjoyed a life of constant miracles, marvelling the while at the special works of power wrought for them by their great leader, Joshua. Following him, at his command and by his instruction, they also shared in those miracles, exploiting to the full the situations originally created by his faith and power. So they learned to possess and live in the land that flowed with milk and honey for them.

Likewise today there are many who enjoy the kind of life outlined by that type. They know truest union with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection, and enjoy full

victory over all enemies of the soul as they press on to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. Their soul is a land that flows with milk and honey as the rivers of the Holy Ghost flow through their spirit. The comfort of the sincere milk of the Word and the natural sweetness of honey are their basic soul-states, as those who meet and fellowship or live with them truly prove. They know miracles in their lives and love to recount them, and they are many. Truly they enjoy the fruit of the Spirit in all righteousness and peace, living and dwelling in the Light. Thus far they enjoy the great Baptism in the Spirit; but there is more, far more in this Baptism than as yet they have known. To recognize and accept and enjoy three quarters of the whole, even though it be the greater, or best, or most important part, is manifestly to be one quarter short of

that whole. The Baptism set forth in scripture is as four-square as New Jerusalem; it is not just threefold but four-dimensional. In this further picture of the one great Baptism set before us, we are shown the fact and necessity of an enduement of power from on high, beyond putting us in a place where we can possess our own possessions according to the promise of God, this also places power in the sense of authority upon us for the proper preaching and presentation of the Kingdom of God to all people.

The Lord Jesus very clearly said three things concerning the day of Pentecost, which we must unreservedly accept and believe because they came from His sacred lips alone. The first is recorded in John 14:20, and was spoken in the Upper Room; the second is recorded in Luke 24:49, and

possibly was spoken in the same room some days later after the Resurrection; the third, perhaps again in that same room some days later still, is recorded in Acts 1:8. These three are vital to our understanding of the mighty thing which God began in that Upper Room on 'that (great) day'. We have no proof, but only reasonable and perhaps sentimental hopes, that the Upper Room that became the Lord's Guest-Chamber for the last Passover meal of the old Order and the first supper of the New Covenant was possibly the same one in which He visited them after His Resurrection and ascension. It is an appealing thought though, for there is a sweet sense of 'rightness' about it, for that Upper Room was chosen by the Lord for Himself and His apostles. It was His provision for them in a hostile city where they would find few, if any other doors open to welcome

them. But if He had opened a door for them, no man could shut it, and into it they would surely resort for refuge when the tides of hatred and persecution rose high against them. Then again it was a well-known place to others of the larger band of disciples, who although excluded from it upon the occasion of the Passover feast, must nevertheless have known of its whereabouts. This is proven by the sure arrival there of the two from Emmaus upon their return to Jerusalem in the darkness of the night following the first Easter day. Perhaps more than all this, the inherent unity of the truth of the three 'words' He spoke either sows or else strengthens the idea that the same Upper Room was the place where all the messages were given; perhaps also it was the venue of the consummating Baptism to which all three messages refer. Whether or

not this is true, by those three 'words' the Lord informed these men of what they must expect to happen to them when they were baptized in the Holy Ghost.

The first was concerning inner knowledge of personal integration and union within the Godhead; 'at that day (Pentecost) ye shall know that I am in My Father and ye in me and I in you'. This was the dearest wish in Jesus' heart for them; it is by far the most important thing that takes place in the Baptism in / of / with the Spirit, and is therefore the foremost thing that Jesus mentions in this connection. For this He prayed on the way to Gethsemane, lovingly spending much time and thought upon it, expressing it audibly within the hearing and for the hearts of His chosen ones. It is a great mystery, although not the greatest mystery of all mysteries referred to in the

Bible, for God Himself is that. This is surely the next greatest, and for this all other things spoken of as mysteries are and were and had to be; God and man — one; just one; only one; not two, but one. God wanted just that, and because of this, all mysteries other than the greatest have an explanation and a reason.

This is the real reason why Jesus Himself was born, and why He died, and rose again and ascended back to His Father. It was all done that in this process of successive acts and events He should eliminate, destroy or overcome everything that prevented us from being in and one with God. This was the impossible thing, it just could not be; God is God and man is man; in the very nature of things it was quite impossible for God and man to be one. Moreover, in the order of reason and logic, as well as in the nature and

practice of philosophy and religion, and in the realms of true propriety and aestheticism, it is utterly improper for such a thought to arise. But Jesus said that on the day of Pentecost, following the Baptism of the Spirit, His disciples would know secret eternal being in the life of God. In certification of this, He said three things which would put the mystery beyond all doubt. Examining the words, it is apparent that they would each know - (1) where He was *primarily*; 'in my Father', (2) where they were *eternally*; 'and ye in me', and (3) where He was simultaneously: 'and I in you'; all was to be one great conscious knowledge. With such words He assured them with mind-baffling matter-of-factness that He would be in them as and when they were in Him, when and where and as He was in the Father. Apparently He regarded the amazing

simplicity of it not worthy or necessary of comment or explanation; the truth is the truth and quite impossible of understanding before the event, and even then and thereafter only with the spirit as it becomes personal reality.

One of the surest ways of losing the point and power of truth that is intended to be enjoyed in the present is to relegate it to the future. If in this case we think that the Lord is referring to some future life in 'the hereafter', we shall miss all that He intended us to know and enjoy now. It embraces 'the hereafter' in the sense of future eternity, but only in the same way as Jesus intended it. Whilst He was still on earth He said that He Himself was in the Father and the Father in Him, and this kind of experience and knowledge is to be ours also whilst yet on the earth. Such knowledge is only offered to

and can only be known by the inner spiritual consciousness. It cannot be understood until a person is baptized in Spirit, and then only as the carnal mind is forsaken and the mind of the Spirit functions within him. This then is the first thing that was wrought in these disciples at 'that day'. By the Baptism in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost they knew that they were as much part of God as Jesus — not uniquely or as originally as He, but certainly as really as He. Two scriptures, each a word from the inner consciousness of the apostles that wrote them, set forth this very truth, 'he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit', I Corinthians 6:17, and, 'we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ', 1 John 5:20. No greater knowledge could be granted to man; it is the most amazing grace, the very ultimate of

revelation concerning the fundament of eternal life — the Word fulfilled.

The second thing that the Lord assured them would happen was that they would be endued, or clothed, with power from on high. Referring back to the story of the two prophets, we see that to Elisha this aspect of the truth was very real. His cry at Jordan reveals his great heart concern about it, 'where is the God of Elijah?' he said. At the same time he was smiting the waters with the cloak which came down from on high. He placed no faith in the piece of clothing; his action was the spontaneous natural gesture that went with the cry, and he was copying what he had seen Elijah do. It was Elijah's God, not Elijah's cloak, that performed miracles. Elijah was God's Elijah — he had done God's works by God's power; but just because Elijah had gone up to

heaven, it surely could not mean that God was quitting the earth also. Bold with faith, Elisha had therefore rent off his own mantle and left it in the wilderness; he would have no further use for it. That cloak was the mantle of Elisha, Elijah's servant, in which he had done all the former works of service relative to that position. Now he discards it, and in its place would wear Elijah's mantle as though he were the son and heir of that great man. From now on it should be his own, not Elijah's — he had no further use for it. The God of Elijah would now clothe Elisha with power as He had done his master and 'father' before him. Elijah being translated and the power being transferred, Elisha was now transformed. Elijah's position was now fully taken by Elisha; thus he became the Elijah figure which was God's figure to Israel. As Elijah before him had used it for his last

great miracle, so Elisha now wielded the cloak for his first great miracle; it was all very spectacular. Afterwards, however, Elisha used it as it was originally designed and intended to be used — he wore it. As upon the original occasion it had been cast about him temporarily, so now it had been bequeathed him to wear; in order to do so he needed to discard his own — so this he did. Spectacular use upon special occasion it may have had, but beyond all that it was to become the habit of his life, his ordinary cloak.

It must indeed have been a spectacular sight for the watching sons of the prophets to view. Whether or not they saw the discarded mantle fall to the earth from Elijah's translated body we do not know, but it is certain that they had seen his use of it. And now, as though still in the hands of Elijah,

but surely held in the hand of Elisha, it flew through the air with a flourish and fell with power upon Jordan like the voice of the Lord dividing the waters asunder. They did not then know that it was never to be used in the same way again, but it was a wonderful, heartening sight to behold. In the same sovereign power as Elijah before him, it was now God's intention for Elisha to move out over the land, and this he did, for he could; beyond Jordan God had done a mighty and amazing thing to this man. With a double portion of Elijah's spirit within, and Elijah's cloak to clothe him without, he commenced his true life of ministry to the people: Elisha yet Elijah — a true witness to his living head. It is the latter fact that lies fundamental to the strange, and perhaps somewhat distasteful occurrence earlier referred to, which is recorded in the end of the same

chapter. Returning from Jordan via Jericho to Bethel, he was met by a company of children. Perhaps they had seen him earlier when he had gone down the road in company with Elijah a few days before. Now they see this man coming up alone, his dynamic, flamboyant, romantic companion gone. Instead of the hairy Elijah, they saw this bald-headed assistant coming up the trail clothed in his master's mantle, and they mocked the colourless man. In their eyes he was a man who presumed to wear his master's cloak, but lacked his master's personality. They possibly knew nothing of the Jordan experience and certainly did not know what God had done for Elisha. They had not dared to mock at Elijah, the mighty prophet of Israel; the stories of his works and the power of his words were common among them, so they feared him, but they

had no such regard for Elisha. They made the fatal and common mistake of having regard to persons; they had respect unto Elijah and not unto the God of Elijah. But the God of Elijah was also the God of Elisha, so Elisha cursed them for their mockery of God's work in him, and forty-two of them were torn of the she-bears.

The Lord Jesus is of an entirely different Spirit; He has instructed all New Testament prophets to 'love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you'. He teaches all His Father's children 'to be perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect', but Elijah never taught his disciple any such thing. Elisha followed the example of his 'father' and 'head' who had not hesitated in the past to call down fire from heaven upon the heads of his enemies. He was indwelt by a double portion of

Elijah's spirit and wore his Elijah's clothing, so he acted in the same vein as that in which he had seen Elijah act in the past, and doubtless would have seen him act again in this situation had he stood in Elisha's shoes, as Elisha stood clothed in his mantle at that moment. Contrary to Elisha and Elijah, our Jesus cited His Father's providential care, and by personal example teaches us that we must make the smiling sunshine of our love to rise on both the evil and the good, Matthew 5:44-48. What Elisha did was undoubtedly right as he saw it under a stern covenant of law, but such will not do today for those who, under a better covenant, are taught by Him who ended the old, to live in grace towards all.

It is not that mockery against the Spirit and power from on high does not deserve the same destructive punishment as that which

Elisha meted out of old — it certainly does; but we are simply forbidden by Jesus to act in such manner, and that is sufficient. Beside this, all who are baptized into His body are given a heart to act as He, so that is all they wish to do. Only the thoughts and words and works of the head may be entertained and worked out through the body; there is no other way they can be done, and certainly no other life than His ought to be lived in His own body. Elisha was a representative of Elijah; Elijah's spirit was in him, so he had the fixed attitude of heart and mind to do the works and carry out the identical wishes of his head. It was all correct enough then and should teach us a great lesson. If this man, under the relationship he had with his head, could act in such manner, how much more ought we, who have the Spirit and attitude and

thoughts and words and works of our Head within us, be able to do and speak as our Head. There is no more excuse for us acting according to the Elijah / Elisha relationship than there is reason for expecting Elisha to act according to the Christ / Church, Head / Body relationship which we enjoy. We are in a better covenant, based upon better promises; there is no excuse for degeneracy. Nevertheless, so great are the uses of types, and so many and varied are the lessons to be learned from them, that we may find yet another solemn level of truth lying just below the surface of the incident we are considering. The humble Lord Jesus said that all manner of blasphemies and sins committed or spoken against Him could be forgiven, but that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost never has forgiveness, either in this world or the next. In this story of Elisha

and the children we have a dim foreshadowing of that fact. When those ignorant 'young lads' (margin) mocked the spirit and power of Elijah in Elisha it was fatal, for in a figure Elisha had been baptized in and was full of the Holy Spirit. In a different yet somewhat parallel experience to be found in the New Testament, Ananias and Sapphira also discovered that fatal consequences resulted from their agreement together to deceive the early Church and tempt the Holy Spirit. By such tremendous apostolic judgement as that which was meted out to these two, the early Church was kept pure. Perhaps we shall find that their sin will find forgiveness in the next world; it certainly did not in this. They were cut off before anyone had a chance (even if they had the desire) to plead with them to repent. Summary judgement, approved of

God, swiftly executed, removed them from the possibility of setting up a cancer in Christ's body on earth. If they are members of the body of Christ they will be dealt with as such. If they never were such, but total impostors (the text does not support that view), they went swiftly down to their doom. If they blasphemed the Holy Spirit (and again there is no evidence that they did so in the ordinary recognised sense), they are eternally lost, but if not, they will be saved, 'yet so as by fire' (1 Corinthians 3:15).

It is refreshing to find that the precious cloak of Elijah / Elisha was never held or passed on as an object of superstitious veneration. We do not find that the sons of the prophets ever vied or competed with each other to obtain such a prize, nor that Elisha passed it on as an heirloom to some 'son' of the faith, or that anyone in the ministry asked it of

him. The mantle was an outward symbol of power, that is all. Elisha put it to a miraculous use, but its prime purpose was to clothe and warm and protect and cover its owner. In a manner similar to this, Jesus says that we are to be clothed with power (Gk. ability) from on high. He did not say that we should be given power in our hands, but that power was to be our clothing, a very different and vastly superior thing. Pride, greed, and misunderstanding often put things to superstitious uses and invest things with improper meanings, causing men to perish in grasping for possessions and positions which they may not be intended to have; but faith perceives all and patiently strengthens itself by gaining knowledge and understanding of the real purposes of God in the one true Baptism. The Lord did not intend that all of us should perform

outwardly observable miracles, but He does intend us all to wear that mantle of power. The first and most important thing a man must know by and about the Baptism is this — that Jesus is in the Father, and that where He is, there he is also; he in Him, and He in him. Already we are in the eternal relationship for which He prayed in John 17, saying, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am'. Paul tells us that we were chosen in Christ before the world began; conscious faith-knowledge of this in a man's spirit will lead on to understanding and experience of the soul's full function in its heavenly calling on earth; the meanwhile he will still be reaching out into the future to attain unto his own high calling of God in Christ Jesus. This can only happen in us as we recognize and consciously unite with our Head in His

Baptism into our death, that we also might be associated with Him in His death. That being so, we may stand with Him also where He stood in His Jordan anointing.

The place where the feet of the priests that bore the Ark stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan was clearly marked by Joshua with a cairn of stones as the place of crossing. Centuries later, when by divine appointment John Baptist came to the same river to baptize, he chose Bethabara, 'the house or place of crossing', because there was much water there. It was to this place that Jesus came in order to fulfil all righteousness and to emerge from the waters unto His anointing into the ministry, for which He was 'the Anointed'. Clothed with power from on high, He went in all the authority of Christhood unto all Israel. Let present-day prophets and their sons stand to

view this thing in all its implications, that we all may be found true Sons of God indeed, and not be wasting our time grasping at empty shards or cloaks of power to cover our naked impotence. Let us recognize that power from on high is to be worn by us as the everyday clothing of the Life which the Lord Jesus once promised, and has now provided for all His people.

Because the Lord Jesus has left the earth and gone up on high, we are not to think or act as though God has left the earth. Paul says that 'Christ is God's', but he also says, 'and ye are Christ's'. Elijah was God's, but Elisha was Elijah's, and perhaps it is high time we had in our hearts a similar cry with relation to our Head as Elisha had to his, 'Where is the God of Jesus?' Before His ascension the Lord sent Mary Magdalene to His disciples to tell them that He was

ascending to 'my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'. In taking His Son back home, their Father and God was not planning to quit the earth or to withdraw His power from men; He was simply proceeding with the plan which the blessed Trinity had prepared before the foundation of the world, and had now instituted, for the complete salvation of men. Jesus had told them that He must go away. He had to go in order to make way for the Holy Ghost to come, and the next stage of the plan to be introduced. The Holy Ghost would not come until the Lord Jesus went, for man must ask for Him as Jesus had said, Luke 11:13. His word being neglected on that occasion, Jesus had to go Himself and ask for, receive and pour out the promised Holy Ghost for men, that in one great act He should both baptize His disciples in Him and give Him to

them at the same time. This was all part of the plan, so having been given the Holy Ghost by the Father, Jesus had the joy of sending Him upon the disciples. This is why, upon rising from the dead and before leaving the earth, He told them to 'tarry in Jerusalem' for the enduement of power from on high, which would be the result of the Father's promise being sent upon them. For this to take place Jesus had to be in heaven, for He has heavenly work to do which is absolutely indispensable to our continued salvation, and because He is doing His heavenly work for us we must be doing His earthly work for Him.

