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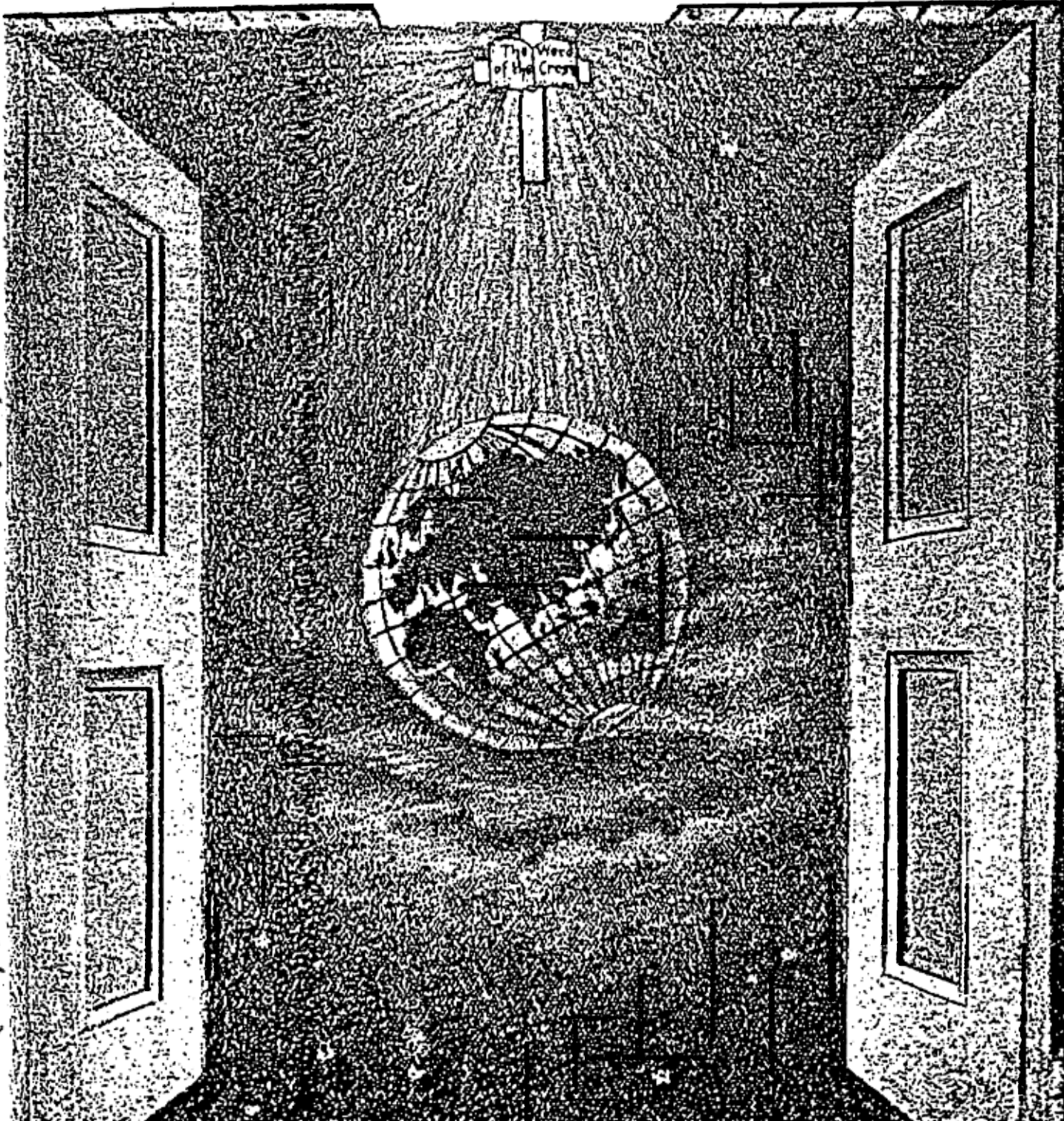
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A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

JANUARY, 1928



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THE MINISTERS' LETTER

(Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre.)

January, 1928.

BELOVED IN OUR LORD

We do not wish you a "Happy New Year," but rather a "Happy Eternity with the Lord." This has already commenced in the Spirit since our life is hid with Christ in God, and what we should pray for is that we may go straight forward into that increasing realisation of the Purpose of God in us as *Life* and Life by One Spirit in One Body. May the Church of the living God greatly increase unto the consummation during this year, and unto this may you be filled with the Light of His Life that you may walk, not as in the encompassing darkness but in that Day of God that already shines upon Mount Zion whither we have arrived in the Spirit. "Ye are come." Stand to that. Stand fast in the liberty of the Divine indwelling Life. The Cross has broken all bands.

Now we cannot see far forward as to time, but we see Him, we trust; and through Him see something of eternity. But He is more important than mere vision. Eternity with all its vistas is without Him a mere void.

Is it not significant of His Coming that His Person is becoming so horizon-filling, dwarfing all else? By this we know that we are in the Spirit's school as He glorifies the Person of Jesus all the while, causing us to behold Him in the Godhead and the Godhead in Him. Modern theology is full of advices to get back to Jesus, the Jesus of history, and gladly we assent to the blessed historic facts: but the holy Spirit sends us forward, upward, onward to Jesus in the Glory of God, and the Glory of God in Him: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost alike tabernacling in and upon Him, Who is the visible Image of the invisible God.

How puny become our enemies, how slight our uncertainties and how harmless our perils, as He looms gloriously Great before our heart's vision, and fills the heavens.

When Israel failed to enter in at Kadesh it was because their God had receded to vanishing point in their unbelieving sight, and so giants grew more gigantic, and strongholds seemed impregnable. But with those sons of faith, Caleb and Joshua, the vision was the reverse. God loomed large, and the giants became insignificant. "Let us go up at once and possess it" said faith, "for we are well able to over-

come it." May this be the language of our hearts at this season.

Beloved, how is your spiritual eyesight at this beginning of the year? Does Jesus fill your prospect with the Glory of His Person? Has He come as captain of the Lord's hosts to undertake the conduct of the campaign, to carry it through to a triumphant conclusion? Is He thus nigh and Mighty? Or is the conflict itself, its problems and perils mostly filling the sight? We exhort you and call upon our own hearts also, to ask the Spirit's aid to see Jesus as He is in that Glory, the Enthroned Conquering God whose battle is won, but Who invites us to share His Victory. It is by His Victorious Life we must now live. If any man be in the Christ he is a new creation. But the new creation is in the Spirit and is in our spirit also as we are begotten out-of and abide also in Him. Ye are of that Eternal Day that has already broken upon Mount Zion. There is no need for you to enter into a mechanical man-reckoned new year, for you have entered into the "Rest," the finished work of God. It is out from God that we can accelerate His processes in time, and hasten the Break of His Day upon the earth, praying in the Holy Ghost.

Yours in the Lord's Hope which is also ours

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

T. MADOC JEFFREYS.

THIS TESTIMONY

WHEREAS there is a widespread inquiry as to the nature and meaning of this "Testimony," "Fellowship," and "Centre," and not a little misapprehension, we would offer a few words of simple and sincere explanation. Not that we would seek to vindicate ourselves before men, where vindication might be necessary, that we leave to the Lord.

AS TO THE "TESTIMONY."

It will be accepted and acknowledged by all that from time to time God does raise up an instrument and prepare for Himself a voice by which He would give special emphasis and call special attention to truth that is basic and vital to the realisation of His eternal purpose in Christ; Truth which has been lost sight of and for want of which there is not only a spiritual paralysis, ineffectiveness, and arrest at a certain point, but also the giving of the advantage to a mal-development and a false system which does not issue in the fulfilment of the purpose of the ages.

locality, a work which we are commencing with the New Year, shall be signally blessed of God.

There is much reason for praise that the Lord is revealing Himself to our children. This is especially marked in the Junior Young Christians' Association. There is an unmistakable movement of God here, and definite decisions for Christ are continually being made, and these with great clearness of vision as to the meaning of the Cross. We are discovering that the Holy Spirit is able to make quite young children understand how Christ not only died *instead* of them, but that they also died *with* Him—in the reckoning of God: "Substitution" and "Identification" are not words easy to explain, but the Holy Spirit is able to make the sense of them clear to children without mention of the terms. We are hoping to introduce into our Sunday School a form of "Covenant" that shall express as simply as possible the essential basis of our faith.

Our young men and women continue to manifest their loving zeal for the salvation of souls. The open-air work in Rye Lane, Peckham, is still continued on Saturday evening whenever the weather allows. There are not wanting signs that this testimony is bearing its fruit, both in the strengthening of the present bonds among our young people and in the addition to their number.

Let us not forget to pray for both Miss Winnie Reid and Mr. Bert Goodwin who are in training for the Mission Field.

God has put it into the spirit of some of us to pray for £1,000 to pay off the debt of the church, amounting to about £650; and to defray the cost of necessary repairs and renovations, with the installation of electric light in the Hall and classrooms. It is pleasing to note that in response to the immediate call for £100 for the latter purpose £35 was spontaneously given during the ensuing week. "By faith we stand"—and, "Faith without works is dead."

MISSIONARY NOTES.

We have a valuable contribution from Miss Hawks which we hope to publish in a following issue "The Opened Door" supplies us with the beginnings of a new world-vision, but we need to foster this along practical lines.

According to it is proposed to have Monthly Tea-Table Conferences on Saturday afternoons to discuss the World-Outlook. Date January 23, February 20.

THE OPENED DOOR.

"And they called the church together and proceeded to report in detail all that God, working with them, had done; and how He had *opened a door* of faith to the Nations."—Acts xiv. 27.

UNDER this heading we purpose to record very humbly, and entirely to the praise of our blessed Lord, how the Holy Spirit honours our testimony to the full Victory of Calvary. If this be true we may expect the Lord to vindicate His own word. There must be a demonstration of the truth proclaimed. We believe that as we cast ourselves entirely upon the strength and authority of the Lord, because of our own utter impotence in the flesh, there is such a thing as "preaching the gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven." To Him be the glory!

A marvellous proving of the Victory of our Lord attended Mr. Sparks' visit to France last autumn in connection with the Dieulefit Convention. (By the way, Dieulefit significantly means, "God is able.") Here are extracts from a letter recently received.

"If ever the visit of a servant of God was rightly timed, and a ministry undertaken in the power of the Holy Spirit, it was his to Dieulefit Convention.

"The Divine endowment which poured through his lips, broke down before our eyes the strongholds, cast down imaginations, and every high thing exalting itself against the knowledge of God, and brought into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

"During my seventeen years' experience as a missionary in France, I have not seen, and had well nigh lost hope of ever seeing, anything resembling the victory won over what I may be permitted to name 'the French theological mentality.' Modernism, too, was shattered like Dagon before the Ark, *broken without hands*, and turned into a ridiculous stump."

"There were fifty Pastors present, and a strong contingent of students. They simply surged around Mr. Sparks and clamoured for further light after each of the regular Convention addresses, and passing out of the Reformed Church, we went over to the Methodist Chapel for two hours extra each day. The seven addresses are to be published, together with those delivered by the Convenors, and this will make up the report, so to speak, of the French Keswick."

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

stream of His people through the place as ministry is carried on and spiritual fellowship made profitable. We believed that this is yet to see something far greater than has been or is, for we have been learning so much more of His ways and means and purposes.

There is this further point, however, and it may be here that many have concluded that we are "a new sect." The Lord has for many years past made us see that there are practical testimonies on the earth to spiritual truths. We see that the truth of identification with Christ in death, burial and resurrection is testified to in believer's baptism. We also see that the anointing of the Holy Spirit is upon and through the Body of Christ and not upon individuals as such, separately. When thus, one by identification with Christ as above, becomes a member of Christ, the Body as represented bears testimony to their coming under the one anointing of the Head for all the members, and this testimony is borne when representative members of the Body lay their hands upon them and pray for them.

Thus, we believe, there is not only a testimony to the One anointing of the Holy Oil from the Head even unto the skirts of His garment—that blue heavenly robe which is His Body embracing all the members—but there is thereby a calling and equipment unto the function of that particular member in the Body.

Then, again, we see that the Lord's Table is a testimony to a threefold truth.

1. The Lord's unique and infinite death.
2. The discerning of the Lord's Body as now corporate and not individual.
3. The consummation of His age purpose in the completion of His Body to call it away.

The basic truth is the Cross.

The abiding testimony is the Body.

The consummation of both is the rapture. Seeing that the grand and all-inclusive feature of the age is "the Church which is His Body," testimony is to be borne to its birth as out from His travail, its corporate life and oneness, and its hope and consummation. This testimony is by that gathering around His Table. It will be seen that we do not term these "ordinances" or "rites," or "sacraments." To us they are—as we believe the Lord has shown us—testimonies, and they are no part of a constituted system by which we mechanically include or exclude any of the Lord's children. In these matters, as in all others, the Holy Spirit must speak in the heart of each

child of God, and the thing must be one of life not creed or system.

It is not always possible to grasp the meaning of the message given, or to have the revelation break upon us all at once, but if we really are the Lord's children we ought to recognise and respond to His life as it is present in and amongst His people. Not emotion, excitement, or any psychical stimulus, but pure Divine life. This is the main test, hence, after all our testimony in essence is one of life and not of doctrine as such. So that after we have said all, the main test has yet to be applied by all who would know of the doctrine whether it be of heaven or of men.

Thus, beloved of God, the object of our existence is "The Testimony of Jesus," a ministry of revelation and life to and for the whole Body of Christ, for the completing of that Body by the Evangel of the Cross to the unsaved and the "building up of the Body," "the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministry."

We have not wished to gather people unto ourselves or to set up something which is organically apart from all other work which is of God. There will, doubtless, be practical and drastic issues in many lives from this testimony, but they *must* be by the compulsion of the Spirit and the urge of life, not by the influence and direction of man.

Our constant challenge to the Lord is that at any cost He will keep this testimony and instrumentality clear of all flesh and natural influence, a pure thing for Himself by the Holy Spirit alone.

T. A.-S.

CONCLUDING ADDRESS JANUARY CONFERENCE, 1928

GIVEN BY MR. MADOC JEFFREYS.

The Cross: and the Vision and Vocation of the Sons of God *through* the Cross.

ONE has a very deep consciousness of the necessity that we should come down to practical issues in this matter of our sonship of God. One recognises the extreme peril of listening to truth all the while that forms a crust upon our mentality, so that we can hear these things, just as also read our bibles, and there be no deep concern in our hearts. We can become so familiar with the presentation of truth as something objective, as something outside ourselves, that we fail to enter into the very thing for

which the truth is uttered. God has been giving to us a very strong pressure of spirit that we might enter into the thing that He is after. Not that we desire to cause a strain, to create a kind of mental and emotional situation, but that there should be, one feels, on the part of everyone who has had the responsibility of hearing the word of God in these days, not least those who have had the greater responsibility of speaking it, no lack of entering into that for which God has called us together.

This thing must be wrought out in us.

Now God has provided a means whereby it can be wrought out in us. Otherwise we may see the truth and assent to it, but are powerless to enter into the operation of it. We can all declare that God was in Christ, and that Calvary is a historical fact. We agree to it that it is true, but we may go on all the while declaring that, and somehow fail to have it operative in our own lives. We may be living a life of failure, as far as spiritual experience is concerned, although we may be assenting to certain very evident facts about the Person and the work of Christ, and so you see that the theme of this Conference has two aspects to it. It speaks of the Vision and Vocation of the sons of God. The Vision of the Cross, and the Vocation *through* the Cross.

First of all there is the Cross presented to us objectively. We see it. We have some revelation of Who Jesus is, and that it was that He did, not only in the seen world, but in the unseen world far more, by the sacrifice of Himself, but it may end there in vision only. We come continually up to it, and we never get any farther. We come again and again and see this, but as far as we are concerned, we are living very much upon the same level. There is no movement forward. We want to get past that fence, but we have never got beyond it. We have come to the point of vision again and again, but we have never entered into vocation. We continually gather around the testimony, but the testimony has not wrought its miracle in us, and we are conscious that somehow, while we assent to it, and would be really partisans of this thing, and light for it, if need be, in the sense that we know it is true, and we declare it is true, yet the mighty power of God, of which we are constantly hearing, is not working in our lives. So it is necessary for us to recognise that, in addition to the vision, there must be the vocation, and we come to the very necessary recognition that the Cross must be made subjective in our

experience, that it must operate within us. Those people who only see an objective Cross fail to recognise the whole implication and application of it. It is not merely something that is outside of ourselves, but it is something that has to be wrought within us.

Now what is the instrument, and what are the means whereby the Cross becomes operative in us? It is by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit first of all begets us into newness of Life, and brings us into a birth relationship with God. Then there must be a recognition on our part that this Life is not a limited Life shut up in itself as our possession; but a Life joined to the Lord one spirit, which must have upon it therefore the constant anointing or energising of God. So the Holy Spirit, God the Spirit, must be the necessary and all inclusive Factor, Whom we recognise as making this Life possible. For the Life is quite impossible apart from the energy of the Holy Spirit. This is where a great many of the children of God fail. They do not recognise the Holy Ghost. And the devil has brought about a great deal of diffidence in these last years in speaking about the Holy Ghost. One of his clever and essentially diabolical tactics has been to scare people off the theme of the Holy Spirit. There has been a great deal of teaching about the Cross with an almost entire exclusion of reference to the only power that makes the Cross operative in the individual life of the believer. Apart from the Holy Spirit the Cross cannot become applicable and operative in your life and mine. We may go on hearing and talking about victory; we may go on hearing and repeating all the themes about Calvary; but until there has taken place in our hearts a recognition of the sovereign operative power of the Holy Spirit, Who is none other than God Himself coming through the ascended glorified Lord to dwell in and upon the spirits of those whom He has begotten out of Him, all our life will be ineffective, because we shall fail to enter into the mighty centralising and consummating work of the Spirit, Who is One Spirit, for by one Spirit, that is, the Spirit of God, were ye baptised into one body.

It is only as we realise the greatness—these terms are almost futile to use—tho' majesty, the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit, can we enter into this mighty thing that God is seeking to do in our hearts and lives. Apart from the Holy Spirit the vision remains but vision; it must become vocation. The thing that we

see in Christ must become actual in us, dynamic in us, working in us, mightily energising us day by day, and moment by moment. "If ye by the Spirit do put to death the doings of the body ye shall live." That is, you and I can only live in newness of life by the Holy Spirit. It is as Christ was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also walk in newness of Life. We live by the Spirit. Now He was raised by the operation of the Spirit of God, and you and I are raised and energised and continue to live by the Spirit of God. God, Who is Spirit.

As one has said, the devil has with his diabolical subtlety scared people of the Holy Spirit because of all the counterfeits of the teaching, and all the representations about baptisms of the Spirit; and so you have the children of God prepared to mentalise everything, and to put everything upon a screen, but there is the failure of the dynamic of the Cross in the life for the power of the Cross in the life is only by the Holy Ghost. And the baptism of the Spirit is, of course, a baptism into the Body so that we are baptised into the death of Christ by the Spirit and that death is made continuously operative in us while at the same time, on the positive side that same Spirit of God brings us into a relation with the infinite being of God in Christ Ascended. And thus the self-life, the ego (and how we need to recognise that it is there the strength of sin is) is continually brought into nothingness as He is glorified, as He comes in and makes us glad in a love that passes knowledge—to surrender our whole being to that newness of Life as out from the risen glorified Christ. You will find for example that when "our beloved brother Paul" had the vision at Damascus revelation was there. He is smitten down by the exceeding glory in Acts ix:—

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. (Not a light from the sky. The heavens open—the breaking forth of the glory of God in the Descending Lord.) And he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said Who art thou, Lord? (And there is only one Lord to the Hebrew—the Lord thy God is one God.) And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the goads. And he trembling and astonished said Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the

city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

Now there is the revelation. The gospel came to the apostle, as he declares in the Galatian epistle by a revelation of Jesus Christ. You get the bald narrative of something that happened. You are not told of the psychological consequences in the apostle. The Holy Spirit does not give to us any study of that whirl of confusion and shattering that must have taken place in the entire make-up of the apostle as he saw that he had been fighting against the living God, blaspheming the Name of the living God, that he was an enemy to the purpose of the living God. We can well imagine to an earnest, zealous heart such as this man's was, what was the shattering nature of such a revelation. He merely says, concerning his gospel, I received it by a revelation of Jesus Christ. But though he had the revelation, though he knew Who Jesus was, and had by this time become familiar with all the gospel facts, there was no power or strength in him to enter into any vocation to do anything. The same thing applies, of course, to the case of the first disciples. They were witnesses; they knew all the things that Jesus did and said; they were hearers, and they were eye-witnesses of all the facts of His ministry and life from the baptism of John to the time of His being received up, but they would have been helpless in the world if they had merely gone out to give the testimony of their vision apart from an enablement. They would have been, as it were, but dreamers and madmen. They would have told a story that would have seemed strange and mystic, but to which the world would have given no heed, unless something had happened, unless something had come in. And the same is the case with the apostle. Something has to take place. And so you find as you go lower down in the chapter that Ananias is sent to him. Ananias gets his commission (verse 15) "The Lord said unto him, in answer to his remonstrances, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me to bear My Name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house: and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord (the same testimony), even Jesus, that appeared unto in thee the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, *and be filled with the Holy Ghost.*"

And so it is the Holy Spirit Who gives us the enablement to enter into the vocation, into the calling, and apart from the enablement of the Spirit, the vision never becomes translated into action. Apart from the Holy Spirit the Son of God is not revealed within us. He is revealed to us by the Spirit, but He must be revealed in us, and there must be, on our part, a recognition of the Holy Spirit. This thing is not in us. You and I cannot carry this tremendous thing through, even if our members as a fellowship were multiplied a million-fold. It is God Himself Who was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; and it is God Himself, by the Spirit, Who is in the body of Christ, bringing this thing through to a consummation. All things are of God, and you and I have to enter into the knowledge of the Spirit in terms of God. The Holy Spirit, as we so affirmed in the last Conference, is no other than God Himself, both Father and Son in the glorified Christ coming down to take hold of us in this little world, and bringing about through us the impact of Calvary's victory against the unseen principalities and powers. And that is the enablement for the vocation.

You will find that in every place where anything is suggested with regard to bringing this thing to a consummation the Holy Spirit is introduced. Take, for instance that passage we were in this afternoon in Romans viii. and this has already come through as a burden of prayer to-night. Our brother did not know what our theme was this afternoon, but if he had he would not have prayed in other terms that would have so given the expression of what was upon our hearts: "An intolerable agony in the universe, inarticulate, waiting for the consummation." The Spirit of God the Creator behind things pressing on toward the end, and then the church, the sons of God who have received the first fruits of the Spirit "we ourselves who have received the first fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves," not because of some personal trouble, not because we desire to escape out of this present unfortunate situation, not because we long to be home and out of it. No, but a groaning within ourselves by the Holy Spirit unto the consummation, and that is the vocation. The vocation is none other than the burden of the Lord in our spirit. And that, as we have so often said, is the ground of all ministry. If ministry has any other ground than that, it is always a means of schism in the body. It always makes for some kind of self-assertion,

some kind of individualism, the lifting up of some person or other, a new school of thought, or a new school of experience and people gathering around that. But when ministry comes as the result of a burden of the Holy Ghost in the heart, then the One Who is glorified is God Himself in Christ. It is Jesus then Who is lifted up in the magnitude of His Godhead, and all flesh sinks into insignificance and is swept out of the path of His glory as He comes through.

One was arrested in emphasising that this tremendous thing which God is seeking to do in the church is something commensurate with His own Being. It is something wrapped up with the justification of His own character. It is something upon which is staked the essential righteousness of His own being. It is He, Himself, doing it, and we have to recognise it is God himself by the Holy Spirit descending from the risen glorified Lord abiding and resting upon the body, and energising every member of the body unto a common purpose, a common mind and a common desire—that this is the means whereby the vocation shall be realised. You find then that as you read down this passage in Romans viii. that we who have the first-fruit of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the *sonship*, and that is our ministry. It is this ministry of having within our hearts the very burden of the Lord, and every time we come to any suggestion about the consummation of God's purpose the Spirit is introduced. It is He Who is the earnest of our inheritance; that is, He is the "stamp" of the fact of our being the sons of God. When the Holy Spirit came to rest upon the Lord Jesus there was this sealing, or this stamping of the fact that here was God's only begotten Son. "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." And then notice as you follow the sequence in His experience that the moment the Holy Spirit comes to rest in and upon the Christ of God (He has the vision before; He has the realisation before of His birth out of the Godhead) the *vocation* begins, the ministry begins, and you find that full of the Holy Spirit. He is led, or driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil!! He meets the cosmic situation; He begins at once to be the Factor of God to create a disturbance in those realms behind the scenes where His life and His ministry and His sacrifice and His victory is to operate. So it is with us. As you read the sequence of history you find that while there may be individual salvation of a kind, an appreciation

of Christ, and a coming into some realisation of His Person and His Work, it is as a church, as a corporate company indwelt by the Spirit that the impact upon the world is to be made. So the disciples are told "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be clothed with power from on high."

Now so often that has been translated into the suggestion of individual power and individual blessing, but it is not that at all. It is in order that the church itself may become the organ of God in the universe, may become the instrument whereby He shall bring to bear upon the principalities and powers the impact of His own divine energy in our hearts. But, you see, that very vocation means the ruling out of our self-life. It is through the Cross we serve; it is through the laying down constantly of our own life that we are enabled to give place to the Spirit, the newness of Life. It is only logical of course to say this. The newness of Life is only made possible as the old life is relegated, as there is a divine energy of Life within us making it possible for us to lay down our souls, and so the Cross is embraced as an active principle, as something that works out from the Divine Being in us, and the Lamb in the midst of the Throne sees His likeness in us, as we also, in the Spirit of the Lamb, are enabled to deny ourselves and to pass out, and to allow the glory of that Life that is hid with Christ in God to be made manifest in us. So we discover that whenever there is the thought of this wonderful consummation, or whenever there is the suggestion of this groaning, this burden upon our heart, we always get mentioned the fact of this earnest of the Spirit, the pledge of our inheritance, the affirmation of the fact that we are the sons of God.

Those who share with Him one Spirit, are able to understand His attitude towards Calvary, as its anguish came nigh to His soul, "What! shall I say 'Save Me from this hour.'" That is the Spirit of the Son, and the Holy Spirit is none other than that same Spirit coming to rest in your heart and mine to enable us to die; to enable us to lay down constantly this self-life of ours, in order that the glorious Life of our Risen Lord may be made manifest in these mortal bodies.

Now all ministry must have its origin in that burden, but it is the desire of love. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who thus comes to us, and the marks of identification of the Spirit is always this love for the Lord in the Throne, and the

corresponding love for the Body. The Holy Spirit never makes you self-centred, never turns your eyes inward to make you absorbed with your own experience. You can always detect the counterfeit baptism of the Spirit, the counterfeit anointing, if there is such a thing, and the true anointing of God. The Holy Spirit as He comes into the heart at once moves your horizons right out, and turns your heart towards the purpose of the One who has loved you and given Himself for you. It is the enablement of this God-given grace of His own indwelling, the fact that He, Himself, comes to dwell in and upon your spirit that is the wonder of the new creation. This is the dynamic of the divine purpose in us. So you find the Lord Jesus telling His disciples when He comes to the final phase of things, when He must be delivered up, "I shall not leave you as orphans, I will not leave you comfortless, I will not leave you as cut off from your source of supply, from the Divine resources of energy and strength, I will come unto you." The Divine Spirit by resting in and upon our spirits relates us immediately and directly to God Himself, and so the individual has immediate access in the fellowship of One Spirit to the Father. Ah, but then he finds that he belongs to a company, he belongs to a great corporate community, and that there is moving and working in this corporate community one Spirit, and a Spirit moving towards a divine end, and apart from that there cannot be any vocation of the sons of God. In the epistle to the Hebrews there is a "considering" of the Lord Jesus from two aspects. You will find that first of all that the child of God *beholds* Jesus; he *sees* Jesus. Now we are discovering that many of these simple statements in scripture are very profound, and that *to behold* Jesus is a wonderful thing. It means to see Him by the Spirit; it means to know Him; it means to live in the light of his countenance. *We behold* Jesus crowned with glory and honour! That is the distinctive experience of the children of God. And then you find that the whole epistle is taken up with the injunction to *consider* Him, and there are two words used. First of all in the third and seventh chapters you will find this word used in one sense. "Consider Him," and then, "Consider *how great* was this One." And so the first aspect of the Holy Spirit's revelation is to magnify the Lord Jesus; to exalt His Person; to make Him loom larger and larger in all the thought of your life. He fills the horizons; He becomes

Very God of Very God to you ; He is presenced as God to you ; you behold Him ; He comes to you, you have communion with Him, and in Him and through Him you have communion with the Father in the Godhead. But you behold Him ! This is a spiritual perception, and only the Holy Ghost gives you that. The Spirit of God, it is He Who reveals Jesus in the Godhead, unveils Jesus, not in the way that history unveils Him and human remembrance and sentiment may unveil Him or describe Him, and a great many books have been written about Jesus, the Jesus of history, and a great deal of modern theology talks about taking us back to Jesus. But, O, what a misrepresentation that is ! The Holy Spirit, He takes us back to Jesus as His Person being the foundation of all truth and giving the content of all doctrine. The Holy Spirit causes us to see Jesus as in the Throne of God, and always presences Him and brings Him down to the heart that you and He may be always in one continual communion with the Father.

But you find when you come to the twelfth chapter that you are reading about vocation. As the Holy Spirit has outlined all the wonder of Jesu's Person and work as Very God, how He brings you to the place where your vocation begins. And you notice that as soon as vocation comes in you have the word, " sons " and strong words about disciplinings and chastenings, and that we are not to despise these or in any wise to seek to escape them, but to welcome them, rebukes of the Lord, the judgments of the Lord, which we meet when we come around the Lord's table and judge ourselves, and are made humble and broken as we consider more and more our own ineffectiveness and unlikeness to the Son of God. These are the lessons of God. But the word in the 12th chapter for " Consider " suggests that we should compare ourselves with Him and contrast ourselves with Him and to recognise how this One was ever following a path of self-denial and of suffering, striving unto blood agonising against sin. And so we are to consider Him in that respect, and discover that the way of *sonship* is the way in which we are called to continually lay down our now lives in order that we might come into that glory. For the 12th chapter reveals the fact that you and I now are in relation to God in that which is vested in Him : that you and I are brought into a fellowship in the Godhead with the Christ of God that makes the dynamic of God operative in our spirit. And you remember

He says, " Ye *are* come," verse 22, and you receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken, because you find that you have a Life that is wrapped up with Christ in God—One Life with Him. But that is impossible, except by the Holy Spirit ! It is not your lonely, individual, separated life here on earth as one who is trying to live as it were a desperate faith all on your own by a kind of mental assent to a kind of teaching and breaking down under it, trying hard to keep your ground and failing, but it is by the fact that God Himself, by His Spirit, comes to dwell in and upon you and is in you the mighty power unto all life and service.

Now I pray God that this truth may get through to our hearts. There are many adversaries, and adversaries in the air too, but I *know*, if you will pardon my stressing this by way of personal experience, *this is the secret of victory*. It is the Holy Ghost, God Himself, coming to dwell in you and me and making Calvary possible in our lives, making it possible, by reason of a constraining love that is larger than ourselves and greater than ourselves for you and me to lay down our lives for the brethren. That is the ministry you and I are called to to lay down our lives for the brethren. A new commandment. To live henceforth unto Him who died for us and was raised again. But what is that ? It is to live for the Body's sake ; it is to live for the church ; it is to be willing to go out in order that the church may be brought to its consummation. That is the love of the Redeemer, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, and hope maketh not ashamed when that love is shed abroad in the heart. Hope as a mere objective thing in the mind is one thing. You and I may sing hymns about a possible glory, but we have to pass through a certain cycle of experience before we come to the place where " hope maketh not ashamed," and that is when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost Who is given unto us ; and then and only then the new commandment is possible. But apart from the Holy Spirit's energising indwelling, God-filling power of love, it is impossible to keep the new commandment, that is, to love one another even as Christ has loved us. The Holy Spirit is the dynamic of God released through Calvary to bring about the fruit of Calvary in your heart and mine, and to make the manifestation of God's grace possible in us, so that the principalities and powers are made to see in our lives the very thing that God has wrought out for us in the Cross.

I was reading at the beginning of the service that mighty word, "Thanks be unto God who leadeth us in the train of His triumph." What is that? Well, we are bound, are we not to His chariot wheels as His slaves, the slaves of His love. As He was the slave of the Divine Love here on earth, so we become the slaves of that same Divine Love, bound to Him, and He is thus able to display us as the fruits of His victory, as the manifestation of His triumph, because His love now, by the Holy Spirit, is operative in our hearts and lives. We are willing to lay down our lives. We are glad to be nothing, in order that He may be everything, and that the church may be built up. Our vocation is one then of a Divine Love, and thus we celebrate His victory over His enemies. It is not merely the assertion of a certain fact, but it is the vindication of a certain fact in our own lives that makes His victory and triumph possible. May the Lord make this very true in our hearts, beloved friends, and may we know that the Holy Spirit is come. He comes by faith and not by feeling. God's word declares that faith is the basic principle of all Divine Life and Divine dealings, and we receive the Holy Spirit by faith. You do not necessarily get a great flood of ecstasy in your soul to begin with; it is a baptism into death. You find that He will take you right down into death. The self-life will be more and more exposed in its ugliness. Life generally will become a wilderness experience, and God will teach you the Life of faith; but you will find the Holy Ghost is there. God is there within your spirit to carry you through, and He makes you then one who begins to tell against principalities and powers—you create a disturbance. It has often been said you find that things become very difficult and lively around you, but you are telling, you are counting. If you go on through that phase of experience steadily holding to the fact of God's indwelling in your spirit, deeper than sense, deeper than consciousness, deeper than mind, deeper than feeling, deeper than will, nevertheless God Himself in your spirit. As you hold steadily there, standing fast in that, you will find that you are really tied to His chariot wheels, and He is celebrating His victories. *You will find your prayers being answered.* Marvellous ministry! You will find God touching interests and other lives through your prayer life, not in the realm of religious emotion, but in the realm of a prayer that costs, an agony sometimes to the heart, a burden to the spirit.

but nevertheless in a love that now is proceeding out of God Himself.

Now one has tried to say this broken word at the end of the Conference, interrupted by a flood of darkness,* nevertheless, our lights are still shining, if they seem to be but flickering and feeble. May it be a parable to our hearts, that when the lights of this world fail and all resources that seem resplendent pass away, there comes in something else, which may not seem very great at the time, but a Light in our hearts even the Light of Life that makes all things possible, so that you can declare with the apostle, "I can do all things through Christ Who instrengtheneth me (strengtheneth me inwardly). When I am weak, then I am strong." For when all my resources fail and I can do nothing, then I rely upon the fact of the mighty God's indwelling and find that my vision is no longer objective, but has become a vocation within me. The Glory I see is being wrought out in me in measure. "Henceforth for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

T. M. J.

A PERSONAL NOTE

BELOVED OF GOD,

This is not the first time that one has attempted the impossible. The difference, however, is that previously it has been in the Lord's Name, and it has succeeded; this time it is in one's own name and there is little hope of success. The object is to try and make you realise how grateful one is for the tremendous kindness which has again been shown in so many ways during the time of sickness.

It is quite beyond one to write personally to all the dear friends who sent messages and tokens of thought, but such of them as read this will please believe that they are personally in mind and that with great gratitude.

"Once and again you ministered to my necessity," said Paul, and these words are one's own sentiments. So generous were many of the Lord's children that we were relieved of all anxiety on the temporal side, and so many were the prayers on all sides that one was sure of the triumph of the Divine will and purpose.

And so it is, for one has been wonderfully enabled to prepare this issue of the WITNESS, and is finding life coming into the writing ministry.

* Our lights failed during this address.

If this should prove to be some little share in that remainder of the sufferings of Christ for His Body's sake which is the Church, may there come to you some enrichment by it which will amply justify it all and vindicate the wisdom of God. You will continue to pray that while one is still kept from public ministry and is in "bonds," there may be a swift and perfect fulfilment of all the Lord's intention. To save these lines from the deplorable failure which one feels to rest upon their purpose, please do believe that the thankfulness and indebtedness which one feels to you defies all endeavours in expression.

One would like just to recognise here the wonderful way in which the Lord has strengthened our brother, Mr. Jeffreys, for the increased burden of ministry during these many months. It has indeed been wonderful in our eyes, and one of the compensations of suffering has been the way in which other of the brethren have been anointed for ministry.

May the Lord greatly enrich you with His heavenly fulness.

Yours in bonds for the Body's sake,
T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

THE CENTRALITY AND UNIVERSALITY OF THE CROSS

(Continued.)

"Now unto the principalities and powers."

At length we come to consider the meaning of the Cross in its vaster ranges and its initial and final impact which is back of the universe and of history. It requires but little spiritual insight to recognise that the whole background of what is recorded from Genesis to Revelation is spiritual and not merely historical. The historical is but the effect in a limited degree of what is going on behind. This earth after all only receives a faint echo of what is taking place beyond. The more spiritual the Lord's people become the more they realise the true nature of the battle (Ephes. vi. 12), the more they feel the impact of a super-kosmic conflict, and the more possessed of the secrets of spiritual effectiveness they become. Moreover, the more spiritual they become in all their conceptions of the methods and means by which the ends of God are to be obtained or attained unto.

The Church which is Christ's spiritual Body is a heavenly organism, not an earthly organisation. While it is represented here on the earth, it is universal in its range (Heb. xii. 22-24).

The whole Church in heaven and on earth is interested and concerned in the battle which rages. The issue is the outworking of Calvary's triumph. It is not a matter of whether Calvary is victory, that was settled in eternity past and transacted literally on this earth by the Son of Man. It is the progressive realisation of all the content and implications of the Cross which is being challenged so fiercely.

Now this brings us to the deep significance of spiritual truth, and we must seek to keep clearly before us the difference between a mental enquiry which may be merely speculative and a spiritual understanding which is essentially practical and potent in its effect. Firstly as to this earth. It must be remembered that this earth is not isolated and self-contained. It is part of a system. While this is true in other respects it is especially true spiritually. *How far this is so is not revealed, but it is made clear that other realms and orders into the "heaven of heavens" and the "far above all heavens" encircling "The heavenlies" where "principalities, powers, world rulers of this darkness, and hosts of wicked spirits" have their present abode are all interested in and have their eyes directed toward this earth because of some special vocation which rests upon it relative to all these. It does not make much difference to the essential truth whether there be material worlds involved, and it would be going beyond our present specific purpose to discuss it. The truth is that some mighty, eternal, and universal purpose has been related for its decision and outworking to this earth, and this earth is central to a purpose which is as wide and inclusive as God Himself.*

Then as to man. So far as we know man is an unique creation and the only being in the universe who combines in his own nature the intuitional faculties of a spirit with the reasoning powers of a mind. "God is a spirit," and the angels are spirits. In creating man God determined to have a race at the centre of whose being, as the supreme and dominating reality, was Himself in life and nature. The life of His creation when it attains to His intention is a reproduction in finite form of the elements of His own life and being. To this end He gave man a spirit, in order that He being a Spirit might reside within man and reproduce Himself in the human spirit. Thus in carrying out and perfecting His purpose in the creation of man He subjects himself for a time to the limitations of humanity, but by the incarnation of Himself

in the Person of His Son He will lift humanity out of those limitations with which we are familiar into greater infinitudes of spiritual capacity.

But our theme holds us especially to the other phases of man's being. This is the psycho-psychical (physical and soulish) body with the power of procreation ("Be fruitful and multiply"); the man who thinks and loves and determines. The entire government, and therefore all the issues of this man should, according to the Divine intention, be in and through his spirit and spirit faculties which linked him with the spirit or spiritual world, and it all depended upon how faithful he was to this law of his spirit as to what the result would be immediately. If his spirit walked after "The Spirit" Who is God there would be spiritual growth in the Knowledge of God and in the capacity for fulfilling the purposes of God. His seed would also have been a spiritual and God-controlled seed. By this course he would have held Divine and spiritual sovereignty in the earth.

But there were other possibilities and this really brings us to the main point of our theme. The spirit as the "inner man" could listen to the psycho-psychical or outer man and conduct himself accordingly and not after his spiritual Head. In this case all the issues would be psychical or soulish and not spiritual. This possibility made room for another element and this is the key to the whole situation.

At this point the theme opens out in several directions or along several lines. In all, however, we accept without discussion the presence of Satan in the universe and especially interested in what is taking place on this earth.

Satan now approaches in the knowledge that if he can fertilise this beginning of the race with a seed from himself he can capture and be the God of the race. This seed, which is known throughout scripture as "the lie," of which Satan is the father he presents to the psycho-psychical man, the man who reasons, loves and determines. Instead of in turn testing it by the spirit at the court of God, the inner man capitulates and the outer man takes ascendancy. Do we see what has happened? The lie has entered by consent in the place of the truth. The false word has taken the place of the true. The seed of Satan has been sown in the race, it has its lodgment in the psychical man, it is a blinding and paralysing and fatal lie, and the blindness and paralysis and death have slain man's spirit

Godward, that he cannot know God's mind or will or purpose or fellowship.

But this is not all, there is a positive as well as a negative element. Man thus incapacitated is called "the natural (psychical) man."

There is however that which is called "carnal." This is the flesh-principle, not mere incapacitation but positive enmity to God and His Things. It only requires a sufficiently divinely spiritual presentation to make it manifest as being in every member of the race. This is the Satanic element as in the entire race in Adam. Those most conscious of this element are those who have been spiritually quickened, and such know best the warfare of flesh against spirit and vice versa. Before following this line further let us return to take up another, which really is not another but only a different aspect.

This interference of Satan with the psycho-psychical man had to do—as we have seen—with the power of procreation and therefore in the covenant of life in blood. Blood was from the beginning recognised as life, its outpouring as the pledge and gift of life, its interchange as a life covenant between those who shared its substance. The function of procreation could only be fulfilled by a shedding and encirclement of blood. Thus the shedding of blood became the door or threshold of life by a covenant in blood on the part of the first parents. From that time onward the significance was given to all kinds of thresholds. The threshold of life and death in sprinkled blood is one of the most familiar things of the Bible. We have the shedding of blood to secure a covering for the fallen pair doubtless at the gateway of the garden. God's answer to Cain's complaint is that "if thou doest not well a sin-offering is *at the door*." Then we have the encirclement of blood at the door of Israel's national life; the passover being to them "the beginning of months." This was not only a covenant of life against death on the ground of judgment and the threshold of their national life, it was also a spiritual marital covenant, between Jehovah and Israel by which He would propagate a race for His own glory. He that day betrothed the virgin daughter of Israel unto Himself (Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.). Judgments were always "in the gate," in Israel. And so from the time when first a twain were made one in a covenant of blood, thresholds, doors, gates, were places of altars and a spiritual significance was attached to them. The altar was at the door of the Tabernacle and there the blood of the covenant which was

taken into the holiest was shed. All this is very important when we come to consider Christ's work in the cross by which He was indeed the "Door" and place of the covenant of life. We leave this, however, till later.

The covenant sign with Israel was circumcision, an encircling of blood at the beginning of life. It represented a cutting off from all the uncircumcised and a cutting off unto Jehovah for His peculiar possession and purpose. It pointed to a spiritual truth, even the putting away of the whole body of the flesh by the Cross—even the flesh in which Satan had actual and judicial place and hold (Col. ii. 11). Circumcision took place on the eighth day. Eight is the resurrection number in Scripture. By the resurrection of Christ it has become the first day of the week. It is in the resurrection of Christ that there is a specific Divine declaration as to His Sonship—see Rom. i. 4, Acts xiii. 33, &c. Our sonship is on the ground of resurrection union with Christ as begotten from the dead, the whole body of the flesh having been cut off.

What we want to see is that the nature of sin and the nature of the fall, the basis of Divine judgment, the ground of the awful wrath of God, and the background of all is spiritual fornication. Satan had a hand in the functioning of procreative capacity and inoculated the race with evil, his own nature. It is not difficult to trace the fact by its fruits, although many might find difficulty in understanding the term "spiritual fornication." All forms of Satan worship have had a sensual element strongly developed.

In Israel the constant deviation from spiritual loyalty to Jehovah was marked by the setting up of groves with "pillars" or obelisks, male symbols, and Asherah, female symbols (Exodus xxxiv. 12-15; Deut. xvi. 21-22, &c.). This was a projecting of the Satanic system on one of its sides. Jehovah never treated these or any other forms of idolatry as just acts of innocence or ignorance, and smile at the foolishness of it all. He took it very seriously and destroyed the people with their idols if they forsook them not. He knew what was behind all this and what this implied on Satan's part. It was an abiding testimony to what Satan had done at the beginning, and of his footing in the nature of the race.

Without accumulating the vast evidence in the word of God as well as outside of it we are surely by this able to see that by reason of an interference to which Adam gave way, Satan

has in a very real sense captured the race and propagated a seed with his own nature. In what we have said about spiritual fornication in Israel we have only intended to illustrate the truth. The issue is the same without any Obelisks and Asherah. To summarise this—to the soulish-physical man possessing procreative powers Satan presented a false gospel, a system of lies beautifully and attractively adorned with a view to obtaining an opening for himself to capture the race and by men's consent hold judicial and actual ground in man's nature. The offer of Satan being entertained and acted upon brought about the immediate rupture of fellowship with God in spirit and the suspending of the Divine intention through Adam. This act of spiritual fornication slew man's spirit in its relation to God, and deadened his capacity for the spiritual interchange with God by which all the purposes of God could be realised. God was infinitely removed from man in fellowship, knowledge, likeness, and co-operation.

Man became another species than that intended. A foreign and sinister element leavened the race. Satan installed in man that which would be suitable to his government and which would answer to his suggestions (the entire range of deception), and which would make possible his entrance into man for his own incarnation. All this does not necessarily mean that man realises or believes it. He may have highly developed religious feelings and sublime ideas and conceptions. He may even be given much to religious activity and service, and yet he is still the natural man, repudiating the demand for being born again, and becoming "a new creation." However fine a specimen a man may be of this species the word still holds that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." It is the nature of man, not his positive attitude which is enmity. It is in the light of this interference in the propagating powers of the first parents and the result in polluted, tainted soul in the blood that the true nature of those new born sons of God are said to be "begotten, not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. xiii.).

Now we are ready to see how initially and basically the cross is central to the spiritual universe. There God in Christ, incarnate with a sinless human soul by the Eternal Spirit poured out that soul in his blood unto death. On the one hand He took on His soul all the pollution of the race—as only God could do—

and carried it away into a land of forgetfulness. Only a sinless soul could do this voluntarily and effectually, for corruption by pollution has no native inherence there, therefore it can be flung off as not constituent.

So the *works* of the devil are nullified and for man by the cross in the power that is in that blood, even the fleshless, enmityless, sinless soul of the Son of Man; there is

"Remission."—"This is my blood shed for remission."—Matt. xxvi. 28.

"Redemption."—"In Whom we have redemption through His blood."—Eph. i. 7, Col. i. 14, 1 Peter i. 19.

"Reconciliation."—"Peace through the blood of His cross, to reconcile all things unto Himself."—Col. i. 20.

Justification.—"Being now justified by His blood."—Rom. v. 9.

Purging.—"How much more shall the blood of Christ purge."—Heb. ix. 14, Rev. vii. 14.

Nearness.—"Made nigh by the blood of Christ."—Eph. ii. 13.

Access.—"Boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."—Heb. x. 19.

Liberty.—"Loosed from our sins by His blood."—Rev. i. 5.

Sanctification.—"That He might sanctify with His own blood."—Heb. xiii. 12.

Cleansing.—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."—1 John i. 7.

But there is more. On the other hand not only Satan's works but Satan himself met the impact of Christ. The whole Satanic hierarchy was dealt with when "He stripped off principalities and powers and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His Cross," Col. ii. 15. It is in that real that the supreme significance of the Cross is found and its transcendent power is felt.

Back of Egypt and the Egyptians were "the Gods of the Egyptians." Every judgment was ultimately against the deity represented by the symbol. The "sacred" Nile, the frog, the beetle, the lice, polluting altars, priests, and sacrifices, &c. Jehovah went behind the symbols to the spiritual system. "Against all the Gods of the Egyptians." So with the Canaanites. They, like the Egyptians, knew of Jehovah, and recognised His supremacy, but continued in a system which was spiritualistic at root. There were the rites of initiation into occultism as in "passing through the fire," the worship of demons, all working out in the grossest uncleanness.

In like manner the events of Daniel iii. are the challenge of the false spiritual system through the great image—the symbol and representation of the fire God Isbah. It is not Nebuchadnezzar, or Babylon as such, but Satan behind, and the tenth chapter exposes the real seat and nature of the conflict. "World rulers of this darkness are behind, and these marshalled and directed by him who was—before calvary—called "the prince of this world," and is still "the God of this age," "the prince of the power of the air."

The whole mighty thundering of God against idolatry has as its reason this false and antagonistic system of Satan whereby he would "be as the Most High," worshipped as God, sitting in the Temple of God, swaying the race and the world.

The persistence of the forces of Satan by every conceivable means—in prosperity or adversity, in false prophets in whose mouths were lying spirits, by bribe, by fear, by impatience, by subtle and almost imperceptible assimilation, by false charity and sympathy, by fleshly passions, to institute idolatry was ever with a view to necessitate Israel's casting off by God and the ruin of their witness and testimony to His sovereignty.

Keep this well in mind, for the device did not cease with Israel after the flesh.

Such as work in heathen countries know only too well the truth of this. The idol or fetish is not the ultimate, it is the spiritual system behind which the heathen are held in chains of iron. It is not such a far cry from this to the cultured, educated, civilised capitulation to the revival of spiritualism and occultism.

The whole subject of total abandonment and utter consecration to Christ is not merely something extra to "Christianity" or the Christian life. Its appeal has its strength in the tremendous fact that anything which limits the Lordship, Sovereignty, Proprietorship of Christ in any life is an ally to him whose eternal quest has been to capture the place of the Son as given by the Father, and at least to divide the honours. This is idolatry. Not necessarily acute forms of devotion to other objects of worship, or initiation into occultism, but a divided heart, a reservation from Christ. In the long run it will be manifest that such gave the enemy his ground for wrecking the whole Christian life, drawing right away from the Lord.

T. A. S.

(To be concluded.)

THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN (The 1928 Motto)

FAITH is the victory that overcome and "faith is the conviction of the reality of things not seen."

If this is true then the secret of victory is the capacity for and the deliberate persistence in looking—not at things seen but at the things not seen." So it has always proved to be in the history and experience of God's people. Paralysis, defeat, disaster have always been consequent upon judgment after the sight of the eyes (the eyes of the natural senses). Victory has always issued sooner or later from someone's assurance of and discernment of the Divine resources and realities behind all else.

How often this twofold issue upon this one principle is seen in the scriptural record of the experience of men. How often deliverance was because someone was given spiritual and moral ascendancy because in their close walk with God their inner eyes refused the tyranny of their outer and were given to a spontaneous "LOOKING OFF"! How often the effect of the Divine admonition by which triumphant emergence came was negatively "NOT AT THINGS SEEN," and positively "BUT AT THE THINGS NOT SEEN." And when "things" were hidden for faith's purifying, the sum total of all the things was "HIM Who is invisible."

So when a deep sea lies ahead, a ten times hardened and infuriated Pharaoh and his host hotly pursue, unnegotiable peaks rise on either side—a humanly impossible situation—but the saving attitude is "Not at the things seen, BUT"—and *what* a "but"!

A land of promise, of fulfilment, of realisation, the entering into the purpose of long and painful preparation lies immediately before. But, as is so often the case, one big final challenge to spirituality as against carnality stands between an exodus and an eisodus. Gigantic difficulties demonstrate before the senses and God waits in the dim unseen.

Again the issue of going over and in, or back and out rests upon a capacity to apprehend the Supreme Asset, and the exhortation is again heard—"NOT AT THE THINGS SEEN."

A prophet's servant who depends upon another's spiritual perception and has none of his own will see only the forces of earth beleaguering the city and will be petrified with fear and paralysed with apprehensiveness, but the prophet who has a first-hand fellowship with God

sees the mountains round about filled with "the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof."

An apostle who has seen what others have been blind to because of their grossness and because they do not know the Lord finds his supreme opportunity when all else in the company are terrorised and in dismay because of things seen—storm, tempest, havoc, darkness, threatening destruction. Everything falls in to his hands because his resources begin where men's end and his confidence is not resting in "the things seen" but in "the things not seen."

Thus we might illustrate *ad libitum*. Satan succeeds along a line which captures the senses of body and soul, and many of God's sincerest children are lead away by an appeal thereto. God seeks His ends in and through the spirit, deeper than feeling or seeing, deeper than sensation or emotion or reason.

Satan is great at demonstrations.

God is great at hiding Himself, in order that he may be sought out in spirit and in truth. If the Church is a heavenly body, if the law of her life is faith, and if the pilgrimage of faith is translation and transition from the earthlies to the heavenlies, from the natural to the spiritual, then surely we may expect that the nearer she comes to the end of her journey the more acute will become the demand for spiritual vision, discernment, and perception. The more will Satan seek success by deception on the ground of the senses, and the more will the Lord make the true life in Himself spiritual, divorced from earthly proof, evidence, and gratification, one of the pure essence of faith, looking "Not at the things seen," or FOR things seen. The spirit of pilgrimage is that of "strangers on the earth," and the sense of strangeness and estrangement in the earthlies must necessarily increase even to an agony of home-sickness for the things which are heavenly.

So we gather up the word; victory, spiritual progress, and transcendent service lie in the direction of spiritual capacity to recognise, draw upon, and rest in those Divine things unseen, but all inclusively "HIMSELF." "JESUS."

Take this motto word by word, bit by bit.

"WHILE."—May it be all the time, no lapses because we ceased to look away.

"WE LOOK."—Deliberately, fixedly, in faith.

"NOT AT THE THINGS SEEN."—Let this be a check, a warning, a rebuke, a correction, in the hours of the seeming.

"BUT."—Every adversity and difficulty may be very real, actual or threatening—"But

—"

"THE THINGS NOT SEEN."—And perhaps the supreme reality, though so often hidden from the natural consciousness—"Christ IN YOU."

"LOOKING OFF."—Oh, for a trained and spontaneous gravitation of looking off—from—unto. T. A.-S.

FIRE WORDS

"O God, my words are cold :
The frosted frond of fern or feathery palm
Wrought on the whitened pane—
They are as near to fire as these my words ;
Oh that they were as flames ! " Thus did I cry,
And thus God answered me : " Thou shalt have
words
But at this cost, that thou must first be burnt,
Burnt by red embers from a secret fire,
Scorched by fierce heats and withering winds
that sweep
Through all thy being, carrying thee afar
From old delights. Doth not the ardent fire
Consume the mountain's heart before the flow
Of fervent lava ? Would'st thou easefully,
As from cool, pleasant fountains, flow in fire ?
Say, can thy heart endure or can thy hands be
strong
In the day that I shall deal with thee ?

"For first the iron must enter thine own soul,
And wound and brand it, scarring awful lines
Indelibly upon it, and a hand
Resistless in a tender terribleness
Must thoroughly purge it, fashioning its pain
To power that leaps in fire.
Not otherwise, and by no lighter touch,
Are fire-words wrought."

AMY WILSON CARMICHAEL.

"I will cause thee to hear My words."—
Jeremiah xviii. 2.

AMONGST the things that this day brings
To you may come a call,
The which, unless you're listening,
You may not hear at all ;
Lest it be soft, and very low,
Whate'er you do, where'er you go,
Be listening.

"Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."—
1 Samuel iii. 9.

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

BY THE LATE DR. ALEXANDER WHYTE,
EDINBURGH.

THERE is nothing more extraordinary, in this extraordinary man, than the way in which he always identifies himself with Christ, and especially with Christ crucified. Christ and Paul so coalesce, so to speak, as to become one man on the Cross. It takes both Christ and Paul to make up "Christ crucified." Christ is apprehended; is bound; is accused; is condemned; and is crucified for Paul. And then, Paul is arrested, is accused, is condemned, and is crucified in, and with Christ. It is this mystical, this transcendental, this evangelical coalescence and identification of Christ with Paul, and of Paul with Christ, that the Apostle so labours to set forth in his glorious doctrines of the suretyship and the substitution of Christ. That is to say, the imputation of Paul's sin and guilt to Christ; and, then, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and the impartation of Christ's holiness to Paul.

My brethren, I can very well believe that these great experiences, and these great doctrines of the Apostles are so Divine, and so deep, that your half-evangelised heart does not as yet fully and joyfully respond to them. Paul's tremendously strong doctrines concerning Christ, and His Cross, may somewhat stagger you. But that is because the holy law of God has not yet entered your heart, and your conscience, to your complete prostration and condemnation. When God's holy law comes home to you, in all its burning holiness, as it came home to Paul; and when God follows up that by "revealing His Son in you," as your alone atonement, and your alone righteousness, you will then become as mystical and as evangelical in your anthropology, and in your Christology, as Paul was himself. Aye, you will become as evangelically startling and magnificent in your language about Christ, and His Cross, as Luther was himself. Yes, my brethren, I can very well believe that Paul's so original, so passionate, so powerful, and so cross-concentrated faith, both staggers and angers some of you to-day. But these great doctrines do not stagger, nor anger, any one of you, half so much as they staggered and exasperated Paul himself at one time.

But now, and by this time, for Paul "old things are for ever passed away, and all things are become new." So new, that Paul is now crucified continually with Christ, Who loved Paul, and gave Himself for Paul.

THE CROSS and THE NEW CREATION

The Old Creation.

The First Adam.

"Breathed---the breath of life"(lives) *Gen:2.7*

"The first Adam a living soul," *1Cor 15:45*

"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," *Gen:2.17*

"As in Adam all die," *1Cor:15.22*

"The law of sin and death," *Rom:8.2*

"He has become flesh," *Gen:6.3*

"The flesh profiteth nothing," *John:6.53*

Romans. VII "I"

"The Old man which is corrupt," *Eph:4.22*

"The Natural man---carnal mind," *Rom:8.6*

"In my flesh---no good thing," *Rom:7.18*

"After the flesh---corruption," *Gal:6.8*

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh," *John:3.6*

"The seed corruption---death," *Rom:6.23*

The New Creation. 2Cor: 5.17.

The Last Adam.

"He breathed on them," *John:20.22*

"The last Adam a quickening spirit," *1Cor:15.45*

"Newness of life," *Rom:6.4*

"In Christ shall all be made alive," *1Cor:15.22*

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ," *Rom:8.2*

"Not after the flesh, but Spirit," *Rom:8.1*

Romans. VIII. "Spirit"

"The New man which is created in righteousness and holiness," *Eph:4.24*

"The New man," *Col:3.10*

"Newness of Spirit," *Rom:7.6*

"In likeness of His resurrection," *Rom:6.5*

"Have crucified the flesh," *Gal:5.24*

"Our old man was crucified," *Rom:6.6*
"Ye died" *Col:3.3*
"Crucified with Christ," *Gal:2.20*

The Christian Life -

- Not - (1) A religion.
- (2) A teaching, i.e. "The teaching of Christ"
- (3) A society or sect

But a New Creation.

THE FELLOWSHIP AND MINISTRY

It was blessed to be carried into this New Year in a stream of happy fellowship and conference. First of all there was the Christmas-tide with a small home-circle in the House where much joy because of the Gift of God was shared in some blessed hours of praise and prayer, this in addition to the gatherings of the Lord's Day (fittingly Christmas Day) when we kept the feast with Him in the midst. In the evening the Loaf and the Cup were shared as out from Himself. The wonder of this testimony to His death, resulting in His Life for and in the Body unto His Coming, is increasing in our hearts.

The January Conference, December 30, to January 2 ushered in the New Year with a solemn conviction concerning our responsibility to "walk in the Light as He is in the Light." The cry is surely coming, "Go ye forth to meet Him." And it is the *manner* of this going forth that we all need to learn. What is the Spirit saying to the church? Ought not all the members to be hearing the same call? The theme, therefore, was the more fitting—"The vision and vocation of the sons of God," pre-faced by "The Cross" as the accomplished fact of the Divine Passion, and the qualification, "through the Cross" as indicating the only method of the Glorified Saviour's operation. For vision must become vocation, or it is as faith without works, dead. The Holy Spirit must make effectual in our heart that death to the self-life without which the Divine Life of the Son of God cannot function through us, and therefore true service depends as much upon the operation of the Cross in our hearts as does salvation. It is because this is not realised that there is so much of the "Ego" the "I" in Christian ministry, resulting in schism because of the personal element obscuring the Christ Glory and Purpose.

When *He* is glorified by the Spirit his attendant ministers are obscured, even though they be Moses and Elijah, and no one is seen "save Jesus only."

It is significant how the Lord fills the House with hungry hearts each Conference time, and those who came were not disappointed. He came through, and each was met according to their need. The Presence of the Lord was realised in a convicting, humbling way. But should not this be the effect of His Presence

upon all, for only those made humble are teachable. Nevertheless, He exalts such to be with Him in His Throne.

MINISTRIES.

We could write much of the Lord's grace in using our young brethren, but we must content ourselves with the following brief notes. Our brother Victor Thomas has returned to Aberdare where the Lord is bringing His children to a clearer understanding as to what is the nature of their testimony and service. It is hoped that there may be a definite MISSION of the Word there in the latter half of February.

Edward Goodwin has had seals to his ministry in Worcestershire, and will be taking the Gospel van from thence to Oxfordshire, working among the villages as he journeys. When we were at Colchester early this month we had a blessed touch of fellowship with our brother Mr. George Fox, the secretary of the League of Prayer responsible for this village ministry in many parts of the country. The thought is to give the full message of the Cross in the villages of England, and there is liberty given to the messengers to preach the Gospel *in the Holy Spirit*.

Our sister, Violet Chapman, enters Redcliffe House for training this month. We believe this is to be the Lord's choice for her. Our young brother, Herbert Stephenson, enters Black Pill Bible School, Swansea. Of this guidance also we are quite happy. Frank Brignall returns to the B.T.I., Glasgow, for his last term there.

It is a joy to us to see these young people going out into ministry and preparation for ministry, and this in such varied relations as to make it plain that the Lord is seeing to it that we are brought into touch with all them that "love our Lord Jesus in sincerity." Our ministry is *in* and thus *to* the whole Body of Christ, and while we hold to the specific testimonies He has given, we would not be cut off from any of His redeemed people.

We have already referred to the ministry at Colchester, January 3rd to 5th. The gatherings, held at the Friends' Meeting House, were representative of companies of the Lord's people from many miles around. The Word came through in liberty, and we are praising God that "The Testimony of Jesus" was proclaimed by the Holy Spirit, and that many lives were reached. Our brother and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Parker, need the encouragement of our prayers in their efforts to gather together the Lord's people upon a free basis for the Monthly Bible Meetings.

T. M. J.

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, HONOR OAK ROAD, LONDON, S.E.23.

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship.

Sundays: 11 a.m., 8 p.m. (Young People's Meeting), and 6.30 p.m. Mondays: 7.30 p.m. Wednesdays: 8 p.m.
Saturdays: 7.30 p.m.

Conferences are held every week-end (Saturday and Sunday), and also a longer week-end at the beginning of each month, this fixed by the first Sunday. (Friday to Monday evenings, inclusive.) All particulars may be obtained from G. Paterson, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

Ministers: T. Austin-Sparks; T. Madoc Jeffreys; G. Peterson (General Secretary).

Guest House Hostesses: Lady Ogle; Mrs. M. Brand.

Telephone: Sydenham 5216.

Telegrams: "Syndesmos, Forest, London."

Cables "Syndesmos, London."

WIDER MINISTRY IN JANUARY

3-5 Colchester. Friends' Meeting
House.
4 Tunbridge Wells.
10 Dublin. Y.M.C.A.
11-12 Belfast. Y.M.C.A.
16-20 Newcastle Area.
16 Ferry Hill.
17 Oakwell Gate.

18 Rowland's Gill.
19 Swallowwell.
20 Newcastle. Connaught Hall.
26 Derwent Hall. Newington Gr'n.

Limehouse: Brunswick Chapel,
Sun. 22nd Mr. PATERSON. Sun. 29th Mr. ALEXANDER.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sums received during December, 1927.

Local, £1 9s. 0½d.; Leicester, 5s.; Willosden Green, 1s.; Brockley, 2s. 6d.; Upper Norwood, 5s.; Dorking, 5s.; Horsforth, 4s.; Leamington Spa, 2s. 6d.; Maida Vale, 10s.; Williamstown (Dublin), 3s. 5d.; Lewisham, 2s. 6d.; Blackheath,

5s.; Leigh-on-Sea, 10s.; Glasgow, 12s.; Tunbridge Wells, 2s. 5d.; New York, 4s.; Bermondsey, 10s.; Blackpool, 4s.; Wimbledon, 5s.; Heaton, 5s.; Newington Green, 2s.; Liverpool, £1. Total, £7 6s. 10½d. (WITNESS AND TESTIMONY FUND.)

1928.

“While we Look, not at the things seen,
but at the Things not Seen.”

“Looking-off unto Jesus!”

ii Cor. iv. 18.

Heb. xii. 2.

“Though now ye See HIM not, yet Believing ye Rejoice.”

“He endured as Seeing HIM Who is invisible.”

I Pet. i. 8.

Heb. xi. 27.

“Faith ... is the Conviction of the Reality of
Things we do not See.”

Heb. xi. 1. (Weymouth.)

Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre.

A Witness and a Testimony.

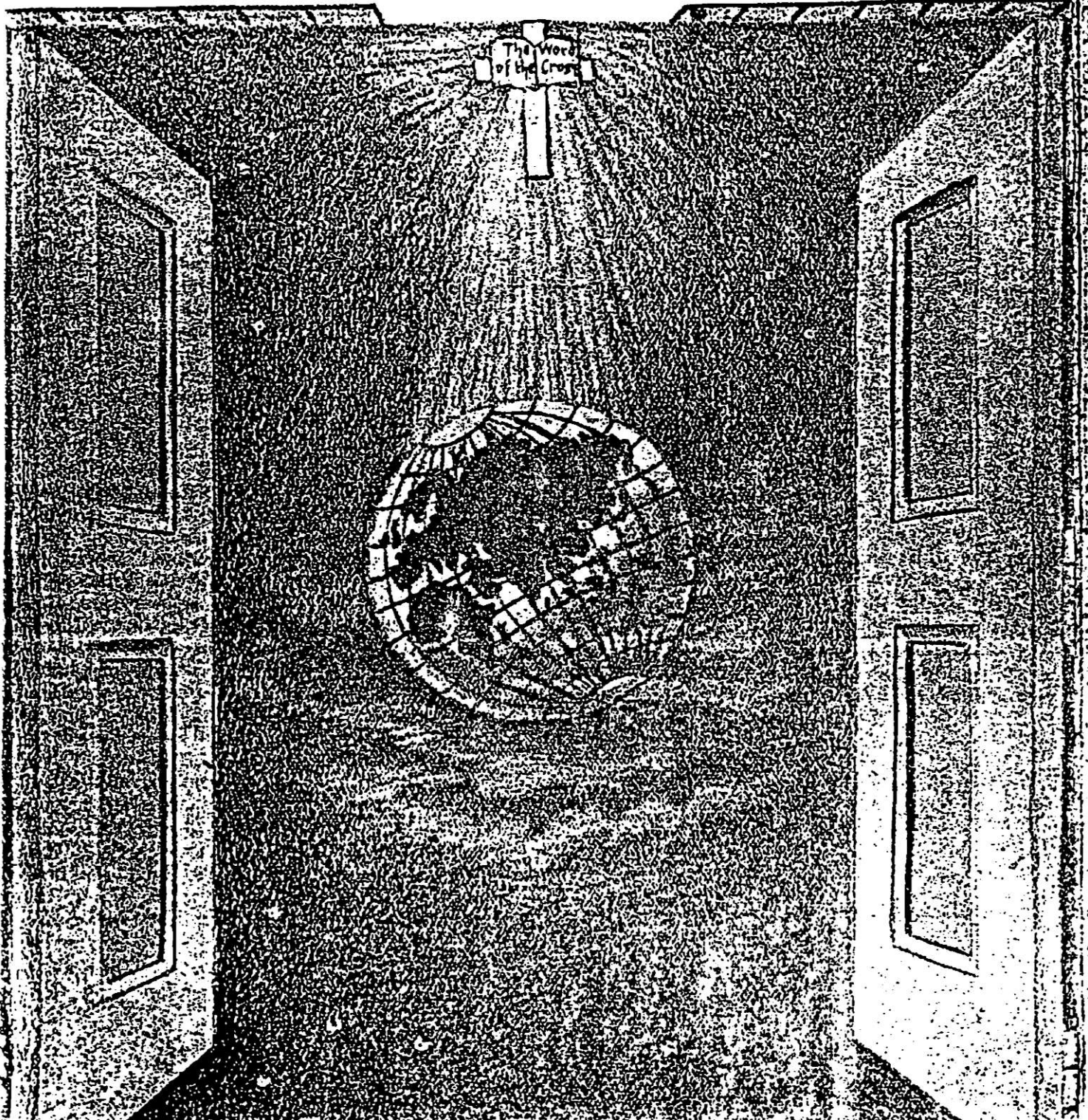
The above in two colours, red and black; on card and corded, can be had at twopence each.

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

FEBRUARY, 1928



VOL. 6. No. 2.



MINISTERS' LETTER

February, 1928.

BELOVED OF OUR LORD,

In times of fiercest trial we have to fall back upon the sure fact that *His* love never faileth.

