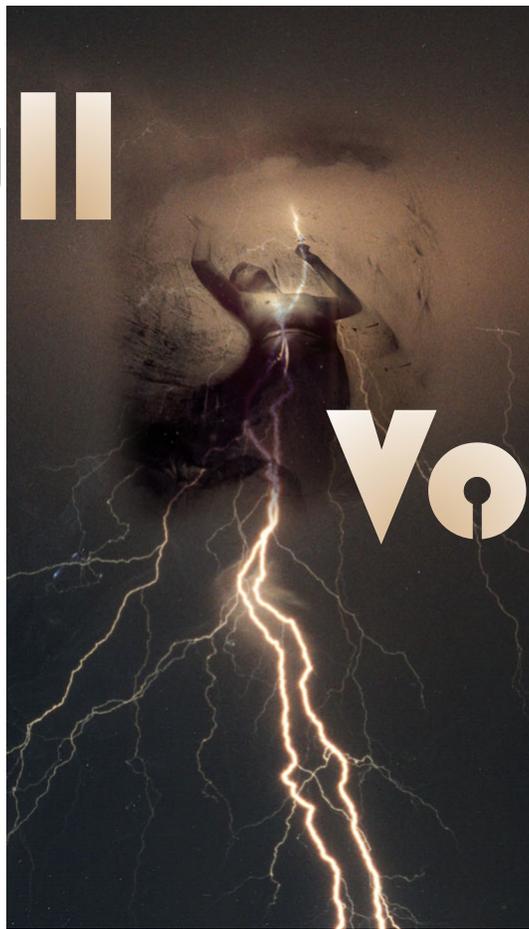


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Volume

BACK IN THE VERY EARLY 1970S, back when television screens were rounded, back when no one had ever heard of cell phones and the internet was still but a gleam in Al Gore's eye, I paid an afternoon visit to the small apartment of our navy band's lead trombone player. Though we played the same instrument, he was considerably older, a college graduate, and a far better musician than I.

It was not long after our band had returned from our all-expenses-paid pleasure cruise in the waters off the coast of Vietnam. During our ports of call in Japan, the Philippines, and Hong Kong most of us had taken advantage of the rock bottom Navy Exchange prices for cameras and stereo gear.

Our lead trombone player had purchased a stereo system overseas—turntable, amplifier and speakers—which was splayed across the carpeted floor of his diminutive apartment when I arrived. As he sat there on the floor studying the back of the record jacket of the classical recording that was spinning on the turntable, I remarked about the low volume of his stereo. Was he just being polite to the others in his apartment building?

No, was his reply, he preferred the low volume. I found it ironic, at the time, that one would spend the money for a new, powerful amplifier and large speakers, only to keep the volume so low. Whether because of my youth or my tastes—probably both—I preferred to turn *up* the volume: I didn't want to listen *for* music, but listen *to* it. Indeed, my preference was and still is to feel music vibrating every atom in my body—to *experience* it.



Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of the mighty,
Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to His name;

Worship the Lord in holy array.
The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;
The God of glory thunders,
The Lord is over many waters.
The voice of the Lord is powerful,
The voice of the Lord is majestic.
The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;
Yes, the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars
of Lebanon.

Psalms 29:1-5

Listening tastes aside, how can we be surprised at the thin, anemic faith of some in the kingdom when they steadfastly refuse to turn up the volume.

It takes nothing away from the mercy and tenderness, the grace of our God to acknowledge His might. We make Him small when we cast Him in our image, when we define Him by *our* standards. In this we effectively render Him impotent, not a Lord at all but a "god" only slightly better and stronger than ourselves. In this we have reversed His created order. How much better to remember and celebrate His vibrant glory, His power, His breathtaking majesty.

Our faith must begin with a God who thunders. Lacking that, we too easily forget that He is the one in charge; that He is holy, and worthy of our reverent worship; that He holds the universe in the palm of His hand, and will not abide those who try to diminish Him.



More to the point, when we answer the call of God and His Spirit comes to dwell within, we are fitted out with the most powerful receiver/amplifier ever conceived: it reaches all the way from the heights of heaven's throne to the clay of this earth. Through it each believer can hear clearly the thundering majesty of his Lord and God—an amplifier so sensitive as to broadcast with supernatural clarity everything from the Lord's whispers to His shouting.

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all

the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you."

John 16:13-14

The one who penned God's written word—the Holy Spirit—daily writes the words of God afresh into our life.

As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

1 John 2:27

But many turn a deaf ear to Him, squelching the indwelling voice. Instead of turning up the volume to experience God's power to the full, they mutter that they prefer the lower volume, thank you very much. For them the voice of God is a necessary but intrusive influence: they acknowledge His sovereign rule but grudgingly, considering their own voice and the voices of their sphere more important—at least more pertinent to their lives.

The instant He accepts Christ Jesus as his Savior the believer acquires the most expensive sound system available—it cost the life of the Son of God—the most perfectly tuned amplifier, and speakers of stunning tonal clarity. The needle on the tone arm never grows dull from use, yet never harms the records it plays. Pressed into those recordings is the voice of the Master, the Lord God Almighty, the King of the universe, Creator of all that is, sharing generously with mere flesh His timeless thoughts, His deepest will, His most intimate yearnings for His children.

For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

1 Corinthians 2:10-13

And then we turn down the volume.

And our lives bear the mark of that decision. We think that lowering God's voice will make it easier to hear our own, but when we turn down God's music, our *own* is diminished.

The Christian is not to draw upon God only when needed, or to reduce the volume of God's music to the level of insipid Muzak. The Christian is to be *filled* with God, *energized* by God. The music of heaven is to be the resonating song by which He lives!



And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Do you want to shine? Do you want your life in Christ to count for something in this world? Do you want your life to be strong, important, vital?

Stop listening to yourself, and turn up the volume on God's sound system.



Full of glory, full of wonders,
Majesty Divine!
Mid Thine everlasting thunders
How Thy lightnings shine!
Shoreless Ocean! who shall sound Thee?
Thine own eternity is round Thee,
Majesty Divine!

Timeless, spaceless, single, lonely,
Yet sublimely Three,
Thou art grandly, always, only
God in Unity!
Lone in grandeur, lone in glory,
Who shall tell Thy wondrous story,
Awful Trinity?

Speechlessly, without beginning,
Sun that never rose!
Vast, adorable, and winning,
Day that hath no close!
Bliss from Thine own glory tasting,
Everliving, everlasting,
Life that never grows!

Thine own Self for ever filling
With self-kindled flame,
In Thyself Thou art distilling
Unctions without name!
Without worshipping of creatures
Without veiling of Thy features,
God always the same!

I with life and love diurnal
See myself in Thee,
All embalmed in love eternal,
Floating in Thy sea:
'Mid Thine uncreated whiteness
I behold Thy glory's brightness
Feed itself on me.

Splendours upon splendours beaming
Change and intertwine;
Glories over glories streaming
All translucent shine!
Blessings, praises adorations
Greet Thee from the trembling nations
Majesty Divine!

Frederick William Faber