Quite clearly God must still be at work in the earth now, for some of the works which Jesus did while here He had only just commenced, Acts 1:1. Before He died He had already completed much, as He said in

John 17:4, but when He died He completed so much more; in fact, all the fundamental work that was needed for our total reconciliation to God. When He arose He had completed even more; and when He ascended He commenced a completely new phase of heavenly ministry, without which we can no more be saved than without Calvary we could be redeemed. But much more had been left unfinished on the earth, and much had not even been initiated, nor could be except man receive the Holy Ghost. So by this heavenly ministry, which He now constantly pursues, we are intended and enabled to continue the works which He purposely left unfinished upon His death, namely evangelizing, pastoring and teaching the world of men. This we are to do, as far as we are able, in His name, and in the same manner, and by the same power by which

He did it in His localized ministry to Israel. Precisely because we cannot continue this ministry of the Lord apart from being clothed with power from on high, He returned to heaven and sent the Holy Ghost, for the work can be done only by this blessed Person in us, I Peter 1:12

When Elisha rent off his clothes beyond Jordan, he became thereby basic man. Typically he went through a crisis wherein he the servant was transformed by putting off himself as concerning the former manner or habit of life, and he did it in order to become a son. To use another New Testament scripture, he 'ceased from his own works as God did from His', Hebrews 4:10. Vital as it is that we should claim the death of the Old Man at Calvary, it is also absolutely necessary to put him off as to the clothing, or habit of works we do. Failure to do this is

the reason why so many do not put on the new man as regards the kind of life-work they do. Thus, with a certain amount of Calvary's benefits, men commence a life which is clothed with 'own works'. To be sure these are not all the works of the ethically bad flesh, such as are listed in Galatians 5:18-21, so obviously distasteful and obnoxious to the sanctified soul. Being in benefit of the transfixion of the Old Man on the cross by our Lord Jesus, instead of continuing the works of the flesh, they now bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. Basically good and indispensable as this is, there is that which is still better, as we shall find from observing the ways of the Lord God Himself as recorded for us in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. We believe devoutly that the works which God did during the six days of creation were none of them evil, but all

good, and at least one of them was very good. But we are told that He ceased from all His good works when He entered into His rest. Works are good; some are very good: but rest is excellence.

We may see this even more plainly shown to us in the person of our Lord Jesus. There can be no doubt that from boyhood onward until He was thirty years of age, Jesus did good works. But from the moment He was anointed in Jordan, He never returned to Nazareth to live His former life and do those former works again. He entered into His rest, a state of ceasing from His own works in order to do His Father's works instead, so that they then became His works. He did not cease from his own Jesus of Nazareth works because they were wrong or wicked, but because He was given some greater works to do by and for His Father and in His Father's

name. Jesus Himself was the bodily fruit of the Spirit as outlined in Galatians 5:22 and 23. He embodied these from childhood, and the works that He did were a natural corollary of that fact. Attendance upon worship, prayers, scripture reading, running errands, visiting the sick, maintaining good works for necessary uses, all these and more, with self-denyings and fastings and goings and comings with their attendant virtues and rewards a man may well do, and yet be doing his own works as springing from his new nature by the Spirit, for undoubtedly Jesus of Nazareth also did them.

They are the 'naturals' of the new nature, and the New Testament writers spent much time and space in eulogising them and exhorting their readers not to neglect them, for they must have a very real and proper

place in the life of the churches. Yet from the anointing onwards, Jesus ceased from living wholly absorbed in them as being the normal, fixed pattern of His life, and this He did in order that He might give Himself to the works that His Father gave Him to do. This revolutionized His life. Similarly, although not then born again, those disciples who left all and followed Him, working under the delegated authority of His anointing, ceased from their own works, both natural and religious, and did His works. Here then, the new realm of ministry is revealed. We cannot bring our own works into it but must cease from them in order that the new works of God should become the preoccupying fulness of life.

Elisha's former works were good, but he stopped doing them and commenced better works. We sometimes act as though all the

good works that a good Jew or a devout humanitarian, or a sincere social worker can do, providing our motives are right and we have an assurance of salvation, are really Christian works, for we do no better than they, and perhaps no more. To cease from our own good works and do the Lord's works is our privilege. Good self can do so much good; but good Jesus said, 'I can of mine own self do nothing'. His own clothing with power from on high revealed 'this to be an absolutely accurate statement; it also guaranteed the continuance of it as He walked in obedience to the Holy Spirit.

All this leads us on to the third saying of the Lord in connection with the Baptism in the Spirit, Acts 1:8, 'Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me...'. More literally the text reads, 'Ye shall receive the power of

the Holy Ghost coming upon you'. The Lord had said previously that the power was an enduement, or clothing from on high.

Clearly then, apart from this enduement, it is totally impossible to be a witness unto Him. These men were already witnesses of the things regarded as the fundamental, historical facts of the faith. Indeed, one of the reasons they were originally chosen to be the apostles of the Lord was that they should personally observe those facts and bear testimony to their accuracy. He as good as said this to them when they accompanied Him on His journey to Gethsemane from the Upper Room, John 15:26 and 27. They had all seen the betrayal in the garden and between them had either directly seen or indirectly heard of all the things that followed upon Judas' terrible deed; they witnessed the trials, the scourgings, the

mockings, the dishonouring, the crowning with thorns, the crucifixion, the blood, the dreadful cries, the death, the tomb, the infallible proofs of His Resurrection, and afterwards His ascension; everything. Their knowledge of facts was complete, but their ability to be witnesses to HIMSELF was nil; yet this is the most important thing concerning witnessing.

Understanding the teachings of the Lord aright, we discover by many statements and illustrations that it is more important to be someone than to do something. The first thing to learn is that we must be witnesses unto a Person, and that person indwelling us. After that we may witness unto His works and words by doing and saying the same kind of things that He did and said. Presumably, before these men were baptized in the Spirit they could have gone

everywhere telling the historical details of the birth, life, teaching, miracles and death and resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus. They could have attempted to fill the world with books concerning Him, but that was not what He wanted of them. It is quite natural and so perilously easy to impart knowledge of things to others, and yet all the time and thereby be nothing but a witness to oneself. It is tragically true that all too often this is being done, in the mistaken hope or belief that such is gospel preaching, whereas the gospel can only be preached 'with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven' for the purpose.

It is of course the great desire in the heart of God that the gospel should be preached in all the world and to every creature, and that certain signs should follow them that believe, but that is not the first purpose for

which the Holy Ghost comes upon people. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit that we all should be witnesses unto Him; each of us must be living, undeniable evidence of Him; proof that He is, and that He is Who and What He is, and that He is with men. This is what He means, therefore, when He insists that we must be witnesses to Him. We must be the kind of people He would accept and choose if He were seeking someone infallibly to show others that He is the living true God and Saviour of mankind. Primarily His evidence to the world is not phenomena or facts, but people; neither is it past history, but present life. This obviously follows from the first thing He said in the Upper Room concerning the coming of the Spirit. It is a logical outcome of the knowledge of union within God.

Nature itself can teach us lessons along this line. Learning from the world around, we may observe that a degree of identity is often achieved in nature as a result of union between two living organisms. Much more in the realm of the Spirit, things that are impossible in the natural order by reason of their very naturalness can be quite easily achieved. The degree of identity as a result of union in the spiritual realm is so profound, so far exceeding anything in nature, that the apostle Paul could write such verses as Galatians 2:20, 1:15, 16 and 4:14, and be found speaking the truth. He was a man Jesus Christ chose, equipped and ordained as a witness unto Himself.

Receiving the Holy Ghost three days after his meeting with, and conversion unto Jesus Christ, he was simultaneously born again and filled with the Spirit to become a chosen

vessel unto the Lord Jesus. So real was this to both the Lord and Paul, that the new human vessel could immediately bear Jesus' name before and to men. That is the degree to which he and the Lord became one. He was that kind of witness unto the Lord Jesus; he spoke His words, did His works and bore His name. The fulness of the Spirit alone makes all this possible in a man, and it is marvellous beyond degree.

There is much confused thinking about this Baptism. Many think it is only an enduement with power for service, but neither the Lord Jesus nor any other person in scripture says it is. Indeed, on the contrary, all the apostles who were with the Lord Jesus while He was on earth had already received both power and authority from Him, and had been serving their Master and men with miracles many months before they were baptized in

the Spirit. We see therefore that the scriptures themselves show, that power for service can neither be the real nor the most important reason for this Baptism. This is not to say that anyone should attempt to serve God before he is baptized in the Spirit, for that is as impossible as thinking that an unborn child is capable of service. To try to do such a thing is as wrong as believing that the prime and directly stated purpose for the Baptism is service. The presence of the person of the Lord Jesus Himself, on the earth with those men of old, was imputed to them then as supplying all that the Anointing of the Spirit supplies to men now. Again, many think that this Baptism is only in order that men may exercise a ministry of the miraculous not otherwise possible. But not only had the apostles cast out devils, and healed the sick, and cleansed lepers

long before Calvary or Pentecost, so also had the seventy others, who because of the pressure of work the Lord appointed to service during His lifetime. Perhaps all these were there in the house on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost was first shed abroad. It is a nice surmise; but be that as it may, it is certain that to all who were there the Baptism in the Spirit had to mean something much more than an ability or empowering to perform miracles, for this, many if not most of them could already do. However, privileged as they had been, in doing such things they had not been witnesses to Him as He wished them to be. This the crucifixion proved beyond doubt, for betrayal, denial, cowardice and unbelief caused them all to forsake Him as He was led away like a lamb to the slaughter. One solitary figure, He witnessed entirely alone

to Himself; they all together witnessed to themselves; so great was the difference.

The Greek word 'witness' means 'martyr', and at that time none of the apostles were willing to be apprehended, tried and crucified with Him. Despite the affirmations they all made to Peter's plainly spoken words, 'If I should die with thee I will not deny thee in anywise', they had no heart for it. None of them as yet had the martyr spirit, or power to fulfil their pious hopes, so their statements were quite valueless, well-intentioned though they all were. The Lord Jesus was one lone, true and faithful Witness on earth; at that time they were not witnesses, although they were disciples. The martyr / witness spirit is born in a man when he is born of the Spirit, and this they did not then know. At times during His ministry the Lord did and said things that showed the

spiritual source from which all His works and words flowed. One such occasion was the incident that took place in Gethsemane, when they came with lanterns and staves to apprehend Him, Jesus asked them, 'Whom seek ye?' They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth'. In answer He simply said, 'I am', and they all went backwards and fell to the ground. Such was the impact of eternal truth upon them. He only told them who He was and is and ever shall be; He was simply being the faithful and true Witness to them, that is all; from this example we learn that witnessing is primarily a matter of being, not of doing.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that there is an empowering or authorization for service other than and distinct from the Baptism in the Spirit, but under no circumstances must this be

confused with it. It is less than it, and we should be deceived as well as foolish indeed to be satisfied with it as a substitute for the Baptism, good and right though it is. The Baptism in the Spirit is for life, not service. That it is with a view to service is true, but it is as utterly superior to it as the Earth is superior to the buildings built upon it. The importance of noting the difference between the two is brought out by the Lord's own statement in Matthew 7:21-23, wherein He is quoted as saying to miracle-workers who claimed to be doing their works in Jesus' name, 'depart from me, I never knew you'. The word 'know' here does not refer to intellectual knowledge, but to knowledge gained by union and identity with another spirit. The Lord is making clear to us that likeness of works does not mean

identity of spirit; that is accomplished by the Baptism alone.

Paul's remarkable statement in 1 Corinthians 15:10 draws our wondering attention to this man's simple testimony to the same truth.

His language concerning himself is almost exactly identical with the words that God uses concerning Himself in Exodus 3:14.

Identifying Himself to Moses, God says of Himself, 'I am that I am'; and Paul, using language almost exactly the same as God's, says of himself, 'I am what I am'. Only the change of one letter marks the difference between God and man, between infinity and finiteness; but by the comparison we learn that Paul was as conscious of eternal being is as God: God, because He is God, and Paul because God is God, and the grace of God which had made Paul what he was. This is the greatest function of the grace of God —

by it He makes a person conscious of being alive with the identical life of Jesus Christ.

This then is the prime factor of witness; it provides indestructible proof and irrefutable evidence that the testimony already given is absolutely true. Jesus of Nazareth made the original testimony; He claimed that He was the Son of God, and for that unswerving testimony to truth the Jews insisted that He must be crucified. When He stood before the Sanhedrin the high priest asked Him, 'Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' and Jesus said, 'I am, and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power ...' That settled it; so saying He sealed His doom. He died because He was the faithful and true Witness, the I AM, the Son of God. It is to give further evidence to this that all the true witnesses are raised up in every generation. But before each witness can be

living proof that Jesus Christ is Lord and God, he must be able to say of himself, 'I am a son of God'; more, he must also be able to demonstrate that fact or his evidence will not be believed. For this he will need to know the fulness of the Baptism — he must speak the words and do the works as well as live the life. At any time to any man Jesus Christ should be able to say of every one of God's children, 'this is My witness; I produce this person; he is My undeniable evidence; he proves that I AM'. This is just what we see in the Acts of the Apostles. The early Church comprised such men and women. Each of them was such a personal witness to Jesus Christ that collectively they were the faithful, true and living witness that Jesus Christ is, and that He is God, and that His claims are genuine.

In order to be the true Church, the Church must be the revelation of Jesus Christ; the justification of His claims, the incarnation of His Spirit, the idealization of His desires, the expression of His mind, the perfection of His love, the glorification of His suffering, the manifestation of His presence, the demonstration of His ability, the realization of His hopes, the consummation of His being; and all this by identification with Himself. Such is the purpose and power of grace. It is recorded in Hebrews 2:9 and 10 that the Lord Jesus is the Leader of the file of many witness-sons He is bringing to glory. So far as we are able to tell, the next son that went to glory following the Lord Jesus was the martyr / witness Stephen. His death is not the first death to be recorded in the Acts of the Apostles following Calvary. Before him Ananias and Sapphira had gone

to their death, their hearts filled by satan; excised from the Vine because they bore no fruit; 'men gathered them up', carried them out and buried them. But Stephen, a man full of the Holy Ghost and faith, standing under trial with his face shining like an angel, speaks first of the glory of God that appeared to Abraham, and lastly of Jesus whom he saw in an open heaven, standing on the right hand of the throne of God, rising to meet him, greet him, welcome him home. In every possible way Stephen was a witness to Jesus Christ.

Of course, being a witness involves much more than having just sufficient life to enable us to live. Jesus Christ did more than just live. What He did and said was important also. His life was as virtuous when He was twenty as it was when at thirty He presented Himself to be baptized in Jordan,

and it was only because of this that the event took place as planned by His Father. He was conscious of this, and told John quite plainly that He had come to him to fulfil all righteousness — that is, so that both past and future righteousness should be fulfilled. Because of this He earned and received His Father's public commendation, and was anointed and sealed under His Father's loving approval, 'Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased'. Thirty years of living unto Father's good pleasure were followed by some three years of pouring out the blessing bestowed upon Him as a result of such well-pleasing. The power (Gk. 'dunamis' = ability) to live had been innate since His birth, hence His claim — I AM ... the LIFE. So when the authority (Gk. 'exousia') of Christhood came upon Him at Jordan, He naturally ministered in all power

and authority as a result. What years of outpouring they were; the whole country was reached and stirred and challenged by the witness of one single life.