After all faith is not a dogma but the trust we have in a Person, and though we may think we have travelled beyond Job, there is no grander word than, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

And if we also know this with all the added light of Calvary to cheer us, is not Paul's assertion just suited for the hour of the enemy's most cruel pressure and raging. "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

There come hours when we can only hang on to His faithfulness to see us through. But is not this faith? We simply trust with our eyes fixed on a Person—Jesus. He said, "If it were not so I would have told you," and our tried hearts can only whisper back, "Thank you, truest Lord, whose blood seals your love, I trust your word."

This may not seem like a conquering faith, for it is not faith in its shouting mood; yet one would say it is faith at its best, faith in the dark, faith hanging on with just the grip of an unalterable trust that Jesus is Jesus, God is God. It is faith's fortitude, and out of its trial shall emerge the satisfaction of proving God even as He also proves us. He proves true, and by His grace we prove true also.

We do not want Him to come saying "Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Wherefore "Stand fast in the Lord," beloved. He is the Rock. Who was it said, "I have often trembled on the Rock, but the Rock never trembled under me"? But we would say "Even when my faith is small, trusting Jesus, that is all." But it is ALL!

Yours in the same spirit of faith,

T. AUSTIN SPARKS,
T. MADOC JEFFREYS.

THE FELLOWSHIP AND MINISTRY

MALTA.

This New Testament island has been very much in our thoughts and prayers during the past month for the reason that our brother, Mr. Sparks, has been detained there with a recurrence of his old physical trouble.

The first reports were alarming, but the latest news is re-assuring. And now our brother, Mr. Paterson, is with him having gone out to his succour. Fortunately from the first he was in good Christian hands at the George V. Hospital. The skilled nursing, and now the added strength of familiar fellowship, are effecting rapid progress, and there are hopes of an early return home. One thing at least can be said of our experiences in this fellowship and ministry during the past fifteen months—they are not lacking in change and vicissitude. We are being constantly tested in various ways, and in some respects the trial of this past month has been the most severe hitherto met. Nevertheless we are persuaded God Himself has us and His things in charge, and He is surely working His purpose through. We shall come out on higher ground.

THE PAPER.

These circumstances have occasioned a relapse to our usual belated issue, but perhaps in this as in other matters the Lord does not wish us to be confined to too strict a programme. The paper does represent our "witness and testimony" for *February*, and it is all to His praise, for "goodness and mercy" do follow us, and in all these things we more than conquer through Him, Who loves us.

THE FEBRUARY CONFERENCE.

The Lord gave the Word: this sums up the impression left by a remarkable Conference. *His Presence* was throughout the feature of each session. Indeed, we are learning, though it may seem trite to say so, that His Presence is salvation, for His Presence is everything; it certainly constitutes the ecclesia, since without His Presence we have no right to call ourselves the *assembly* of God. It is not the preaching, the teaching, or anything that may gather under the category of human activity, but it is HE, Himself, Who brings and supplies all the constituents of the feast. Without His Presence word and work are all in vain.

It is one thing to pay lip-service to such truths, but quite another to live in them and by them. We therefore praise God for His faithfulness in reducing us to such weakness and impotence, that having ruled us out, He has a free course for the manifestation of His glory.

It is also very difficult to report the *spoken* word. Our readers must therefore pray that

the Lord may, by His Spirit so bring the messages that were spoken and are now reported in these pages *through*, that they may share with us the deep impressions made upon our hearts.

The theme we felt was Divinely timely, "The Cross, and the unity of the Vision and of the Ministry of the Church, the Body of Christ."

One thing was emphatically registered as being absolutely essential for the children of God to realise in these closing days of the dispensation—**THE ONLY objective VISION** of the Church must be **JESUS, revealed by the Holy Ghost.**

For fear of any question we mean Jesus the Christ come in the flesh, crucified, and thus glorified through His out-resurrection.

All other visions are *subjective*, that is, they may be realisations in experience of certain truths in the Christian life; but there abides **ONE VISION**, the Heavenly Vision; it is Jesus in the Godhead, and the fulness of the Godhead in Him. The Light, Who is God, is the Light of His Glory in the Face of Jesus the Christ.

The complementary truth to this was that the vision of the Body is not objective, but subjective. We do not visualise a Body: we see Jesus. But by the Holy Ghost we should *realise* the Body as a Life that is One in the fellowship of One Spirit.

So likewise the *one* ministry is the building-up of His Glorious Body in the energy of the Holy Spirit. The ministry is wholly of the One Spirit. He can only use us as the natural man is kept continually crucified, and thus His Life is free to function through us. And it is also so necessary to make clear that *every* saint should share in this one ministry, the Holy Ghost's upbuilding of the Body, for the Body maketh its own increase in that abiding constituent of the Divine Nature which is Love; that is to say God Himself in Christ supplies the increase as out from His own Being by the Holy Spirit. It is an increase of *God!* Therefore it *must* be by His Spirit, since it is a circulation and supplying of His own Life through the members as they abide in Him, and thus, through the travail of the Interceding Spirit, are made channels for the Divine communications.

This is so important to *realise*. What avail are mental visions of the truth of the Body without a spiritual realisation of the *fact* of the Body as working in our own hearts in the Passion of the Divine Love?

Then it is so easy to say this, and to re-affirm it, but once again, beloved friends in our Lord, *it is not the anointed ministry in the Word that builds up the saints into the heavenly Body of God in Christ*: this is but the means the Holy Spirit would use to bring the saints to maturity, a maturity in the simplicity of the revelation of the Truth as it is in Jesus, in order that they, the saints (including these anointed ministers also as saints now) might commence through the travail and in-working of the Spirit in their hearts to build-up the Body in the Love that prompts and compels continual Holy Ghost prayer.

May God call us all to our holy, heavenly vocation, a vocation so far beyond our self-bound nature as well as all natural powers, that we are forced to cry unto Him for His enabling Spirit to mightily energise us.

Surely the Cross in its utter ruling out of the self-life is the only possible basis for such a ministry.

THE OUT-GOING MINISTRY.

These continue much as reported in previous months, and are only mentioned here for the purpose of procuring prayer co-operation.

At Aberdare, our Sister Florence (Miss Green) has joined forces with our brother, Mr. Victor Thomas, for a fortnight's intensive mission. The Lord has been burdening the hearts of our friends there that the evangel might go out to the unsaved, and we rejoice in this significant development. Already there have been a few who have come to the Lord via the full message of the Cross, and we are looking to Him that a real "break" may take place, for this will help the faithful little band at Aberdare to realise the implications of their "Fellowship" as the Lord adds to them those who have been born out-of-Himself. There is nothing like the miracle of a few Holy Ghost converts to make plain what the church of the living God is.

At Waunllwyd, Monmouthshire, our brother, Mr. Gresham Speedy, continues to hold forth Jesus as the Christ, crucified. It is a plowing time for him. But an encouraging feature is the presence and interest of a great number of young people who can be reached. We stand for a strategic gathering-together of souls unto His NAME in this place.

Mr. Edward Goodwin reports definite work of the Spirit in each village as he tours from Worcestershire into Oxfordshire. He is now at Pershore. There is need of strong reinforcement of prayer as he is now working alone.

There is much hunger for the true gospel, but much darkness also, and as souls are awakened under conviction of sin, the enemy is aroused also, and antagonism on the part of those who want not Christ, but a pleasure-loving religion.

In Northern Ireland our brother, Mr. Crowe, has so far met a real need in the area around Belfast that a three days' visit is now extended to ten. Our brother, Mr. Walker of Kircubbin, writing about this ministry says, "It will take real prayer *every step*. The burden one has is for the release of the Life of God through the members of the Body. *Life* is what is needed, but one is seeing that this is only possible by the Cross through which we are living in Him. It seems as if God is doing a quiet deep work in preparation for *something*—but the thing is tremendous and far-reaching."

Verily it is, for it is nothing other than the preparation for His Coming!

At Clacton-on-Sea our sisters, Miss Janes and Miss Parlett are waiting upon the Lord for His pattern. The house at "Elsiemar," Dudley Road, while it will accommodate a few guests is evidently meant to be a gathering place for intercessory prayer, waiting upon the Lord in His rest, that so His burdens may be given. Our sister, Miss Parlett is more and more being compelled to an evangelistic ministry among the villages of Essex. It is hoped that in a week or so there may be an all-day gathering for prayer that these openings of the Lord may be brought to fruition.

The monthly conference at Newcastle is due this week, the 24th. In this district as already indicated the need for ministry is so clamant that we feel the time has come for some regular provision that the little companies of His hungry sheep may have that "Word which is Life in the Holy Ghost."

One may just add that it is becoming increasingly difficult to write these notes, and there is a question as to whether they should be continued. They involve the mentioning of names, which we dislike; and yet, certain information must be given for prayer.

But we are realising more than ever before that *man*, as such, is not in this work; it is all of that Heavenly Man, God in His Throne, Who by His Spirit is now gathering His Body unto Himself, *and out from the earth*.

There is a mighty far-reaching stirring, a movement and a working, not seen of men, nor to be advertised among men *for it is holy*—a hidden, glorious work of God the Holy Ghost.

There is a Cry out-of-heaven. *He* is calling.

But that Cry must have its companion response in our hearts as we hear it, for it is the Cry of the Spirit, and if the Spirit of the Christ be also in us, beloved, shall we not know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings in our spirit, and with groanings that cannot be uttered *pray*. Out of such praying ministry shall issue. His Cry is "Come,"—and our cry, by the Spirit is also "Come." "Come, Lord Jesus, come swiftly!" But the Coming means travail, striving, working—yet all by His "*in-working*."

MARCH CONFERENCE.

This is due, Friday, March 2nd, to Monday the 5th. The Theme (D.V.) will be:—
The CROSS, and THE GRACE OF GOD in Jesus the Christ.

The Grace of the Christ-Life.

(a) Life, in the begetting.

(b) Service, in the anointing.

ALSO EASTER.

We purpose, if the Lord tarry until then, having a FIVE DAYS' Conference as from Thursday evening, April 5th, to Tuesday evening, the 10th.

Friends will be well advised to communicate forthwith to ensure accommodation.

Particulars will be issued next month in due course.

"THE CROSS—AND THE UNITY OF THE VISION AND MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY"

Ephesians iii.

(FEBRUARY 4, 1928.)

THE theme of our Conference is, as you are aware,

THE CROSS, AND THE UNITY OF VISION AND MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH,

and we are made to see in the passage we have read how the apostolic ministry of Paul was to the effect that he might bring this vision to bear upon the spirits of God's people. When we say "apostolic" we are not thinking of some ecclesiastical office, but of a functioning of the Holy Ghost through a member of the Body who does not think anything of himself but who calls himself in this very passage, as in the 8th verse—"Less than the least of all saints."

It is very important that we do not get "heady" ideas about office and position in the church, otherwise it will be fatal to our life and ministry. "If any man think himself to

be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." In this life we have nothing possessive, as such, but rather we are possessed. It is not for us in the church to think ourselves to be anything, but rather to recognize that we are possessed of God unto an Eternal Purpose; and you get, therefore, the revelation of the humility of the Apostle, his *essential* humility, as he only ventures to speak to the church "As less than the least of all saints."

But as he himself has said (in the 7th verse), he has been made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto him according to the "effectual working" of His power. As you know—this is a very common expression of the Apostle's—"the effectual working"; a word which is best translated "energising." It was an inward energising of the Holy Ghost that enabled him to serve. It was not something that he could go forward in as his own possession. He could not go about and be advertised as an Apostle; he could not speak as one who had authority in the realm of personal assertion. It was by the in-working and energising of the Holy Ghost, and for this he was very dependent; he depended upon the prayers of saints; he went about in weakness, in fear and much trembling; his speech was not in the persuasive words of men's wisdom, and there were places where he could not speak very much, for various reasons. There were other places where the word of God ran and had free course, and God was glorified; but he recognised that the source of his ministry was not in himself at all; it was in God, and only as it came forth from the Eternal Spirit, through the co-operation of other members of the Body, could he have that utterance, which is the utterance of God.

It is well for us to recognise these principles of ministry. There is nothing in which the Cross so operates as in Holy Ghost ministry. In the ministry of the flesh, the flesh, of course, is exalted; but in the ministry of the Holy Ghost the flesh is abased. That is to say, you are continually reduced to absolute impotence and weakness, and thrown back upon the resources of God, the Spirit. It would be well for us always to keep this in mind when we read the words of the Apostle, lest we get a false vision of him, and make him sometimes to look as a great figure, a master of assemblies; whereas the actual facts of the case are essentially different. He is an insignificant man among men, as far as the world is concerned. The Holy Ghost has preserved his epistles

so that they come down to us making us to realise that he was the mightiest instrument Christ had in that early church; but he was among the people of his time as unknown, led of the Holy Spirit from town to town, labouring with his own hands. In the sight of men, not to be esteemed, nevertheless speaking in the power of the Holy Spirit. His ministry was chiefly with ones and twos and threes, or at the most with small and insignificant assemblies. That was the method in which the Body was being builded up in those days. One is led to say that, and to dwell upon it, because our imaginations so run away with us that we paint false pictures, and get wrong ideas of the way in which the Body is being built up. You will discover, as you go on, that it is in the hidden work of the Spirit that the glory of God is found, not in that which is seen and advertised among men.

Well now, his ministry is none other than this—it is to speak that word of the new creation whereby the light of God can shine in upon human hearts, and, as he himself has said in the second epistle to the Corinthians, it requires the same omnipotence of God to speak the word that breaks through into the heart to give the revelation of Jesus Christ, as was needed to speak "Light" in the first creation. God Who spake the light out of darkness, it is He who has shined in our hearts. It is the same omnipotence of God; but this ministry is only made possible by the weakness of our flesh, as we are reduced to ineffectiveness. It is thus He gets His opportunity of speaking His creative word of the new creation. In the 9th verse he says it is his especial work to enlighten all; to make all see. You cannot make people see. We discover that more and more. We feel like shaking people sometimes to make them see and we are constrained to talk with great vehemence of spirit, and yet you feel somehow that words are not sufficient, and our cry is Oh, that God would make them see! But you cannot make them see except by the unction of the Holy Ghost. It is He, He Himself, makes people see; because these things are not seen by the natural mind at all. They are foolishness to the natural mind, and it is the natural mind coming into the things of God that creates confusion, which is why you have the chaos of to-day. This is very obvious, though perhaps in some directions, not so obvious; but the confusion to-day in vision is due to the fact that the natural mind comes in to speculate upon the things of God; and if there

is one thing we need to learn, it is that the natural mind must not come in to speculate upon the things of God. I refer to those who are really born again, and who in the first place were enabled to see the Cross by the Spirit, but who afterwards have not recognised that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, as our ways are not His ways, and who still think they can talk about the infinite on a finite level. You cannot. When God the Holy Ghost breaks in upon your spirit to reveal, not the historical Jesus, but Jesus in the Godhead, Jesus as God Himself in the throne—when the Holy Spirit does that amazing work in you—you cannot go on then to have a mental system of truth built upon or around that first revelation; but that revelation must continue to become, all the while, an increasing revelation of the Son of God. You find in the next chapter a reference to the climax of this process of revelation (13th verse).—“Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith, and at the oneness of the full knowledge of the Son of God.” That is to say there is a progressive revelation of the Christ, and that progressive revelation is all the while by the Holy Spirit. Now one of the reasons for confusion in the church is because, after people have been born again, they still bring to bear their natural minds upon the interpretation of truth. This is why there are these endless schools of thought. *We ought to be all saying the same thing; preaching the same thing; instead of that you have numbers of earnest Christians—one admits their earnestness, their spirituality of life—bringing the natural mind to bear upon the Bible, and upon interpretations, teachings about the Body, the coming of the Lord, translation, &c.* The Holy Ghost will give to us the certainty of truth constantly, but the great danger is that you may commence to preach in the Holy Ghost, or you may commence to prophesy in the Holy Spirit in forth-telling the mysteries of God, but afterwards bring your own mind in. That is the tragedy of many a figure in the history of the church. Those who have been raised up by God, commenced in the Spirit, and whether the devil or “I” got in we do not know (they both go together: where egotism begins the devil is at your elbow) they went on in their own mentality, they began to bring their own mind to bear upon the infinite things of God. That was where disaster came in. It is very well to recognise this principle at the beginning. You cannot know anything in the realm of the Spirit, except by the Spirit. You cannot know

anything of the things of the Christ, except by the Holy Ghost; and we, who have commenced to speak, of all men, need to recognise our responsibility before God that we should not begin to go on in the energy of our flesh, in the energy of our intellect, or in any kind of thought of our own to interpret the things of God and thus to create special schools of teaching. And so you see how the cross must operate here in the mental realm to keep the messenger continually in the place of death; and the Apostle gives good reason why the stake should be driven through him, that he might be kept there crucified constantly, lest he might be exalted, so that God could have the opportunity of speaking that broken word through him right unto the end.

Now this is, you see, the marvellous functioning of the Holy Ghost, in that here is one, a sent one, who gives out from God, by the Spirit, His utterance, and is thus able to make all men see. Not that he is able, but that the Holy Spirit is able, through him, to make men see what is “the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the ages hath been hid in God.”

And here you have stated “*The Vision.*” The vision is the fellowship of the mystery which has been hid in God; and all the children of God should have that one vision. The Holy Spirit should be able to so break in upon the heart as to present this one vision—“the fellowship of the mystery which hath been hid in God.”

Now what is the fellowship which hath been hid in God? We could give many explanations of that. We could get into far-reaching ranges of truth about that; but it is well to ask ourselves if “the fellowship of the mystery which hath been hid in God is anywhere clearly defined; if it is focal anywhere; if it is reduced to an issue in our minds where we can clearly see it as one thing, centralised, gathered into a single revelation? Well you have only to turn to that very familiar passage in the 1st chapter of the first epistle of John, which we have turned to again and again in successive conferences. Now this is what John saw: this is what Paul saw, and this is what Peter saw all by one Spirit. They all came to this. Paul saw it perhaps first the most clearly, and then others accepted the revelation of the Holy Ghost through him. John came to the same vision, and Peter at last we know came to it in clear vision as he testifies to his agreement with his “beloved brother Paul.” But here it is!—

"That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes; which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Logos of Life (and the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and announce unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard announce we unto you that you also may have fellowship with us (the fellowship of the mystery): and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

So we see the fellowship of the mystrey hid in God is the fellowship of a *life*, not the fellowship of a truth. This is very important to recognise. If you begin to think of fellowship about a truth you will soon find that Satan can attack that. It is the fellowship of a life hid with Christ in God, a life that is not your own in a possessive sense, but a life out of which you are born, and into which you are baptised by the Spirit. It is the life of the Son of God. It is the fellowship of the mystery which hath been hid in God. It centralises then in Christ: it is not separate from Him. It is life through a Person and life in a Person; and remains so. It is never divorced from Jesus. It is the truth as it is *in* Jesus, in those dimensions, of course, of Jesus of which we are speaking now. We are not speaking of Jesus local and finite. We are not speaking of Jesus geographically and historically, we are speaking of Jesus in the Godhead. We are speaking of the infinite God revealed in Christ Jesus, of Him who fills the heavens.

Now the Apostle John, as we have often seen, is filled with the amazement of this vision; he is lost in wonder. You never lose your sense of wonder if you have seen Jesus. You never lose your worship in the Spirit, if you have seen and retain your vision of Jesus. I mean *this* vision. I do not mean geographical vision, the vision over your shoulder we speak of—"the vision that fades in ancient shades of far-off Galilee"—but the vision of your heart's eyes lifted up in to heaven so that you have come to see *through*, because the Light has broken through. You see God in Jesus Christ; and you see what He has come into the world to do. Not only to die for our sins—for He died for the sins of the whole world as such—but because we have accepted, in this age, the full meaning of that Incarnation, and therefore what identification with Him in death is; so we have come to see that He has risen from

among the dead into the Father in order to give to us that Life which He now shares with the Father as Man. It is *that* Life!

This is the vision of John, now an old man, but broken in heart with amazement and wonder and worship as He sees this Life so manifested. That is the fellowship of the mystery, the mystery of this Life which was hid in God and which was manifested in Christ here on earth first of all as in the days of His flesh, then when He had passed through the way of His passion, was further manifested to His disciples in His out-resurrection; then in His ascension Glory, and as He was afterwards manifested to Paul, and to others through Paul. He was seen received-up into the heavens, and the Apostles by the ministry of the Holy Ghost, manifested the Life as in the risen Lord, the Life of the Godhead in the Man, which we are now asked to come into and share. This is the marvel of the new birth. The new birth is not merely your own birth, but *Christ's* new birth. The Father declared: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," and it was *then* made possible for you to be born again. It is not your personal new birth, therefore, but it is a birth out from Him whereby you are made one with Him to share a Life in the Christ of God. That is the fellowship of the mystery.

We have before seen how at the end of this epistle of John in the 5th chapter the Apostle has spoken with great emphasis about the testimony, "The testimony that God hath borne to us concerning His Son" in His resurrection, through His passion. He says finally as we have seen, in the 11th verse "And this is the testimony that God hath given to us eternal life, *and this life is in His Son*. He that hath the Son hath the Life; he that hath not the Son hath not the Life! It is very marvellous as we dwell upon these points to see that the testimony which God has given to His Son is a testimony that *includes* the church. It is not the testimony to the Son of God personal in Christ Jesus our Lord only but it is the testimony of God through the Spirit, and through the water (or word) and through the blood to the Son of God as now He *shares* His Life in His church. This is the testimony—that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. That is to say it is not a life to be possessed personally. It is not life that you have merely as in yourself; it is a life that you share in Him with others. That is the fellowship of the mystery.

Now the vision of that is *one* vision ; and it is first of all *objective*, or without yourselves, and, so if you ask what is the vision of the church ? The answer is, The vision of the church is *Jesus*. The vision of the church is *not* the Body. The vision of the church is *not* the cross. The vision of the church is *Jesus*. If you have a vision of the Body without the vision of Jesus remaining supreme in your heart, you will become mystical and theoretical. You will be talking about the Body all the time, but you, yourself, will not be an example of what it is to be a member of the Body. You may talk about the cross, and get a doctrine of the cross, but unless the cross is seen in the supreme light of the Person of Jesus your doctrine will be hard. It will be without love, and without worship, and people will wonder why you, who preach so much about the cross have so little of the love which is revealed in the cross. People will be saying that you are talking about the Body as something mystical in the heavens, and the love that should be manifest in you as a member of the Body is not revealed. But all this is because there is an absence of the vision of Jesus. That explains a great many things, and brings us back to simplicity. The reason why so many people come into advanced truth as it is called, and manifest so little of the true grace of God is because they have lost the vision of Jesus. The vision of Jesus in the Godhead, that is the testimony of the church—We behold Jesus !

You find this oneness of Vision right through the word of God—for instance in the epistle to the Hebrews, which we have already quoted—We behold Jesus ! And the vision by the Holy Ghost is the breaking through to see Jesus in the Godhead. Take Paul. He is brought to where he is by a revelation of Jesus Christ. But it is always by a revelation of Jesus Christ that men are saved. Whatever other vision Paul had all is found in this supreme vision of Jesus Christ. Who He is ! And you find, as we have seen, that the Apostle is crying all the while for a deeper and fuller knowledge of Jesus. It is the personal knowledge of Jesus as God. It is the entering into all that infinitude of fellowship with Himself ; the thing that draws you more and more toward Himself. And you and I discover in the Christ of God all our experience. Whatever experience we have had which is of any value it was found in some unveiling of the Person of Christ in Jesus. If you lose that you wander, you go into side-paths. You may be taken up with this

school of teaching and interpretation ; then you enter into another ; and many of us may have created theories, schools of thought and teaching, and wandered away from the Central Testimony. We lost the supreme value of Jesus—the oneness of the faith which is bound up with the full knowledge of the Son of God. Peter said "*Thou art the Christ.*" Well, this is the Rock upon which I will build My church. And we must not think that foundation is something it is not—static, stationary. Upon this living foundation of the vision of the Christ I will build My church. You are being built up into Him as you see Him. You are being built up into Him as you behold Him, and so you help to build others up. That is "*holding fast the Head.*" Each member has to so hold fast the Head, wrestle to retain that singleness of vision.

You remember, when Jacob was wrestling at Peniel, he said, I have seen God face to face. Well, in Jesus Christ you see God face to face. That is the revelation, and you are to wrestle to hold that. The devil would try to get your mind taken up with other things, but that is the thing to hold on to. To behold God face to face in Jesus Christ ; to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. You find John saying, "*We beheld His glory.*" That is the sum total of their experience. You find again the Apostle Paul saying that the gospel is "*The gospel of the glory of God in Christ—Who is the image of God.*" (In the Authorised Version it is given as "*The glorious gospel of Christ,*" but the correct reading is "*The gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God*").

Now this is *objective*. It is outside yourself, and you must retain that. It is the vision of the *Person*. Nothing must obscure that. Now *subjective* vision is that which you have as within yourself. But without this objective vision of Jesus you will find that subjective vision becomes obscure, misty, misleading. You will find you will begin to exclude this or that essential because of certain interpretations of truth, if you do not retain the vision of Jesus in the Godhead. As we have said, a doctrine of the cross minus *that* is without power ; and a doctrine of the Body without *that* is unpracticable. I am emphasising this because one has seen a great many of God's children taken up with truth, they see truth ; it becomes crystallised in their imagination, and they lose sight of the throne of God. If you and I keep the vision of Jesus we shall never become "*heady*" : we shall never become heretical ; we shall never

become divisive, schismatic ; and so the unity of vision will be preserved in the objective vision of Jesus in the Godhead, oneness of vision for the whole church.

Healthy, subjective vision therefore depends upon the retaining of the objective. It is the overmastering, overwhelming breaking in of the Light of God in the face of Jesus Christ that keeps you and me in our place, so that we live in the glory of that vision.

But now there is another side to the truth—it is not only without ourselves, but, praise God, it is within ourselves. You find the Apostle turning to the other side when he speaks about, "The Son of God being revealed *in* Him." It is very wonderful when you get the true objective vision of Jesus, and believe Him, for upon that moment you are born again. I cannot explain it, but I know it happens. It is then that that which you see in Him is made true in you. You find it happened with the Apostle Paul. First of all there was the amazing revelation of God in Christ, and then he speaks about that synchronising with the revelation of the Son of God in him—"When it pleased God to reveal His Son *in* me." The Son of God revealed to you by the Holy Spirit and then the Son of God revealed *in* you by the Holy Spirit as you are born out from Him. That is the subjective side. You find you have a Life now, but that Life is joined to Him. It is His Life. It is not your Life, but His Life in you. Of course, when you speak of Christ being in you, you do not mean the totality of Christ—the totality of Christ is not even in the entire Body, but His fulness is.

Nevertheless He remains God over all, blessed for ever. The Church does not become God. We need clear thinking here. When Paul speaks, therefore, of the Son of God being revealed in him, he does not mean the totality of the Son of God ; but, that by the Eternal Spirit, he has been born out of that One Whom he has seen, and he has been made one with the One he has seen ; and then he begins to recognise that He is the Sovereign Lord of his life, not only as outside of himself, but as within himself ; and it is the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus working in him. Oh, once we get this revelation, this subjective revelation, this revelation within, what a blessing it will be as it makes us to cease from all self-effort, as we see that having seen Him He is then begotten in us by His Spirit ; that we are a part of Him, an integral, essential, vital part of Him ; and we live now by an *inworking*. As we are born by a *begetting*, we live by an *inworking*. Of course,

these are very simple things ; but let us repeat them—we are born by a *begetting*. You cannot beget yourself. You are begotten out from God as you get the vision, as you see Him, recognise Who and what He is and accept Him. And then, just as you are begotten by a *begetting*, so you live by an *energising*. You do not live then as self-sufficient ; you do not live out of anything that you have control of entirely. It is nothing possessive. You live by an energy, and Paul has been praying in this epistle, "That we might know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. Well, we behold Him, out that is not sufficient. The everlasting God is by His Spirit working in us, *energising* us, making us one with Himself in fellowship of life and ministry. So the subjective side of the truth is this, That Christ is in you, the hope of glory. And the hope of glory is not the hope of your attainment ; the hope of your being able at last to climb to some heights of merit where you can break through and somehow be acceptable to God by reason of all your wrestlings and determination. It is not that ; it is by an energy within yourself as you yield to and acknowledge your Life. It is the presence of the Spirit of Him *inworking*, operating within you. The very power that raised Jesus from the sepulchre into the Godhead is the power that is working in your spirit to raise you into oneness with Himself.

Well, as we recognise we live by a subjective experience on the one hand because of an objective vision on the other—as you see Jesus, by the Spirit so you find the Life of Jesus is being wrought out in you by the Spirit. Then you come to the truth of the "Body." And I want to point out very definitely and seriously that the truth of the body is not objective, but subjective. If I may make plain what I mean. You may get visions about the Body and not be contributing very much to the Body. The only Heavenly vision that you must have is the vision of God in Jesus Christ ; but the truth of the Body, or the vision of the Body is subjective. It is something working in you. It is something that is functional ; something that is essential to your Life ; something that is a part of you. You cannot hold it, so to speak as a mere objective truth. In one way it is you, the new man, and you find the life now in you is a constituent life that belongs somewhere else than in you only. It belongs to Him, and it belongs to others ; and you find the truth of the

body is subjective. It is *working* in you. Now in the course of my ministry I have found that a great many people are trying to discern the Body as a mental objective fact. It is not that at all. You cannot visualise and you are not asked to visualise the Body. The Holy Ghost makes you visualise the Lord Jesus—to behold Him—to worship Him—to adore Him—to love Him. That is your vision; but the vision of the Body is subjective. That is, it is being wrought out by the Holy Ghost within you. It is an inward realisation of unity. It is not an attempt to create unity, but an inward realisation that I am one with all other members of the Body because I am one in Him with them. He shares His life and they share His life then in Him we are one; and because I now derive all my life from Him and worship Him and love Him, and am constrained by Him, you see the vision of the Body implies something working in me. It is not because I talk about it, and preach it, I must live it! O beloved friends, I stress this—that we must live the truth of the Body. It is not an automatic mental thing to try to bring upon others as a truth that is merely to be conceived as something outside ourselves. The truth of the Body, if it is at all with you, is in you working as a passion, something of God Himself, by His Spirit, working in your heart. Oneness is not an ideal; oneness is a fact. There are ideals, and there is the consummation of God's purpose. There are wondrous things in the throne that we may see, but the oneness of the Body is a fact—a fact in God, and a fact in you—"Which thing is true in Him and in us." What we have to ask for is that we may behold Jesus more and more in the glory of the revelation the Spirit gives, and then we shall find, as the Apostle Paul says, "The love of Christ constraineth us." We are being exercised, energised, driven onward, embraced, constrained as by a mighty power, burning as in a consuming fire. "The will of the Lord of Hosts shall accomplish this." And so the vision of the Body is not an objective vision but a subjective vision, and the unity in that sense is brought about by a necessity of life. We cannot live without the Body. We come to the place where we must have fellowship with one another in the Holy Ghost.

The Cross then comes in here because you see it rules out the personal. We have spoken about the Cross and the oneness of visions of the Body. The cross comes in in ruling out the personal here, and that is why the Body is the very means whereby God works out the cross

in you and me. You will find that when you come into the true subjective truth of the Body of Christ, where we have to live together in any kind of fellowship, that there you have the very means which the Holy Ghost uses to see that the cross shall be operative. It is very easy to talk about the cross from the platform, and it is very easy to sometimes pray about the cross, but when it comes to laying down your life moment by moment and day by day for others; that is the cross. So you see Life in and for the Body rules out the personal, and that is why the instrument of the Cross, that death of His whereby He died to self in every detail of self-assertion that He might live wholly unto God as Man, is the principle that has to be wrought out in you and in me. You and I are to live unto Him in His Body, and that means the ruling out of the personal in the old creation. Thus all mental conceptions of the Body have to go, all mere emotional conceptions have to go, and even the self-will to this end has to go, and you find that the self-life in all its detail has to be continually stripped. As you seek to live for the church you will find that the cross will operate; the cross will bring to bear its impact upon your life, the self-life. It is very easy to live a holy life alone. That can be a superior kind of Pharisaism; but live together with Christians in intimacy, and you know the irks, you know the way temperaments clash, you know the way possessive things come up in us, even in our zeal for truth. Why we even talk about translation and get divided upon spiritual truth! Oh, you see, when you come to live truly in the Body of Christ you will find the vision is functional in us. This cross becomes subjective. But it is Jesus Who is seen as God and Whose pure burning gaze upon you causes you to know the terror of the Lord—the fear of God—beholding Him—recognising His sovereignty—His deity—as the impact of His Presence is turned upon you, you find that in the Body the vision has to be functional, an essential of life, and so it is made the very means whereby the Cross works out death in you. Your mental conceptions won't suffice, your conceptions of the Body so far as you are going to will the thing through won't suffice, and even those emotions and feelings that you may have won't suffice. It must be by the Holy Ghost functioning in you the Life of God so that you are able to lay down this miserable self-life, as it is stripped more and more in its antagonism before God. Now Christ died that we might live, and we have to die daily that we

may live in Him and others may live also. I have to die. That is the principle of the Body. But only the Holy Ghost can work that out in you ; and you see on the two sides the unity of vision is only made possible by the Cross first of all. To behold Him in the throne, and then to recognise it is His life that has to be wrought out in us, and that is only possible as the self-life is continually laid down at His feet that He may arise within us and manifest His glory, His multifarious wisdom before the principalities and powers. Of course the degree in which the truth of the Body is revealed in us the degree to which the Life of Christ is present in us is what is the devil's estimate of it! What is he thinking about it? What do the principalities and powers see, they who are enabled to judge, allowed by the Lord to scrutinise? What do they see by way of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts? That is the test.

May the Lord make us each one true members of that Body in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, in the oneness of that life which is hid with Christ in God for His Name's sake.

BEHOLD! HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS

"Earth! Thou grain of sand on the shore of the Universe of God! Thou Bethlehem amongst the princely cities of the heavens, Thou art, and remainest, the Loved One amongst the ten thousands of suns and worlds, the Chosen of God!

"Thee will He again visit, and then thou wilt prepare a throne for Him, as thou gavest Him a manger cradle.

"Then in His radiant glory wilt thou rejoice, as thou didst drink His blood and His tears!

"On thee has the Lord a great work to complete!"

For of the dust of this planet the Word took and became flesh.

And here His Cross was planted, and here His Blood was shed—that the earth might be His Footstool, and the MAN in the Throne His Glory!

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CONCLUDING ADDRESS AT FEBRUARY CONFERENCE

(THE CROSS, AND THE UNITY OF VISION
AND MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH)

February 6th, 1928.

Mark vi. 47: Philippians iii. 1-15.

"And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and He alone on the land. And He saw them toiling in rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them; and about the fourth watch He cometh unto them walking upon the sea; and would have passed them by; but when they saw Him walking upon the sea they supposed that it was an apparition (something seen by the imagination, or something supernatural breaking through the veil of sense), and they cried out with fear: for they all saw Him and were troubled. But He straightway spake with them, and said unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And He went up unto the ship; and the wind ceased."—Mark vi. 47.

You find a somewhat similar experience of fear on the part of these disciples who so loved their Lord after His resurrection as recorded in Luke's gospel, xxiv. 36 :—

"And as they thus spake. Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and said unto them, Peace be unto you. But they having become terrified and affrighted supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do reasonings arise in your heart? Behold My hands and My feet; that it is I myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones according as you see Me to have. When He had thus spoken He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not from joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye any meat? And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb. And He took it and did eat before them."

In the Philippian epistle (3rd chapter) you find the dimensions of this vision of Jesus changed altogether. Now He is known as Very God, and yet you find the same banishing of all fear from the heart of a sinner, the heart of one whose life had in all its strenuous years been misspent, who had found that he had been living in a wrong direction, and had been brought to such extremity at last by the enmity of his carnal mind against God that he had not only been persecuting the church, but had blasphemed the Name of Jehovah. Yet he is able now to say, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." He then proceeds to give certain admonitions, and speaks about himself and all the others who with him have the same joy, that if their joy is in any danger of waning, to remember that they are now of the circumcision, that which has been cut around, encircled by the blood of the Cross, cut off by that encircling of His blood from fear, and from the devil, so that nothing can pass that ring of the Divine Life into which they have been gathered. We are the circumcision, he says, which worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. He then enumerates all those things which might have given him some standing before God, and declares that all these things which were his own, his self-righteousness, self-satisfaction and self-appraisal he has counted to be but loss on account of Christ, of Whom he has tasted in measure; of Whom there has been a revelation, a revelation not only of His glory, but of His grace. He not only saw the Lord out from heaven as Judge of

his sinful and desperate flesh, his wrong nature, but there had come in the same moment, well-nigh, the revelation of that Judge as Saviour also. There always is that. God in the same breath of revelation of His glory gives the revelation of His grace. This is the day of grace, unlimited grace, grace flowing like a river. It is the current of the Divine Love that is now turned, as it were, in its fulness upon us, through the Cross, so that no matter what may be the degree of our self-despair, when once we have seen Jesus Christ, and HIM crucified, our very self-despair is the ground of God's mercy; our brokenness is the very opportunity for God's help. Once we have come to that place where we recognise that our nature is like a festering corpse that will become more and more corrupt to our own consciousness as the days pass, so, on the other hand we see there is another Life offered to us freely which we receive by faith, which is within us by faith, which springs up by faith, and is maintained by faith out from Him Who is our God and our Saviour. Then we get clear of the phantom atmosphere of fear, terror, fright, lest the glory of God, Who is a Consuming Fire might break out upon us to our judgment and destruction.

Now the fact is that some of the children of God are afraid of the coming of the Lord for this very reason. The devil has got them into such a state that they are afraid of the coming of the Lord, because, you see, they have not recognised yet that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. They have not recognised the fulness of that salvation from sin which God hath wrought Himself. It is upon this ground the Apostle tries to expostulate with us—"Who is he that condemneth? Why it is God that justifieth." It is the God Whom you fear in His glory and majesty, for the justifier is Christ, Who is God in another form. It is He that died. "I am He that became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore." Of course the impact of the glory of God upon our flesh is always to smite us with fear, if we live in the flesh; if we stay there; if we think of meeting God in our flesh. If we think to meet Him on any ground of self-justification; if we are thinking that we can bring before Him something by which we have earned a share in His glory, then, of course, there is a fear in that realm. There will be an impact of dread, and the Apostle knows of this in the realm of his flesh. "Therefore knowing the terror of the Lord we do

persuade men." He knows it, but he is not living there. He is living on this side of the Cross. You find that when John, who had lived by the grace of God so holily and devotedly in His service, had the manifest glory of the Godhead in Christ revealed to him, he fell at His feet as one dead. The impact was so terrific upon his consciousness. But there came the voice, "Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am He that liveth, the Living One, and I became dead. It was I Who became dead. It was I who went down into that spiritual death for you, and behold, I am alive for evermore. But not as I was. I, the Living One, the eternally Living One, Who from everlasting to everlasting am God, I now am alive for evermore as *Man* for your sake, partaking of your nature, and I am not a phantom, not a spirit, I am Jesus! This is the revelation that removes all fear. I am Jesus. So glorious, so stupendous, so beyond the range of all our thought. From that Form God, in Whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead, bodily, sustaining the universe by His substance, there comes the Voice, "I am Jesus." This is the parable of the One Who treads the stormy, heaving sea. There came something of that terror of God, that impact upon their consciousness of the fear of Him when they were toiling in rowing, and when He came to them upon the storm they thought they had seen an apparition. Is your God an apparition? Is your God a phantom? He may be a phantom vast and tremendous, a God formless and unknown, Whose approach brings upon you the sweat of terror, of judgment because there is a breaking in upon you of the unseen and unknown. Is that your God? Then, ah, of course, you will have fear; you will have terror, judgment. But is He Jesus? He says you see, out of all the terror of that night, and of all the supernatural impact of the way of His coming, a way that was beyond their reason and their sense. "Be of good cheer. It is I. Be not afraid." He came walking upon the sea! Supernatural surely! Yes. But He says, "It is I." And so in His resurrection, surely this one Who bursts through space and presences Himself in the company of His disciples, though His glory is veiled as yet, this is a terror-striking experience; they are affrighted, and think they see a phantom, and He says, Be not afraid, it is I. Spirit hath not flesh and bone as ye see Me to have. Have ye anything here to eat?" He comes down to the level of their consciousness and

their need, and He eats with them. Communion! He wants to commune; He wants to eat and to drink, and that we may eat and drink with Him and have fellowship with Him.

Now this is the vision of God that satisfies. The near vision of Jesus. It is also the vision of Him in the throne, but that might be a mental one. You might be dimly seeking to apprehend some vastness which is called "God." You might be trying to descry some glory beyond the stars; but by the Holy Ghost He comes and presences Himself in order that we might partake of His substance; that we might eat and drink with Him, and He with us. That is His message strangely enough to the last church, the church of Laodicea. Behold, I stand at the door. It is I, Jesus. The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Eternal God? Yes, but the Spirit of Jesus. I stand at the door and knock. If any one hear My voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with Him and He with Me. The intimacy of Jesus! His desire that we should entertain Him—open our heart's door constantly to Him, and banish all this phantom fear which the devil brings upon our minds by reason of past sins and present unworthiness that haunt and depress us." He showed them His hands and His feet. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. That is the attitude of the disciple. The vision of Jesus, not in the mental range, as one has already suggested, but in the way in which He comes to us in nearness by the Holy Spirit, and you and I become His temples. Well, what does it mean to be a temple of the Holy Ghost? Is it to be some kind of strange mystic clay vessel in which there is some element of God's substance? It is not only that. It is true that there is a substance of God in you, since you are begotten out from Him, but to be a temple of the Holy Ghost means that the Spirit Who comes to dwell within you, comes as a loving Friend. When the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you—the Strengthener—He shall teach you; He shall comfort you; He shall guide you. He shall be in you and to you, what I am now. I will come unto you. The Father and I, We will come unto you and make an abode in you. O, beloved friends, all our vision, and all our ministry is impossible without a personal acquaintanceship of God in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit. You and I have not got a religion that we are trying to live up to; we have not merely a series of doctrines, very tremendous in their range so that when people

come to hear us they say, They have wonderful truth and deep teaching! If we have not JESUS we have nothing. He, Himself, is God manifest in the flesh, not a Spirit only, but a MAN who has become such that you and I may share His Life and Substance. And once fear is taken away there is then, of course, the incoming of that perfect love. Fear is cast out when love is made perfect, when we see Who Jesus is, not only in the range of His Godhead (and we need that vision), but in the very fact of His retained humanity, the Man in the throne, the One Who comes nigh in the Spirit is the One Who died for our sakes. Thus there can be that intimacy with Jesus on the part of the disciple. This is the blessed provision that the Holy Ghost makes, the present Jesus! And one does desire that amid all these declarations of truth we do not become "heady"; we do not have lines that reach out into the infinite where we lose ourselves in conjecture, but we do come down to the actual and the personal, fact that Christ presences Himself by the Holy Ghost, and in Him you know your God. It is the people who do *know* their God who are strong and do exploits. You will find that some of the simplest people, who would not use your phraseology, know the Lord better than you do. I remember telling a young brother who had a good deal of the truth of this testimony and who was meeting a certain Christian person, "now remember she knows the Lord far better than you do. She has not the phraseology, but she has known Him for many years." That is the principal thing, beloved, to **KNOW** the Lord, not to see some phantom coming across the waves, not to see some apparition of the night, but to hear and to know His welcome voice, 'It is I, be not afraid.'

Now I believe that all the scriptures are deeply prophetic, and that this passage is prophetic of the last hour. I believe the parable of His coming in the fourth watch, the disciples toiling in rowing because the winds are contrary, pictures us in these days surely, as there comes in the impact of the supernatural opposition to our advance, as you and I are seeking to press through into that position we believe is for us in the heart of God. Is not the wind contrary? We find it very difficult. It is a battle! There are principalities and powers in their rage hotly against us, and we are toiling in rowing; but it is just at such a time He is coming. It is when the battle is tensest, when success seems distant,

and an impossible thing. But you and I are still rowing. You don't give up. You don't become passive. You are still rowing, resisting, fighting. Oh, don't think that all this means passivity which I am speaking about. I have discovered this rest in God is the best fighting tonic there is, but if you are so to speak spluttering and gasping and trying to keep your head above the waves in a desperate effort to keep on top, that is not fighting. It is when you are assured that your rest is in God, that is the best fighting spirit. Still there is a fight on, a terrific fight, and the impact of evil is going to become more and more terrific; but there is nothing to fear. Just when there might be the possibility, if there could be the possibility of His grace and His indwelling strength to fail us, He comes walking upon the sea. That is the vision for these times. We expect His coming, the breaking through of His Person, but not as a phantom of the night, not as an apparition that frightens and terrifies the senses, but as one who says "It is I—I AM," not an apparition, a phantom; not even a vision, a hallucination, something strange. But *actual*. I am bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh. I am the One Who has begotten thee, and by My Spirit thou art Mine. Such is the climax of our knowledge of Jesus, but you must have that knowledge also as the starting ground for all this pressing through.

Now in the third chapter of the Philippian epistle you have this pressing through. Here is the Apostle Paul living in that timeless life of the Christ: "that Eternal Life,"—speaking the same thing that you and I now speak because of the grace of God; here we have the language of the fighting saint. Paul was a pattern member of the body (not the pattern Christian, because the Lord is the pattern Christian; it is He who has given an example for us to follow in His steps). But Paul is the pattern member of the Body. So wonderful, this man's epistles, written under such conditions that he never thought they would see the daylight of the twentieth century and be scattered all over the world, known in practically every tongue! Here he is, speaking language that the Holy Ghost has put within his spirit as a member of the Body, and declaring as a member of Christ's Body, that he with every other member, shall, by the grace of God, break through into the heavenlies by the power of the Holy Ghost. This is our individual responsibility before God, as we rely upon the Spirit within us to press through into that Oneness with our Lord in the Throne. And because

we have no confidence in the flesh, and have accepted the judgment of the Cross upon it, we have entered into the realm of *no condemnation*. There must be the foundation of joy in your Christian life. You must be a happy warrior. There are no dismal, successful (*sic*) warriors of Christ. Those who appear to fast do not really fast. Those who give the impression to others that Christianity is a heaviness, a groan and a burden, are no commendations of our Lord. The joy of the Lord is your strength; and the burden is upon your spirit, not upon your mind. There is a vast difference between a burden upon your mind, and a burden upon your spirit. The burden upon your spirit, that comes when you are before the Lord; you take His yoke upon you, and your heart is pressed with the travail of His love; but a burden upon your mind you will carry everywhere, and you will be an oppression to your friends and a block in the meetings if you carry a weight which is purely mental. That is all psychical; but the burden of the Holy Ghost is upon your spirit. And so you find the Lord saying,

"When thou fastest, appear not unto men to fast; but wash thy face and anoint thine head." That is, commend your faith. Give witness to your salvation. Let the joy of the Lord be your strength. It is very important to recognize this. *The basis of all successful conflict is joy.* It is the joy of your salvation. Your helmet, the protection for your mind, is the helmet of your salvation; otherwise the devil breaks in upon your mind and possesses you with fear. He haunts you with yourself. He crowds you with phantoms. He is everlastingly portraying before you some dismal prospect. But if salvation has come to you; if you are resting upon the finished work of God in Christ, then you are free. If He has quickened you, He has also raised you together with Himself and enthroned you. You do not struggle to keep your feet upon the throne of God. You cannot do that. You are *there!* Your life is hid with Christ in God. And so, upon the ground of personal experience, your life is sheer joy; the assurance of salvation; the absolute confidence in the work of God. It is for this reason the apostle says, finally "to sum up everything, brethren,—rejoice, and again I say, rejoice!" Why? Because we are they who worship God in the Spirit. It is by the Holy Spirit we worship. It is not with our mentality; it is not by way of any kind of outward ritual or mental adjustments that we approach God, when we do Him service, but it is by the energy of the Holy

Ghost, for we have no confidence in the flesh. The flesh means, of course, as you are well aware, not the physical tissue, but the whole make-up of the natural man. No self-confidence! But every confidence in the finished work of Christ, and in the grace of His Spirit's indwelling. The basis of all prosperity in Christian service and any progress in the Divine Life is that you are not afraid of Jesus. If you are afraid of Jesus, well, He tries to reassure you and says, "Be not afraid, it is I." He tries to let you know that God and He are identical, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." There is no difference. And so in the Vision of that Face, there is absolute joy.

Of course, if your heart condemn you, that is another thing. It is because God readeth your heart and knoweth all things. It may be there are some in whom is an evil heart of unbelief. It may be, that, secretly, you are not following Him. It may be that you have some reservation; that you are not free. That is another question. But I say that every man and woman absolutely abandoned to God has nothing to fear. Yielded to Him there is nothing can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The love of God is in Christ. You remember that wonderful psalm of confidence at the end of the 8th chapter of Romans:—

"I am persuaded neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other *creation* shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Rejoicing in the revealed Lord as Saviour is the basis of all advance in life and service. We cannot think of ministry until we have such a vision of God as brings Him to us actually in Christ Jesus. As I have said, if there be fear, there may be a ground for it. I do not want you to have that fearlessness of Ignorance who went blithely whistling along, but had never come through that Wicket Gate, and had never fled from the City of Destruction. If you are still making sport in the City of Destruction; if you are still looking back upon Sodom and Gomorrah; if you are not surrendered to God, of course there can be nothing but life-long contradiction and eternal loss awaiting you. But if you are surrendered to God; if you have come to Him via the Cross, and really recognise the judgment of God upon your entire nature; that there is nothing good in you at all; if you have given yourself to Him

upon that basis and believe in the blood of that mercy seat, which is Christ Himself, God Himself manifest in the flesh, crucified on your behalf; if you have come to see your absolute need, now BELIEVE, and never let another doubt trouble you as long as you live. The devil is a liar! And all these fears and terrors and accusations are of hell; and they are quenched by the blood. You can quench them if you only believe in the omnipotence of the Blood of Jesus.

Now one is dwelling upon this at length because one wishes to impress the fact that when you examine the reason why you fear, if you are really surrendered, there is no reason to fear; if however our heart condemn us, it is because God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things. But if our heart condemn us not, we know that the Blood cleanses, and we have confidence toward God.

You remember what the Apostle says in the Hebrew letter:—

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus; by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.”

Through the flesh of Jesus (of which we are members) we come into the actual presence of God Himself. But do we so come at prayer meetings and gatherings? I think it is most important that we should take up our responsibility, each one of us, to press immediately into the actual presence of God Himself. I think we are far too casual in our gathering together. One has often detected (one does not wish to suggest anything by way of reproach) a lack of realisation that we are in the presence of God, and that where two or three are gathered together there He is actually by His Spirit in the midst. We need to recognise *that*. Well, we are in the presence of God now with joy and confidence, because we share His righteousness in the Holy Ghost; then having got to this thing which is in the Apostle Paul, this vision, and this ministry which is in the vision, for the ministry is of God in Christ come down to us by the Holy Ghost,—Here am I! Jacob, so to speak, crooked by nature; and here down to Bethel, which is the house of God, there has come that shaft of Divine light and life. The vision, by the Spirit of God, has reached even me, and I am born out from Him, Whom I see in the Throne, and yet not separate from Him, joined to the Lord one spirit. And what is my way now, my path eternal? It is

to mount up and up, and to go through in that way until I am found there in the Throne altogether in Him. That is my vision. That is the vision of the Apostle Paul. Now when every member of the body has that vision there is something converging; there is a moving towards a Purpose. God, Himself, by His Spirit, is prepared to do all He can from His end, from the throne. He sends down His Spirit to dwell in our hearts; but you and I, by faith, must seek to lay hold of that which has laid hold of us. And as God by His Spirit is seeking to press through our hearts to bring about His Purpose in the Body, so you and I must co-operate in turn by taking hold of Him as He has taken hold of us. That is what is known in the 2nd chapter of the Colossian epistle as “Holding-fast the Head.” Holding fast is not holding on desperately to save yourself. It means this holding with a wrestling. The word used to describe Jacob at Peniel where he had the Vision, but it took him twenty years to realise it. At Bethel there he was as Jacob, a man of the flesh, full of his crookedness, yet with the vision of God. The way of the Light came down to him at Bethel, but at Peniel, after much travail in his flesh, and much exercise and busy work for God all in vain, he is left alone, and there comes the other end, as it were, of the Bethel experience; but it comes by wrestling. He wrestles through the night, and he sees God face to face. There you have the Christian experience in parable. You have it actually in the Apostle Paul. He has commenced in Christ, and Christ is commenced in Him; he has seen the wonder of Christ. The vision has come down to him. The glory of God has come; he has seen that God was in Christ. The whole thing has somehow broken in upon his consciousness and he sees Who Jesus is, and what He is prepared to work out in him for His eternal purpose; and now he is pressing back in the Spirit in turn to apprehend Him Who has apprehended him. He is wrestling to know more perfectly the Jesus he already knows. Some one asked Confucius if there were a word that could sum up all religion, and he answered, “Is not ‘Reciprocity’ such a word?” One quotes Confucius with diffidence, but is not the nature of the Christian life also found in this word, Reciprocity. We have sung it in this Conference, “I take,” “He undertakes,” or put it the other way, “He undertakes,” “I take.” That is true, but He has undertaken. “He who hath begun a good work in me will perfect it unto the day

of Christ." "Whom He justifieth, them He also glorifieth." God's intention is perfect, and God's power is perfect. Reciprocity. He undertakes, He takes hold of me; but now I take hold of Him.

This is a not passive life, but an intense activity in your spirit. And this is the line of march of the church's activities—One vision—all Christians engaged in this laying hold of God in Christ and all service springs out of it. You need not worry about service. You take hold of God as God takes hold of you, and as you wrestle with God your service will come. You can be obsessed with your personal ministry, and there is no greater danger than that. If you are always talking about it and wanting other people to pray about it, it will end in becoming all in the flesh. But if you are taking hold of God; if you are burdened by the Holy Ghost; why, your ministry is alright. "Out of your inner being (unknown to you) will flow rivers of living water." You need not worry about your ministry. Are you loving God in Jesus Christ with all your heart and with all your strength and with all your might? That is the fruit of the Spirit, and as you are bound up with Him in one Life, your ministry will take care of itself. And there will be no rivalry in that ministry. Each one will be minding his own business in the Lord. You find this illustrated in the case of Peter. The last rebuke of the risen Lord was this: when he became anxious to know what was going to happen to John—"What is that to thee, follow thou Me." What is following Jesus? Following Jesus is following Jesus in the Holy Ghost. It is following in this *celestial* way, the way everlasting, from the dust to the throne. And here you have it all expressed by Paul. It arises out of an intense spiritual love for his Lord, and a love that desires that love may be begotten. Love does not come as a mighty current first of all in your life sweeping you off your feet. It may come first like a seeping spring in your heart as you cry for it. A little love first, and then the love increases and increases. That is the way of our salvation. It is out of faith unto faith; out of love unto love. It is not a great mighty faith first of all, but faith which is simply the quickening of the heart. All life is like that. You do not hear the buds "bang" in spring, they just quietly unfold themselves. God's Life manifests itself like that, but a good many Christians want to go off like squibs all at once. I am using such crude expressions

because they really illustrate the principle of the matter. You don't grow like that. Do you see the spiritual reality of it? It is faith unto faith. Faith as a grain of mustard seed, Life as a grain of wheat too, all that same seed of God. O, if you love a little now, and hold on, you will love more and more; and if you believe a little you will believe more and more. It is the gift of God; it is the grace of God. He gives you the beginnings of faith in order that you may ask for more. He gives you the beginnings of life in order that you may ask for more life. You are not so conscious of the Life; but God is faithful, and every one that asketh receiveth, and everyone that seeketh findeth, and to everyone that knocketh it shall be opened. His Spirit is given to everyone who asks, and He turns none away. But it is one of the perils of our time that people expect some phenomenon to break in upon them, they want instead a supernatural experience, and visualise their conversion upon the standard of somebody else's.

Now notice the order of the Cross subjective. The Cross objective is a finished work. Christ has died once for all for sinners, and He dieth no more. And you do not die by way of merit. God does not ask you to add another death to that of Christ. There can be a great deal of mental mal-adjustment about the doctrine of the Cross. If you don't know Jesus; if you have a doctrine of the Cross outside of Jesus, there can be a great deal of distortion about it, and you have people painfully trying to crucify themselves to please the Lord. Well, where is grace? For this would be additional to grace. You cannot present yourself a sacrifice for sin, your own sin! The sacrifice the Lord wants of you is a *living* sacrifice, and a living sacrifice is a joy that is in the Cross.

There is a Cross subjective. There is a working out of the Cross in your life and mine to the glory of God's grace. It is by grace we are able to be crucified in the laying down of our self-life. Not by regulations and laws, and the impact of our own will, or other people's wills upon us, but by the grace of God; and if you read the tenth verse the order of doctrine is, That I may know Him (by the Holy Ghost) and the power of His resurrection—the power of His ascension Life in me. First of all, Life in you, the Life of God, the Life of the Risen Christ, and what does that effect? The intimacy and communion you have with your Lord which the Holy Spirit brings about in you. A fellowship of His sufferings; not those suffer.

ings at Calvary ; but the suffering with Him for His Body's sake. The love of God, the love of the Spirit burdening your heart so that you are willing to lay down your life for others, daily, constantly, by the Life of the risen Lord, by the Spirit within you, putting to death the doings of the body. We do need to get our minds clear as to this. You cannot crucify yourself. Why if the flesh could not keep the ten commandments of the law of Israel, how do you think the flesh is going to maintain the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus ? Except by the Spirit, you are helpless. It would be the most cruel mockery that God could inflict upon us to ask us to attain to a standard of righteousness in Christ when we failed to attain the lower law of the ten commandments. No, it was as many as received Him on the ground of what He did for them at Calvary, to them gave He the power, the authority, to become the children of God ; and it is by the power of His resurrection, that ascending power of God that lifts you and causes you to ascend unto the divine likeness and power. It is that which enables you to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings. Not the sufferings of the Christ crucified, but the sufferings that remain in the Holy Ghost, the travail of the Spirit, the love of God, the passion of His love so that you live for the Body's sake. You live for others and you lay down your life for the brotherhood. But what does this bring to you ? This brings you at last to the conformity to His death. The death comes last. Life is first, then ; afterwards the fellowship of His sufferings in the Holy Ghost's ministry ; the travail of prayer for the Body's sake. There is thus wrought out in you that which makes you conformable to His death. Then as you are being made, by His grace, and by the power of His Spirit, unconsciously to yourself, conformable to His death, then there will be the outbreak of that resurrection that is the goal towards which you are pressing. The negative side is that you disappear, unknowingly to yourself may be, but others are seeing a change, less of self seen, less obtrusive. Yes, we see this miracle of grace happening around us. Some of God's children used to be so hard, self-righteous ; but they are mellowing, becoming more tender, more sympathetic, more thoughtful, more mindful of the weak and the erring and those who are out of the way ; more Christ-like, more like Jesus. And O, beloved friends, that is what we want : to become, like Jesus, so that people may see in

your face that you have something of the love of God—conformable to His death, and this ugliness which is "I" disappears. I cannot make it disappear ; I cannot crucify myself ; but because I know the power of His resurrection in me by the grace of His Spirit, and because there is something in me of the fellowship of His sufferings for the Body's sake, the praying in the Holy Ghost, there goes on in me the conformity to His death, so that I decrease and He increases. Then you have the splendid objective side with the humility of the Apostle :

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect ; but I press on, if also I may lay hold of that for which I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have laid hold ; *but this one thing I do!* (Here is the one line of Christian service ; the one line of Christian ministry ; the one line of Christian vision, as we have it on our motto-card—not looking vaguely out into the unseen, but "Looking-off unto Jesus!" as God in the Throne, coming down to me to live in my spirit, to run the race, not a personal race only, but a race in which you and I are included. And we shall all arrive at home !)

That is the vision to gather us together into oneness by the ministry of intercessory prayer, and by the pressing on of our own hearts to be found identified with our Lord in the Throne, for He also identified Himself with us, and He Who condescends to you and to me to live with us by His Spirit is saying to our fearing hearts day by day, as Satan seeks to oppress us with fears, "Fear not, it is I." It is He who shall ascend in us and with us and the Holy Ghost shall take us all home. It is God's Spirit Who is going to take us home, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. But you and I are pressing towards this realisation of His Life. But His Life is Love, and Love in the Spirit for Him and for the Body. If you love Him Who begets, you love those who are begotten. This is the essence of the Christian Life. Paul is showing the heavenly way, the surpassingly excellent way of love.

May the Lord bless us at the close of this Conference with the one thing needful, that we may not be busy about the many things, the many visions, the many services, the many businesses of the Martha spirit, the flesh, but that we may listen to the Holy Spirit within us, and choose the good part that cannot be taken away from us.

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, HONOR OAK ROAD, LONDON, S.E.23.

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship.

Sundays: 11 a.m., 3 p.m. (Young People's Meeting), and 6.30 p.m. Mondays: 7.30 p.m. Wednesdays: 8 p.m.
Saturdays: 7.30 p.m.

Conferences are held every week-end (Saturday and Sunday), and also a longer week-end at the beginning of each month, this fixed by the first Sunday. (Friday to Monday evenings, inclusive.) All particulars may be obtained from G. Paterson, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

Ministers: T. Austin-Sparks; T. Madoc Jeffreys; G. Paterson (General Secretary).

Guest House Hostesses: Lady Ogle; Mrs. M. Brand. Telephone: Sydenham 5216.

Telegrams: "Byndesmos, Forest, London."

Cables "Byndesmos, London."

WIDER MINISTRY IN FEBRUARY

Aberdare, Glamorgan.—

Mr. Victor Thomas.

Sister Florence (Feb. 18—March 3).

Wauullwyd, Mon.—

Mr. Gresham Speedy.

Pershore, Evesham, Broadway,
Worcester.—

Mr. Edward Goodwin.

23—24.—Newcastle.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sums received during January, 1928.

Local, £17 12s.; Youkers, N. York., 8s.; Glasgow, £1; Clapham, 2s. 1d.; Worthing, 2s. 6d.; Bedford, 2s. 6d.; Old Kent Road, 10s.; Newcastle-on-Tyne, 10s.; Norwood, 7s. 6d.; Oakham, 3s. 6d.; Denmark Hill, 10s.; Birkenhead, 2s.; S. Tottenham, 2s.; Woodstock Road, £1; Liverpool, 10s. 2d.; Sutton, 3s.; Bromley, 10s.; Malmesbury, 2s. 6d.; Cardiff, 3s.; Guernsey, 2s. 8½d.; Falmouth, 2s. 6d.; W. Southbourne, 2s. 0d.; Edinburgh, 3s.; Blackheath, 5s.; Germany, 7s. 6d.; St. Annes-on-Sea, £5; Philadelphia, £1 0s. 6d.; Weedsport, U.S.A., 4s. 2d.; Doylestown, U.S.A., 4s. 2d.; Wallingford, U.S.A., 8s. 2d.;

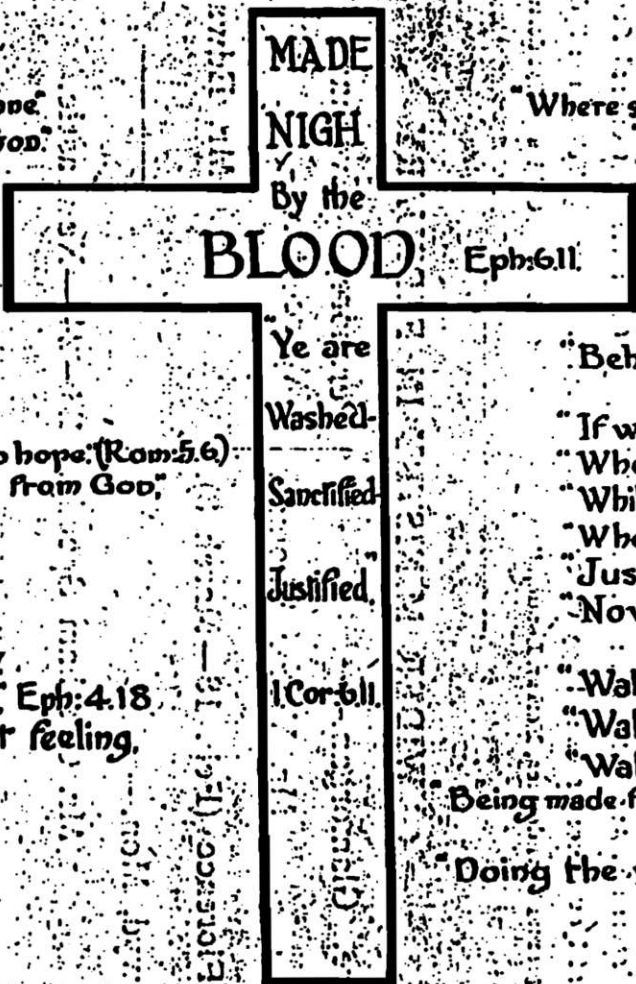
Germanstown, U.S.A., 4s. 2d.; Belfast, 3s.; Putney, 3s. 6d.; Hackney, 5s.; Hephzibah House, N.Y., 10s.; Bournemouth, 3d.; Bermondsey, £1; Derby, 10s.; Kwangsi, China, 8s.; Lowestoft, 6s.; Green Lane, N., 3s. 3d.; Blackpool, 6s.; Burley, 5s.; Weston-super-Mare, 4s.; Brampton, 6s.; Southampton, 5s.; Malta, 2s. 6d.; Kirby Muxlo, £1; Doncaster, 1s.; Lewisham, 2s. 6d.; Walthamstow, 2s.; Eastbourne, 2s. 6d.; Catford, 10s.; Finchley, 5s.; Goudhurst, 3s.; Manchester, 2s. 6d.; Matlock, 2s. 6d.; Chorlton-c-Hardy, 2s. 6d.; Bradford, 10s.—Total, £40 5s. 1½d.

State-Condition-Result
Sin has brought

THE CROSS and
our SALVATION

GOD'S MERCY, GRACE,
& LOVE.

John:5:2 Whole world lieth in wicked one.
 Rom:3:9 All the world guilty before God.
 "All under Sin" Rom:3:19.
 Col:1:12 Kingdom of darkness.
 Rom:8:2 Law of sin and death.
 John:3:10 Children of the wicked one.
 Ephes:2:3 "disobedience"
 1Cor:6:9 Strangers- unrighteous.
 Ephes:2:12 Dead in sins- without Christ
 " Aliens, without God
 " 13 Children of wrath
 " 12 Without strength- having no hope. (Rom:5:6)
 " 4:18 Sinners, Enemies, alienated from God.
 John:3:12 In Darkness.
 Ephes:4:22 Old man which is corrupt.
 " Works of flesh" Gal:5:14
 " Vanity of mind" Eph:4:17
 " Understanding darkened" Eph:4:18
 Eph:4:19 Ignorance- blindness- past feeling.

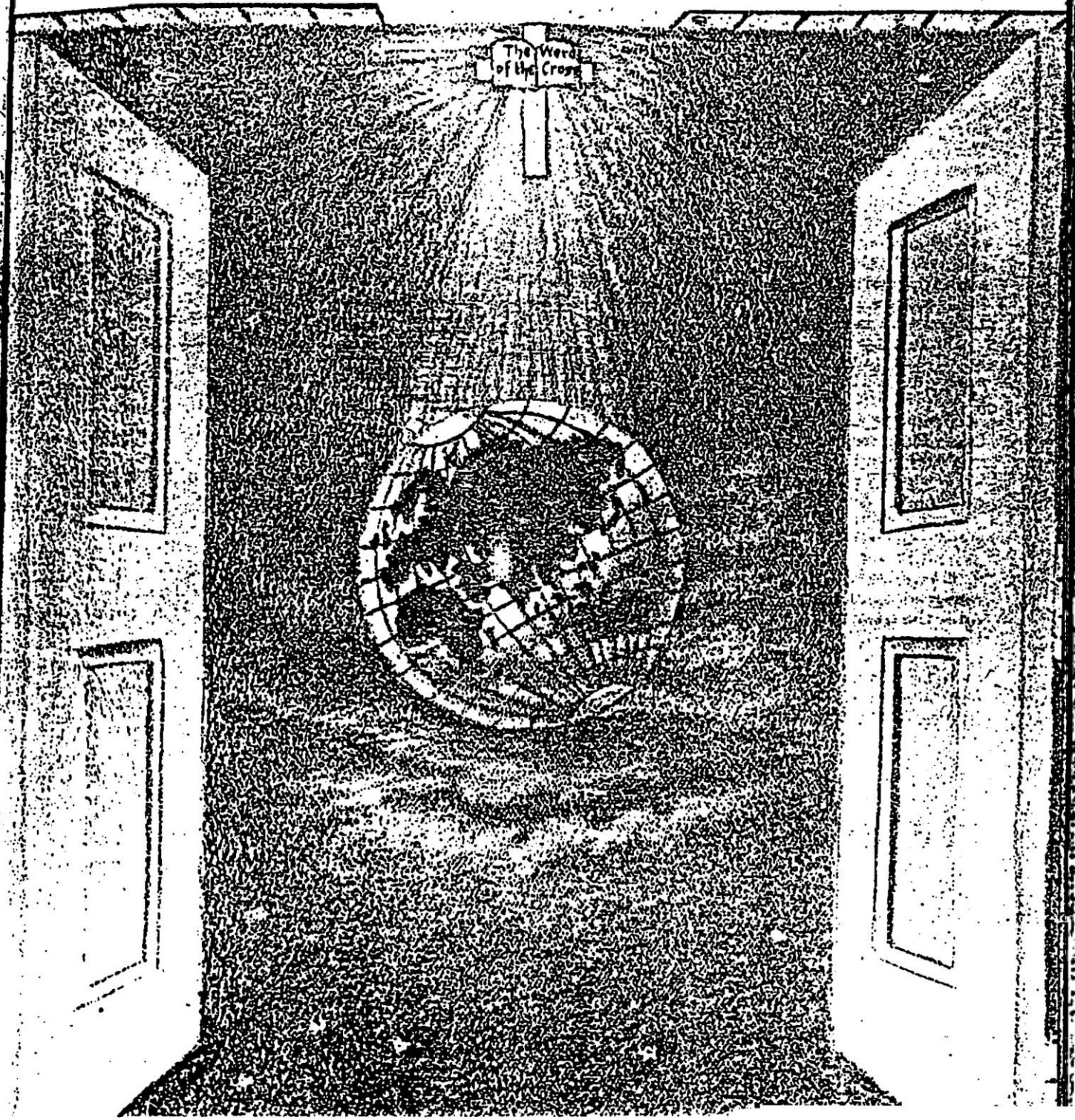


"Where sin abounded - grace much more" Rom:5:12
 "Herein is love." 1John:4:10
 "God so loved - that" --- John:3:16
 "He laid down his life." 1John:3:16
 "Took our sin upon himself." 2Cor:5:21
 "To save sinners." 1Tim:1:15
 "For the sins of the world." 1John:2:2
 "Behold the Lamb of God" John:1:36
 "If we confess our sins." 1John:1:9
 "When we were without strength" Rom:5:6
 "While yet sinners" Rom:5:8
 "When we were enemies." Rom:5:16
 "Justified by His blood." Acts:16:31
 "Now are ye light." Eph:5:8
 "Walk as children of light." Eph:5:8
 "Walk in newness of life." Rom:6:4
 "Walk worthy of the Lord." Eph:5:10
 "Being made free from sin - servants of God,
 fruit unto holiness" Rom:6:22
 "Doing the will of God from the heart" Eph:6:6.

