

# EXCERPTS FROM

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# THE LINK

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**North Road Chapel** (Evangelical)

**BIDEFORD**

## Internet Edition

THE LORD'S PORTION IS HIS PEOPLE (Deut. 32 v. 9)

As the redeemed of the Lord we constantly dwell upon the preciousness of Christ to His people and most rightly so for this is a glorious truth - "Unto us who believe He is precious" (1.PET.2.V.7). But it is equally true that we are precious to Him.

There are varied and beautiful figures used in Scripture to describe His own, such as, "His peculiar treasure" "The King's bride" "The Lord's jewels" All indicative of great value and worth. Our Bibles also tell us of His Conduct toward us, "His Unceasing Care" His watchfulness "He neither slumbers nor sleeps" His tender love, His touching sympathy, His unfailing and Almighty protection, indeed all the resources of Heaven are geared to His elect, why? - because we are His treasure, - the treasure hid in the field of the world (MATT 13.V.44) but which He, the Son of God purchased at the stupendous cost of His own blood, "selling all that he had" - giving His all to redeem us, to buy us back. They are "My Jewels" says He; but what mis-shapen stones, we were as we lay in the field, yet stones which the Father's eye had been upon from all eternity, and for these stones the Son said. "I will give my all", this He did at Calvary, "He gave His life a ransom for many" (MK. 10.V.45) Having thus been purchased the Holy Spirit sought us out in our generation rough stones indeed for we were "The children of wrath even as others", (EPH 2.V.3) nevertheless "chosen of God and precious", therefore did the Spirit of God EFFECTUALLY call us and SEAL us, - "put the stamp of heaven upon them for they are mine" says Christ, yes beloved the Kings seal is upon us, we are His, a purchased possession.

Now having been thus purchased and sealed we have been taken out of the world, - not taken from the world, but removed from the ranks of the ungodly to still live in the world as long as He sees fit to leave us here. During this period the Holy Ghost continues His wonderful work upon us and within us, for as long as we are upon earth, we are still very much mis-shapen stones, so the work of chiselling, shaping and polishing is a continuous process fashioning us after His own "GLORIOUS IMAGE" so that one day we shall adorn His heavenly temple. This is the only way in which we can explain God's dealings with us now, for He leads us out into the sunshine then brings us into the shadows, some parts of life have been so calm and tranquil and then the storm breaks, waves and billows pass over us, thorns and briars in the "narrow path" pierce our feet and the track is rough and

sore, but all these things are but instruments in "Divine Hands" working upon us in order that He might present us without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, faultless before the Throne of God. The dealings and providence of God towards His own are often strange and bewildering to us, sometimes He allows Satan to buffet and to level at us his fiery darts, but says the Word of God "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (IS.54.v.17). Ultimate victory is assured to the child of God, the man or woman who has been Sealed by the Holy Spirit of God is destined for glory, but in no way are we exempt from trial and difficulty, indeed the Scripture says "All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus SHALL suffer persecution", "In the world ye SHALL have tribulation". These things do not just befall us by chance, God in His providential dealings BRINGS them upon us, it is part of the chiselling, part of the process of polishing and refining.

God in His Word has given us many an example as to how He works upon His own; minutest details are given in order to give us an insight into His dealings with the elect, not only as to why He thus acted but what the end result was. Take the patriarch Job, an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil, prosperity encircled him, wealth poured into his coffers he had servants innumerable, kings honoured him, nobles sought his company, he was the greatest man in the east, BUT! Satan approached, he lifted his bow, he shot his arrow, it struck and in a moment his wealth was gone, his asses and oxen were plundered his flocks were smitten, his servants left him> his friends deserted him, his family forsook him, disease; took hold of him, and that noble man of the east was reduced to a pathetic wreck of humanity, - Satan has smitten; but we say "was not Job one of God's jewels?" he was indeed, amidst all his dereliction and suffering as he scraped his sores with a potsherd he said "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (JOB.1.v.21.) "He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold" (JOB 23-v.10). Tragic in the extreme as was Job's lot at that point yet he fully realised that it was part of the process of moulding, and that he was but clay in the hands of the "Divine Potter".

We look again into God's portrait gallery, this time we see a man kneeling with a rough sack cloth around his body with ashes upon his head, this is the man who previously had been styled "A man after God's own heart," What has happened? Satan has struck, two heinous crimes have been committed, we look more closely into the picture, his crown lies in the dust, his harp lies broken at his side, crushed to the ground

he cries "Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me", Yes Satan had shot a fiery dart, but shall his weapon prosper? We move along the gallery for a further glimpse. Here we see the shepherd king rising from the dust throwing his sack cloth aside, he dries his tears, he picks up his harp he re-tunes its strings and we listen to the strains which vibrate through the air, "Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies". (PS. 103.v.1-4).