Truly, as Isaiah 55:4 says, He was given for a witness, firstly to God and then to men; and so must we be. As the Children of Israel of old were Jehovah's witnesses (Isaiah 43:8-13), so are we now to be Jesus' witnesses. Jehovah claimed the entire nation of Israel as His witness to the fact that He is, and was, and ever shall be God. So does Jesus claim the Spirit-baptized ones as witnesses that He is, and was, and ever shall be God. It is sadly true that Israel failed in their witness, but whether they failed or succeeded made no difference — in their day they were still the infallible proof that God is. No less than they, and even though we too fail, which God forbid, the true Church of Jesus Christ is

the evidence He advances to the world in proof of His eternal being. We should not fail; there is no excuse.

The Church of Jesus Christ is so much more blessed, and has so many more advantages than Israel, that comparison between them must give way to contrast as the two peoples are viewed in the light of scripture. For which of the pictorial events called baptism through which Israel was led could do more than typify the mighty Baptism wherewith we are baptized? And what of Elisha, in whose experience both the watery and fiery 'baptism' and consequent enduement with power from on high combined? Did any of these thereby know identity with the person of Jesus Christ and inclusion in His body? No, not one; reference to Luke 9: 51-56 gives a clear insight into that fact. Reading these verses, we find that

James and John wanted to act like Elijah and call down fire from heaven to destroy the Christ-rejecting Samaritans, but the Lord summarily rebuked them: 'ye know not what spirit ye are of', He said. To do what they wanted to do would have been quite contrary to the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

As we have seen before, Elisha had found it quite possible and desirable to have two she-bears come out of a wood and maul a whole company of children, who suffered for no greater crime than that they cried, 'Go up thou baldhead'. The reason he found it so easy to will and to do such a thing is not hard to find. He was the direct spiritual lineal descendant of a man who called down fire from heaven to destroy people; he therefore found no difficulty in acting in that same spirit; it was the spirit of that age under that Covenant. Had he been baptized

into the body of Christ, he could not have done what he did; he was of the ascended Elijah's spirit, so he just continued Elijah's works and will; and upon the occasion of which Luke writes, so also were the apostles. Because they were not yet baptized in the Spirit, they were not of Jesus' Spirit, although they were Jesus' chosen apostles. They were functioning by Christ's anointing, but because as yet they were not of His Baptism and not therefore baptized into His body, they were not of His Spirit. To be of His Body and His Spirit, a man must be baptized with His Baptism.

Although the apostles had responded to the call of the Lord and were learning of the New Covenant, as yet its deepest secrets were not revealed to them; spiritually they still belonged to the Old. The Baptism in the Spirit entirely changed this, for by it they

were initiated into and integrated with the Spiritual Man, Christ Jesus. By this one and the same Baptism are we all, with them, baptized into One Body, in order that we may be united and unified into one Man. When we all alike live His life, that is, speak His words and do His works, and display His disposition and attitudes towards the needs of all men, the world will know and believe that the Father hath sent the Son. This then is the essential reason for which the Baptism in the Spirit was instituted; it is the only ground and hope that we shall ever be like Jesus, because it is the method chosen by God to accomplish this.

Baptism in water is not the One Baptism, but has a special relationship to it as an illustration, and has the function of a photograph or a print or a diagram inserted in the text of a book. Some books would be

as complete without such things as with them; their inclusion has interest value to either the author or the reader, but they are not vital to the proper understanding of the book, whilst others make a more vital contribution to the message which the author has to communicate and are included for that purpose. Nevertheless they are but illustrations, serving an end, deemed advisable or necessary by the author for a clearer understanding of the whole, but these must not be mistaken for the main thing. They do but serve to focus the mind more readily upon some important details as the message proper is being propounded.

Such then is water baptism. It is an illustration to the onlooker, and more so to the participator and the demonstrator. By striking words in Mark 16:16, it is enjoined by Jesus upon every one that believeth; it is

commanded by Peter in Acts 10:48, and practised by the entire church. Paul expounded its true significance in Romans 6, and placed it in its proper perspective in I Corinthians 1:14-17. Philosophy, sophistry and sentiment may invest it with meanings and significance not plainly stated in the scriptures, and valuable only to those who practise ritual baptism according to their religious system. These all may be disregarded without loss.

The Lord Jesus Himself doubtless gave to water baptism its chief virtue when He said to John Baptist, 'Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness'. The act must be included in the sum total of perfection which earned high commendation from His Father — '... in thee I am well pleased'. To Him John's baptism was obviously not the One Baptism,

else He would not have instituted another. The Jordan episode was an illustration of the true Baptism to which He was moving all the time as the goal, the fixed necessity for Him. He gave full expression to it later, 'I have a baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened till it be accomplished', which word, in order to be properly understood, must be read in conjunction with His cry in John 12:23-28, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit ... for this cause came I unto this hour'. Jesus was 'alone' and 'straitened', and unless He had fallen into the ground and died — been baptized with that Baptism of which He spoke — He would have remained 'straitened' and 'alone' for ever. Calvary and the subsequent events up until Pentecost

held for Jesus a threefold meaning of fulfilment not normally recognized:

1. In relationship to Moses and the Red Sea; it was the type of His exodus which He accomplished at Jerusalem, Luke 9:31.

2. In relationship to Joshua and Jordan; it was the occasion of His entrance into His glory — 'His inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away', Luke 24:26, John 17:5, 1 Peter 1:4.

3. In relationship to Elisha and Jordan; it was the period of His receiving 'from the Father the promise of the Spirit' and the shedding forth of 'this which ye now see and hear', Acts 2:33.

Jesus' Baptism therefore supersedes and substitutes John's baptism.

No-one is baptized with John's baptism now; it ceased officially on the day he was arrested and put in prison. He had some

disciples who sought to continue it, but Paul adequately dealt with the error at Ephesus. To invest water baptism with the title 'John's baptism' is to confess to total misunderstanding and misinterpretation of scripture. For those who have eyes to see it, Jesus' baptism by John invested John's baptism with an entirely new meaning. For those who will receive it, it typified the fulfilment of the word in Micah 7:19, 'thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea', so before stepping into Jordan to fulfil all righteousness, the Lord was nominated 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world'. Therefore, leaving Jordan, the Lord terminated John's ministry, for it was fulfilled. Its purpose was to make Jesus manifest to Israel as the Baptizer in the Spirit. So the next thing we find is that Jesus is baptizing and that all the people are going

to Him and not to John; and gradually John, with his important though inferior baptism, is eclipsed and then eliminated from the scene, while Jesus hands over water baptism to His disciples (John 3:22-26,4:1-2), who now baptize in His name. John's baptism was thus ended.

It is totally impossible to baptize with John's baptism today, and it is quite untrue to suggest that one can do so. Moreover, it is patently obvious that no-one administers or receives such baptism, for where now does anyone confess their sins in and over the waters into which he or she is shortly to be plunged? It is invidious and totally misleading to seek to clarify the difference between present-day water baptism and Baptism in the Spirit by calling the former 'John's baptism'. All baptism in water today must be done in the name of Jesus, but lest

a misinterpretation be placed upon this plainly commanded practice, it must be understood that everything else that is done by the true minister of Jesus Christ must be done in that same name also; baptism in water is just part of the whole ministry, that is all. During His ministry on earth His disciples baptized people in water in His name, that is in His stead, for that was all they could then do. Until His death and resurrection He could not command them to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But following the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, they were to baptize in a name they never knew until then, for it had never been spoken before. This is one of the reasons why they were not allowed after Calvary to go and preach and baptize until they themselves were baptized in the Holy Ghost. Until Pentecost they could not do

other than baptize in the name of Jesus only. It could not be done in the name of John, or of the Father, or of the Holy Ghost; it could only be in the one name they knew — Jesus. Of course Jesus knew that baptism in water was not 'that' Baptism; almost certainly this is the reason why He handed over water baptism to His disciples. To have administered it Himself would have unavoidably confused men's minds, so He made a clear distinction between the greater and the lesser thing. He was going to baptize 'with the Holy Ghost and fire', but in order to do this He had Himself to be baptized first. Until this was accomplished He could not enlarge or expand beyond His straitened natural body into His spiritual Body of many human-being members. He would have been one lonely, lovely figure in the whole of history; the loveliest but the

loneliest. His baptism into death and all that it entailed for Him was the only way for Him and for us. What God wanted could not have been accomplished without it. We sometimes forget that as well as being a historical act, Calvary is an eternal spiritual fact — or at least we seem mostly to act and preach as though it was only the former.

The only way to enter death is to be baptized into it. The experience of dying plunges us into the state or condition of death; it is a baptism. Paul tells us this in Romans 6:4. And Jesus says quite plainly in Mark 10:38 and 39 that it is possible and for some quite certain that they shall be baptized with His Baptism. Therefore Paul again says in Romans 6:3, that to be baptized into Jesus Christ we must be baptized into His death. In the Spirit the death of Jesus is now, here, real and powerful as ever,

(paradoxically enough) living, existing in the Spirit. What He accomplished in death is forever and must be so, because the only way into the Body of Jesus Christ is by baptism into His death, of which baptism into water is a symbol. Beyond symbolizing the remission and washing away of sins (Acts 2:38 and 22:16), it now represents the open tomb of Jesus Christ, into which the believer is buried and through which he rises into newness of life, and total spiritual regeneration.

As Paul says in Romans 6:7, 'he that is dead is justified (Gk.) from sin'; There is no ground for believing that anyone else is.

Regeneration of a spirit is into life in the Body of Jesus Christ. This is perfectly consistent with the whole tenor of revealed truth. Surely all our regeneration-salvation consists less in what the Lord Jesus did for us

than in what He is in Himself, what He was made for us, and is become to us, and shares with us. Of course, He had to do the many and great things for us that no-one else could do, for only by these gracious deeds could we be saved. His substitutionary and vicarious works have probably never been fully told or enumerated; but He Himself is altogether superior to His works as the craftsman is to his craft, or the artist to his art, or the builder to his building, the creator to his creation, the saviour to his work of salvation, and the lover to his love.

Having in some measure examined the truth revealed in these scriptural illustrations of the One Baptism, we will seek to relate and combine into a whole the teaching elicited from them, that seeing God's provision, we may each boldly seek Him, that our own spiritual experience may be adjusted

thereto. There is not the slightest reason on God's side why any one of His children need come short of the glory of God, for He intends all His children to be included into His own conscious knowledge of eternal life. Being integrated into Christ's body, we must be partakers of His fulness.

Many believers today are only partially experiencing the Lord's blessings. They could and should be enjoying all the fulness of the blessing of the gospel, but because of restricted faith or incomplete ministry of the word to them, or limited believing, or perhaps sheer ignorance, the fulness of blessing is unknown to them. Without pressing the point beyond credibility or formalizing anything, such partial or restricted or limited or incomplete experience may be described as being but a quarter, or a half, or three quarters of the

whole truth as outlined in the foregoing pages. The majority know only what is typified by the story of the Flood; a comparative minority live in the enjoyment of the spiritual counterpart of the Passover and Red Sea crossing; fewer still have any experimental knowledge of the truth typified by the passage of Jordan under Joshua, while comparatively very few indeed have any real personal experience of what is pictured for us in the events that surround the translation of Elijah. Finally it must be sadly confessed that it is a very small minority who live in and enjoy that which is set forth by the whole. But it is folly indeed to be satisfied with one or two, or even three parts of the whole, when the complete salvation of God is proffered to us.

This salvation includes:

1. Safety in Christ from final and eternal

judgement, as typified by Noah and the ark.

2. Utter deliverance from the devil and his hosts in this present evil world, as illustrated by the passage of the Red Sea.

3. The destruction of the Old Man, Adam, unto complete possession of the soul in Christ-likeness, which is shown by the crossing of Jordan.

4. The enduement of power from on high in order that we may be witnesses unto Jesus Christ, of which the incident concerning Elijah and Elisha is the illustration.

In order of revelation we may see that salvation is from:

1. Death, hell and judgement for sin.

2. The world and the devil and all his hosts.

3. The flesh with all its works.

4. Self and all its impotence.

Being thus delivered as God intends us to be, we may then be true witnesses unto

another who, while on this earth, was not of this world; whose Father was God, so that He was God manifest in the flesh; a life-giving Spirit who overcame the devil and said, 'I can of mine own self do nothing'. He was the last Adam, the second man, in whose image many sons have since been begotten by God the Father.

Lamentably enough, because of great ignorance and much misunderstanding, many who otherwise would have realized and entered into the whole truth of this Baptism have been prevented from doing so. Instead they have tried to make the most of an uneasy rest in one or even two or three parts of the whole. The clear testimony of scripture is that God is wanting many sons just like Jesus, whose greatest work is not just to change wicked, hell-deserving sinners into inhabitants of heaven in order to

prevent their eternal destruction, but to make us new creatures, sons of God whilst here on earth. It is what Jesus Christ did for me as me, and that He lives for me as me, that is my chief joy and greatest glory. He in me, and I in Him in God, and God in Him in me; this is God's aim and stated desire, it is the terminal point in scripture revelation.

5- THERE IS ONE BAPTISM

It is widely believed and specifically stated by some that there are three baptisms, one in water and two in the Spirit. One of these is said to be a baptism into the body of Christ and the other the baptism which is an empowering for service. Still others think that there is a baptism of fire extra to the Baptism in the Spirit; while some speak of a baptism of love beyond the Baptism in the Spirit. Adding up the possibilities mentioned, it would seem that if all this is true, there may be five baptisms. Now if that is what God means by the phrase 'one baptism', it is not what He says, which is an alarming thing. If indeed it is true, He is acting completely out of character. Worse still, He is forcing His apostle to do the same. Since

such a possibility borders on blasphemy, we must reject it out of hand.

When writing to these Ephesians, of all people on the subject of baptism, Paul had for many reasons to be most meticulously careful. He had administered water baptism to the foundation members of the church there, but before that they had also been immersed in water by Apollos, a minister of the Old Covenant. It is therefore of major significance, as well as being singularly opportune, that it was to them he should speak of there being only one baptism. It is as though he is saying that he considers water baptism not to be worthy of mention, and by comparison neither is it; they knew exactly what he meant. When speaking of one baptism, Paul was not referring directly to either of the occasions when they were dipped in water. The first occasion, although

it had been administered and received in all sincerity, had been a total mistake. The second was only valid because by water baptism a visual enactment of the One Baptism is presented to the senses.

In these verses Paul is setting forth seven statements, which find place in this list solely by virtue of the fact that there is only one of each. Therefore to single out one of them and pluralize it is at least an arbitrary practice; especially is this so if it be allowed or argued that each of the other six must retain singularity. To do this sort of thing would be confusing and dishonest. The whole point of the matter is that none of the things or persons mentioned in this list would have been included in it had there been more than one of any of them. Each of them is not just one, but the only one. Had the possibility existed that there could have

been more than one of any of them, it would not have been included. Each thing or person mentioned in it is exclusively one. Upon reflection, we must surely conclude that God has compiled this list quite purposely. The implicit reason for including the phrase 'One Baptism' in this section is that we should plainly infer and wholeheartedly believe that there is *only One Baptism*. There it stands, an integral part of a sevenfold body of truth which stands or falls together. If we attempt to qualify one part of it, we must in all honesty qualify all.

The people to whom this statement was originally made were 'the saints which are at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus'. Quite noticeably he does not address it to the church at Ephesus, but to the saints there. That is exactly the same thing of

course, but his choice of phrase is not casual but careful and significant. The age-abiding message of the book is for 'the Church which is His body' (1:23); a company including 'the saints at Ephesus', but far greater than they. Paul writes for the whole Church in every place throughout all time, so he does not say anything to the Ephesians that could possibly be construed to have only local meaning. The man's utter consistency is not only to be found in the actual words he writes, but also in the very structure of the truth he imparts.

To these people he is entrusting revelation which is for the whole Church of Jesus Christ on earth, and only for that body. It is written exclusively for those who are included in and described as 'us'— verses 3, 4, 5, 6, etc.

There are those to whom this writing does not directly apply. Some of these may find

Paul's writings very instructive, but that is quite secondary to the point he is making. Nothing in the New Testament is primarily for 'the man in the street'; all is for the Church. Immediately then we are made aware of an 'us' and 'them' position, and since this has been deliberately created by God, it is vital that we accept it.

This position is brought out straightforwardly in 1 Corinthians 8.4-6, where the apostle puts it in the plainest language: 'we know that ... there is none other God but One. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him'. This is very clear, and supplies a clue to the proper

understanding of the fuller Ephesian statement.