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

MARCH, 1928

VOL. 6. No. 3.



MINISTERS' LETTER

(Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre.)
March, 1928.

BELOVED IN OUR LORD,

He Who said "I am the Truth" has become that "truth" in us also by His pardoning and begetting grace. It is the truth of His Life. As the Father and He are one in it, so now are we by Him, sharing one eternal Life in the Only-begotten, and therefore abiding both in the Father and in the Son by One Spirit.

And this truth is *substantial*, not theoretical. The Word has become Substance, and we partake of Him, the actual and living Christ.

What an indissoluble bond is this as in Him and in us. Truly nothing can separate us from this Love-Life of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The universe may sooner pass away than this Oneness of Life in Him. Thus also He is able to save us unto the completion, and while the throes of the whole creation become convulsive in these last hours of the age, the powers in the heavens being shaken, and the sea of humanity rages and roars with the sinister unrest that betokens the coming incarnation of the god of this world, we, beloved, are rooted and grounded in that Eternal Life, which is the very Love of God in the Christ.

Do not trouble, therefore, your own hearts by any fears, but recognise that the Christ is in you and you in Him by One Life of One Spirit, even the Spirit of God Incarnate. The Truth as it is in Jesus is now become the Truth in us also, One incarnate Life of God in Him and in us. But He, the Head, and we the members; nevertheless knit together in a Oneness that is indissoluble, eternal, unchanging.

Praise God for a Truth that has become *substance*, actual; and we living that Life in these mortal bodies by the very faith of the Son of God.

Therefore, will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the heart of the seas; though the waters thereof roar and are troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof—for there is a *River of Life*, and this flowing through our own hearts. "His love floweth on, full and free as a river; And His mercy endureth for ever and ever!" Yours in His plenitude,

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.
T. MADOC JEFFREYS.

THE CROSS AND THE GRACE OF GOD

"THE CHRIST-LIFE RELEASED THROUGH
THE CROSS."

Final address of March Conference.

Scriptures read: Numbers vii. 89; Matthew iii. 16, 17; John xii. 27-31; Judges vii. 15-22; 2 Cor. iv. 7; Philipians ii. 15, 16.

ONE trembles lest there might be that which is not the breath of the Spirit, and we have a mental conception, instead of the open vision of God.

We trust, therefore, that we shall come into very great simplicity this evening, as we see what should be the manner of our ministry.

We need to recognise that Life is spontaneous, and that ministry also is spontaneous. That is a reversal of much that is evident in the Christian life, for often service seems to be very laboured and heavy as if there were a great effort continually being made by the flesh. Whenever that is so we know that we are not living or serving in the right realm, because "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Of course we know there are many things that work against the true children of God to produce strain. The constant purport of the Holy Spirit's admonition in the New Testament was to keep the saints in the freedom of grace. They would continually get back into bondage of one kind and another, and the Apostle had to enjoin them in such words as "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. Ye have received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but ye have received the Spirit of sonship whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

We have seen in the course of these gatherings that grace, in the first place, is the beauty or glory of God, and that the first thing that should take place in our Christian experience should be the breaking in upon us of the vision of the beauty or glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. If we have not seen Him thus, by the Spirit, we are not yet saved. "H our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are lost (or perishing) in whom the god of this age hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine in upon them." The foundation upon which Christ builds His "ecclesia," His Body, is the revelation of His glory. It is so necessary for us to grasp clearly the simple fundamental truths concerning salvation, that we do not delude ourselves at the end of the age that we are saved when we are not. This is very primary, but there is such a danger in a testimony like this to have so much of the truth in our heads, and not in our hearts. It may have impressed itself upon us by the very magnificence of its conception, because there is presented to us a

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

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range of truth which is very entrancing. But all horizons of truth are empty without the personal vision of God in Christ. Unless He has ravished and captured our hearts, we have not yet commenced. You will forgive me that I press this, but one would not be a faithful minister of Jesus Christ unless one continually emphasised that there must be the vision of the beauty and the glory of God Himself in the face of Jesus Christ. That is not historical, but *present* revelation, coming out of heaven by the Holy Spirit. The gospel is not preached by any other agency than by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. It is not that we preach orthodoxy or adhere to a creed; but it is the Holy Ghost, God Himself, by His Spirit, in the midst of His people Who preaches the gospel; and when He does preach the gospel so, though it may have very painful effects upon the "Sanhedrin," very painful effects upon the congregation who gather, nevertheless, then, and then only, the divine work, which is the building up of the Body of Christ is accomplished. Otherwise all is waste. The Apostle reminds us, you remember, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, that though we build upon the right foundations, we have to take heed how we build upon those foundations, because we may build wood, hay, stubble, and all that will be tried in the day of fire which is close approaching; and it will be found wanting. Now, one presses that home because it ought to bring us, each one, to the place where we become, as we saw the other evening, suppliants for revelation—those who *cry* for revelation—that God may shine in upon our hearts and give us to see the beauty and glory of Himself in Jesus Christ. That is grace: for we saw that grace, first of all, is revelation. God, in His mercy, shines in upon us. We should never see Him else. We should never see the Son of God, unless the Father revealed Him. We should never understand the least fragment of what the mystery of godliness, apart from the revelation of the Father. And so the Benediction, the "Blessed" of the Lord Himself is upon the heart that sees the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (Matthew xvi. 17.)

Then we have seen in the course of this Conference that this vision of Grace brings us to an absolute end of ourselves, a complete despair; and that is the conviction of sin. We should not shrink from praying that there might be a conviction of sin in the midst of the church as it gathers. One does not suggest that we

should become morbid and introspective, but that we should ask the Lord to unveil Himself to us that there may be brought about in our hearts an unveiling of our own corrupt natures, corrupt in their very fountain, so that we might see the necessity for the grace of God in redemption. (1) The grace of God in revelation, (2) The grace of God in redemption. And we have seen that the redemption is as perfect as the revelation is perfect. We have seen that the redemption is secured by the outpouring of His Life in the blood of Jesus, and we saw that it was not merely the corpuscular fluid of the physical Body of Jesus, but it was the *Life* released in the blood. The price of an infinite Life has been paid for our redemption. We are redeemed, not with corruptible things of this universe, not with the elements most precious of this seeming stable system of things, but with something which is incorruptible and eternal, the Blood of the Christ of God (1 Peter i. 18, 19). Evidently the Holy Spirit means to indicate here the spiritual character and value of the Blood of Jesus. It was the soul of the Only-begotten of the Father made incarnate by the Eternal Spirit; and therefore when the soul was poured out in the effusion of *that* blood, all the values of the Eternal Spirit of the Son of God were released by which the universe has been cleansed. Now, if that be the Blood of Jesus, you see grace in redemption is perfect because it is infinite. We can have absolute assurance. And there is no doubt that the Lord is giving revelation as to the nature of the Blood in its heavenly and infinite character because we are living in the last hour of the dispensation, and the powers of darkness are gathering thick and closely around the church, which is His Body, seeking to stifle and quench and obstruct the breaking through of the glory of God in the Body of Christ, and so we should be living in that experience of the 12th chapter of Revelation: "They overcame him (Satan) because of the Blood of the Lamb" (in the midst of the throne). We do need to continually reiterate and press home that this is the Blood of the Lamb, not in a theoretical sense, but of the Lamb as seen by the Holy Ghost's revelation to the Apostle in the midst of the throne of the Eternal God—that standing, regnant, bleeding Lamb. It is that Blood in its heavenly nature and reality: "And they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death." So the redemption is perfect because it is an infinite

redemption through His Blood—the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace, and there is thus a perfect assurance in the children of God. We do not shrink from the presence of our God Who is a holy and consuming fire, for we do not worship thoughts; we do not come to gatherings and listen to addresses, and the whole testimony just there on that plane; but we come actually into the presence of the living God Who is a consuming fire. We can come without fear and condemnation because of the nature of this perfect redemption through His Blood.

Then we have been seeing that grace next takes its form in the liberation through the Blood of an Eternal Life, which is the Life of God in His Son; and the theme of our Conference, as you know, is "*The release of the Christ Life through the Cross.*" We are invited to share the inheritance on the ground of redemption. It is not only as sinners, then, we stand before God, but as "called saints," sanctified unto a Divine Purpose, separated, for the glory of God—called out from the world, not merely for the salvation of our souls as sinners who otherwise would go to hell, but called out from the world in order to form, by the mighty operations of the Holy Ghost, in and through the Risen Glorified Lord, the Body and Habitation of God by the Eternal Spirit. *This* is what we are called unto. And so we realise that even when we have seen Who Jesus is, in the infinite character of His Being; even when we have seen what grace is in the marvellous provision of the Blood as the outpouring from the Divine Being of that which alone could secure our redemption, we have only come to the beginnings of grace in that Eternal Life which is the Christ's (Jesus') eternal life. Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Thus we come to grace not only provided for us, but grace *imparted* to us. That very beauty and that glory which we see in the face of Jesus Christ is to be imparted to us. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, and we all, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed from glory to glory (or from grace to grace) by the *same* Spirit." This is the grace of the "*begetting.*" That Only-Begotten Who is the loveliness of God and the glory of God, Who is the revelation of the Divine Character, that very glory and grace is to be imparted to us as we are begotten out from Him, and by the Spirit worship Him continually day and night in His Temple, which is the Body of Christ!

We are called to that. And so we see that grace has now become a stream out from the Divine Being that continually flows into our hearts as an Eternal Life, which is the Life of the Son of God. We cease to be personal in this matter, for we belong to an integral Life; we are included in a glory of God which is a Life; that we may be in the ages to come a manifestation of the glory of God and of the grace of God (Eph. ii. 7). We rejoice upon the hope of the glory of God.

We were seeing in some measure this afternoon something of the grace of "this begetting," that this begetting is also an infinite begetting. It is not just the personal begetting of you and me again; it is not that you and I start all over again as from the beginning of our lives and get back to the hour of our inception into this world and are given a new birth naturally in that sense. It is not that we are even restored to what Adam was before he fell. That would be very wonderful! I think I have given to you a translation of that Welsh hymn which reveals something of what God has done for us in Christ:—

In Eden I remember well
My glorious crown of blessings fell,
And faded all away.
But blest be Calvary's victory,
Jesus has won far more for me
I'll praise Him now for aye.

We may well praise Him now for aye once we have seen what He has given, for the new birth that we enter into is that birth which was announced in all heaven when the Lord Jesus Christ ascended in His resurrection unto the glory of the Father as the Only-Begotten from all eternity now made Eternal Man. He was then addressed: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (Heb. i. 5). That is our new birth as revealed by the Spirit. When we accepted Christ we were ruled out of time and taken back into eternity, and found there in God. Notice the tenses of that passage in Ephesians ii. 5 and 6, which we read this afternoon; it says: "God... hath quickened-together-with Christ." Raised-us-up-together-with, made us sit-together-with." It all took place *then*. This is to say the new birth which takes place in you *functionally* commenced *there*. This is of the mystery of godliness. There is *One* Only-Begotten of the Father full of grace and truth, but "Of His fulness have we all received, and grace corresponding to grace." When you are born

again it is not you, so to speak, are born again in a personal possessive sense, but you are now born again, or born from above, as out from *Him*. You are realising in time that which God conceived in Eternity before the foundation of the world, and you are found in the Christ of God (Eph. i. 4). *That* is the new birth. It is not merely my own little new birth, but I find I have been begotten in and out of the Only-Begotten from all Eternity. And what is the measure of grace then? O, the measure of grace is the measure of that outflow of the Divine Life by the Eternal Spirit; and if I but have faith to rest back upon that and to recognise that the *Christ* dwells in my heart by faith, I find that "I am rooted and grounded in love." You see where the springs of your being are now. They are hid with Christ in God. That is grace, and you are born out of it; but when you begin to try to manufacture a little structure of righteousness, well, God will break that down all the time. That is why so many of us are having a bad time. We try to build up a little structure of our own righteousness, to bring a few toy bricks together, and God sweeps those efforts of our own flesh at self-justification away day after day. *He will not have it!* All that ground of the selfhood of us is for ever judged there at the Cross. Your life is now entirely of Grace, and you are called to manifest the virtues of Him "Who hath called you out of darkness into His most marvellous light."

That is the nature of the begetting. You have to get back beyond Time. There never was anything like that in Eden, marvellous as Adam's life was, a wondrous being, another mystery. We cannot know what Adam was apart from revelation, a being compounded of dust on the one side and breathed directly into by the Breath of God on the other side. Yet only, as we saw, to be a type of Christ. But now, you and I are born out of the Only-Begotten Who has ascended into His throne as Man; Who before His Advent was God the Son Unincarnate, but now Incarnate. It is out of Him you have been born from above; and we do need to recognise what the dimensions of this "new birth" are. It is from above, and all our life now is from above. That is why the Apostle is continually reiterating this doctrine of grace; and he tries to expostulate with this stubborn unbelief of our hearts when he writes in the Colossain letter, "Ye died; and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life shall be manifested then shall

we also be manifested with Him in Glory." "Set your mind on the things that are above." Your life is *there!*

This is the measure of grace in the begetting. The begetting is a limitless begetting. It is a fountain of Life out from God; and when we talk about our spirit now we do need to get clear on this. Some of us have been discussing this question of spirit and soul. It is not your old spirit that is quickened, otherwise you are not a new creation. You are *born* from above out of the Eternal Christ, and you are back there in Him; *there* your origins are. "if any man be in Christ he is a new creation." Old things are passed away: behold all things are become new; and all things are out of God." Therefore it is grace. Your life is now out from God, and you are to live out from God by the Holy Ghost. It is important for us to recognise that we live by the Holy Ghost; by the energies of God, and that these are ours by faith. That is why the Apostle prays that we might be strengthened by His Spirit into the inner man—that other man beyond the reach of sense, beyond the reach of our own self-will and our own self-thought, and our own self-feeling—there, hidden in the inner man, "Christ may dwell in your hearts, by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend *with* all saints," because you have come into those eternal dimensions of the Eternal Life of the Only-Begotten, you have come into that limitless realm of grace. You begin to understand that God does not expect anything from you but that you should yield to Him in all things, and BELIEVE HIM, because the radical sin is unbelief. It is the element of sin that is hardest to eliminate, this secret unbelief, that will not believe the word of God which He has sealed in the blood of His Only-Begotten Son.

By grace, therefore, we have come into the infinite dimensions of the Divine Life, and we are not in the dimensions of this little world in its experiences and knowledges and intuitions, but we live in a realm of revelation. We live in a realm where all the domes of our little sense-heavens are broken, and we see the land of far distances, because we have seen the King in His beauty, "the length and breadth and depth and height, and finally the knowledge surpassing love of the Christ." *That* is our life. Our life has all its springs now in God.

But what about ministry? Ministry is consequent upon that Life. You find in the beginning of the gospel of Matthew (iii. 16, 17),

that the Lord Jesus, begotten out from the Father, hears the Voice that greets that "begetting" as He comes out of the river, "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." Then we saw, you remember, a similar illustration from the Book of Numbers, where Moses goes right into the holiest of all by the ministry of the precious blood. It was by the intercession of the priesthood that Moses entered, because blood had been sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat, and as he stood there in the holiest of all, he heard the Voice of One speaking unto him from the Mercy Seat that was upon the Ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim. Thus there was not only communion, but there was the law of ministry, that Moses should go out as the minister of God because He had met the recognition of God there in the holiest of all. So with the Lord Jesus, now not only in type, but in actuality, having passed through death in the figure of baptism, there comes the recognition, "This is my Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." Ministry is but the recognition on the part of the Father of that which is begotten. The baptism in the Holy Ghost is the recognition of the begetting, and I always think that the Holy Spirit must be given simultaneously with the begetting now, since all the works are finished. I cannot conceive of a child of God who has not received the Holy Spirit. "If anyone hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." There may be the manifestation of the Spirit—one does not limit this. There may be further displays of the wonder of the anointing. There are "fallings upon" doubtless of the Spirit of God in various ways. We do not limit Him. But the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the recognition on the part of the Father of that which is begotten, and the ministry thus goes with the begetting. If you are really acknowledging the begetting, and if you, by the precious blood of Christ come in, as the Apostle enjoins, into the holiest of all, there the Voice meets you. There that Word of God, Incarnate in Christ, now becomes incarnate in you by the new birth in the measure that the Christ is in you, and you come out as One in Him. "Let that incarnate Word dwell richly in you," for there must be the approval of that Word in ministry, "To each one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." If we are begotten out of him, it is in a Purpose of God, and there comes a ministry with the begetting. The ministry is

also entirely of grace, only one wants to recognise the distinction between Life, and the Ministry of that Life, for it is not ministry with God first. God is after *Life* in you first. He is after the begetting; He is after securing in you that which is well-pleasing to Himself. He will use you in His Purpose afterwards; but that is also in His sovereign will and choice. What He is seeking in you is a delight and satisfaction for Himself; and when He gets you, a sinner, to accept Him in all the measureless nature of His love and grace, when He gets you to an assurance of what His blood has secured for you, that you are begotten out from Him, and dwell by faith in the fact of your begottenness, and rejoice in Him as your Life, you will find that upon that condition ministry is given.

If there were ministry apart from that you would have cross purposes developing. That is why there is so much trouble and confusion to-day. People *seem* to be serving God in promoting what is mis-called Christian work, but you find the first thing God does by the Holy Ghost is to destroy that which has been created by man. You and I know very well the nature of Christian service to-day, getting into what are called churches, and the awful position it is to serve in organisations called churches. Where there has not been the revelation of the Lord Jesus; there has not been the conviction concerning sin. There has been a joining of the church without a joining to the Lord. That is the trouble. You come into these churches and you discern a large proportion who are not born from above, who have not Life. They have theology and even orthodoxy, but not Life. I am speaking feelingly from personal experience. One goes about the country preaching this gospel under the constraints of the Holy Spirit, and we find sunken rocks in the feasts of charity, those who are even prominent Christians, who even sit on Evangelical councils and committees, and—*"they are not born again"*

One is prepared, of course, to stand before the throne of God some day and asseverate that. We have to discharge ourselves from the blood of souls, and one has to be faithful. One is not saying this by way of condemnation, in censoriousness, but as a simple statement of the Spirit's discerning. They have not Life. They do not know the power of the redeeming Blood. Some of them despise the Blood. Now, no man who is born from above would in any way minimise the value and preciousness of the Blood of Christ. Some of these people

also fight the teaching of the necessity of the new birth. That is the trouble.

So you see it must be that out of this begetting of God in our hearts, and the assurance of it, this coming through into a relationship with God in the fellowship of the one Spirit, *ministry* breaks forth.

The anointing is absolutely related to the begetting. "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." God will say to every child of His who is thus begotten out of His Spirit, "This is My beloved." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son in your hearts crying, Abbe, Father." "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ." "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." That is the recognition as from Him, and when the anointing comes in that way upon our spirit, *ministry* ensues. The grace of Christ in Life must issue inevitably in the grace of Christ in *ministry*.

We see, therefore, that *ministry* is the breaking forth of the glory of God in our hearts. It is of Him, and not of us. You cannot manufacture it; you cannot create it.

We have been taking lately the Book of Numbers, and have noted the breaking forth of the glory of God in the rod of Aaron. Now what was Aaron's rod any more than the other rods? They were all dry sticks, and Aaron's stick was as dry as any other stick, as far as nature was concerned. "Aaron, what is he?" There was nothing more in that rod than in the others. O, but because it was the rod of the elect and recognised of God there broke forth the glory of God. And we have seen what *that ministry* is. There are the buds and the blossoms and the almonds all at once! It is unrestricted, unlimited grace. You do not serve God by some painful effort. The burden is the burden of the Spirit not your burden. It is *God*, by the operations of His Spirit, breaking forth through your heart because you are a child of God. You love Him—you cannot help loving Him, and when you love Him, out of the love the service comes. It is not some mental ability; it is not some equipment of a natural character, but it is the breaking forth of that free unquenchable love of God. You find the Apostle declaring the principle of service when he says, "The love of Christ constraineth us." We do not need to define the nature of our anointing. We do not need to ask ourselves whether we are apostles, or whether we are prophets, or whether we are

evangelists, or whether we are this or that. *Functioning*, out-breaking of Life is the essential matter. There is no need to worry about *office*. The love of Christ will constrain us, and the *ministry* makes itself manifest. It breaks forth from the love of God, and the essential and foundational character of that *ministry* is revealed in the word of God. It's basic character, as we have seen so often here—but one is pressing this home because it must come home to our hearts if we are to serve Him—is always a *ministry* of intercession. If there be no intercession in me I have no right to speak from this platform. If there is not that element of the *ministry* in one's heart one cannot preach. You must preach out of experience; you must declare that which the Lord hath done, and the very basic nature of *ministry* is this Spirit of intercession. O, I do pray that we may really get hold of this and realise that this *ministry* is for us all, each one. There is not one child of God here who cannot have, by the grace of God, the *ministry* of intercession. If you only wait upon God, if you worship Him, if you have fellowship with Him, then this other thing breaks through and it is spontaneous. It is grace. It is given. You do not earn it. You cannot climb up to heights where it is found. It comes down to you; and the lower you are, and the more broken you are, and the less you are in your own sight, the more the grace will flow, and the more powerful will the service be. "It is to *this* man will I look." It is "he that abaseth himself that shall be exalted"; and when the Cross works in us this humility with regard to our flesh, so that we are less than nothing in our own sight, it is then God comes down. When pride, conceit, self-esteem, and all those other things that block the path are dealt with by the Cross, and God has us contrite, tender, loving God and man, and most of all the saints, then there breaks through intercession. That is Aaron's rod. You may feel as dry and as dead as that withered stick, but you see "We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Then you get this other parable, the three hundred of God and Gideon's reduced band (*the number of the priestly family*), intercessors, who with but the cry "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon" overcome a seeming overwhelming array of military power. Only a broken pitcher, but a Lamp shining through, and a trumpet. A Life and a Confession—these two going together. The Lamp shining

through the broken pitcher. When God breaks the pitchers, breaks the earthen vessels, it is then His glory is manifested. We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the glory, the power, and all the tribute of it may be given to God. It is not of us at all. It is of grace.

Thus in that day of His manifestation with all the sons that He has caused to inherit His glory, the Head Stone will be brought forth with shoutings of angels, but deeper praise of saints, "Grace! Grace!"

SOUL-SACRIFICE THE PRINCIPLE OF UNITY IN THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

(Notes of an address given at the February Conference.)

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it in abundance." (John x. 10.)

The thief comes with a very definite purpose. He comes to steal; he comes to kill; and he comes to destroy. You do not need to be told who the thief is. The thief is the devil. The one who would rob God of His glory, and of His purpose, and of His sheep, if that were possible. But there is a very precious word in this same chapter, "Neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand."

But the devil is not playing at things. He is a desperate being and out for desperate ends; but opposed to his desperation is the zeal of the Lord of Hosts. The antithesis to that desperate energy of the devil is the more than equally zealous energy of the Holy Ghost, the outgoings of Omnipotent Love, the passion of God by the Holy Spirit. And the only thing that can meet the devil is this passion of God. The passion of God met him in the blood, and overcame him. In the blood of Jesus there was released the energy of the eternal passion. We need to recognize that the soul of Jesus was the soul of One Who made God actual in this world by an Incarnation; and that behind His soul was the Eternal Spirit as the Spring of it; and that His soul was a constituent manifestation, through the blood in a body here on earth, of the eternal being of God. When the blood was shed that soul was poured out; and there was released in the universe the divine energy; yet the divine energy in another form, not in the form of omnipotence, but in a form that

seemed to be weakness, nevertheless in an invisible might that you and I cannot discern, except by revelation, and then only in part. For it was the impact of almighty God through the blood of Jesus that met the devil. God was in the Christ. You see, you have something that has met this desperate purpose of Satan. And the only thing that can meet the desperate purpose of Satan in you and me is that same power that was in the Lord Jesus, and is now in us, by virtue of what He wrought. It is the zeal of the Lord of Hosts. It is very important to recognize that these are not pictures. The Lord has not given these parables for the sake of our imagination; but He is really trying to unveil the desperate issues that are behind the scenes with regard to the eternal purpose of God in the church. No member of the church, therefore, can afford to be complacent, or to be haphazard, or to be easy-going.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. Now I am come that they may have life (and, as you know, this word 'life' means life in its essential vitality, 'zoe'), and that they may have it in abundance."

Abundant life! So that you have the adequate meeting of the need of the sheep, as there is that without which would continually perambulate in order to destroy, to steal and to slay. There is on the other hand, the resources of abundant life for the sheep. But how is that obtained? Well, in this way:—

"I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd layeth down His *life* for the sheep." But it is important to notice that an entirely different word is used for "life" here, "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd layeth down His *soul* for the sheep."

It was by the laying down of His soul that the gift of "Eternal Life" was made possible. Because as He was manifest in the flesh, and offered in the passion of the Cross, He was justified in the Spirit, and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God Himself was released through the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ in His passion. He not only stripped off from Himself principalities and powers, triumphing over them in it, but in His ascension He secured the release out of the Divine Being of the Holy Ghost for the church. This is the gift of the Holy Ghost; this, the release of the Spirit of God out of the Divine Being in and through the ascended Lord. The Spirit of Divine Man as the nature and substance of our life henceforth—born out from God, and energised and maintained by God.

It is that. This is the stupendous fact of God now in Christ and in the church—THE HOLY GHOST. He has received the promise of the Father. The Spirit that was already His as the Son of God in fellowship with the Father from all eternity is now given to Him as ascended Man and Head of the Body, so that He is able to release for us, as out from Himself, the Eternal Spirit, to dwell in and upon us as members of the church. Each one of us, as members of Christ's Body, have resting in and upon us the eternal resources of God for our spirit. That is the truth that every born from above child of God ought to know. There is the energy of a *life* in your spirit which is infinite, exhaustless, because it proceeds out from God. And in your new birth you are not merely made a little puny individual spirit, but you are related to God in one Spirit, and therefore upon you rests the descended Spirit of God continually, as you abide under the blood. But this was not possible except as He laid down His soul—laid down that life in its human essence and form.

"I am the good Shepherd, the good Shepherd layeth down His 'psuche,' or soul, for the sheep."

This was the quintessence, the very essential nature of that sacrificial love in Him, which caused the Father to delight in Him (17th verse).

"Therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down my 'psuche' (soul) that I may take it again (in His ascension). No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down; and I have authority to take it again. This commandment (or charge) have I received from my Father."

He needed the commandment of the Father to lay down that peculiar "psuche," life, or soul, because it affected the life of the Divine Being. It was bound up with the Trinity: the Father, Son and Holy Ghost were alike bound up in the soul of Jesus. The value of the soul of Jesus and the dimensions of the soul of Jesus are the value and dimensions of the Eternal Spirit. You need to recognise that it was through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself unto God. Once we get the meaning in these words, the Holy Spirit means us to have we see that it was through the Divine Being in its essence as Spirit that He offered Himself, —through the out-pouring of His soul. There is, therefore, a coming through of God in the pouring out of the soul of Jesus, a coming through of God in the shed blood; for the blood is not merely the corpuscular fluid,

but there is released as the blood is shed that other *life*, which is commensurate with the source of it, begotten out from God. A Divine Life is in the flesh of Jesus, and that invisible soul of Jesus manifested in the glory of His Manhood (but, of course, illimitable in its resources in the Eternal Spirit), that soul was released, and there came through all the values of the Eternal Spirit, for through the eternal values of His own Spirit He offered Himself unto God. May the Lord give revelation that we may see the might of the blood of Jesus as a heavenly power, as something that is able to meet Satan in the highest realms of his range. You find the last phase of the church of God has the revelation of the meaning, the value, the power, of the blood of Jesus:—

"They overcame him (Satan) because of the blood of the Lamb."

It was the Lamb that John (the Apostle) saw by the Holy Ghost. The Lamb *in the midst of the Throne*—the Lamb newly slain and bleeding in the throne of God. All symbolic, because our finite minds can only take in truth as it is presented in symbol, but the reality is that in the centre of the Divine Life. Sovereignty is the power of the blood of Jesus.

The Lord Jesus, therefore, needed the commandment of the Father because the laying down of his "psuche" or soul involved the Trinity, involved Deity; and as an integral Being out from God, the Father in Him, and He in the Father by One Spirit, He needed the authority of the Godhead to lay down this life. Of course, we need to recognise that He could never have been slain. No man could take it from Him; no devil could take it from Him. He voluntarily laid down His life. He was crucified through weakness, through His yielding Himself to that passion whereby He met the powers of darkness, being our Representative for sin, triumphing over them in it. But if we could only see the other side of that Cross we should behold the magnificence of God, the glory of God as revealed in it.

Now one is led to this verse because here is the principle of *unity*. This is the principle by which God is harmonising the universe. It is the thing of which Jesus has given so wonderful an example in laying down His *soul*. He laid down His peerless, unique, spotless soul: the incorruptible blood of the Christ was poured out, that essence of His life, which has cleansed the universe and reconciled all things unto God. "Things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, all things reconciled to Him."

He laid down His pure, peerless soul in order that there might be released life abundant, not that "puscho," life, but that Spirit, that Life out from God Himself, for you and for me as we are begotten of Him. This is the principle of unity because thus He becomes the Head of the universe in the Godhead as Man, and thus He secures the eternal principle that all things shall be gathered up, or headed up in the Christ of God. In John xii. 23 there are words that are very familiar:—

"Jesus answered them saying—The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified [in the Godhead: He does not mean that He might simply have some display of glory as for Himself; but that He might be glorified in the Divine Being as Man, and the Divine Being be glorified in Him.] Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

He is speaking of Himself first of all as laying down His soul, but now He extends that principle, to those who shall share with Him this life, this life of ascension in God, this life which is Spirit. We must follow the same principle that He followed, not only for our salvation, but for our identification with Him. We do not save ourselves in any way by trying to follow Jesus. I hope you recognise the meaning of that. We do not save ourselves in any way by trying to follow Jesus, because we cannot. The one who endeavoured best to follow Jesus in the flesh was Peter. He tried hard; and he did all kinds of desperately courageous things, and there was no man so resolute and determined as he. He was the one who stepped out on the sea in that dark and stormy night. If ever there was a dare-devil it was Peter in the realm of his flesh. You must not minimise Peter's attributes of heart and mind as a man in the natural. He was the man who took out his sword and was prepared to fight single-handed the armed forces that came to arrest the Saviour. Just two swords they had, and Peter unsheathed one and was prepared to defend the Lord Jesus Christ against the world. That speaks for his courage; but he knew nothing about this other thing. He knew nothing about the impact of hell; he knew nothing about the impact of principalities and powers. You remember the Lord (ch. xiii.) says—"Whither I go thou canst not follow me now," and Peter says: "I will lay down my soul for thy sake." But he did not know what it is to lay down the *soul*. He thought it was to die in the mortal body. That

is not laying down the soul. There are plenty of men with dare-devil courage who will face that, but that is not laying down the soul. And the Lord tells him: "Wilt thou lay down thy soul for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." As much as to say, You do not know the impact of Satan, and the weakness of your own moral fibre. You will crumple up as I take my sheltering hand from over you; but I have prayed the Father that thy faith fail not, and when thou art turned again at last, and hast seen thine own weakness, then strengthen the brethren. And it is only the brethren who have had this crash who can strengthen others, because they know the weakness of the flesh, the impossibility of any man or woman fighting their way through. "Thou shalt follow Me hereafter." That means following Him in the way of laying down your life; *but we are only able to lay down that life through the operation of the Cross*. It is only as the Holy Spirit makes possible the laying down constantly of the natural life into that death which Jesus has already died for us that we can follow Him through into the Godhead, have access unto the Father in Fellowship of one Spirit in Him. We only live in the Spirit as we are crucified in the flesh. We only live in God as we die in ourselves. That is the fashion of it. The Apostle accepted the working out of the cross in his own life. Bearing about in his body the putting to death of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in his mortal flesh. The life of Jesus, which is the life of the Eternal Spirit is only made possible in our mortal flesh as we lay down our *souls* by the power of the Cross. This is the principle of unity. He is speaking here in John to His future disciples—those who together with Him shall become that "first-fruits" unto God in that Pentecostal presentation. He is the first-fruits to God in that Easter presentation of Ascension, but now there will be that Pentecostal presentation, that baptism whereby we are baptised into One Body, and shall be the first-fruits of the new creation in and through the Christ Personal Who is "God over all, blessed for ever."

Thus He elaborates what must be the principle of our following—"He that loveth his life (life here is 'psuche,' soul) shall lose it." Now how many of us are fondly loving our souls. Well, I would not like to say that there is one person here who did not still love his own soul. I find I do love myself, and it is the cross to

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constantly lay down by the power of the Spirit—this self-life. What makes your pride to be hurt so swiftly? It is the self-love. What makes you so self-conscious about the testimony? It is self-love. Why is it that you suffer this and that agony very often under the slights and rebuffs of your brethren and of the world? It is self-love. It is that in us which is self. It is that personal life in us (not that individual life in us) which is the thing which prevents the unity of the Body. It is the "ego," the "I" in its various manifestations that prevents unity. And so He says: "He that loveth his *soul* shall lose it; and he that hateth his *soul* in this world shall guard it unto life eternal." That is to say, the true soul life shall become manifest in eternity when you and I are resurrected in His likeness; when you and I at last receive the end of our faith, which is the gaining possession of our souls; then our personal life will be saved because it will partake of His Person and His Nature. We guard that personal life of ours, which is so dear to us, as we lose it, lay it down constantly by the power of the Spirit thus working out the cross in our nature day by day. Then He says these tender words: "If any one minister to me." This is our ministry—to minister to Him. It is not our ministry to minister to one another first. You remember in Acts xiii. 2, it describes certain disciples *ministering unto the Lord*. O, if we had this vision, that our service is to minister to the Lord, not first of all to the church. A ministry to the church in your self-life is void, and your personal ministry becomes a thing that is your snare. But, as we saw this afternoon, the vision of the church which makes for unity is the vision of the ascended Lord. The objective vision is the vision of the Christ Himself—we see Jesus! We have that same faculty to see by the Spirit that He had. He was able to lift up His eyes *into* heaven. That has been very precious to me this Conference—He lifted His eyes into heaven and He *saw*, as it were, by the Spirit. "No one hath seen the Father but the Son," The glory of the Father filled His life. The love of the Father constrained His heart that He was able thus, because of that vision of the Father's glory, to lay down His soul constantly, until at last it came unto that death of the Cross when He was made *sin* for us. And what a test! He met all the accusations of hell, as our Representative, in the realm of His soul. He lost His soul, so to speak, in pouring it out for our sakes, and He guarded it in the Life Eternal.

That is the way He went, and that is the way you and I are called to follow. That is, as He had the faculty by the Spirit to lift up His eyes into heaven, so, praise God, we have also. O, tell me friends, what do you see when you pray? Do you know Jesus by the Holy Ghost? Have you the revelation of Jesus as there in your spirit, a clear light shining right down from the Godhead into your heart so that you see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, a consciousness of Jesus over all. There was in Him a God consciousness; and there is in you and me also as we are born out from Him a God-consciousness in our spirit, and we lift up our eyes into heaven. So we saw that the unity of ministry is secondary to the vision of Jesus. There is no disunity when people have the vision of Jesus. In old days I have been at church meetings that were a little bit lively and some members got cross with one another and began to talk as if God were a million miles away. But that is not possible when we are conscious of the presence of God.

But this is the consciousness of the child of God—the presence of God. Lift up your eyes into heaven. Behold Jesus. That is the one thing that makes for unity as the objective vision. And then, as we saw this afternoon, the subjective vision—the vision within our hearts—is the functioning, the reality of the Son of God revealed in us. He is revealed to us in the Godhead, and He is revealed in us as a functioning Life, as members of the Son of God. I touch you, I touch God. You touch me, you touch God. Touching God? Yes! "Why persecutest thou Me, Saul?" As our brother was saying some months ago, Paul touched Jesus in Stephen. The Son of God whom Paul harried was also by His Spirit in those. They were integral parts of Him, essential parts of Him. So the objective vision that makes for unity is the ascended Lord; the subjective vision that makes for unity is a realisation in the Body, a realisation that is inward, functional, essential, vital; and if one member of the body suffer, all the members suffer with that one; and if one member of the body is glorified, or exalted, all members are glorified in that one. It is a functioning life—and have you realised that the Life is inward in us by the anointing? We should recognise how precious each child of God is to the Father, and therefore how precious they should be to us.

But now here you have the principle by which unity is promoted in us. "If any man minister to me, let him follow me." Peter in

the flesh cannot follow Him, but Peter in the Spirit can. Peter in the new birth, and under the anointing of the Spirit can follow Him in the way of the Cross. He is not following Him now as a sinner, but following Him as a saint, as one who is sanctified, as one who is being led by the Spirit, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." These are taken step by step through their life as blind men, being willing to submit to the Spirit; but you can only submit to the Spirit as the self-life is laid down. "If any man will minister unto me, where I am there shall also my ministering servant be." Ah, then you know, in identification with Him, your life is hid with Christ in God. Yes, even here in the earth, you ascend into heaven by the Spirit and He says, "If any man minister to Me, him will My Father honour." That is our ministry, to minister to the Christ and to minister to Him first of all directly in worship, in fellowship, in adoration, and then to minister to Him in the Body. But that ministry in the body, as we saw this afternoon means the laying down of the soul.

Now the soul life in you and me is the personal life, it is not the individual life. There is a distinction here which we need to recognise. As individuals, you and I persist. You do not cease to be. There is no "Nirvana" to the Christian, no absorption into anything, not even into God. The marvellous thing is that God transforms you absolutely and entirely so that you are a new creation. "Old things are passed away, and all things are become new." You somehow persist, and that is the miracle. Paul says, "I am crucified together with Christ." (God has wrought that. I believe it.) Nevertheless I live. That is a mystery. No longer I—still that is not altogether true. Paul, you have still a bit of "I" in you, surely? "No longer I, but Christ liveth in me." How can this be? Listen further, "and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." It is to live it by faith. It is by faith there is the upspringing of another life in you as you are prepared, by the Cross, to relegate your life to death. The other Life, the Spirit of the Eternal in your spirit springs up as the puny self-life is relegated to the Cross, yet you persist. That is the miracle, the marvel of God, that after He has destroyed you, so to speak, after He has put you to death, yet you live. That is the doctrine that is foolishness

to the natural mind and to the wisdom of this world. To us who believe it is the very dynamic of God. The one who is speaking knows that it is the power of God that as he is prepared to relegate constantly, by the power of the Spirit, the self-life to death, another Life out from God springs up in his spirit. This is what we confess:—

Thou of life the fountain art
Freely let me take of Thee
Spring Thou up within my heart!

But He does not spring up as the *religious* man merely. It is not because you sing hymns, because you have been to revival meetings and your religious emotions have all been stirred, your love of music has been fed. That is not it. It is in the reality of the Christian life. That is, you lay down constantly the self-life, another Life springs up out from God in your spirit,

Spring Thou up within my heart
Rise to all eternity.

Personality then has to be relegated to death, being in the realm of the soul, but individuality is in the realm of the spirit, deeper down. God preserves this, and yet He transforms it, and the unity of vision in the church and the unity of ministry is always imperilled by this thrust of the personality—the uprising of the human personality, but not the human individuality. God does not rob you of your individuality, but He wants you to lay down your personality. It is the personal that attracts and gathers, intrudes and causes schism. It is when He is obscured and hidden by some other personality, some other interest than He coming between, and that is the point where the self-life, the soul-life has to be hated, loathed. Why? Because it would rob my Lord of His place. It would be sacrilege, robbing the temple, intruding something else in the place of God Incarnate in Christ Jesu, and I must lay down this soul of mine in all its operations.

Now, we who have heard a lot about souliness in these past years are in danger of some deception because we think of psychicality in only *one* realm, and that is in the realm of emotion. We think of temperamental, nervous, hysterical, easily moved people, and say: O, that is very soulish. But that is not the only form of souliness. We do not need to be told that the soul has three forms of life—in the realm of the

emotions, in the realm of the intellect, and in the realm of the will. Soul is made up of these three forms of personal life—the emotional or life of sensibility: the intellectual life, or reason, and the volitional, or the life of will. Now a great many are ready to recognise it when it is in the realm of the emotions, but they do not recognise it when it comes in the form of intellect; and because they are cold and not emotional; they are inclined to think they are not psychical but they may be much more psychical than a rather highly-strung person who gives way to feeling. This is one of the perils. There you get the breaking in of the devil as he is able by powerful intellectual impact to bring about schism, and it is the intrusion of the self-life there that makes for disunity of vision. The vision must be only of God on the one hand in Christ, and only of the Body as an expression of the Christ on earth—a two-fold vision. One of Him in the God-head; the other of His life shared in a great corporate company, and the divino purpose to be realised in the progression of that corporate company. So you see another aspect of the self or soul life, quite apart from the emotion is the intellect, or reason, which must be laid down. O, how that can intrude into the realm of the spiritual! How there can be the thrust of the personal in the intrusion of teaching, of doctrine, and how there can come in mixture. There may be first of all a genuine revelation, and then intellectual pride comes in and adds to it, or takes from it, which all makes for disunity. Why is it that now in the body of Christ, in the church, there is such a multitude of divisions gathered around powerful teachers, and every school thinking it is right, and looking askance at one another? It is because there has come in this element of the soul in intellectuality. Then there is the will. O, the will seems to be splendid because there is neither now—no psychicality apparent in the form of emotion, or in intellect, only the strong personal hold and drive and thrust. That is will, and all that personal life of ours has to be hid down and hated if we are to minister to Him, because we can only minister to Him in the Body, as the life is functional in the Spirit and rules us out. That is the hardest thing to bear—to be ruled out. Here I must lay down in the dust life's glory dead: to recognise the meaning of the word "All flesh is grass." And the glory of man, what is that? "The flower of the field." The soul-life? Well, that also is grass and must perish. What is it that endures for ever?

The word of God—the written, uttered, incarnate and now consummate Word of God as bound up in the progression of the Body. Paul recognises his ministry as a member of the Body in Colossians—that he might complete the word of God. The word of God has to be completed in all those who shall be born out of that Eternal Word and made one with Him. Paul sees that, and he is prepared to suffer afflictions for the body's sake; to lay down constantly all the self-life; all self-realization! Yes, even self-realisation in the body! And *there* is a snare! You and I can still have a subtle thought of self-realisation, rather than that He might see of the travail of His soul. There is only One to see of the travail of His soul: that is the pure soul that was laid down at Calvary. Your soul and mine in their natural state, as God sees them, are very, very unspeakable things, for they express the natural corruption of our hearts. It is only that which is of the Spirit is life. It is only that which comes out from Himself that brings a glory to God. All that which comes out from me; all that which springs out of my personality, whether it be in emotion, intellect, or will, will not glorify Him. It will obscure Him; it will draw attention to me. This life of mine must be laid down that His life may come through. That is why God can only use the weak. He cannot use the strong, He cannot use the wise, He can only use those who are quite unable in their own sight. It is the "nothings," or those that have been brought to nothing by the impact of His glory, and have found, like Daniel, "That all their comeliness is turned to corruption," or like John at Patmos—falling at His feet as those who are dead. Yet again, we get the principle of unity in falling at His feet as those who are dead! Dead men don't quarrel, and dead men don't make schism. Dead men do not provoke that which would in any way obscure His purpose, because their self-life has been reduced to dust and ashes in their own estimation as before His glory, and now they choose to live only by the Spirit.

Now, as one says that one is stating the ultimate reality. There is a principle in that which we do not achieve ever by any attainment. If you lived to be one hundred years you would never get there. It is a process first, the thing that the Holy Ghost has begun to perform in you and me: "He that hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ," and we are in school. We are disciples.

We have gathered around Jesus, not as they gathered around Him in the days of His flesh, but we are gathered around Him as He is in the throne. He is in the midst of the Church; He is in the midst of two or three where they gather unto His name. We gather around Him; we learn of Him; we learn of Him the meaning of His Cross, the significance of His Cross. He endured His Cross, not for His own sake, but for our sakes; and the principle of His Cross is now made to operate in us by the Holy Ghost. So we see that as we are born out from Him there is going to be a constant striving of the Spirit in us to secure the realisation of this new creation, for it is in the realm of the new creation we are while our life is hid with Christ in God. Romans viii.: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in birth pangs." In it, and also in us, are the convulsive workings of the Holy Spirit Who is seeking to break through in the universe; but first of all to break through in the church. Just as you have it in that marvellous type of Jacob who was of promise, so in you and me there is that struggle. Well, He is going to overcome. Only *Israel* can prevail, that which is indeed of God, because He has seen God face to face; because He has had the vision, the one vision of the glory of God in Christ. Peniel! I have seen God face to face. There is a struggle going on continually—the self-life, the I, that is my original I, still here; but now there is another Life arising out from God by faith; and this other Life from God, energised by the Spirit, crucifies the other. As he comes up in the realm of feeling he is to be crucified; as he comes up in the realm of intellect he is to be crucified; as he comes up in the realm of will he is to be crucified. Hate your own life; and then another life, His life accepted as your spiritual life, arises within you. It is by the energy of another life! And when we come to realise that we *cannot* live the Christian life, we *cannot* follow Christ in the energy of our flesh, neither by dint of intellectual power, because the vision of far distances is open to us, nor in the realm of our will because of the tremendous determination about us, but because we recognise that "In me, in my flesh, dwellth no good thing," and we are humbled to the dust, because in the realm of the personal we are not in it. Yet we remain individuals, but allow another Life to come in, not in passivity, but in a rigid assent, claiming continually that the Holy Ghost shall put that self-life to death. "If ye

through the Spirit do put to death the doings of the body, ye shall live."

And what a One we have to gaze upon, Whose soul was spotless, and in Whom was no sin, yet He laid it down for our sakes and became poor, continually poorer, helpless and impotent in this world. The most foolish of the foolish who could not save Himself, and could not help Himself. Could not turn a stone into a barley loaf to feed Himself, though He might feed a multitude! Who is wearied as other men are, yet gives life to others. Who in Himself knew the weakness and frailty of our mortality, yet had the resources of immortality, because in His self-life He refused to live, the peerless Jesus! Endued we must believe with every possibility of human glory, with every equipment of emotion and intellect and will, that could have out-Napoleoned Napoleon, of course, and out-Cæsared Cæsar. He could have been a prince of men by reason of natural endowment, as we would call it, but He refused so to live. He laid down his soul constantly in ever, ever increasing tests of faith, until the Lord at last made Him realise that He must pour out that soul that had never known sin as a sin-offering and taste death spiritually for every man—to be cut off as far as His self-consciousness was concerned from the Eternal Spirit, Who was the spring of His life. He was obedient unto *death*, even the death of the Cross.

We are not called to face such things as that, but we are called to hate this life because it caused that. It was self-assertion in Satan that began the thing, simply self-assertion. "I will"—only the will—only another conception to that of the glory of God. If you read the scriptures carefully you will see that this was the sin of the beginning, and this self-assertion in me is begotten in me from him, the devil that root of sin, which is this life of self deep down entrenched in my being, so much so I cannot detect it. It can come up in the most deceptive ways—the deceitfulness of sin—this thing in me caused that. Well, if He laid down His life, surely I ought to be willing to lay down mine, and to lay it down in such fashion as He makes possible because He said "Ye shall follow me afterwards." So you yield to His Spirit, and then you cease to be anything that causes disunity, anything that causes schism. It is always the "ego" uprising that causes disunity in one form or another.

May the Lord make us worthy of this calling for His Name's sake.

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre,

HONOR OAK ROAD, LONDON, S.E.23.

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship.
Sundays: 11 a.m., 3 p.m. (Young People's Meeting), and 6.30 p.m. Mondays: 7.30 p.m. Wednesdays: 8 p.m.
Saturdays: 7.30 p.m.

Conferences are held every week-end (Saturday and Sunday), and also a longer week-end at the beginning of each month, this fixed by the first Sunday. (Friday to Monday evenings, inclusive.) All particulars may be obtained from G. Paterson, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

Ministers: T. Austin-Sparks; T. Madoc Jeffreys; G. Paterson (General Secretary).

Guest House Hostesses: Lady Ogle; Mrs. M. Brand.

Telephone: Sydenham 5215.

Telegrams: "Byndesmos, Forest, London."

Cables: "Syndeamos, London."

Easter Conference:—

Thursday to Tuesday, April 5—10, 1928 "The Cross—the Way of God."

BOOKLETS

(WITNESS AND TESTIMONY.)

The following are now available:—

By T. Austin-Sparks:—

'Incorporation into Christ,' No. 1. Price 2d.

'Incorporation into Christ,' No. 2. Price 2d.

'Incorporation into Christ,' No. 8. Price 2d.

These are now published in one volume, Price 8d., coloured paper cover (not 5d. as previously announced).

'The Inner Man of the Heart,' Price 4d.

'Vision and Vocation,' Price 3d.

'The Prisoner of the Lord,' Price 2d.

By T. Madoc Jeffreys:—

'The Divine Unities,' Price 3d.

The following booklets may now be had in French:—

Témoignage et Expérience (Série).

Par T. Austin-Sparks.

i. 'Incorporation en Christ,' prix réduit, 1 franc. (Suisse 50 c.)

ii. 'Incorporation en Christ,' 50 c. (Suisse 25 c.)

iii. 'Incorporation en Christ,' 50 c.

iv. 'L'Homme intérieur du cœur. La sphere de la vie du croyant,' 1 franc.

v. 'Le Peuple qui fait de grands exploits,' 30 c. (Suisse 20 c.)

vi. 'La Triple Loi de la Croix,' 30 c.

vii. 'Etablie comme signe,' 30 c.

viii. 'La Vision universelle,' 30 c., 'Vision et Vocation,' Nos. 5-8, 1 franc.

On peut se les procurer de Secrétaire, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, 13 Honor Oak Road, London, S.E.28.

ITEMS

THE Easter Conference is close at hand. Arrangements are being made to erect the Tent to accommodate the larger companies expected, but our "sojourning in tents" depends upon the kindness of the weather.

It is a great joy that our brother, Mr. Sparks, has again been restored to us by the mercy of God, and will be with us at this Conference. The journey home from Malta was accomplished with wonderful facility, and we trust that with a resting in the Lord a full deliverance from bodily affliction will come.

The Theme it will be noted is, 'The Cross—the Way of God.' It is the everlasting way, the way of Jehovah revealed in all His covenant relationships, the way of His Christ, the way of His Church, "I am the Way."

Our March Conference was full of His mercy.

The out-going ministries continue to witness His Presence with His messengers.

The distinctive feature of the past few weeks' fellowship has been the opening-up of many new relationships with the Lord's great company of labourers in His harvest. This to us is very pleasing and significant.

It will be recognised that the present issue of the paper is produced under great pressure upon time and resources. The Lord supply the lack in its preparation.

We trust that the Conference issue of April will prove a beginning of new and blessed fellowship in this work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sums received during February, 1928.

Local, £7 9s. 3d.; Holland, 10s.; Norwood, 5s.; Willesden Green, 0s.; Southgate, £1; Grimsby, 15s.; Swarthmore, U.S.A., £1 8s. 2d.; Dakota, U.S.A., 4s. 1d.; Philadelphia, U.S.A., 4s. 1d.; Mt. Airy, U.S.A., 10s. 4d.; Shurdloes Road, S.E., 5s.; Streatham, 10s.; Highbury, 3s. 10d.;

Woking, 2s. 6d.; Ilford, 1s. 1d.; Horsforth, 1s. 4½d.; Southampton, 3s. 6d.; Manchester, 3s. 6d.; Glasgow, 3s. 6d.; Cardiff, 4s. 6d.; Canada, £1; Samoa, 10s.; N.11, 3d.; Chicago, 5s. 2d.; Lewisham, 1s. 6d.; Newcastle, 5s.; Elgin, 2s. 6d.; Plumstead, 5s.—Total, £17 4s. 1½d.

THE ATTITUDE of CRUCIFIED ONES TOWARD EACH OTHER.

The believer is no longer in the "flesh" but the "flesh" is often in the believer.

The carnal mind.
As carnal.

"Envyings, strife, divisions, contentions," 1.Cor:1.2.3.5.

"Brother goeth to law against brother," 1.Cor:6.6

"Debates, Wraths, backbitings,
Whisperings, swellings, tumults," 2.Cor:12.20.

"Partiality," James: 2.2-5.

"Put away all bitterness
" " " " wrath
" " " " anger
" " " " clamour
" " " " evil speaking
" " " " malice" Eph:4.31

"Speaking evil one of another," James:4.11

"Rendering evil for evil," 1.Thess:5.15 1.Peter:3.9

"Lying one to another," Col:3.9.

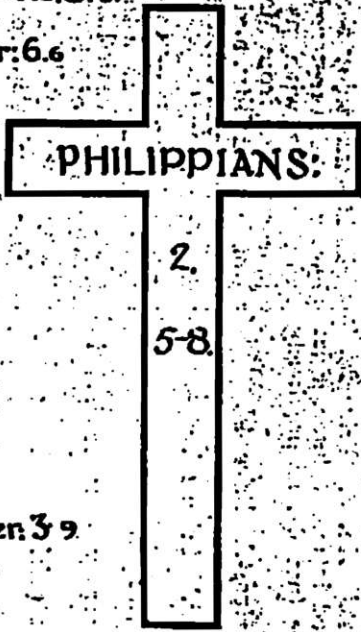
"Envyng one another," Gal: 5.26.

"Judging thy brother," James:4.11

"Setting at nought thy brother" Rom:14.10.

"Provoking one another," Gal: 5.26.

Phil: 4.2-4.



(1) The essential oneness.

"That they may be one" John:17

"We being many are one body members one of another," Rom:12.5.

"Called in one hope of your calling," Eph:4.4.

"Fellow citizens," Eph:2.19.

"Till we all come--unity of the faith--
----unto a perfect man," Eph:4.13.

(2) The practical outworking.

"We ought to love one another," 1John:4.2.

"By love serve one another," Gal: 5.13.

"Increase and abound in love,
one toward another," 1Thess:3.12.

"Consider one another," Heb:10.24.

"Submit to one another," Eph: 5.21

"Comfort one another," Thess:4.18.

"Edify one another," Rom:14.12 1Thess:5.11

"Forbearing one another," Eph:4.2 Col:3.13.

"Forgiving one another," Eph:4.32.

"Confess one to another," James:5.16

"Pray for one another," 1.Peter:4.9.

"Love suffereth long
is kind

" " " " envieth not

" " " " seeketh not her own

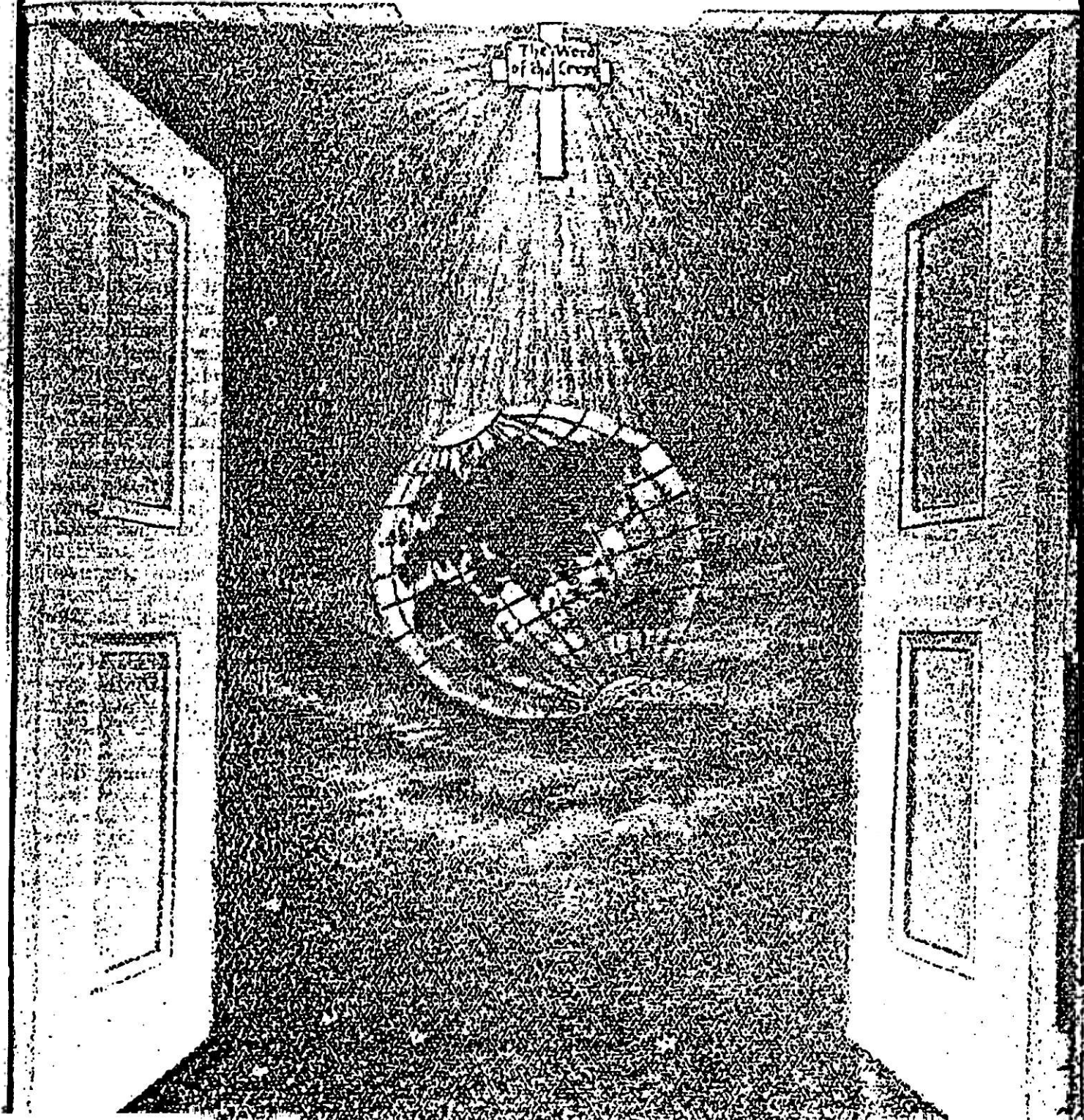
" " " " thinketh no evil" 1.Cor:13.

A WITCHESS AND A TESTIMONY

APRIL, 1928



VOL. 6. No. 4.



THE MINISTERS' LETTER

(Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre.)

April, 1928.

BELOVED OF OUR LORD,

Nothing can replace the lack of a true fellowship in the Body of Christ. And this is not conditioned by time or place, for it is a fellowship in the Holy Ghost, not in the flesh. Our access to God, the Father, is in the fellowship of One Spirit. And this is the Spirit of the Christ. First, of Him, Who is the Head of the Body, even Jesus; but then, the One Spirit in all the members. We meet the members through the Head: not the Head through the members. This is a vital law of His Life. Therefore we can always meet the members if we truly meet the Head.

This is not a visionary word but a very practical one for lonely members. Does this meet the eye of some isolated member, out off by the circumstance of distance, adversity, or sickness, from seeming fellowship in Christ? Beloved, we meet in Him. Doubt it not. Cherish this thought, nay, this fact of His Life in you and in us. He is God's Sanctuary, and we in Him. We are members of His Flesh, His Holy Flesh, the Rent Vail into God's Presence. We all pass alike through into the Divine Glory. We are all baptised into that Cloud. We meet there, a great congregation of the Blood-purchased, in the Spirit.

There is a true and substantial communion of His saints: but *in* Christ. Seek not any manner of individual *communications*, the supernatural manifestations that the flesh covets. Nevertheless enjoy richly and deeply of His Cup, for it is a Cup of Blessing, our common participation in the Blood of the Christ, a Life-Covenant between the Father and the Son whereby we also have a common participation in the spiritual Body of the Christ of God. But this will be *heart-sense*, therefore heart's ease and deep content. It is a spiritual knowledge, Divinely given, that we are all under One Roof, so to speak, One Covering of His Glory in the Father's House.

But this requires a Christ discernment, to know and to love all saints in Him. If they be reachable at all you will seek them out and enjoy meeting with them on these earth levels, for there the Cloud descends according to His promise. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together in these days of thickening

darkness and oppression. But none are unreachable, for we only meet at all as we meet in Him, and thus the qualification includes the loneliest member on the earth. Surely the net is spread in vain, saith the Psalmist, in the sight of any one that hath a *wing*. Brother, sister, thou hast wings. The Holy Spirit in thee would cause thee to ascend and meet with us thy brethren *in the Lord*. Your life is hid with Christ in God, and so is ours. We meet therefore in that One Life.

Thus would we greet every member of His Body in His embracing Name, Jesus, the Head of the Christ of God.

Yours in that replete Fellowship,

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS,

T. MADOO JEFFREYS.

WHAT THE GOSPEL IS

It is very important that we should know what the Gospel is. If we were asked to state what the Gospel is probably we should set down some passages of Scripture which we consider are inclusive of the Gospel. Probably John iii. 16 and say—that is the Gospel. We should be right to a point, but at best we should only be stating certain basic truths about the Gospel, glorious truths and yet not in themselves the Gospel in its fulness or in its central meaning.

Those are wonderful facts and they are constituent parts of the Gospel, but that is not the Gospel in the sense in which you and I must understand the Gospel and know the meaning of the Gospel.

I believe that the Gospel is just this, simply, but most profoundly, that the Son of God, Who is also Son of Man, has come, and in His Coming has expressed in the world the Divine type of what God intended before times eternal that His race, His creation, should be. That is God contracted to the span of human life; God manifest in the flesh; God combining with His own essential nature another kind of creation called "man" and in that combination producing as out from Himself a typo, a kind, a species which never occupied the world before (so far as we know), which was His thought and conception before the foundation of the world. A creature in which God is resident Himself by His Divine Nature; and in the coming of the Lord Jesus, the Christ, we have that species represented, that typo manifested, and that is the Gospel. That into the image of that Son

those who become identified with Him in oneness of that Divine life are destined to be conformed, to be the instrument for the manifestation of God by His indwelling.

And that is the mystery of which the Apostle Paul speaks so much, you are familiar with the word: "the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations which is Christ in you, the Hope of glory." "This mystery is great; we are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones." The realisation of this will be both personal and corporate.

Now the Master threw some advanced rays of light upon that revelation which was to come by the Holy Spirit later through a spirit-indwelt Church and its members when He said words with which we are very familiar—"In that day (what day? well we know) ye shall know that ye are in Me and I in you," "and if a man love Me he will keep My words and My Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Further, in His prayer: "I in them and Thou in Me," and again: "If any man will hear I will come in unto him."

Then later these words from the realisation of that marvellous fore-shadowing and promise: "If Christ is in you the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness." "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"—"Jesus Christ is in you,"—and "for me to live is Christ" to which might be added many declarations and utterances relative to this great central truth.

The Gospel is the manifestation and revelation of that, which was in the heart of God before the world as to what His own people should be; that His people in whom He Himself is resident, through whom He reveals and manifests Himself, who are definitely partakers of His Divine nature, and that that representative, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of Man, has achieved that work by His Cross whereby God may get His end and realise His original purpose. That is the Gospel. And seeing Him, not as an historical figure, not as just Jesus of Nazareth, but seeing Him as the representative of all the sons of God as an inclusive Son and understanding the true nature of the Lord Jesus, we see that which God has from eternity chosen us to be in Himself. That is the Good News; that is the promise, that is the prophecy, that is the power. Of course, I am quite conscious that many questions might rise out of a statement like that, but I am not careful to stay and discuss such at this moment. We want to recognise one or two other things in

relation to this theme which arises out of that declaration.

We have often said that although God created Adam and intended him to fulfil ultimately, and to realise, the work which Christ the Lord came to do and to realise, it was but a probationary creation; He did not create him at the outset on the same plane as the Lord Jesus, and therefore he never lost what the Lord Jesus regained, but the Lord Jesus brought infinitely more than ever Adam lost.

It was the Divine intention that ultimately the Lord should inhabit and indwell, and reside within and manifest Himself, as out from the man of His creation. But that first creation which was in the mind of God intended to realise that end ignominiously failed and fell from God. The Cross does not come in to retrieve merely that loss. There is much misconception that Calvary just regains Paradise and reconstructs the mass of wreckage of Adam's fall and mistake and blunder and sin. The Cross may do such, but it does infinitely more. It does not start where Adam went wrong; now it starts with God Incarnate and on the ground of all that Calvary has done in wiping out one order which has proved ineffective you start where God originally intended man should end, where man should have arrived at the end of his probation. If Adam had not fallen there would have been a development and a growth unto partaking of a life which is uncreated. That is why God hedged around that Tree of Life so that a man should not perpetuate a species endlessly. He might later have taken that, and possessing *the life of the Ages*, sharing one life with God, uncreated life, endless life, he might have come at length to the standard of the Sonship. But the probation failed and so man on that plane was wiped out in the Cross and that creation brought to an end; and when the Lord Jesus rises from the dead He rises not of a fallen Adam race but He rises as the first begotten from the dead, of a new species altogether; and it is a new creation, not a renewed creation—a new creation, something that has never been before. And that is brought about by the same Spirit as energised out from God in the original creation but which energises so much the more now to bring forth this other thing. There never was such an energising of the Holy Spirit in the history of the Universe as is manifested in the raising of Jesus from the dead.

In our resurrection union with Christ we are to "walk in newness of spirit." Not merely the

old spirit resuscitated, but a newness of spirit. What is this newness? It is in the fact of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as its true life; Christ resident within by the Holy Spirit. This is new. It was never true of man before, the operations of the spirit of God were always upon before—as from without.

It brings us right back to the A.B.C. of our Christian life and experience to recognise this that sonship in this superlative sense, relationship to God of this kind, which is to be sons of God in the Eternal Son is on the basis of God Himself being resident in our spirit and that on the basis of a new thing which has been done in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, a new creation, in which God takes up His abode. "Upon man's flesh shall not the holy anointing oil come."

From that time onward the course of spiritual experience is the history of the progressive ascendancy of God in man's spirit over that other old outer man.

There are times when it is difficult for the Lord's people to put a piece of tissue paper between the two. It is very difficult for you, for instance, sometimes to be able to see the narrowest line between your prayer and the prayer of God the Holy Spirit in you. You are praying and for all you are worth, but your prayer as such gets nowhere, if it were left there you could go on praying and get nowhere until in your prayer there is an extra ingredient.

Many people have the idea that incense in the Bible represents the prayers of God's people, that is not so. They quote Scripture from Rev. viii.—the golden bowl containing incense, and then immediately the declaration "which are the prayers of the saints"—be careful of your grammar—"the incense which are the prayers of the saints." What are the prayers of the saints? The golden bowls. What is the incense? It is the prayer of the Holy Ghost within the saints (Rev. v. 8). The Greek in that passage makes it perfectly clear that it is the bowls which are the prayers of the saints and the incense is something which is added to; the incense is added *into* the prayers of the saints. Elijah, a man of like passions—he prayed and "in his praying he *prayed*," the something extra there. What is that? The man prays, but as he prays something comes through his prayer. it comes right out of the Throne of God. Only that declaration which comes right out from God Himself can open or close the Heavens. And that is what is meant by praying in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost praying in you. For is

it not said most definitely that He shall make intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered. The Holy Spirit is in the Church, the Body of Christ and it is there that He is fulfilling His advocacy and making intercession. There are times when an unutterable something is in our spirit, an awful cry which we are unable to articulate, a groaning which cannot be uttered and although you cannot articulate that that is the effective thing; that is extra ingredient.

That is why God was so particular when He gave the ingredients of the incense—"there shall be none of this used by men for themselves." Not merely to make, but not for themselves. This thing was not for the flesh, it was unto the pure purpose of God; and if it came into the realm of the flesh there would be a blazing forth of judgment—so it was when strange fire was offered. It is the thing which is God Himself, effecting His purposes which are the purposes related to this new creation.

One thanks God for that extra something, because while one has a very blessed union with God and life in Him one is always making mistakes; one is constantly coming short; overwhelmed with lack of wisdom and understanding and how they do move short of that revelation of life utterly in the spirit. While one's relationship to the Lord is absolutely clear, and while one's spirit is pure (I prefer to interpret "heart" as "spirit") towards God and while one is always and constantly praying—"Lord, plant that Cross to the depths of my being," while one does that, in spite of the limitations, there is a movement of the Lord, He is doing it though we be of little faith, which is nothing else than God Himself going on with His work. That will never be thought a reason why we can continue to blunder, but as one is seeking to go on with the Lord, the Lord is doing His own work. We are in union with the Lord and He has brought us on. Sometimes He lets us make these false moves to show us that this thing is of Himself and not of us.