Another wonderful scene, it is midnight, two men are lying on the damp stone floor of a Roman prison, feet fast in the stocks, backs bleeding and smarting with the wounds of a Roman scourge, famished and sleepless they await their doom from the imperial tyrant; but listen! Along the dark corridors of those clammy chambers can be heard the strains of music, two male voices in solemn chorus, this is Paul and Silas in a Philippian dungeon. Satan had struck again, but did his weapon prosper? We listen to the great apostle as he reviews his spiritual career:- "We are troubled on every side, but not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; as sorrowful, yet rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." - "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? NAY! in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" - What triumphant language, what absolute victory but what shaping, what moulding, what refining took place through all these experiences. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (HEB 12.V.11.)

Difficulty often crosses our path, sorrow enters our homes, anxiety may fill our minds, Satan may hurl his darts, but, "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper". We are of intrinsic worth to Him, His seal is upon us, we are-the apple of His eye, "the Lord's portion is His people ... He found us in a desert land, in a waste howling wilderness" (DEUT 2.V.9-10) we are the treasure taken out of the field, the "King's

jewels" being polished to adorn His temple. The One who died to purchase us rose victorious over sin and death and hell, victory ever has been and ever will be His, and through His Sovereign Grace, victory is ours. Victory in sorrow and in joy, victory in darkness, and in light, victory in life and in death, victory yes "VICTORY THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB". "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ".

W.H.M.

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The following article appeared in "THE MESSENGER" the bi-monthly magazine published by Emmanuel Evangelical Church Salisbury, and re-printed here by their kind permission.

#### THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

The charismatic movement is one of the great threats to pure evangelical Christianity today. The vast majority of believers simply cannot see the dangers, although the red light is everywhere to be seen. It is time for the Church to be awakened. Well, what are the dangers?

Firstly, the doctrinal danger. We have no hesitation in saying that "second blessing teaching" is nowhere to be found in Holy Scripture. According to the Word of God, the "baptism" or "washing", of the Holy Ghost is to be identified with the saving work of regeneration (1 Cor.12.v.13, TITUS 3.V.5.).

The claim that miraculous gifts have been restored to the Church is an ill-founded claim those miraculous gifts being conferred in New Testament days, only through the ministry of the Apostles (ROM 1.v.11 - 2.TIM.1.v.6.). But more serious still is the resurgence within the charismatic movement, of Old Irvingite heresy. Thomas Small, leader of the Fountain Trust has revived the error in his recent book "Reflected Glory", insisting there, that Christ took unto Himself the flesh of fallen humanity. "He (Christ) entered the concrete form of our nature under which we stand before God as damned and lost".

We believe, indeed, in the true humanity of the Lord Jesus, but we insist that His nature was not fallen, and that Christ was completely free from original sin (LK 1.v.35.-ROM.8.v.3.) Small is not alone here, Dr. Gordon Strachan published a book a year or so ago defending Irving's theology at some length. The person of our Saviour is at the centre of the controversy here.

Secondly, the spiritual danger. The absolute rubbish which is being read in modern charismatic literature has to be read to be believed. I am not going to quote at length, but here is one example typical of so much of the rest: "The new tongue I was given was intermingled with waves of mirth in which every fear I had just seemed to roll away. It was a tongue of laughter, and when I had finished laughing, I felt that I would never again have to spend another day in bed because of worry". ("They speak with other tongues" by John L. Sherrill). Whatever it was, it was as different from New Testament experience as chalk is from cheese. When the true miraculous gifts were given on the day of Pentecost the crowd cried out: "We do hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God" and "fear came upon every soul" (ACTS.2.v.11 & 43)- This new teaching is creating spurious spiritual experience, leading people into the power of delusion and doing untold harm to the cause of God.

Thirdly, the ecumenical danger. Protestantism and Romanism are merging under the influence of this charismatic movement. "St. Peter's Rome, on Monday echoed to the sound of Rock guitars and the strange language of 18,000 "charismatics" when they attended Mass and met Pope Paul ... The conference ... which included Mass, prayers and confessions, faith healing and prophecies". (Quoted from "The Universe" 23-5-75).

The annual gathering of the Fountain Trust this year "RENEWAL 77", will have as speakers Michael Harper, David Pawson, and Cardinal Sueners who is the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Belgium. There are furthermore, signs of treachery and betrayal within the ranks of charismatic Protestants. Michael Harper, founder of the Fountain Trust made some alarming statements in an interview with George Hoffman. Having referred to "Roman Catholics" and "liberals" within the charismatic movement, Harper continued with these words: "The whole movement is a challenge to Evangelicalism to put its house in order, because these people are not going to become Evangelicals. The strength of the movement in America, for example, is not evangelical and the people have not come from evangelical backgrounds. Indeed in this country I see the need for people to be liberated from 'evangelicalism". The charismatic movement embraces those who have Catholic instincts and this is very healthy for the movement. "He was then asked how the movement compared with Revivals of the past. "There is one major difference" he replied, "Revival since the eighteenth century has tended to follow a certain pattern. They have tended to be evangelical

and to miss out on this major theme of a corporate expression, the Body of Christ ... Undoubtedly the new thing in this movement is that it is not simply an evangelical movement, it is involving Catholics and Liberals, and I would say that it is unique in revival movements". That is plain enough. Here is startling revelation as to the true nature of neo-pentecostalism. You see it is the enemy of biblical and evangelical Christianity. Roman Catholic charismatics are indeed claiming to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, but this experience is NOT bringing them to see the truth of the Evangelical Faith and the errors of Rome. Exactly the opposite of this is taking place. "Never before", says a priest in a fairly recently published book "The Charismatic Renewal and the Irish Experience", 'had I such a sense of Mary's role in leading me into the fullness of Christ and the Spirit". "The strengths of the renewal" says Father Kilian McDonnell in the same book, include "A new appreciation for the sacrament of penance ... (and) fidelity to the Bishops and the Pope".