The observation is not made by Paul, any more than it is cited here, in defence of the fact that there is only one God. It is obvious that the Corinthians already knew and accepted the fundamental truth he stated, for he says quite plainly, 'we know that there is none other God but one'. He is deliberately establishing the 'us and them' position though, and he can do no other because it has been distinctly and unavoidably created by God Himself.

Taking up this greatest of all Bible themes, we may use it as the key to our understanding of the whole matter.

Investigating the Book we find it records the names of many gods; to mention but a few, Tammuz, Baal, Remphan, Moloch, Dagon. In addition to these, the Lord Jesus Himself

more than once when referring to satan called him the prince of this world. Paul goes even further, calling him the god of this age. Now this god has personal being; he really exists, and is worshipped by some; to them he is god, but we know that neither he nor any of the above-mentioned is the one true God. The devil's claims mean nothing to us, and each of the others is entirely false. They are, or were at some time or other, worshipped as though they were that one and only true God, but that did not make them so. Satan was the only god among them who had actual personal being. All the others, being man-made, had no existence at all except in fantasy. Who then would entertain the thought or propagate the lie that there are five Gods?

Further to this, would anyone say that there are three or four Bodies, or Fathers, or

Callings, or Spirits, or Faiths, or Lords? If any would state that there is not more than one Father, we need only cite Jesus' statement 'ye are of your father the devil' or Paul's 'we have had fathers of our flesh', or 'not many fathers'. This allows that there are four fathers, three spiritual and one natural. So the point may be made that Paul is speaking of the Father as being one of many classes of father. However, what he is really doing is speaking to those who love the truth for the truth's sake, who have spiritual understanding and whose eyes have been opened. To them there is one God and Father. To some he may speak of many fathers, but here he is speaking to those whom he addresses with the exclusive pronoun 'us'. We do not allow that there is more than one Father. People who live in the heavenlies know no other.

Now this Corinthian passage only deals with and confirms one of the seven statements made to the Ephesians. We may find it greatly helpful therefore if we reverently adapt and rephrase its thought forms to suit our subject: 'though there be that are called baptisms ... on earth (as there be baptisms or ritual washings many), but to us there is but one baptism, the Regenerating, in which are all things and we by it'. As to 'us' there is only one God, so also to us there is but One Baptism. True, there are many experiences on earth called baptism, and we shall be examining some of them, but for the Church which is His Body there is only one that may be properly called 'the Baptism'. We acknowledge freely that there are things or beings called 'god'; we also know that there are experiences called 'baptism', but for the Church which is His body there are no more

baptisms than one, even as there are no more Spirits, or Lords, or Fathers than One. We who are the Church, being members of the 'us' company, acknowledge no plurality in any of the things listed in Ephesians 4. There may be plurality in many other things, but not in these. Indeed, we read in chapter 1 verse 3, that there are multiplicities of blessings in the heavenly places for us, but there are not multiplicities of any of the things mentioned in this list. These are described as 'the unity of the Spirit' which we have 'to keep' (Gk. 'watch', 'preserve'). God put them together, so we must watch that no one filches them from us; they are one whole, unique in scripture. Their importance cannot possibly be over-emphasized; there is no such list to be found anywhere else in the New Testament — it is not even repeated. It holds the place in the

New Testament which the ten commandments hold in the Old Testament. But it is far superior, for following its original inscription, first by God and then by Moses, the Decalogue finds occasional repetition, but not so this testimony; it is once given.

Those ten commandments, written on two tables of stone and given to Israel by God, were the foundation-stone of spiritual and social life under the Old Covenant. They were to be the basis of God's new civilization, and the Children of Israel were commanded to keep them as a whole; the Law was their life. Though written on two tablets of stone, the ten commandments were an acknowledged unity; so much so indeed, that they were called 'the Law', not 'the laws'. In a somewhat similar way these seven 'words' from God form a perfect

declaration of basic spiritual life for the Church. We too must keep our revelation as a whole, for in a far greater degree with us than with them, it literally is our eternal life. Paul calls it 'the Unity of the Spirit'; it is most precisely that.

James in his epistle sternly tells us that to offend in one point of the Law is to break the whole. If any man deliberately sinned he incurred God's wrath on four counts: (1) the particular thing he did or omitted to do broke one commandment; (2) by the offence he broke the wholeness of the commandments; (3) he therefore showed contempt for the Law; (4) he offended against the spirit of the Law. Such an attitude of heart displays incipient rebellion against God, which left unchecked leads on to anarchy. Contempt of the Law meant contempt of God; it warranted death. If this

be true in regard to that ancient list, how much more ought we to be concerned to keep the present unity of truth? Theirs is indeed a unity of truth; ours is the truth of the Unity. That is a body of truth, but this is the truth of the body. Significantly enough the list commences with this word: One Body — no wonder the writer to the Hebrews is so alarmingly pointed in the question he poses in chapter 2 verses 2 & 3. Manifestly then the glory of that former declaration is not to be compared with the glory of this latter. The first was a wonderful manifesto of spiritual and moral law for the governing of a nation, and the foundation of man's acceptance with God. This is the law governing the formation and form, and the function and fulness of the Body of Christ, and of man's union with God. The tenfold Law is sincere milk, this sevenfold law is

minced meat. That of old was outward, something superimposed upon a people not spiritually regenerate. It was given to be learned through the mind and practised in life; it was the set standard of behaviour for those who would live in God's kingdom of heaven on earth. This new is a statement of eternal life itself: it is not dependent on me to make me dependent upon it. It is. There is no talk of 'thou shalt', or 'thou shalt not' — it is. It is at once a presentation of the Unity of the Spirit who is God, and a doctrinal definition of the means of our incorporation into it. It is an expression of eternal life in unity, forming a body, an organism called the Church. The Unity of the Spirit is simply Life; that which is, is the Unity of the Spirit — God.

All this is very wonderful, but it is not the end. These seven may be written out thus:

'there is only one body, and only one Spirit, even as ye are called in only one hope of your calling, only one Lord, only one faith, only one baptism, only one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all'. To commence this statement we could have added the qualifying words, 'to us' — they are absolutely necessary. Paul can only be speaking 'to us', for he says that God is the Father of all to whom he is speaking. Without the limiting 'us', everybody would be included, and that would be Universalism of the most heretical order. Universalism finds no support from the Bible. It was written partly with the express purpose of denying and destroying that wrong notion.

More marvellous still than their uniqueness in all the realm of revealed spiritual truth, each of these is in itself a unity. As the Spirit

is a Unity, so is the hope of the calling and the body and the Lord Himself, and so on down through the entire list, including the One Baptism. In fact, lower down in this chapter Paul speaks of 'the unity of the faith' and doing so adds to faith the definite article, making it 'the faith'. This is most obviously true, for seeing that there is only one faith, it must of necessity be 'the faith'; it cannot be any other. Continuing the thought further, we arrive at the conviction that if this be true of faith, then it must also be true of all the others. How could it possibly be otherwise? Turning back to Ephesians 1:3, we discover this to be indeed the case with the last statement of the sevenfold Unity, 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'; here again the definite article is used; it had to be of course. All the rules of grammar and logic and truth and

common sense and of God Himself demand it; it could not be otherwise. Moreover mental honesty and spiritual law demand that it must be so with all seven; if there is one of each and only one, it must be *the* one. Applying the accumulation of the above facts to the statement with which we are currently engaged, we set forth this three-fold truth: (1) there is *only one* Baptism; (2) it is *the* Baptism; (3) baptism is a *unity*.

Proceeding yet further, we set forth the premise that if that 'One Baptism' be 'The Baptism', then it must of necessity be God's own Baptism. To be so exclusive it must be something God does, or gives, or experiences. Unless this were so, it could neither be fundamental nor universal to the experience of life eternal. If it was the baptism of some being other than God, it

would permit of as many repetitions and variations as there are other beings. To be absolutely exclusive it must be God's alone. This can very easily be demonstrated in the case of the 'one hope of your calling'. We shall not need to look further than the first chapter of the epistle to find the grounds for the demonstration. When writing there of the 'one hope', Paul speaks of it in a slightly different way, 'the hope of His calling'. We see then that the calling is both 'His' and 'yours', that is both God the Father's and ours:— His because He is the caller, ours because we are the called; but the hope is one in both hearts, His and ours.

When we first hear the call we are not generally aware of the full meaning of it; but it does bring with it hope. With the passage of time however, this state of hope takes one positive and clearly defined form in the

spirit — Christ-likeness. To the truly regenerate Spirit-filled man, the absorbing passion of the soul is to be like Jesus (4:20-24). Whether the hope be His or ours, whether in the heart of the caller or the called, Christ-likeness is the one and only hope of the calling. To make this possible the Lord has to baptize us into His body, for therein lies the only hope of achieving it. As is to be expected, God was the first one to have this hope in the beginning. He first conceived the thought and said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'. In order to share this one intention and hope with us, in fulness of time God became man. This same thing could be as fully established from scripture concerning each of the remaining 'unities', but we will confine ourselves to this one.

By grasping the principle of truth demonstrated here, we shall be able more easily to realize the fact that there is only One Baptism. This should not be difficult to any child of God, for in reality the Baptism is only ONE's Baptism, and that ONE is JESUS CHRIST, the SON OF GOD. The same thing is true of all these seven cardinal points mentioned by the apostle; the body is His; the Spirit is His; the hope of the calling is His; He is the Lord; His is the faith; His is the Baptism: His is the God and Father. All is His. It is all HIM. The united truth is just ONE, only one, THE ONE, and the glorious gospel of it all is that He shares all with us, so that what is His becomes ours too.

The Lord Jesus was unique, the singular Unity of God and man on the earth, and it is by this originating miracle that all else is one. Because He was God on the earth, that

same Baptism was man's baptism too, for He combined God and man, and in that union made all one. His great grace toward us lies in His intention to share with us all He accomplished by that union. In order to achieve this He baptizes us with His Baptism, so making the baptism which belonged to God alone our baptism. No-one who is united with Him in the Baptism should find difficulty in understanding the meaning of a phrase like 'the unity of the One Baptism'.

Now it may appear, upon reading a passage in the letter to the Hebrews, that the conclusions drawn above are incorrect and that in fact there are more baptisms than one. In chapter 6 verse 2, we read of 'the doctrine of baptisms'. This would seem to intimate very clearly that there must be more than one baptism. But the apparent disparity disappears as soon as we discover

that the word baptisms should really be 'washings'. The word 'Baptism' is an entirely New Testament word; it is not to be found anywhere in the Old Testament.

Nevertheless the Old Testament writers speak of a variety of practices ordained of God to be incorporated into their system of worship as ceremonial washings; it is to these that the writer refers in Hebrews 9:10, when he actually uses the word 'washings'. Beside this occasion, the particular form of the word translated in chapter 6 as 'baptisms' occurs twice more in the New Testament. Each of these references is to be found in Mark chapter 7, where he uses it once himself and once when reporting the Lord Jesus verbatim.

However, it is neither the tradition of baptisms nor the practice of baptism to which the writer to the Hebrews is drawing

our attention here. We are being pointed to the doctrine (singular) of baptisms. There was only one official doctrine running through the whole system of baptisms, namely entire sanctification — complete cleansing and separation from all sin, with a view to total acceptance by God. It is upon this that he is wanting us to dwell, and not upon Jewish malpractice of baptism.

At the time of writing the Ephesian epistle Paul had for many years been seeing the wholeness and oneness of things spiritual. For over a quarter of a century he had been the prisoner of the Lord, captured and captivated and shut up in Him. In this relationship the apostle had learned the truth that now he was so desirous to commit to writing for all to read. He saw and felt the truth exactly as the Lord Jesus Christ felt and saw it on His way to the cross, 'that they all

may be one as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ... one, I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one'.

From this inner knowledge of God Paul speaks, exhorting his readers to 'keep the unity of the Spirit'. He sees that however or by whatever person truth is expressed, it is invariably the same, and it is always one. He had been consciously living in this unity for such a long time that, as may be expected, he had come to realize what it was: God Himself. God is (a) glorious Unity of Spirit; three blessed persons in one eternal Spirit-Being. Therefore, all He does and says with intention to impart or establish something of an everlasting nature, must be a creation by or a projection of or a demonstration from Himself. It is not surprising then that the

apostle should speak so emphatically about the unity he knew so well.

Paul was a master of words, yet as he outlined the doctrine of unity which men must keep, he was reduced to almost cryptic language. The whole passage from chapter 4:3-6 could be rewritten thus: 'giving all diligence to keep (in the sense of preserve) the Unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all'. As a simple, straightforward, comprehensive outline of truth it has no equal and could not be bettered. It commends and endears itself to our hearts as the word of the Lord, for in its sevenfold unity it breathes the simple perfection of God. It is the doctrinal basis of

the Church, which is itself another unity. God is a unity of three persons in one Being; the Church is a unity of many members in one body; this doctrinal basis of the Church is a unity of seven statements in one manifesto.

It is noticeable that between this statement and the revelation of the Church given lower down in the chapter, Paul makes reference to apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Therefore it may not be very far wrong to assume that what is here presented is nothing other than 'the Apostles' Doctrine'. Perhaps after all it may be the original 'Apostles' Creed'. It would be typical of this responsible man that he should supply us with the doctrine which all the apostles taught by common inspiration and agreement. These surely cannot be just Paul's exclusive teachings (see Galatians

1:12, 18 & 2:1, 2, 7). If this is true, it was in this identical doctrine that the Church continued in fellowship from its natal day of Pentecost onward. Little wonder if this be so, that the Lord added to it daily such as were being saved. Since no manifesto similar or comparable to this is to be found anywhere else in scripture, we may be sure that no other is needed. Had it been necessary, it would have been given, for some such concise, bedrock credal statement as this is absolutely vital to the Church in the world. Its perfection may best be described by borrowing and adapting a phrase from James — 'it is perfect and entire, wanting nothing'.

Manifestly all else of Church doctrine is the development of the truth so clearly presented and firmly established here. Much more teaching is to be found in this and

other letters that flowed from the same inspired pen, but this is basic to all, forever grounding the whole firmly in God.

Obviously this is why it is given to us, for in these seven we find that each member of the Godhead is mentioned, working together with one another unto the end in view, namely the Church, its distinctiveness and calling in this age.

Seeing that Paul mentions baptism as one of the seven fundamentals of the unity of the doctrine of the Church, it is of vital importance that we should understand its place and meaning in both scripture and life. To do this we must first take note that all these seven are spiritual — that is that they are entirely of and in the Spirit. They are truly a Unity of Spirit, for they require no other medium than Spirit for their being; they have existence only in that realm.

Indeed, because they concern the divine Being and human beings, they cannot exist in any other realm than Spirit. We must therefore understand that, in common with the other six things mentioned, baptism is of and in Spirit. This 'One Baptism' is wholly spiritual, and that well-known, strong, definitive, scriptural phrase, 'this is that' could most certainly be used about it.

Having established that the Holy Ghost emphatically says that there is only one baptism, it may reasonably be asked why many speak of two or three or more baptisms. There are two main reasons for this sad mistake:

1. Preaching the Bible without differentiating between the Church and other groups mentioned therein (although in some measure some of these obviously typify the Church).

2. Failure to distinguish between one's own experience and plainly stated truth.

We must be at pains to ensure that our personal experience and the scriptures as they apply to us are in accord, but while doing this, a preacher must avoid making the common mistake of trying to fit scripture into his experience, as though what has happened to him is the standard experience set by God for everybody. In no sense or degree may we seek vindication of our position; we must seek validity, authenticity; these must be our watchwords. The Bible has been given to us for many reasons, and perhaps not the least important is that we should read it and honestly adjust our thinking to it. The resultant mental renewal arising from this exercise must lead on to real transformation of life followed by

fearless reformation of doctrine wherever necessary.

It is interesting to note that baptism is not here grammatically pointed out as *the* baptism, nor is it grammatically emphasized in that way anywhere else in scripture. In every place it is spoken of without the article, and it is a rule in Greek grammar that the absence of the article denotes character; but perhaps more remarkable still is the fact that the definite article is absent throughout the whole of this section. More amazingly, even God Himself is not pointed out in this way. One might think that He ought to be referred to as *the* God, but no; yet no-one would for a moment think that Paul intended us to believe that he was not speaking of the one and only true God. Again, the body is not pointed out as 'The Body' as opposed to 'a

body'; but no-one taught of God has any doubt that when Paul spoke of one body he meant The Body; in fact, lower down in the chapter that is exactly how he does refer to it. This being so, it cannot be doubted that he intends the same thing to be understood concerning each of the seven.