The main conception is before us and the line is simply this—that God had a design, a species in mind that is the reproduction of Himself, an incarnation of Himself not in one man only but in a Body, the inclusive incarnation of God, the Body of Christ, composed of born-again ones; that was His original conception. Adam did not lose that, he failed to attain unto it. The Cross comes in and wipes out that kind of thing, not merely the result of Adam's failure in himself and in the earth, He wipes it out—the first Adam.

In the resurrection this is realised, but God Himself brings about the resurrection by the ouergising of the Holy Spirit and sonship in this superlative and transcendent source is on the ground of a union with Christ in resurrection by an indwelling revelation of God through the Holy Spirit. "Because we are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our heart whereby we cry "Abba, Father"—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." Sonship is only possible by the way of the Cross by the indwelling Spirit.

These are far-reaching principles, but they bring with them comfort and assurance that the end will be attained because God has promised it. He does not leave it with us to do it, it is God Who works in us. It is very difficult to understand why some who claim to be the Lord's people, some who carry His Name and are engaged in what is His service, can go on with gross and fundamental contradictions in their life, and that the Holy Spirit should be resident in them to declare in them the Will of God. This thing is so difficult to understand, but I believe it is impossible to go on like that if really the Holy Spirit is getting the upper hand.

In unenlightened days when one knew very little about the fact of revelation, one was working upon the objective and external, even then one recognised most clearly that they were held when they said a thing from a pulpit or platform which was not according to the truth, and yet it seemed to be born out by the truth, but one remembers they did not have a good time when they were saying it. And we are being checked like that all along if the Lord really is within. You are safe if the Lord has really taken up residence inside. You will have a check when you are making a mistake.

The whole secret of walking in the Lord is that the Lord is walking in you.

May He bring us into the effectual working of it that we may know what that extra is—Christ in you, by the Holy Spirit, the hope of glory.

Thus far we have seen something of the nature of the new man whom God had in mind as the ultimate realisation of His desire. We have seen that Christ Who is God manifest in the flesh is the only answer but the absolute answer to that quest of God from before the world and its creation, and that Christ is the first and representative and inclusive of that type. He answers specifically to the Divine desire and requirement in that He is a manifestation of God by the indwelling of God.

We have been able to see just a little of the meaning of Pentecost and of the Holy Spirit's coming as an inseparable part of the Godhead and taking up residence in the spirit of the new creation man on the ground of the resurrection of Jesus, the Cross having for ever wiped out of existence so far as God's purpose is concerned God's creation in Adam.

So we have the presentation as a new man in Christ Jesus; that he is in a very real way by Divine intention a God-man—a God-indwelt man, a God-possessed man, a God-revealing and manifesting man and in all therefore not a natural man but a supernatural man that has the Risen Christ as his type, he is essentially a spiritual man. All his being and his life is spiritual, his sustenance is spiritual, his warfare is spiritual, his service is spiritual, his equipment is spiritual, his walk is spiritual; everything of this man is spiritual because he is a spiritual being.

You say—"that does not describe us!"—"That surely must describe some future state." But it does describe us if we are in Christ Jesus. That is our description but we have to be able to clearly make that discrimination between the outer man and the inner man and to recognise that this man is not the outer man with which we are so familiar, but it is the inner man to whom we, the outer man, are such strangers. We are learning to know him and to know ourselves by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

One feels a desire to indicate afresh by familiar words how we are learning to know this new man as ourselves, to recognise him and to see who he is and what he is, what he is made of, what he can do and what are his qualifications.

We see him mostly in his enduements and service as portrayed partly and very clearly in that 12th chapter of the first Corinthian letter. We shall see here just again as has been said already that this new man is as distinct from our old, outer, natural man as any two entities can possibly be distinct from one another. These two entities are utterly distinct from one another. They are poles asunder and all their make-up is clearly divided and between the two stands the Cross which writes death on the one side and life on the other.

If this new man is a spirit-man, is born from above, born of the Holy Spirit for that which is born of the Spirit is spirit and if we are born of the Spirit therefore we are spirit in our new life, new nature, and now being; if this man is such then his whole outfit must be spiritual.

This is not something up to which you have to climb, it is interwoven with your new life and is the expression of it, but you are called upon to recognise three definite lines of separation, to acknowledge them and assent to them and to allow the Holy Spirit to make them very clear and practical in your experience; that is our spiritual education.

The clear line of distinction and discrimination in the matter of use and service and work is simply this that the abilities and endowments and qualifications and gifts of the natural life are not the *primary* ground of our activity and service in the spiritual life; that our activity and service as a new man is upon the ground of an entirely spiritual equipment and that is not natural but supernatural. And that if this new man is a supernatural man, something which cannot be produced by any of the resources of natural life, he requires the transcendent act of God in that power which itself transcends all the ordinary operations of the natural and which relates to all his activities and works and these are the product of special, definite, spiritual impartations and gifts.

Those who have no gifts naturally can have them spiritually, whilst those who have plenty of them naturally have nothing to boast of.

The very birth is not of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man.

What does 1 Corinthians 12 really represent? We have thought of it and in thinking have got into an awful lot of confusion and made room for many preponderances. We have recognised the true nature of this that it is indispensably necessary that this new man by the Holy Ghost should have special spiritual qualifications to do the work for which the Holy Ghost—in the knowledge of God's purpose concerning each one—has equipped and called him. God knows what we are called to in the Body of Christ and He has made provision for our equipment to do that thing. This chapter presents to us many of those things by which the new man fulfils his new vocation according to the Will of God. Dispensations and dispositions were said to be *as He willed*. One does not regard these things as extraordinary demonstrations, but as the normal and natural expression of a spiritual life that the Lord shall give equipment for special service.

Now beloved, it should never be right for you to say "I am not fit for that, I am not qualified for that; I have no abilities of any kind or gifts or qualifications for the Lord's work." If you are really born again of the

Holy Spirit and you are this new creation what has happened that being in the world you can do nothing. You can neither talk nor use your hand nor feet nor your eyes, that you are simply useless in the new creation. I am of the persuasion that there are no useless things in the new creation. The Holy Spirit wraps up with the new creation those things which are going to make it capable of realising its end and effecting its purpose.

Having made the provision we have as our birthright, our inheritance in the new creation, the right of equipment of a super-natural character unto the work of God and have it as something which is natural to us in the spiritual realm.

Two things must be said here. The whole of our trouble is to recognise this, that *our* uselessness or our usefulness in our natural life is no criterion whatever, and that is where the Cross comes in. It comes on the positive side for the very clever people to smite them right out of the realm of real spiritual effectiveness, to smite them as clever people, as natural in their equipment and endowment; that is a fact, however, you may wriggle and argue. The course of spiritual experience is to make them realise how utterly useless they are in spiritual service, they don't count! Their works are at an end, their abilities are at an end, their reputation is at an end, no longer can they hold their heads up before men and claim to be something in religious work. We cannot do the things that we once could do even in the Name of the Lord.

But then in the recognition of that fact, the meaning of the Cross, they come not to the end but the beginning. Behold I make all things new and all things are now out from God, whereas before they were out from somewhere else.

The new door with a new equipment. How different! And only those who have gone some way through that new door know how different. Your wisdom here is absolutely confounded, your natural genius for getting things done is absolutely brought to confusion; you are made a fool of if you dare to move in that realm again, and God sees that you don't succeed in that way.

But now it is a new kind of thing—the Wisdom of God set over against the wisdom of this world. This wisdom of this world is sensual, psychical, is devilish. (James ii. 15.) A different kind of wisdom, "By the same Spirit the word of wisdom; to another—

knowledge," this is as far removed from natural knowledge as heaven is from the earth. By it the things which are of God are accomplished, are done, and that which is of God far outstrips anything we can do.

We have got to face the fact that the Cross means on the one side to bring us where we cry, though we have been the most able and successful "I cannot!" "I cannot!"—that is the end. You have got to accept that fact, the sooner, the better, before we shall come into that new creation, "I can, in Christ, all things."

We have to recognise this that these equipments and enduements are racial and as such they are corporate. The Church is also called a "nation," "an elect nation." The metaphors are all brought together—"an elect nation, a royal priest-hood, a spiritual house."

Nation—the root is a birth, it relates to a birth; it is racial, it is on the ground of sharing one life. If this is true and the Holy Spirit is "The Spirit of Life" *that* life, He is also the Spirit of service, and therefore of equipment, by whom and through whom the gifts are given—"distributed"—to those who share the common life of the Body. These gifts are corporate gifts and related, and they are not for independent service or action, but all meant to contribute to one object and purpose, and they are inseparable.

If this is true and the gifts, the qualifications, are the natural right of birth on the basis of a common life for a common end in a corporate Body, they will only be manifest and effective in their own place and relationship. That is that the member has to be properly related and put into position, and function within the definite and clearly defined limits of their divine appointment. *To get outside your appointment in the Body of Christ is at once to arrest the functioning of the Holy Spirit through that divine importation.* "Stir up the gift"—to keep it in the ascendancy because it may be lost in its power—stir it up.

If all this is true the Holy Spirit requires for the expression and manifestation of the gifts a discerning of the Body, a recognition of the fact of the Body. For spiritual equipment is dependent upon relationship, ministry in and to the Body of Christ. If it requires the Body for this then the Holy Spirit will require a discerning of the Body if there is to be a manifestation of enduement for body service.

That brings us to that much misunderstood testimony to the Body which was discerned undoubtedly by the Church in its first clear

days when those who were representative members in the Body brought each new convert, each new elect member, who had confessed and declared their union with the Body of Christ, and in a definite act by putting their hands upon them and held a testimony to the Body, and the Holy Spirit recognised their testimony and gave His own attestation to it, and by such means and at such times equipped that member for the work—it was "the work whereunto I have chosen them." Timothy, "Stir up the gift which is in thee in the laying-on of hands." What was that? It was there by prophecy. Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. When the Holy Spirit prayed through such as prayed over Timothy, evidently He prayed prophetically as to Timothy's work as an evangelist. "By prophesy," says Paul (1 Timothy iv. 14, 2, 6, 4, 5).

Beloved, is this quite clear that this new man is a corporate new man, his equipment is a corporate equipment, his enduements are for the whole work of the Body. The recognition and discernment of that fact is required by the Lord in a definite testimony, and then not necessarily by any demonstration at the time. There is a quiet, a silent moving out into ministries which take their own course and find a special emphasis in the Body of Christ, and while we keep within the realm of that ministry it grows and so it becomes the natural expression of our life in the Body of Christ.

One does feel that it is necessary to add as a note the emphatic pronouncement that while fulfilling the Divine mind and will as representative and "First-begotten"—the federal head of a new race—Christ was infinitely more than that. He is very God of very God. Deity will never be the *essence* of the new creation man. His will be Divine nature by *derivation*, not original being. We must always recognise the two sides to Christ's being and work.

T. A. S.

WHITSUNTIDE CONFERENCE

This will be held (D.V.) as from Thursday, May 24th to Tuesday, May 29th. Particulars later.

May Conference.

The usual Monthly Conference is due Friday, May 4th to Monday, May 7th. The Theme will relate probably to the Cross and the Heavenly Life.

Applications for hospitality should be sent to Mr. Paterson.

THE CROSS AND THE NEW MAN

"The Day that God Created Man"
Gen. 1:1.

MAN.

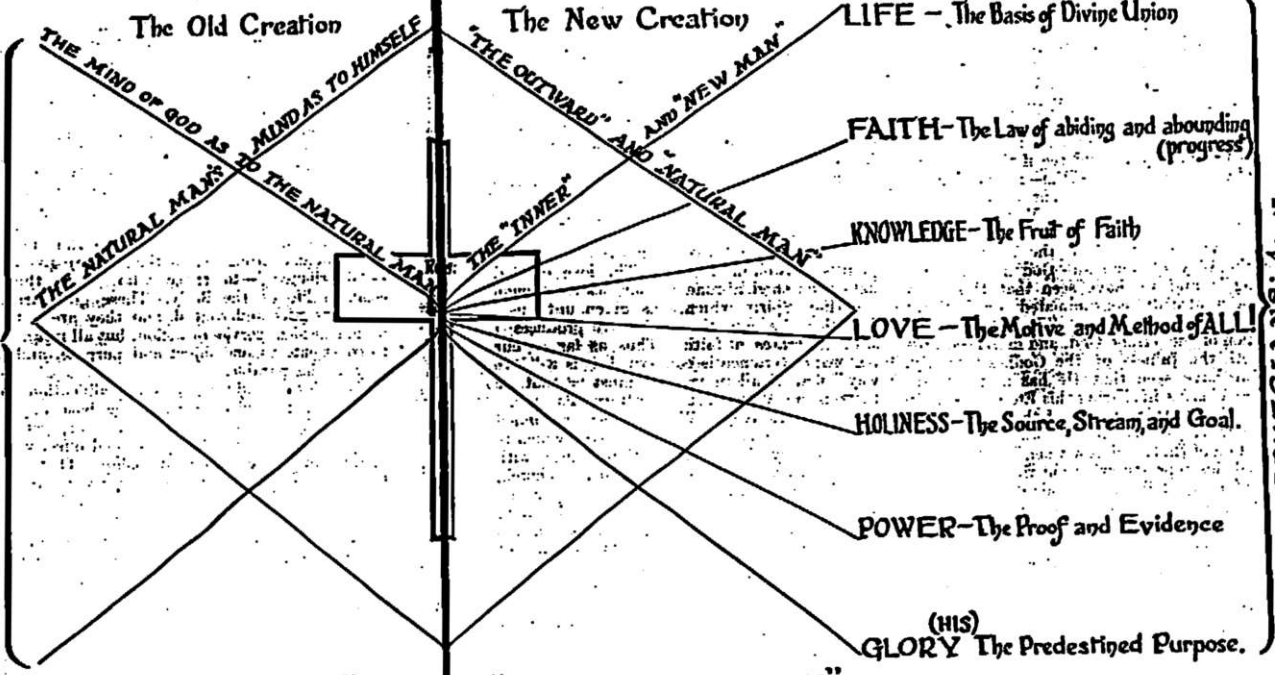
SOUL:
1. Conscience
2. Communion (Worship)
3. Intuition

SOUL:
1. Reason
2. Emotion
3. Volition

BODY:
1. Flesh
2. Blood
3. Bone

The relationship to God by the Spirit:
1. Likeness (Basic spirit, John. 3:6; 6:63)
2. Fellowship (1 Cor. 6:17)
3. Knowledge (Revelation to spirit by intuition faculty (1 Cor. 2:14)
4. Co-operation (1 Cor. 3:9)
5. Dominion (Heb. 2:6)

The Fall.
The spirit subjected to the soul.
The soul the sphere of Satanic attack and triumph.
The body the instrument of the soul under influence of Satan.
The spirit in death, the relationships break down at every point.
Death is basically spirit separation from God.



"NOT AFTER THE FLESH" ROMANS 8 "BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT"

(T.A.S.)

EPHESIANS: 4: 15

CLOSING ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE EASTER CONFERENCE, 1928

The Way of God.—Acts xviii. 36.

The Way everlasting.—Psalm cxxxix. 24.

The Way of Jehovah.—Isaiah xl. 3.

"I am the Way."—John xiv. 6.

THE Lord has been speaking to us in these days, beloved friends, of this Way of His own, the Path of His Eternal Purpose in which He is coming to a Consummation of His own Being in the Christ—that He is at last going to express Himself in all the glory of His Love in the manifestation of the sons of God. We have called that "The Way Everlasting," which we are seeking to be brought into; and we are still asking the Lord that He would search us and try us and see if there be any way of grief in us, grief to Him—not necessarily grief to us, or to others—but grief to Him, that we might be led into this Way of His Life in Christ that is eternal.

We have seen that it is the Way of God, and the Way of Jehovah—God in His "becoming"; and we have seen that this Way has been already consummated, or brought to its conclusion in Jesus, Who is the manifestation of the Triune God, and in Whom now dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily. But we have seen that He has a wonderful purpose of *grace* in sharing this Eternal Sonship in the MAN with members of this fallen race, and how He is seeking to bring about the perfection of that, and how when He shall have secured this representation out from this fallen race of every tribe and kindred and tongue and people, then there will break forth in the church, which is His Body, the fulness of the glory of that Eternal Son Who is God and Who is Man. Then in this garment of Humanity, which He shall wear for ever, even ourselves, He shall manifest in the ages to come the glory of His grace.

But we have seen that we are brought into this only as we accept the sentence of death upon ourselves. That sentence of death has been registered already at the Cross where He took the whole race to a judicial and actual death as far as God is concerned, and we have seen that all the problems of our selfhood are solved there. This is our great comfort, because this intolerable selfhood of ours, while we are born out from God, and have a knowledge of God, and are found with His Spirit within us, is still with us in these bodies, and

becomes in the light of His countenance exceeding vile. We recognise, however, that by His Spirit it is possible to continually apply the fact of Calvary to that selfhood, that old man, and thus it is possible to continually put on the New Man, and have the Life of the Christ of God arising in our hearts.

We have seen that this is not only our personal salvation as such, but it is the goal wherunto He is working in us—thus He Himself is moving forward in us. God is on the march. He is moving toward an "end," or completion in this present age. There is a current of a Divine Life seeking to break through into the universe, through the church, as out from that glorified Man; and you and I, by the grace of God, are to come into the fulness of that current of His Divine Life as working in us.

But we have seen that this Way of God, this Way of Jehovah, this Way Who is Jesus is communicated by two principles of His Divine Life in us; and the first, which is fundamental, is Love, His own Love. This is by the Holy Spirit's indwelling in us, "The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us." And then we saw that this love produces a faith, generates a faith. Thus as far as our personal experience is concerned, it is a "love way" first of all in us. It must be that, or there is no Way at all. Afterwards it becomes a Faith Way. We have been reminded of this "Love Way" in 1 Cor. xiii., which is set in a very significant section dealing with the activities of Divine Life in the church, activities which can so easily be taken up in another realm, viz., the supernatural. Here you find the attempt of the enemy to invade the church, to break into the consciousness of the church, and to cause schism, so that while the children of God know something of Life and ministry—as a matter of fact, that Corinthian Church was very active in many manifestations of God's presence—there is nevertheless the scandal of schism and confusion. But the one way to escape out of the devil's traps by which he creates schism in the church is this exceedingly excellent way. "Yet I announce unto you a surpassingly excellent way." This is the way of His own love in us, and unless we have that Love we have nothing. The love of God is redeeming love: the love which is in the New Creation Who is Christ. The love of the new commandment whereby in the church the cross is constantly applied.

Now we may talk about the Cross individually and speak about identification and all the rest of it, but when we come together as the children of God, then we begin to see the strength of sin; then we begin to discover the workings, the energies of sin; then we come to know the awful subtlety of the devil, because, as we come into personal relationship one with another there must be, as we meet the impact of the supernatural the constant application of the Cross in the laying down of the self-life in fellowship and ministry. But this is the supreme difficulty God has with His church. That is why you find when there is the beginning of a Holy Ghost Life, ministry and so forth, there is always something that is rather terrible, even threatening coming across the path of it. It is the devil himself. And this is where he always has an entrance, unless the Cross does its sheer work in the fulfilling of the new commandment. So the Lord tells His disciples who are full of vision, who are full of expectations and thoughts and possibilities now that they have come to know something of the fact that they are going to share His sovereignty and His Life that this commandment is the *new* commandment of that New Creation Life—"that they must love one another according as He has loved them"—that is, the Love of God in you and me is a redeeming love one for another whereby we wash each other's feet, and continually lay down our souls, our self-life, one for another.

Now, of course, this means the Cross, and it is only made possible as the love of God is poured forth constantly in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. "Yet I announce unto you an exceeding excellent way." It is a way of the heavenlies. It is the Way of God. It is the Divine Life moving forward. It is the energy of God. It is the might of His Spirit. The most marvellous manifestation of His sovereignty is this, that His own love is shed abroad in our hearts and manifests itself in the fellowship of the church. And so we see that our fellowship is not a fellowship of doctrine, or of similar attitude and mental apprehension and vision, but our fellowship is in this love of God.

Then this love of God produces in us "the faith of God," and we saw that the Way is also a "Faith Way." You will see from your Schofield Bible that he particularly terms 1 Cor. xiii.—The Love Way, and Heb. xi.—The Faith Way. But this faith is not the faith of the believer when as a sinner he is enabled by

God to apprehend truths for his salvation. It is more than that. As we have seen, the grace of God gives to us as sinners an apprehension of faith which is able to take hold of the fact of God in Christ, and therefore of the fact of Calvary; but this is His grace of faith given to us initially, whereby we are saved and brought into an assurance of salvation; but now that we are saved in this supreme sense, now that we are born out from God, His love produces in us a faith which is *of God*; and this faith is the active expression of His love. So we saw that the New Creation is "faith that is energised by love," Gal. v. 5. Its manifestation is that; and this faith is positive and active, constantly taking possession of the heavenly inheritance, constantly passing on to new triumphs of ascending grace, constantly breaking through to new positions of divine power in us and in the church, so that you are making a spiritual progress all the while. This is literally true though it may sound visionary. You and I only have geographical distances in our thought. We cannot think of spiritual distances. We are living in a universe which we only know in three dimensions; we are sense bound; but when the Lord does quicken your spirit you see there are other distances, and that you are capable of moving in spiritual directions. This is God's task for us as the church in our corporate faith, a faith shared, a mutual faith both of you and me, as the Apostle declares; and this faith of God in us is constantly taking spiritual possessions, constantly breaking through to new spiritual positions. You have, of course, the parable of this in the Old Testament where the children of Israel passed through Jordan, and entered into the land of promise, their spiritual inheritance; and by faith in the Name of Him Who had been revealed to them, foreshadowing the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, in that Name of Jehovah, they were able to take possession after possession for God as His people; but we know how they failed to entirely inherit the land; and this history of failure was written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have arrived. God is now seeking to get a heavenly people, who yet live upon earth, to break through by a corporate faith, or a mutual faith that is energised by love, to overcome principalities and powers, and all world rulers of this darkness. Now there has been a failure, as we know, again and again, in history of the Christian age to overcome. This was all known in the

fore-knowledge of God, but you have it explicitly revealed, especially in Rev. xii., that at the end of the time there will be a company on earth who are going to overcome; and they will overcome him, Satan himself, in all the fulness of his malice and subtlety and manifestation as the antagonist of God and of the saints. He is given all his names in that 12th chapter of Revelation. Nevertheless it is said of these: "They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony (and then follows this same principle of the Cross), and they loved not their own lives unto the death." This characterises those who are going to break through, for they break through corporately. They do not break through independently and individually. One of the subtle devices of the devil is to get the Lord's people taken up with individual translation, and thus to rob them of the very incentive that God has in the church, which is the manifestation of the marvel of His grace in the laying down of our lives one for another in selfless love, for the translation is a corporate translation, a breaking through by the manifestation of the Eternal Spirit in a corporate company as they have come to the oneness of the faith which is energised by love, and the oneness of the full knowledge of the Son of God. (Eph. iv. 13.)

May the Lord write the vision in our hearts. We are close to a very holy possibility, and you and I have been called of God in these last days that we might be those who so reveal His glory by the Cross operating in our lives that we shall be numbered among those who have the privilege of breaking through to the throne of God. It is in God's Hope that this will take place; and when He has brought this to pass by His Spirit, then the whole church breaks through into manifestation.

Now we were reading in Romans viii. "The Hope Way," as one calls that section, verses 18-30, and you see how clearly it is stated what is God's hope. We have seen the "Love" Way of God in the cross, and the "Faith" Way of God through the Cross, and now we have the "Hope" Way of God because of the Cross. God has a hope. He is called in Romans xv. 13, "The God of hope." The literal translation is "The hope" "The God of the hope." And so in this Eternal Way, this Way of God, this progress of God from eternity to eternity in His Son, and now in His church, there are three principles of His Life—Faith, Hope, Love, these three, and the greatest

of these is Love, because it is the spring of all of them. It is Faith in Love that brings about the Hope. It was God's Faith, as we have so often said, in His own Love that ensured His Hope. God dared to have faith that Calvary would be triumphant; that His weakness, the weakness of God, would be mightier than the might of man, or the might of Satan. And you and I have to have the same faith. Faith in love, the love of God; Faith in weakness; Faith in the fact that we can do nothing; Faith that if we are ruled out God will come in. Faith that if we are reduced to nothingness then an energy intangible, that you and I cannot handle, but which possesses us, will be working through us. You and I constantly reduced to a sense of impotence, the flesh constantly smarting on the one side under the sense of its inability, and yet, through you, the Eternal God manifesting His glory. "Now abideth Faith, Hope, Love," these three. Here is the Hope Way of God. May He "Fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in the Hope in the power of the Holy Ghost." We have seen that all these principles of the Divine Life in Jesus are stored in the Holy Spirit for us. It is not of us; but it is the energies of the Eternal Spirit that produce these three attributes of the Divine Way. The Holy Ghost produces in us the Love of God. We cannot manufacture it ourselves. The devil gets many of us despairing because we cannot love. Well, give up trying and confess yourself a loveless one, one whose nature is rather hateful than otherwise, and ask that the victory of Calvary may be wrought out in you, and reckon yourself dead, and be willing to be dead, and then you will find that another Life will break in through you. It will be all of grace. The love of God will come through, and you can love your enemies. You can pray for them that spitefully use you. So we see that Love is by the power of the Holy Ghost; Faith is by the power of the Holy Ghost; and Hope is by the power of the Holy Ghost. For in the Way Who is Christ the Love, Faith, and Hope are all out of God.

Now we come back to Romans viii., and we read what we have often touched upon in relation to the sufferings of the saints. "If we suffer together with Him we shall also be glorified together with Him." Here is a condition of the Inheritance. The Apostle, just touches upon the practical sufferings of this age. There is a kind of suffering peculiar to this age, a travail of the Spirit with all that

it produces. The burden of the Lord in you will produce suffering, both in the constant laying down of the self-life, and in meeting the impact of the world outside, and so you will know the peculiar sufferings of this present time as they relate themselves to the Christ of God. The Spirit of the Lord will produce in you a suffering as far as your flesh is concerned, but a joy in your spirit. It will also produce in you that which antagonises everything in this present world, and that in turn again will cause suffering. "But the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Then he goes on to say that "the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (This is the corporate manifestation of the sons of God.) "For the creation was made subject to vanity (or disappointment)." That is, God allowed it to come under disappointment in His permissive will. He allowed the Fall. He allowed the invasion of Satan. He allowed this corruption in order that His glorious purpose might be vindicated, that His love might become enhanced, "not willingly, but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope." And here is a reading which is very helpful, and which I think is very literal. "Upon the hope that the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." This is God's hope concerning His universe, that it shall be liberated; but that this liberation will come by a breaking through of His glory as that glory is first of all revealed in the church in the manifestation of the sons of God. Then it says in the 24th verse: "We are saved to the hope," not to anything less; but to the very Hope of God. It is very important to recognise the significance of the reading. This beloved is what God saves you unto. You are not saved in an incidental way for personal reasons peculiar to yourself, but you are saved unto a Purpose, unto a Hope of God, unto a Consummation; and everyone should yield themselves to the Spirit that the Spirit in them might work that of God which will help Him to bring about that Purpose. "You are saved to the Hope." You remember how in the 1st Epistle of Peter, chapter i., 3-5, he declares "we are begotten unto a living hope, through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from among the dead unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled." That is to say, here the Hope is *alive*. It is Life in you first. The

Hope of God as the Life in you is the Love of God, and the Love in you produces that faith of of the Risen One, the Faith of God. It is the Life of His resurrection. It is His Life, by His Spirit, working in you toward the realisation of the hope to bring you to that heavenly inheritance, that joint heirship of God with Jesus Christ with all other members of the church which is His Body.

Well now, have we this Hope in our hearts by the Spirit? It is very wonderful how the Holy Spirit begins to burn in you with this Hope. This is why God's children have in every age expected the coming of the Lord. The mistake, of course, is that we so often translate heart experiences into head notions. This is our danger, and thereby a good deal of scandal has arisen about the coming of the Lord. The coming of the Lord has always been imminent! It has always been nigh. The Eternal Spirit is seeking to break through. He is in the universe as the Spirit of Creation, groaning, seeking to break through. If we could but sense it we should find the universe all quivering with expectation. The Spirit of God in that expression you find in Genesis i. 2.—fluttering, trembling, brooding with a yearning and desire that is intense to break through the universe. Why, when you get your spiritual senses quickened you can feel it—this sense of imminence! This is why God's children have always had this thought that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. It is true, and always has been true ever since the Lord Jesus ascended into His throne—the coming of the Lord might be at any moment during this age. Ah, but it depends upon something begotten and energised in the world, and so we have this sense of the imminence of His Coming. It is the Hope that burns in the heart? The danger is that people at once translate spiritual experiences into things of the head, and begin to prognosticate and to think things out, making mental deductions and calculations, and that is why the Lord has to rule our heads out in this Life altogether, otherwise we make a terrible mess of things. Nevertheless the Hope burns, and the imminence of the Lord's coming has always been a present experience of the Holy Ghost in the members of the Body. Then we see in this same passage that if this is so in the creation, how much more is it in the church, that if the creation travails, much more we who have the first-fruit of the Spirit literally groan within ourselves waiting for the sonship, to wit, the redemption of the body.

We are covering old ground, and we know this does not refer to our concern for a personal experience. It is not that you hope to be translated for your own personal satisfaction. No, it is because you are concerned about the Body, about the purpose of God. You now live for Him, and for His interest. Calvary rules you out in self-desire, and the desires of God begin to spring up in your spirit as you are filled with the Holy Ghost. "We who have the first-fruit of the Spirit groan within ourselves waiting for the sonship," for we are saved to the Hope. That is the motive, and we shall ever be seeking to realise it. That is why when God gets us altogether for Himself, and we are filled with His Spirit, there comes in that ministry which we have described lower down in the chapter—*Intercession*. We know not how to pray except by inward striving. How can we pray with this love of God burdening our spirit, this desire for His glory? How can we pray an Almighty praying? Well, the Spirit, Himself, joineth Himself to these infirmities of ours. There are these groanings, and then He gives utterance, and there is praying in the Holy Ghost that brings about swiftly and more swiftly the purpose of God.

This hope also generates in us a great particularity. It makes us scrutinise ourselves, and thus comes the last word, the practical word upon which one wishes to close this Conference: the need of holiness, of absolute purity of heart, and motive in this Way of God. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Of course, they now see God by the Spirit. It is *they* and they alone shall see God. Thus we are bidden to "pursue the *santification* without which no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14 (R.V. American). You remember also the wonderful statement of Paul in the 16th verse of the 6th chapter of 2nd Corinthians, "We are a temple of the living God (that is the church) even as God hath said, I will dwell with them and walk in them (the goings of God in the sanctuary. He will walk in them. He is moving onward. It is not we are walking. *He* is walking.) And I will be your God, and they shall be My people (My peculiar people). Wherefore, Come ye out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing"—uncleanness in any form. We have to learn what the unclean thing is, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit Who is holy, as holy as God is holy, will always detect in you the unclean thing, will make you very

sensitive to uncleanness of any kind. Any thing that is contrary to the Divine Life you will be checked upon. You will become increasingly sensitive, for you will be walking in the light, as He is in the light, and need therefore to know that the blood of Jesus Christ by the Eternal Spirit is continually operating and actively cleansing you from all sin; otherwise you could not walk there. You cannot be in the Divine Presence and entertain uncleanness at the same time. Is not this our experience? For we know how God does bring us to Himself, by His grace, but we also know how soon we fall below, fall short of that Glory, and how we groan as we look back upon the day, knowing that our behaviour was not seemly, that our words were not as they should be, and our inner attitude of heart was not right; and while it does not appear before men, God sees and the devil sees, and we know we are a hindrance to the Divine Purpose, we are blocking the path of the God we say we love because we are cherishing this thing which He can see—the unclean thing—the flesh in all its subtle workings, with Satan close at hand. "Touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you (unto Myself). And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty." I like this word "Almighty" here. It is a great comfort to me. It is only mentioned twice in the New Testament, the other place being in Rev. i. 8. It is the word "All-Holding," the God Who holds everything in His hand. It brings us back to the blessed word of the Saviour: "None shall pluck them out of My hand. My Father is greater than all." (The word "pluck" there is really "snatch.") None shall snatch them out of My Father's hand. There is a snatcher, a thief, one who would swiftly and deftly take you out of that Hand if he could, and he is perambulating the church. He is watching his opportunity to get in to snatch you. But there is One alert. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep," and He is alert with the activity of the Divine Shepherdhood to see that you are not snatched out of His hand, if you rest in His hand; if you are there, willing to be there, held there—"None shall snatch them out of My hand." He is the All-Holding One, the One Who holds everything. As we hold Him, He holds us, and He holds us when we do not hold Him. He is mindful of us when we are unmindful of Him. He is faithful, when often we are faithless and unbelieving! Now we are ready for

this verse: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

It is very important to recognise there are two kinds of filthiness and that neither of these filthinesses refer directly to the body here, but to the soul, and to the spirit. We do not detect these, except in the light of His countenance, but there are things that are filthy of spirit. The pride of Satan, for example, is very beautiful, very wonderful, but it is filthiness. There are things that seem like light, but in His presence they are darkness. Satan, himself, is able to transform himself into an angel of light, and so you see how we have to walk in this humility of a recognition that "In our flesh dwelleth no good thing," that we are capable, apart from the grace of God, of anything and everything at any time, and that all the past represents no security for the present. We are only secure in that covenant of the grace of God made between the Father and the Son in His precious blood, and it is absolute grace from beginning to end. O, how slow we are to learn this, and how slow we are to leap into it for our joy; because once we are there fear has gone and torment has ceased. You know that God expects nothing from you as an individual born of this fallen race, but your life now is hid with Christ in God, and as you rest there on that side, claiming the Cross to constantly keep in death the self-nature, you will find another Life within you, which is of God, that effects His purpose. But there is a filthiness of spirit, as well as of soul (flesh), and it is only as we walk in the light of His countenance that these shades appear. They would hardly appear to be shades, but rather light on lower levels, but as you walk with God, mounting up by faith, ascending all the while, as the Glory increases so are we made increasingly sensitive to all that darkness that is Satanic. As we have heard many times in this Fellowship, there is an Ascension Life. We are travelling, by degrees, from one degree of glory to another, and so by the Spirit you find you have an increasing sense of any ungodliness, and anything that is unlike God in you becomes darkness and horrible, and you repent and repent. There never will be a time when you are not repentant, and in the last moment before the Day breaks there will perhaps be some shade that will be confessed then in the light of His countenance. Is not this what is meant by that word concerning

His activities in the church in Malachi, which we have touched upon already—He will sit as a refiner of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi? We are called to a life of intercession, and we yield to it—we want to be His intercessors—we want to be in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. That is why we are in this Testimony. Well now, He will as a refiner of silver, presiding in our midst. He is as One looking at the cooling silver. The silver is molten and it is cooling, but there is lead in it, and as it cools the lead rises up and forms a film on the surface; and so it is poured from pot to pot, and there is less and less lead, but what is there, still concealed in the silver, is always rising. You would at last think it had all gone; but no, some lead yet comes up, a thinner film and then a thinner film, until at last the silver flashes through with nothing of any taint. Then the Refiner sees in us His likeness and is satisfied. Now it is He, our Great High Priest Who is doing that in us. He shall sit as a refiner of silver, and shall purify the sons of Levi with acid tests. That word "fuder's soap," you remember is "fuller's acid" that burns, and the flesh feels the acid, the burning, the scorching of God's touch, as He shines in upon our hearts and reveals our secret sins in the light of His countenance.

Then one wanted to turn to that other passage in 1 John iii., and this really brings up the same thing: "Every one that hath this hope upon Him purifieth himself, *even as He is pure.*" And so one calls you with oneself at the end of this Conference to purity, zeal—His purity, and zeal for God's House. There must be in the Lord's house a pure motive, a pure spring for life and service. Why are you serving? Why are you speaking? Why are you preaching? Why are you praying? What is the motive behind? Is it pure? "The zeal of Thine House hath consumed me" it was said of Him. He lived for the church. *That* is purity—to live for the Divine Purpose; and He brings us to that; and we purify ourselves, *even as He is pure.* The holiness of God is the passion of His love. Now we have had a good deal of "Holiness" teaching with standards of holiness. This is your standard of holiness, *the Divine Nature.* Shall we at the close of the Conference ask the Lord in some very definite way to see to it that He does take us in hand and purify us, and know that He is going to do it, as we yield to Him. There will be the acid. There will be the constant dealing
(Continued on next page.)

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, HONOR OAK ROAD, LONDON, S.E.23.

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship.
Sundays: 11 a.m., 3 p.m. (Young People's Meeting), and 6.30 p.m. Mondays: 7.30 p.m. Wednesdays: 8 p.m.
Saturdays: 7.30 p.m.

Conferences are held every week-end (Saturday and Sunday), and also a longer week-end at the beginning of each month, this fixed by the first Sunday. (Friday to Monday evenings, inclusive.) All particulars may be obtained from G. Paterson, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

Ministers: T. Austin-Sparks; T. Madoc Jeffreys; G. Paterson (General Secretary).

Quest House Hostesses: Lady Ogle; Mrs. M. Brand.

Telephone: Sydenham 5216.

Telegrams: "Syndesmos, Forest, London."

Cables "Syndesmos, London."

(Continued from previous page.)

of the Refiner with us, but they are His hands, His pierced hands, and it will be well worth while when at last there comes the flashing of the Silver, and we see Him according as He is. There never was a time when there was so needed this work of the Spirit in our hearts, for we are living at a season when Satan is pressing in, coming very nigh, and he will be able to fasten upon anything that is impurity, anything that is a mixture, anything that is something that he can take hold of and say: Now that is mine, that belongs to my realm. And so you see only the power of God can effect this in us. But, blessed be His Name. He is our High Priest for this very reason. He is not the High Priest of the world; He is the King of the world. But He is the High Priest of the church, which is His Body; and He ever lives in a Divine passion of love to make intercession for us, and as we yield ourselves to Him, He will see to it that Faith, Hope, Love—these three manifestations of the Divine Life shall work in us.

May He give us grace to yield ourselves to Him in a final act of new and definite consecration to His Eternal Purpose. Amen.

T. M. J.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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FELLOWSHIP AND MINISTRY

THE EASTER CONFERENCE.

FAIR weather as well as the good "spoken-word" of God was given and thus we were able to meet with comfort in the tent which had been erected in faith for the occasion. Much loving labour had been expended upon preparing the floor of our canvas house, which is now pitched on the east side of the tea-rooms. A good foundation of coke-breeze and tar, well rolled, renders the present site damp-proof, and thus the infirmities of the saints are safeguarded.

It was fortunate that we had provided this increased accommodation for we should not have been able to seat the larger gatherings of Good Friday and Easter Monday in the Hall. The evenings were chilly, and then we were obliged to move up to the house; but the place was too small, and we overflowed into the lounge; while in some cases the later comers had to be turned away.

We praise God for the numbers of His hungry people, but it was best of all that He was present to meet their needs. The ministry was sustained throughout in His strength, and there was a revelation of His Eternal Way of the Christ, which through the Cross is open unto us, that will abide in many hearts we believe.

It was a time of re-union with many friends who have been unable to attend the winter conferences, and all were gladdened to find Mr. Sparks sufficiently recovered to be present at all the gatherings and also able to take definite part in some.

BOOKLETS

By T. Austin-Sparks:—

'The Inner Man of the Heart.' Price 4d.

'Vision and Vocation.' Price 3d.

'The Prisoner of the Lord.' Price 2d.

By T. Madoc Jeffreys:—

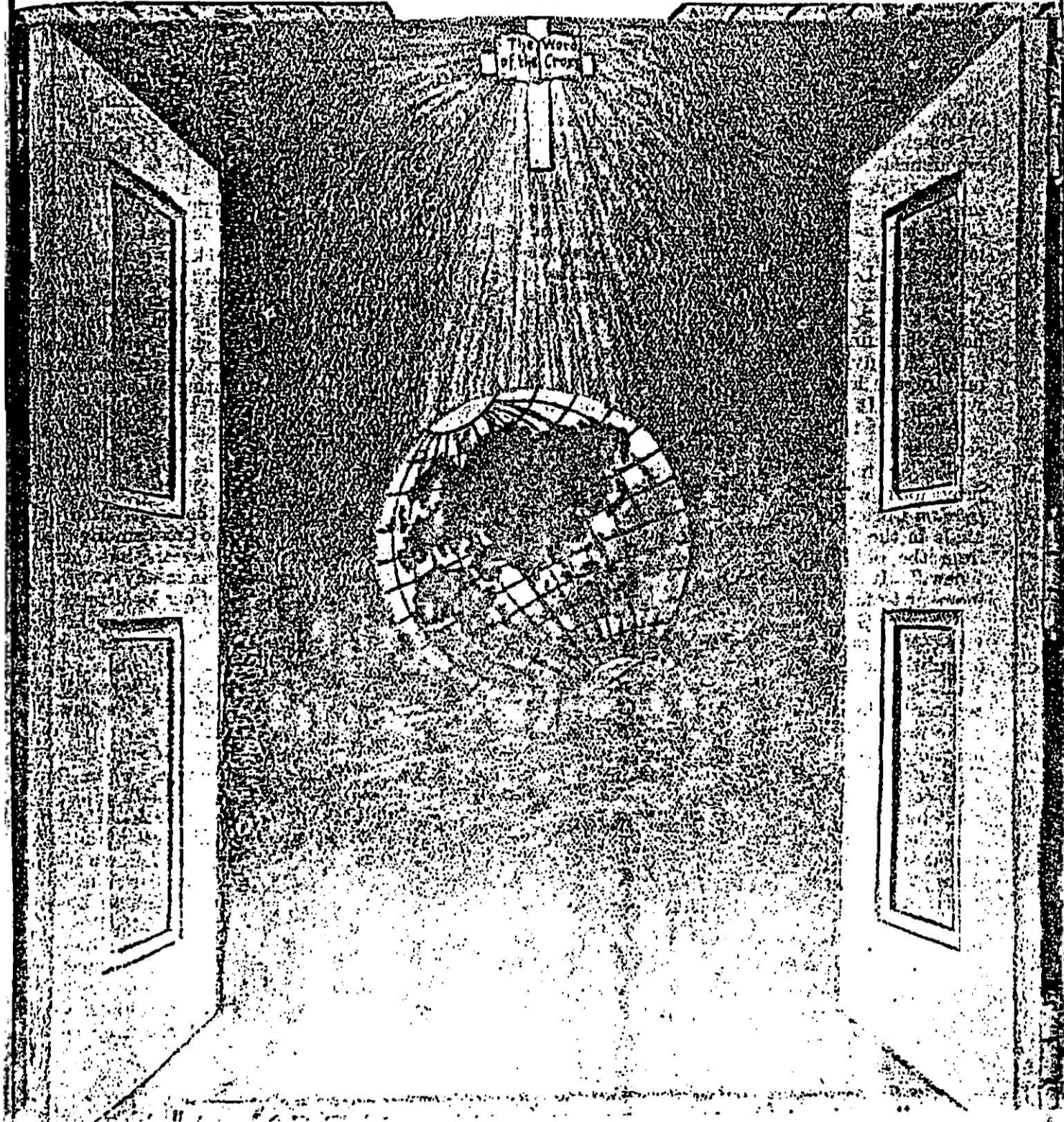
'The Divine Unities.' Price 3d.

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

MAY, 1928



VOL. 6. No. 5



MINISTERS' LETTER

(Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre).

May, 1928.

BELOVED OF OUR LORD,

This "Life" is a *grace-life*. Freely bestowed in its begetting, freely renewed in the constant quickening of the Anointing.

The Shepherd is continually constraining us to lie down in the green pastures of grace. We are forever trying to make headway in a wilderness of law. This is the contrariety of the Spirit and the flesh. To which do we hearken?

Somehow we cannot get the voice of that schoolmaster "Law" out of our hearing. Although it was the relentlessness of law that drove us right into the arms of the Atoning Christ because of the revelation of our inbred lawlessness, we are still prone to consider the way of the Lord as a Law-way rather than as a Grace-way. Nevertheless, it is altogether a Grace-way, and to the once initiated "Grace has a charming sound."

All the invitations of the Shepherd are not only in the language but in the very tones of "grace." It is not merely the Words but the "Voice" of the Shepherd that the sheep must recognise.

How often does His Spirit amplify the Gospel provisions with "freely"? Yes, it is *with freedom* Christ hath made us free, and we must abide in the freedom. He expects not a stiver from the old man; all is freely given in the "new." It is "newness of life" moment by moment to faith's call.

We urge God's redeemed not to listen to the voice of strangers, the harsh condemnatory, or subtle doubt-suggesting voice of the devil. Well is he called "the false accuser"—the accuser of the brotherhood of the Christ.

Ye are not under law, but under grace, the mantle of the Bridegroom. Rest, and rejoice! This is our state. A perfect salvation procured and secured in a Saviour-God! Who is he that condemneth? Yes, *who?*

The curse has been discharged. The Blood has been poured out and carried through. Thus the Eternal Word is confirmed and the Spirit now freely gives, continually gives, a Life that within itself contains the anointing of a constraining Love.

Abiding in grace,

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

T. MAUOC JEFFREYS.

FELLOWSHIP AND MINISTRY

MAY CONFERENCE.

The Cross—and the heavenly Life, the heavenly mind, and the heavenly calling. God came through with words of purpose, and issues for His glory with decisions on His behalf were reached in many lives.

Among many others it was a joy to have the fellowship of our brother, Mr. Richard Voisin, of Jersey, whose witness to the Cross and its first-fruit, the Body of the Christ, has been so loyally maintained and is assuming increasingly clear definition.

So many are given some glimpse of the glory of God's purpose and appear to be about to "sell whatsoever they have" that they may enter into that "perfect Will of God," and then!—some subtlety and current of this present age, whatever it be we know not, arrests their seemingly eager feet, and they turn, sometimes even regretfully, to the things associated with the Saviour that are behind. But oh the tragedy—they are no more with Him pressing toward that heavenly Consummation. Thank God that some, counting all the cost, measuring the significance of the Cross, come forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.

THE EVANGEL.

There have never ceased those activities in proclaiming the message of the Cross among the unsaved during these past two years, but these have been rather personal than in any way an organised effort on the part of our local fellowship. We have not ceased to cry to the Lord for some definite ministries along this line. Several of our young people have been constrained to go out into the "highways and byways." The call is now becoming a corporate responsibility in a very marked way. There are several districts in the country open to such a proclamation, and we are waiting upon the Lord for the equipment for a summer campaign in these directions. We praise Him that He has already commenced to place His seal upon the vision. Perhaps something more definite may be stated in our next issue. Regular ministry at Aberdare, the Newcastle and Belfast areas is still being continued month by month.

Our sister, Miss Janes, at Elsiemar, Dudley Road, Clacton, is seeking to make her home a gathering ground for the Lord's intercessors, and a place of rest for such of His children as may be led there. The ministry of evangelising

the neighbouring villages still concerns our sister, Miss Parlett, and this is one of the prospects that occupies our prayerful co-operation.

WHITSUN AND FURTHER CONFERENCES.

We anticipate a large company of the Lord's people for these days, May 25th (Friday) to 29th (Tuesday), and friends would be well-advised to make their arrangements. The theme is 'The Cross—and the Promise of the Father.' Further particulars may be obtained from leaflets. There will be no June Conference.

The August Conference is upon the horizon. It will be the first week culminating with Bank Holiday, August 6th. We are arranging it a week earlier to suit holiday arrangements, and we also have in mind the possibility of having some holiday camp and conference in that month. This requires a more definite consideration.

Last summer we met every week-end. We feel that Saturday afternoons should be utilised for gospel ministry by our younger folk; but the house and grounds will be open for fellowship as always, and there are opportunities for waiting upon God thus afforded of which many of the Lord's servants might care to avail themselves. There will be the usual gathering at 7.30 P.M.

"THE CROSS AND THE HEAVENLY LIFE"

THE HEAVENLY CALLING

(Notes of an address delivered at the May Conference.)

In relation to the theme that is heading up to its climax this evening we might first of all read the testimony of Paul who had the boldness to call upon his fellow-believers to be imitators of himself, not as the Lord Himself is our example that we should follow in His steps, but as a pattern member of the Body of Christ. As one who had a true church consciousness, which is true Christ-consciousness Paul invites his fellow-believers to imitate him. Acts xx. 22-24:—

"And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghosts testify unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life (soul) of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy (this reveals the fact that he knew God had a determinate purpose for him in his life). And the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus (in fellowship with the Lord Jesus). This preposition 'of' is significant

—not only from the Lord Jesus, nor out-of the Lord Jesus, but *from-being-with* the Lord Jesus (ministry received in fellowship) to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Then we find lower down in the chapter the testimony that makes us recognise what was the source of this passionate love the Apostle had for the church of Christ. He is giving the admonition to others—v. 28:—

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the little flock (the word 'little flock' is a term of endearment, a diminutive. It is the same word that the Lord Jesus used when He said: 'Fear not little flock, &c.') over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed (as shepherds), to pastor the church of God, which He purchased with (or through) His own blood."

What was the conception of the value that Paul had concerning the church? It is purchased with the blood that God Himself provided by the Eternal Spirit through the Incarnation.

There has been a word already said which comes from the third chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews:—

"Wherefore, holy brethren (or members of a holy brotherhood, not merely holy brethren as singular in ourselves, but brethren who belong to a brotherhood, a holy brotherhood) partakers of the heavenly calling (partakers with another One of a heavenly calling, of One Who is set over this brotherhood and in this brotherhood), consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession (as a holy brotherhood), Christ Jesus (the order of the name 'Christ Jesus' is significant. You find that often the order is Jesus Christ, which is Jesus the Christ. That is as the manifestation of the Son of God on earth He is Jesus the Christ, but in His ascension glory as in the Godhead, He is the same Jesus, but He is the Christ Jesus. There has been an inversion of relationship as it were. He is no longer limited as He was here on earth in His self-humiliation, but He has now been glorified in the Father, and it is the Christ in all the illimitable significance of that term—the One in Whom and upon Whom infinite God dwells and rests—'In Him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' Nevertheless, the same Jesus, but you see the significance of the order. 'The Apostle and High Priest of our confession, the Christ, still Jesus.' In some of the versions the 'Christ' is left out, and we simply have the blessed and exalted name 'Jesus'—'The name above every name,' as including now in that Name all the Christhood that is signified in the term 'Christ'); Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all His house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who hath established (or founded) the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some one; but He that established all things is God (including the house). And Moses verily was faithful in all His house, as a servant (as a confidential servant, not even

as a bondservant there, but one of peculiar privilege; he was admitted into fellowship with God) for a testimony of those things which were afterwards to be spoken; but Christ as a Son over God's house; Whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end. Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith:—

*To-day if ye shall hear his voice
Harden not your hearts."*

And here you get at the end of the passage the interpretation in part at least of the word you have in the first verse—**THE HEAVENLY CALLING.** It is a heavenly calling because it is a calling by a voice out from heaven. I wonder if we recognise this—that we are called by a voice out from heaven. You remember in the 12th chapter of this epistle the writer contrasts this present call with the call from Sinai, the calling of the church in the wilderness; that assembly of God was called around Sinai, and heard a Voice and saw the manifestation of the glory of God materially. "God spake all these words saying," and they heard the voice waxing louder and louder in the sound of the trumpet, and they saw the mountain burning into the heart of heaven as the glory of God broke in upon this material universe. That was a solemn call. The Apostle is dealing with that call in the 3rd and 4th chapters where, he says, despite that call the greater part perished in the way: They were called to a testimony for God in the earth. They were called to be His people; they had the revelation; they saw the glory of God; they heard the voice of God—there could be no denying that experience. So terrible was the experience that their flesh could not endure it, and they appealed that some other way of revelation might be given them, and that God would not henceforth come in that way. God was terrible in the manifestation of His glory; it was more than they could bear and they asked that Moses should become His intermediary.

But we are told in the concluding passages of this book that we have come to a different mount than that. We have come to a heavenly mount Sion; to the heavenly Jerusalem; that we have arrived into relationship with great spiritual realities to innumerable companies of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to *God the Judge of all.* But thank God we have come also to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant and to the blood of sprinkling that continually speaketh better things than that of Abel. *We have come,* and these realities are so much more intense, so much more real than those realities which the children of Israel saw and heard at Sinai. "Things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." You and I, as members of the Church, if so be we have heard this call, have come to heavenly facts and realities, things that are wrapped up with the Being of God, things that are concerned in the consummation of the Eternal Purpose. We have arrived there. We are not touching flimsy notions and ideas, doc-

trines and mental conceptions, but we have come to a very definite and Eternal Reality in Christ; and so we read lower down in the chapter (xi.) in the 25th verse:—

"See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh; for if they escaped not when they refused Him that warned them on earth, much more shall not we escape who turn away from Him that *speaketh from heaven.*"

And yet how is this speech coming to us? It is not coming to us in thunders, it is not coming to us in material sensations, it is coming as it came to Elijah who was used as one to portray the change in the nature of God's revelation. After he had been the prophet of thunder and of judgment and of fire out from heaven, he was taken you remember in the re-action of his spirit into the wilderness, and there in that same mount Horeb he was met, where there had been this material revelation, and there came earthquake, and there came fire and whirlwind, but God was not in those; but then there came a still small voice, and God was in that. And this is the test to our faith, for this is the way of His speaking in this dispensation by the still small voice, the voice of the Holy Ghost, the voice of the Son of God, and it is by that voice we are called—a heavenly calling, a calling from on high. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh" the Apostle enjoins more than thrice in this epistle.

Then we are reminded of what the Lord Himself said in John v. 25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, *and now is,* when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God." Now is! There was a voice speaking. Thousands heard the voice as a material voice, but only a few heard that other spiritual voice, amongst whom were they who said: "To whom shall we go but unto Thee? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life." They were not able to obey that voice then for that called-out assembly could not yet be gathered because Christ was not yet risen to *give it Life* whereby it might live in the heavens—the only place where the church can live. For it is a heavenly Life that is in the members of the Body; it is the Life of God in the Christ, and that Life was not yet given by the Eternal Spirit until another life had been poured out in the place of our life at Calvary. It was when that life had been poured out that the other Life could be given. But here is this voice speaking on earth: "The hour is come, *and now is,* when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Thank God it is a blessed testimony: If you hear you live. The voice of the Son of God—a calling from heaven by the Holy Ghost. So in the epistle of Peter, from which we have quoted more than once in this Conference, we read that the gospel is preached in the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. That includes the necessity of Pentecost; for it includes the necessity of an anointed ministry; it includes the necessity of utterance upon earth which is not the utterance of men only, but the utterance

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

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of God through men whereby there is a calling out from heaven. It is very necessary that we should recognise the nature of the call. It is from on high, and it is up to Him—to be called unto Him. "Come unto Me," He called on earth, and He would have given rest to Israel. Now He calls us from on high—Come unto me. A call out from the world unto Himself. You remember the familiar passage in the gospel of Matthew, and it is very significant in passing that it is only in Matthew you get mention of the church, and only in Matthew you get mention of the word "called," not in the other gospels. I think that may be explained by the fact that Matthew is the gospel of the Kingdom, for the Sovereignty in the church is bound up with the Eternal Sovereignty, not only the Sovereignty upon this little planet of Israel under that anointing at the head of the nations, and the nations also blessed with Israel, but the universal Sovereignty of the Christ of God. That is why it seems to me the Holy Spirit has excluded from the other gospels the actual mention of the word "church," and, strangely enough, no mention of the word "called." In Matthew also you get the two passages: "Many are called, but few are chosen." And you remember what He says to that great confession that Peter made by the Holy Ghost as he obtained a glimpse of the transcendent glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,—and how we need to get our mental conceptions of that confession shattered, for *Peter saw right through!* And this is what God can do for you and me, by His grace, beloved friends, if we are found sufficiently needful in our hearts, crying unto Him for revelation. If we will only get out of the realm where we think our mentalities are going to grasp truth, that you and I can by means of finite minds and finite reasonings see the Christ of God, or hear the Christ of God. You cannot! If you had an intellect that was as colossal and as great as that of Satan you would never see the mystery of God in Christ, except by revelation. There came that flash into the spirit of Peter, by the grace of God, whereby He saw the truth: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living, the actual God"; and He said: "Thou art Peter (a stone), and upon this Rock, this revelation, I will build My church—My 'ecclesia.'"

Now you are well acquainted with the meaning of this word "ecclesia." We are scholars in the sense that we know it means "that which is called out." It is "who called-out assembly," borrowed from the Greek word which indicated the called-out assembly of those who had free citizen rights in a free Greek city in order that they might transact public business. Now translate that into terms that are heavenly—My "ecclesia," My assembly, the assembly of the Christ of God: that which is gathered into and around and in the Christ of God! That is the church, that heaven. Body which is His. A heavenly calling, a calling from on high.

But first of all there comes, under the revelation

of His Godhead, a simultaneous revelation of the fact of the Cross, the fact of *Him* crucified (you put these two things instantly together). Always by the operation of the Holy Spirit there is an immediate conviction concerning sin; and this, as we were seeing this afternoon, is the necessary beginning of grace. We cannot see the gospel as a gospel of grace until we have seen how necessary grace is. It is not until the Lord has unveiled Himself to us in His glory that we begin to see *ourselves* in the light of His countenance and our comeliness is turned to corruption. We cry with Isaiah: "Alas, I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips. The whole expression of my life is foul because its origin is foul, its nature is foul." It is then we see the necessity for grace. Calvary does not need careful explanation to us then. We do not need to have the thing drilled into us by a series of intellectual dissertations when once we have seen ourselves in the light of that Countenance. His Spirit always reminds us that *He* was crucified—"Jesus the Christ and *Him* crucified." It was *He*, this glorious One, this One of Infinite majesty and holiness, Who is no other than God Himself Incarnate, that was crucified. We then see that a universal salvation is provided, if men would accept it, and provision has been made therefore for all uncleanness. We need a provision of grace that can get beneath the very root and ground of our being to deal with the absolute depravity of our nature in relation to God, namely, our ungodliness. For *that* was the revelation Abraham had in Ur of the Chaldees—nothing that was between Adam and Moses, but something that was Adam's experience between his fall when he was engulfed in the power of hell, and the hour when God provided a covering for him. It was Adam not yet met with in grace, but lost in the darkness. It was the experience of David, as we have seen, when he fell into hell, and knew he was in the power of an absolute Satanic captivity, which, as far as he was concerned, was eternal—when he says: "The pains (or cords) of Hades gat hold upon me." Now He has met that awful ground of a satanic depravity in us. We are inclined to overleap that fact and accept these other doctrines such as "identification," before we have seen the need of identification. We take them as mental postulates, and go on Romans vi., vii. and viii., and sometimes to Ephesians, talking about heavenly positions, and we have never seen the ground that we find in Romans v. You and I will be to the end of our days, in the realm of our self-nature, sinners, ungodly, enemies, without strength; but you see we have a calling from on high, and He calls you when you are there on that sinner's ground. He calls me when I am there, and I see that it is this Christ of God Who was crucified Who calls me because I am thus self-confessed, a sinner, ungodly, an enemy of God in my nature. He calls me because I have confessed this, and have seen this, but

have soon also that He was crucified and "made sin" on my behalf. He calls me to share another Life with Him. That is the calling. You remember the wonderful verse from a familiar hymn:—

Thou shalt see My glory soon
When the work of Christ is done,
Partner of my throne shalt be
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?

It is a sinner who shall see the glory. It is a sinner who shall share the throne, if he listens to the call:—

"Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?"

It is a calling from on high to that!

"The High and Lofty One Who inhabiteth Eternity, looks to this one—him that is of a humble, a broken, and contrite spirit, and trembleth at His Word."

Now it is very important that we should see that the church of God, the "ecclesia" of God, is made up of sinners. You and I confess we are sinners, and it is this, that constitutes the glory-grace of God, that He gets this material transformed into something else. My church. I will rebuild My church, my "ecclesia," on this ground. Now once we have recognised it is a call to us on the ground of the blood that was shed, then we see that we are called out from the world—and one does stress this—that there must be an utter break. We cannot, beloved friends, enter into this except as there is a complete break. You remember the call in the second epistle to the Corinthians: "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, said the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." It is a coming right out from the world, from this system, from the "cosmos," from everything in it, not merely leaving habits. It is not merely leaving society; it is not merely leaving relationships, it is leaving everything, and taking up a faith position of a "Life that is hid with Christ in God." "Ecclesia"—called out, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Out of Egypt Israel was called—Egypt typical of the world—Pharaoh typical of Satan. You and I are called out of that dominion and that realm to a "Life that is hid with Christ in God." Of course, there are so many phases of the call. It is a call from heaven to live a heavenly life by the Holy Ghost, and it is well for us to embrace this fact that this life can only be lived by the power of the Holy Ghost. You cannot live it by determination. You cannot live it by efforts at self-consecration, or self-crucifixion. You can only live it by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that Life which is given, His Life, is only received, and only maintained as the self-life is continually acknowledged as under sentence of death, under the judgment of Calvary, and under the power of the Holy Spirit to put into operation that death constantly. A great many of God's children are still much checked

and held up because somehow they think they themselves can put to death the "old man"; that they can manage somehow to enter into a life of holiness by enthusiastic devotion to the Person of Christ as far as they themselves are conscious of that Person. It is only by the Holy Spirit: "If ye through the Spirit do put to death the doings of the body ye shall live; but it will be by the Holy Ghost." Then, in the Spirit we find we are sharing something, for it is a discovery, sooner or later, that you and I share the same Life. As the Spirit of God rests upon us we discover as we meet a fellowship, not a life merely of a personal pilgrimago to heaven. A great many of God's children are being kept fairly useless, as far as God is concerned, because they are still going upon *single* lines to glory. They are thinking that all this is for their personal good and end. Well, of course, it includes that: but God is not saving us now for our personal good and end, otherwise He would save all men. What He is after now is an "ecclesia." He is after a church. He is after an assembly. He is after that which will function in His Life, not only provisionally and preparatory now as in this age, but eternally in the ages to come. That is the thing He is after. A great many of God's children are held up because they think it is personal salvation, and as long as they can keep within the lines of personal obedience upon certain things, and really live in obedience in some degree to Christ their Lord, that that is the thing God is after; but He is not after that. He is after something infinitely greater than is going to function for Him now on the earth because it functions in the heavens, because we meet actually there, because the Anointing resting upon us causes us to enter into a corporate Life by which His Spirit exercises His sovereignty through us. That is the thing that God is after.

And it is very wonderful that this fellowship is not organised, but is the result of this heavenly Life when we so meet. Two of God's children—if they are living in the Spirit, if they know the indwelling and overshadowing of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, the moment they come together find *fellowship*, a fellowship in the Holy Ghost. They find that God Himself, by His Spirit, descends and rests upon them. Do you know anything of that beloved friends? You do! That is a wonder, a miracle, a revelation of what the church is; and we can never really enter into the Divine Purpose, or serve God, even in the very elementary and primary stages of service until we know what fellowship is. It is a church He is after. It is a fellowship, and a fellowship which is functional; and so you find the next mention of the church in the 18th chapter of Matthew is just concerned with that. He begins to show how that which is bound on earth is bound in heaven: that which is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven: and he gives the explanation. "For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst." You get the marvellous demonstration of that first church in the Acts of the Apostle,

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

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in the 4th chapter, when you find the church gathered together and the place was shaken where they were. It does not mean merely that they met in a building, and the enclosure served the purpose of the gathering. That is not the gathering. The gathering was in the Holy Ghost. It is because these were so susceptible to the fellowship of the Spirit, because they were so clear in their revelation of what they were as members of the church, members of the Body of Christ, that as they came together with no block, no hindrance, but in a common purpose, a common Life, that the Holy Ghost swept through that assembly, and they prayed the same prayer! I do not know whether you notice here what is to me a greater manifestation of the unity of the Spirit than that which happened on the day of Pentecost—they all prayed the same prayer. I do not know what the number was, but they all prayed the same words. The Holy Spirit did not, on that occasion, speak in different tongues, but He spake in the same speech through the entire assembly! Then you find the boldness given to the witnesses, and the word of God going apace; but this makes us realize that this assembly is a spiritual assembly. The fellowship is a spiritual fellowship. It is a common Life that is hid with Christ in God, and when we are in true fellowship one with another in the love of God, then the nature of this heavenly thing is manifested before principalities and powers. It is a heavenly thing. This church really meets in heaven, and because we meet in heaven here upon earth, the Holy Ghost rests upon us, and the work of God is wrought.

You get an illustration of the vital fact of this assembly being spiritual in 1 Corinthians v. where Paul enjoins that they shall gather together in the Name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit. He will be present! How can he be present? He is present there in the throne. He recognises that this Life is a Life shared in the Christ of God. It is one Life and the one Anointing of one Body, and he ventures to declare that he will gather with them—with my spirit, and the power of the Lord Jesus. But you see the power of the Lord Jesus is held up unless there is unity. God has limited His sovereignty to this, and He has delayed His programme for this, and He has allowed this present evil age, though He foreknows its period, to drag its misery out, because He is dependent on this side for the functioning of His will upon His church. The Apostle therefore recognises that if He is going to act for God with his brethren his spirit must be with them in oneness in the Holy Ghost.

The condition of this oneness, as we know, is love, a selfless love. We not only have to discern the fact of the church by revelation, as I trust by the grace of God we do, but we have to recognise what is the method of the operation of the church, because the operation of the church is the operation of the Holy Ghost—the operation of God. Well, it is upon the basis of unity, and that unity is secured by love—the laying down of the self-life.

That is to say, it is the Body of Christ which is the true means whereby the Cross is made to act in our lives. You will find that is so—one is finding that is so. God has, in His wisdom, so designed the Body as the test to us: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples when ye have love one toward another." And what kind of love is this? "As I have loved you, that ye love one another." The love which is His! It is not any kind of human love. We have our stories, our history, of the amazing heights to which the love of man can attain in the relationships of human affection, but that love is faint and fades before this love. "As I have loved you"—the Good Shepherd's love, Who laid down His Life for the sheep. That is His Love. He laid down all the endowment so pure and holy of His marvellous humanity, laid it all down, gave it all up, allowed it to become that which was condemned of God, made sin for us, for the church. "Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for it." You cannot measure that. We get some faint idea of what it signifies. But not only did He empty Himself of His glory, and not only did He travel that way of self-abasement and humiliation and self-impoverishment continually until He was made a curse for us, but He has even taken upon Himself the vesture of our humanity for eternity for our sakes. The Son of God has become the Son of Man for our sakes. "For their sakes I sanctify myself that they also may be truly sanctified." When they see that I have so sanctified myself, so given myself, surely they will also give themselves up to the same end, the Body's sake.

Now you see that is impossible apart from the Holy Ghost. O, I hope that the devil is not lashing any poor child of God by accusing them that they have not this love. Of course you have not, neither have I; but if you recognise that this is a heavenly Life, the Life of Another Who is God Incarnate, Who ministers His Life to you in grace constantly, as you cry for it—you are to be a servant of the church, a minister to the church. Well, this is not in you or in me apart from the love of God. But here is the Apostle, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself." Why? "That I may finish my course." What is his course? It is not merely that he is going to Rome to a martyr's death. He might give his body to be burned, but if he had not love he would be nothing. It is this, that Paul having seen that He so loved him and so gave Himself for him, he, by the love of Christ, is constrained to give himself for others, and he is a minister and a servant and he is living for the church. "He is filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His Body's sake, which is the church."