I tell you it is time to raise a protest within the ranks of Evangelicalism, no matter what the "broadminded" may say of us Truth compels us to take a stand against it in these days, and to exhort every believer concerned for the cause of God to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints". (JUDE 3. ROM.16.v17. EPH 5.V.11.)

M.H. WATTS.

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JOHN KENT - A HYMN-WRITER OF GRACE

The grace of God is the only real and complete answer to the sin of man. And where sin has been deeply felt and a sense of its forgiveness received, it is unlikely that the forgiven man or woman will trace the forgiveness to any other source than God's free, unmerited grace. This process of things is, perhaps, nowhere better seen than in the hymns of an old saint such as John Kent. This man was born of very humble parents in the town of Bideford in Devon, in the year 1766. As a child, he never had the advantages of a formal education, but with the honest instructions he received from his Godly father endeavoured to improve his grasp on academic subjects, and, above all, laboured to stir up the gift that he knew, even in his young life, to be in him. From an early age he began to gather thoughts together in verse; and as "grace well refined his heart" in later years, there flowed from his pen such great hymns as "Sovereign Grace o'er sin abounding", and "Tis the Church triumphant singing". The

first collection of Kent's hymns appeared in 1806, and from the very beginning of his hymn-writing career until the end, the subjects of his efforts never varied. "The sovereignty of God", we are told, "in His dealings towards a fallen and depraved world, gave him a wide scope for the exercise of his talent". And ever the self-effacing recipient of that sovereign grace, his son tells us that he never knew his father "to choose one of his own hymns for singing, not even in the retired society of his family". His constant appeal against any praise was "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me; but to thy name be all the glory". Although stricken with blindness in his early fifties, he continued to pour forth his hymns (his young grandson taking down his words as he spoke them) and for another twenty years afterwards the Church's praise was to benefit through his ministry as a sweet psalmist in Zion. His dying conviction was the conviction of his redeemed life, and the theme of his song continually - "I rejoice in hope", he was heard to whisper "I am accepted - accepted! My frames and feelings are not the conditions of my acceptance", he went on, "No; blessed be God, salvation is all of grace from first to last".

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MR. W.J. SEATON.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION

Attendance at the Annual Convention was not quite as good this year as last, nevertheless it was a time of happy fellowship and profitable ministry from our brother Mr Geoffrey Thomas.

There is little to report in the regular meetings of the church other than to say that we should never cease to be thankful for "the means of grace", the opportunities of corporate prayer and thanksgiving, the gathering around the Word of God, for instruction, for comfort and for guidance, and what food we have had for our souls again during this past quarter.

During the coming months we look forward to the visits of preachers from further afield, we pray that their ministry might be attended with great blessing both indoors and out. The ministry on "The Church" will continue on Sunday mornings, by the time that this is in print the section on eldership should be nearly completed.



On Sunday morning May 29th recognition was given to our brother Mr F.W. Bridge to the work of both Deacon and Treasurer and he was commended to the Lord in prayer for Divine help and blessing to rest upon him.

On Saturday August 6th a group of about 70 young people and workers from the Metropolitan Tabernacle are coming to Bideford for one week, they will be with us for the services at North Road, and at the "Drive-in" church. We look forward to this with very great joy and pleasure and pray that these lays spent together may be a time of real encouragement and blessing to both them and ourselves. Dr. P. Masters will be preaching on Sunday evening at North Road, and on the riverbank. and most probably on the Thursday.

Again, we think of our dear brethren and sisters who cannot now join with us in these things, we send to you once more our love, and assurance of our prayers. May you know much of His joy and His peace.

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#### OBITUARY

On Thursday 26 May 1977 the Lord took to be with Himself our brother Mr J. H. Dunn who was within two days of his 92nd birthday. He had had a remarkable life, never knowing any real illness, and remained well to the last. He was a man of simple yet unwavering faith which was so manifest over the past few months as continuously he was expressing his desire to "Go Home". We thank God for His kindness and goodness to him, but shall all miss his cheery presence in the fellowship.

On Tuesday 7th June the Lord also called home our beloved sister Mrs Garner. For many months she has been in great weariness of body and often distress. We rejoice that she is now in that blessed state where "The former things are passed away". We remember both her, and her late husband with love and affection, and thank God for their faithfulness and devotion to the Lord's work at North Road.