The reason for the absence of the article here is that Paul is pointing out the Unity of the Spirit rather than the importance of each very important part. Each phrase of this sevenfold doctrinal statement is characteristically and naturally an integral part of one whole statement. He is drawing our attention to something, namely this: the very absence of the article strengthens the truth that each is an indispensable part of the characteristic Unity of the Spirit. The writer insists upon it; the statement is one interdependent whole. Each of the truths

specified by each phrase is important and singular in its own sphere and meaning, therefore it has its own indispensable position in the doctrine of Unity; all are necessary to each and each is entirely dependent upon all. Therefore grammatically, purposely and necessarily these seven lose their own pointed distinctiveness in order to gain greater importance. Each contributes to the one whole; they all combine to make the aggregate greater than the particular, and so together present the full truth.

This is no novel idea — it originates with God, for He Himself is like this. Each member of our ever-blessed triune God is distinctively and fully God in His own right, yet each combines with and subjects Himself to the others in one united will. Again, in keeping with the truth God is, each member,

though exactly what the other two are in nature and substance, has a distinctive personality and function of His own, and is the only one there is. We see then something of the reason for the absence of the definite article from these verses. It is perfectly consistent with God and with the rest of scripture.

Looking at these verses as a whole, we can see God's way of achieving that grand union between man and Himself in the Spirit, namely the one true Church which in the dispensation of the fulness of times shall be revealed before all. The truth is hidden in these few statements as treasure in a field, yet it lies quite open for all to seek and find. God has done it this way, that being discovered it may be understood and enjoyed in all its glorious simplicity; it is a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

We see first of all that in the construction of the sevenfold statement the one Lord is placed centrally (i.e. fourthly) and worshipfully confess Him to be the pivotal Person around Whom all else is grouped. By Him and for Him everything consists. That understood, we proceed to the knowledge that in order to be our God and Father, even as He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God gave the Lord Jesus to be our one Lord. Because Jesus is the one Lord of the Church, He baptizes us into Himself in one Spirit, and doing so integrates us into one Body. This one Baptism is the true and only baptism / inauguration in the Spirit, otherwise called regeneration. At that moment the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ begets us and thereby becomes the one God and Father of all so baptized. By this means He is above all and through all

and in all His children, for they all become one Body of people, over which Christ Jesus is both Lord and Head. This body, formed by the Lord, only exists in the Spirit, and does so in order to be filled and inspirited by one Spirit, His own. His Spirit must be the spirit of His (own) Body. Being so privileged, each son must give his all to realize fully in himself the one hope of his calling; it is He. Each for himself and all together must arrive at full realization of themselves in Him, and of Himself in them.

There is *only one God and Father*, His; there is *only one Lord*, it is He; there is *only one faith*, His; there is *only one Body*, His; there is *only one Spirit* in that Body, His; there is *only one hope of our calling*, it is He; there is *only one Baptism*, His. He is all and all is His; He is the Lord who by that Baptism

brings us into all of Himself and everything that is His. All is one.

That all is not consciously realized at one moment in any individual's experience is no proof that they are not one, nor does it mean that it is not possible to enter into all at once. Realization so often depends upon understanding, which is the reason why Paul prayed with such passion, 'that God ... may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation ...' (Ephesians 1:17). Realization of revealed truth in living experience is conditioned by many factors, and varies in different persons and groups to great degree, affecting both prayer and preaching. The result of this is that all too often the partial at least obscures the whole, if it does not by neglect deliberately seek to destroy what it does not embrace.

Therefore let us understand this, that there is no eternal life outside of Christ. All other natures and forms and expressions of life, animate and inanimate, created by God outside of Himself, though from Him are other than Him. None of these have His personal life, and must remain outside Him forever unless a genuine means of including them into Himself be devised and ministered by Him to them. We have not been informed by God of any such future intention on His part, but we have set before us here His way for men now. The truth about it is that Jesus Christ came into this world and lived and died and rose again in order to baptize us into Himself, so that we poor humans may share His life.

6- TO FULFIL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS

We now return to the only man spoken of in the Bible with whom water baptism is particularly connected, that is John Baptist. He was directly sent to Israel by God with the ministry of the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Unlike many prophets who preceded him, he never performed any miracles. This is very surprising indeed, for he came in the spirit and power of Elijah, who in his day did some amazing things, and wrought some outstanding miracles; but not so John. Each of Israel's long line of God-given prophets had his own powerful, and often sign-attested ministry, but none save John could claim the distinction of being sent by God with the ministry of baptism. True to his distinctive calling, John it was who first

commanded repentance unto baptism as God's requirement of Israel at that time. His was a bold faith; he was a brave and outstanding man.

John's message was entirely new. It was not a paraphrase of the Mosaic law, nor was it couched in the same words, nor was it ministered in the tradition of any prophet before him. Jesus Himself said that a greater than John had not been born of woman, calling him a burning and a shining light. The truth of this testimony is amply borne out by the fact that for a season the remnant of Israel accepted his message and rejoiced in that light. The Baptist swiftly became a very popular and romantic figure among the people. He lived in the wilderness, dressed in camel-skins, was remarkably frugal in his eating habits, used great directness of speech and fired the imagination of all who

flocked to hear him. They accepted the man, responded to his message and ministry, and were baptized of him in water.

But John's baptism was not that 'One Baptism' and he knew it. His insistent message was that he was merely preparing the way for One mightier than he, who was coming to administer a greater baptism. John administered baptism in the ordinary element of water, because it was entirely suited to his ministry. But John had been told by God that the prime reason for his baptism and service was to present Christ and His Baptism to the nation. Therefore his primary task was to relate all he said and preached to the baptism he administered. This he faithfully did, even though when baptizing Christ he did it under protest. The introduction of his Superior to the nation by baptism was a most spectacular

event. He had been specially instructed of God about Jesus on one particular point: 'Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost'. John had already announced Jesus as 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world', but apparently he had no direct commandment from God to announce that fact. Presumably it came out in the course of his prophetic ministry, (or was it a word of knowledge?) and it was true. But he was definitely briefed by Him that sent him to say of Jesus Christ, 'this is He which baptizeth in the Holy Ghost', so he said it. John's ministry was admirably suited to foreshadow Jesus' ministry, for what better way to introduce and symbolize Baptism in Spirit than by this water baptism? Under John's ministry, baptism became the focal

point in a man's experience; indisputably he made it obligatory to the salvation he preached. It was an entirely new move by God. Without doubt, if the prophet was to be believed, forgiveness was made dependent upon baptism. Not that the water had any power to wash away sins. Physical elements used in religious rites are always only symbolic. Then, as now, water had no innate properties or virtue to deal with the sins of mansoul. Water baptism was a foreshadowing rite enforced on the people through John by God simply because He chose to do it that way.

The virtue of water baptism to those men of the Old Covenant lay in the obedience of faith in a man's heart, which caused him to obey the command of God as proof that he believed the word preached to him. But by this ministry of baptism, God, by John, was

seeking to shift the whole trend and emphasis of spiritual truth away from traditional religion. Judaism was bereft of power: since the captivity and dispersion of Israel, and the destruction of the Temple with its original furniture, there had been no value at all in the Jews' religion. There was no Ark, with its Mercy Seat and tables of Covenant, in Jerusalem. All ritual blood-offering and sacrifices after the Levitical order was useless for redemption and atonement — by it there was no forgiveness. What was enacted in daily, weekly and yearly ritual was entirely without saving strength. Beside this, centuries had passed since Malachi had added the final contribution to Israel's sacred canon; everything had gone dead. Then John appeared, sent from God with a

revolutionary message and insisting upon a new ordinance. It was epochal.

The nation that had waited so long for the Messiah thought this must be He, for prior to this neither patriarch, prophet nor king had ever preached and practised these things. John's ministry was not traditional, for Moses had not commanded anything even remotely like this. Then was it additional? For it was certainly extra-Mosaic. They soon discovered that it was neither; it was utterly different. As an instance of this, when they responded to John's ministry, surprisingly enough he did not send his converts hastening from baptism to the Temple to offer sacrifice for their sins. Instead he taught them that to be baptized for remission of sins was enough. They also learned that John's ministry was only temporary and his baptism introductory.

Listening to him further, it became obvious that all he did was unto a greater end. He said plainly that he and his baptism were only valuable to them as both he and it foreshadowed another and greater Person and Baptism. They must understand two things: (1) forgiveness was only being granted, and the rite enacted, because God was sending His Lamb into the world to take away sins, and (2) baptism was only being ministered to them as a kind of earnest of the fact that the Son of God would baptize them in the Holy Ghost and Fire. John's baptism was certainly not traditional, nor was it merely additional; it was transitional. His dynamic ministry was sent by God to the remnant of Israel, that by it a greater, more dynamic ministry should be introduced and applied to them, and by them given to the world.

Although perhaps few people of his generation had eyes to see it, the first glimmerings of a fuller truth began to flicker and shine in the darkness of the gross ignorance which enveloped them. John did not know, and so could not teach, any of the doctrine that we now associate with water baptism, but he was absolutely adamant about its administration. The complete revelation concerning baptism was held in abeyance in the person of the Lord Jesus, to be later defined in all its glory by Paul. Even Jesus could not make it fully known, for the typical value of water baptism lies in its representation of what He accomplished by the Cross. Most of the actual value of the One Baptism is only effective in us at, and following upon, our individual Pentecost. To the discerning eye John's baptism, though meaning much, could have implied more

than he plainly stated because the place and means he chose for his ministration was the river Jordan. Whether or not John recognized the full significance of his actions we do not know, but his ministry illustrated the wonderful promise God had made through the prophet Micah that He would 'cast all their sins into the depths of the sea'. Jordan rises high in the mountainous regions of Lebanon and flows southward on its tortuous course to the Dead Sea; it then formed the eastern border of Israel. John's converts joined him in the river, and confessing their sins were immersed by him in its flowing waters. The baptism was a token of God's faithfulness; it was a pictorial demonstration of the immediacy with which God acted to forgive and cleanse sins out of their souls. His mercy and grace washed them from the soul swifter than Jordan's

flowing current, to be buried forever in the sea of death.

That was the first great meaning of the rite, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Yet more than this was revealed by it also. Pondering the deep significance of this baptism against the background of Israel's history, we may reach the conclusion that the Lord was seeking to jolt the people wide awake as to their true identity. They were the nation God redeemed from Egypt by the hand of Moses, and afterwards brought over this very Jordan into the land of their promised inheritance by the hand of Joshua. He took over leadership from Moses after forty years of wandering in the wilderness, and set the nation heading for Canaan across this same river into their possessions. Now, before the eyes of the people, as though taking the place of Joshua, John stands

uncompromisingly firm in the midst of this same Jordan talking about the kingdom of heaven being at hand. As has been said, the place he chose to announce the fact has a most significant name — Bethabara, 'the place of passage or crossing'.

Somewhere in Jordan Joshua had built a cairn of twelve stones; it marked the exact spot where he stood with the Ark of God on dry land. It is hardly likely that John's feet stood firm in the identical spot where originally the Ark waited in Jordan, but there was no mistaking John's meaning. He bore no Ark and built no cairn, but commanded all to go to him in the river, and continued baptizing there until one day Jesus came. It was as if by this John was saying to the nation, 'Behold your Joshua, this is He; every one of you must come back to the beginning. God is giving you an opportunity

to make a fresh start. As it was with your fathers, so also must it be with you; there is no other way, it is from here that you must enter your Promised Land'. It is a very striking parallel. Just as of old they had to 'pass through the waters' into Canaan, so in John's day the remnant of the Children of Israel must come up out of Jordan into their inheritance.

Shortly the land was going to flow with the real milk and honey — Jesus was the sincere milk of the word and the sweetest person that ever lived. Although they did not know it, the time was at hand; God was in process of fulfilling His promise to them.

In John's gospel, chapter 10 verses 39-41, we read that later in His ministry Jesus again resorted to Bethabara 'where John at first baptized.' He did so in order to re-emphasize the purpose of His former visit there, though

at this time there was no John, no baptism, no voice or dove or anointing. It was a critically important time for Him; the miracles He had done as a testimony to His Christhood were under hostile examination. Worse still, He was being hounded to death by the authorities. But his retirement to Jordan was not a defeat; He was actually about to work His greatest miracle before men, so He carefully prepared the background. He intended to prove as conclusively and reasonably as reasonable men ought to demand, that He was indeed the Son of God. Short of His own death and resurrection, it was to be the greatest sign that could possibly be shown to men, and it was carefully arranged so that He should declare more fully who He was. Therefore, He was about to do two things: make the greatest claim He had ever made among

men — 'I am the Resurrection and the Life' and raise Lazarus from the dead as the sign to prove it: so back He goes to Jordan to the 'place of passage' where John baptized Him. From there He set out again upon the greatest mission of His life. As though He had just died and been buried and had risen again from the dead, He went forth to perform His greatest miracle on earth that side of Calvary. Straight from Bethabara Jesus went to the home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus at Bethany to demonstrate that He is the Resurrection and the Life. Amen! It is Jesus who invests Jordan with its greatest meaning. As though fresh from His own baptism He raised Lazarus from his rock cavern. Can anyone or anything withstand Him, or anything be plainer to the honest heart? He is thus giving baptism its proper

meaning and truest setting; death, resurrection and life, or new birth.

Although at the time none but the Lord Jesus could see the whole strategy of God, John's ministry in relation thereto was to enable people to discover who they themselves were and who Jesus was. This done, John must gradually retire from the scene. On the other hand, Jesus on His part, having commenced to reform and adapt the nature and purpose of baptism, went on to complete the plan. That is why, even before He was baptized, Jesus firmly established the fact that all righteousness must be fulfilled. Whatever John Baptist understood by these words of the Lord when He insisted upon baptism we do not know, but God had to be just even in this. If it was righteous that upon repentance men should be immediately forgiven, then it must be shown

how and why. At Jordan men confessed their sins and were forgiven, so into the place 'where sin abounded' stepped God's sinless Son, God's Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world. This was a kind of prophetic identification; Jesus was identifying Himself with all those who, in humble confession, had previously stood there. God used water to introduce baptism as His new method and to manifest the Lamb by whom He would accomplish the true Baptism in Spirit. He was also showing that He would remove the already discounted sacrificial system and replace it finally with the new Baptism of which this was a picture. He was preparing them for the revelation of the 'One Baptism' which was to be administered in the future by Jesus Christ in the Spirit of God.

Hundreds of years earlier God had said through Jeremiah (31:31) that He would

make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. From that moment His attitude towards the Mosaic covenant was public knowledge. God made that statement, He had fixed His will and given a verdict; He made the first covenant old. Predictably, from that moment it began to wax old in His eyes, and by the time John stood in Jordan it was ready to vanish away. This is why God sent John as a forerunner to Jesus.

By his ministry John accomplished four very important things in relationship to that old covenant he represented:

1. He served on the nation God's final notice of His impending official break with the things received by tradition from their fathers.
2. He pictorially displayed to them the exact moment and means by which God was going

to do so; hence his revolutionary new message and ministry.

3. He presented the Person who was going to do it.

4. He revealed both an eternal principle and a divine order. The plan of God for winding up the age and the commencement of the new age was death, resurrection and the descent of the Spirit.

Everything God does is according to unchanging principles and eternal order. From that time forward Jesus gradually began the prearranged take-over from John. Commencing His ministry with the same message and baptism as His forerunner, He thereby ratified them, and before long superseded both. Bringing a far greater message and ministry than John's, He removed the lesser gospel of John Baptist and established His own as the Gospel for

this age. In process of this His light speedily eclipsed that which had shone in Jordan; His works and preaching evoked from men such remarks as 'we never saw it on this wise' and 'never man spoke as this man'; so it was throughout His life, until by death and resurrection He wrought the one new, true Baptism. At the same time He completed the phasing out of the Old Covenant in preparation for the New to begin. His actual Baptism had taken the place of the lesser baptism that John had administered; substance had taken the place of shadow.