And this is our calling. He calls from on high to a fellowship with Him, and with God. This is the first phase of it, worshipping in the glory, seeing the glory by the Spirit, worshipping the Father in the Spirit, because you are members of

the Christ having fellowship with the Father in the Son. But then you find you are also living here in this world, and you are set in the assembly of God's people and your "flesh" comes up and their "flesh" comes up, and you find the most difficult thing in the assembly is unity, real unity. It is when you get the church beginning to gather together in the Holy Ghost that you begin to discover the devil, you get the emergence of something that you never knew before. You can live your solitary Christian life with some amount of self-satisfaction, although one is afraid to use these terms; but when you seek to come together in the Spirit and begin this battle of the ages, the hell breaks loose. God is now bringing you up against this fact, that the wrestling of the church is something quite different to individual salvation. The wrestling of the church is against the whole of this world system, the thing that blocks God's purpose, the thing that stands in God's way. *Our* wrestling (not my wrestling, I cannot wrestle, it is not my solitary individual effort) is against principalities and powers, and you will find that there is this sinister subtle thing coming in to prevent unity, and the only thing that can make you a contributory member of the Body of Christ in the face of that is this selfless Life in the Holy Ghost. But this is your calling, your vocation here on earth; it is your business, a heavenly business, and not as one who is prominent, but as a saint. Notice the expression at the beginning of Paul's epistles both to the Romans and the Corinthians: "Called to be an apostle"—literally a *called* apostle. Then lower down: "Called to be saints" *called* saints. O, beloved, have you heard that call? God has called you to be a saint. It does not mean to live a holy, individual life—it means that of course, but it means you are called to serve the Body, to live for the Body. This is your vocation. And if you have any ministry which the Holy Ghost has marked out in you it only makes the Cross the heavier burden, but it is a burden of love, it is the burden of His passion and His constraint. But the vocation is to serve the church—a heavenly calling, so heavenly that it demands a heavenly Life. It demands a heavenly love, and its manifestation is the manifold wisdom of God, that He gets us, sinners, so hateful, so contrary with our flesh and irks and corners, laying down our souls one for another, laying down our "flesh" one for another, laying down this thing which is "you" and "me" for one another, so that *you* do not appear, and *I* do not appear when we come in the assembly, and therefore *I* do not irk you and you do not irk me, because you lay down your life and I lay down my life. There are some of God's children who speak a great deal of the Cross, and they want everybody else to be crucified but not themselves. But all of us compete in this "each esteeming the other better than himself; in honour preferring one another"—selfless love—a heavenly calling—heaven manifested on earth—God's grace revealed here. The character

of Jesus made manifest in you and me to the discomfiture of the devil, God can say, not in any challenge such as you and I can imagine, to His enemy: You see this is the manifestation of My grace. This is what the Cross has done and is doing in these sinners "called saints." That is our calling, and we do not live upon the horizons, thinking of it in other lands only, though God grant we may think of the Body in all the earth, but we are up against it here in this assembly. If so be we are an assembly of the Christ here we have to lay down ourselves one for another constantly. It is only so the church is built up; the Body edified and the completed Unity shall be brought about. Paul, in the Philippian letter speaks about pressing on toward the mark for the prize of the calling from on high, the upward calling. It is a heavenly calling in that sense, but it is not even an individual calling even there. There are many who would translate the words of the Apostle to some individual ambition, that he hopes to be unique, and to have a personal translation, and does not care much about the rest of the Body, as to what happens to the other members. That would be very contrary to the revelation of the Holy Ghost. This upward calling, or calling from on high, is the thing that he seeks to realise with the whole Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is to be realised and consummated in an upward calling, and this presses home upon our hearts this evening, for we believe that God is giving to us some intimation of His near approach. We believe the Lord is pressing in upon our hearts that we are living at the end of the time. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh," but we are not thinking of that merely as some wonderful happening that may be our blessed experience to enjoy; we are thinking of it in relation to God's purpose; we are thinking of it in relation to the church, which is His Body. I believe that, as far as our personal predilections are concerned, as the months and near years come, if the Lord tarries, if it were not for the love of God, we should desire to be home with Him. I believe that the time is fast coming as the pressures increase, and the difficulties of ministry and service become tenfold more difficult, that the only natural inclination will be for us to say, Lord take me to Thyself. You find the Apostle realising that, and as you think of his labours, his selfless labours for the church, you understand him. "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is very far better; nevertheless, for your sakes"—he faces again the life of conflict, the life of misunderstanding, the life of persecution, the life of rigour, the life of fastings and prayings, and wants the burden of the Cross. He still welcomes it all "for your sakes"; and that is our calling. I wonder whether, beloved, we have come to a time in our Conferences where we get beyond listening only to truth, and come into the truth as it is in Jesus, and when we will say: Here am I, Lord, take me for this. Make me a minister, a saint, a saint who is yet a sinner, recognising in

the self-nature that which will ever be in Thy way, but nevertheless, Thou hast given me the heavenly calling of a Life that is hid in Thee, and, by the power of the Holy Ghost, I claim the calling of that Life in this mortal body as I lay down my soul, my self-life for Thy sake, and for the sake of the members of Thy church. That is our calling. I wonder when the Lord will have His way with us, and we will come into that, that holy thing, that unceasing thing that goes on day and night, "serving Him day and night in His temple" in the Body. The Lord calls us to this. He wants us for this; the need is so great. The need here is so great for the power of God to rest upon us in our assemblies. The need is so great that praying in the Holy Ghost might become the normal experience of our gatherings, and the place would be shaken where we are found, not in outward sensations, but in those cosmic happenings of God, so that because you and I are found praying here, in the uttermost parts of the earth things are done—"the greater works than these." God is calling for that! One would not speak like this, unless one were speaking to one's own heart again that the Lord would so bring one to a place to make one's calling and election sure—to know that one is in this because this is in one's very heart. In measure that is taking place.

Thank God for His grace, but, O, shall we open our hearts to-night and let the blessed flood-tide of God's redeeming love fill our being; that we shall discover in the days to come that somehow something has happened. God has unlocked a door, by our consent, in us somewhere, and there is breaking through in us now something we never knew before. We are not concerned any more about ourselves. As we have so often said, no longer concerned about our own salvation. That is where Paul had got to, "I was wishing myself a *anathema*," no longer concerned about himself; but living for the sake of the church, because he was living for Christ's sake. That is the significance of his testimony. "For me to live is the Christ, and to die is gain." God will do that in us as we yield ourselves to Him. This "Fellowship" stands for that. This witness here stands for that. It is a witness to the testimony of Jesus in the Holy Ghost. A heavenly Life, because of a life laid down—your life laid down, the heavenly Life coming in, and the Holy Ghost moving in you in prayer, in intercession, in ministry—another Life that shall be the wonder of God's grace before principalities and powers.

May He speak this in our hearts, and may we say that we refuse not Him that speaketh, because He has cut out this "day" out of the time-ages, in order to effect this marvel of His Body, "To-day therefore if we hear His voice let us not burden our hearts."

T. M. J.

CROSS-ROADS

(CHIEFLY FOR BOYS AND GIRLS).

You might think that this word means two roads that cross one another. It means more than that. It means the *place* where roads met or crossed, they might be two or more.

For there in the old days it was the custom of our forefathers to fix a Cross, and so the Cross-ROADS was the place of the cross.

It was there they used to bury the bodies of the suicides, unhappy people who had taken their own lives. There, too, little villages and towns would spring up, because of the traffic of the roads; but they would be built around the cross, so to speak; fellowship in life and work would grow around the cross.

You would be surprised to find how long a list you could make of villages and towns the names of which end in Cross.

In God's word Solomon describes Wisdom as an Angel, a heavenly messenger, standing at the Cross-Roads. "She standeth in the top of high places by the way, in the places of the paths"—the Revised Version says, "where the paths meet,"—the Cross-Roads. "Besides the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors" (Proverbs viii. 2 and 3).

This is to say that wherever the many paths of men are found Wisdom is standing to meet us, to prevent us going any longer in our own ways. The city gates are mentioned because so many paths meet there.

With what does she meet us?

I think it is with the CROSS, for Paul says that the Cross of the Lord Jesus is the Wisdom of God.

But what does God mean by meeting us with the Cross of the Lord Jesus? What is He saying to us? Surely He is saying, "Halt!" But more than that. He is also saying "Come!" Come along another WAY, My way.

He is showing us that our paths, our ways, must end where He meets us. We can go no farther. If we do, it will be to our bitter pain and loss, even death. And is He not showing us that in the Cross of His Son he has already brought us to an end? That when He died we also died in God's reckoning? And He would have us reckon it too.

For God can only begin where we end, and before He can lead us into the Path of His Life we must forsake our own way, our own life.

"I want my own way," we say; or if we do not say it, feel it. But Jesus meets us at the

Cross-Roads with His Cross and says, You must give up your own way, and take Mine. I am the Way.

You remember how the rich young ruler came to this cross-roads. He met Jesus there, and He held up the Cross before him. The young man had thought he could have the life of God, eternal life, and still go his own way. Jesus made him see *that* was impossible. But he went *away* grieved. It is said, "he had great possessions"; but we all have great possessions; there is nothing so great in our sight as having our own way.

But we cannot have our own way and the WAY of Jesus. When He meets us it is the CROSS-ROADS, the place of the Cross.

Jesus looks upon us tenderly and loves us, just as He loved that young man; but even that tender love cannot save us unless we choose His Way. There are some things even God cannot do. He cannot decide instead of us, He cannot make up our minds for us. We must choose, we must decide at the Cross-Roads. *It is difficult.* Jesus knows all about that. For He had to make a far greater sacrifice to save us than we have to make in order to be saved. He has been at the Cross-Roads Himself, and all through His life He was choosing the path that led to the Cross: in the wilderness, when tempted by Satan; on the mount when Peter sought to make Him pity Himself, and then in the most terrible test of all, in the garden, He chose the Father's will though it meant His own anguish and death. So He knows how hard it is.

I have often wished that the young ruler had but looked up and thus have seen the love call in the Saviour's eyes. It might have been different! But we are now where He was, face to face with Jesus. What shall we do? Surely as He says, Come! Follow me! Take up the Cross! We will look up, decide to cease in our own paths, and allow Him to lead us in the power of His Life, which He will give to us by His Spirit, in the WAY EVERLASTING.

T. M. J.

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"Freely ye have received; freely give."

"GIVE ATTENDANCE UNTO READING."

PAUL, 1. Timothy iv. 13.

THE question of helpful literature on the Cross and kindred subjects is often raised and advice asked. While other reading should never be allowed to take time from an adequate study of the scriptures themselves, we do urge that Paul's advice to Timothy should be carefully and judiciously extended and followed in relation to the written messages of some of God's instructed and consecrated servants.

It will be appreciated that we cannot open these pages to mention much that is sound and commendable. Our purpose here is just to mention a few books which all who seek a good foundation presentation of these basic truths should possess and know.

The book department at the Centre will be glad to serve in helping to secure these books if desired.

Here are the first nine books recommended:—

'The Twofold Life,' by A. J. Gordon.

'In Christ,' by A. J. Gordon.

'The Ministry of the Spirit,' by A. J. Gordon.

'The Meaning and Message of the Cross,' by H. C. Mabie.

'How does the Death of Christ save us?' by H. C. Mabie.

'The Divine Reason of the Cross,' by H. C. Mabie.

'The Cruciality of the Cross,' by P. T. Forsyth.

'The Death of Christ,' by Professor Denny.

'Shall we continue in Sin,' by A. T. Pierson.

We ought to remark that in thus recommending books we do not commit ourselves to endorsing every point in them or to other books not mentioned which are by the same authors. Spiritual discernment is necessary on the part of readers, but we mention only such books as we feel are valuable and important in general.

T. A.-S.

John xii. 24.

A corn of wheat abides alone,
So long as it remains unsown:
But, when within the earth it lies,
It renders up its life and dies;
Yet soon to fuller life is born,
And bears a head with many a corn.
So death, once dreaded, proves a friend,
And puts to fruitlessness an end;
Art thou, then, willing to be sown,
Or wilt thou still live on alone?

THE CROSS AND THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER.

(1) Before times Eternal

The Vision of the Father.
The Divine Reason of the Promise.
"A people for Himself. A people for His Name."

(2) The Purpose projected

The dominating objective of the ages.
The Divine Method of the Promise :-
Incarnation: "God manifest in the flesh."
Man: "The First Adam"
Created.
Conditioned.
Subversion.
Repudiated.

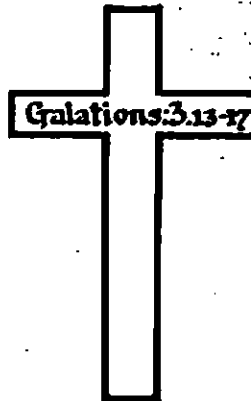
(3) The Vision tarrying but persisting.

Christ and the Church.

- (1) Prefigured.
- (2) Previsioned.
- (3) Predicted.

The Message of the Cross Visualised. (T.A.S)

Hebrews: 9.14.



Luke: 12.50.

(1) The Promise fulfilled, the Vision in realisation.

(A) The Federal Head. The Second Man: 1 Cor: 15.45, 47.
The Sovereign Head. Eph: 1.22. Col: 1.18.

THE SPIRIT UPON HIM AS
THE HEAD.

Mat: 3.13-15. Rom: 6.4. Rom: 8.1. :-

(B) "The New Creation in Christ Jesus."

"The Church which is His Body."

Identification with Christ in
Death, Resurrection, Ascension,
the Baptism by and anointing with
the Spirit. John: 20.22. Acts: 19.23 (RV). 1 Cor: 12.13
1 Cor: 1.21

The Spirit and Christ.	} Birth.	
The Spirit and the Believer.		Life.
The Spirit and the Church.		Service.

(C) The Present Progress and Process.

- (1) The Reason. "Out of the Nations a people for His Name." Acts: 15.14.
- (2) The Method. "Christ in you the hope of Glory." Col: 1.27. "Conformed to the image of His Son" Rom 8.29.
- (3) The Persistence. "His Inheritance in the Saints." Eph: 1.18.

THE SPIRITUAL CLINIC

I.—Paralysis

THE miracles of Christ are not only called "wonders" (that which arrests and bewilders the reason) they are also "signs"—that which points to something else; they are indicative of something more and imply something beyond or behind. While it is doubtless true that the healing miracles implied and signified that in His redemptive person and work Christ would at length deliver the human body from its corruption and all the painful fruits of sin therein, we believe that the present emphasis is to be placed mainly upon illustrative suggestiveness of the maladies specifically dealt with although not all specifically named (Matt. iv. 23, x. 1; Mark i. 34).

The Holy Spirit does not hesitate to reveal or affirm in the records that many maladies and infirmities had demons directly behind them, and Satan directly responsible for them, as well as *specific sin* as an immediate ground of them. From the illustrative, the parabolic, in the gospels we work through the Cross into the more spiritual and heavenly realm by the resurrection and ascension of Christ and have more to do with the spiritual counterpart than with the physical; while still there remains *in the Church* a testimony and a prophecy to the entire redemption of spirit, soul, and body.

There are diseases and morbidities which relate to the "inner man," and in so far as he is of greater importance than "outer man," so the temporal is subservient to and waits upon the spiritual and eternal. We do not propose to deal with the relationship of the two, but suggest in passing that *the quickening of the mortal (dying) body depends upon a life in the renewed and energised spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God.*

Among the many of the Lord's people who are spiritually afflicted not a few are in a condition of spiritual paralysis. In this matter analogies between the physical and the spiritual do not always hold good and cannot be universally traced, the two realms have different standards of reckoning. While many of the sufferers are quite aware of their condition and know only too well and sadly of their spiritual ineffectiveness, there are many whose impotence is hidden under a considerable amount of feverish activity, emotional stimuli, religious busy-ness, cerebral agitation, oral effusiveness, &c. It depends entirely upon the *Divine*

definition of spiritual potency and effectiveness as to the measure of real purpose served by all this. Moreover, we must realise that even in the true life and service of the Lord there are gradations and levels of spiritual accountability.

MISTAKEN SIGNS.

It is important that we should be alive to the bluffs which abound in the realm of "Christian" activity. There are many such in our physical disorders! and an experienced physician is not deceived into false hopes by these. A liver subject knows quite well that a voracious appetite rather than a sign of excellent health too often has a subtle and insidious trap in its hiding. Such examples of what we have called "bluffs" might be greatly multiplied, but it is unnecessary, we know those disconcerting reservations of enthusiasm on the part of the physician or surgeon after we have told of certain pleasing (?) features of our case.

Now we find ourselves between two expressions of the same subject: (1) that where paralysis in spiritual life and service is fully recognised and more than suspected; and (2) that where the trouble is just as active and real but quite undetected.

THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL EFFECTIVENESS.

It is, however, necessary in the etiology of this malady to approach the inquiry with a recognition of a general fact. This fact is that the main objective of the forces of evil is by some means—no matter how—to rob the believer of real spiritual fighting-force: not talking force, working force, organising force, advertising force, holding-and-going-to-meeting-force, listening-to-teaching-force, soul-force; but genuine fighting force in which the impact of the victory of the Christ of Calvary by the Cross is registered upon the forces back of the human and worldly elements, the "principalities and authorities, the world rulers of this darkness, and the hosts of wicked spirits in the heavenlies" (Ephesians vi. 12).

Spiritual effectiveness is decided there, and not amongst the things seen. It is because of this that the enemy is well pleased amongst the spiritually superficial or unspiritual "Christians" to carry on a campaign of works and activities, programmes, institutions, meetings and churches, and allow or foster a certain kind of success imitative of good, but in which there is nothing that gets beyond time and earth and is lacking in that constituent which affects his hold upon the situation.

IRRECONCILABLE ELEMENTS.

There are some classic illustrations of spiritual paralysis in the Old Testament, and some tragic instances in the Now. To study these is to diagnose many cases as we know them to-day.

Kadesh Barnea was the scene of a corporate paralysis of the "Church in the Wilderness." The causes are not far to seek. Sitting down by this case and holding our clinic we trace the trouble firstly to a long-standing contradiction and irreconcilable elements in the composition of this "Body." Exodus xii. 38 puts its fingers upon this clue. "Mixed multitudes." Egyptians clinging to Hebrews. Egypt elements mixed with Hebrews. Non-covenant elements holding place on covenant ground and exercising influence in mind and heart and will. Now, if Egypt does (as seems very probable) represent figuratively the sense-world, that realm where the senses predominate; where things seen, heard, handled hold the field and are the criteria; where emotions, reasonings, and human volition are the ultimate and final bound of life and determine the course or attitude or outlook; then here is indeed a very strong and sound clue to much of the present spiritual counterpart of the historic paralysis which drained the fighting-force and made impossible the conquest on the part of Israel. If the components are mixed the motives will be mixed, the master passions will be mixed. When God challenges his people to work out upon a purely spiritual basis, holding from them everything upon which they could naturally rely or rest as a surety of success; when He withholds all such basis of service as would gratify the flesh; when He allows appearances to *appear* as though they flatly and positively contradict and deny His covenant; when there is every *reason*—as such—to believe that the enemy has possession and all the odds on his side; when in themselves His people can find nothing whatever to provide for the nourishing of hope, but much to the contrary; then motives are tested and discovered, then interests are laid bare, then the ground of standing is made manifest. Then it will be betrayed as to whether it was for the Lord Himself or for the advantages which He is able to give that brought us out to associate with His people. Reason is confounded, feeling is petrified, volition is powerless before some of the practical propositions of God and by some of His methods and dealings with His own. There is absolutely no human ground

upon which to hope or expect any emergence into triumph.

Well now, what about it? Is this the end? Is it to be death in the wilderness? Is it *paralysis*? With many it is. At rock bottom God detected a personal motive, a self-interest, a care for satisfaction in itself, a concern for spiritual possession as an end in itself, a name, a reputation, a standing, something of sense, and when the test came this sense-element came up and strove for its rights, judged after the sight of the eyes, the hearing of the ear, the handling of the hand, the present and immediate prospect. Hence paralysis in the realm that really matters. Satan had a stake inside which gave him a judicial right which even God could not repudiate, seeing that the only means of its repudiation had been neglected by the one concerned—namely, the Cross whereby the flesh has been crucified. Some secret hidden almost unrealised walking after the flesh has at length been dragged out into the light by a supreme test and paralysis in spiritual-life and service has resulted. Sooner or later every irreconcilable element will manifest itself in spiritual impotence. We must not presume upon our early successes, neither should we be concerned enviously over the apparent prosperity of carnal men in spiritual (?) work: the end is not yet, and the true range of effectiveness is not known to us.

NATURAL RESOURCE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

For the present we would take but one other case of paralysis in the Old Testament which is of peculiar interest and instructiveness. This instance is recorded in I Samuel xiii. 17-23. Here is disclosed the cunning subtlety of the enemy. As we have pointed out the main objective of the devil is to render the Lord's people inoperative as a *fighting force*.

In the case before us the Philistines have put the forges out of commission and the smiths out of work. The weapons of war have been confiscated and the resources for making others destroyed. Pastoral work is not prevented. The enemy does not object to us having teaching and preaching, but it must stay there. Any militant aggressiveness with the weapons which are not carnal but spiritual is forestalled and *pre-vented*. As with Egypt so with the Philistines there is doubtless a spiritual suggestiveness. They are frequently described as "uncircumcised." Paul is very clear in his revelation that the Cross is God's instrument by which "the whole body of the flesh" is cut off, even "the circumcision of Christ" (Col. ii. 11).

But this Philistine aspect is not that of the grosser forms of the flesh or self-life, it is more particularly just the natural life and resource operating toward and upon the spiritual ground. So many there are who seek to do God's work by natural capacity or withhold from it because of lack of natural abilities. Human and natural force of mind, intellect, reason; status, position, influence; personality, acumen, training, advantage; temperament, disposition, constitution, &c., these are the factors which are taken into account. This fact is accountable for a terrible amount of long-run paralysis.

Such as have worked and proceeded upon an emotional life; a life of feeling, of stimulus; visions, enterprises, appeals, stories, presentations; the tragic, the pathetic, the necessitous, in the realm of the Lord's service will—if they are truly His servants and are really going on with him in spiritual life—come sooner or later to a place of terrible arrest where everything will seem to have fallen through the bottom. The life (?) will dry up and the work be impossible. The old forms of service will be strained, artificial, and forced. Interest, passion, enthusiasm will wane and pass out.

What is true in the realm of feeling is true in other spheres. The drive of will, determination, persistence, obstinacy, tenacity, obduracy, inflexibility, &c. So also in the matter of mere reason; each will at length by its own course, with its own particular emphasis in purely spiritual matters bring the life to a state of paralysis. We lose all our weapons of effectual warfare when the uncircumcised Philistines, i.e., the natural resources which have never been crucified with Christ, hold sway or gain the ascendancy. "The Philistines be upon Thee" will at length be a cry which synchronises with the tragic fact that "the Spirit of the Lord was departed from him" in the case of all such as presume upon natural ability and so play into the hands of forces which had never been circumcised.

Whatever God may do through a *man* or a *woman*, employing any wholly sanctified mind or heart or will or resource within or without it must be settled that the measure of spiritual effectiveness, the measure in which we count in the presence of the unseen forces is just the measure in which we have come by the Cross to the place where we know—and live accordingly—that it is not in or of ourselves to serve God; that no resource of ours can count as an effectual basis; that God must do it in us and through us; and that all means, methods,

forces, times, enablements, must be out from Himself. Such was the lesson which God took great pains to teach Moses, Paul, and many other prophets, apostles, and men who had been most used.

The test question in the diagnosis is not that which relates to influence amongst men, much or little; reputation, following, head-counting, full diaries, acceptableness, meetings attended and taken part in, teaching received, truth known, knowledge possessed, zeal demonstrated, suffering endured: it is not whether we are well known among men but whether demons say "Jesus I know and...I know." It is just how far the impact of Christ as Sovereign Lord is registered through His Body and its members upon the forces opposed to Him back of all human conditions, and how far the registering of that sovereignty *there* makes its re-action upon the earth-situation as dominated by those hostile forces. We may be very much in action in all other kinds of work and failing here be really paralysed; but we may be out of all other activities and counting in that realm "labour more abundantly (and effectually) than them all." We have yet more to say on this matter. T. A. S.

THE BELIEVERS, PAST AND PRESENT

I. PAST.

We were dead in sin.	Ephesians H. verse 1	1
We lived according to the world.	"	2
We were the servants of the flesh.	"	3
We were the children of wrath.	"	3
We were without Christ.	"	12
We were aliens.	"	12
We were strangers.	"	12
We were foreigners.	"	19
We were without hope.	"	12
We were without God.	"	12
We were far off.	"	13
We were at enmity.	"	16

II. PRESENT.

We are quickened.	"	1
We are saved.	"	5
We are raised.	"	6
We are seated.	"	6
We are created in Christ.	"	10
We are made nigh.	"	13
We are made one.	"	14
We are made new.	"	15
We are reconciled.	"	16
We have access.	"	18
We are fellow-citizens.	"	19
We are built.	"	20
We are fitly framed.	"	21
We are an habitation of God.	"	22

AN OUTLINE OF THE TEACHING CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT

A SYLLABUS OF STUDY

(Appendix to Chart on page 83.)

Titles as suggestive of nature and vocation.

1. "Power of the Highest." Luke i. 35.
2. "Spirit of the Lord God." Isaiah lxi. 1.
3. "Spirit of the Father." Matt. x. 20.
4. "Spirit of Christ." Rom. viii. 9; I Peter i. 11.
5. "Spirit of Life." Rom. viii. 2.
6. "Spirit of adoption." Rom. viii. 15.
7. "Spirit of wisdom." Eph. i. 17.
8. "Spirit of might." Isaiah xi. 2.
9. "Spirit of understanding." Isaiah xi. 2.
10. "Spirit of truth." John xiv. 17, xv. 26.
11. "Spirit of holiness." Rom. i. 4.
12. "Spirit of revelation." Eph. i. 17.
13. "Spirit of Judgment." Isaiah iv. 4, xxviii. 6.
14. "Spirit of Glory." I Peter iv. 14.

Some symbols and types of the Holy Spirit.
Oil, Water, Dove, Abraham's servant, Joseph's interpreter, Wind, Pillar of Cloud, Dew, Fire, Seal, Clothing, Light.

The Holy Spirit and Christ.

1. His Birth. Matt. i. 18.
2. His Baptism. Matt. iii. 16.
3. His Temptation. Luke iv. 1, 14.
4. His Resurrection. Rom. viii. 11.
5. The Witness to Him through the ages.
John xv. 26, xvi. 8-11, 13, 14.

The Holy Spirit and the Believer.

Every believer is born of the Holy Spirit.
Every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
Every believer is sealed by the Holy Spirit.
Every believer should be filled by the Holy Spirit.
Every believer should be led by the Holy Spirit.
Every believer should be anointed by the Holy Spirit.
Every believer should be taught by the Holy Spirit.
Every believer should walk in the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit bears witness within to our Sonship.
The Holy Spirit forms Christ within the believer.
The Believer must pray, return thanks, worship in the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit enables the believer to put to death the deeds (works) of the flesh.

The Holy Spirit baptises the believer into the Body of Christ.

The Holy Spirit exercises the ministry of "Advocate," "Intercessor," within the believer.

The Holy Spirit is the strengthener with all might in the believer.

The Holy Spirit and the Church.

The Church is formed by the Holy Spirit.

The Church is united by the Holy Spirit.

The Church is governed by the Holy Spirit.

The Church is qualified by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit sends certain members forth to specific service, bearing witness to them and to the Church.

The Holy Spirit rests upon the Church as anointing upon the Body of Christ, not upon individual believers as such.

The Church's ministry and the Holy Spirit.

The Cross is the Spirit's instrument in conviction of sin.

The Cross is the Spirit's agent in salvation.

The Cross is the theme of the Spirit-inspired preacher.

The Church and its members depend upon the Holy Spirit for ability to hear, receive, assimilate, and transmit the word and truth of God.

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is revealed as—

The Divine Agent in Creation.

Acting upon conscience universally.

Especially concerned and associated with an elect nation.

Enabling men to receive and pass on Divine revelation.

Especially endowing certain people for Divine service.

Preparing the world for Christ.

Sins against the Holy Spirit.

"Quench."

"Resist."

"Grieve."

"Insult."

We propose that the above should be a subject of study and that the references where left out should be filled in by the reader.

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, HONOR OAK ROAD, LONDON, S.E.23.

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship.
Sundays: 11 a.m., 3 p.m. (Young People's Meeting), and 6.30 p.m. Mondays: 7.30 p.m. Wednesdays: 8 p.m.
Saturdays: 7.30 p.m.

Conferences are held every week-end (Saturday and Sunday), and also a longer week-end at the beginning of each month, this fixed by the first Sunday. (Friday to Monday evenings, inclusive.) All particulars may be obtained from G. Paterson, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

Ministers: T. Austin-Sparks; T. Madoc Jeffreys; G. Paterson (General Secretary).

Guest House Hostesses: Lady Ogle; Mrs. M. Brand.

Telephone: Sydenham 5216.

Telegrams: "fyrdesmos, Forest, London."

Cables "Syndermos, London."

BOOKLETS

(WITNESS AND TESTIMONY.)

The following are now available:—

By T. Austin-Sparks:—

- 'Incorporation into Christ,' No. 1. Price 2d.
- 'Incorporation into Christ,' No. 2. Price 2d.
- 'Incorporation into Christ,' No. 3. Price 2d.

These are now published in one volume, Price 6d., coloured art cover.

- 'The Inner Man of the Heart.' Price 4d.
- 'Vision and Vocation.' Price 3d.
- 'The Prisoner of the Lord.' Price 2d.

By T. Madoc Jeffreys:—

- 'The Divine Unities.' Price 3d.

The following booklets may now be had in French:—

Témoignage et Expérience (Série).

Par T. Austin-Sparks.

- i. 'Incorporation en Christ,' prix réduit, 1 franc. (Suisse 50 c.)
- ii. 'Incorporation en Christ,' 50 c. (Suisse 25 c.)
- iii. 'Incorporation en Christ,' 50 c.
- iv. 'L'Homme intérieur du cœur. La sphere de la vie du croyant,' 1 franc.
- v. 'Le Peuple qui fait de grands exploits,' 30 c. (Suisse 20 c.)
- vi. 'La Triple Loi de la Croix,' 30 c.
- vii. 'Etablie comme signe,' 30 c.
- viii. 'La Vision universelle,' 30 c., 'Vision et Vocation,' Nos. 5-8, 1 franc.

On peut se les procurer de Secretaire, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, 13 Honor Oak Road, London, S.E.28.

In Dutch, 'Inlijving in Christus.'

Mecidre ex. (à f 0.10; boven 12 ex. à f 0.05), verkrijgbaar bij Mej. J. E. C. Kunne, Zandvoort-schelaan 141, Zandvoort.

THE diagrams which have been appearing in this paper are now printed separately and are available at the price of one penny each, 9d. per doz. They are:—

1. The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.
2. The Cross and our Salvation.
3. The attitude of the crucified ones toward each other.
4. The Cross and the New Creation.
5. The Cross and the New Man.
6. The Cross and the Promise of the Father.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."
—Job xiii. 15.

THE perfection of faith is to cling to the Word of God when all His ways seem to proclaim the very opposite of that Word. Isaac, no doubt, had confidence in his father; and when he saw him with the knife in his uplifted hand ready to slay him, still he trusted in him, nor would he have fled to any other earthly refuge. It was a terrible trial of the faith of Lazarus and sisters when they hearkened, hearkened, hearkened for the footsteps of Jesus, and after all, those of death came first; but we may hope that the dying one passed away with something like the words of Job upon his lips.—GEORGE BOWEN.

"No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous...afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness."—Hebrew xii. 11.

CHRISTIAN resignation is very different from that stoical stubbornness, which is most easily practised by those unaimable characters whose regards centre wholly in self; nor could we, in a proper manner, exercise submission to the will of God under our trials, if we did not feel them. He knows our frame, is pleased to allow that afflictions for the present are not joyous, but grievous. But to them that fear Him, He is near at hand, to support their spirits, to moderate their grief, and in the issue to sanctify it; so that they shall come out of the furnace refined, more humble and more spiritual.—JOHN NEWTON.

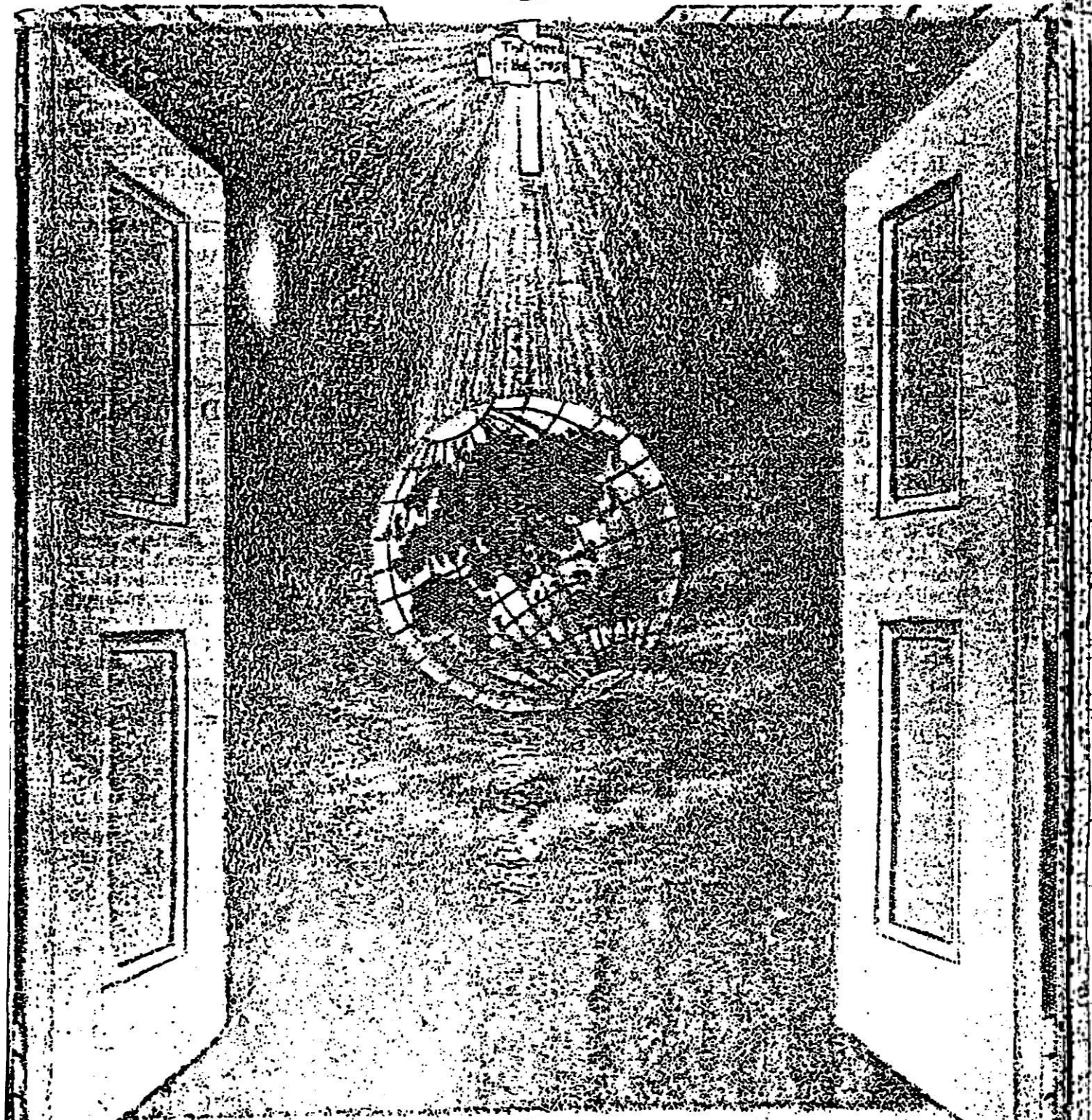
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A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

JUNE, 1928



VOL. 6. No. 6



"A GREAT AND EFFECTUAL DOOR."

MINISTERS' LETTER

Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre

June, 1928.

BELOVED OF OUR LORD,

"This is the victory that *hath overcome* the world, even our faith" (R.V.).

The Holy Spirit would have us very careful about our spiritual *tenses*. And as for the victory, do we not declare, "Thanks be unto God Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"?

If the victory is given, and the victory is our faith, it is obvious the faith is given also. This is to say that there must be a gift of faith in the gift of the victory. This is so; and this is what Paul means by Gal. ii. 20, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." But what does he live? A victorious life, new life, heavenly life, Christ's life; but in a mortal body, and in this world.

How blessed to know that both the victory and the faith are included in one gift of eternal life.

It was Jesus Christ's faith at Calvary that secured the victory; and *His* faith is now imparted in His resurrection life to all those who believe upon Him.

It is a simple but wondrous fact that when we in our utter sinfulness and helplessness come to see that only a Divine Saviour can possibly save us, God reveals to convicted sinners a *crucified* Christ enthroned in heaven, the Lamb in the midst of God's Throne. He had faith at Calvary, an obedience of faith, to go down into what was spiritual death for us all, being *made* sin, and thus *becoming* a curse. And it is this very One who was raised from hades to Heaven's Throne for our sakes—He was raised for our justification—that as we believe upon Him His very faith might be imparted to us as the principle of our life henceforth, and this faith is the Victory that *hath overcome*.

How slow of heart are we to call upon our Lord's faith to arise within us by the Spirit to meet every new challenge of His adversary, the prince of this world.

If we have believed that God hath raised that same crucified Jesus into His Throne of Deity, we have *believed* enough. Henceforth it is not our *belief*, but His faith. The gift is Jesus Christ's faith unto all them that believe.

There is no greater thing to believe than what we have already confessed with our mouth. What we have to do now is to draw the living water out of the wells of salvation. For if He is within by His Spirit, His faith is within, and the victory is within.

May this be a pastoral word from the Good Shepherd to some fearful and timid child of God. Beloved, you have believed enough *now* if you believe that the crucified Jesus is the Son of God *now*. His faith is within you as a consequence of Divine faithfulness to your confession. Draw out! The change from death to life has taken place. The Governor of the Feast awaits your ministry of glad communion, from which will spring all strength for faith's service.

Yours by His faith,

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

T. MADOC JEFFREYS.

FELLOWSHIP AND MINISTRY

WHITSUNTIDE CONFERENCE.

THERE is a repetition in Psalm exxxvi. that is not vain: "His mercy endureth for ever."

It is thus the Psalmist comments upon every covenant act of God in His dealings with His people; and it is our own comment upon all the seasons of grace and power at Whitsuntide. We are constrained to say, "His mercy endureth for ever."

Of course there are always the many adversaries. It is not always easy going. There is a battle. Often to outward appearance there is arrest and check, but "His mercy..." And how much more so now in the Triumph of His Cross. We had a sense of real spiritual progress during this Conference. Something was accomplished "in the heavenlies" the fruit of which is yet to be manifest. There was *life* in every meeting, and the numbers representative of many places and even countries, betokened the need and hunger of the Lord's true children for His "secret" in these latter days.

As to the Theme, "The Cross and the Promise of the Father," there is no space to add to the word as printed in other columns; but the Lord opened up the whole range of the implication, "This is That," as we were led to see how the SEED of God, the Man in the Throne, is the Only One to Whom such a Promise involving the God-head could be given, and that the Church which is His Body sharing in that Anointing or Christhood,

the gift of the Holy Spirit is the firstfruit of that Universal Sovereignty which shall be manifested in the Day of God, but is now specifically manifested in the Church as the very Organ, the Body of that Headship of the Christ under the Lordship of Jesus. *This is That!*

MINISTRIES.

Already there are indications of a release of much ministry in the Holy Spirit for the near coming days. There are now constant calls and out-goings in many directions. Were there space we could give much information concerning these, but there is a shrinking from making this column one for mere news. Perhaps it may suffice to say that the Lord is exercising our hearts with a need for a definite proclamation of "The Testimony of Jesus" in several seaside centres. Added to this the Lord is setting free several more of His servants both for the ministry of the evangel and teaching, and His commission seems definite "Go forward!"

We thank God for His continued seal upon the work in the area around Newcastle. There are more meetings asked for than can be met in the monthly week's itinerary. It has been the programme thus far to hold the Conference the third Friday in each month at Newcastle, this being preceded by meeting the Lord's people in the out-lying villages and towns, but the demand is becoming such that it would seem that a more permanent provision is required. This at least would be one of the areas for the summer months' activity.

The Lord is forming links in Northern Ireland and the work is assuming a more definite character. A Conference is being held at Kircubbin, Strangford Lough, near Belfast, as from July 12th to the 16th. Particulars can be obtained from Mr. H. Walker, Tubber, Kircubbin.

JULY CONFERENCE.

This is due for the week-end, June 29th to July 1st. Particulars to be obtained from Mr. G. Paterson, 13 Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SUMS received during May, 1928: Local, £3 1s. 3d; Shirley, 4s.; Bermondsey, 10s., 2s.; Sparkbrook, 2s. 6d.; Willesden Green, 2s. 6d.; Jersey, 12s. 6d.; Guernsey, 4½d.; Bognor, 2s., 5s.; Chichester, 2s. 6d.; Paget Road, N.16. £4; Bayswater, 2s. 6d.; Leigh-on-Sea, 10s.; S. Tottenham, 2s. 6d.; Derby, 2s. 6d.; St. Leonards-on-Sea, 10s.; Ealing, 3s.; Punjab, 2s. 6d.; Coonoor, £1; Bangasson (Africa), 4s.—Total, £12 1s. 7½d.

"THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER"

THE HEAVENLY SEED THROUGH THE CROSS—SPIRITUAL FRUITFULNESS.

(Notes of concluding address, Whitsuntide Conference, 1928.)

I WANTED to speak for a moment or two about the fruitfulness in service of this spiritual seed. You will find in Gal. iv. that "in the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free" there is a prolific service which in itself is a miracle. It is an astounding paradox that out of the condition of seeming impotence into which you are brought by embracing the Cross there is a breaking forth of Life as from the heavens, not as from yourself, which is the astonishment of heaven and earth, though we cannot see the nature of these works.

But we are living, as you know, in a dangerously statistical age, prone to look at results; but there are no results to be seen really by the natural man in the realm of this service. Just as the spiritual man and spiritual things are spiritually discerned, so spiritual fruit is spiritually discerned. I wonder whether we recognise that. It will be a great comfort, and we shall cease to wonder how we are getting on, and what we are accomplishing and doing, when we recognise that spiritual results are spiritually discerned. We must get the vision of what spiritual service is and what it is accomplishing before we can really be satisfied in the Lord's life and ministry.

Our Lord had this true vision of spiritual service in the face of what might seem to be the actual facts, which appeared as failure in every direction. His work as it might have appeared in the first phase of His ministry faded and withered until it seemed to come to nothing. At the end even his disciples forsook Him and fled, and He was left alone. Thus He went down into death in every realm, not only in the realm of His soul, but in the realm of what seemed to have been service, and He was left desolate. But you see He had the spiritual vision—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Myself." He recognised spiritual results as emanating from a spiritual Act on His part; and we have to recognise now that just as our life is spiritual, our acts must be spiritual also. They are the works of the Holy Ghost, acts of the Holy

Ghost. I do not mean to say that you won't see anything at all by way of results, but we have got to get rid of the idea of counting heads. We have to be rid of measuring service as the natural man measures service.

You find here in the 4th chapter of Galatians a word quoted as from Isaiah liv. which is very significant in this application:—

"But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, 'Rejoice thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she which has the husband.'"

Here you have the revelation of the nature of spiritual service. The 54th chapter of Isaiah is next to the 53rd! In the 53rd is the absolute desolation of the Cross, even the desolation as to "seed." It is asked in the 8th verse: "Who shall declare his generation?" Where is the fruit? What are the results? Here is all this suffering, this travail, this wounding, these stripes, these continued, constant, and ever increasing lashings of the enemy, the pressure of a life of sacrifice! Is it never going to result in anything tangible? Is there not going to be something that you can handle arising out of this? Well, it says, "Who shall declare His generation (His fruit, His seed), for He was cut off out of the land of the living." That is a very strange word to speak about the Lord. I am afraid to suggest what was in one's mind, or on the fringe of it many years ago when one used to puzzle about the word of God, and try to get from commentaries and other sources some explanations for its mysterious utterances, as one had pity for the Lord in His dying fairly young. I am only mentioning this because one never had the explanation of it until the Holy Spirit gave it. Here He is, cut off out of the land of the living with no generation, no fruit. Then He goes on to say, as you follow down the chapter in the 10th verse, "When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin." His soul poured out! His life lost in all the realms of this world! It is as if the Holy Spirit were addressing each member of the entire corporate church. When we make His soul "a trespass offering," when we are brought to that place where we are under the conviction of sin in the "old man," and see that our life is in Another, then we recognise the need of that out-poured soul to cleanse us from all sin—*Then* He shall see His seed. Then He shall see His fruit in a heavenly life in His people, for we have to recognise that

the life that you and I are called to live is absolutely heavenly. It is from above. It is not of this world. It is right out of the land of the living here, so to speak, in that realm of a life that is *in* God. Oh this is why the Lord is, by the Holy Spirit, going on with this persistent application of the Cross. We may ask, Will the Cross never cease? Will the Holy Spirit not stay at some point in applying this Cross all the while? We may be disposed to complain at the Cross as we complain at the conflict—the ever-deepening work of the Cross—because the Cross is being constantly applied to cut us off from everything in the realm of the natural that we might be found altogether in the heavenly. Our brother, Mr. Sparks, has often said, what may have seemed a mystical thing, that we are translated by degrees. It is the same thing to say that more and more we find all the springs of our life in God, and less and less the springs in ourselves. "When Thou shalt make His soul a trespass offering, *then* He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." He shall see *then* of the travail of His soul when His children are living not in the realm of the soul, but in the realm of the Spirit, and that, of course, is the utter work of the Cross in our relationship in the Body of Christ. The Body can only be realised as the soul-life in every one of us, even as children of God, is cut off by the Cross, and we meet one another in the One Spirit.

Now this principle of death to all the realm of the natural was fully followed out in our Lord's life. His soul was constantly denied. For I suppose we recognise He had a soul, a wonderful soul, a pure and spotless soul, an "ego" that was absolutely without taint. He denied *that*. He came out from heaven not to do His own will. He had a will, and this will was not a sinful will in His case. It was a true self will, but He denied it, and lived continually out from a heavenly source. We do need to recognise that this is the truth the Holy Spirit especially reveals to us in the gospel of John—"He was cut off out of the land of the living." He was denied all those relationships here on earth that there might be this other relationship maintained between the Father and Himself, and His life was lived thus in a constant negation, the principle of the Cross, cutting off everything that could intrude into this realm of a fellowship with the Father in a Heavenly Life, out of which the heavenly service could be given.

Well now, your life and mine is of the same character absolutely in principle. But this ruling out of the self-life cannot be done by dint of any perseverance of our own, or human resolution. We simply submit to the baptism into His death by the Spirit, and the resurrection into His Life by the Spirit. There is this blessed power of the indwelling Spirit in our hearts whereby we can put to death the doings of the body, and can constantly deny our soul. It is the only way in which the Life in the Body can be realised; but we do need to see that it is then He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied when He sees that we, on the other hand, are prepared to have cut off from us every realm of self-satisfaction and self-delight. This is the law that operates in the Body, and until we come to this, beloved friends, we cannot get fellowship in the Holy Ghost. It is impossible to have fellowship in the Holy Ghost when the "ego" in one person, and the "ego" in another, in whatever form, is at work. It may be in emotionalism sometimes; it may be in the mentality at other times, which is quite as dangerous and subtle; it may be in the volition at other times in a strong self-assertive will; but all has to be fully brought under the power of the Cross in order that there may be another Life out from heaven manifested in us all as One Seed of God, and then upon that One Seed of God, which is the Christ, the Holy Ghost rests in the mighty operations of the Divine activity.

Now this is very essential, because this battle is too grim, as we have heard, for trifling. We are up against something so terrific that if we in any way trifle with it, we shall get crushed, and accordingly we have to recognise when we come into this battle that we must be prepared to lay down our soul, our self-life; and, unless this takes place as a conscious definite resolution which God will enable us by His Spirit to constantly carry out, we can never function in the Body of Christ. We can meet as very strong self-assertive people who have our views about the Body, and our views about the conflict, and our views about the coming of the Lord, and all the rest of it, *but we are simply in His way!* It is this blessed humility of the Christ of God which is the basis of any possible service; and you see the example here in a range which staggers us as we behold this pure and Holy One denying every right of His own for the glory of the Father. But this is the standard of the Holy Ghost Life which He will seek to bring about in you and me by the

Cross, so that we constantly lay down everything of our own, in order that He may come in.

Thus He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied "by the knowledge of Him." It is in the knowledge of Him all this comes through. The spirit of wisdom, of revelation, comes in the knowledge of Him. It is in fellowship with Him that all things are given. "By the knowledge of Him shall my Righteous Servant justify the many; for He shall bear their iniquities; therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great and He shall divide the spoil with the strong."

It is this Life that can bind the strong man. This is the basis upon which victory is secured, because He poured out His soul unto death; and it is the same principle upon which you and I share the victory with Him. The work of the Cross as a *redemptive* work is completed by Him. It is by that one outpouring of His Life that eternal redemption is secured, but the principle of service is based upon this operation of the Cross in us by the Holy Spirit, the pouring out of our souls constantly unto the death, the giving up of everything in the realm of the self-life. You cannot do this, of course, except by the power of the Holy Ghost. That is why we so need the Lord's Holy Spirit "apart from Me ye can do nothing." When there is behind the scenes a hidden contradiction to the Cross, it is no good merely uttering a formula against the enemy; it is no good quoting Scripture against the devil, for it is "the 'spoken' word" of the Lord (Eph. vi. 17), which is the word of the Spirit. That is to say, the Holy Ghost will, in us, when we are utterly given up to the Lord, and our self-life poured out, speak His word, and this is the power against the enemy, the utterance which God is waiting for in His church, the binding of the strong man. The principle is always this self-denial in all its ranges, "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors." Are we willing to be there, numbered with them; if people misunderstand you, misrepresent you, you do not defend yourself. You do not fight for yourself upon any ground. No conflict in the flesh, otherwise there can be no conflict in the Spirit. "He was numbered with the transgressors and bare the sins of the many—and (notice this) *continueth to make intercession for the transgressors.*" This indicates His redeemed ones, those who say,

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." He continues to make intercession for us. This is the marvellous thing; and because He does this, by the power of the Holy Spirit you and I are constantly kept in relationship with Himself as we walk in the light as He is in the light in a painful path to the flesh, this exacting path where you and I are searched constantly. Nevertheless, on the other hand, we have a Life in Him which satisfies, a Life in Him which is substantial, a Life in Him which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. You have got all that on the positive side of the balance sheet, far outweighing the debit side. It is the wonder of God that once you have come into this conflict *actually*; you have learnt the secret of all true deep happiness. The devil kept one for years out of it from fear of the cost, because the Lord did give one such a sheer vision of what it meant; and when one did come up against it some years since, the devil did not spare one either, for the Lord did not let one be spared. One saw that it was coming into a thing which would arouse all the malignity of Satan, and all the power of the devil would be ranged against one, with the entire cosmic system in which we are in; and of course there was a time when because of one's temperament and the cost the issue presented, the hour of decision was very terrible; but the astounding thing was that once you had made the decision, once you had come through, the whole thing became easy, and one found it so true that "The yoke is easy, and the burden is light." This seems a strange paradox and even contradiction, but it is true. There is a compensation in this; there is another side to it: the Holy Ghost in you. The Life of God in you is more than sufficient to compensate for all your trivial loss, and it is a remarkable fact that you get a deeper joy in God than ever you did before, as you face the issues. You see, *He continueth to make intercession!* He is on our behalf, and He is ever supplying our needs. "He is able to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus," and these are spiritual needs. There will be an ever flowing stream of grace in your heart to meet every necessity, every emergency. He has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Now we come in the 54th chapter of Isaiah to the true fruitfulness of spiritual or heavenly service, the service of the Heavenly Seed:—

"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear;

break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and *thy seed* shall inherit the nations."

You see "*the seed*" has come through. One wants to put this in a very brief word:—

This Heavenly Seed is the Heavenly Life of the ascended Christ of God. It was only secured by the deep passion of His death. There is a big theme suggested here concerning the fourfold nature of the Seed, the Seed Who is Christ—the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, and "The Seed of God." If you follow this up in the word of God you discover that the Heavenly Seed is the Ascended Risen Lord. You will find the distinctions. There is the seed of the woman that has dealt with the enemy, the seed of Abraham that has secured the inheritance of the world through faith, and the seed of David that has secured the sovereignty in Israel; but these are all things which have been wrought out in the earth or world sphere, and will be manifested, but in His Resurrection Ascension the Father says: "Thou art My Son: to-day have I begotten Thee." In the resurrection-reception the Godhead breaks out in rejoicing over this Man Who is coming up into the throne of Deity—"Thou art My son: to-day have I begotten Thee." There is an unutterable exultation in that word. Here are these other things secured. The devil after all, in the ultimate, is but a shadow that will be forgotten. The seed of the woman, that virginal life on earth, pure and holy though in the likeness of sinful flesh but in Whom tabernacled the Eternal Word has dealt effectually with the enemy—with all the range of Satan. As the Seed of Abraham, he shall yet secure for Abraham's seed the inheritance of the world. There is that sovereignty of David's Greater Son secured, but all these are simply relating to God's vindication in relation to the earth which is His footstool. But here in the Resurrection-Ascension He is addressed "Thou art My Son: To-day have I begotten Thee"—that is addressed not only to Christ Personal, but in Him includes all the Seed, His Seed, "all-out-of One" and so you and I are brought into a relationship with Him where the activities

HALLELUJAH!

of Life become now the activities of the Holy Ghost.

And, O, if we but caught this revelation, that you and I are to be a heavenly people and to live a heavenly life now upon the earth by faith! You will find the Lord continually emphasising, in the 17th chapter of John, that it is *out of* the world all the time His people are. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." He means more than a separation from the world in material relationships. He means that here He has got something apart from the world, something heavenly, something to be joined to Himself, something to be one with Him in the Father. "That they may be one, according as We are one." Don't you see the range of this *now*? Because if this is so in fact now, it must be ultimately realised and perfected. If you and I are to enter into this Life of the Heavenly Seed you see how the Cross has got to cut us off from everything, especially egotism, for this is the ultimate ground of the devil as he works in the Body of Christ—this *self-assertion*! But as the Cross gets us so to lay down our soul for one another to live for this Body, which is the nature of course of the Divine Life, so the Lord sees of the travail of *His* soul, and He says—here is this final word—"I am glorified in them." The Heavenly Seed! But, O, the works that break out as we are prepared to be barren, desolate in all the self-works, in all the works that issue out of some self-desire and self-gratification, and allow the Holy Ghost to come into our hearts, and rule us in all respects, so that the Cross shall always have its operation in the laying down of this life that is tainted—*then* there will come in that amazing breaking forth of a fruitfulness in prayer that shall reach the ends of the earth—Heavenly works! "Greater works than these shall ye do because I go unto the Father."

We have thought those "greater works" were increased activities, more marvellous miracles, statistical things that people can see. The "greater works" are those works of the Holy Ghost in the realm of the heavenlies of prayer and intercession of a Divine character in us, groanings that cannot be uttered, finding something of their articulation coming through. It is that for which this Fellowship has been called into being. It has been called not to appear before men as something that can attract, something that would gather around itself any of the beliefs or considerations of people who like these movements, or what

seem to be spiritual movements sometimes; but it stands for a selfless life in which we come into *His* Fellowship, and are prepared each one to deny ourselves: to take up the Cross in this sense. O, then the Holy Ghost will come in such floods upon that dry ground, that desolate ground, that barren ground, that there shall break forth singing and rejoicing, accomplishing a Divine effectiveness, bringing to pass the things of God.

Yet this vast and largely unseen range has its practical application. It comes down upon every relationship in life, and touches everything we have and are with the finger of God. But this is the call of God to our hearts that *He* might be glorified in us. If you will look at the context of this word you will see once again *it is in relationship to prayer*. We are able to so enter into fellowship with Himself that whatsoever we ask it, then in His Name, shall be given unto *us* that the Father may be glorified in the *Son*, because His *Seed* is manifested!

T. M. J.

Life Through the Living

II Kings iv. 18-35.

I. Gehazi. The failure of formalism.

A class of "Christian" worker.

1. Eager to act. Verse 26.
2. No passionate love for the distressed. 27.
3. Unprayerful and self-sufficient. No cry to God. 29.
4. Powerless. Nothing eventuated. 31.

II. Elisha. The secret of victory.

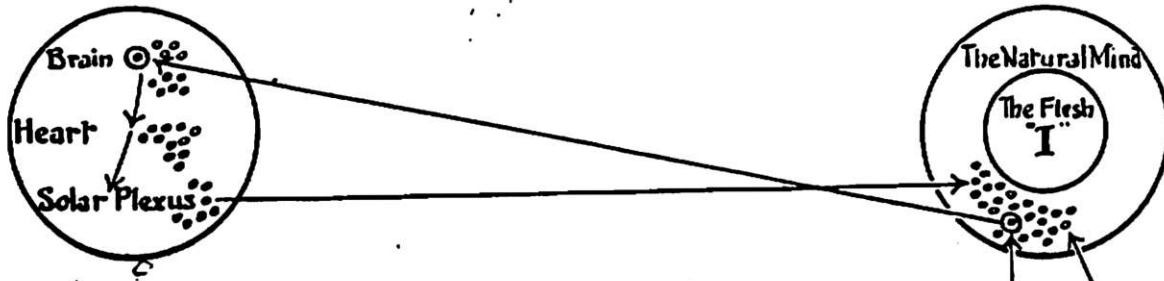
1. A great compassion. 27.
2. Union with God. Adjustment. 33.
3. Standing in the gap between death and life, possessing that victorious life. 34.
4. Victory.

The secret—A living one transmitting life.

The CROSS and the deliverance of the MIND

Romans: VIII. 6.

A. "The mind of the flesh - death."



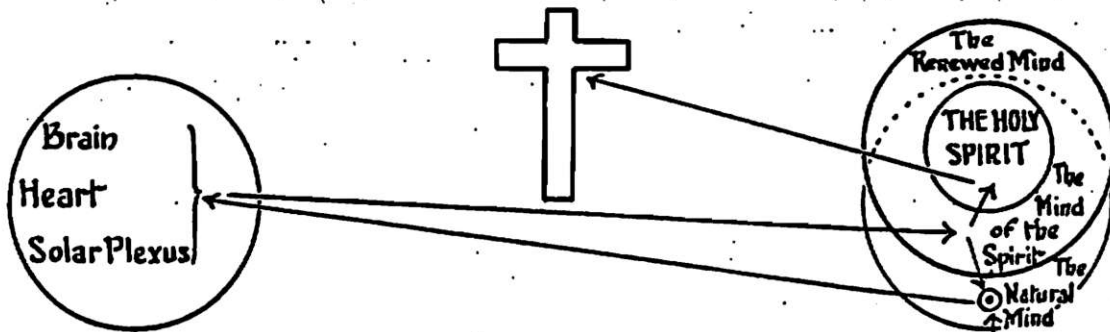
Suggestions,
Thoughts,
Desires,
Emotions,
Fears,

Anything which may arise which needs the death of Christ registered upon it--comes into our conscious mind -- is passed on to the brain & thence to the heart; thence to the Solar Plexus or nervous system ~ ~ ~ goes back again to the consciousness or mind gaining stimuli. This goes on to and fro, until a constellation of complexes is formed, and a mental, physical, or nervous breakdown results; because there is no way out.

A Constellation of Complexes

An Initial Anxiety

B. "The mind of the Spirit - life and peace."



As before the initial work is made into the consciousness, but now THE HOLY SPIRIT resident within the renewed mind gives His judgment upon it, bearing witness to the Spiritual mind - the Spiritual mind responds and acts with THE HOLY SPIRIT in taking it to the Cross and making Calvary effective in each particular. The Cross is the way out and there is rest unto the Soul.

as before.

THE SPIRITUAL CLINIC

Paralysis—continued.

The Paralysis of an unguarded mind.

THERE are few, if any, more malignant causes of spiritual paralysis than a mind unrenewed or unguarded. We learn by bitter experience that the main objective of the adversary as the most important means to his ends is the mind. Nine-tenths of the trouble with both the individual child of God and the fellowship (or arrested fellowship) of the Lord's people is traceable to the workings of the unrenewed mind in which there is carnality still or the mind unguarded becoming the playground of "The prince of the power of the air." There are three aspects or directions of this morbid activity—Godward, manward, and selfward; or upward, outward and inward.

We take the second first: **THE PARALYSIS OF A DOUBTFUL MENTAL CONCEPT MANWARD.**

In this realm we have a whole catalogue of unhappy symptoms. Christians with a true knowledge of God and otherwise a real walk with God becoming the prey of all kinds of thoughts about others; misjudgments, prejudices, criticisms, imaginations, &c. Plutarch spoke of great public conflagrations which were resultant from a smoking lamp of gossip in an attic. How true it is that a smouldering suggestion made to the mind and unquenched at once involves that one and many others in a fire of far-reaching spiritual devastation. The activity of our own natural mind apart from the true revelation of the Holy Spirit; the observation, suggestion, interpretation, report, description, information of others; the insinuation, complexion, perspective, presentation of the wicked spirits in, through, or apart from the above; the "judging after the sight of the eyes and the hearing of the ears" (a thing which it is said the Lord Jesus would never do), the reasoning of the reason; how these lead to arrest, inflammation, disaffection, not only in the member concerned, but—if we knew the laws of spiritual relationship—in the whole spiritual organism.

A germ of this kind may be a lie in substance or being truth in substance nevertheless sets up a wrong basis of relationships, i.e., human instead of Divine; "Knowing after the flesh instead of after the spirit." Oh, if only the Lord's people would obey the profoundly wise injunction "Prove all things"! Such a concept as we have mentioned will soon be

fed by the enemy, and seeming evidence will accumulate from all quarters to justify (?) it. When relationships are so infected co-ordinated action and corporate functioning is impossible and the devil's end is achieved.

Then as to the Godward direction: **THE PARALYSIS OF A QUESTIONING MIND.** This is peculiarly the peril of the severely tried children of God, or the lurking danger in times and places of adversity. A doubt as to the love, the wisdom, the power, the faithfulness of God. Few there be that pass through without at least the consciousness of this spectre, and not many have passed through deep waters and intense fires without a Godward "Why?" at least in their thought. "Why should it be me?" "Why should it *always* be me?" The ruin of the race was resultant from the acceptance of an insinuation from Satan that God was after all not really favourable to the highest well-being of man; that there was something He was keeping back, and suspicion of God has always been a master-stroke against the primary law of union with God—faith.

When this seed of doubt has been sown in the mind and allowed to remain it is not long before every phase of spiritual vitality is paralysed; prayer, fellowship, the Word, ministry, service, testimony; and God can do nothing with a doubter.

Then again, **THE PARALYSIS OF AN INTRO-SPECTIVE GAZE.** There are so many whose eyes are always turned inward; self-scrutinising, self-analysing, self-judging. They are always looking at their own spiritual tongue and taking there own spiritual pulse; comparing themselves unfavourably with others of their knowledge, and projecting their own spiritual sensibilities to be hurt. What accusations and condemnations the enemy is able to level at and put upon such! It is no wonder that before long they entertain doubts as to the truth of their own salvation and of God's acceptance of them. This leads to the bogey of having committed the unpardonable sin. Oh, the perils of a too strict an individualism in salvation!

It is clear that this introspective morbidity issues very quickly in paralysis, and joy and peace are "Dead-sea fruit" here.

The Way of Deliverance

Well, having diagnosed the case, it remains to point the remedy.

I.—A basic recognition

Before there can be any hope of a cure there must be the clear, definite, deliberate, and conclusive recognition of the FACT that this whole trouble originates with and is perpetuated by the "hosts of wicked spirits in the (lower) heavenlies," "The prince of the power of the air," "The God of this age" (Ephes. vi. 12, Ephes. ii. 2, II Corinth: iv. 4).

These powers of darkness are always trying to get a lodgment and obsession in the mind by a thought or idea, and so colour or fill the entire horizon therewith. They will hammer and hammer away with a suggestion to get it entertained.

No wonder that military terms are used by the Holy Spirit in this connection. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God unto the casting down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing....and bringing into *captivity every thought*," II Corinth. x. 4. "The Word of God is...sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to dividing asunder of soul and spirit....and is a 'discerner of thoughts....'" Heb. iv. 12. "The peare of God shall *garrison* your....mind."

Thus, in the matter of the mind an intense warfare is clearly revealed as going on, and cleaving, captivating and defensive forces are needed. God's provision is not for our protection from our own flesh, that He requires us to reckon ourselves as dead to, but against the adversary. It will be as well for us to bear in mind that the powers of evil interpose between ourselves and others, and others and ourselves, and set up false situations, distort things said, misinterpret anything capable of being misinterpreted, and even creating or suggesting a sense of strain and disaffection when in fact there is none. The recognition of this as being so, and the more so as the spiritual life and work intensifies (explaining why the most spiritual often become most deeply involved), is basic to any deliverance.

II.—The location of the trouble

A further step toward victory is a tracking down of the location of the trouble. We shall have to secure the basic reason and cause of the evil. After all, is that reason in ourselves? Is there not really and truly a revolt in us against it? Is it because we have personal interests to look after? Are there secret personal ambitions, concerns, rights (?) pro-

vinces? Does it really matter to us whether we lose all if only Christ comes into His own? Have we "learned how to be abased as well as how to abound"?

If we can give a clear answer to God in such matters may we not conclude that these thoughts and feelings which constantly worry us are not of our choosing or consent? Would we be gratified or grieved if our thoughts about others proved true? This is a good test.

III.—A vital necessity

Now whether it be from without or from within there must be an instrument and ground IN us as well as outside of us for victory. This is the renewed spirit and renewed mind. The natural mind and the carnal mind are Satan's ground. We need not here refer to the Scriptures which refer to this; it is enough to say that the Holy Spirit resides within the renewed spirit of every one "born of the Spirit." His work it is to make the Cross of Christ real and effectual in the believer's life. But He does this co-operatively. That is, He bears witness to the truth and *against* the lie. He judges things for us and in so far as we walk after the spirit and not after the flesh we are swift to discern what the Spirit saith. When thus He bears witness and registers His judgment. He calls upon us in our renewed spirit to take His enablement and positively and deliberately take the judged thing to the Cross and on the ground of Calvary's victory to refuse and repudiate that thing. Thus we learn to be strong in spirit as we act in faith upon the energising of His might, but it all remains His strength and never becomes ours independently. We shall find that such a course brings deliverance, but it may be that the enemy will return again and again with the old thing until He finds that we have learned how to "resist" effectually, and thus He will change His method. It is the Body of Christ and its corporate witness which is involved, and a due recognition of this will be a more adequate dynamic and motive for resistance than a merely personal concern.

The two diagrams on page 96 illustrate the principle herein enunciated, and it can be extended to everything that makes for spiritual paralysis and death.

T. A.-S.

(To be continued.)

"FIRSTFRUITS"

(CHIEFLY FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.)

ONE knows a strawberry bed where soon the first-ripe strawberry will be hailed with great delight. Some morning, ere this June is out, the dew and the sun will have finished their work of filling the fruit and painting it, and the blushing berry will then be saying, "Please pluck me. I am this summer morning's gift to you."

What then? Will this Christopher Columbus of the first-ripe strawberry accept the invitation? Suppose this discoverer of the firstfruit loves some one very dearly, more than all the strawberries and the best things on earth. Then I can imagine them eagerly plucking the fruit, of course, but running to that loved one with such a joy in their heart, and never a thought for themselves, offer it so willingly, saying, "Here is the Firstfruit of our strawberry bed. I have gathered it for you."

Will not that **SOMEONE'S** heart be also glad, not because of the fruit, but because of the love and sacrifice shown?

Now "Firstfruits" is a Bible word full of beautiful meanings. God sought to teach His people Israel much by it, and would now teach us.

Read Leviticus xxiii. and Deuteronomy xxvi.

At Easter time, which gathered around the Passover feast, the barley in Palestine would be turning its green slightly, and the children of Israel were asked to look for the ears that were ripe, and bring a sheaf of barley firstfruits to wave before the Lord in His House as a thanksgiving and a love offering. Then at Whitsuntide, just fifty days afterwards, and therefore called Pentecost (*pente* means fifty), when all the barley was ripe, they were to bring two loaves made with the first barley flour, but baked with leaven, or yeast, like any other loaves. These also were to be presented to the Lord as the firstfruit of their bread.

Deuteronomy xxvi. is a super-beautiful chapter, and tells with what a wonderful story of God's love and mercy these Israelites would come at full harvest-time with baskets of all the firstfruits of the ground.

But this Sheaf of Barley and the Two Loaves are very important matters for us, boys and girls; for the Sheaf of Barley is the Lord Jesus Himself as He rose from the dead, the firstfruit of the sons of God. But He, of course,

is One Son of God out-of Whom all the others are being born. This brings us to the two Loaves, and these are the "church" or Body of the Lord Jesus. You notice they are *two*, meaning that both Jew and Gentile are found in One Bread of the Firstfruits: also they are made with *leaven*. This is very strange, for leaven in the Bible is always the type of sin, and how could God accept something in which there was sin? But this is meant to show how our sinful human nature can be made, by the wondrous grace of God through the Cross, acceptable to God in His Beloved Son, for you must also notice that the Sheaf of Barley was sufficient to make the Two Loaves!

Now you remember what took place on the day of Pentecost, how the Risen Lord poured forth the Spirit of God and baptised those 120 disciples into Himself. This the Spirit of God has been doing all these 1,900 years. Whenever He convicts of sin, and thus causes men and women, boys and girls, Jew and Gentile, to realise their need of Christ's death for their sins, and of His Resurrection for their Life, He brings them to become a part of the Two Barley Loaves made out of the Sheaf of Barley, the Risen Christ; and so while the Lord Jesus is the Glorious Firstfruit of the New Creation unto God we also are made a Firstfruits, known in the New Testament as One Bread, One Body. Isn't the Bible wonderful?

There is much more to be said about this, but you must search the Bible for yourselves.

Let us think for a moment of the beauty of this act, the giving of the firstfruits—the first lamb, the first calf, the first corn, the first sweet fruit of vine or fig tree, and *the first baby boy*.

What must these people have thought as they brought to God their first and best? Oh, some of them knew God's secret, that He was going to give to them and to us His Firstfruit, His Only Begotten Son. Some of them caught the vision of the Coming Christ. Abraham did. He offered up Isaac, his first and only true son, trusting God that he would have him back even from death; and so he saw the day of Christ. Hannah gave her first and dearly desired little boy, Samuel; and she sang a song by the Holy Spirit too—you must read it (I Samuel ii.). It reminds us of another song, that of Mary, when the Child Jesus was born. How wonderful to think that our great God and Saviour Jesus the Christ was once a boy! How He must love boys. (But the girls are just as dear.)

(Continued on page 102.)

ANOINTED FOR BATTLE

A brief word at the close of the Whitsun Conference.

WE have been occupied in these days with the nature and effect of the fulfilment of the Promise of the Father. A promise made to the Son, and then fulfilled *through* the Son to the Church, which is His Body. Thus the promise was ultimately revealed to be a corporate and not only a personal one as such. We have before pointed out that after His Baptism it is expressly and immediately affirmed that "He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." The Baptism was in type His acceptance at the very commencement of His ministry of the Cross—death, burial, resurrection—and all His teaching and working from thenceforward was on that ground and in that light. It is most significant and suggestive that the first activity under the anointing should be a deliberate encounter with the "Prince of this World." The battle of the ages is joined, the Eternal issue as the ultimate purpose of "The Promise" is taken up at once. The point with which we want to stay is this, that the express purpose and outworking of the anointing with the Holy Spirit is conflict—warfare.

