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"The Ministry"- A General Outline of the Testimony for Which We Stand

by T. Austin-Sparks

First published in "A Witness and A Testimony" magazine, Feb 1926, Vol. 4-2.

Let it be emphatically stated that we regard the Cross of Jesus the Christ as the source and fountain-head of all things relative to the purposes of God and our fulness in Christ.

Firstly, the Cross represents a work of redemption which was unique, exclusive, inclusive, and conclusive on God's part - for it was God in Christ Who did it, or in Whom it was done - to which and in which we can add nothing and share nothing.

Secondly, for the outworking of all the purposes of God to their consummation the Cross does represent and demand the inclusiveness of every member of a fallen race in Adam.

It has often been stated thus, "When Christ went to Calvary, He not only took our sins but He took us."

"Identification with Christ," is no new *theme*, but while few have entered into its glorious meaning experimentally, there are many who have only apprehended it mentally, and there are also many who have either failed to see it or have refused to recognise it. To our mind this is the failure out of which have come all the other failures in Christian life and service. This was dealt with from one important aspect, namely "Power," in our last issue. [*The article is called "Position and Power"*] Dr. H. C.

G. Moule, late Bishop of Durham, has put it thus:-

"Truly this truth is a thing which, if revealed, must be worth the grasping. Is it a divine certainty for every human being who really accepts God's witness about His Son? Yes, for every such being, that he is not only very near Christ, but IN Christ... Not only touched and held by the Lord, but 'joined to the Lord, one Spirit.' How full is the divine testimony to the fact; how frequent is that phrase full of eternal life 'In Christ.' 'In Christ' the true church was chosen (Eph. 1:3,4), and blessed with all spiritual blessings before the universe began. 'In Christ,' 'the Beloved' was given to it acceptance before the Holy One (Eph. 1:6). 'In Christ' we have redemption through His blood (Eph. 1:7). If any man be 'In Christ' he is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). 'In Christ' the believer is 'created unto good works' (Eph. 2:10), etc., etc.. *It is inadequate, and it is a spiritual loss, to terminate our faith or teaching within such phrases as 'The Lord has loved me,' 'has sought me,' 'has found me,' 'has saved me,' 'has shed His blood for me,' 'has given His grace to me,' 'has changed me,' 'leads me and guards me.'"*

It will require but a cursory glance through the New Testament letters - especially if a literal translation such as Conybeare's is used - to see that this Identification or Incorporation or vital oneness has its origin in Christ's death. Here we merely affirm it, in future issues we shall deal with each point more thoroughly. If the Cross means such a relationship to Christ, not that of a man's watch to himself, but rather that of his hand to his head, this must be true in every phase of the meaning of that cross as *present spiritual experience*, namely:-

1. Death, an acceptance of the finish of our old self in one all inclusive reckoning, and a willingness to have this wrought out at every point throughout our life on earth. To every enticement, appeal, interest, provocation, temptation to think, speak, feel, or act in the flesh and according to the natural life, an abiding attitude of "Lord, I die to that." Thus a "putting to death, through the Spirit, of the deeds of the flesh."
2. Resurrection. Through this initial acceptance and progressive reckoning of death, a glorious sharing of His life, and that, the life of a triumphant resurrection. This life begins and has its residence in the spirit, but moves through the whole being, spirit, mind, and body, making possible in every part what on the natural plane is impossible.
3. Ascension: The transference of one's life-source, relationships, standards of judgment, scales of values, points of view, interests, ambitions, purposes, conceptions, citizenship, and resources to the heavenlies.
4. Enthronement. "Reign in life by the One Man Jesus Christ." This throne-life resulting in the functioning of the Sovereign Head through the members of the Body, firstly against and over the Satanic hierarchy, the spiritual background which breaks through so constantly in the narrative of scripture (see previous issue, ['Position is Power'](#)), and then in dealing with the naked situation among men. Not only so, but also in knowing the special sovereignty of the Head in the life of each member of the Body and of each member to the others. This all gives a wonderful new illumination of the subject of service, and opens up a new world of spiritual possibilities. In fact it really does put THE key to real and effective vocation into one's hand.

Much remains yet to be said on each point touched, but this will suffice for the moment to imply our basis. For many of us and others, life has been a new and romantic thing since it pleased the Lord to take us down into that death where earth, the world, and the self-life ceased to be of any account,

and we were "raised together with Him to share His life."

There is a great demand for a simple and concise statement of these blessed truths afresh, and it is most probable that we shall commence in the next issue a series on 'Incorporation into Christ.'

IDENTIFICATION

ONE with Thee the Son Eternal,
Grafted into Thee by faith,
Sharing in Thy filiation
And Thy uncreated life.

One with Thee the Son Beloved,
Made by grace of Thee a part,
Habitation of the Spirit
Homed within the Father's heart.

One with Thee the Son Incarnate,
Member of Thy mystic frame
Joined to Thee in Thy begetting,
Born with Thee at Bethlehem.

One with Thee the Son Anointed
With the Spirit's mighty power
Fused in conflict and in service,
Day by day and hour by hour.

One with Thee the Son Forsaken,
Passing through the judgment woe,
Dying unto sin forever
Overcoming every foe.

One with Thee the Son Arisen
From the deadness of the grave,
Merged with Thee in reproduction,
Bearing fruit each day I live.

One with Thee the Son Ascended
Seated now upon the throne,
Coalesced with Thee in reigning,
Thy authority mine own.

One with Thee the Son Returning

Given universal praise
Grown together in Thy beauty,
One with Thee through endless days.

F. N. DOUTY, U.S.A.

Mr. Sparks and Mr. Douty had blessed fellowship during the former's recent visit to the States, and as remembrance of the subject so often enjoyed in conversation and ministry, Mr. Douty wrote the above lines and handed them to Mr. Sparks.