All this can best be summed up in the words of Hebrews 10:5-9. Jesus took away the first covenant in order to establish the new, second and eternal covenant. That is why, in common with His forerunner, the Lord did not direct men to practise the sacrificial system of the Mosaic law in order to obtain

forgiveness. What John had commenced in a figure, Jesus continued and completed in reality at Calvary. Now and again however, the Lord did tell men to re-visit the old; His purpose in doing so was clearly that of two-fold testimony only: firstly to testify of Himself to the people involved in it, and secondly to testify to the divine origins of the Mosaic ritual.

Occasionally the Lord sent men to show themselves to the priests, but never once did He direct men to its sacerdotal rites in order to obtain forgiveness or cleansing. He sent the lepers to 'offer for their cleansing', but not to make a sacrifice in order to obtain it; they offered the ritual gift because they had been cleansed already. By this means the priests learned that a greater than Annas or Caiaphas was among them and a greater than Aaron also. The lepers were already

cleansed, but Jesus was teaching them that until the Old had vanished away entirely it must be honoured, even though in a man's individual experience its function was fulfilled.

Bearing all this in mind, perhaps one of the most remarkable features of the four Gospels is their unanimous witness about the public testimony of John Baptist. With one voice they testify that he said Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire. More noticeably still perhaps, John made no direct reference at all to the Lord's redemptive work. Only once did he connect Jesus with sacrifice, saying 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world', John 1:29. More surprisingly than ever, three of the gospel writers do not even mention this last fact at all. Significantly enough, having said it, the apostle John goes

on immediately to record John Baptist's words that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost; that apparently was the reason why He bore away the sin. Obviously all the writers thought that if this was not the greatest reason for the Baptist's ministry, it was certainly the culminating point of it. Their unanimous testimony is as unmistakable as it is undeniable, they emphasize it as the terminal point and climacteric utterance of his ministry. If their evidence is to be believed this is the most important point.

Now we know that the Holy Ghost was given the responsibility to inspire and oversee the authorship of the Gospels: His intention was to draw attention to the Lord Jesus and not to Himself. He has come and ever works to glorify His predecessor on the earth. Yet *He* inspired each of the four writers of

the Gospels to give this prominence to John's declarations about the Baptism in the Holy Ghost: Why? The simple fact emerges that the Baptism must be very important, for the purpose of the faithful Holy Ghost is to place emphasis exactly where it is needed.

The whole period covered by the earthly ministries of John Baptist and Jesus Christ was sandwiched between two baptisms.

During the whole of that time God was moving to a new position in His saving purposes among men. It commenced with water baptism by John and ended with Spirit Baptism by Jesus: even so, neither of these is that 'One Baptism' spoken of in Ephesians 4. Each has a definite relationship to it though, and as an elementary illustration John's baptism introduced men and women into the truth of it. On the day of Pentecost, by being baptized in Spirit, men and women

were baptized with Christ's personal baptism, and introduced to the ages of the ages of eternal life in Him.

Reading the opening chapters of each of the four Gospels, we discover that Mark and John virtually commence with the baptism of John, and Matthew and Luke with a genealogy of Jesus. The two latter give complementary accounts of His birth and associated events, and then also pass swiftly on to His baptism in water by John. Then according to his personal directive, each writes a Gospel of His life and work, and a full and detailed account of His trial and death and resurrection; three of them also speak of His ascension. Thus the way is left clear for the next book, the Acts of the Apostles, under the authorship and editorship of the Holy Ghost, to commence with the account of the birth of the Church.

Significantly and inevitably it begins with the story of a baptism — Jesus' not John's; the new era had come. On the day of Pentecost men were being baptized in Holy Spirit instead of water. It was an epochal occasion. The ascended, enthroned Lord Jesus Christ was bestowing upon men the privilege of Sonship. Pentecost was an initiating and inclusive, as well as an inaugural occasion. On that day men were being baptized with the One Baptism of the new order. The risen, glorified Lord Jesus could now do this in all righteousness. He had completely removed the old order and clearly established the new, because on the cross He had made the one and only eternal sacrifice for sin.

The Bible says that Jesus was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world; exactly when we are not told. Whether it happened following the beginning of sin in heaven, or

whether God did it beforehand in anticipation of that sin we do not know, but this information is certainly a revelation of the heart of God towards man. So when at last Jesus appeared and died on earth, it was all over. The sacrifice had already been made before the world was, and it only awaited the fulness of time to be offered on man's behalf on earth. After that happened, blood need never again be shed for sin, and about that God was entirely happy. Consequent upon that final act of total reconciliation, He could establish and bring to perfection His plan to regenerate mankind. It was because His method of effecting that regeneration was so entirely new that He introduced it first in parabolic form through John Baptist. Having done so, He retained water baptism as 'a visual aid', an outward picture of far

less importance than the great Baptism it so inadequately portrays.

Water baptism, even though it was only an outward institution in the physical realm, was real enough, and every time the prophet administered the rite he was insisting on the need for the more important baptism of which he repeatedly spoke. John, like the Holy Ghost who filled him, knew that his mission was to glorify Christ by baptizing Him in water. At first, recognizing the superiority of Christ's baptism, he refused to do so. He knew that the Christ was a baptizer too, and although he was a man full of the Holy Ghost, he knew and said that he himself needed to be baptized by Jesus in the Spirit. What he understood by that is difficult for us to know, but in heartfelt words he indicated most clearly how greatly superior to himself and his baptism he

regarded Jesus and His Baptism to be. Nevertheless, upon the Lord's insistence, John co-operated with Him to fulfil all righteousness, and so the lesser baptized the greater in water. Whereupon he immediately knew that he had done the right thing, for he saw the blessed Spirit, like a dove, descend from heaven to alight and remain upon his Lord in the sacred anointing of Messiahship, and his ministry was fulfilled.

Months after this, when the Lord had been ministering to men under the power of that anointing for a long while, and as He was nearing the cross, He made some mysterious references to another baptism. That He was not speaking of His past baptism at the hands of John is as obvious as language can make it. He was unquestionably speaking of a future event — 'I have a baptism to be

baptized with and how am I straitened until it be accomplished', He said. Many of those who followed Him must have been sorely puzzled by the remark. They had previously witnessed His baptism at the hands of John; they also knew by John's testimony that there was an experience called baptism connected with the Holy Ghost, and that Jesus would administer it. Indeed, it is almost certain that some of His disciples were following Him bearing this promise in mind and looking for its fulfilment. Now they heard Him speak of another baptism; and in such personal terms too, 'I have a baptism', He said; but He did not go on to say ... 'to administer'. Had He said that they could have understood Him, for was not that in essence the thing that John had said? But He said, 'to be baptized with'; it was another, a different baptism, and it was for Himself, but

He did not say who was going to be the Baptist. He seemed to make it so distinctly personal. They had been baptized in water; they also were expecting to be baptized in the Spirit, but they had not been included in this Baptism; His speech was exclusive. More than that, He said that He was 'straitened until it be accomplished'. Apparently for Him it was either unavoidable and inescapable, or else He was determined to undergo it, or both.

His anointing had obviously been such an enlargement to Him. How greatly He had been magnified from Jordan onwards. How then could He speak of being 'straitened' as though He were narrowed down, kept within bounds, shut up? If, following His baptism in Jordan, He was so magnified and enlarged that all men knew of Him, and yet He spoke of being 'straitened', whatever

would be the result of the next baptism? Could there be any limits to the results of such a baptism as that to which He now moved? He said that He was going to 'accomplish it'; strange words! But one thing was plain, this Baptism was not for the multitudes as was John's; it seemed to be for Him alone; His Baptism. Just His. One Man, it seemed, was going to accomplish One Baptism; how, no-one knew except Himself alone.

Upon the occasion when this subject was raised, the Lord asked two of the apostles He had chosen whether they were able to be baptized with this Baptism. They answered, 'we are able', and their hearts rejoiced. They had at the time been asking Him for privileges in His kingdom (in fact the highest positions it was possible for anybody to have) which were not His to give, and to

their sorrow He had to refuse them; but to compensate them for their disappointment He asked them the question quoted above. They did not know that by so doing He was granting them the greatest opportunity and highest possible privilege a mortal man can know — His own Baptism.

It was the most wonderful and yet the most terrible experience He ever knew or accomplished as a man; it was the crowning glory of His life. To this end He had been born and for this purpose He came into the world; it both fulfilled and consummated Him, eclipsing in splendour everything else He had ever done. By its sheer overwhelming brilliance and wealth of love, His Baptism, and what He accomplished therein and thereby, outshines all creation, all His works, and all His other miracles. In offering them this, He offered them the

opportunity of achieving the prize they sought and had requested of Him, for He Himself knew no way to His throne other than via His Baptism. He took them at their word; they were going to share His Baptism. What a Baptism it was and still is! Unlike the one administered at Jordan, it was not to be of a visible nature in water. Nor was this Baptism to be a baptism in blood, though His own blood was much in evidence when it happened. Neither was it a baptism in the suffering He endured then, great and inevitable as that was; all these atrocities and horrors, terrible as they were, were but introductory to it. Jesus' Baptism was to be accomplished by Him by death; so to death He went, grieving, sweating and dripping with blood. Hanging on a cross He bore sin and expiated it, overcoming all the hosts of darkness in motionless battle as He swept

majestically onward to the final act of baptism. He knew that neither His bloodshed nor His suffering would, of themselves, justify God in granting expiation for the past sins of mankind; there must be more than that — far, far more.

All the truths normally associated with the work of Christ on the cross could only be, or be effective unto salvation, as all was done with a view to the death of God's Son. His precious blood, even the blood of His cross, is only effective and redemptive because He died there. It was not the blood of the whipping-post, nor of His shameful crowning, that bought our redemption and purged our sins. All of it was the precious blood of the precious Lamb, and it flowed generously from the Redeemer, but it was the dying Lamb who was the redeeming Lamb, not just the suffering Lamb, nor yet

the bleeding Lamb; it had to be by the blood of His cross, sealed by His death.

In the aggregate of course all counts, for all was necessary as part of a great whole; His blood is most precious, every drop of it.

Wheresoever it was shed, in whatsoever capacity, or whoever it was that exacted it, all was foreknown and planned by God. It was precious at the whipping-post as it fell from His torn flesh there; it was also very precious — as it dripped from the cruel spikes of His crown in Herod's palace; but it is most precious of all on the cross, where Jesus died for us. It is only because He died that everything else He was and did and endured has any relevance for us today. The fact that He suffered and bled, necessary and indispensable and savage as all was, is only valid in the redemptive aggregate as it was the suffering and bleeding of His dying.

It was the sacrifice and offering and laying down of His life that saved us. The savaging of His body and the shedding of His blood and the suffering of His soul, though each contributed its special and necessary value to the whole as part of His expiatory work, could not of themselves, nor all together, have reached man.

All would have been in vain had He not died, for man is a dead spirit, existing in the body as a dead soul, totally uncomprehending and unimaginative of eternal life and utterly incapable of responding to it. So the Lord had to die, that by dying He might invade and enter the state of death where man was imprisoned. At the moment His physical body died by the expiry of its breath and the departure of His spirit, His Spiritual Life plunged into man's spiritual death.

Everything He endured previously led up to

this precise moment; for reasons far too numerous to mention He had to hang on the tree until all God's requirements were met. That done, He was ready to move unhindered unto His next and greatest task, the moment of triumphant death, the Baptism to which He had referred. By His death the Lord reached Man; at last He came to where he was, and to what He found him to be — Death. It required the act called Baptism in order for Him to accomplish it.

Gazing upon Calvary one could have witnessed a process of dying that could be counterparted among men in many and various ways, though happily for the most part less barbarous than His. But all physical death is not a process, as sudden accidents all too shockingly demonstrate to us. The sudden plunging from life into death is a

sharp, and to some a painfully terrifying reminder that death really is a baptism. It is an unceremonious immersion into a completely new realm or world of existence, from which there is no return to the former mode of life. Death is not generally thought of as a baptism, but nevertheless that is exactly what it is, and it was towards this that the Lord Jesus was moving and to this that He was referring in Luke 12 verse 50. His birth and earthly life, as well as His physical dying, were all a straitening unto this end. He was born, and lived and hanged upon a tree as a necessary preparation for and prelude to His Baptism. He voluntarily, and God His Father deliberately, and the Holy Ghost comprehensively engineered it; together the blessed Trinity had moved to the point in time when God could retrieve His loss.

Perhaps we ought to pause here and seek to distinguish some things that differ. When speaking of Christ's death it is possible so to use the term that the most important truth of it is lost through generalization. Yet failure to apprehend truth is liable to cause us to be at peril in our understanding where, says Paul, we ought to be men. For instance in the accepted sense of the word Christ did not 'die' on the cross, for it was quite impossible for Him to die in the manner that we apprehend death. Unlike ordinary men, if He had not voluntarily dismissed His Spirit, He could never have died. When the Lord did that He did so with the mighty shout of a conqueror, and strictly speaking, until He dismissed His Spirit from the cross He lived on it. Therefore Jesus accomplished our redemption and reconciliation while hanging still alive on the cross; it was by His living

blood, not by His dying blood that the ransom was paid. He never more truly and fully lived than when He was dying. He of all people had to be baptized into death, because He could not die as other men — it was quite impossible. Having borne sin and its penalty in His body on the tree, He arrived at the moment of full release unto which He had been straitened all His life. Plunging in spirit into the death wherein man was held prisoner, the Lord furthered His many conquests unto ultimate victory. Life entered death then. Until that moment He had been penetrating through the environs of man's death, but having done that the Lord stormed the stronghold of satan and reached His beloved Man.

Although so much that was wrought out in the flesh at Calvary was visible to the eye, it was a Spirit Baptism. It is ever the things

which the eye does not see, or the ear hear, or the mind understand that are the most vital things of all. It was what was wrought in the invisible world of Spirit that was most important. God is Spirit, so is satan, and so essentially is Man. Calvary was primarily to do with Spirit — God who is the Living Spirit and Man the dead spirit — a captive of satan who is the spirit of death. On the cross Jesus, the Living or Life-giving Spirit, overcame and thoroughly defeated satan, the death (or death-dealing) spirit, and consequently released the enslaved, dead spirit of Man. That is what the Baptism is all about. In the act of dismissing His Spirit He accomplished greater things than He did in the process of dying. It was the most glorious and intensely righteous thing He ever did, and is the deepest meaning behind the remark He made to John Baptist, 'Suffer

it to be so now for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness'. Water baptism was a righteous act to Jesus at that time because the Life-into-death Baptism towards which He was then moving is righteousness eternal in the Spirit.

More than at any other moment since the creation of the world those last moments on the cross reveal righteousness superb and love supreme. Voluntarily accepting fullest responsibility and obligation, without pressure, knowing that it was the correct and only thing to do, Jesus did it. That is the final act of Righteousness from which Regeneration springs. It was through the death of His physical body, whereby so many other righteous things were accomplished, that He did it. The Baptism was not accomplished in the body but out of it — as His Spirit went from His body. Whilst in the

flesh He could and did do so much, but in the moment and act of departure from it He accomplished more, much more, the most difficult thing of all.

Everything was in the realm of Spirit; even His blood was only valuable because of the spiritual life He lived in the flesh. So, because all is basically and virtually Spirit, it is in Spirit that the Baptism must take place. He was not a sinner, but became as the sinner; He was not sin, but was made sin; He was not death but was baptized into it in order that His death may be for us the only death there is. Therefore, His death is the new death, all the old forms and expressions of death being superseded by it. The death of sin for us was accomplished at Calvary. Death *to* sin for us took place also at Calvary. Spiritual Death is destroyed, so is Hell, so is satan (Hebrews 2:14), the spirit who had the

power of death. Physical death is now also destroyed — that is, rendered powerless, or annulled — and renamed sleep. Jesus was laughed to scorn when He spoke of death as sleep, but He was right. Luke tells us that Stephen 'fell asleep' and he was right also. Life cannot die, but its physical frame can sleep. For us there is but one death. As He was made sin for us, so was He made death for us, that He may be both Righteousness and Life to us. In every way our precious Lord and the things He did, and what He accomplished as events took place in His life is absolutely *all*. Even His glorious claim to be Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, assumes fresh lustre as we see it outworking in such a dreadful realm as this.