What was true in His personal case has to be made true in His corporate case—that is, in the experience of the Body-instrument of His abiding outworking of victory. No one can ever come into a living spiritual experience and knowledge of the Cross without being immediately precipitated into this conflict. The essential issue of Calvary is the anointing with the Holy Spirit. The primary purpose of the anointing with the Spirit is the establishment of the sovereignty of Christ through His Church over the entire system of spiritual rebellion, revolt, anarchy, and hostility. Let it be a settled thing that identification with Christ implies and involves a warfare of increasing intensity from which there is no discharge in this life. So many there are who think that if only they can receive the Divine anointing they are going to have such a wonderful time; how rich and beautiful their lives will be; what power will be at their command, and what an end of all spiritual trouble.

Truly there is a blessed side to it and with all the conflict it is well worth while. But it will be as well to settle it at the outset that there is a sterner side where personal blessing, enjoyment and comfort become secondary to the

great interests of the Body of Christ. John Bunyan was given wisdom to put Hill Difficulty not far from the Cross. Pilgrim didn't get very far beyond the Cross when he met Hill Difficulty, and there is a suggestiveness to one in that which is full of rich and valuable significance, for it says in effect that the very nature of our Christian life is one of conflict, of battle, of warfare, and that our life absolutely depends upon it. You take our physical organism and you discover that the whole organism of our bodies is planned and arranged and constituted upon a basis of warfare, and real health and real life in our physical being is simply on the basis of triumphant warfare—a battle going on all the time. Our organism creates its own difficulties which in their overcoming constitute real health and real life. There are those difficulties in our organism which are pathological—that is, disorder—and they work death. Now you take that into the realm of the Body of Christ, and you find it is very like this. Its very health depends upon its conflicts, and the organism of the Body of Christ is designedly constituted by the Lord Himself upon a basis of conflict, and the Church is never vigorous without warfare. The unfortunate thing is that there are the pathological difficulties which create a warfare which ends in death and arrest in the Body of Christ. We find ourselves occupied far too much with those disorders which create difficulties and which we do not get the better of, and are all the time throwing us into a state of sickness and weakness and infirmity. The Lord would have us—and He has constituted His Body as a spiritual organism—upon a basis of essential conflict for Life, and Hill Difficulty meets us immediately we have faced the Cross and accepted it and stepped across it. It is not far, we meet it in the very ordering of God, not as some misfortune that has befallen us, but in the constitution of the thing to prove and try our Life, and to give our Life this supreme opportunity of demonstrating its reality. And here again is this wonderful insight of Bunyan, that there are those in his allegory who come to Hill Difficulty and never get past it. Formalist comes to Hill Difficulty. He is the man who has put creed and theory in the place of practice and experience. He never gets past Hill Difficulty—he gives up there, it is not the genuine thing. Hypocrisy comes to Hill Difficulty, and he likewise gives up. Hypocrisy is not the man who has put the creed or the

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theory in the place of experience as we often think, he is the man who is a parasite who lives on the spiritual energy of someone else and has none of his own. He finds his stimulus in someone else's triumph and when he is put to the test he has nothing of his own. Now we must be very careful that we are not spiritual parasites in word or deed. Hypocrisy cannot face Hill Difficulty. Timorous comes there, and Mistrust comes there, but they give up. It is only this reality of the thing, this genuineness of Life which proves itself there and demonstrates its nature and comes through, and is infinitely better for the difficulty. You see the wisdom of God in that; that we come immediately into difficulty, into conflict, into warfare, but that is the very thing for which we were born from above, and that is God's wise way of securing an increase of Life.

The real spiritual effectiveness is that which takes the enemy at his full value into account, and is not ignorant of his devices, and knows exactly what the real business on hand is, and as being alive to that situation stands all the time in the Christ Who is a match for it all. That is the practical ground where the thing has got to be demonstrated. It would be quite an easy thing to say we will never say anything more about the devil. Now let us sing all about the Lord and be happy together, and we will forget there is such a thing as the devil. That is not the way. You may have a happy time in a way, but the range of your spiritual effectiveness is considerably narrowed when you get there. We have all had that temptation. We would all love to rule the devil out of the universe, and, thank God, we are going, in Christ, to have a share in it, but it cannot be done like that.

Now the fact is that that is the background, and we are thrust into that immediately we really recognise the meaning of the Cross and the Body of Christ, and accept it. Do recognise that, beloved, because you are going to meet it, and therefore do not think it strange as though things had gone wrong when you meet Hill Difficulty immediately after your great surrender, and your great acceptance, when you have put everything over for that. That is the proper order—"Then was He led of the Spirit into the wilderness," into battle. We must be watchful against the devices of Satan whereby he would get us to settle down and stop fighting. We receive blessing and then our tendency is to hug our blessing, dwell upon it, seek more, instead of turning it

into munitions of war. The Holy Spirit has to come in and pitchfork us into the battle again. He knows that our very life depends upon it.

We often think that if only we could get out of the conflict, if only the conflict would abate a little, or cease, how much more life we would have; how much more joy we would have; how much more power we would have; how much richer and fuller everything would be if only we could get out of this awful battle for a bit. No, it does not work that way. One has, at times, tried for a spiritual holiday, and O, how the spiritual muscles sag, everything goes to pieces! Afterwards we have got to recover the ground, and we have got to redouble our spiritual energy and activity to get back again. You cannot take spiritual holidays. You cannot go on leave in this business. It is vital to your life, and that is true not only of the individual, but of the Body. You must not have a lull, unless the Lord gives you a lull. There are gracious respites given of the Lord from time to time—"Then had the Church rest," but it was not a long one. Bunyan put an harbour on Hill Difficulty, but Pilgrim went to sleep and lost his book. That is where the trouble began. It was not put there for him to go to sleep; it was put there for him to get more strength. To wait upon the Lord to renew His strength to go on, that is all. The Lord gives us a gracious respite here and there, but we must not think He has given us a discharge. No, and it must be the Lord's doing and not ours. Don't let us take ourselves out of the fight. Don't let us run away and think we are going to get more strength by getting out of the conflict. The Lord will check such a course. He will do a work which will bring us back into the fight. The enemy may say to us that the fighting business is the wrong line; it isn't really what the Lord means you to do, He wants you to stop that and go on in a quieter way, but somehow in the Lord's way you find you are fighting again. Yes, the Holy Spirit in the church is a militant Spirit to carry the battle right through to the final issue.

T. A.-S.

NEW BOOK

'The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.'
By T. Austin-Sparks. With three-coloured diagram. Limp cover edition. Ninepence. Postage 1½d.

BOOKLET

'The Cross and the Deliverance of the Mind.'
Reprint from *Witness and Testimony*. With two diagrams. One Penny.

(Continued from page 99.)

However it was not until the Cross and the death of the Lord Jesus that God had His Firstfruit. It was when Jesus was raised from that death into the very Glory of the Father that God said to this Glory-Man, this GOD-MAN, "Thou art My Son. To-day have I begotten Thee." The Barley Sheaf had come, for we were all included somehow in Him. And now God is making His twofold barley loaf, His other Firstfruit; and when it is complete, when all those who accept the death of Jesus for the sin within them and the life of Jesus as their righteousness, are gathered out of this world to become His very own, His peculiar treasure, then the Lord Jesus will also have His firstfruit of the coming Kingdom of God, His Body, His Temple, the Church.

But to be in that Firstfruit, boys and girls, we must give ourselves to Him, and this is the true meaning of the verse, "Honour the Lord with thy substance and with the firstfruit of all thine increase." Give the best, the first, your very heart to Him. T. M. J.

"THE SERVANT OF THE LORD"

Simple messages on some New Testament Conceptions of Christian Work and Workers.

No. I.—THE BOND-SERVANT.

THESE simple studies are prompted by a deep and long-existing conviction that much of the painful failure in effectiveness in the service of Christ is due to the fact that there has been an altogether too inadequate realisation of—

1. The nature of Christian Service, and
2. The meaning of being the Lord's servant.

This conviction naturally lays great constraint upon one to seek Divine enablement to minister to the ministry of the House of God.

Many there are who have become very weary in well-doing if not discouraged altogether from the work. This may be because the work is not according to the New Testament conception or it may be that the worker is lacking in the basic conception and dynamic of their holy calling. Or it may be that the two co-exist. It is our intention to keep the worker most in view and allow the nature of the work to be seen mainly through the New Testament view of him (or her).

There are so many—to our painful knowledge—who have "taken up" work in churches, Sabbath-schools, and various departments of Christian activity who really have no vital, heart-burning, soul-travailing, connection with the "Eternal purpose" of God in Christ. The result is seen and felt in the spread of disappointment, disillusionment, the "handing-in-of-resignation-

spirit," and an epidemic of "the malady of not wanting." Later on we shall have much to say to those who are not of this kind, but who nevertheless are wearied in the greatness of the way.

Here we begin with one submission, namely that for all the disease of inertia; for all the pain of failure; and for all the cries concerning powerlessness, ineffectiveness, and the baffling problems of the work, one of the supreme, fundamental, and indispensable principles and requirements is a right conception of our calling and of that in which we are called to serve, if we are truly God's "born again" ones. Thus, to try and help the discouraged; to renew vision for those in whom it has faded; to raise the level for those who labour without love; and to generally raise the standard of work and workers; these elementary messages are passed on.

In choosing a model of a servant of Christ we instinctively turn to St. Paul. He seems to us to be the most outstanding in every way, and from the greatness of his achievements, the success of his methods, the amazement of his endurance, and from his dominating objective, we must get back to his own conception of himself as a worker.

He has given us that conception in many significant and suggestive phrases, some of which we select at once. Not once only, but frequently he refers to himself as "the Servant of Jesus Christ."

Now, I venture to say that a right understanding and apprehension of that word "servant" as Paul used it, is, without other designations, calculated to revolutionise all of our work for the Master.

The actual word used by Paul was "bond-slave," and by it we are thrown back into the social conditions of the world in those days. Slavery was a part of the social life of that time, and the readers of Paul's letters were all quite well acquainted with the ideas and customs connected with that system; indeed some of those readers were slaves themselves. Paul looked upon himself as having been bought by Christ. He gloried in that ownership, and whenever opportunity presented itself he boasted that he was Christ's. To him that ownership was permanent. The slave was bound for life, and there could be no termination of the relationship or obligations.

The transaction has been permanently marked by branding: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. vi. 17). Professor Mahaffy says: "In the numerous records of manumissions found at Delphi and at other shrines in Greece we have learned the legal process by which a slave gained his liberty. He did not bring his master his earnings, and obtain his freedom with his receipt for the money; but went to the temple of the God, and there paid in his money to the priests; who then with the money bought the slave from his master on the part of the God, and he became for the rest of his life a slave of the God. If at any future time his master or his

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master's heirs reclaimed him, he had the record of the transaction in the temple. . . . If he travelled from home and were seized as a runaway slave, what security could he have? Paul gives us the answer. When liberated at the temple the priest branded him with the "stigmata" of his new master, Apollo. Now Paul's words acquire a new and striking application. He had been the slave of sin; but he had been purchased by Christ, and his new liberty consisted in his being the slave of Christ. Henceforth, he says, let no man attempt to reclaim me; I have been marked with the brand of my new master, Jesus Christ." This will also throw light on numerous other utterances of Paul when such words as "Servant," "Freedom," "Liberty," &c., are used.

On the one hand this Pauline conception of the absolute and indelible proprietorship of Christ throws much of our modern "service" into striking contrast. Rather than being in willing, full, and free servitude, vassalage, and slavery, to Christ, we often regard our service as a kind of religious V.A.D. affair. We may be interested, we may be philanthropic, we may be condescending or we may be dutiful, but we are certainly not under any compulsion. We can do pretty much as we like about it, and if things do not suit us, we can either "throw up" our work altogether, or go where we shall be more appreciated, or where things are smoother sailing. So to-day, the "worker" too often makes the cause serve him or her instead of being the servant of the cause. Paul took his directions as to sphere, time, and kind of work from his Master, Christ, and relegated every concern to Him. He was not his own, and he could not use either his powers or his time as directed by the flesh. But on the other hand he was fully aware and convinced that this "slavery" to Christ was for him the greatest thing in the world. He had caught the true significance of the Master's invitation to "Take my yoke. . . and you shall find rest unto your souls." That to Paul meant control and direction for the most serviceable life.

The stream rushes aimlessly, frivolously, and noisily on, until it is yoked by a water-wheel, and then by its arrest it grinds the grain to feed mankind.

The wind blows wildly to no purpose on the sea until the mariner yokes it with his sail, and thus it is harnessed to bear the enriching cargoes from shore to shore. To capture the electricity which would otherwise be lost, we suspend our telegraph wires, and direct it intelligently along them, bring the whole world into an intimate association: And so, as in these and many other ways, the yoke is the symbol of useful control, and serviceable direction, Paul knew that the yoke of Christ's service and association would make his life more fruitful than his own independence. There is a liberty which leads to havoc, ruin, uselessness, and remorse. But the supreme element in Paul's abandonment to Christ was a strong, clear sense of what Christ had done for him, and a perpetual

consciousness of what Christ was to him. There is nothing which makes slaves of us more than love, and it is an ecstatic and sublime slavery which never wants release, and only dreads that a breach might at some time come. In the captivity of Christ's love, Paul would ever be found doing everything which would preserve it from suffering hunger in his life, and he would ever be found praying that the "marks" might be burnt more and more deeply into his soul.

Who that one moment has the least despised Him,
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Doth not despise all excellence beside Him,
Pleasures and powers that are not and that are.
I am persuaded that nothing shall sunder
Us from the love that saveth us from sin,
Lift it or lose hereover or hereunder,
Pluck it hereout or strangle it herein.

In summarising what we have said, let us clearly point out that for effectual Christian service and the more powerful corporate testimony of the Church, it must be realised that the Divine calling and equipment for the prophetic, or pastoral, or teaching, or evangelistic, or apostolic work is not centred in one man in any given community, but that these personal gifts are distributed over the whole Church. Every true disciple of Christ is called to be a "servant of the Lord," and should prayerfully seek to know in what specific capacity He calls them to serve; not taking up work at random, but having sought His guidance, they should give themselves earnestly, devotedly, and vigorously to their special ministry, and regard their calling as from God.

The "marks" of Christ must be seen upon His servants whether in the place where the Lord's people assemble, the business, the home, or the social circle, and he must ever be proud to say of Him, "whose I am, and whom I serve."

A vital relationship with Christ born of a deep personal appreciation of what He has done for, and daily is to, our souls, and a clear understanding with a profound conviction of what He wishes to do through our instrumentality; these covered by a complete and utter abandonment to Him, are the only legitimate grounds for His service. Of such servants the world and the "Church" stands in tragic and pathetic need, and by such all problems of ineffectiveness and failure are solved. Such never take up the work lightly, and therefore never give it up easily—if at all. I am more and more convinced that the problems of the untouched masses, the leakage of young people will be solved most lastingly and fruitfully; not by social organisations or increased machinery, but by the type of workers for Christ who have this work committed to them. Every Christian must conceive of himself or herself as being definitely called by God into the "Fellowship of His Soul," and as "Workers together with Him," and that this calling is a solemn and irrevocable

(Continued on next page.)

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, HONOR OAK ROAD, LONDON, S.E.23.

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship.
Sundays: 11 a.m., 3 p.m. (Young People's Meeting), and 6.30 p.m. Mondays: 7.30 p.m. Wednesdays: 8 p.m.
Saturdays: 7.30 p.m.

Conferences are held every week-end (Saturday and Sunday), and also a longer week-end at the beginning of each month, this fixed by the first Sunday. (Friday to Monday evenings, inclusive.) All particulars may be obtained from G. Paterson, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

Ministers: T. Austin-Sparks; T. Madoc Jeffreys; G. Paterson (General Secretary).
Guest House Hostesses: Lady Ogle; Mrs. M. Brand. Telephone: Sydenham 5216.
Telegrams: "Syndesmos, Forest, London." Cables "Syndesmos, London."

BOOKLETS

(WITNESS AND TESTIMONY.)

The following are now available:—

By T. Austin-Sparks:—

- 'Incorporation into Christ.' No. 1. Price 2d.
- 'Incorporation into Christ.' No. 2. Price 2d.
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These are now published in one volume, Price 6d., coloured art cover.

- 'The Inner Man of the Heart.' Price 4d.
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By T. Madoc Jeffreys:—

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- ii. 'Incorporation en Christ,' 50 c. (Suisse 25 c.)
- iii. 'Incorporation en Christ,' 50 c.
- iv. 'L'Homme intérieur du cœur. La sphere de la vie du croyant,' 1 franc.
- v. 'Le Peuple qui fait de grands exploits,' 30 c. (Suisse 20 c.)
- vi. 'La Triple Loi de la Croix,' 30 c.
- vii. 'Etablie comme signe,' 30 c.
- viii. 'La Vision universelle,' 30 c., 'Vision et Vocation,' Nos. 5-8, 1 franc.

On peut se les procurer de Secrétaire, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, 13 Honor Oak Road, London, S.E.28.

In Dutch, 'Inlijving in Christus.'

Meerdere ex. (à f 0.10; boven 12 ex. à f 0.05), verkrijgbaar bij Mej. J. E. C. Kunne, Zandvoortchelaan 141, Zandvoort.

THE diagrams which have been appearing in this paper are now printed separately and are available at the price of one penny each, 9d. per doz. They are:—

1. The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.
2. The Cross and our Salvation.
3. The attitude of the crucified ones toward each other.
4. The Cross and the New Creation.
5. The Cross and the New Man.
6. The Cross and the Promise of the Father.
7. 'In Christ.'

(Continued from previous page.)

ordination to "the work of the ministry." (Read carefully Ephesians iv. 12 R.V.)

To be Christ's own purchased possession; and to be Christ's own controlled, directed, and equipped servant, is to have the strength of a great assurance that nothing can separate you from Him; that you work under supreme authority; that all the resources of Christ are at your disposal; and that while doing His work there can be no ultimate failure, unless He is to ultimately fail, which is impossible. This is a service which is eternal and supreme, and is only the probation for "higher service," where and when "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face."

Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice me,

Ay, for me, too, He greatly hath sufficed; Lo, with no winning words I would entice you, Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.

Yea, through life, death, through sorrow and through sinning,

He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed: Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning, Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

T. A.-S.

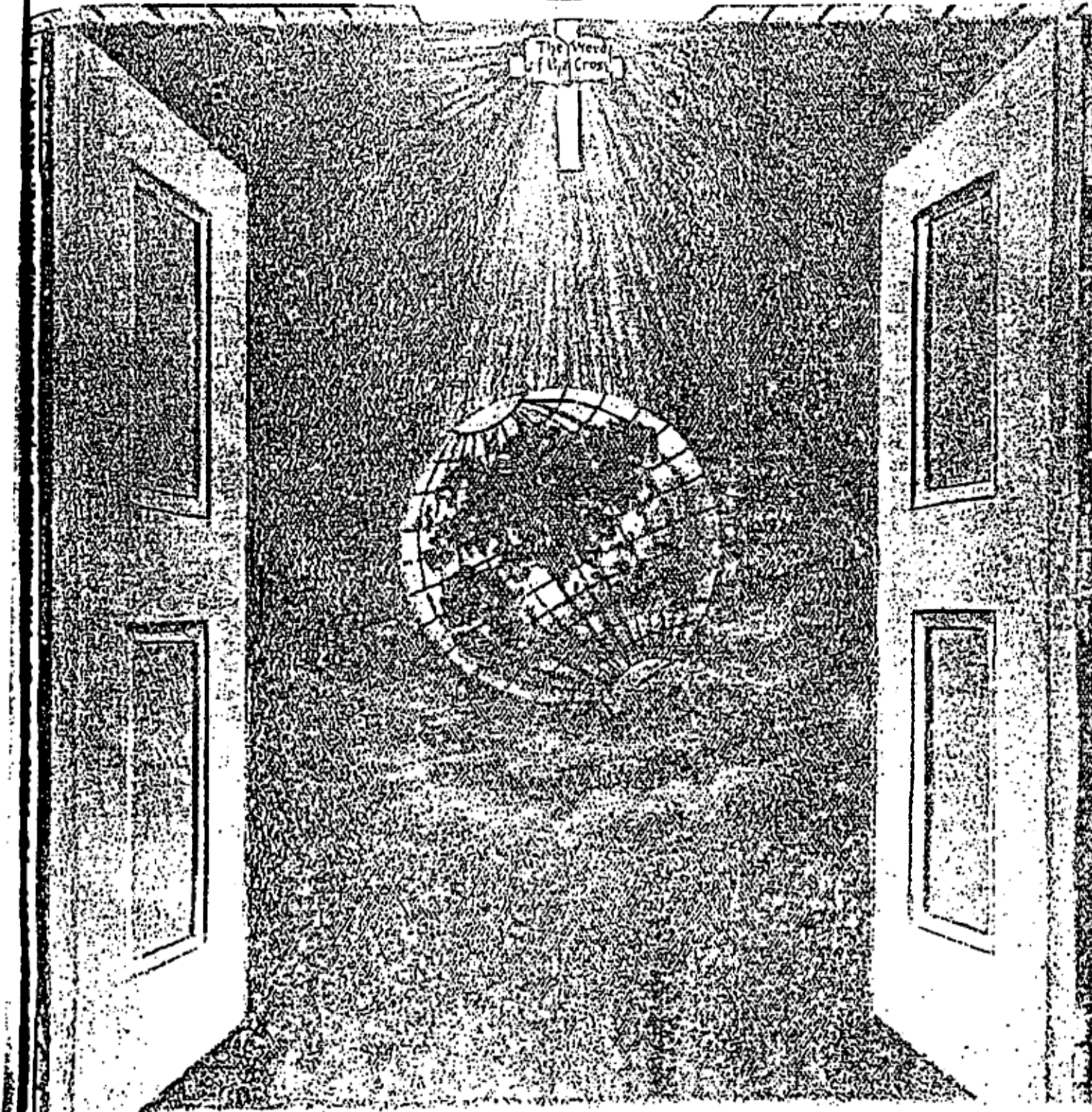
(To be continued.)

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

JULY, 1928



VOL. 6. No. 7



MINISTERS' LETTER

Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre.

July, 1928.

BELOVED OF OUR LORD,

"After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying Alleluia.... And again they said Alleluia!"

The last word is Praise! And it will be a recurring and unending word. So in that 19th chapter of the Revelation the "Alleluia" swells again and again, and it is the comely and fitting expression of all saints, "for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

Therefore our praise now in struggling fighting days does God more abundant honour, for it is prophetic; and its spirit is the testimony of Jesus.

To declare Jesus "Lord" now, and to behold Him crowned with glory and honour is the word and vision of the Holy Ghost.

But unto what magnitudes does the Name and the Praise of Him reach! This softer Greek "Alleluia" is the old martial Hebrew Hallelujah of the Psalms. It is the last word of the Psalms (Ps. cl.). But it also arises out of the midst of grimmest conflict: Ps. lxxviii., "Extol Him that riseth upon the heavens by His Name, *יהוה*." It is the Name of God in His Aloneness—He that is above the infinitudes of the universe, the Name above every Name. But it is still our Jesus! He hath accomplished all things well. Faith thus can measure the Omnipotent Might of Calvary's triumph as above all other power and might, and rejoices in the midst of the years.

Blest will it be to join the heavenly anthem in the days of crowning; but better far now to have heavenly praise in our hearts while the "Battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood."

By Him, even Jesus, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, confessing to His Name—for to say "Lord Jesus" is to say Hallelujah. This is the language of heaven and of the Holy Ghost.

Yours in the Joy of His Triumph,

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

T. MADOC JEFFREYS.

FELLOWSHIP AND MINISTRY

THE time of the July conference found the house full to its capacity. Many parts of the country and beyond were again represented. The tent also was repeatedly filled for the meetings. Again the Lord's work was done without demonstration or display; mostly in secret and largely behind the scenes. There were some very big issues realised of which the majority were quite unaware. The theme was not exhausted by any means, in fact, we seemed but to approach it, and we feel that it has yet to come right through and out. The Lord gave some very blessed messages, and there were some very direct and practical applications of the truth. One special feature of this conference was the number of our young brethren present. There was the returning from various spheres of recent sojourns, and a preparation for further ministry to which some have now gone. We thank God that—despite a bitter conflict with the enemy and an intense effort on his part to quench this testimony—He goes on with His work and is all the time meeting His children and seeing many of them through. We believe that this time in which we are called upon to stand together and persistently beat off the vultures is going to issue in a breakthrough of God, not now in a vision, but in the reality of an emancipated people. The "horror of great darkness" may again prove to be the introduction of a wonderful revelation and act of God.

We rejoice that there is such a rich going forth of ministry in these days. The Evangel to the unsaved and the ministry to the Lord's people is growing apace.

Besides various regular weekly ministries in a number of places the following have gone forth for special work:—

Mr. Madoc Jeffreys and Mr. Crow to the Belfast district.

Mr. Gresham Speedy to Ayrshire for all July.

Messrs. Frank Brignall and Ernest Streets to Newcastle area for two months.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Holloway to Clacton-on-Sea.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Goodwin to the villages of Oxfordshire.

Mr. Oliphant to the Bournemouth area.

Mr. Speedy and Mr. Thomas are booked for all August at Lowestoft.

Our sister Lady Ogle has been called to Italy for a time. Many will miss her in the house, but we will pray that she may have a rich and gracious ministry while away.

Two special events have taken place in our midst this month. The friends gathered on Tuesday, the 3rd, to celebrate in spiritual fellowship the marriage of our brother Edward Goodwin and our sister Mary Campbell: and again on Friday, the 6th, for the same purpose in the union of the daughter of our brother and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Madoc Jeffreys (who is affectionately known among us as "Rita") and our brother, Cecil Bartrop. These occasions are something new in weddings, and those of us who have had not a little to do with "ceremonies" for such purposes felt that we had reached a realm far transcending anything in our experience. These were beautiful testimonies and truly "the Lord was there." Our brother and sister Goodwin went the same day of their marriage to their united ministry in the Gospel in the villages of Oxfordshire.

THE AUGUST CONFERENCE will be held from Friday, the 3rd, to Monday, the 6th. The theme will be taken up again from July, 'The Cross and the Heavenly Vision.' Friends desiring to stay in the house should write at once to the Secretary.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Local, £2 8s. 6d.; Dundee, 2s. 6d.; Willesden Green, 6d.; Philpot Street, E., 10s.; Dollis Hill, N.W., 2s.; Ilford, 1s.; Cardiff, 2s. 6d.; Bromley, 2s. 6d.; Rhiwbina, 11d.; Westcliffe, 2s. 6d.; Epsom, 2s.; Newington Green, 6d.; Bradford, 10s.; Cranston Road, S.E., 2s. 6d.; Shirley, Southampton, 5s.; Cliftonville, 4s.; Blackpool 1s.; 2s. 6d.; Stansted, 5s.; Hook, Basingstoke, 2s. 6d.; Neath, 1s.; Leigh-on-Sea, 10s.; Flyford Flavel, 2s. 6d.; Ryde, 2s. 6d.—Total £6 3s. 11d.

NEW BOOK

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BOOKLET

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CONCLUDING MESSAGE AT THE JULY CONFERENCE

THE CROSS, AND THE HEAVENLY VISION

2nd July, 1928.

John iii. 12.—"If I have told you 'earthlies' and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you 'heavenlies.'"

There are things of Christ that are earthlies, and there are things of Christ that are heavenlies. Then He goes on to say how impossible it is that anyone should have the heavenlies as vision or revelation, except as they have ascended into heaven.

Verse 13.—"No one hath ascended into heaven, but He that came down out of heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven."

He came down out from heaven by the Eternal Spirit in that begetting of Bethlehem and in the further fullness of the anointing of Jordan, and by the Spirit He was continually ascending into heaven, being joined to the Father inwardly—One Spirit, His Life was hid in God all the while.

In John vi. 67, for example, He is uttering "heavenlies," not "earthlies," and the "heavenlies" are always hard sayings which the flesh cannot receive. This is so even with His disciples, verse 60: "Many therefore of His disciples when they heard this, said, This is a hard saying, who can hear it? (They could not hear it because the heavenly ear was not quickened by the Holy Ghost yet to hear spiritual words.) Jesus knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at this said unto them, Does this cause you to stumble? What then if ye should behold the Son of Man ascend where He was before?" Then He goes on to say, It is the Spirit that quickeneth with regard to hearing. The flesh profiteth nothing in this realm of listening to the heavenlies. The sayings that I have spoken unto you are not mere ordinary sayings, words which men may hear as mere words, but they are something far different to that, "They are Spirit and they are Life." That is to say, they are the utterances of God Himself. God is speaking through Me. "God giveth not the Spirit out of measure unto Him, but He Whom God hath sent speaketh the actual sayings of God." "The words that I speak unto you they are Spirit and they are Life."

Now we have to recognise that the Apostle Paul had to relate his earthly experience at

hitherto, and I work." In like manner we also must serve in that fellowship of the One Spirit, Who brings us not only into identification with our Lord in life and service, but also with one another in the corporate ministry of the Body. Life in the Body of the Christ necessitates the working-out of Calvary's Victory over the old man with his Satanic background in that we have to lay down our lives (soul-life) for the brethren.

OUR NEW NAME.

We have been most desirous that in coming out from association with denominational interests we should be safeguarded from the implication with which we are very sure "the enemy" would seek to saddle us, viz.: that we are a kind of new sect or "movement." We made it sufficiently clear in our last issue, we trust, that we recognise the One Fellowship of all true believers. Yet we have been exercised as to what should be our designation, for it is obvious we must have some form of address. We believe the Lord has rightly guided us in taking to ourselves the title of:

"The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship
Centre."

This finds acceptance in all our hearts. It retains the name of the locality where the Lord has commenced to do so gracious a work. He has set His Name in this place we vorily believe. The eyes of the many, and in all parts of the world, are turned towards the home of this fellowship. Therefore "HONOR OAK" stands.

Then as to "CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CENTRE"—this covers comprehensively all our life and service in our Lord. We are simply a "CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP" upon the basis of Jesus as the Christ of God, and *Him* crucified. This "fellowship" is de-limited by the Holy Spirit alone as Lord in the Church. Such a fellowship becomes inevitably a "CENTRE" of spiritual ministry in prayer, and subsequent "thrusting forth" of those called by the Holy Spirit into the open field of the world.

THE NEXT STEP.

We go out *free*, and thus we cannot outline the future. All our works have to be tried now as to whether they have been wrought out in God. We go out as "a fellowship" in the Holy Spirit only, and all organisations, as such, that belonged to the set order, have long been under the impact of God's Hand. We have very little of such left. But what remains must stand this test: "Is it a work of the Spirit's Life and appointment?" Everything

will have to relate itself to this standard. We cannot attempt to "run" anything, not even the work among the children. The Lord has been putting this issue to the Sunday School for some months. Perhaps this is as difficult a matter as any. There is a natural interest and enthusiasm for what is called "Christian work" among children that cannot stand the test as to whether it is the Spirit's ministry and operation. Our teachers will have to ask themselves whether they are called of the Lord into a ministry of the Holy Spirit among children; whether they gather children not around the psychical Christ of Galilee (as painted by modern imagination) but around the living Lord of Glory, the Christ of the Scriptures, and this in the power of His Cross. Children need to be "born from above" as well as their elders. Whatever work we have among children must be of the same essential character as that among adults, though it may differ in method. It will be to form among them a "fellowship in the Holy Spirit" as among ourselves.

It will be seen that we have much need of prayer. We legislate nothing. The Spirit of God is now free to fashion His own instrument among us. Are we willing for the Lord to have His way? Shall He take away *our* "work" to give us *His* in due season?

In any case the month of December will be a trial time as the conveniences and accommodation will only allow an attenuated programme. But we can meet for prayer, and that continually. Out of that will come His perfect pattern.

OUR NEW HOME.

We have arranged to hand over our present buildings at the end of this month. Nov. 28th will therefore be our final Sabbath in what has been known as "Honor Oak Baptist Church." But the last meeting of the fellowship will, significantly enough, be the prayer gathering on the Monday, the 29th. Thus by the Providence of God we shall hold our DECEMBER CONFERENCE, 3rd to 6th inclusive, in the Hall attached to what has been hitherto called, "Forest Hill House," Honor Oak Road. As will be seen from the accompanying map (p. 110) this lies farther up the hill on the main road, Forest Hill Road, with a turn to the right at the top. It is about ten minutes walk from the present building.

The time is short owing to the protracted character of the negotiations, but the Lord has evidently been holding us as well as leading us.

there will be a growing revelation in the Heavenly Vision. But if so be our carnal mind comes in and possesses the revelation, so to speak, at any stage, this activity of our own mind that comes in and puts a circle around this revelation, and denominates it and limits it, that moment we shall have got in God's way. We have shut up the avenues of illumination, and we can no longer know the experience of "In that Light we see light." That is, the revelation is never complete. We only know in part, and we prophesy in part, and if we come to any conclusion at all about this matter, that moment, of course, we shall come to a *conclusion* as to our progress in the heavenlies. This is very important to recognise because the work of the Cross has really to be operating here in the realm of the mind. Of course, one could be tempted to diverge into many directions as to the working of the carnal mind, but especially in the direction of revelation. We have got to see to it that the carnal mind never takes hold of the things of Christ and seeks to make of them anything by way of possession. We have to think heart-thinking that is continually illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Well, here you find the Apostle is spoken of as a witness for Him unto all men of what he has seen and heard. There is, first the initial revelation that the Apostle Paul had upon the earth as out from heaven. It is actual; it is physical; but it enters into every realm of his consciousness, as we see from the narrative. It is not something visionary, but an event that actually breaks into this cosmos or world, registering itself upon the consciousness of the Apostle, and he says he has seen the Lord. But He has seen Him in another dimension to that in which the other apostles had seen Him during the space of 40 days until that moment when they also saw the "Son of Man ascend up where He was before" (John vi. 62). We do want to recognise that, in the narrative at the end of the Gospel of Luke, that which is spoken of in the 6th chapter of John did actually happen! We have often pondered upon it here; we cannot do so too often. Some of us may have seen the significance of what is said, but others who have not been present may not have yet grasped it. The Lord had appeared to His disciples during the space of forty days in an adjustment of His glorified Body to their actual physical senses. They had seen Him, heard Him, handled Him, and they knew that the very Jesus with Whom they had been so intimately acquainted was

actually raised again from the dead; and, as we see, they were made competent witnesses of the physical fact of the resurrection; but when you have believed in the physical fact of the resurrection, you have not necessarily entered into the heavenly vision. There are tens of thousands of people who accept the death and the physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus who have no revelation at all; and you know as they speak that they have no revelation of this word that He said in John's gospel, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before." Note in Luke xxiv. 51, 52.

"And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and was carried up (received up) into heaven."

Now you can visualise that as much as you like, but you just want to recognise that you cannot have any kind of picture about the Lord of Glory being received up into heaven. Some artists might try to portray that but you would not get any conception of it by any picture, no matter how graphically it were portrayed. It means that here is the Lord Jesus re-entering His Infinitude as God Manifest. He has re-ascended as the Eternal Son of God, or as God the Eternal Son, now glorified in our humanity that He might fill the heavens; that now in Him the fullness of the Godhead might dwell bodily. That vision must be by revelation. They saw it as a matter of physical experience, but that was not sufficient to make them custodians of the Heavenly Vision.

On the day of Pentecost they were all baptised into One Body, and they became His witnesses after another fashion asseverating the fact of His life and ministry and of His death and resurrection, testifying by the Spirit; but these first witnesses somehow failed to yield to the work of the Cross so as to have their minds renewed in the Spirit to become the vehicles of the Spirit for an increasing revelation. God had therefore to raise up another who should be the witness of the Heavenly Vision.

But here you have, at least, in their experience an expansion. They do really see there is something beyond all comprehension, and they do discern enough to worship Him now as God, but they do not enter fully into the implication of it all. We have read these words many times, "They worshipped Him (that Ascending One, El-Elyon, the Most High

God), and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God." We have seen the psychological significance (if we may use a long word) of their being in the temple, for the temple was the type of the Body of Christ, the habitation of the glory of God.

But somehow they failed, and God had to raise up this other one to be a witness for Him unto all men of what he has seen and heard. You see the distinction, they had seen an Ascending Lord, He had seen a Descending Lord. The Lord Who descended, not for the sake of Saul, but for the sake of the nations and for the sake of that church which is to come out from the nations. He condescended to come again in order to bring the impact of the Heavenly Vision upon the consciousness of Saul of Tarsus by the Holy Spirit.

Now we find in Acts xxvi. 16, 17 :—

"Rise, and stand upon thy feet, for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister, and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people (that is the Jews) and from the nations unto whom now I send thee."

Here is *one man* sent to the nations. He is charged, by the Spirit, as God's witness in the apostleship of this tremendous reality, the first impact of which he received outside Damascus, to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light, the encompassing darkness of this world, all that which naturally encompasses us, beclouds us, darkens our understanding so that we are unable to understand heavenlies, unable to hear heavenlies. We may accept all the earthly facts as Apollos did, having learned all the things the Lord did and said right from the baptism of John to His resurrection, but those are not heavenlies. It is by the Holy Spirit alone, by the utterance of the word of God, and by that breaking in upon our own hearts, as we are willing to receive it. He alone can unveil to us heavenlies, make us see the Heavenly Vision.

"To open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

Alas, how many of God's children are still, as far as their minds are concerned, under the power of Satan—no revelation, no light coming in, no shining in from God Himself directly into their hearts. But that is what we need—the HEAVENLY VISION. The price, however, of that Heavenly Vision is an absolute surrender

to the operations of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ as an Act of God to the cutting off from every thing of the world-bound, the Satan-bound, the flesh-bound, that we may be emancipated into the Life of the Spirit, whereby we may know God directly and know Him in Jesus Christ.

This was to be the ministry of the Apostle Paul, and he says in the 19th verse, "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the Heavenly Vision." Of course, we can quite see that the Heavenly Vision is an historical fact, a breaking in as out from the heavens of the Person and glory of the Son of God both upon the physical consciousness of Paul, as well as upon his mental and spiritual consciousness; but it is a far bigger thing than that initial act. We discover it is but the beginning, and that Paul had to get the interpretation and relation of this Vision by the same Spirit. When we come to the Galatian epistle we find this distinction between himself and the other apostles clearly stated. He says in the eleventh verse :—

"For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me that it is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by a revelation of Jesus Christ."

It came that way, outwardly, by a revelation of Jesus Christ. Then he goes on to say in the fifteenth verse :—

"But when it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son *in* me."

You see the Heavenly Vision is an inward and an outward thing. We have seen that this knowing is an inward thing, but it is an inward thing because of an outward reality; and you cannot have the inward thing unless you have the outward reality. The outward reality is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ our Lord as out from the heavens by the Holy Spirit. The Heavenly Vision is **JESUS HIMSELF**. That is the *objective* vision. It is to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Speaking for oneself this is that which has emancipated one's mind. With this VISION somehow everything else falls into line, every conception of the universe, every thought about the nature of man, every consideration with regard to the word of God, the moment one had the Heavenly Vision, the moment one saw Who Jesus is, all the riddle of the Universe was solved. That sounds very simple, and almost trite, because we think we know Who Jesus is; but you must

know Who Jesus is not *in the earthlies*, but *in the heavenlies*; and it is the Holy Ghost, it is God's own Spirit out of the Godhead Who alone brings to you the revelation of the Person and Nature of the Lord Jesus in the Godhead.

But this is the foundational and essential aspect of the Heavenly Vision—the Heavenly Vision is JESUS HIMSELF; and you have to safeguard this for it is fundamental. The devil would be always diminishing this, obscuring this, or taking this away. That is to say, beloved friends, you may get all kinds of mental concepts about truth. You may, for instance, have a clear outline of doctrine. You can actually have a very clear logical doctrine of the Cross, so to speak—and this is a very extraordinary thing to say—of course, it is a fictitious cross when it is so—but the Cross is the most wonderful logic. We have sometimes said that Satan is a logician, but he is not in the same field as the Omniscient Creator, and there can be the fascination of the clear logic of the doctrine of identification, and all the wonders of it that grip the mind. You can have it in the carnal mind and be crystal clear in your doctrine upon that line, but without *The Person* of Jesus you are still an instrument of Satan, and still in the grip of a delusion. The Light has not shone in and is not operating and functioning. It must always be this first of all, one sheer, clear, clean objective vision of the Spirit, and that is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ—a heart conception of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

Well now, the Apostle declares here that this thing had become inward. It is a heart vision. It is not something, as we have said to-day already, that is imaginative; it is not something that you might try to paint. There are psychical visions of Jesus. I have known people who have had visions of Jesus, and I have doubted very much their spirituality afterwards, though not their "psychicality." No one has seen Jesus the Lord of Glory since Saul of Tarsus! There may have been all kinds of experiences; but I doubt any experience, especially in these last days of this character, because I believe the revealer of the Lord Jesus Christ is God the Holy Ghost in the heart, and so the centre and balance of the Truth is maintained. If you get into these realms of phantasy and illusion, with which the Christian Church is simply teeming to-day, in all those movements which are really leading people to some excited, ecstatic and distracted

condition of heart and mind—I say these are not the works of the Holy Ghost! The work of the Holy Ghost is an inward revelation in your spirit of Who Jesus is in all the dimensions of the Godhead, and it is the Holy Ghost Who is the revealer of the Lord Jesus, and not angels. People talk much about angels, how angels have appeared to them, and angels have shown them this or that. I doubt whether there is any angelic ministry of that character in this dispensation. I believe there are ministrations of angels, but the Revealer of the Lord Jesus is none other than the Spirit of the Truth. That is, the Person of God, by His Spirit out from the Godhead bringing to you the revelation of Him Who is in the Godhead, even the exalted Son of God. That becomes inward, deeply inward, and, as we have seen, it becomes the passion of your spirit. If one may speak for oneself you find that when this vision has come to you by the Holy Spirit in your spirit it has got you as a captive, a prisoner, you cannot but speak the things in your spirit. It is inward, and Oh, in this Testimony what we want is not a framework of words; it is not merely to have these things upon a screen of our mental horizon; but something that is the passion of your spirit. That is the Testimony of Jesus. It is the Testimony of Jesus by the Holy Ghost in the Godhead, and the Testimony of Jesus by the Holy Ghost in you as the passion of your life. That is the Testimony, and when you get the magnitude and sweep of that both in the height there in the Throne and in the depth as in your spirit, to talk about Honor Oak, or of any other Centre, is foolish. It is bigger than the world. It is something that has the very essence of God Himself in it.

So you find the Apostle says that "the Son of God is revealed *in* him as the Life now of his spirit, as a member of the Body of Christ, and you find you are not added somehow externally to the Body of Christ, but you are added to the Body of Christ as you are found in Him, and He in you—inwardly. It is out from heaven you are born; out from heaven you are quickened; out from heaven you are sent and commissioned. These young men here who are going out into ministry are going out from heaven, out from the Spirit as the Spirit works in their spirit, the true Testimony of Jesus. That is the method. It is "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you"—You go in the same way as I have come. I came, the Only-Begotten out from the bosom of the Father, Incarnate God in Man, I shall send you out

as members of My Body, begotten out of My Glorified Being in the Father. So we go out into this world. But now he says, because of the revelation, "When it pleased God...to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the nations"! (A world ministry without limit, a cosmic ministry because it meets a cosmic situation, a world situation); immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

You see the carefulness that the Holy Spirit exercises. There must not be any notions, any thrust, any colourings, any weakness, any diluting, any interferences with the purity of this revelation. It comes in one sheer impact of God in Christ upon his spirit. It had to be pursued in that same Spirit, and one of the things that you and I have to recognise is that we, much more so than the Christians in the first generation, or century, are the victims of a mental atmosphere which has tremendously thickened and become more confused in the course of nineteen centuries. I wonder if we recognise the tremendous beclouding that you and I are suffering from because of the accumulation of what is called "Christian Teaching." Just think of the libraries that have been written, and the vast majority of all that has been written has not been written by revelation at all. There are very few books that have in them the quality of revelation; because, of course, the Lord has jealously guarded His word, and He does not ever use the wisdom of man; and when you get a great outpouring of philosophical conceptions of the Lord Jesus, even upon orthodox lines, they are but passing, limited ones. The brethren will bear one out in saying that one could read a great deal of what is perfectly orthodox and fundamental in some respects, and while you assent to some of the truth, you cannot use that which has been contributed along that line. What you have had you have had to get for yourself out of the word of God, and by the Spirit. One has received help, of course; one is not minimising the value of all that has been contributed by devoted and earnest hearts to the conceptions of the Lord Jesus; but we have to recognise that the method of the Holy Spirit is still the same, *that each one of us have to receive the gospel by a revelation of Jesus Christ*. It must come to you in the power of the Holy Ghost. It is very important to recognise this, and that the Holy Ghost will exercise a wonderful austerity with regard to us. The Cross has got to reach its ultimate objective in the Church at the end of the age; and as

it is proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit as the central thing in the operations of God, you and I have to know the Cross in its final operation as cutting us off completely from the earthlies that we may be His altogether in the heavenlies. Our brother said something of this on Sunday morning when he spoke about the Lord at the end of His days on earth coming, in the realm of His soul life, to what was a seeming passivity in order that the other activity of the Eternal Spirit in Him might be made manifest whereby He met that unseen antagonism and power of Satan. "Now is your hour and the authority of darkness," He said. So it will be at the end of the age.

That section of His Church, His Body found here on the earth at the end of the time has got to know the Cross in its deepest operations as it cuts altogether away from that earthly root of our life and being, and causes us to derive all our springs as out from Himself. It is well for us to dwell upon this phase of things. I can see we are but at the threshold of our theme, and have not touched it; but, O beloved friends, it is a real fact that we are living under the accumulation, the outpouring, the dust of human thought that has gathered around the history of Jesus throughout the generations. Now you and I have not to wade through it, but we have to ask that it shall be cut completely away from us, and we have to come to a clear conception of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Therefore it means in the realm of the mind, as in no other realm, we must know the work of the Cross; and one sees it is the *mind* the devil is imprisoning. It is the mind the devil is using, and you and I will have to be very careful in our walk at the end of the age that our heads never become uncovered. A great many people quarrel about "covering," but "covering" is a most important thing, however you may define it and relate it and bring to bear pictures upon it, you have to abide very carefully, if you are to walk in the light under the constant cleansing of the blood of the Lord Jesus, and in His appointments for your life and attitude and relationship in order that the mantle of your Divine Master may be over you, otherwise you are in peril and terror of the night, and there will come crash after crash of Christian reputation and service and standing because of an "uncovered" head somewhere or other at the end of the time. We need to recognise that this means the mind in any way becoming exposed to other thoughts than the thoughts of God. Now that is the

Cross, and you and I know something of that in these last two years in particular as we have come out into a world testimony, as we have seen this Cross bringing us into identification with our Lord in His heavenly attitude towards the powers of darkness, as we are made one with Him in His enmity against that which is evil; as we have been made very often the vehicles of His challenge, the utterers of His Testimony, we know the perils of an uncovered mind, and how there swirls around, if we could but see them, the hosts of darkness. Wherever there is an unsundered mind you see deflection, so it is in the realm of the mind we have to be guarded. Now notice what the Apostle says: "I conferred not with flesh and blood." It does not mean that he merely disdained men, but it meant that he did not want this revelation interfered with. The Holy Ghost constrained him to jealously guard a Holy Ghost experience and testimony. One had an experience of that character when the Lord gave one a revelation of Himself many years ago. One of the initial mistakes one made was to go to a very godly man whom one esteemed as much holier than oneself, and to tell him a little of one's experience, but it was the greatest blunder one could have made. It grieved the Holy Spirit, and more than that, the good man had never experienced anything of the kind, and he tried to explain it away, and to talk one out of it. The carnal mind came in and one got into confusion. You see your experience is never the experience of another. These are days in which people are constantly outpouring, but we should never tell our experiences very definitely, except as they bring glory to God in Christ. I believe the secrets of the Lord are with them that fear Him, and there is far too much talking of the ways of the Lord as a kind of very bald and lurid announcement of news. One is sick of the kind of literature that talks about the experiences of God's children, healings, for instance, and all other experiences of like character. I do not think it is honouring to the Lord, sooner or later it brings about a great deal of confusion and distraction, and possibly misleading. "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia" to be alone with God, and there you find as you read the history of Paul that this Heavenly Vision became explicit. He saw its significance. He was instructed of the Lord. You find he says in

II. Corinthians xii. about visions and revelations that lest he might be puffed up by the exceeding greatness of the revelations, the Lord had to stake his flesh right down. The Lord had to make this Cross so experimental in the Apostle Paul that he could not move. I do not know exactly what was the nature of that stake in the flesh. It may have had more than one aspect, but it meant this, at least, that the Apostle Paul was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus. He was held down to one single line of revelation, *that of the Risen Lord*, and of all that He was seeking to accomplish out of the Godhead by the Holy Ghost.

Well now, the Heavenly Vision is the vision of the Heavens. It is that which the Lord refers to when He tells His disciples, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when the Spirit of Truth shall come, He shall lead you into all truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but He shall take of the things of mine. (What things of mine? Not earthly, but heavenly.) All that the Father hath are Mine (here is the explanation); therefore said I unto you that He shall take of the things of Mine, and shall show them unto you"—these Divine things, involved in the Person, the Headship, of the Christ of God, the secrets of God, the deep things of God, the purposes of God, the ways of God, the lines along which God works in our lives together as a Fellowship. Oh, how we cause arrest if we bring to bear in the slightest degree our judgment upon things, our minds upon things; if we become clever and expert and advanced and begin to station ourselves somewhere! "If anyone thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing he deceiveth himself," because this Vision is continually coming, through the Spirit, in an increasing revelation. You do not exhaust revelation. That is why one always feels very sorry for people who begin to tell you what they had some years ago, and you find from their very attitude they have not grown beyond that; they have become arrested because they have made another idol now of their own experience. They are always talking about it and looking backward. But "Any man putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is not fit for the kingdom of God." Paul says, "Forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto the things which are before." A looking-back ploughman cannot plough. That is the meaning. A man with his head over his shoulder cannot plough; and this is true in a heavenly direction. If you and

I are thinking we know because of some past experience of last week, or last year, or last decade, we have ceased to function in the Vision. This thing is progressive unto God. It is out from God unto God. You see it is part of a Divine Consummation. It is something that God Himself is moving toward. It is the progress of God by His Spirit unto a certain end, and, of course, this lifts the whole thing out from the earthlies. You and I have to have this conception, which is His Body, that is, a heavenly church, not an earthly church. It is a fellowship in the Holy Ghost. That is, every time you and I meet we should meet in God. "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me and I in you." How far we are removed from this! We meet as men and women; we meet as those who know one another after the flesh, and that will always be so until the Cross gets its operation deep in us; until what we say is true, not merely as a statement and accepted doctrine, but as an experimental fact working in me this very moment, so that I can say, "I am crucified together with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And if the Christ be within me by the Spirit as I gather with you, and the Christ be within your spirit as you gather with me, you see what the power of it is, what the significance of it is—a meeting in a Divine Life which is the Christ. You see that the final gathering into the heavenlies is but the same kind of gathering, though different in degree and realisation to the gatherings that you and I experience when we meet together now. When two or three of us are gathered together we ought to be gathered together *in the Holy Ghost*. Only the Cross can make that possible. That is, as the Cross is yielded to, and we recognise the fact that now we live by the Life of Another Who is the Christ of God, and we are joined to Him, one Spirit, related to Him in His Purpose, and one in His operations, so the Son of God is revealed in us corporately when we meet; and thus, through the Church is revealed the manifold wisdom of God. But the Heavenly Vision you see is a Divine Reality in Jesus first of all which is positive and outside ourselves. You must recognise that, *He* is God over all, blessed for ever, our Lord Jesus exalted in the Godhead, but then that same Life of His, by the Holy Spirit, working in us unto a Divine Revelation and Realisation. It is well for us to recognise

that the last out-gathering into the heavens, the nature of the coming of the Lord, is the very nature of our gathering together in this tent now. It is the same kind of gathering in degree, because when that takes place it will be by the same power. That is the meaning of the benediction of the Apostle when he says, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray your entire being, spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is not only an objective coming, it is a subjective coming in us. He is seeking to come where we are now this evening, and we can hasten the coming of the Lord as we yield ourselves to the power of His coming; and the power of His coming is the realisation of Himself in His Body, which He is seeking to complete and perfect. It is the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God in the glorified Christ effectually energising us as we meet in Him that there might be an increased manifestation of the glory of God through the church unto that final realisation. When the Coming does take place it will be but the last movement of the Spirit, where and how we know not, but suddenly we shall have arrived, because He will have arrived! Don't you see the nature of the Coming, beloved friends? It is something objective—we shall see Him according as He is! But the Coming is also in another way, as in all cases it is a subjective working of the Holy Ghost in us; and the Holy Spirit can only do this work in us as we are crucified to a complete IDENTIFICATION. We are far from it, of course, in our nature. We are the chiefest of sinners. Is that your experience to-night? The chiefest of sinners! That was the Apostle's consciousness in his own nature and life. He recognised that he was the chiefest of sinners and consented to that flesh being constantly staked down to death, so that there could be the mighty in-working of the Holy Ghost, and he lived this thing out experimentally by the Holy Spirit, "Always bearing about in the body the deadness of the Lord Jesus that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

That Heavenly Vision of Jesus in the Body of His Glory, the Habitation of the Triune God is to be realised in that Body becoming the Portion of the many sons who shall share that Glory in—THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD!

T. M. J.

"IN CHRIST"



DIAGRAMS

THE diagrams which have been appearing in this paper are now printed separately and are available at the price of one penny each, 9d. per doz. They are:—

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Centrality and Universality of the Cross. 2. The Cross and our Salvation. 3. The attitude of the crucified ones toward each other. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The Cross and the New Creation. 5. The Cross and the New Man. 6. The Cross and the Promise of the Father. 7. 'In Christ.' |
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THE SPIRITUAL CLINIC

Paralysis—*continued.*

As we have observed, the causes of spiritual paralysis are very numerous, and we do not expect or attempt to cover the whole ground in this present undertaking: Some of the most common, and, at the same time, such as include others, will engage our attention.

We proceed to speak of

THE PARALYSIS OF DISAPPOINTED EXPECTATIONS

There are not a few typical instances of such in the Word of God. Some of these are discerned in ejaculative and fragmentary expressions, such as that of Job, "My purposes are broken off!"

Or of the two on the Emmaeus Road—"But we had Thought—;" or again of John the Baptist—"Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?"

And then as to the man who has come to be known as "The Rich Fool," there are two fragments in the narrative—"He said....but God said."

In each case there was an arriving at an end, a deadlock, a paralysis, and each represented a false expectation.

Two of these at least were to be accounted for by a mistaken conception. This conception is very far reaching to-day and has become responsible for much deception; a deception which works in two ways. On the one hand many give up in despair—like John the Baptist—because the issues which they had come to believe were immediately inseparable from a certain acceptance and line of action have not developed. The results have not followed, the success has not materialised. On the other hand many have been ensnared by this false conception into thinking that a certain kind of success, increase, popularity, achievement, is THE thing, while—as a matter of fact—the ultimate spiritual value is almost if not entirely lacking.

In the two cases cited, i.e., John the Baptist and the Emmaeus Road, too, there are at least two fundamental misconceptions which issued in paralysis.

One was the failure to recognise the initial, primary, and essentially spiritual nature of Christ's mission and work. In their minds the temporal and earthly bulked upon the horizon to the exclusion of the spiritual and

heavenly. We think it unnecessary for us to show how much this was so. It is one of the most obvious things in the Gospels, and was one of the Master's greatest problems with His disciples. Again and again, He tried to let in light to correct this misconception, and at last knew that it would be the ground upon which they would all be offended; the difficulty over which they would all stumble, when they saw Him an apparently helpless victim on the Cross.

It was among other things an entirely mistaken order of events, as Acts xv. 14-16 (R.V.) clearly shows. There was a complete incapacity to recognise the Divine purpose, method, means, time, instrument, basis, and passion. This let in personal interests, concerns, ambitions, and false anxieties. The thwarting of these, and the disillusionment of the Cross utterly smashed them and their whole scheme of things.

"We had thought," said they; but then thought was earthbound. Something of the "Heavenly Vision" is essential to life and assurance and hope and ascendancy. We shall find increasingly that before there can be an earth and world manifestation of the Sovereignty of Christ in anything like a commensurate sense, there will be an intense heavenliness and spirituality of life and work on the part of those who are called to share the Throne.

Whatever else may have been in John's mind leading to his pathetic and despairing message, it is almost certain that his own condition presented a problem occasioned by a mistaken idea. It would be something like this: "If He really is the Christ, and all that has been prophesied of Him is true—all those things about opening the prisons to the prisoners, and letting the oppressed go free, &c. Why is it that I, having served Him as I have and standing in such a relationship to Him as I do, should be left in this dungeon? There are reports of miracles and mighty works. Why am I left to suffer thus?" This problem comes near to the heart of many of the Lord's people. We know from the Master Himself that He was far from ignoring or forgetting John. In John's case it is certain that not for sin or in Divine forgetfulness was he left in his trial undelivered. The reason was to be found elsewhere.

It might be as well to listen to another who has a different expectation without despair: "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." This one

had much to say about the spiritual fruitfulness of his bonds.

"I am an ambassador in bonds for the mystery of the Gospel."

"My bonds in *Christ* are manifest in all the palace and in all other places."

"Many of the brethren waxing confident by my bonds are much more bold to speak the word."

"Whom I have begotten in my bonds."

I may hardly seem fair to make this comparison between the two men, but one only does it because one finds so many where John was; and who is to know but that Paul sometimes was tempted to feel that way. The facts are that there is often a larger service through a certain curtailment, a fuller life through a deeper death, a richer gain by a keener loss, and we have to look for the impact of the operation of God in us in a realm where the eye of man cannot trace. The Master said of John that he was the greatest of the prophets; and he no less than they was to lay down his life and suffer unto death for his testimony. There is evidently in the eyes of God a virtue in certain sufferings of his servants which is of greater importance to Him than the fleeting glory which might accrue to Him by His deliverance of them. There is that peculiar blessedness to which the Lord referred in His reply to John which belongs to them who under severe trial are "not offended in Him." In some strange way John was related to the Cross and to "the Lamb of God," and thus he was brought within the realm of "the offence of the Cross."

What do we expect in our relationship to "The testimony of Jesus"? Supposing the deepest purposes of God can only be realised by His hiding from our flesh all that that flesh craves for its life, and—more—supposing His work in us whereby triumphant faith and obedience reach their highest form necessitates His concealing Himself and accepting the risk of being considered to have been unfaithful? There is no doubt that most of those who have been called into some of the most vital expressions of "the Eternal purpose" have been trained in the school of *apparent* Divine contradiction, delay, withdrawal, and darkness. Paul wrote to the Thessalonian saints that "No man should be moved by these afflictions for...we are *appointed* thereunto."

Job, who cried "My purposes are broken off," learned that that did not matter very much

seeing that God's greater purposes stood fast. It all depends upon whether we know that we are in "His purpose" and in His way of fulfilment whether in the day of the ordeal we shall triumph or be paralysed.

Job found strength in recognising that "He performeth the thing that is *appointed* for me, and many such things are with Him," in spite of those things being quite foreign to his own expectation.

A right and true relationship to the Lord is a basis upon which there is absolute confidence, assurance, and hope when *our* purposes or expectations are shattered. It was not so in the case of the "rich fool." "He said...." He had purposes of his own unrelated to God. "But God said...." and that was the end of all purpose.

If we have God's life in us we can survive anything. The Lord is not out to peevishly frustrate our hopes or disappoint our expectations, but to either change them for His own or fulfil them in a higher and larger realm.

May we just add a word in this general connection? Many unexpected things, and things quite contrary to expectation, will come to us in both the realm of spiritual experience and Christian service, but one of the bitterest and often most fatal forms of this paralysis comes through disappointed expectations with regard to people. David said *in his haste* "all men are a lie"! and many others have come perilously near to feeling that they dare not put any confidence in anyone. David's experience of the breakdown and worse of the "familiar friend who went to the house of God" with him has been that of many others. Trusted and highly esteemed leaders, conspicuous and greatly used men of God, such as we had come to trust and look up to and count upon and regard as authorities or counsellors, saints and deeply taught: these all in one or more of many ways causing us to reel under the shock of a disillusionment.

A manifestation of ill-temper, irritability, jealousy, personal interest, pride, respect of persons, suspicion, concern for place, prestige, approval; being influenced by heresay, report, criticism; prejudice, partiality, compromise. All these or others, and some very much worse. Anyone who reads this will understand what is meant and would be well able to appreciate the acute suffering and resultant numbness and paralysis of such an experience as it strikes at the vitals of faith, fellowship and trust. There are so many embittered and sceptical,

soured and suspicious because of such disappointed expectations, and too often they allow it to strike at their faith in God.

Now the first thing to say is that the Lord has prescribed very carefully for this form of paralysis, both for prevention and cure. He has pointed out the antidote both in word and deed. As to the word, at how much pains has God been to warn against "putting trust in man. Again and again the danger and folly of making man a prop and a basis of confidence has been emphasised. As to the practical side, why—if not for this very purpose—has not the Lord prevented the disappointing and, sometimes, shameful breakdown of His best servants from being placed on record. If the Bible is inspired of God, then we have to place the *record* to the intention of God. It is strange that we so often extract the comfort for ourselves from this fact, but are shocked when we discover the "like passions" in certain others. We had better settle it once and for all that, be grateful as we should and must for all the grace of God in His children, and value all the help through them, and esteem them very highly for their work's sake, the Lord will never allow us to go for long on human props or crutches, but will free us to see that He alone is our Rock, that our spiritual education and growth must ever and only rest upon *personal* and *direct* knowledge of Himself. The greater the usefulness to God of any life the deeper the loneliness in experience. He takes us often where no other can enter, interpret, understand, help. Rather, by their mental play upon our strange experience, and their interpretations given to it they create even greater painfulness and distress for us. Soon or later we are bound to be disappointed in man, but this may lead to a rich and deep knowledge of God if we are not soured and paralysed by it.

It will also be the occasion of a great and healthy self-distrust on the one hand, and a deep sympathy and solicitude for the suffering on the other hand. The Master in the hour of anguish "looked for some to help, and there was none." We may be allowed just to sip the cup in order to know something of the help of God which no other *can* give.

T. A.-S.

"THE SERVANT OF THE LORD"

Simple messages on some New Testament Conceptions of Christian Work and Workers.

THE BOND-SERVANT (continued.)

So far we have spoken of the specific relationship to Christ suggested by the term "Bond-servant." We shall proceed to think of the deeper nature of this relationship and of the vital principle back of it. We are familiar with the designation of the Lord Jesus Himself as "The Servant of Jehovah," and we know that in type and declaration that conception of him occupies considerable place in the Scriptures. The Ox throughout represents Him in the two-fold aspect of service and sacrifice—one thing, never separated. Of Himself He said one all inclusive thing. "The Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom." In sharing—not the redeeming activity of Christ, but—the outworking purpose of that specific activity, one thing is said of the servant of the Lord, "To you it has been given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but to suffer for His sake."

It is so important, beloved, that we should be clear on this matter of service, and it will save us so much sorrow and heartbreak if we have this right as early as possible. We do not want to spend time in pointing out the tremendous mistakenness which prevails far and wide in this respect. "Christian service" has come to be a realm in which all the acquisitive; ambitious, obtrusive, assertive, self-seeking, and numerous other elements of the natural man have been vented and taken hold. It has created a system in which *human* distinctions are the order of the day. Yes, and much more which it is too painful to mention. We need an adjustment of our minds by a true spiritual perception of the real nature of service, and it will be well for us ever to remember that all work for Christ is not service to Christ. A child may be very well meaning and industrious in its "helping mother" (?), but poor mother may find rather more work created than done.

Now let us say right away with emphasis that the indispensable and basic thing to real service is THE SERVANT SPIRIT AND THE SERVANT MIND.

In Philippians ii. the Holy Spirit says through Paul "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, Who . . . took the form of a bondservant." Now this passage is a sequel

to John xiii. 7: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know afterward. There is a very vital principle involved here. Let us study the thing carefully. There are three sides to it or phases of it: the Divine, the human, and the Satanic. Take the human first. The Master and His disciples had come in after a tiring day: dusty, hot, and weary. They had no paid servants, so that they would either sit down to supper as they were, or wash one another's feet. But this was a servant's job and these men were wont to discuss who should be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. It was not likely that such a mind would submit to the slave's duties. They were probably each standing upon dignity, prestige, and pride. Possibly Peter was not the least offender, for when the Master girded Himself with a towel and poured out water it says "He cometh to Simon." Here commenced a terrible unveiling of Simon's mind. The first disclosure is made when Simon says "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" Here is *self-will* asserting itself against the will of the Lord. It is self-will rising up upon a basic pride, an exposed and shamed pride. The Master's answer is "If I wash thee not thou has no part with me." At the suggestion of part with Christ Simon leaps forward—"Not my feet only but my hands and my head." In effect—"I am after all I can get." Here is self-interest, self-enrichment, self-realisation. The principle back of the Master's act is entirely missed because self fills the horizon.

Before the chapter is concluded Simon is strongly declaring that he will lay down his life for the Master, a declaration which had a sorry issue in the hour of its testing. And in this connection self-confidence and self-sufficiency are unveiled. All this led to Satan's triumph and Simon's defeat. It has ever been so. The breakdown and ruin of man has always been because of his self-life, from Adam onward.

Simon was obtained by Satan for sifting because Satan had a stake in him which gave him a judicial claim and right over Simon. Christ served the Father to the full because Satan had "nothing in Him." We must come back here, but let us turn to the Satanic side. Isaiah tells us (chap. xiv.) that Satan was hurled from the glory and fell into so great depths of ruin because he said in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High." He aspired to equality with God. Ambition for power where the power was

God's alone; mastery where service was the order; these were the motives operating. This brought his ruin, and then by prompting Adam to act by the same motive the ruin of the race was accomplished.

How is all this to be remedied? By reversing the order. There was one who had a right to equality with God—"who being on equality with God"—but who—contrary to Lucifer—"thought it not something to be grasped at." This one, in order to get down to the depths of the ruin and destroy the works of the devil, emptied Himself, humbled Himself, took the form of a bond-servant and became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the Cross. Thus only could the *will* of God be done in the universe; the will which destroys the other will of Satan in the world and in man, for self-will is Satan-will.

So, when the Master said "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," He was pointing to the day when by the Spirit's illumination they would see that self-emptying and laying down of one's self was the principle of salvation, redemption, the greatest service. He told them so clearly that they should and must lay down their lives ("souls," self-life) for one another. It is most significant, therefore, that the servant-mind of the Master in action should at once meet the impact of that vaunting self-principle in Simon which is the Satanic stake and resistance.

From this review of the position from the Divine, the Satanic and the human standpoint, we ought to see quite clearly that the matter of service is infinitely more than busy-ness in religious causes, earthly activities in Christian interests; it is the accomplishment of a heavenly will and Divine purpose which registers its impact in the breaking of another foreign will and destroying the works of the devil. This is the force of "obedience," and the "not my will," and this is the servant-mind and servant-spirit.

Thus, further, we must see that the relationship of bond-servants is in the very nature and essence of redemption. The blood by which we have been redeemed has become the means of a covenant of service. Amongst other things, when Israel was redeemed or delivered from the slavery of Egypt the blood of the Passover Lamb—formed into an encircling doorway as it was shed on the threshold and sprinkled above and on either side—involved and implied that they went through and out to be God's servant. Indeed the demand of Jehovah

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, HONOR OAK ROAD, LONDON, S.E.23.

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship
Sundays: 11 a.m., 3 p.m. (Young People's Meeting), and 6.30 p.m. Mondays: 7.30 p.m. Wednesdays: 8 p.m.
Saturdays: 7.30 p.m.

Conferences are held every week-end (Saturday and Sunday), and also a longer week-end at the beginning of each month, this fixed by the first Sunday. (Friday to Monday evenings, inclusive.) All particulars may be obtained from G. Paterson, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

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Guest House Hostesses: Lady Ogle; Mrs. M. Brand.

Telephone: Sydenham 5216.

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was "Let my people go that they may serve me!"

When a slave in Israel had fulfilled his time and could claim his liberty but preferred to remain with his master, he was taken on to the *threshold* and his ear was bored with an awl; the blood fell on the threshold and he and his master stepped across that blood, and by so doing a covenant of service—now the service of love—was entered upon. To have stepped upon the blood and "trodden it under foot" would have been to have "counted it an unholy thing," but passing over ("passover") it hand in hand was a covenant too sacred to ever be broken. So we are reminded that "we are not our own, we are bought with a price, even the precious blood."

The basic vision of all true service is that of the Lord high and lifted up, His train filling the Temple, resulting in ourselves being smitten to the ground with a realisation of our own worthlessness which for ever makes us—not masters—but slaves, and which necessitates an abiding application of blood-soaked, fire-impregnated coal from the altar if we are to be sent-ones, His servants. Might it not be laid to our charge that our vision of service held ourselves high and lifted up and filling the frame as the goal, until we saw the Lord, and then—in that light—ourselves worthless. The Lord's need is to have *bond-servants*: such as—even though the extreme pressure at some time might make them say that they would "no more speak in this Name"—find that they cannot forbear for long, but, cost what it may, they must be in it and at it, the fire is in their bones and that zeal of His house eats them up." May we be such, and may the true ground and motive of this fellowship in service be:—

T. A.-S.

I love, I love my Master,
I will not go out free!
For He is my Redeemer,
He paid the price for me.

I would not leave His Service,
It is so sweet and blest;
And in the weariest moments
He gives the truest rest.

My Master shed His life-blood
My vassal life to win,
And save me from the bondage
Of tyrant self and sin.
He chose me for His Service,
And gave me power to choose
That blessed, perfect freedom
Which I shall never lose.