In the beginning satan had made Adam to be sin and death to the race, so it was perfectly in order that the last Adam should be made

sin and death to us by God. In all things He must have the preeminence, even in this. There was no other way but death for Jesus the Last Adam, for He had come to end the reign of sin and death. 'I am the Way', He said in the upper room, and within a few hours of making that statement He was baptized into death. There is no other means of access to death than baptism. Lucifer plunged himself into sin and death, thereby becoming satan; in turn by Adam he plunged the whole human race into sin and death also. Because of this, in His day the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, was made sin by God and plunged all living (that is, vitally righteous and holy) and loving into that death which is the result of sin. This is that wonderful, almighty and most mysterious experience which is only faintly pictured and

hinted to us in the practice of water baptism.

Seeing that water baptism is not that One Baptism, but only a dim picture of it, we must understand clearly at this point that identity in name because of parallel symbolic ideas is not necessarily an equation of power or experience. Water baptism is basically the projection of an idea from the spiritual to the natural, a suggestion of an invisible experience. Were it not an ordination of God, it could only be regarded as a substitute, an imitation, a grotesque caricature of the real, an empty mocking charade. It would only be a dumb miming of a dim idea not fully known, a cruel cynical deception, for of itself it has no value at all. Like so many other 'things' of old, it has no intrinsic worth of its own, and can, of itself, bestow no merit upon those who engage in

it, either as minister or recipient. If there is any spiritual danger attached to water baptism, it lies only in the superstition ingrained in the minds of men who religiously invest it with mystical, sinking almost to magical, powers never intended by God when He originally ordained it. Obviously then, if only for this reason, it could never be the one and only true Baptism.

7- INTO LIFE ETERNAL

Like the other six that combine with it to set forth the wondrous Unity of the Spirit, the One Baptism must be of an eternal nature and import. It must be incorruptible, impossible to secularize or profane, and quite beyond anyone's power to debase to a mere superstitious rite. In the end, a heart must be able to repose everlasting trust in something; there must be some things which cannot be shaken or removed. Praise God there are such things, and they provide everlasting security, and become sure ground on which to build our thinking because they remain indestructibly eternal. Therefore God ordained the Baptism as an eternal means; it is not a temporary measure. In itself though it is not a final end; the Baptism is always 'in', 'into', 'unto'. In its

administration there is an end in view, a point to reach and a position to be realized — Regeneration.

Further reflection makes clearer still why John's baptism, or any like it in the same element, could not possibly be the One Baptism. It is concerned with the reasoning that lay behind the questions in the minds of the priests and Levites who spoke to John. To them baptism was such a departure from tradition that whether or not it was right, to have any justification for existence at all it should only have been administered by Elijah or 'that Prophet', or 'the Christ', John 1:19-25. In the minds of these people the whole concept of baptism, whether it be administered by the forerunner of the Messiah or the Christ Himself, was only held to be valid in the context of the Messianic Kingdom. This is a most significant thing. The

Christ, apparently, was expected to do something comparable to baptism. Their scripture for instance spoke of outpourings of water upon thirsty souls and floods upon dry ground, and by this they understood that the writers were implying the Spirit, hence they were in danger of confusing John the Baptist with the Messiah.

Had they given deeper consideration to John's ministry, it would have been apparent that it could not have been the Messianic Baptism, for John's was not an outpouring, but an immersion. Perhaps confusion arose because water was used, but the scriptures remained clear; the Messiah would usher in His Kingdom by pouring out the Spirit.

Hence the confusion in their minds; John was immersing. Why? The significance of the method used should have settled the problem; John's baptism was as perfect a

means as could be desired of depicting death and resurrection. It did not typify the Baptism in the Spirit as revealed at Pentecost, but the baptism wherewith Jesus baptized Himself at Calvary in order to create the means of new birth.

Objections to the truth of baptismal regeneration as here set out are generally based upon John 20:22, where we read that Jesus breathed on the assembled disciples and said unto them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost'. This, so it is said, was the moment of regeneration for the disciples. This passage should be compared with Luke 24:33-42. It is not easy to tell just how many were there at that time or to exactly determine who of the 120 persons gathered together on the day of Pentecost was selected to receive this special favour. If it be that only apostles were present, then there were only ten.

There should have been eleven, but for some reason Thomas, being absent, missed the blessing; he lived for eight days in polite scepticism of both the resurrection and the result. However, it is widely believed that just ten apostles were there upon the occasion when the risen Lord breathed upon or into them the Holy Ghost.

If this be so, and this was the time of new birth for them, then from the scripture records we know that only this small proportion — a twelfth in fact — of the company gathered together on the day of Pentecost were already born again. The implication of this is that whatever had happened to the apostles, the larger number must have been born again by the Baptism in the Spirit. If this view is unacceptable, then they must have been born at some time subsequent to that experience, but that

is absurd. If it be that neither of these propositions is true, then when were they born? If they (and presumably Thomas also) were granted a similar kind of experience to the ten prior to Pentecost, the scriptures are strangely silent about it. Where in scripture is the slightest hint given that we all must have some experience equivalent to the ten in order to be born? No-one insists upon it. Yet who can doubt that the early Church expected all to be baptized in Spirit?

That the day of Pentecost was in fact the day of regeneration for the whole company, including the apostles, receives striking corroboration from the use of the Greek word 'pnoe' for 'wind' in Acts 2:2. Luke the physician, who also wrote the glorious account of the conception and birth of our Lord Jesus, is on familiar ground here — he is using a medical term. In his day doctors

and midwives used this word when speaking of birth; it is specifically used to describe the incoming breath of the newly-born babe.

Ancient medical journals, we are informed, also make use of this same word when describing the result of the action taken by a doctor or midwife to induce breathing at birth. Such action is still common among us, with the same results.

Further to the point, the writers of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament in 200 B.C. use this same Greek word 'pnoe' when translating Genesis 2:7. 'God.

..breathed into his nostrils the breath of life'. It is quite obvious that Luke, guided by the Spirit, used a word commonly understood by all to mean the beginning of life; all of which appears to be fairly conclusive evidence of what the original members of the Church believed. Perhaps the fact that Luke claims

in his Gospel only to write of 'things generally believed' among them, and since 'they' included the apostles with whom he travelled, we are on safe ground in making the claim. Whether breathed into a clay man formed in a garden, or into a flesh and blood baby formed in a womb, or into those one hundred and twenty, the initial breath of life means birth. Adam was formed and created a man, a babe is formed and born a child, the Church was formed and created and born on the day of Pentecost by the Baptism in the Spirit. By and in that experience each person received the gift of the Holy Ghost by inspiration of God and was made alive; until that moment they had no personal, spiritual existence or corporate form, save in the mind and will of God. They were baptized into the body of Christ in whom is life, and received the breath of the life of that body.

To those who thereby became the first members of the Church, that experience was baptismal regeneration. Since this is so, what did happen to the ten apostles on the Lord's great day of Resurrection?

For the answer to this question we need to go back into John 14. There the Lord is recorded as speaking to the eleven concerning the person and coming of the Holy Ghost; 'the Comforter' He calls Him. Not only so, but the Lord also fixes their attention upon the day of His coming, verse 20, 'at' (or 'in') that day. The Lord is very specific; He needed to be; so beyond dispute we must be able to fix 'that day'. It is quite a simple matter to do this, for the Lord said it was the day when, upon His request, the Father would give them the other Comforter to abide with them for ever. It could be thought, and certainly has been said by

some, that this is precisely what took place on Easter day.

Now if this be so, it must be agreed by all that this must be 'that day', but there is no proof of this. On the contrary it would appear most certain that the gift of the person of the Holy Ghost was not made to them at Easter, but on the day of Pentecost. This seems clear enough, both from Peter's words on the day of Pentecost to the Jews in the presence of the Church, and also his later statements to the apostles. Without controversy, Peter must be regarded as the chief witness of the Lord in this matter. He it was who made all the original statements about this baptism, and examination of them proves that he is absolutely consistent in his deposition. Much of what the Lord said in John 14 certainly did have a

fulfilment on Easter day though, as we shall see.

Speaking of that day, He said 'I will come to you', and He most certainly did that.

Another thing He said was, 'because I live ye shall live also', and if breathing on them accomplished that, then on Easter Day they undoubtedly lived because He did. However, there is not sufficient evidence to show that they lived; in fact, once again most of the evidence seems to prove exactly the opposite. Jesus said, 'at that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me and I in you', and that is precisely what they did not know upon that occasion. On the contrary He certainly was not in them and they in Him; He was outside them and they were outside Him; both they and He knew it and so does everyone else who reads the

scripture. Beside this, subsequent events proved it to them beyond measure:

1. He again appeared to them (without) eight days after.
2. 'He showed Himself again' to them (afar off from them and their boat) upon the shore of the Sea of Tiberias.
3. He entertained them to a meal and afterwards walked along the beach with Peter, followed by John.
4. 'He led them out as far as to Bethany'.
5. 'The eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them ... they saw Him ... Jesus came and spake unto them'.
6. After the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God.
7. Angels said to them, 'this same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven...'

This seems to be conclusive enough evidence that Easter day was not 'that day' of which the Lord spoke in the upper room, for manifestly during all these days He was not inside but outside them, and quite deliberately so. He was certainly not one with them and they with Him and with each other as He had prayed they should be; 'that day' of fulfilment did not arrive until 'the day of Pentecost had fully come'. When 'that day' came, all the Lord had said would happen to them did happen; especially those things He spoke in John 14:20. Beside this, we read in Acts 2:44, 'all that believed were together and had all things common', which is even more than the Lord had said. We see then that what happened to the apostles on Easter day was less than the Lord had said, but that what happened at Pentecost was more than He had said. This

good measure, pressed down and running over seems to be logical proof that the Lord's statements were truly fulfilled in them then. 'At that day' He had said, ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in Me and I in you', and sure enough when they were baptized in the Holy Ghost they immediately knew these things, and that His word was truth (Acts 2:32-36), but they did not know on Easter day. All they knew upon that occasion was that He was risen from the dead and was with them, speaking, showing them His hands and side, breathing on them, commissioning them for further service. Except for the nail-prints and special on-breathing, He had done such things before.

Having seen from scripture that what took place in the apostles' experience on Easter day was not regeneration, it ought to be

possible to come to some understanding of what did happen, for it is often far more easy to show what a thing is not, than to prove what it is. An attempt to show what did actually happen is therefore set out below.

If we allow the miraculous event to stand as it is, without trying to invest it with mystical power beyond what we plainly read, we shall do ourselves the greatest service in the matter. Doing this, we see at once that the Lord's action in breathing on them was all part of His plan to identify Himself to His fearful disciples. Up until that time they had thought Him to be only an apparition. They had not fully accepted that He was really alive, and had received reports of the resurrection as idle tales. So when He appeared, the Lord repeated the normal daily greeting, and then used special words

to them *which they alone had heard Him speak*. It was a simple enough plan; only they had heard Him say to His Father, 'As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world'. So seeking to reassure their hearts, He takes up the same words, and uses them in a slightly different form, 'as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you'. It was not the only reason why He used those words, but it must have been wonderfully comforting to their hearts.

Yet with sweeter intentions and something of grace and power beyond what they had ever known He went further still. Drawing even nearer, He dispelled their last lurking doubts and fears by breathing on them. That did it; His lovely warm breath (as John the recorder especially had felt it in the upper room when he laid his head on his breast),

chased away all their hesitations and questionings; their lingering doubts vanished. This was no deception, it was Jesus; it was no cold deceiving spirit, it was really HE. 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost', He said, 'whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained'. He came to establish His bona fides; they saw Him, heard His voice, felt His breath, saw His wounds, remembered His words, received His command. Quite clearly in this lies the reason why they needed the special impartation of the Holy Spirit; the commission makes clear the need for the ministration, and what an unique charge it was. No-one else had ever had such an awesome responsibility placed upon them before. The staggering fact was that from that moment, in a limited capacity, they

were to act as God on the earth. They had done this before in a much more limited way when they had preached and healed and cast out demons in Jesus' name, but never had they dealt in authoritative forgiveness of sins.

Upon an earlier occasion they had heard Jesus grant to a man absolution from his sins; it happened during the course of a miraculous healing. For this He was accused by His enemies of making blasphemous statements and being an imposter; 'who can forgive sins but God alone?' they said. Until Easter day He had never delegated that kind of authority to anyone; lesser things, yes, but never had He even suggested to them that they should, or could, forgive sins. This was entirely new. Never before had He allowed them to do anything more than prophets and sent-ones of the Old

Testament had done. Their fathers had acted with authority to speak and heal in their day, but had never been granted powers of absolution or retention. But now with this impartation, they were enabled and commissioned to deal with sins also; it was almost too incredible to take in. Every one in that room, including the Lord Himself, knew that this was quite impossible unless He gave them some most extraordinary gift or presence or power. There would have been no problem in the minds of the apostles as to why they needed this special in-breathing of the Holy Ghost; they knew exactly for what reason it was granted.

With the final exposure of the sham of degenerate Judaistic practices came the need for their replacement. Hearts in Israel, though confused by events, were crying out for reality. When Jesus died, God rent the

veil in the Temple from top to bottom; there was nothing there, 'Ichabod' was written over everything. There were no means on earth for men to have their sins forgiven; worse still there was no-one now to whom they could go, for Jesus was no longer in the world. Therefore God had to do something lest He leave Himself without witness. So by the on-breathing of the Holy Ghost, He committed to these men what, until then, had been the sole prerogative of God; the supreme authority and ability to forgive sins. It was a special dispensation; undoubtedly it was bestowed in anticipation of new birth and the life they would receive at Pentecost. Later they were to be given command to tarry till they were endued with power from on high; they had the commission, but not the life and power. They must not attempt to act in their authority until they should by

new birth become living witnesses unto Jesus Christ. It was a great commission, far exceeding anything that went before, but it no more required new birth for its reception than did the commission to work miracles which they had received years earlier. They still retained that and to it this was added. Then we may ask the question, 'why could it not all have been done together on the day of Pentecost?' An answer to that is, 'simply because the Lord did not wish the general state of regeneration to include this special authorization.' It belonged exclusively to the apostles of the Lamb, and the Lord did not intend it to be passed on to others in apostolic succession either.

There is perhaps also another acceptable reason to be found for this special bestowal of the Spirit before Pentecost. In Acts 1:1 and 2, we read that 'Jesus began both to do

and teach, until the day in which He was taken up'. For forty days following His resurrection He showed Himself alive to His apostles by many infallible proofs, speaking to them of the Kingdom of God; this he did 'by the Holy Ghost'. It was a very important time, and it was obviously for this that He needed to impart the Holy Ghost to them; the Spirit was to be the necessary link between them and their Lord. This is what He was doing when He breathed on them in the house that day. By this initial impartation by on-breathing, and the consequent ministration throughout the following period, the Lord graciously prepared them for the new era. On the day of ascension He finally left the earth to go home to His Father; knowing of this He instituted the means by which He could train them for the time to come when His visible presence

(may we say 'Parousia' Gk?) would no longer be with them. They needed to become used to the experience of Jesus speaking to them when not visibly present with them. What better method or what more timely moment, then, to introduce and authenticate to them the oral gifts?

Although all of them had already been given the gifts of healing and miracles, so far as we know none of those men had as yet received the gift of prophecy. Excepting one or two rare occasions, the oral gifts were unknown to the apostles before Calvary; the great prophets before them had spoken words of wisdom or knowledge or prophecy, but as far as we can trace only one of them had done so; they needed to move into a new realm, so He breathed on them the Holy Spirit.

Of course they had heard the marvellous utterances of the Lord, but He had always been visibly present with them at the time of utterance, so they had no difficulty in associating the words with the person.

However, because of His necessary absence, and according to His future plans for them and all men, they needed to be assured of the genuineness of the oral gifts, so over the period of forty days, with patient love, He came and taught them, perhaps by this method. We do not exactly know this to be true, but (summarizing the above) we do know that:

1. None of the apostles appeared to possess or use oral gifts before the Resurrection.
2. The Lord had breathed on them purposely to impart the Holy Spirit.
3. Peter appeared to possess an oral gift following the Resurrection and before

Pentecost, (Acts 1:15-22), which allows the assumption that they may all have received one.