I would not halve my service,
His only it must be!
His *only*, Who so loved me
And gave Himself for me.
Rejoicing and adoring
Henceforth my song shall be—
"I love, I love my Master,
I will not go out free!"

BOOKLETS

(WITNESS AND TESTIMONY.)

The following are now available:—

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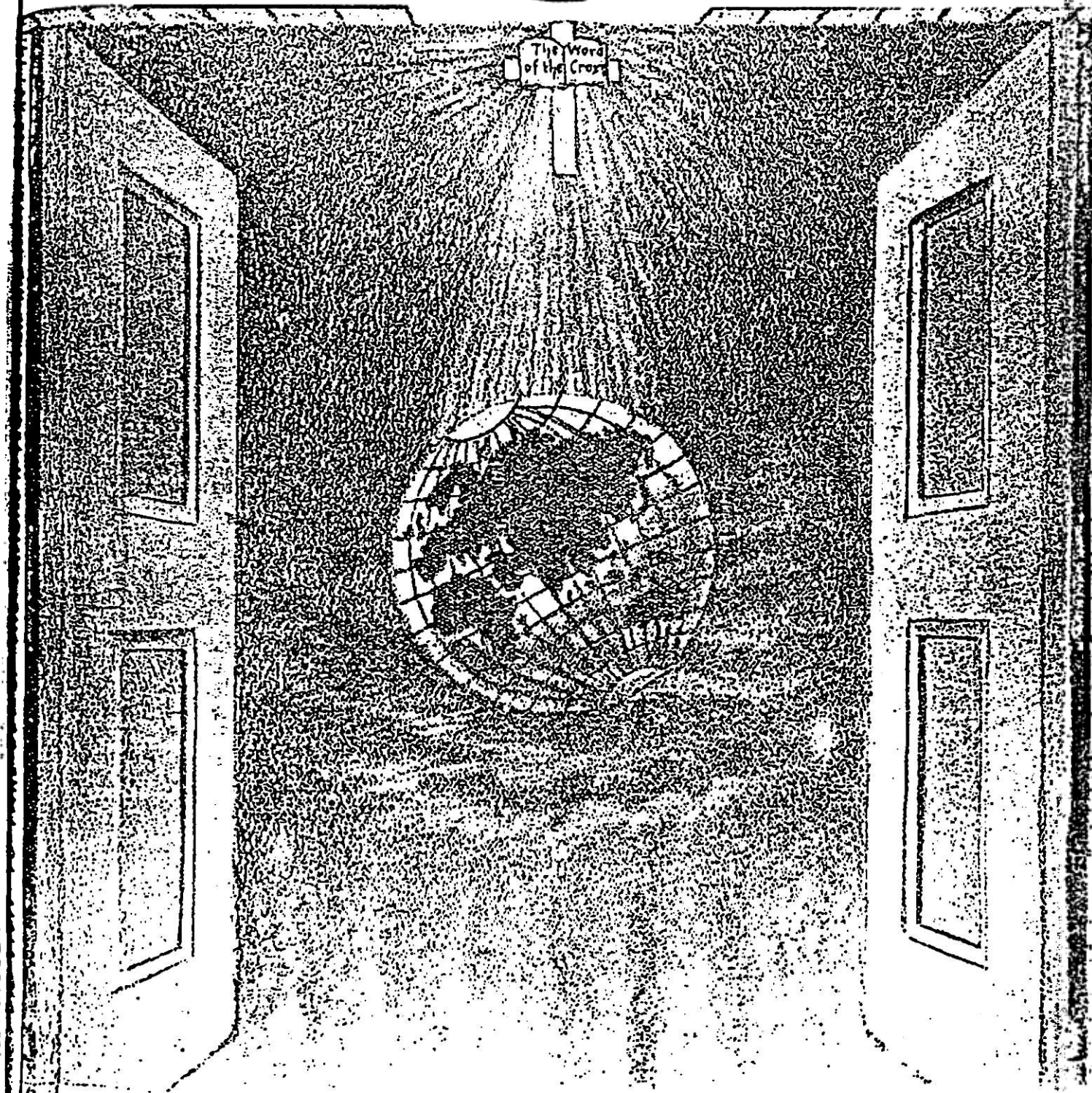
Some of the above booklets are published in French, Italian and Dutch. Enquire concerning same if desired.

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

AUGUST, 1928



VOL. 6. No. 8



MINISTERS' LETTER

Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre.

August, 1928.

BELOVED OF OUR LORD,

"The Lord God is a Sun and Shield. The Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

Such is the confidence of God's own, but righteousness is the girdle for such walking by faith. If our heart condemn us it is because God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. How many secret misgivings that paralyse faith are due to some fundamental unrighteousness of the spirit. We have to remember, as God's children, that there is a righteousness in the Holy Spirit. There are often shadows between our hearts and the Lord of Glory because of some withheld obedience, and so the further good things of the Spirit are withheld. How can He conduct us farther on the path of Glory if we obey not the commandments of the Comforter. The secret disobedience to some call and challenge of the King is the cause of many an arrested life.

Nevertheless, His faithfulness to bless abides, but waits now upon our faithfulness. What is the next step of faith? It is this that will bring us once again into the Sunshine of His Presence. We may be sure that the clue to much lack of assurance and power to-day is due to a refusal to go forward with God. He is a Sun and Shield as long as we are pressing forward, this in the Spirit, to new obediences, new acts of faith and love. He would have His people free, free to Himself. Whatsoever He saith unto, Do it. This is the simple principle to all miracles of His transforming power. Yes, He will give grace and glory; and these are the two sides of One Divine Life.

May we receive the grace of a constant obedience to the Spirit that the Glory of the Christ may be revealed in us to the cloud of unseen witnesses.

Yours in this "Way,"

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

T. MADOC-JEFFREYS.

FELLOWSHIP AND MINISTRY

RECOLLECTIONS of praise must abide with all who attended the August Conference. The Lord's blessing was in the weather for it was ideal for dwelling in tents. Also the Word came through in great freedom. "The Heavenly Vision" became clearer, and therefore more heavenly; yet the sense of our being but at the outer fringe of its revelation was more marked than ever. The principles involved in the Cross and its operations as essential to any participation in the eternal life of the Christ were the subjects of the first addresses, and later very clear teaching came through upon the distinction between soul and spirit, and what "soul-hatred" implied. Above all the Lord in the Fulness of His Divine Glory was lifted up, and it was seen, with worship, how through the Cross the Son of Man was so exalted in the Godhead.

It was a great joy to have our beloved brother, Mr. Sparks, back into ministry, and this with manifest liberty and unction.

That the Holy Spirit was working in many lives has been attested by the number who have during these weeks borne testimony to their identification with the Lord in the Cross, in His death, His burial, His Resurrection into Ascension Life.

The visit to Ireland in July was accompanied by many tokens of Divine guidance, and a new circle of fellowship was discovered at Cork. The next weeks confront us with many demands for service in many places. Belfast, Dublin, Cork, Newcastle area, France and Holland are all in this prospect, and we must look to the Lord for the apportionment of this ministry that His own messengers may go forth in each case.

The following ministries are still in progress: Mr. Frank Brignall and Mr. Ernest Streets are now stationed at Swalwell, near Newcastle. Definite gospel work is being carried on in a small Mission Tent procured for this purpose. This was found necessary; and we believe the Tent with its seating facilities will serve a very real need not only at this season but for future calls in this and other areas. Reports reveal the Hand of the Lord as being with them.

Mr. Gresham Speedy and Mr. Cyril Bond are now at Lowestoft. There are many open doors for their message as well as the opportunity the sand services afford. Mr. Victor Thomas is spending three weeks at Bognor.

Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin continue their work among the villages of Oxfordshire. At present they are stationed at South Newington, and many little country chapels are being opened for week-night services. Miss Ada Goodwin is joining them for a little time for children's work while she recuperates after illness. There is a sound of spiritual movement in all this. The village people reveal a hunger while much of the organised religious life is worse than dead.

Our sister, Mrs. Brand, is now spending a few weeks of well-earned holiday. Meanwhile the Lord is carrying us through at the House, and there are quite a number passing through continually apart from the crowded Conference times.

Our brother and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Bond have now removed to Pevensey. This would be considered an actual and irreparable loss if we were in bondage to the old ideas concerning Christian fellowship, especially as our brother has been one of the most conspicuous of those who have come forward steadily in the life and service of the Spirit in this "Testimony" in addition to being our treasurer; while Mrs. Bond has always been a truly loyal and willing helper in every form of ministry that needed heart or hand. Our "flesh" would indulge itself in some grief at their departure; but there is the compensation that they can frequently join us for Conference, and that there will be a setting up of the clear Light of this Life at Pevensey.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No charge is made for this paper, the cost of its publication being met by freewill offerings from the Lord's people; but any who so wish may share this ministry by contributing towards its maintenance.

Local, £1; Broxbourne, 2s. 6d.; Belfast, 2s. 6d.; Blackpool, 1s. 6d.; Clacton, 5s.; Camberwell, 2s. 6d.; Charlton, 2s.; Cardiff, 3s. 5d.; Chicago, £1 1s. 4d.; Edgware, 5s.; Earlsfield, 2s. 6d.; Eastbourne, 10s.; Finchley, 2s. 6d.; Glasgow, £1; Hornsey, 3s.; Highbury New Park, 2s. 1½d.; Liverpool, £1; Norwich, 6s.; Morden, 5s.; Palmers Green, 10s.; Plumstead, 5s.; St. Anne's-on-Sea, £5 0s. 3d.; Upper Norwood, 5s.; Wolverhampton, 2s. 6d.; Wimbledon, 2s. 6d.; Williamstown (Dublin), 4s.—Total, £13 16s. 1½d.

"THE SERVANT OF THE LORD"

Simple Messages on some New Testament Conceptions of Christian Work and Workers.

II.—THE WISE MASTER-BUILDER.—I Cor. iii. 9.

THE building similes of the New Testament are fairly well known. From the time when Christ said "Upon this Rock will I build my church," the conception is maintained in the nature of the object and the designation of the worker.

The subject is dealt with from various aspects, such as:—

1. The Lord the Architect and Chief Builder.

"The pattern of the things in the heavens" Heb. ix. 23.

"I will build" (Matt. xvi. 18).

"We are God's building" (I Cor. iii. 9), &c.

2. The Church as the House over which Christ is the Head.

"As a Son over His own House, whose House are we" (Heb. iii. 6).

3. The Church as a Building.

"The household of God, built upon the foundation... Jesus Christ the chief corner, in Whom all the building fitly framed... an holy temple... in Whom ye are builded" (Eph. ii. 19-22).

"Living stones built up a spiritual house."

"The stone which the builders rejected" 1 Peter ii. 5, 7, &c.

4. The individual believer is a building, a temple (Cor. iii. 16).

5. The Servant of the Lord is a builder; as above.

There is a less obvious phase of this subject which contains some important factors. This is in a word used very frequently, namely the word which is usually translated "edify." The verb or its substantive "edification" occurs in some form or other about twenty times in the New Testament, and in every instance except one it is used by Paul. The one exception is in Acts ix. 31, a book written undoubtedly under Paul's superintendence. The fact is important in as much as it implies or declares a unity of truth and revelation. The nature of the Church is thus at least signified throughout Paul's letters, and it gives a distinct "Pauline" flavour to the Hebrew letter.

If we give some examples and the reader will change the italicised words to "build" or its correlatives much light will be gained and the true idea of the work will be seen.

"The churches had rest and were *edified*" (Acts ix. 31).

"We do all things for your *edifying*" (2 Cor. xii. 19).

"*Edify* one another" (1 Thess. v. 11).

"For the *edifying* of the Body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 12).

"Unto the *edifying* of itself in love" (Ephes. iv. 16).

"All things may be lawful but all things do not *edify*" (1 Cor. x. 23).

"We ought not to please ourselves, but let everyone try to please his neighbour for his good unto *edification*" (Rom. xv. 1, 2).

"Let us follow after the things . . . wherewith one may *edify* another" (Rom. xiv. 19).

Having said this much we proceed to speak of a very vital and indispensable qualification which is basic to this great and responsible ministry. This spiritual equipment is related to the whole subject of God's building in both Old and New Testaments.

The eternal conception of the Church as a spiritual house or building runs through all the Scriptures, both historic, poetic, and prophetic. When Solomon was chosen to build a house for the Name of the Lord the one supreme need he recognised to be "a wise and an understanding heart." When he wrote the book of Proverbs his theme was "Wisdom" personified. There is a strong prophetic strain in this book. It is generally recognised that the key to the book is to change the title "Wisdom" to "Jesus Christ." By so doing the book leaps into new meaning and life. Take in connection with our theme such a passage as "Wisdom hath built her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars." Here is a forecast of Him whose name is "Wisdom." "Christ the Wisdom of God." "Made unto us Wisdom," building His Church upon the sevenfold glory of His Person. We would earnestly urge that "wisdom" in the N.T. be "looked up." It will be found to be related to "the mystery" and both the "wisdom" and the "mystery" are Christ. Both have been hidden away by God from the ages and generations. Hidden in all the Scriptures, and Paul distinctly says that at the appointed time even the Prophets divulge the secret thing through the chosen interpreters (Rom. xvi. 25-26). This is connected with the unveiling of the "Church which is His Body." Now Paul as the elect vehicle of this revelation prays for those to whom he writes with regard to it that they might be given "a spirit of *wisdom* and revelation in the

knowledge of Him. The eyes of your understanding be enlightened" (Eph. i. 17, 18).

To pursue this truth is to have abundant proof that—

1. The building of a spiritual house is in progress.
2. God has had this matter in mind from all eternity and has kept it in mind all down the ages,
3. The present age is that which is characterised by—
 - (a) The revelation of the purpose;
 - (b) The specific activity of God in this connection.
4. The work which is supremely co-operation with God is that of gathering out the "living stones" and bringing them into corporate relationship.
5. For this work there must be—
 - (a) A revelation of "the Eternal purpose" to all who are to be "workers together with God."
 - (b) A spiritual equipment with a wisdom which infinitely transcends the wisdom of this world.

Into these five points we have gathered vast ranges of Divine truth and purpose and have set the bounds, defined the nature, and indicated the principles and laws of "Christian" service and ministry.

The two last subdivisions go to the heart of Paul's (rather the Holy Spirit's) designation of the servant of the Lord as "a wise master builder." They relate to the object—who and what Jesus Christ is—and all the methods and means by which the object is to be arrived at.

Our first emphasis, then, is laid upon the fact that for the work of God a wisdom and a skill, different from and far transcending that of man at his best is essential. A wisdom which is the gift of God. A wisdom which, however, is very often foolishness to men, and yet which—when the work is done—makes the wisdom of men look foolishness.

Wherein, then, does this wisdom lie? What are the features of it? Paul answers the questions for us in various ways.

Firstly. "I have laid a foundation," and "Other foundation can no man lay." The object in view must have the foundation most suited to it. There is only *one* possible foundation for this spiritual house. It is God's eternally elect and appointed foundation. It is the very bedrock of the universe, deeper than soil, subsoil, and strata. There is no

volcanic eruption which can upheave it, and no blast which can shake or split it. There is no other foundation for life and work of which this is true, hence the supreme wisdom of making this the basis of all procedure.

"Upon *this* rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," said the Divine Architect. Upon what rock? "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God!"

Jesus Christ, infinite Son of God, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form, and all-inclusive Son of Man, the federal Head of a new race; the foundation of the universe, but in a special sense the foundation of the Church. The most startling, stunning, upheaving, shattering thing that ever happened to a mortal was the revelation of who Jesus is which came to Saul of Tarsus as he journeyed bent upon doing despite to the name which was so soon to be spoken to him out of high heaven. Humbled as no power on earth could have humbled him he asks: "Who art thou, Lord." (Lord=ruler, principal.) He might not have been surprised if the answer had been in one of the great Hebrew designations of God, such as Jehovah, although he might have been perplexed as to how he was persecuting Him. But when the answer came straight, strong, clear, "I am *Jesus!*" it was calculated to send a man off food and sleep for days and nights, and then to the back side of a desert—to Arabia—to contemplate the ruin of his enterprise and get the foundation for his new edifice. *Jesus!* At once persecuted and sovereign; on the throne and persecuted. Jesus, done to death by Saul's circle and in the place of transcendent majesty! Jesus—"the Nazarene impostor"—God! Alas, alas!

Jesus is God! The glorious bands
Of golden angels sing
Songs of adoring praise to Him,
Their Maker and their King.
He was true God in Bethlehem's crib,
On Calvary's cross true God;
He Who in heaven eternal reigned,
In time on earth abode.

Jesus is God! Oh could I now
But compass land and sea,
To teach and tell this single truth,
How happy should I be!
Oh, had I but an angel's voice
I would proclaim so loud!
Jesus, the good, the beautiful,
Is everlasting God!

Was Saul a master-builder of Judaism? Then it was true in his case indeed that "the Stone which the builders rejected, the same had become the Head." "Disallowed *indeed* of men, but with God elect, precious." Surely also it was true in his case that "Whosoever shall fall on *this* Stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it falleth it shall grind him to powder." Paul, by experience, knew something of the impact of Jesus in risen power and that is the crux of the whole matter. Neither Peter nor Paul arrived at their Christology by mental processes, by reasonings, by training, by the schools, by research. In each case it was by revelation.

"Blessed art thou, Simon, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee but my Father."

"It pleased God . . . to reveal His Son *in* me."

"Neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." Here then are the two sides to the basic wisdom of the "wise master-builder." The fact of Jesus—Son of God, and very God; Son of Man, without Whom the universe as a whole and the race in particular must collapse and cease to be, and without Whom that elect instrument without which the universal purpose of God can never be realised—the Church, the House of God—can never be built; for He and He alone is the Foundation. Then on the other side this fact and its nature proclaimed on the ground of a revelation which is an experience, and experience which is a revelation. They who pioneered this "Testimony of Jesus" were neither authorities, experts, or exponents; they were "witnesses." The two things are one, the fact and the fact known by revelation of the Holy Ghost. No one can be a builder and no Divine building can be built without this basis and equipment.

There are many things to which the name of the Lord is being affixed which are being constructed, and which appear fine and great and like "the Church," but the twofold reality is neither in the builders or the buildings. They are destined to collapse when God's hurricane and fire test every man's work. Good works; philanthropy, hospitality, reform, education, religion, relief, &c., may be the products, or bye-products of what is called "Christian civilisation," and things for which to be profoundly grateful, but let us not confuse these with "a new creation," regeneration, a being "born from above."

(Continued on page 136)

"THE CYCLE OF THE SON"

PSALM NIN. EPHESIANS I. 3-14.

To understand this Psalm in relation to the passage from the Ephesian letter we need the knowledge that is revelational, and this is only possible to the organ of the spirit. Do not confuse heart and spirit. The heart is the organ of the spirit whereby the spirit merges in us in the form of soul, so that while we do have in this world our soul life as a faculty, we do not have it as a nature. As a nature our soul life must be continually hated and laid down; as a faculty you cannot live in this world except in the form of soul energised by spirit. It is well to get clear thoughts about these distinctions. Thinking of the soul as nature it has to be continually relegated to death, we are referring to the fleshly soul, or soul imbued with the Satanic principle at its root. Soul simply as a faculty of mind and intellect and will has to be continually renewed, or restored by the indwelling uprising Life of the Spirit, and the organ through which the spirit merges in the form of soul in these mortal bodies is the heart; and the faculty of the heart that understands the things of God, a faculty which has been lost altogether in the fall is the "nous," or "mind," called sometimes, "understanding." "Then opened He their understanding (or their heart faculty) that they might understand the scriptures." Apart from the opening of that heart faculty we cannot understand the scriptures. You can read the Bible as a systematic book containing doctrine; you may get up a mechanical system of truth from the Bible in that way; but this is not to commence to know the things of the Spirit. You need, as we have often said here, the illumination of the Holy Ghost to read a single word of the Word of God, for you cannot read any verse of the Bible except by a spiritual intelligence. It is not mere history, statements that can be intelligently received by intelligent people, otherwise the more intelligent would have an advantage. You need the Holy Spirit to read every word of God, because every word of God was originally given by the Holy Ghost. The words are the words of God, and you cannot understand their infinite meanings since an infinite Intelligence speaks every one of them. This is the trouble with a very great number of earnest children of God that they do not come down to a bare fact of this character. Yet it is quite im-

possible to read a revelational word without this, so "He opened their understanding," and remember who they were. They were Hebrews, and they had continued with Him for three and a half years, and they knew their Bible very largely by rote, but they did not understand the least things about the scriptures and their eternal significance as related to the Christ until He opened their understanding.

In the 19th Psalm you get these words in the first six verses:—

1. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork.
2. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

[It is said that the zodiac contains a revelation of God, and the whole earth contains a revelation of God.]

3. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

4. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. *In them hath He set a tabernacle for the Sun.*

5. And rejoiceth as a Strong Man to run a race, which is as a Bridegroom coming out of His Chamber.

6. His going forth is from the end of the heavens, and His circuit unto the ends of it. That is to say, there is inbreathing in the whole creation of a living word of God, and, of course, this word is the Spirit of the Christ, Who is the Eternal Logos. That infinite word of God, the utterance, or expression, the mind in this activity of God is penetrating the universe everywhere. It is continually going forth as a creative energy. But even in the epistle to the Romans the apostle applies this word to the gospel, and he says that, quite apart from the messengers as such, there is another messenger, or message that is having its impact upon the consciousness of men. It says in the 10th chapter 18th verse: "So faith cometh by a report" (or by a hearing as out from God, and a hearing or report cometh through the 'spoken word' of God. This means the word spoken by the Holy Ghost. It does not mean simply the letter, it means the Spirit speaking the word that the Spirit has given. Then he asks the question referring to this remark.) But I say, have they not heard? Yea, verily. Their sound went into all the earth, and their sayings unto the ends of the world."

You will find him speaking in other places of the gospel being preached in the whole

creation under heaven, he is referring to the fact that there does go out into the universe a report, something that can be heard, something of a "light that would light every man coming into the world," to put it in another way. I hope you are receiving what one is seeking to say, that there is this energy of God, by the spoken word, sustaining the universe, and going through it, and this is what the apostle refers to in this 10th chapter of Romans in relation to the gospel and hearing. He speaks of it in Psalm xix. that there is a voice, sayings, going forth, but this Eternal Word, as you read from the 7th verse on has become articulate, definite, so to speak, in the written word. That is, the Bible, the Old Testament enshrines in its wisdom and its sayings all that infinite Word of God in creation. It is the essential expression of the same thing, but here it has come to be uttered through the voice of prophet, and then to be written. Then you have the thought that all this word that penetrates through creation, this utterance and expression of the Divine Mind that is being voiced everywhere is all headed up in Christ Himself, His Person; that He was this eternal expression of the Divine Mind; that in Him is the eternal design, conception of God; that this is the thing that God is seeking to arrive at ultimately. This is the consummation of His purpose, to bring forth this the completed, consummated Christ of God. This is His ultimate end, and it is thus Paul speaks in relation to the completion of the Body of Christ, that it is to fulfil, or fill up, the Word of God (Col. i. 25).

First of all, then, there is the statement of this wonderful activity of the Divine Mind as it goes forth in the expression of creation; then you have in these later verses, from the 7th to the 11th, all the word of God that has been spoken and written, as scriptures, but he says concerning all these words or expressions of the Divine Mind, both in creation and in the Bible, that there is in them something that gathers up into its light the sum total of all of them, and he calls this the "Sun"; and he says that, in the midst of all these activities of the Eternal Logos, "He has set a tent, or tabernacle for the Sun, which is as a Bridegroom (here is a significant word, One who seeks that which shall be his counterpart to be gathered up into union with Himself) coming out of His chamber. And rejoiceth as a Strong Man to accomplish a race (to attain His desire an end), His going forth is from the end of the heavens, and His circuit unto the ends of it."

You do not need to be told that the Lord Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness. It is almost the final word of the Old Testament, Malachi iv. Remember that the Old Testament is a complete scripture, or word of God concerning the gospel. All the gospel is found in the Old Testament. In 1 Corinthians xv. the apostle tells us that the doctrine of the cross is all found in the Old Testament. He died for our sakes, *according to the scriptures*; He was raised again the third day, *according to the scriptures*.

"For behold the day cometh (the day of God, in distinction to the Day of Christ). The consummation of the Christ will come with the church; but when the church is completed the Day of God will come. Then the Christ in all His fullness both as Head and Body will be manifested, and the Lord shall come in that way, and every eye shall see Him. You have the arrival of the Day of God into the universe as well as in relation to this little world, and, the present heavens and earth will pass away. But that day shall burn as a furnace, and all the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear My Name shall *the Sun of Righteousness* arise with healing in His wings (or beams)."

Now here is the description in Psalm xix. of the arrival of that Sun of Righteousness in the midst of all the activities of the Divine Word both in creation and in the written Word of God.

You are familiar with the statement often made in this Fellowship about the going-forths of the Lord Jesus as from all eternity to all eternity. We are beginning to see back behind the earthly history of the Lord Jesus, and forward unto the ages of the ages, and to recognise that His life as lived on this planet during 33½ years, including that ministry of His manifestation by the Spirit during 3½ years, up to His death and resurrection wrought out upon this earth is all the revelation of an infinite thing that happened in God and out from God. This is the Testimony of Jesus by the Holy Ghost. It is not the testimony of man at all, though certain men were chosen witnesses of these earthly facts. You and I are coming to the place where these words, these sayings, these unspeakable things that the Holy Ghost does utter in the words of man, though they may be familiar words, are just being spoken as for the first time in our hearts;

and we do need as a Fellowship to continually wait before God that He may bring through His revelation in our midst, because the revelation that He is seeking to bring through is one that shall shatter and destroy the "flesh" so completely that He may be able to get a fellowship in the Holy Ghost; and then in the fear of the living God. We shall know that we are not touching something relating to your little career and my little career, my little ministry and your little ministry, your salvation, or my salvation, but we are touching something that God Himself, by the Holy Ghost is seeking to bring through into the earth at this time. It means that those who enter into it have abandoned themselves entirely to the work of the Cross to rule out every activity of the self-life, so that they come into an emergence of the Divine Life as in them by the Spirit and are going to be God's instruments in the Holy Ghost, and by the Holy Ghost break through the principalities and powers in a ministry of prayer; and upon this hinges the Divine Purpose. God could get on without us, but upon this hinges the accomplishment of the Divine Purpose. There is a cycle of the Son of God, He has come out of His chamber as a Bridegroom, as One Who is seeking something to be brought into such relation and union with Himself that through it He will bring out the fruit of His Eternal Purpose. You and I, therefore, are touching an infinite thing; whereas we thought it was merely the problem of your salvation and mine. Well, that should be done with; you are no longer in anxiety about that. If you are really given up to God you know you are saved because the Blood speaks for you, and you have the witness in your heart that the Blood in the very Throne of God is your security, so there is an end to all uncertainty. You know that you are in yourself the chiefest of sinners. There is not the slightest ground for a Divine confidence to be placed in you; there is not an element of integrity about you which could stand a single test of Satanic temptation. You have come to know that you are unsafe and unreliable; you are like Peter exactly, you would deny your Lord with oaths and curses. If He let the impact of a Satanic temptation come upon us unchecked we should crumble up. We know that, and because we know that, and have yielded to our utter condemnation as revealed in the Cross, we have become capable of receiving a living spoken word of God.

It is the kind of Word that this Psalm speaks

of. You have been begotten again, but God has not entrusted this Life to you so that you have lived it out of your independent resources, but you live it by faith out from God. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." It is another Life, the springs of which are in God Himself, and once you have realised that you see that God can in the stream of that Life which you receive out from Him, begin to work out in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. What is His good pleasure? His good pleasure is this thing which we are to bring about. The consummation of His glory in His Son, and through His Son in His completed, or consummated Body. It is a thing that relates to the entire universe, not only to this little world, and it relates to the Being of God Himself. Now that is the Testimony of Jesus in and by the Holy Ghost. His is the Testimony of the Incarnation, and the Incarnation is not a local finite Incarnation; it is an infinite Incarnation. I remember when the Lord showed me that the Incarnation was infinite all my problems were settled. I was trying to portray the Lord Jesus and relate Him to some image of my own. I could not get the vision of things, but when the Holy Ghost crashed right in through one's intellect into this other faculty of the spirit and opened the eyes of one's understanding to see the Infinite Glory of the Risen Jesus, then you also saw what He had set out to accomplish.

In Micah v. 2 also we read of Him, "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," and on Sunday we were seeing the three-fold nature of the only-begottenness of the Christ of God. You remember what was said—that He was only-begotten as to His Spirit from all eternity, being the Eternal Self-expression of God the Father, the effulgence of His glory. His eternal history as such is Spirit, equal with God Himself before the creation of the universe. He was only-begotten in the form of human soul at Bethlehem, having laid aside all that infinitude of His Being, "Having emptied Himself (we are told) voluntarily, thinking it not a thing to be held-on-to to be equal with God." It was then He consented to be limited to creaturehood, to be imprisoned within the universe He had created, and to come down to something far, far less than that, to be imprisoned in the *likeness* of sinful flesh, though not in the *actuality* of sinful flesh. It seemed to be so, of course, and was the exact similitude of our body, but it was a pure and holy and sinless and

incorrupt body. Then, as you and I have seen in this Fellowship He was begotten as the only-begotten of the Father in Bodily Form through His passion, having dealt with iniquity in the universe and with sin in man. On the morning of His Resurrection-Ascension into the Being of God now as Man, He was addressed by Deity, "Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee," thus you get the three-fold nature of the only-begottenness of the Son of God, and that is why Paul, by the Holy Ghost said a thing that the other apostles never reached to, except as he gave them his revelation, because they were so tied down to their earthly conceptions of the Lord Jesus, as you and I are still in danger of being tied to our mental conceptions; but he, Paul, because he was liberated by a heavenly vision, was able to say, "In Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwelleth in bodily form." So you see you have had an arrival of God Himself to a consummation in the Person of His Son as glorified in His Ascension, but He did that also with a certain purpose. It is as a Bridegroom He has come forth, and it is the bride He is seeking. It is this counterpart from a fallen human race that He is seeking to incorporate into that glorified Son of Manhood that He might present it to God as the everlasting token of the victory of His grace; and that is the Church. So we do need to recognise that we are touching this holy thing in the Church, which is His Body. It is not a matter of individual salvation now; it is not a question of our individual safety from hell, and all the rest of that. As we have seen there will be in the time of the millennium, and the ages to come, relationship in salvation as upon this planet that will be manifested both in Israel and the nations, but this is the "So-great salvation," and you and I are being called into a co-operation with God Himself, by the Holy Ghost, to effect His purpose. That is what this Fellowship is meant to arrive at, that there should be here a fellowship in the Holy Spirit for prayer, that there might be the current of the Divine energy, the will of God made manifest through our praying, not because we are anything, or are clever and have become what are glibly called prayer-warriors. There has been a tremendous amount of fleshly presumption and foolishness around this. One has been smitten almost with horror at the glib way in which prayer is offered, as if Satan and the powers of darkness can be dismissed with a formula. It must be the very passion of the Eternal Spirit breathing

through our hearts, as you and I are crucified together with Christ. One is touching this because one wants to come to Micah v. 2, where He is encompassing earth and heaven. Notice the order—earth and heaven. In the 1st chapter of Genesis you have the heavens and the earth; but in the 2nd, where you get the beginnings of the Divine works, in men, it is the earth and the heaven. It is from the earth this heavenly thing is being carried through.

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting. (In the margin, from the days of eternity.) In them hath He set a Tabernacle for the Sun." There has been a going forth of the Son of God from all eternity.

In the 9th chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah you have the Manifold Name of the Lord Jesus which indicates this, referring to His birth in this world:—

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful (Enigma), Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace."

You see what you are taken into when you reach this name—The Father of Eternity—whose goings forth have been from eternity.

In the 10th chapter of Jeremiah there is the same infinite character in the Name, 10th verse:—

"But Jehovah is the true God (or God of truth); He is the living God, and the King of Eternity: at His wrath the earth trembled, and the nations are not able to abide His indignation."

The King of Eternity! You remember how John had this vision in Patmos: it is this further unveiling of the Infinite Christ to John. John who had already written that they had seen that which was from the beginning who had spoken about the Eternal Logos, he now gets a vision that is in its impact still more wonderful. He says in the 16th verse:—

"His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength (the Sun!). And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. And He laid His right hand upon me saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last (the beginning and the end), I am He that liveth (or I am the Living One who never could die in the realm

of His Spirit. You must remember He never died in the realm of His Spirit, He *dismissed* His Spirit by an act of will, and poured out His soul unto death), and *became* dead (He became dead in the realm of His soul and His body was buried), but now He says, *Behold I am alive for the ages of the ages.*"

But He is alive now in the three-fold form of Life. His *psuche*, soul, or blood has been taken through into the Presence of the Divine Being. This again is a mystery; but we know the blood has been taken through. There are things we know not yet, but we know that the blood of the Lord Jesus has been taken through, whether it is called "blood" or "soul," because the *psuche*, or soul, or soul-life is in the blood. We have to recognise that just as God saw life in the blood that was upon the altar (not upon the ground), and in the blood that was taken through into the holy place, not death at all, so Life, in blood-form, has been poured out, and blood in Life-form has gone through into the presence of God. Read the 9th chapter of Hebrews and you see the High Priest took blood through as Life into the presence of God, and God saw Life upon the Mercy Seat, upon the Golden Altar, and on the horns of the Great Altar, but death on the ground. Blood shed, and thereby death effected—Blood now taken through in sprinkling, and Life offered. The Lord Jesus says, "I have authority to lay it (the Life) down, and authority to take it up again," and that is what we mean when we say, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, is cleansing us from all sin." That is what we mean when we speak, as John tells us, of drinking His blood, and that is what the hymn-writer means who says:—

My Jesus to know and feel His blood flow
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heav'n below.

We want to recognise this, that the Lord Jesus now is the Christ of God, Who is yet Jesus. The infinite Christ of God in Whom and upon Whom all the divine effulgence rests and is visible—"The visible image of the invisible God." And He is yet that Eternal One that He ever was, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday (in that long ago) and to-day and for ever." Yet He has taken upon Himself now the consummated form of His Being in His glorified Body; but you see He is waiting to incorporate into His Body out from the earth that which is to be the manifestation of the glory of His grace in the ages to come; and everything is hinging upon that. That is why

you and I must see that we are touching a Holy Thing. Though we may not be able to put it to ourselves in the terms which one is now, expressing it, yet you see it in your spirit and know it in your spirit. Never mind whether you can say it, and don't let the devil get you into oppression because you cannot say it, but because you *see* it you will enter into a relationship with God whereby His Spirit will energise you unto prayer for the bringing through of His Purpose at this time. We do need to see from these scriptures that the goings forth have been from eternity. That here is the King of Eternity; that here is the Father of Eternity, and here is the One whose going forth is like as the Sun, and Who will accomplish His Circuit.

This is the Heavenly Vision! We come back to Ephesians, and we must conclude here with just a glimpse into this. I do pray the Lord may give to you what He gave to me many years ago, the breaking in of this revelation which affects everything. Let us just read the passage and conclude with it, asking the Lord to shed light upon it:—

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Father in the three senses that we have spoken of. Father of His Spirit, Father of His Soul, and Father of His Body. Father of His Spirit from all eternity; Father of His Soul in the Only-begottenness of Bethlehem: Father of His Body in the Resurrection, Ascension. 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.') Who hath blessed us in every spiritual blessing in the heavenly things in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the cosmos, that we should be holy and without blame before Him; in love, having predestinated us unto sonship (unto an all-inclusive corporate sonship, not to single, individual sonships, but unto a sonship which we share. Not merely to be individual sons of God, but to be sons of God because we are in a corporate Sonship—the whole universe waits upon this—the manifestation of the sons of God! The corporate sonship of that Son when He shall be manifested in and with His members) through Jesus Christ to *Himself* according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us acceptable in the Beloved; in Whom we have (a continual) redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, wherein He hath abounded to us in every wisdom and

intelligence; having made known to us the mystery of His will (what is the current of the divine energy and purpose) according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself (you see it is something in Himself; something God is concerned about as pertaining to Himself. It is the arrival of a consummation of God—and now here is the emphasis)—*that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might head up all things in the Christ*, both which are in the heavens, and which are on earth, even in Him, in Whom we were made a heritage."

That comes down to my reversed individual experience, and if I can once get the direction of vision altered, not as from God to me for *my* benefit and for *my* salvation. If I can once get my eyes off myself, and the line of my vision not as upon what God is going to effect for me and do for me, and what I am going to get, but upon what am I to be for God, and what am I going to be in God for His glory, you see your problem is settled; you have found rest unto your souls; your cares are done with; you are living moment by moment in a Divine energy; you are living now by the Holy Ghost. Yes, physically also! That is the solution of all this talk about divine healing and the rest of it. It is not merely physical healing for me. No, it is that I may live the Christ by the energy of the Eternal Spirit in and through me. "It is no longer I, but the Christ living in me." But you see, that is not *toward* me? It is Godward. It is not that I may, so to speak, be saved for my little self; it is rather that in me and in my brethren and in you there might be a growing, increasing intensity of fellowship and love toward the divine glory, and you and I don't care in a manner what happens to us at all. You do not care what happens to you by way of your place and your ministry, and this and that; it is all buried in the grave of Christ, God has forgotten your miserable little entity and mine in the realm of our sinfulness, and He sees us in this new Life in Christ, and we are presented before Him, by the power of the cleansing blood, blameless. But He is wanting to get the current of the Divine Will through us, and that is what Paul says in Romans, where we have defined all the doctrine of our salvation, and of what God is going to do with Israel. You can leave that alone. God can bring that about after He gets us right, the church or Body. That you present your bodies a continual living sacrifice unto God, and be not conformed to the current of this age at all, but

be transfigured by the renewing of your mind. This mind that is now ceaselessly busy asking about the problems of yourself is being renewed with another mind, the mind of the Christ of God, and the vision of God the desire of God, the purpose of God, the mystery of His will, works in you and you prove what is that single, good, acceptable thing—the will of God.

Now that is the thing that lies behind this Testimony, and it is so pure, so holy, so selfless that God will sweep aside every bit of flesh that He may come through; and when He can get us there where we are willing, He is going to get a prayer company, not of those who think they can pray, but of those who are broken before Him, those who have in their hearts the travail of His Spirit. But that is all of His work, and it is so simple when it comes to this—"To work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." That is, you are before God as those who tremble and are humble, and know you are nothing, and simply confess to the name of Jesus, and the cleansing power of the blood and the work of the Cross, and when you are there—nothing—then is God able to work in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure, you co-operating with Him in continual assents of faith. May we see the sweep of this; in the midst of all the words of the Eternal God, by which the universes have been framed, and all the words that have been spoken through the prophets? He has set a tabernacle for the Sun, that He may accomplish His race, His circuit, His Consummation.

But this involves the completion of that Building, His Habitation, made up of representatives of all the nations of this fallen race, that it may be forever to the Praise of the Glory of His Race. This first! and then? The End.

T. M. J.

THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE

AUGUST 31st to SEPTEMBER 3rd.

THEME:

"THE MEANING AND MESSAGE
OF THE CROSS"

FRI. 31st at 7.30 p.m.

SAT. 1st at 3.30 and 7 p.m.

SUN. 2nd at 10 and 11 a.m., and 3 and 6.30 p.m.

MON. 3rd at 3.30 and 7.30 p.m.

Particulars fr. m Secretary.

THE SPIRITUAL CLINIC

Paralysis—continued.

The Paralysis of a Spiritual Irregularity.

FROM observation of the maladies which come upon the people of God and bring arrest to His work through them we have been much impressed with the fact that the violation of a Divine order is the cause of much trouble. If it is true that what God is doing in this age is not just saving individuals as such but in constituting a "Body" and building a "House" by the addition of each saved one, then the right position in each is vital to its perfect functioning and its heavenly order. There is an order, and there is a *position* for each member. It is not given to us—let us say it with emphasis—it is not given to us to appoint the place or to manipulate into position. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. What we do say is that each member has his or her place and God knows what it is. Under the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit each member should come into that place. If they fail to do so or get into a wrong place they fail in their essential ministry and upset the effectiveness of the Body.

"God hath set." Articulation is essential to life. "Unto each is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph. iv. 7).

"Having therefore gifts differing according to grace" (Rom. xii. 6).

There are not a few illustrations of dislocation and irregularity in the Scriptures:—

Dathan and Abiram and their company (Numbers vi.).

Aaron and Miriam (Numbers xii.).

Saul going over the head of Samuel (1 Sam. xiii. 9).

Uzziah presuming into the priest's office (2 Chron. xxvi.).

Paul has very much to say on matters of order in the Church, and it is not merely the individual position which is of importance, but the relative factor and element. Independent action is as dangerous as dislocation, it robs of covering and protection and exposes to enemy forces. There is a heavenly order, a spiritual system, and the relationships and ministries of believers are to be upon those spiritual principles and a reflection of that heavenly order..

What Paul says about woman's place in ministry and the domestic relationships of the saints can only be understood and appreciated in this light.

When one called of God to do the work of an evangelist assumes the role of a teacher, or vice-versa, or any one marked out for this particular functioning attempts to do that, or when one goes beyond their scope and assumes any prerogative which is not theirs by Divine ordering they are in the way of an arrested ministry, and more, they will be landed into serious confusion. People and things—otherwise occupying a vital position in the Divine plan—put into their wrong places have the Divine unction withdrawn from them. This becomes manifest and the spiritually undiscerning conclude that the thing or the person is outside of the Divine purpose and accordingly they rule them out. Thus much confusion and loss ensues.

Undoubtedly in New Testament times the recognition of the corporate nature of the Church and the definite prayer which followed the baptism of everyone who thereby testified to their identification with Christ was the initial establishing of this relative position and this truth of articulation, adjustment, and function. The Holy Ghost came in and took up the superintendence from that time, and any disorder thenceforth was against Him. In these few lines we have encircled a very wide and important field of truth and would plead for a prayerful retracing step by step with the Word. The Holy Spirit's method is to set His seal upon us as we move according to His leading; not according to our fancy, choice, aptitude, predilection or ambition.

(WE have not yet covered all the ground concerning spiritual paralysis, but we feel led to move to another subject just now. Doubtless we shall come back to finish the aforesaid.)

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

Probably a larger place is given in the Scriptures to the subject of spiritual sight and spiritual blindness than to any other matter relating to life in union with God. One has only to call to mind such common words as: light, darkness; sight, eyes, revelation, vision; knowledge, ignorance; understanding, wisdom, foolishness, error, lies; day, night, &c., to realise how true this is, for all these are related to the inner perception and the organ of spiritual discernment as quickened by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual enlightenment and vision is clearly and definitely shown in the Word of God to be basic to—

1. Salvation.
2. Growth in holiness and power.
3. Vocation and service.
4. The Oneness and effectiveness of the "Body of Christ."

Hence all these designations of the Adversary, e.g., "Darkness," "Deceiver," "Liar," "Blinder," reveal that to prevent salvation, hinder spiritual growth, destroy ministry, and bring about a weakening schism in the corporate testimony he will by any conceivable means interfere with spiritual enlightenment, to prevent, confuse, injure, or deceive. Let us make a sweep of this field by saying right at the outset that the entire matter of life—growth, cohesiveness, holiness, fellowship, concerted action, effectual fulfilment of the Divine purpose rests upon a true spiritual and heavenly vision. While on the other hand death, paralysis, stagnation, barrenness, disintegration, schism, conflict, divisions, bitterness, wrath, hatred, malice, evil-speaking, personal engrossment; susceptibility, hyper-sensitiveness, criticism, jealousies, offences, defeat, contradiction, chaos, defilement, deadlock, are fruits of—

- (a) A loss or absence of a true or adequate heavenly vision.
- (b) A false—or merely mental—as differing from a vital—vision.

THE vision—not the mental concept—but THE vision which is *living* is that of Christ Crucified as the All-inclusive, All-pre-eminent, All-pervading, All-sufficient, All-mighty Sovereign Head; "the Lamb in the midst of the Throne." This vision will lead to everything else mentioned, and only as it grows will there be an adequate motive for all included in salvation, sanctification, vocation, oneness.

This vision is essentially and inseparably bound up with the Cross. For it the Cross is demanded. The Cross alone makes it possible. All that hinders and limits it is dealt with in and by the Cross. It is only given on the ground of Calvary, and it for evermore makes the Cross an abiding necessity as a working force.

Seeing then that spiritual vision is the basis and axis of all it is no wonder that against it the enemy uses all his devices which are as many as his legions. His methods vary with the people with whom he has to deal. They cannot be tabulated and listed, but we hope ere we are through with this subject to state the principle by which they may all be detected. Our method we feel will be, in

following out this theme, to deal with the spheres, the nature, the causes of defective spiritual sight; the nature, the basis, and the need of spiritual vision, initial and progressive. The spheres relate to the realm out of Christ and in Christ, and deal with—

- (a) The natural man.
- (b) The carnal mind.
- (c) The place of spiritual progress.
- (d) The realm of service and ministry.
- (e) The corporate life of "the Church—the Body of Christ."

The nature of defective sight will cover the various forms which are illustrated in the physical realm.

All these have their causes, to understand which is to discover the remedy.

We shall find it impossible to be too emphatic in our declaration that one of the most vital organs and faculties of the spiritual life, upon which hangs greater and more issues than any other is that spiritual perception—the eye of the heart or spirit. Without this progress must be slow, hesitating, blundering, and fraught with many calamities.

For special ministry in the Body of Christ a special gift of spiritual discernment is imparted by the "One Spirit," but discernment is surely intended to be a normal condition in a live member of that Body; yet how few give evidence of possessing it in any measure sufficient to safeguard themselves from error, or even provide for them a ground of certitude and assurance.

But we have anticipated our subject a little, let us return to the first sphere which is that of

NATURE'S DARKNESS ; SIGHTLESS EYES.

In this realm all the children of Adam, who are yet such, are gathered and over the portal of this domain many inscriptions may be read, each one telling of their condition as in darkness, but the one which *seems* to make their condition so hopeless is this "Neither *can* they know" (1 Corinthians ii. 14).

This, of course, does not mean that the saving truth is withheld from without, but that in them there is no organ capable of taking hold of *that* truth. The faculty has been destroyed and even though they would see and perceive it is not *in themselves* to do so. Unless with the presentation of the light and the truth there is also given a capacity to perceive and apprehend then their condition is *indeed* hopeless. But let us look in and see

who these are and what they are. We may be surprised and astonished, for surely such a condition seems to speak of gross wickedness and deep depths of flagrant iniquity. Well, that depends upon your standpoint; from God's, yes, but from man's—not necessarily and not always. Here truly will be found such as are sinners manifest to all; here heathens who are often referred to by the "civilised" (?) as "sitting in darkness" (what a false comparison!), but here also are included the most enlightened by the light of civilisation as such. Here are some of the greatest brains the world has known. Here are multitudes of the most scholarly and learned. Here are even many whose researches have led them far into the realms of theology and theosophy. Yes, they include many who have held place in ministry and office in what is called "The Church." Many of these live lives which from man's point of view are morally almost flawless. And yet, and yet, with all they do not know in that realm and in that vital way which is "life," eternal life, because Divine and not human life. Look again! What is their description? "The natural man receiveth not...neither *can* he know the things of the Spirit of God." It should be well known by now that that word "natural" in the Greek is psychical. Perhaps the faulty translation is not altogether unfortunate for the natural man in the psychical man, and the psychical man is the natural man. He is a different species—so to speak—from the spiritual man. As the word implies the psychical man is entirely governed and bound by reason, feeling, volition, within a world of sense. But the things of the Spirit of God are not in that realm in the first instance. True, spiritual forces can and do register themselves upon psychical apparatus, but the psychical apparatus does not *know* them (hence the delusion and deception of spiritism), and this is true to the absolute in the matter of the things of God. Not only the delusion of spiritism has its ground in the psychical as a registering apparatus, but the entire counterfeit of the truly spiritual or divinely spiritual is in this realm. Evangelism, "Apostolic" teaching and practice (?), "Pentecostal" experience (?), prayer force, and even exorcism *can* all be merely psychical. Signs, sensations, impacts, can be psychically produced by the use of the most orthodox New Testament language and doctrine, even the Name and the Blood of Jesus may be employed in terms and language.

There is only one sure safeguard against the colossal delusion by which *multitudes* will be carried away in the latter days, and that is a clear apprehension of the teaching of the Holy Spirit concerning soul and spirit and the continual operation of the Cross in the realm of the "natural" man.

No, the *natural* man CANNOT! He may be full of religious knowledge, emotions or feelings, and activities, but if the Bible thunders more than speaks on any matter it is this that such can be the most mistaken and deceived.

The highest reach of genius comes far short of the lowest degree of Divine inspiration and revelation.

Christianity is not a system of philosophy but a revelation to faith. The Bible does not argue this truth, it simply affirms it as fact and in its own language describes its nature.

Man cannot by searching find out God. There is nothing that man *can* do which will be in itself a basis of that knowledge which to possess is "life eternal."

"Thus," you will say, "what is the use of preaching, why call upon men in the name of the Lord to listen to and obey the gospel?" The answer has two sides. As to those preached to, they can adopt an attitude. They can manifest a desire or willingness. They can face one way or the other. There is a double blindness of which we yet have to speak which comes upon those who being among the "cannots" of nature, place themselves among the "will nots" by deliberate choice. The attitude which recognises the fact of "cannot" and faces toward the light in willingness to see provides God with the needed opportunity for working His work.

On the other hand all preaching which is of any avail to salvation must be in faith and in the Holy Ghost. Faith, because there is no ground of apprehension in man apart from the action of God, and in the Holy Ghost because He alone can impart the "faith unto salvation" and the ability to apprehend on the part of the unsaved. Hence, man cannot be saved when he likes and chooses. It is not given to man to fix the time when he shall "accept Christ," any more that it is in the power of the blind to decide when they shall have eyes. The Lord Jesus alone can "open the eyes of the blind." He came to do it and is still willing to do it, but there is constantly coming for many the time when

"Jesus of Nazareth has passed by."

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, HONOR OAK ROAD, LONDON, S.E.23.

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship.
Sundays: 11 a.m., 3 p.m. (Young People's Meeting), and 6.30 p.m. Mondays: 7.30 p.m. Wednesdays: 8 p.m.
Saturdays: 7.30 p.m.

Conferences are held every week-end (Saturday and Sunday), and also a longer week-end at the beginning of each month, this fixed by the first Sunday. (Friday to Monday evenings, inclusive.) All particulars may be obtained from G. Paterson, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

Ministers: T. Austin-Sparks; T. Madoc Jeffreys; G. Paterson (General Secretary).

Guest House Hostesses: Lady Ogle; Mrs. M. Brand.

Telephone: Sydenham 5216.

Telegrams: "Synodosmos, Forest, London."

Cables "Synodosmos, London."

We have often been disturbed those leading men of letters, science, religion; men who have gained eminence in various walks of life and are considered authorities on certain subjects, have been called upon to speak on the great questions of the Bible: subjects which touch vitally eternal relationships between God and man; subjects of human origin and destiny. Too often the unenlightened readily allows these views and philosophies to become a kind of creed for them. Let it be said again, with new emphasis, that the only saving knowledge is that which has come by revelation which brings certainty upon a basis of an experience of God, and those who have this are not experts or exponents but "witnesses." Theirs it is to testify, and the truth of their testimony can only be known by faith energised by the Spirit of God.

So then from first to last for all vital knowledge of God the action of the Holy Spirit is essential. This action is from without in the case of the "natural man" and only leads to a certain point where an attitude becomes necessary to the next step. It is from that step that the real history of a personal knowledge of God begins. The step determines whether there will be that done in man which becomes the ground of progressive knowledge of a spiritual character. We have yet to speak of what that ground is. Here, at the outset we have but laid stress upon an initial fact to be ignorant of which, or to ignore which, is to make for deadlock on God's side and "strong delusion" on the devil's side.

T. A.-S.

(To be continued.)

NEW BOOK

'The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.'
By T. Austin-Sparks. With three-coloured diagram. Limp cover edition, Ninepence. Postage 1½d.

(Continued from page 126.)

The Church is nothing which man can build by any resource in himself personally or collectively. The Church is an organism not an organisation. "Behold, I show you a mystery, we are members of His flesh and of His bones." Build that, if you can! Launch that; organise that; "run" that! It cannot be done. It is the spontaneous outworking of spiritual forces released, in the acceptance by faith of tremendous facts concerning Christ, which facts are proclaimed out of experience in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Not the theological Christ; not the doctrinal Christ; not the Christ of the letter; much less the Jesus of history: but the Christ of Eternity in all the meaning of His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into the Throne of God revealed in the heart by the Holy Spirit. This alone is authority to preach, to serve, to occupy position, to "build" in relation to the house of God. It is folly to spend time and strength otherwise. It is wisdom to labour on this foundation.

We shall proceed later to speak of The Gospel of the Wise master-builder. T. A.-S.

BOOKLETS

(WITNESS AND TESTIMONY.)

The following are now available:—

By T. Austin-Sparks:—

- 'Incorporation into Christ.' No. 1. Price 2d.
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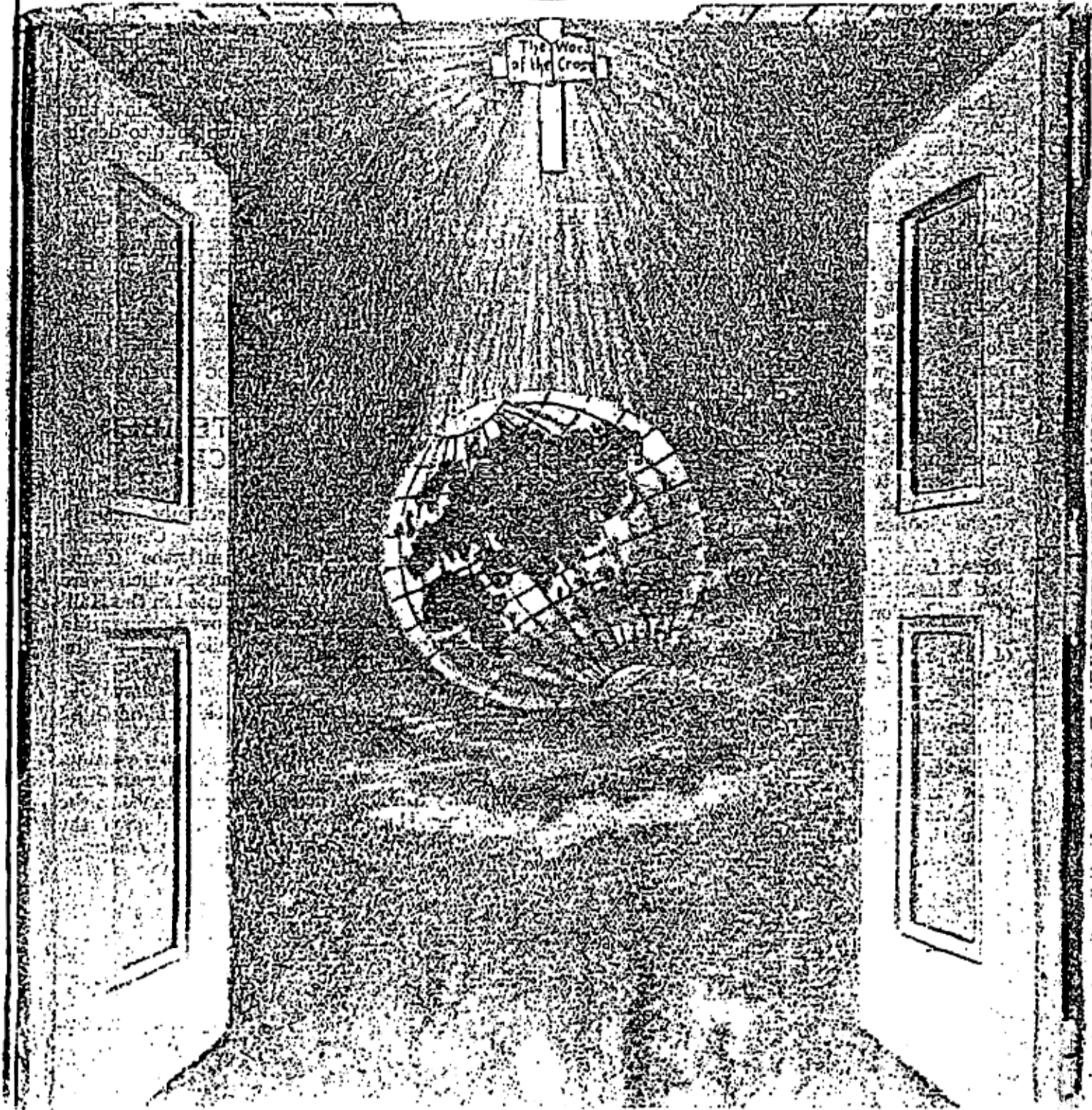
Some of the above booklets are published in French, Italian and Dutch. Enquire concerning same if desired.

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

SEPTEMBER, 1928



VOL. 6. No. 9



MINISTERS' LETTER

(Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre.)

September, 1928.

BELOVED OF THE LORD,

"The glory of the celestial is one; and the glory of the terrestrial is another." There is a glory of the spirit and a glory of "the flesh": spiritual glory and psychical glory.

To the Church which is the Body of the Christ of God belongs the celestial glory: its members rejoice upon the hope of the Glory of God.

But this means the forsaking of every less glory, and thus indicates the range of the operation of the Cross. It was so Jesus—the Christ of God on earth entered into that exceeding glory of the Godhead as the Infinite Christ of God far above all heavens yet still the same Jesus!

The glory of the Only-Begotten was not effulgent here on earth in His fashion as a man, except through revelation to the "twelve," in the "signs." He wrought, and in the Mount. He was, as it were, hiding His face from us. It was not seen then as it is now by the Spirit—the Face of God! Nevertheless, the celestial glory was there, though veiled. He was in the *similitude* of sinful flesh yet to the discerning there was revealed a glory full of grace and truth. Ultimately, as we have seen, He was manifestly glorified in the glory of the Godhead, the Being of the Father; and *this as MAN*: but on earth the glory was hidden from the eyes of men, and He so humbled Himself in all the obedience of the faith of His Passion that every aspect of terrestrial glory was so far removed from Him that none of the princes of this world knew Him.

Beloved, we have to recognise that this is going to be the "form" of our life now: hidden with Christ in God, celestial, it is also hidden in our hearts and from men, being found only as grace and truth in us. Present grace is celestial glory. Are we content to shine in a way that never glorifies us terrestrially? To be unrecognised of men, in lowliness and impoverishment of all things that men hold in honour, yet known of God, and shining celestially! Witnessing now to principalities and powers the beauty of that VAIL, His Flesh, Glorified, into which we are being inwrought by the Holy Spirit as members! This is the "embroidered wisdom of God" made manifest in the heavenlies as *grace*, the

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Church.

The Lord is seeking such as are prepared to suffer the loss of all things that He may give them the riches of His celestial glory. "Go, sell *all* that thou hast!" It is sufficient that the disciple be as His Lord, poor on earth, rich in heaven. A conformity to the Glory of that MAN in the Throne means a conformity to His death here upon the earth.

The strong cry of our hearts these past days has been "THAT I MAY KNOW *Him*, and the power of *His* resurrection, and the fellowship of *His* sufferings, being made conformable to *His* death, if by any means....!"

Thank God, His Spirit in us lusts against the flesh. We *can* through the Spirit put to death the doings of the body. We can die daily, bearing about in our bodies the "deadness" of the Lord Jesus, and all the while the celestial glory is being manifested as the Grace of God. We sigh for glory in our weaker moments; we already shine in glory in our times of His instrengthening.

Yours for *His* Glory in the Church,

T: AUSTIN-SPARKS.

T. MADOC JEFFREYS.

NOTES ON SEPTEMBER CONFERENCE

"THE Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." He certainly came in with some surprising mercies. Conference weather prevailed, and consequently the "Tent" proved ideal for the gatherings, which were much too large to be accommodated in the Hall. The House was again full to overflowing, and an atmosphere of blessed fellowship in the Spirit pervaded all.

Our greatest personal joy was to have our brother, Mr. Sparks, in a full tide of anointed ministry.

After the first gathering on Friday evening, an initial season which sometimes represents difficulty owing to the enemy's resistance to the utterance, but which in this case gave the "key" to the Conference in the apostle's cry of Philippians iii. 10, "That I may know *Him*!" the subsequent gatherings were a continuous fellowship in the revelation of Jesus as the Eternal "I AM." The Lord unveiled His Person in all His Process of Purpose throughout the ages, with the Cross as the consummatory Centre of all His activities.

But the Holy Spirit laid especially solemn

emphasis upon the fact that this knowledge of the Christ is in "a Life," the power of His Resurrection, and that only in the dynamic of this "Life" shared in and with Him could there be the cosmic service, "fellowship with Him in His sufferings," and thereby conformity to His death.

It was a rich time, but imposed upon us the responsibility of receiving much more light; and the call to our heavenly vocation as fellow-labourers with God the Son in the works of the Holy Spirit, the greater works made possible through Calvary's triumph, has become the more insistent.

It is not our purpose to detail the theme. Reports of the messages are in this issue, and more will follow. It was the Glory of Christ, the Head, that was unveiled, but the concluding note was "Grace," and the measure of His Fulness was seen to be the very confidence of our sufficiency both to live and to serve.

The two gatherings of special character—Saturday evening, for 'Elementary Principles,' the Word of the beginning, and Sunday afternoon, 'The Cross, and the World Outlook' warranted their inception. The former was unusually large, indicating the love for the sincere "logic" of the Word. The subject, which reviewed the many causes of failure and immaturity in Christian experience, can be stated thus: "The first principle of real Christian experience is to know Him, Jesus, the Ascended Lord as *life*."

"The Testimony of Jesus among the Nations" was naturally the theme of what would otherwise be known as a missionary meeting, but the world impact of the Truth declared by the Spirit through the members of His Body in corporate fellowship is *one*, and cannot be divided into home and foreign service. But this provides the vision and incentive for a more urgent missionary zeal, for the Holy Spirit's objective is to secure that the Testimony of Jesus should be raised as an issue in every nation, and thus obtaining a "handful of corn" in every tribe of earth, and this despite the gates of hell, so that the Resurrection Son of Man shall soon be perfected. Matthew xxiv. 14; Gal. iii. 28 (literal version)—"Ye are all ONE MAN in Christ Jesus."

Several testimonies to IDENTIFICATION with our Lord in His death and Resurrection were borne. We append a very helpful word upon the Godward aspect of these testimonies given by our brother, Mr. Oliphant, on Saturday afternoon.

FELLOWSHIP AND MINISTRY

THE holiday season has passed, and there has been a return home of those who have been enjoying well-earned rest, and of others who have been labouring in various spheres.

The activities in gospel proclamation, in the full message of the Cross, and the other aspects of the ministry of the Word are becoming so numerous, and involve such detail of name and place that it is both inconvenient and inexpedient also to issue what might appear to be advertisement.

We praise God for the many calls for this Witness and Testimony to the Lord, and the work of His Cross as manifested in a Life shared in a Body. These are coming in an embarrassing degree from local centres, while further afield there is great hunger and there are many opportunities.

OCTOBER CONFERENCE

THIS will be held as from Friday evening, the 5th, to Monday evening, the 8th.

The theme would seem from relate to 'The Cross, and the release of the Holy Spirit in Service.'

"SOVEREIGN HEAD"

THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST

Notes on a Conference Address.

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death."—Philippians iii. 10.

THESE words express the life-long quest of the Apostle. This quest had swallowed up all other interests, ambitions, and values. There was a time when he boasted above any other man of the advantages which were his by reason of ancestry, descent, inheritance, status, achievement, rectitude, influence, &c.

"If any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the Church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless." There had come to Paul a glimpse of something which had made all this appear to him as "the veriest refuse" in comparison. That glimpse had been growing steadily, had

reached the dimensions of "unspeakable things," but here right at the end of his life he is still crying "That I may know Him!" From all the writings of this inspired man we are going to seek to know what it was that had been breaking upon him as the revelation which was so all-absorbing, all-consuming, and what he saw to be the issues of such a knowledge. We therefore turn to see when and where this thing commenced, and what the commencement was. This is undoubtedly found in Acts ix, 5. Here, smitten to the ground by the fierce blaze of the heavenly glory and in answer to his enquiry "Who art Thou, Lord?" The answer came clear, straight, deliberate, strong,

"I AM—JESUS!"

This answer issued in the collapse of an entire system and the reconstruction of everything for Saul who now became Paul. It sent him for two or three years into Arabia to get the significance of it. There is one phase of this declaration which we may immediately consider. Those words "I AM" which not only declared a fact but formed a designation, had often been on the lips of Jesus in the days of His flesh, and they had never been used by Him without some tremendous eternal significance on the one hand and some vital effect on the other. Let us look at some of these occasions: John iv. 26.—"I that speak unto Thee am" (he)

The "he" is not in the original, and the Greek literally reads "Jesus said to her, 'Who speaking to thee *I am*.'" See the consequences of this!

John vi. 20.—"He saith unto them, it is I, be not afraid." The Greek here again is "He saith, '*I am*,' be not afraid."

John viii. 24.—"Except ye believe that *I am*, ye shall die in your sins."

John viii. 28.—"When ye have lifted up the Son of man ye shall know that *I am*."

John viii. 58.—"Before Abraham was, *I am*."

John xiii. 19.—"I tell you before it is come to pass that when it is come to pass you may believe that *I am*."

John xviii. 5.—"Jesus said, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them *I am*. When therefore He said unto them, *I am*, they went backward and fell to the ground."

Later in our meditations we shall come to see something of the great spiritual meaning of some of the more familiar "I am's" of Jesus, but here we are just pointing out that this declaration carried with it a potency of tremendous effect, and it was both the statement as a

fact and as a power which started Paul on this great quest and opened the way for the revelation of the eternal and comprehensive purpose of God in Christ.

Paul started by coming to see that the Jesus of the New Testament is the "I am" of the Old, but it went beyond that, it ranged the eternities and the ages.

"Before Abraham was *I am*," that as to past eternity, "before times eternal."

"I AM He that liveth...and behold I am alive unto the ages of the ages."—that as to the eternity yet to be.

We now turn to look through Paul's enlightened eyes, as we are given spiritual perception, at the first phase of this range of the revelation.

JESUS: BEFORE TIMES ETERNAL.

The whole system and scheme of things in the universe was related to this, "Jesus," "I am," "before times eternal." It would take all our time, beloved, to turn up the references to everything we are going to say, and you will pardon me if I don't do that; but you can follow closely and go to the word yourself, and, like good Bereans "see if these things are so," and you must just give me your confidence that what I am saying is with scriptural foundation, but of course most of you will be readily able to see this with the very words of scripture with which you are familiar.

Now, then, go back into the eternity past and find the Lord Jesus there. Of course, this mere fact may not carry you very far, but the interpretation of the fact, the revelation of the nature of the fact which has come to Paul is very very vital for present purposes, and we must be pre-eminently practical. We are not dealing with eternity past in itself merely as such, we are bringing the facts out of eternity past to bear upon the present and immediate issue. This is the important thing, and this is really what we are after. When Paul, by revelation, takes you back there in his knowledge of Jesus eternally co-existent with the Father, he sees something happening back there. He sees many things happening; he sees one thing with two sides happening. Firstly, he sees the Father with a purpose in the nature of a design, what we would call a scheme, but the Greek word is not a safe word to use in this connection. In the Greek it means things which are external, which change. "The fashion (*schema*) of this world passeth away," so that one would not suggest that. What was in the mind of the

Father was something transcendent and unchanging, but it was a design, a plan, a purpose, and that purpose was concerning His Son; and in and through and by and unto that Son all the divine thought and intention, purpose and plan was designed. And so, for that purpose, that specific thing, the Second Person in the Godhead becomes the First Begotten. Then, and right up until His resurrection through the Incarnation He was the Only Begotten, but in design He was also to be the First Begotten. In the resurrection He was the First Begotten, and there were those begotten after in Him; but we leave that; that is the other side. "The only Begotten of the Father," and He became in that sense the Only Begotten Son, and then the Father (I am putting it in our language) as it were, tells the Son the whole plan and purpose, and brings the Son into fellowship with Himself in this, and, in effect, He says to the Son, Now this is My plan, My design, My purpose, My will FOR YOU; and it is all for you, and it is all to have its fulfilment in you and for you and through you. The whole universe is to be involved, and I gather it up for you and unto you to work it out through you. ("All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father"—"For unto Him, and through Him and by Him were all things created.") And now, says the Father in effect to the Son, It is yours, it is for you ultimately, finally, consummately. It is for you, and I secure it in you; it is your inheritance as Son and Heir. ("Whom He appointed heir of all things.") Now you undertake the realisation of it, whatever it costs; and there is, as it were, the Divine glance down the ages, and the dark shadow crosses the path, the shadow of sin, an apparent breakdown, an arrest, a coming in of sinister elements and of the issue and consequence, and the necessity for the Cross. And the Father says, "Yes, do you accept that?" "Yes, I accept that and enter right into that now in all the pain and the passion and the agony of it." And "The Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world." Calvary became in eternity a realised thing before ever it came forth into time. The whole thing is gone through with the Son in prospect and committed unto the Son. You read those wonderful passages that come through Paul (and I assume that Paul had at least a very real hand in the writing of the Hebrew letter—if it were not his own hand it was as near his own dictation as could be) which take you back there and tell you, "Thy throne O God is for ever and ever."

Concerning the Son, read that marvellous first chapter of Hebrews again, and see what He says of the Son; and then take the first chapter of Colossians and see again back in eternity, what the Father is committing unto the Son, including in the Son, determining for the Son, and through the Son, and all ultimately unto the Son. Then first of all towards this realisation is the creating of the ages, and the Son does it unto a Purpose; the Son comes forth and creates the ages—"By Whom He created the ages." The Son created the ages unto a specific thing which the Father had registered for Him in Eternity as His Son.