4. These gifts are later called the gifts of the Spirit.

5. The scripture definitely says 'He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto the apostles'.

6. This must have been an extraordinary occurrence to have received such special mention, for had it been usual, attention would not have been deliberately drawn to it.

7. Had the communications been made as they had always been, no mention need have been made of the Holy Spirit.

Thus it may not be so much a gratuitous assumption as an allowable deduction that the Lord only taught the apostles by: (1) showing Himself alive and talking to them in

the normal ways, (2) by remaining invisible and using the oral gift of prophecy for the purpose. However, whichever way He did it, they were perfectly prepared by Him for His coming to them on the day of Pentecost, as He had said in John 14. During those forty days they still awaited 'that day' of knowledge that He had come to abide with them for ever, and looked forward confidently to it in sure hope of His word. Recognition of all this clarifies many things otherwise inexplicable, stabilizing and fixing them in the understanding.

Arising from this sure foundation, a simple fact emerges, namely that strictly speaking the gifts of the Spirit do not function by the Baptism of the Spirit. As we have seen, some gifts were being operated by at least 82 disciples long before the day of Pentecost, and also that to some of them other gifts

may have been added just prior to it. Granted this, it is true to say that upon such evidence it cannot be accepted as a scripturally proven fact that the gifts of the Spirit are either given in or function by the Baptism of the Spirit. On the other hand, scripture provides sure ground for believing that they function in the Church by special authorization under the anointing of the Spirit. They are dispensed in the body of Christ for two main reasons: (1) the edification of His body, (2) the testimony to the world that 'the kingdom of heaven is (still) at hand'. We will not now pursue this line any further, instead we will return to the opening thematic outline and consider the truth of the One Baptism in the context of the New Testament epistles.

Upon examination, it is evident that none of the apostles' writings directly say, or in any

way hint, that they thought — even if they did not teach — that there is any more than One Baptism. Commencing with the book of Romans, we discover that the references to the subject are very few. In chapter 6:3,4, Paul speaks of the Baptism in words which leave us with no doubt as to what he means. At this point he is introducing his exposition of life in the Spirit. He develops the theme in chapter 8, elaborates it still further in chapter 12, and completes it in chapter 15, culminating in verse 19. Besides these chapters, there are only two other references to the Holy Spirit in the whole epistle. Nowhere in this letter does the phrase 'baptism with, or in, or of the Spirit' occur, and neither does the phrase 'one baptism', but it is quite obvious that when speaking of baptism Paul is alluding to the one and only Baptism in the Holy Ghost.

In the first of these scriptures it is most evident that the reference is to a spiritual baptism. Water cannot be found in Romans 6, for water cannot possibly be the medium wherein men are baptized into Jesus Christ. Water is only used as the most suitable medium in which to enact the idea of death, burial and resurrection before the eyes of men. Before God, the only medium in which the real death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ could possibly be experienced is the Spirit, for it is the only realm in which it exists. We have to be baptized in the Spirit in order to be baptized via His death and burial and resurrection into Him; it cannot be otherwise, for all He ever did for us historically now exists only in that realm. We are not immersed in or made beneficiaries of a now non-existent event — a memory. The redeeming, regenerating act and

experience lies in (the) Spirit. It was accomplished by Christ with this in mind and only for that purpose. In order that we may have the eternal life referred to in chapter 6 verse 23, it is absolutely necessary for us to be baptized in the Spirit. Eternal life is 'in Christ Jesus', chapter 8 verse 1, and being baptized into Him, we shall find the life which is described in detail in the rest of the chapter developing in us to the full. Thereby we shall be formed in the image of the Son to which we were conformed by God's will before the world began. This is life in the Spirit as opposed to the life under law, so graphically revealed in chapter 7.

In chapter 12, Paul moves straight on from the famous opening verse to speak of 'one body', 'many members', 'different offices', and 'then gifts'. Nowhere in any of these verses has he even remotely hinted that

between the baptism of chapter 6 verse 3, and installation into these offices and possession of these gifts, and their operations and ministries, there must be another baptism. If it be true that before a man can have power to operate gifts for service he must undergo a further baptism, why in this most logical and closely argued epistle does not Paul mention it? If a man needs it, and God provides and therefore demands it, then where is it? For an apostle charged with the special duty of teaching the Gentiles, Paul is strangely silent on the matter of plurality of baptisms. The whole implication, if not the clear statement of the apostle in this epistle, is that there is only One Baptism.

Proceeding to his first epistle to the Corinthians, we find the same kind of thing. In the 12th chapter he writes with absolute

clarity about being baptized in one Spirit into one body, and being 'made to drink into one Spirit'. This is set in the opening verses of a chapter specifically dealing with the gifts of the Spirit, at the beginning of the most famous and detailed section on the subject in the whole Bible. He leaves the unprejudiced reader under no illusion here: he says we all ought to possess and function in these gifts, and tells us how properly to do so to the glory of God; but he does not anywhere speak one word of another so-called baptism in the Spirit beyond the one already mentioned in verse 13. If it be true that there is in fact another baptism and Paul did not mention it, he must surely be charged with neglecting his responsibilities to the point of dereliction of duty. Of course, this charge can never be brought, for there is

no other baptism but one, as he so plainly said later in the Ephesian letter.

Writing to the Galatians, Paul mentions the word baptism once only — in 3:27. This verse is as clear an allusion to the verses we have seen in 1 Corinthians 12 as is possible to wish for. It comes at the end of a chapter dealing with receiving 'the promise of the Spirit through faith', which is set subsequent in order of truth to the cross. All this is presented in the context of such words as, 'the blessing', 'the covenant', 'the inheritance', and being 'children of God'. It is most obviously to this that the baptism refers and certainly not directly to gifts of the Spirit. Nevertheless although he does not mention these specifically, they do have their place in the chapter: it is by no means a prominent one, but we arrive at that conclusion by inference from verse 5. Seeing

that so far throughout the whole of the epistles into which we have searched there has been no reference to the subject, why does not this responsible man tell us that we need another baptism for power or some such thing? The answer must simply be because it has no foundation in fact, and therefore has no place in the Bible.

Passing on now to the Ephesian letter, we find that the subject of baptism comes up but once in chapter 4 verse 5, as 'one baptism'. It is so unequivocal that it is almost superfluous to write about it. It is true; that is why it is written. Despite that, however, it has been thought by some that a second spiritual baptism is intended to be understood, or may be presumed to exist and rightly to be inferred from Paul's language in 1:12 & 13. Because he says 'ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of

promise *after* that ye believed', it is presumed he meant to say one of two things: either 'ye were baptized in the Spirit a long time after ye believed, or ye were baptized in the Spirit when ye believed the second time', but he did not say that, nor did he mean it. It is absolutely true that the baptism or sealing only takes place after a person believes; it is most certain that no-one can receive a second baptism in the Holy Ghost. The assumption is that the first baptism is into the body for life, and the second is the enduement of power for service, or for entire sanctification.

One clear look into the Greek of the passage should dispel that whole idea. The word 'trusted' in verse 12 is really half a word. In order to convey the original thought, it should be hyphenated to 'first', making one word — 'first-hoped' or 'fore-hoped'. The

second word 'trusted' in verse 13 is not there at all in the original. Reading these verses with this in mind, the inspired statement can be understood to mean, 'when you heard at first you hoped; then later when your hope turned to faith ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise'. In other words, 'you were baptized in the Holy Spirit after you had heard and believed the gospel'. Paul here is almost certainly referring to their experience as recorded in Acts 19:1-6. Under John Baptist's heraldic ministry, people had only 'fore-hoped' in Christ. They at first hoped that John was the Christ, then when he disillusioned them about that, they were baptized under him in hope that their Messiah would immediately come. It was this preaching and ministry that the Ephesians had received through Apollos,

John's disciple. Later when Paul went to Ephesus, this was the kind of background he found there, but when he preached the gospel to them, their fore-hopes turned to faith — they believed and received.

There is no mention of the word baptism in the Philippian letter, so we pass on to Colossians and note the single reference to it there in chapter 2 verse 12. Here again, with persistent clarity of purpose, the blessed Holy Spirit tells us all that we ought to wish to know from this epistle on this matter. It is God's method of including us into and making us partakers with Christ of His burial and resurrection; it is an operation of God. So strongly is the whole point made, that the word 'baptism' here can only rightly be translated '*the* Baptism', for it is definitely and objectively pointed out to the mind. There could hardly be found a clearer way of

saying, 'This is the objective to aim at; this is that most important experience for you to undergo; this Baptism; definitely it is this'. Quite unmistakably it is the only one spoken of, and just as clearly it has no direct connection with the gifts of the Spirit, but apparently it does bring us into the body of Christ (verses 17 and 19). There are references in other epistles which have been considered already so that we need not examine them here.

Perhaps one of the greatest mistakes made in seeking to interpret scripture, and especially this truth of the Baptism in the Spirit, is in assuming that the Bible has always been in its present format. This is not so. When one considers, for instance, that the scripture from which Jesus read in the synagogue was possibly just a scroll of Isaiah, and not even a complete copy of the

Old Testament as it then existed, and also that the early Church never had a New Testament at all, it may help us to grasp a very salutary yet simple fact, most significant to us now.

In Acts 2 Luke has recorded the story of the Church's Pentecost — its true birth-day. Sadly enough, the whole thing was immediately opposed by the entire Jewish religious world. With amazement and doubt, and some mockery even, the question was asked, 'what meaneth this?' Standing up with the eleven, Peter took upon himself the responsibility of answering the question. The result was a foregone conclusion, for during the early events connected with the resurrection, the Lord had opened the understanding of the apostles to comprehend the scriptures. It seems that upon that occasion He took them through

Moses and the prophets and David's psalms, giving them special insight into the prophetic statements concerning His suffering and death and resurrection. It is not surprising then that, following that clothing from heaven, Peter is found handling the Hebrew scriptures with unerring accuracy.

Therefore in answer to the question, the apostle says, 'this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel'. Going on to quote him at length, Peter then points to 'Jesus of Nazareth', a man who, although He was 'approved of God' among them, was unreasonably crucified at their hands. This Jesus, he said, was raised up and exalted by God to shed forth 'this which ye now see and hear'. Although it was a visible, audible, recognizable experience, what was seen and heard was objected to, and still is by some.

This is a great pity, but it is not altogether the fault of the objectors that the mighty Baptism is discredited; it is sometimes the fault of the good folk who seek to defend it upon wrong ground. Strange to tell, the biggest mistakes are usually made upon the interpretation of verse 16, the text upon which the defenders of the doctrine take their surest stand.

It is absolutely true that Peter's words are precisely right. They were then; they are now. What is not true though is that he said 'This is that', and *only this* is that, and that's that, and nothing else is that because 'this' is all there is to it. Such a specious approach to the text misinterprets Peter to mean 'this' is all that God intends you to understand by the words 'the Baptism in the Spirit', and only 'this'. Nothing could be more absurd: Peter did not say that because it is not true.

What he said is absolutely true as far as it goes of course, and cannot be improved upon, but there is a lot more in the Baptism than that which Joel wrote. If it be perfectly true that what took place on the day of Pentecost was that which Joel had said about the Baptism in the Spirit, ought it not to be equally true that what Jesus said about that Baptism also took place at the same time? The answer to that question is undoubtedly an unqualified 'Yes'. But it would have been useless for the apostles to attempt to repeat what Jesus had said exclusively to them, to a crowd of devout Jews. These people had but lately crucified and slain their Lord, and were still refusing to believe in His resurrection. What did they care about anything He had said about this or any other subject?

Behold the wisdom of God in this. Peter did not refer to Jesus' sayings, for to the company he was addressing Jesus was a discounted, discredited criminal liar, who had suffered capital punishment for His blasphemous crimes. It looks horrible in print, but nevertheless it was what they thought at that time. Peter could not therefore sensibly refer to the Lord's promises, and even had he done so, it would have been worse than useless, for to those Jews and proselytes, there was no proof that Jesus had ever said anything. His words were not in their scriptures. Further, Peter could not make any reference to what New Testament scriptures said about it, for none of them were written. He could not say, 'as the apostle John wrote in the fourteenth chapter of his Gospel, verses 15-20', for John had no idea at that time that he would ever

write a Gospel, and he was quite unknown anyway. Nor could Peter say, 'this is that which our brother Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12', because Saul of Tarsus was at that time an unconverted blasphemer, one of 'them'. Obviously he had not then written of the glories of the Church's experience and superior knowledge of the Baptism.

At the time Peter was speaking, all the writers of the New Testament had as yet to take up their pens, so on the day of Pentecost there was nothing of Gospel or Epistle to which Peter could refer. Moreover, the occasion could not be repeated. Peter just had to take an Old Testament reference and apply that to the event taking place, even though it was woefully inadequate to describe properly and fully the mighty Baptism taking place on that day. There was nothing else to use, for there was no other

inspired source to which he could refer. Under the Spirit's hand, Peter selected Joel's prophecy, and applied it to the occasion because it is a true reference to what was taking place. There are also other references to it in the Old Testament, any of which he could have used with equal accuracy, but however many he may have quoted, all would have been partial and incomplete. Neither Joel nor Isaiah nor any other prophet of Israel could give the whole, nor yet the greatest, nor yet the most vitally important testimony to the Baptism. The great tragedy is that, because of prevailing ignorance about these things, the incompleteness of the Old Testament has caused severely limited thinking to develop in the Church about it. Inevitably this has affected the ministry, which in turn has led to partial and shallow experiences among

God's people. Tragedy upon tragedy, the Church in many instances does not see to which covenant it belongs, preferring to make much of what an Old Testament prophet said about the One true Baptism and nothing, or little, of the sayings of the great apostles of the New Testament when they wrote on the subject.

Surely the men who experienced that mighty initial baptismal regeneration into the Church knew far more of what it meant than any of those who, in an earlier dispensation, wrote with minds which were confessedly enquiring into what it all meant: 1 Peter 1:10-12. Joel wrote by inspiration alone, knowing nothing of the experience of it, therefore he had to write informatively only, and having only this lesser part, he wrote of the lesser, partial experience. The better part has been written by the saints of

the New Testament, who from experience supply us with the details of the basic life it brings. These are they who by the same Spirit inform us of these far more important truths of the Baptism which are missing from the Old Testament.

We need to know all the things written in scripture, or God would not have recorded them, but it is of far greater importance for us to know what the apostles of Christ's Church said about that Church, than what non-member prophets said about it. The simple reason for their lack of complete knowledge is that the truth of the Church was hidden from them. Even though God spoke in times past by the prophets, for ages and generations the mystery of the Church lay hidden from them all. Because the apostle referred to the prophet, it does not mean that he was thereby abdicating his

own office; Joel's description was absolutely right, but only as far as it went. Like everything under the Old Covenant, it was weak through the flesh and was superseded, firstly because it did not go far enough, secondly because it was incomplete, and thirdly because it was most certainly not final.

The Old Testament deals chiefly with outward manifestations, but inward reality and spiritual truth came all graciously with the Lord Jesus Christ. and with this the New Testament is principally concerned. The prophets, including Joel, prophesied of outward things; it is therefore absolutely right that they should speak of outward signs; but the apostles, in common with their Lord, spoke of inward things. Therefore we must ever bear in mind that although the Baptism *is* 'that' which Joel spoke, it is more

than 'that', it is also what Jesus and Paul and John say.

The substance of Peter's prophetic ministry that day will supply us with just the illustration we need. He said, 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man'. So He was; this Jesus of Nazareth is that man. Yes, He was a man; but He was more, oh how much more than that. See Him now, seated on the throne; the fulfilment of Davidic prophecy, the glory of God, the Baptizer in the Holy Ghost; King, God, Man, Lord, Christ. *This One* is *That* Man. He was certainly that, but more than That; He is also that I AM. Hallelujah! The audible tongue that speaks in unknown outward praise is good; the inward tongue that cries 'Abba Father' is far, far better. But having the greater, let us not refuse the lesser, for although the better be of greater value, the best of all is to have both the

greater and the lesser together. Each is for its purpose, and must not be confused with the other, lest, like Esau of old, we should cry 'I have enough'; whereas his brother Israel could say 'I have all'. Paul, whose statement commenced and inspired these pages, shall end the matter for us in words which go even further than Israel's, 'I have all and abound, I am full'.