Now that is one side. It is a marvellous thing which would occupy and fascinate us, and I think move us tremendously if we were to stay with it long enough, and you know the grip of a thing like that, how difficult it is to pass on when it is breaking upon you all the time. No wonder he said, "A Hebrew of Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, circumcised the eighth day,"—"what 'piffle' compared with *this!* I count all that the utmost refuse that I MAY KNOW HIM!"—he is seeing this vast thing—I AM, JESUS, before Times Eternal, with all this meaning of the Father, and much more. But, beloved, there is the other side of this two-fold thing. O, wonder of wonders, he sees that the realisation of this was not just the Son in an isolated capacity, not the Son by Himself, One alone, a Unit in the universe to have all this for himself, but it is the Son in a corporate capacity! That word corporate is losing its force and power, and I am foraging around to find a better word for "corporate" that will revive the meaning of it—the *inclusive-ness* of the Son—and Paul sees. Yes, the Father made a covenant with the Son. The Father came to an understanding with the Son. The Father did all this with and for the Son, but, at the same time, when the Father chose the Son tho Only Begotten, chose Him deliberately, and the Son entered into the choice of the Father, when He had done that, the next step was to be, "we were chosen *in Him* (the Son) before the foundation of the world." "We were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world"; and then a whole system of activities was projected called, "the works of the Son." Have you fathomed the works of the Son? Have you ranged the works of the Son? And these works were settled before the foundation of the world. The works were set and fixed and finished that we should walk in them—finished before the foundation of the world

(Eph. ii. 10, Heb. iv. 3, &c.) There is a vocation settled in eternity; there is a kind of conduct, a nature of procedure, a system of activities out from God in the Son all ready prepared that we should walk in them. And then something more. The Son, "the express image of the Father's glory" (Hebrews, Philipians), in the form of God—"Who being in the form of God"—the Son in the likeness of the Father, an express image, or *eikon*, representation of the Father, of course containing also, as the extra phrase has it, "the very underlying essence of His substance," but in presentation, or representation, of the Father; that is the Son. Now listen—"we were foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son." Is not this mighty? Is not this wonderful? Not that we shall partake of the essence of deity, but that we shall be a manifestation, expression of His glory, of His nature, a reproduction of God in glorified human form—The Son Incarnate—glorified humanity expressing the very likeness and image of God; in that realm becoming the "Archetypal" Man, the Supreme Head, into which all are to be conformed; fore-ordained away back there in the Eternal Counsels, the Father and the Son and the Spirit in counsel, and the Father, as it were, revealing the design, the Son entering into it, and the Spirit co-operating as the Executive in all this. But *we* were in it, and in the foreview we were chosen in Him, and fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of His Son. What a background! What a thing to miss! What a motive for our being at all! What a key to our existence! Does anyone ask, "Why was I born? I never was consulted as to whether I should come into the world. Life is an awful enigma and full of pain. O that the darkness had covered me on the day of my birth!" So some talk. O beloved, let him who knows a little of Him speak to your heart and take you into this. But one wants to come to a very practical proposition, and I shall have to close almost at once. You see we were fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of His Son. That is in the Purpose of God, a people, a race, represented in Jesus Christ in an inclusive representation, sharing His Life, sharing God's Eternal Purpose which is in Him, inheriting His heritage in God, secured in Christ through faith and ultimating in His likeness.

Now that is the grand first view of "I AM" before Times Eternal; but this is the practical thing—get this if you miss everything else—

"Conformed to the image of His Son." The Greek word behind our English word "conformed" is the opposite to that word which I have just mentioned *schema*. This is *morphe*. *Schema* and *morphe* are opposites. *Schema* means the presentation in an outward form, which nevertheless is a changing form, or fashion that passes; *morphe* is the essential likeness, abiding likeness, or nature, the thing that is real and enduring. Now that word "conformed" is *morphe*. What is conversion? It is not *schema*, an outward change of fashion that passes, it is taking on the permanent likeness of Jesus Christ. That is conversion, *morphe*—converted to His likeness. It is not merely a change, but it is a change to a certain definite image, a certain definite form. Is that what we mean by conversion? Is that what we are talking about when we ask, "Have you had any conversions?" Is this what we are after when we say we are out for conversions? Is this the aim, the goal you have in an evangelistic campaign? Does conversion with you mean the taking on of the germ of the eternal image of Jesus Christ? In other words, receiving the Divine Nature, destined to transform and to make us like unto Himself, receiving the abiding likeness, image of Jesus Christ, and having received into us the Life, which has it in itself to bring about the very likeness of Christ, we are progressively converted, transformed, transfigured into His likeness? Even *that* is conversion. You see even for the evangelist we have to come right back to before times eternal. We see now that conversion means that, and that we were fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of His Son. That is conversion, beloved, and do you wonder—I do not, as I come to see this—that our ideas and our methods and means are altogether inadequate. We cannot bring this about by any kind of revival singing. We may work up an atmosphere to a tremendous tension with choruses and sensational stories, but it is a wonder that really anything abiding does happen sometimes, and I am not at all surprised that the thing breaks down before long, and unless you keep up the sensation and emotion and all that sort of thing it collapses; unless you bolster it up and keep it going, and put your shoulder behind it all the time it flops and goes out. Let us get an adequate conception of what conversion is, and then all mean methods, all this rubbish will be thrown aside, and we shall have an adequate

gospel. And what the world is languishing for is an adequate gospel, a gospel which has in it that power which can accomplish the Eternal Purpose of God—"Conformed to the image of His Son." Now what can do that? That is the question we have to answer. Nothing less than the mighty energising of the Eternal Spirit out from God, the Spirit of the Covenant, the Spirit of the Purpose, the Spirit of the counsels of God, the Spirit Who, in effect, said, "I will go out and be the Instrument of this Almighty Power to function, to bring about this Purpose for the Son." And the Spirit is working for the Son all the time, not speaking of Himself, not making Himself the figure-head, not bringing Himself before the eyes of others, but all the time glorifying the Son, working mightily for the Son; and in the Son, and through the Son, enabling Him to go through the Cross by the Eternal Spirit. Nothing less than that, beloved, the very omnipotence of God Himself, can bring about our conversion to the image of His Son.

Now Paul sees that. That is the thing that has broken upon him. He sees Jesus before times eternal, and he sees what the Father has determined concerning Jesus, and then he sees his relationship to Jesus and in Jesus, chosen and then fore-ordained to a certain end, and that end the image of His Son, and he says, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection," in order that I might be conformed to His image. That is the end. Of course it means much more than that, but I have stopped here with just this one thing. Do you know something now of the meaning of conversion? What have been your thoughts about conversion? Perhaps we have been guilty of thinking of *schema* instead of *morphe*? That is, a change of fashion of life, a change of mode of life, a change of things more or less outward in behaviour and conduct; instead of going to certain places, coming to meetings and all that. Well, now, that is not good enough when you have got to meet the impact that the Eternal Son meets in the Cross for the realisation of the Eternal Purpose. Nothing less than the very Life Principle of the Eternal Son resident within one will suffice to realise and attain unto the Purpose of God before times eternal in the Lord Jesus.

O beloved, this is our quest, That I may know Him thus, and this is where we begin. You have got to come down to the first activities of the Son in creation, that He is the creating One, "By Him the worlds were

created"—"All things were created by Him and unto Him"—"In Him all things hold together"—"Upholding all things by the word of His power." This is the Son, and yet in the ultimate issue, it is not the isolated Unit, it is the Corporate Christ which is going to reign. It is the "Archetypal" Man, a Man with all those gathered up in Him who are to reign. The saints shall rule the world. Where we begin is—Have we got the principle of sonship, the power of sonship, that He was the Only Begotten, and in a sense is always the Only Begotten, and that He has in His resurrection become the First-born among many brethren, the First Begotten of a whole company of those sons whom He is going to bring to glory? The sense in which He is going to bring many sons into glory is not just to a place but to a state. He is the Son inclusive of all the sons who are "joint-heirs" with Him as the Heir. "He is the Heir of all things," and "we are joint-heirs with Christ," says the word, for "all things are His."

It is wonderful this unveiling of Jesus Christ, the "I AM," but you begin here with the principle of sonship, and that, of course, goes back—we share His Life and are attested sons in the Son by the power of the resurrection into which we enter through the Cross. We once and for all recognise His Cross as having for ever put away one system, an old type, and accept that and reckon ourselves in that mighty putting away and concluding of God, "God hath concluded all under sin." That is, He has finished everything under sin, and in that finishing, that concluding of God we have taken our place by faith truly, for ever reckoning that system, that type as gone. It is not for us any longer; we repudiate it all along, deny that self, and recognise that in His resurrection He has commenced this eternal thing, He Himself being "declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead," and we who have shared His death, and have been "planted together with Him in the likeness of His death" are now "in the likeness of His resurrection" on resurrection ground, receiving the gift of the Spirit of sonship, "born of the Spirit," "born from above" by the act of God. That is the basis; that is the beginning of the conversion which is to issue in His image, and "I shall be satisfied when I awake in His likeness." And the whole creation has become involved. "The whole creation groaneth, travaileth in pain until now." What for? "For the manifestation of the sons." You see here is this passion, the

passion of God entering into creation unto this end. Creation writhes in its impotence and helplessness to get to the end God has fixed; it cannot; it waits for the manifestation of the sons; and when they are manifest creation shall be redeemed with them—delivered! But we have gone on too far and must come back again to the principle and law of sonship, that is, *conversion*, to issue in His likeness—"That I may know Him."

The Lord answer our prayer as it really comes from our hearts more and more in the light of all this—"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection."—Amen.

T. A.-S.

SUBSTANCE OF A BRIEF MESSAGE AT A BAPTISMAL TESTIMONY ON SEPT. 1

ONE has been finding in one's spirit increasingly on occasions such as this, an emphasis upon an aspect of the testimony made here this afternoon that is, perhaps, not the one most commonly spoken of at these times—namely, the *Godward* side of the Testimony.

As the Spirit gives direction, we most rightly dwell, now on the fact of our identification with Christ—that which has been wrought in the Cross, and what will follow in the out-working—now on the significance of obedience in testimony; now on the truth of the Body. These aspects and others rightly claim our deep attention. But there is this other aspect of this baptismal testimony, as with all the other testimonies which are likewise occasions for "the discerning of the Body," namely, the purely *Godward* side—that of which the Spirit-wrought obedience of the child of God becomes the occasion to God Himself.

In bringing His children to this matter of open testimony in baptism, God seems, so to speak, to have deliberately *secured* for Himself a specific *opportunity* of glorifying the Name of His Son and all His purpose in and through the Son secured in the Cross.

True Baptism in fact is ever a reverent challenge to the entire Godhead which can never meet with a denial, and not only so, but was deliberately intended to occasion this activity of the Godhead.

It has been pointed out before now in this place that it was as the Lord came *up out of the waters*—typical of the presence of Resurrection Life, that the Spirit descended and the Father's voice was heard. Now where the baptism of a believer as a truly spirit-wrought and spirit-led

obedience, there of necessity must ever be this seal of God—even though not now outwardly seen and heard. God cannot deny what is out from Himself or withhold the seal of His ownership thereof. It is this fact that is so much in one's spirit these days and which should prove of such immense comfort and consolation in these days of the end.

As we come forward to this testimony it is as those who are without strength in themselves, yet bearing record to a work of the grace of God within them, of a relationship established for ever with us in the Son by the Spirit, and in response to that Spirit—enabled testimony on our part, and against the challenge that is provoked thereby to all that is hostile to God, the Godhead moves out into action. The Holy Ghost rises up in the House to bear record that it is even so, to seal the testimony and to set up an everlasting Amen to the truth and to say "I am never going to have that testimony thrown down or destroyed."

You will see in the Word how jealous God is in the matter of ownership even in earthly things, "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbours' landmark," and in this matter God is jealous over His Son and will not have His ownership of us, His relationship to us—union with us in His Son denied. Though all hell may rage, endeavour to blot out and seek to disparage, God says "I have borne record, I will never have that testimony moved out of its place. This is a blood purchased vessel, incorporated into Me as this one has by My grace borne record, and I give My Amen—here will I be found and here have I set up that which is everlasting.

What a confidence this should minister in these days when the fury of the oppressor increases on all hands. And, of course, this too, is the reason of the conflict—for in being incorporated into Christ and into His Body, we become part of the Judgment Instrument of God—it is the Corporate Son that shall at length sit in judgment on the whole Satanic system and is even now the vessel in which God is hastening the hour. But though all hell may rage God has borne record to the Spirit-enabled testimony in His obedient children. He has given His Amen—His character is involved, the Blood and the Oath plead His faithfulness.

And God finds, and finds in these occasions of testimony a *deliberate* occasion for the Sovereign activity of the Godhead and He secures the opportunity for such record bearing and

manifesting of Himself before principalities and powers and all that can look on, by moving His children through His Spirit to these acts of obedience in public testimony before heaven and earth and hell. K. P. O

"THE CROSS AND THE GRACE OF GOD"

Notes of an Address given on Sunday morning, September 2nd.

THOSE of you who have been at the previous gatherings of this Conference have noted the direction of the Spirit's guidance in our Theme in the cry "THAT I MAY KNOW HIM!"

The answer to that cry of Paul was the unveiling of Jesus as the great "I AM" in ever-increasing majesty and glory.

Now "Grace" is an essential constituent of such a knowledge, and to the Corinthian believers Paul says "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.," for in the revelation of the Eternal Word becoming flesh the abiding impression was of One "full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). This was the *form* of the manifestation of His Person to His disciples.

In the passage quoted you have first the Birth: "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father": the preposition "of" here is significant: He is the Only-Begotten as "from beside" or "being with" the Father from all eternity. But later in the 18th verse we read, "No one hath seen (beheld) God at any time: the Only-Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father"—*and is always in the Bosom of the Father*, always at the Centre as it were, of the Divine Being, whether pre-incarnate before worlds were, whether found here on earth in the likeness of sinful flesh, or whether Incarnate now in the Glory of the Godhead as MAN, He is ever in the Bosom of the Father. He is the "secret" TRUTH of God, the mystery of God, and therefore He alone can be the revelation of God. Thus it goes on to say, secondly, "He hath declared HIM," that is, He hath told Him out, or expressed Him. The Word became flesh. That Eternal Conception of God of Himself, both in His essential character of Being, and of His Eternal Purpose in Creation because of that character, it was that Person Who became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His Glory; but it was a glory manifested as "full of grace and truth."

In the 16th verse we see that this fulness of grace and truth revealed in Jesus on earth is now a fulness imparted, or shared, in a "Fellowship," but shared only upon a certain condition of faith, faith in His Person thus, and faith in His Cross, in the *work* that God accomplished there through Him for Himself as God in the universe, and for us as Man. So it is confessed, "Out-of His fulness have all we received, *and grace for grace.*"

The alternative reading to this last expression is "grace corresponding to grace," that is, grace over against grace, the purport of the words being, grace in continuity, a life of grace increasingly, for every grace received requires more grace to continue.

We have entered upon a life of grace, but its very nature makes us dependent upon its further supply by the Spirit of Christ. The very first moment you abandon the ground of self-confidence, once you have accepted the Cross as a spiritual principle and dynamic of God for your salvation as ruling out continually the life in which you were first born into this world, you see you are dependent upon the life of Another; and this is Grace.

You do not commence the Christian Life yourself. Another commences it in you. There is certainly a change of mind and attitude on your part, a turning or repenting towards God, but this is only the beginning of an adjustment on your part. What really happens *if there is a happening at all*, is that by the free grace of God you are born "from above" out of the living Christ. You are therefore dependent henceforth upon Him absolutely and eternally as the Source of all your new life. And you therefore need "grace for grace." The beginning of grace necessitates a continuity of grace. You cannot begin with grace and go back to something else as a means of spiritual livelihood. This is a delusion that many of the children of God are brought under by the enemy, namely, that having commenced in grace they require some kind of merit to go on with God. This is, as Paul reminds the Galatians, foolish or "senseless." When they came into blessing first of all it was by a condition of receptivity which God had produced in them, they were enabled to receive the grace of God; but somehow we often fail to recognise that it must be a receiving all the while on our part. This is not passivity, for it requires again from our side an active exercise of faith. Thus it is also said that our salvation

is "out-of faith unto faith"; but this is the activity of the Divine Spirit within us whereby we are able to appropriate grace, grace, unending grace.

In 2 Cor. viii. 9, the apostle therefore tells true believers, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." This does not mean merely that they knew *about* the grace of the Lord, the mere objective fact; but that they knew what it was to experience that grace. He goes on to describe the great objective Fact of that Grace of God, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich." Notice the word here, "He became poor." It is only found here. "He impoverished Himself, He made Himself poor, He beggared Himself." It is the same root as the word used to describe Lazarus in Luke xvi., complete poverty, a stripping of everything that might be thought of as values, riches. And it was His own act.

But this was done that we through that "poverty" might be made rich, rich now in Him.

We are taken immediately to that corresponding passage in the Philippian epistle, ch. ii. 5-8, a passage that is so often explored for what is known as "The Kenosis Theory,"—the explanation of the "Self-emptying" of the Lord of Glory. There we read, "He made Himself of no reputation"; but this sentence literally translated is, "He emptied Himself." Paul tells the Corinthians that they know what this means, "Ye know the grace." But only a child of God knows this. Theologians do not *as theologians*. They may know it as children of God by the Spirit, but they would never know it by mere theology. So John says, "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it." And Paul says, Ye know the GRACE. But it is futile to enter into discussions about it, for apart from all controversy great is the mystery of Godliness—God was in the Christ, God was manifested in the flesh. How? Well, that is the MYSTERY But ye know. Blessed ye!

It is therefore idle to discuss it, or to write books about it, because it is a matter of "eternal life." It is only the eternal life in us that can know the nature of the Incarnation. The Lord defines eternal life as being this knowledge of GOD as in Himself (John xvii 3). Apart from this inward knowledge all discussion about the Incarnation is absolutely futile, and beside the point. But to the saved the explanation of this "Impoverishing" is

that it is the GRACE of God.

"What is grace?" Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in GOD-FORM (being then the Effulgence of His Glory, the Exact-expression of His Substance, and upholding all things by the spoken word of His power) thought it not a thing to be grasped, held tightly, or to hold-on-to, to be equal with GOD. Then comes the "Kenosis" expression to which we have referred, "but made Himself of no reputation," *emptied Himself* He put aside those attributes of Deity that were external to His Being, but He did not empty Himself of His being. He remained in His essential Spirit, God. "From everlasting to everlasting THOU art God." Nevertheless He took upon Himself bondservant's form. He became the slave of the Eternal Purpose in the Godhead, and was hedged in to this along a certain line that had been pre-determined in the Divine Counsels. Thus being found in *fashion* as a man, that is, as to the external form He still *humbled* Himself, went on humbling Himself, until that humiliation touched the depths of His shame as our SIN on the Cross. This is the Way of the Divine Grace, the Self-emptying of the SON, until He poured out His soul in the blood as a *sin-offering*. Wondrous grace! But this the Divine Nature: it is the *nature* of God thus revealed. The grace of GOD hath been manifested. And so it is declared again and again in the New Testament that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is not other or separated from GOD, it is the very grace of God.

This is grace in its operation. It is the Self-emptying of God in the extravagance of His Love and Desire for us; but it is manifested in Jesus the Christ. He was therefore revealed to His disciples as full of this Divine Attribute, full of grace and truth. This was the manifestation of His glory on earth—grace!

In John ii. 11, it is declared "This beginning of signs did Jesus and manifested forth His glory." There are eight such signs in John. But the Glory was revealed in another form to the disciples than that. They were not smitten only by the manifestation of signs, though these arrested their attention, but they saw, by the grace of God again, something else, they saw the wonder of the Divine Love in the heart of Jesus. He chose those twelve that they should be *with* Him, with Him intimately. Multitudes might see the miracles as well, and there was a company of disciples larger in number who may have had an intimate acquaintance with many of the wonders and

signs ; but these were chosen that they should be WITH HIM. And then there came, as we were telling the children, that crucial moment when He asked, "Whom do ye say that I am?" And they were enabled to see *through*, what no one of men can see the glory of God in the grace of the Lord Jesus. We had that so familiar verse you remember at the beginning of the Conference (Matt. xi. 28), "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart." You come to the heart of Jesus. This is what you and I need : to come to the heart of Jesus, the heart of God, the Divine nature. In what is this revealed ? Not in the demonstrations of power, not in the display of omnipotence, not in the majesty of eternal Counsels, not in the glory and sweep of all the ways that are everlasting, but in the heart of God. He says, "There is a place by Me" ; there is a cleft in the Rock. You and I are not called now to look upon that which is external to ourselves, but something into which we have been brought as an intimate relationship of life *through a cleft*, the cleft side of Jesus. We are able by that new and living way which He hath inaugurated, through the Vail, that is to say, His flesh, of which we have become members, members of His Body, to pass by fellowship with Him into a knowledge of God ; not a knowledge about God, not a compendium of theological theories, and statements ever so clear, fascinating and brilliant though they may seem, nor any category of knowledge about the attributes of the Infinite Nature, but we are brought into a fellowship with Him in His essential character, and to KNOW HIM thus inwardly, intimately in communion, substance of His substance, nature of His nature, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh—joined to the Lord, One Spirit. And in this inward spiritual fellowship learn to know God inwardly, directly, absolutely, so that you and I are made to cease in sheer shame of such a revelation from ourselves, and to be as He is in this world. Now that is knowing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and only the Holy Ghost can apply that knowledge inwardly to our hearts.

The grace of God is revealed in this marvellous divine act of a self-emptying on the part of the Lord Jesus of all those external attributes of His glory, retaining, nevertheless, in His Spirit His Divine Nature, and therefore telling God out, manifesting God, so that He will say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

And you see the continuity of that ! It is the grace of God. It is the character, the nature of God ; but here revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ, immeasurable grace far more transcendent than you and I can compass in our thought, this constant outpouring on the part of God of His own Being in selflessness of love that has been made specific in the Lord Jesus Christ directly to us. Here is the current of it, and the manner of it, in our benediction "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." That is the grace of God. You see this grace as it comes out from eternity, "And being found in fashion as a man"—it goes on—here is the grace in Him, always self-emptying, always laying down His life—"Meek and lowly of heart." This is His essential character, and these disciples, by the Spirit, are drawn of the Father, closer and closer to the heart of Jesus. They begin to understand Him more and more intimately until there can break in upon their spirits one day, Who He is in this essence of His nature. This is to KNOW the Christ of God. Of course, you and I cannot trace the wondrous Self-emptying that is unveiled in the Passion. We stand at a distance there. It will be the theme of Eternity. We can see the manner of His going in the days of His flesh, but not that last awful self-emptying of His when He poured out His soul unto death ; that last great act of faith energised by love in losing Himself for our sakes, only by faith holding on to the reality and faithfulness of that inner communion with the Father, trusting all that self-conscious life of His to death and pouring it out. I say you and I can only look into the depths of the heart of God there and see something of the Divine Nature, but that is the revelation of the Cross. This it is that does break our hearts when once the least hint of it begins to break in upon our spirit ; we are robbed of strength, and we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the wonder of it is, beloved friends, that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the grace of God, the Divine Nature, is communicated to us. When you and I are born again "from above" it is this life of God in the Christ, that is given to us, and the nature of this life is grace. We become sharers with Him of the grace of God, for the characteristic of the Christian Life is this "self-emptying," the giving of ourselves, the laying down of our life. And this is why the Lord in His marvellous wisdom and intelligence has designed the form

of this Life in a Body, in order that the manifestation in the Body might be the manifestation of the Christ in grace still. Just as there was in the Lord Jesus the manifestation of the glory of God in grace, so there is in the Church the same manifestation of the glory of the Christ in grace. Read down the opening verses of the Ephesian letter again, and see what this thing is that God has fashioned in the Body of Christ, the Church, "that we should be to the praise and glory of His grace." It is the grace of God which is revealed in this fellowship in the Holy Spirit. It is the same marvel that was in Jesus on earth, but now revealed in the members through the Church, His Body, the embroidered, the varied wisdom, the loveliness, the grace of God, and the principalities and powers once again behold the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in you and in me. You see, as you get a glimpse of Him, to KNOW Him, and to KNOW Him in His grace, so His grace is communicated to you, His Divine Nature; and it is *most* manifest in these relationships in the Church which is His Body. That is why we recognise there is such a tremendous attempt of the enemy to resist this Fact of the Body as it emerges into the heavens; as it breaks forth from the mere levels of our earth consciousness, and our ordinary human relationships, and you begin to enter into a fellowship in the Holy Ghost. How the devil fights this! Because you see the condition of membership in the Body of Christ is grace; the condition of fellowship of the Son with the Father, and the Father with the Son was grace. This is the Divine Nature, the giving away of one-self for others. That is grace; that is the Cross. The emptying by the power of love of all that love knows is meant to be emptied forth for others. That is grace, and in the Body of Christ, this must be the condition of our corporate life—grace for grace. It is not merely the going along individual lines of salvation—How shall I get to heaven? It is not that. The *personal* question is settled at Calvary. Once you have been to the Cross truly, and have seen what God has wrought for you there, and have yielded yourself to it, and have been born "from above" out of that Living One, the life now is "grace for grace"—the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is what the apostle intends in every salutation and benediction. It is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is the Divine Nature in that Man given to you, as a necessity of spiritual life, because you are now brought to live in a "Fellowship" with Him, whereby His Eternal

Purpose is to be realised in the Church which is His Body; for the only possible condition of our life together in fellowship is that we should lay down our lives (souls). You remember the Lord says in John xii. that if we would gain our life (soul), we must lose it; if we lose our life (soul), we shall guard it unto Life Eternal. But this is grace! It is the pouring out of the soul, the laying down of the self-life, and in the laying down of the self-life—the other Life comes in, the Life of God. So His glory is manifested, and the increasing grace can flow from member to member, and likewise rejoice the heart of Him Who is the One Who exercises grace, and there can be this wonderful quickening of Life, the Life of the great "I AM" in the members of His Body—"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now to know that experimentally is to KNOW God—to KNOW the Lord Jesus Christ in an inward fellowship with Him. Just as here on the earth He always did the things that pleased the Father, never seeking His own glory, His own honour, His own self-advancement, His own self-attainment, but lived by the Eternal Spirit for the purpose of Another, and for others, so the grace of God was manifested. And as you and I live in the fellowship in the Holy Spirit, so again the grace of God is manifested—"grace for grace." We see thus that the grace of God is the immeasurable activity of the Divine Nature. Why should God create? Why should He enter into all this? Because His Nature is Grace. It is the outpouring of Himself.

But we know that something has entered into the universe which is not of grace; something indeed the very antithesis of grace. And what is the antithesis of grace? O, it is *self-assertion*; it is Satan. It is that other spirit which says, "I will," and desires self-attainment. But you see the contradiction between the two. Here is the nature of God—Grace. Here is this other thing that has entered into the universe which is self-assertion. And God has to conquer this, not by self-assertion on His part, but by grace. That is the reason for Calvary. God could have swept the devil out of His path, but He meets Him in grace, and the blood of Jesus Christ is the Life Stream out from God, through the incarnation, whereby the grace of God meets Satan. It was the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that met the enemy in the outpoured blood. It was the self-emptying all the while, *the weakness of God!* He was crucified through weakness. That is the

grace in your life and mine, that you and I are to go through in weakness, in self-emptying, that we might live out of Another. So whenever we find ourselves brought to a place where we must exercise grace, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, He supplies grace for grace; and thus we increase in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The fulness is coming in, not merely into you and me as individuals, but it is passing through, and you minister grace to one another, and the Body is built up in love in the increase of God. And this fulness out from God in Christ is pressing for emergence, and there is going to come a moment in the universe, you sense this in your spirit, and we believe it is nigh, when that grace will break through in the Body. The very thing that broke out in the Blood, the glory of God manifested in grace, will again break out at the end of the age, when God gets His people prepared to die out for Him, and for one another, and to live for the Body's sake. That is what you have in the apostle Paul. "By the grace of God I am what I am. I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." What is he speaking about? It is not because he is a great convention speaker and getting a long list of engagements as a well-known preacher and teacher. It is not that, it is this man being spent and dying out, daily exercised in entreaty, conflict and agony of heart for the Church for the Purpose of God. He pours himself out for others. He does not desire to be known himself, but he fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for His Body's sake, which is the Church. That is grace! "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet He impoverished Himself." And the life of grace is impoverishing yourself, becoming weak, giving up all that of the self-life to the Cross in order that this other Life, which is the Life of Christ, the Christ of God, might come through and minister to others. There is a very real principle at stake here; because there is a kind of spiritual selfishness which is the most subtly Satanic thing—one discerns it in one's own heart—being always concerned about ourselves even spiritually. What blessings are we going to get? I know there must be a season in our life when there is a hunger and thirst until we do realise that Christ is the satisfaction within; but when you have come where He is the satisfaction within you, the Fountain of Life, the life that should be "Grace for grace,"—it is to live then

for the Body's sake, and to know the mighty dynamic of the Cross in one's own life cutting right down between this life of self-assertion, soul, which is the most subtle form of sin, and the other life which flows out from God in us as "*spirit.*"

May the Lord grant unto us the knowledge of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, because in this we come to the knowledge of His heart. This is what He means when He says, "Come unto Me, learn of Me, I am meek and lowly in heart." You come close to the heart of God. You know God, and to know God in this way is to be changed from glory to glory, but this is not something that you realise as a self-intoxication, of personal increase of life and power. It is "grace for grace." The aspect of glory now is grace. The glory that passeth is the glory that is visible upon the faces of men, as in the case of Moses; but the glory that is eternal is the glory that was in Christ here on earth. Only upon one occasion was He effulgent, there in the mount; but here on those levels of fellowship with us He was in the likeness of sinful flesh, taking His place in Jordan with a sinful race and a sinful nation, being one with His disciples in toil and weariness; and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ was the revelation to the discerning heart of the glory of God. This is how it is going to be, one recognises, now with the Lord's children. It is not going to be the manifestations so much of the supernatural; it is not going to be the glory that is visible to the natural eye; but it is going to be grace. And grace is but another aspect of the faith that is going to carry us through these difficult times in which we are living, which have been predicted by the Holy Spirit centuries before. It is the grace of God—the Life of God. After all, it is only another term for the Life Stream of God in us that is going to carry us through. But you see this Life Stream of God in us is only secured and maintained as the self-life is relegated to death. As we die daily, so we live daily. And here is the working principle of grace, "Always bearing about in the body the putting to death (the deadness) of the Lord Jesus that the Life of the Lord Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." And then again, "We which live (we who are alive unto God, who really live in the Eternal Life) are always delivered unto death for Jcsu's sake," that the blessing might come upon others. Grace be with you all. Amen. T. M. J.

JOHN BUNYAN ON "GRACE ABOUNDING"

I HAVE also had some notable place or other in the Word presented before me, which word hath contained in it some sharp and piercing sentence concerning the perishing of the soul, notwithstanding gifts and parts: as, for instance, that hath been of great use to me: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal." (1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2.)

A tinkling cymbal is an instrument of music with which a skilful player can make such melodious and heart-inflaming music, that all who hear him play can scarce hold from dancing; and yet behold, the cymbal hath not life, neither comes music from it, but because of the art of him that plays thereon; so then the instrument may at last come to nought and perish, though in times past such music hath been made on it.

Just thus I saw it was, and will be with them who have gifts, but want saving grace; they are in the hand of Christ, as the cymbal in the hand of David: and as David could with the cymbal make that mirth in the service of God, as to elevate the hearts of the worshippers, so Christ can use these gifted men, as with them to affect the souls of His people in His church: yet when He hath done all, hang them by, as lifeless, though sounding cymbals.

This consideration therefore, together with some others, were for the most part, as a maul on the head of pride, and desire of vain-glory. What, thought I, shall I be proud because I am a sounding brass? Is it so much to be a fiddle? Hath not the least creature that hath life, more of God in it than these?

Besides, I knew 'twas love should never die, but these must cease and vanish: so I concluded, a little grace, a little love, a little of the true fear of God, is better than all the gifts: yea, and I am fully convinced of it, that it is possible for souls that can scarce give a man an answer, but with great confusion as to method; I say, it is possible for them to have a thousand times more grace, and so to be more in the love and favour of the Lord, than some who by the virtue of the gift of knowledge, can deliver themselves like angels.

Thus, therefore, I came to perceive, that though gifts in themselves were good, to the

thing for which they were designed, to wit, the edification of others; yet empty, and without power to save the soul of him that hath them, if they be *alone*; neither are they, as so, any sign of a man's state to be happy, being only a dispensation of God to some, of whose improvement, or non-improvement, they must when a little love more is over, give an account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

Let all men therefore prize a little with the fear of the Lord (gifts indeed are desirable), but yet great grace and small gifts are better than great gifts and no grace. It doth not say, the Lord gives gifts and glory but the Lord gives grace and glory; and blessed is such an one to whom the Lord gives grace, true grace; for that is a certain forerunner of glory.

A NOTE

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Corinthians xv. 57.

This comes at the end of a long spiritual argument, and is surely the conclusion of the whole matter. Now upon this we can commence the doing of works of faith.

For what is the range of this victory? It covers all the ranges of eternity and penetrates to every thing in the universe. For observe, it includes the vanquishing of death to hell, or hades. There are no spiritual enemies surviving the scope of this triumph, for the lord of death and of hell is involved in this debacle.

It is "*the victory*" of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not yours or mine. That would be poor comfort of faith. But it is the all-inclusive VICTORY, pronounced on that great exclamation of His triumph, "It is finished."

And God gives to us *this* victory!

As the chapter makes it clear, the Victory is involved in His Resurrection. A life begotten of God has been victorious through the Cross over sin, death and hades, all the phases of the satanic sovereignty.

But how is it communicated to us? How do we receive it? *In His Life!*

Nowhere in the realm of our own effort can we hope to prevail. The victory is given, and it is given in a *life*, His Life.

This brings us to 1 John v. 4—"Whatsoever is born of (out of) God overcometh the world." Nothing else can, but this begotten life has already accomplished the fact for the literal rendering of the rest of the verse is "and this is

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre,

HONOR OAK ROAD, LONDON, S.E.23.

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship.
Sundays: 11 a.m., 3 p.m. (Young People's Meeting), and 6.30 p.m. Mondays: 7.30 p.m. Wednesdays: 8 p.m.
Saturdays: 7.30 p.m.

Conferences are held every week-end (Saturday and Sunday), and also a longer week-end at the beginning of each month, this fixed by the first Sunday. (Friday to Monday evenings, inclusive.) All particulars may be obtained from G. Paterson, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

Ministers: T. Austin-Sparks; T. Madoc Jeffreys; G. Paterson (General Secretary).

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Telephone: Sydenham 5216.

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the victory (completed victory) that *overcame* (past tense) the world—our faith."

Notice the two factors, "the world"—"our faith."

1. The cosmos, the entire world-system: principalities, authorities, "the empires of the darkness of this age." What a world! The awful background of all human misery and sin, nay also, the hidden background of all human attainment, civilisation, science, pomp, and prospect. But conquered already, overcome.

2. And then the victorious weapon, "our faith." But described as already having achieved the triumph. What faith is this then? Oh, it is the faith that is the constituent of the begotten "Life." It has already proved itself to be thus mightily dynamic, for it prevailed at Calvary in its apparent weakness. It went down to the lowest depths in sacrifice: it arose clothed with Deity! "HE AROSE a Victor from the dark domain."

And this life is now in us, and therefore this faith of the life is also in us. It is the Christ-life: the Christ-faith. Christ our life: Christ our faith. The corporate faith of the Church, then, is but the same weapon that has already completely triumphed: it is the faith of the Son of God.

And if the life be given, the Victory is also given, for the victory is *in* the life.

"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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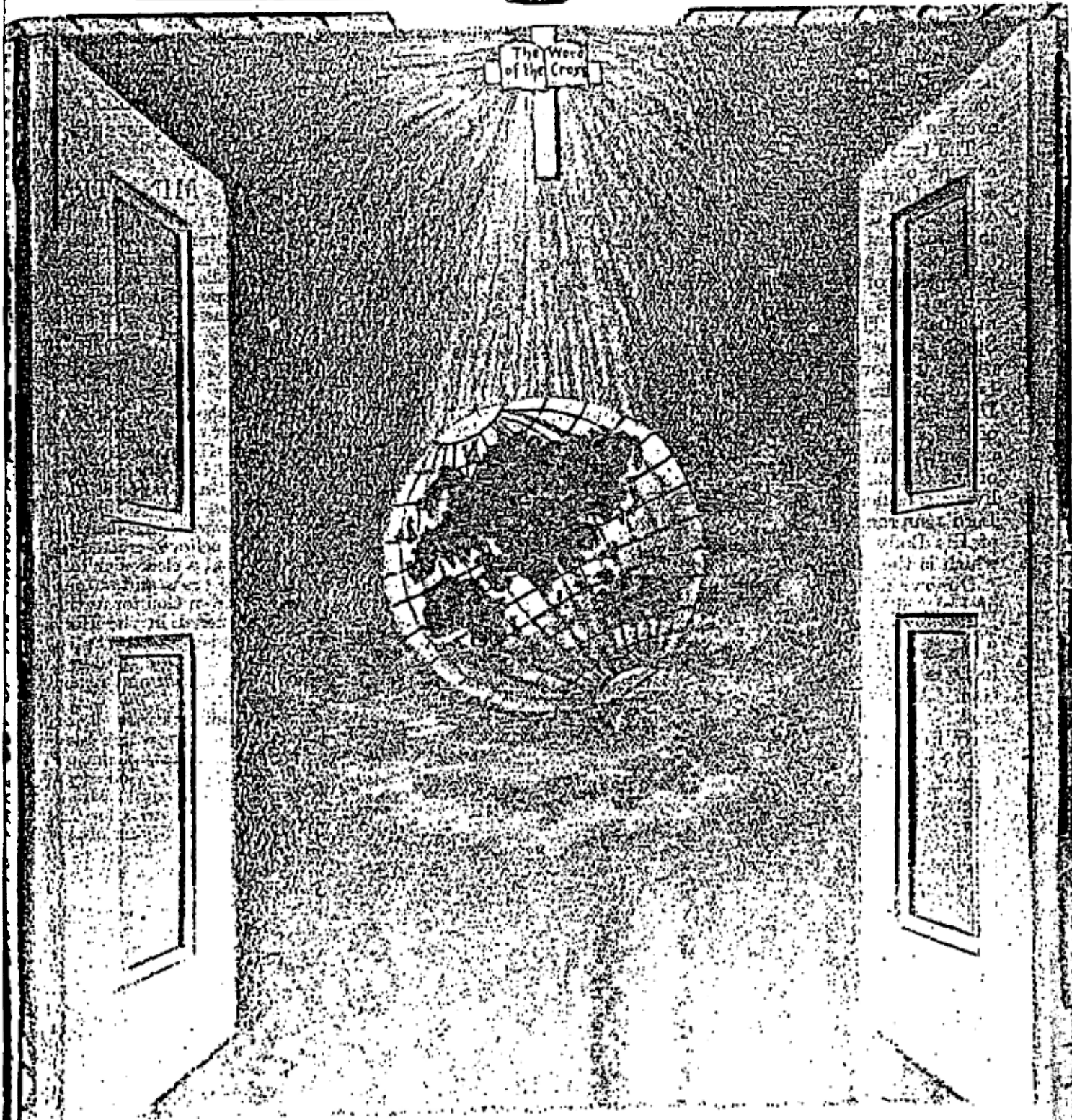
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A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

OCTOBER, 1928



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MINISTERS' LETTER

(Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre.)

October, 1928.

BELOVED OF THE LORD,

One sang long since, "I love the habitation of Thy House, and the place where Thy Glory dwelleth" (R.V.).

He thought of an earthly habitation, a temple exceeding magnificent that crowned Mt. Zion; but those infinitely higher thoughts of the Holy Spirit had in mind the Body of the Christ, that heavenly habitation of the Lord of Glory; for the church when complete, shall be the everlasting tabernacle of His Glory.

The true mark of Christmindedness is a discerning of the Body of Christ, and surely the seal of Christlikeness is a love for His Body, and this is a practical and therefore a present love for that Body in its members. Let no one deceive himself in this, for there can be a perception of the truth concerning the Body without this practical and present love of the members. The former illumination of the Spirit is necessary but the Spirit Himself within us would energise in the latter as "the Love of the Christ." Oh, how we need a Divine discerning of the members, a knowing of one another after the Spirit Who dwells in us and upon us as the Spirit of the One Life of the Christ. Then shall we give ourselves as living sacrifice to that ministry which is the Lord's supreme desire, namely, the up-building of His Body in the Increase of a Divine Life, which is the Divine Love.

Observe how the apostle in his heart burden of Eph. iii. 14-21, speaks last of all before he comes to "the power that worketh in us" of "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge" for it is in *this* love we come into the fulness of God. Are we, beloved, living in the fulness of God? We are if we are now living on the earth for the Body's sake.

Did not the Saviour close His appeal for His Church with these words, "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them," and thus, "I in them"? What a love is this! His Spirit yearns for the complete glorifying of His Son in that Habitation made up of His living members, and within us His Spirit would be as a consuming fire unto this end. Let us yield our hearts to Him that in these last days our love for Him may be manifested in our love for His members, for whosoever loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him.

We love them as we find them, discerning them in the Lord. They are scattered abroad these days, hidden away, often hungry for fellowship, food, and consolation. And there are those unborn ones, in every land that wait to hear that living Voice of His Love in the Gospel's proclamation. In every way either in prayer or preaching it is the task of an inward constraining Love, Christ's own love in our hearts.

May it be said of each of us, as of Him, "the zeal for Thy House hath consumed me."

Yours by His grace,

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

T. MADOC JEFFREYS.

FELLOWSHIP AND MINISTRY

WE are continually seeking the prayer fellowship of the Lord's people in the matters of the TESTIMONY, and we feel that it is due to them to know something of the way in which the Lord is answering and working. With this purpose only, and not in any desire for advertisement, we give brief accounts of conferences, &c., and announce prospective ministries.

BELFAST

OUR esteemed brother in the Lord, Mr. T. Madoc Jeffreys conducted a four days' conference from September 27 to 30 in Haypark Avenue Baptist Church, Ballynafeigh, Belfast, and we can truly say that these meetings were of the Lord's appointment.

The Conference for believers was preceded by a Gospel Mission which we believe created a hunger for a larger revelation and a clearer understanding of the message of the cross and so our brother's visit was as one sent from God for as the word of God was being ministered in the Holy Spirit one realised that the Lordship of the Spirit was being established in the hearts of God's children and they were being led into a deeper and richer knowledge of His will.

There are supernatural manifestations being witnessed in our midst in these days which tend to unsettle the Lord's people and draw them off into side issues, we therefore praise God once again for the unfoldings of the many foldings of His word through His divine ministries for the perfecting of the Saints... for the edifying of the body of Christ.

E. G. C.

DUBLIN

Life! life! eternal life! Jesus alone is the Giver!
Life! life! abundant life! Glory to Jesus for ever!

For many weeks prior to the Annual Convention, October 1st to 5th, in this City there was an unusual spirit of expectancy in our hearts for a soul-refreshing, Christ-exalting, and God-glorifying

season of fellowship and conference. The Lord responded with a blessed stream of Life which far exceeded our expectations and which has both rebuked and nourished the faith of many. It was not more coincidence that we were led to lay hold of the following Word and have it printed on the Convention notice: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the *Fountain of the water of life* freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son," Rev. xxi. 6-7 (R.V.).

The Lord's messengers were Rev. T. Austin-Sparks, Rev. T. Madoc Jeffreys, Rev. Arthur Harries and Mr. Norman Grubb. The seal of the Lord was evident at the two opening meetings, when our brother Jeffreys—who unfortunately had to leave for London on the Tuesday night—delivered a remarkable word on the nature of the life in God, and with no uncertain sound declared the truth of God's eternal purpose in the out-working of that Life through the members of the Body of Christ, and the glorious fact of that spiritual oneness which joins the Sanctifier and the sanctified in "bonds which none can sever." These messages struck the key-note of the entire ministry for the week, and the Spirit of the Lord so gripped the Conference that speakers and hearers alike were held to the one blessed theme "Resurrection Life." Mr. Harries, arriving in readiness with some special addresses, was switched off his programme and came through in the life-giving stream with some rich utterances on the "oneness of the Body." False doctrines, carnal cleavages, the spirit of schism, and other similar characteristics of organised religion as we know it to-day, were exposed in the light of the Throne, and shown to be subtle devices of the great enemy to thwart the purpose of God, i.e., the demonstration of the "one Life, one faith, one baptism," as all-inclusive in the risen Head in heaven, and finding practical expression in His many members upon the earth.

It was a great joy and privilege to once again sit under the ministry of our beloved brother—T. Austin Sparks. Weak in body after a long season of physical illness, a fresh quickening of Divine Life made it possible for him to be with us. Rich as our brother's messages have always proved to be, we have never listened to more life-imparting ministry than on this occasion—messages born of a heavenly vision and hammered out on the hard anvil of experience. Truly God's servant came in "the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." The word of the Spirit came through in a series of remarkable messages on the blessed secrets and implications of knowing "Christ and the power of His resurrection." It was the voice of the Risen Lord in the midst of His people. Words from Him are always "spirit and life." The Lord also entrusted our brother with a mighty word for the closing meeting on the Friday night. It was something infinitely bigger and deeper than a mere "Convention

address," and it would be indeed strange if all present were not afresh impressed with the tremendous truth that "he who is in Christ is a *new creation*." Fleshly living, loving, serving, speaking, thinking, walking, praying, must all be subject to the sanctifying effect of the Cross in order that we may be experimentally lifted into that realm where "all things are out from God." They were burning words indeed, uttered with authority and conviction, as of God's oracles.

Our brother—Mr. Norman Grubb, of the W.E.C., was also with us, and moving in the fullness of the theme delivered some most helpful messages on the practical application of these great truths in personal testimony and service. The Lord gave him a strong message on the real implicates of union with the Lord Jesus in His death, as the only avenue to that Life which is adequate to overcome the forces of darkness, ensure victory over sin, and produce real strategic effectiveness in service. Mr. Grubb's personal testimony, as a missionary, to the out-working of Calvary in his own life and service—the disposal of self-instituted plans for a life work and the consent to the Divine order, the breaking down of human love and the inflow of Calvary passion as the motive power in service to God, &c.—will long be remembered by all who were privileged to be present. It is difficult to convey on paper an adequate impression of such a season of renewal and refreshing. In a word, the theme was manifestly of the Lord's arranging and the ministry—an example of I Peter iv. 10-11—was in the urge and unction of the Holy Ghost. It was also a privilege to have the prayer co-operation of Mr. Norman Douty (U.S.A.) and also our old friend and Association member, Mr. Gresham Speedy. Our hearts are glad and full of praise for all the Lord has revealed and accomplished. We have been drinking deep at the Fountain-head, and we trust that as a result our lives will be a fresh confirmation to the death of Christ, in order that His glorious purpose may be fulfilled in and through us by the power of an endless life. It is blessed to realise that it is "God who worketh in us both to WILL and to DO."

R. W.

HONOR OAK

THE October Conference at the "Centre" was set in what Paul would have called "a great conflict." Those on the inside of things were kept almost instantly "standing and withstanding," and holding in prayer against many varying currents. Undoubtedly many big issues were bound up with that Conference and these were being strongly contested. But the Lord broke through and registered the impact of a real challenge and crisis. The theme was 'The Cross and Service,' but the issue was that of all life and activity being in "the power of His Resurrection," and the

expression of a life which in Him had shown itself superior to sin, Satan, death, and hell.

The guest house was quite full and various mission fields and spheres of the Lord's work were represented by those present. From near and far friends came to this "holy convocation," and blessed fellowship was enjoyed. An especially helpful feature of this occasion was the tea-time open conference on the Monday, when specific difficulties were dealt with and testimonies were given.

As we go to press several conferences are in progress. Mr. and Mrs. Jeffreys are in Holland and reports come of good times. Might we here ask for special prayer for our brother in this as in all his ministry. His name is often allowed by many of the Lord's people to prejudice his ministry and throw a vapour of suspicion around himself in as much as they associate that name with others of the same and a movement with which our brother and ourselves have no association whatever.

At the same time Mr. Sparks is in Sunderland (Bethesda Chanel) taking part in the "Keswick" convention meetings. This will be immediately followed by the Newcastle monthly meetings.

Mr. Thomas and Mr. Speedy are fulfilling ministry at Hexham, Binchester, Oakwellgate, Croxdale, Swalwell.

Our sister Dr. Lumsden is with students of Oxford University for eight days.

We would mention for prayer present and coming ministries at Bognor, West Wickham, Manchester (Chorlton-cum-Hardy), Blackpool, Belfast, Bermondsey, &c.

The next Monthly Conference at Honor Oak will be (D.V.) November 2nd to 5th.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Local, 17s. 4d.; Blackpool, 3s. 6d.; ditto, 4s. 6d.; ditto, 1s.; Birmingham, 2s. 6d.; Bexhill, 5s.; Bormondsey, 2s. 6d.; Cardiff, 10s.; Cambridge, 2s.; Dundee, 3s.; ditto, 2s.; Fulham, 2s.; Guernsey, 4s. 1d.; Heaton (Newcastle-on-Tyue), 5s.; Lowestoft, £1; ditto, 5s.; Leigh-ou-Sea, 6s. 8d.; ditto, 10s.; New Duffus (N.B.), 5s.; Nowcastlo-on-Tyne, 1s. 1d.; Southampton, 2s.; Stroud Green, 2s. 6d.; Watford, 5s.; Windlesham, 2s., Total, £6 3s. 8½d.

"SOVEREIGN HEAD"

THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST—Continued.

"That I may know Him."—Phil. iii. 10.

Jesus—the "I Am" in Creation.

"And of the Son he saith... Thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands."—Heb. i. 10.

"All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him."—John i. 3, 10.

"Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created."—Rev. iv. 11.

"The Beginning of the creation of God."—Rev. iii. 14.

"In Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible; whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."—Col. i. 16-18.

"There is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him."—1 Cor. viii. 6.

"For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things,"—Rom. ii. 36.

"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus."—Eph. ii. 10.

"To bring to light what is the stewardship of the mystery which from all ages hath been hid in God Who created all things... according to the Eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Eph. iii. 9-11.

"For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth....

"For the creation was subjected to vanity.

"The creation... shall be delivered.

"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain."—Rom. viii. 19-22.

Having seen Jesus as the "I Am" before times eternal, we now come to see Him in Creation.

The above selection of passages of scripture make certain things quite clear.

Firstly, there is the general declaration that it was Jesus through Whom and by Whom all things were created. Then there is the range of that creation and creative activity. Not just this Kosmos but far beyond—the heavens—and hierarchies and "principalities," dominions, &c.; "things visible and invisible" (to us).

Following this there is the declaration that

it is all for and unto Him, and that in Him it all holds together. This is all said to be related to an "Eternal purpose" which God purposed in Him.

Then there is seen the entrance of that into the creation which made it impossible for the creation to realise the end for which it existed; the deliberate subjecting of the creation to abortiveness until that purpose came through, and with that event the creation delivered.

All this is tremendous in its implications and requires fuller and closer consideration.

The first main and all-inclusive truth is that Jesus is the *raison d'être* of the universe. He is the explanation of its existence. Dismiss Him from the universe and the universe ceases to have its motive and also ceases to have its integrating power and intent; it would then fall to pieces. That is why "it was not possible that He should be holden of death." "In Him all things hold together." Jesus is essential and indispensable to the solidarity, continuation, and purpose of "all things."

Then in the universe man is found and he is accounted for in the same way. No man will ever have his life explained until he has come into his place "in Christ Jesus." But when he comes there by the grace of God he discovers a very well-worth-while purpose in his having been born. It is one of the unvarying characteristics of life in Christ that a new sense of purpose is born, and the consciousness of being related to some eternal design and object.

The next thing to note is that not only worlds but ages were created by Him. The movement and purpose of God in Christ gives character and purpose to definite cycles of time and phases of eternity. It is not our purpose to deal with these, but to simply point out the fact that in various ages the one supreme purpose of God is being developed progressively. The basic principles and heavenly laws of the Divine intuition are the same in all ages. Ages represent phases and parts and forms of the whole and entire purpose, but it will be in the "ages of the ages" that the parts and phases will have become one whole and clear thing: everything seen thus to be not two or more things, but one thing, and Christ will be "All in all." To this end was the universe created, and this is the motive of creation. What will be the supreme feature of the eternal ages? We have already in our last issue answered the question. It will be a glorified humanity, sharing one Divine life and likeness. It will be the universal Sonship of

God in all its meaning, nature, and purpose; the "many sons" in *The Son*, sharing the inheritance and fulfilling the yet unrevealed intentions of God in an eternal vocation.

Unto this—let us repeat—all things were created and this earth was brought into being as the sphere and instrument of its literal beginnings and processes. The creation existed for the "sons of God" (the *whole* creation, not merely this earth), but when that entered into the race by man's complicity with Satan, which made it impossible for that "man" (plural, inclusive) to attain unto that specific sonship the purpose of creation was interfered with, and it could no longer realise its end. Hence it is revealed that God in effect said to the whole creation—you cannot arrive at your wonted end until I get mine. I subject you to vanity, I cut off your attainment until I have that for which you were brought into being. And yet this is only for such time; it is not for ever and it is not hopeless, we will have our end. So I subject you to abortiveness—but in hope, and you shall be delivered from the bondage—the grip of corruption. I am "the God of hope," the God of "*The Hope*." That hope is only possible of realisation on the ground of sonship; that men shall be born of Me, and there is no hope for any man otherwise. But I shall have my sons and then all things will find their purpose and their fulfilment. In the meantime I am travailing to bring forth this son race, and the pangs of my travail will be felt in all the creation. There will be an unintelligible ache in the universe and a groaning toward something. My Spirit groans behind the whole creation and specially within those of His indwelling toward this all vindicating end.

So we put into the mouth of God the things which are implied by the scriptures. Now when Paul cried "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings," he was but recognising that in the resurrection of Christ there is the guarantee of the creation's deliverance in which he would share: that this would only be by "the exceeding greatness of His power.... according to that working of His might which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead," and that the "sufferings of Christ" were those might travailings toward "the manifestation of the sons of God" which would be His satisfaction, His vindication, and the establishing of the universe in His realised "eternal purpose." So thus that "waiting,"

that "groaning" is related to that "manifestation of the sons of God." That is, when all who shall be born of God, born from above by resurrection union with Christ shall—with Him—be manifested in glory. These are they who have recognised that His death was their death as a part of the first Adam; that His burial was the eternal entombment of that "body of death," that His resurrection was the birth of the New Man, the "new creation"; and having recognised this have, by faith, accepted and entered into it to walk in that "newness of life" in all its implications. Such, knowing Him and the power of His resurrection to a measure in themselves are called into the intelligent sharing of those mighty travails and spiritual pangs which are toward the full manifestation of the sons which is to synchronise with the emancipation of the whole creation from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the sons of God. Every "new birth" from above by the operation of resurrection power is vindication of the creative work of Christ. Every such spiritual new birth is related to the universe and is not a thing in itself. Every new born one is constituted a part of the effectual travailing power of the Spirit of Christ "Who maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Much more has yet to be shown as the content and issue of all this, but here our purpose is to show that the instrument, purpose, and consummation of the *whole* creation is Christ—and Christ inclusive and corporate. Without Christ there is no purpose, no adequate motive, no hope, no goal, no justification, for existence. Without Christ there can be no world, no future, no harmony. All must be aimless, abortive, chaos, inexplicable, mockery, despair. This is the outlook of all that is "outside of Christ." Hence the great emphasis upon "In Christ."

This surely is the "Mystery" so often referred to in the New Testament. It is the mystery of the universe so much explored and speculated about by philosophers, scientists, theologians, mystics. God reproducing Himself in a glorified humanity. Jesus the Archetypal Man. Incarnation is the key to the mystery and Church—Christ's Body—the corporate example and instrument. This explains the universe and gives the secret of all creation. In the light of this we understand why Christ is called the "Logos," and as such He is "the First and the Last," for Logos means Thought,

Reason, Power, and the Personification of these.

In the beginning He creates all things. In the end He fills all things. T. A.-S.

"THE CROSS AND SPIRITUAL SERVICE"

Notes of an Address given at the October Conference

THE theme of our Conference is one which is practical for all present, as we are all the children of God, and our great concern is to serve Him. You remember how He, Himself, says in the 12th chapter of the Gospel of John, 23rd verse, concerning the work which the Father has committed to Him, the service by the Eternal Spirit about to be consummated in His Person, through that completed victory in the Cross, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." But there follows the principle upon which God is glorified in Him. "Verily, verily, I say unto you except the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

This is as to Himself; He must die as the corn dies that the full ear, which is the Body shall come forth. But this principle extends to every member of that completed Body. "He that loveth his soul"—his personality, those things that relate to himself either externally, or those interior possessions of the person. We need to recognise these last are the more subtle. It is the human personality in its fallen state that is the biggest hindrance to God's Purpose in the Body. The clash of personalities, especially as we seek to come into closer fellowship, temperaments, strong wills, attitudes of minds, habits of thought due to upbringing, all contribute to a failure to realise the oneness of that Life in the Christ of which our brother was speaking last evening, because that oneness of Life is in the Spirit, and not in us as individual souls. The Lord, therefore, lays down this principle of service as in the members of the Body—"He that loveth his soul shall lose it, and he that hateth his soul in this world shall guard it unto Life Eternal." That is to say the soul at length shall be possessed by the Life Eternal. This is the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

What we are concerned about now is the progress of our spirit in God. The birth is a heavenly one. It is a birth out of the Risen Christ Who has become a quickening, or life-giving Spirit. We have to recognise that the

salvation we have obtained is in our *spirit*. The effects of that salvation are manifested, of course, moment by moment, in the soul and in the body. The soul is quickened by the spirit; and the body is quickened by the spirit, for the Life now is a Life in the Spirit, a Life hidden in God, and therefore a Life only realised by faith, and not by feeling. It is well for us to really stress this principle of our life, that it is wholly a spiritual life, and "He that is spiritual discerneth all things." Naturally, of course, we are still psychical, soulish. There is no blame in that as such; it is our infirmity that we partake not only of that nature of the psychical man, Adam, even if he had been un-fallen. But he had fallen before he became our ancestor, and thus we partake in psychical life engulfed in the satanic world around us, of which we are unconscious, but which is ever subtly laying hold of that aspect of our nature.

But our new life is a Life altogether out from the Spirit and is in us as spirit. This is why the Holy Spirit is stressing so much in these latter days the distinction between soul and spirit, because it is the last defence of the enemy, it would seem, when he can get good people, children of God, to alternate between life in the spirit and life in the soul, and the clash and turmoil of personality as such is bringing about confusion in the church. Thus here is laid down the principle upon which alone spiritual service is possible:—

"He that loveth his soul shall lose it, and he that hateth his soul shall guard it unto Life Eternal."

You see how this leads on to service because the next verse reads: "If any man serve Me [minister to Me] let him follow Me." That is, to minister to Him we must follow Him whither He has gone. You remember how in the 14th chapter of this same gospel, speaking to His disciples, He says, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." This mystified them, but the Lord gives us the revelation. He told Peter that he could not follow Him into that Life into which He was now entering. We read in the context that Jesus knew He had come out from God, and was going back into God. Whither I go ye cannot follow Me now—into God. How can you follow Me into God? Jesus knowing that He had come out from being with God in eternity and was going back to God in eternity but now as *Man* did those things, and confronted the disciples with the fact that they could not follow him. But there they were bringing their own mental

conceptions to bear upon this and saying, Why cannot we follow Thee now? But we cannot begin service until we are with Him where He is, and He told Peter for his encouragement, Ye shall follow Me afterwards. You see the whole thought is that He was going back to be with the Father as Man, and we are to follow Him *there*. You can only follow Him there by the enablement of the Holy Spirit, as we first of all accept that great basic truth that the Holy Spirit is hammering into our hearts these days, the truth of *identification*. The fact that we have been, and are willing to be crucified together with Christ, that we are identified with Him in death, and thus there may be an entrance into another Life which is His Life; then in that Life we follow because in that Life we are with Him; in that Life we are joined to the Lord One Spirit, and this Life is hid with Christ in God. So He says, "If any man minister to me [desires to serve me] let him follow Me," follow Me *there*. This is a very different conception to thinking that He left us an example as He was among men, and that we should try and imitate the faithful standard of His life. You see the foolishness of it. If our flesh was unable to obey the law, how could we obey the law of a life infinitely beyond us! We cannot enter into it even; we have to be born out from Him, and thus be with Him "Our life hid with Christ in God."

"If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me; and *where I am there* shall also my minister be."

Thus we are to be with Him, and it is with Him in fellowship that we can begin to serve. We do not serve Him as outside of Him, we serve Him only as members of His Body, in Him. We cannot serve Him outside His Body. A great many of God's children to-day are not realising this truth, but are seeking to serve Him outside of the Body, and you recognise that though they think to serve the Divine objective, they are really hindering the way of God's progress; for we can only serve Him in the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of One Body, Who ministers in and as out from the Body of the Christ of God. "Where I am there shall also My servant be," there with Him. That is what the Apostle John means in the beginning of his letter when he says, "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." We are in one Life with Them, in one activity with Them, and it is necessary then that we should live as out from heaven. That is the vital

principle of the Christian life and service that we should live as out from Him, from God, moment by moment. "Where I am there shall My minister be. If any man minister to Me [thus], him will My Father honour."

Now we see how necessary the Cross is to service because otherwise our service will be cutting across the lines of the Divine objective, and we shall discover, though we are building upon the right foundation even Jesus Christ, we have built but wood and hay and stubble, and when the fierce day, the evil day comes and everything in heaven and earth is shaken (and we recognise we are in that day now, at least the scriptures teach us so) nothing will stand but that which has been wrought as out from God Himself, and only that which is in the Body of Christ will stand. Nothing else will. How important, then, that we should recognise what is the manner of Christian service, and how it rules out immediately every self-interest and every self-activity. Now the Cross must be applied to us in the matter of service and this is where we are least willing. There have been demands upon our life when we have accepted the Cross, but we still do not see the principle of the Cross in service. We still want to do our own works. We are very enthusiastic in this direction, but the word of God says, "How shall they proclaim the unspeakable things of the Christ except they be sent." In John v. 17 you have that familiar passage where the Lord unveils the manner of His service. It is still the same. The service that we are engaged in is His service, not ours for Him, but His service in us.

"Jesus answered them and said, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (You know this word "work" means to work by an energy.) The Jews understood what He meant. He and the Father worked by one energy, by one Life; they were fellow-labourers together in one Spirit. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only brake the Sabbath, but He said also God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God."

Then the Lord Jesus unveils the method of His working:—"Verily, verily, I say unto you the Son can do nothing from Himself." It was not from Himself. Here He was on this earth a marvellous personality with every power, endowment of mind and sensibility and will, and surely without sin. Yet from all that equipment of His pure and holy personality He could do nothing. If we pause just to consider the implication of these words we shall see

what is the mystery of this service, that it is out from God by the Eternal Spirit. He from Himself could do nothing; and we know what manner of Man this was, without sin, pure, holy, and no doubt with every possibility of wondrous activity in every realm. The Lord Jesus could have, as man, dominated the race if He had chosen to cast His personality upon men; if He had chosen by sheer force of will to attract men He could have been King of kings on this earth, *but only on this earth*; if He had sought to fascinate and allure by all those marvellous endowments of mental prowess He could have become One who could have charmed the race with wisdom; if He had thrown the glamour of His personality upon people with an attractiveness toward Himself He could have won them all. Many people speak of Jesus as if this had been the method of His life, that His winsomeness was always flinging itself around people, and He was trying to allure and charm them in that character. It is a complete mistake. You find that when He came up against situations of a character when the qualities of His soul might have been exercised, He put up a barrier between Himself and others. You find at Jerusalem, when He could have had the ear of many, He refused to commit Himself to them, because He knew that it was not reliable, and He would not commit Himself to man. He made it as difficult as possible on that score. He refused to use any factor of His own personality as such in the realm of the soul, so He says here, and we will look into the Word, "The Son can do nothing from Himself." Well now, how does He work? "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work." He works out from God by the Eternal Spirit, and He will only work in this way. It is only as the Spirit moves Him, and as He is led by the Spirit, governed by the spirit, impelled by the Spirit that He works and that is His consistent method in this world—completely helpless, tied down in all the realms of self-achievement, but moving out from God. Now this means humiliation; it means constant obedience of faith; it means the crucifixion of everything that seems desirable; it means depending upon another supply of Life as out from God. That was the method of His life. Read down the chapter, and you see how He speaks of this work that He does. "The Son can do nothing from Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing." Now how did He see what the Father was doing? In the fellowship of One Spirit. In

the same way that He saw Nathaniel praying in his private arbour when he was exercised in his spirit, Jesus saw him praying there under the fig tree, the revelation of which at once convinced Nathaniel that He was the Son of God, the King of Israel. He saw Him because He was in fellowship with the Father, and there in the Eternal Spirit He had had this revelation of Nathaniel. This was the method of His living. "What He seeth the Father doing; for whatsoever things He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner [that is by the Spirit]. For the Father fondly loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth: and greater works than these will He show Him, that He may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead ones, and maketh them alive, even so the Son maketh alive whom He will."

You remember the reference in John xvii: "Thou hast given Him authority over all flesh that He may give Eternal Life to as many as Thou hast given Him." This Eternal Life was the Life shared with the Father and the Son from all eternity, and He is going to give this Life that has become manifest in the flesh to as many as the Father will give to Him. This is the new work that the Father will give Him to do, this work of making alive the dead ones, and making them alive now in such a fashion, not merely raising the dead in their old nature, raising dead bodies; but raising you and me, who are dead, into a Life in God. That is the thing He does. It is hidden from men, and they cannot see much of what is happening, and even Christian people do not often appreciatively estimate it; but principalities and powers are able to discern what is happening. The devil knows what is happening when God the Son in His victory, through the suffering of death, is able now to give to us, the dead ones, His Life, the Eternal Life. That has been the burden of the Spirit evidently in these days both here and in Dublin, that you and I have entered into that Life. It is not that you and I are quickened and are alive unto spiritual things, and unto some prospects. It is not that. It is much more. We have entered into that Life. This is the marvel, and we are to realise this Life; and it is in this Life, and out from this Life that the service is.

We have seen the nature of this Life more than once here together. It is that Eternal Life which was with the Father. It is not everlasting as commencing now; but it is that Life that was in Eternity, that came this way, and then in the Out-Resurrection was mani-

festated, as the Apostle declares in his epistle, made One with the Father in the Man, and now goes on unto Eternity. You and I have entered into that—His Life. "If ye were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ is." That does not merely mean that you are to live to some abstruse consideration of Christ, it means that you enter into the things of the Christ now moving forward to their consummation. There is an intensity of the Divine passion in the Christ of God seeking its fulfilment; and you and I are to be in that. The pulse of God is to throb in our hearts. The Spirit of the Eternal is to move us forward, and that is the ministry, that is the service. It is not, so to speak, you and I pottering about doing good. We must not leave those works undone, of course; but there is another work, and He says with the intensity of His own heart that must characterise us, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." Do you not catch the accents of His Spirit? "I must work the works." You and I are here in this Conference because we do desire with all our hearts to work the works of Him Who has also sent us now, as we are born, out from Him and anointed by Him, into this world to complete those works of God by the Spirit in the church, which is His Body. So we see the nature of this Life, it is a Life that is raised into the Godhead, and our Life is hid with Christ in God.

And then the wonderful comfort is that this Life is in Itself an overcoming Life. It is not that you and I have to overcome; He has overcome, and His Life overcomes still. This is the victory that overcame the entire cosmos, the entire system unseen, things antagonistic to Him, even our faith, the faith of the Son of God. But it is most important, as we saw last evening, to recognise that this Life is in a Oneness. "This is the testimony that God has given concerning His Son, that God hath given to us [now] the Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the Life; he that hath not the Son hath not the Life." This Life is in a oneness, in a unity. (1 John v. 11 and 12.)

Well, as we have seen, the Son worked *with* the Father on earth: "My Father worketh hitherto and I work"; and then lower down in the chapter (John v.) you notice how in the 26th verse, you get the origin and basis of this service, the peculiar nature of the work that the Son of God did in the earth, the work which

He completed in Calvary, but the fruit of which work is now to issue in a working of His Spirit in the church so that there is manifested before principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God in this thing which He has got not only in His Son, but now in a corporate collection of sons.

What a triumph of grace is this! God gathered dust and made Adam, breathed into him the breath of lives, but God does eminently more wonderfully now, He does not gather dust, He gathers the foul and loathsome debris of a fallen Adam's race. You and I are by nature the children of wrath. We are not even dust, but we are involved in all the uncleanness of the fall; in all the horror of the pit; defiled, in our personalities by every conceivable avenue whereby the subtlety of satan can come in upon us. It is well for us to recognise the exceeding sinfulness of sin as the satanic thing which is against God in the universe, and which has infected us by nature. And though with regard to our individual salvation we may be assured, one is constantly asking God to search one lest one may be in the state where we are somehow hindering Him, for if you are self-assertive you are in His way. You know that here Satan has his way of coming in still. Oh, the wonder that God takes not the dust now, but He takes this loathsome debris, as it must be to Him, this leprosy, and He makes out of this leprous flesh of fallen man the Body of His praise. He gets us into a unity. Here is the marvel of His grace that He gets us to be so brought into Himself and to be so willing that our flesh shall constantly be crucified, and our self-life so constantly laid down that you and I become *one* in Christ. Why if He can get five brethren as on this platform and make them in the Holy Ghost alive unto God together as one unit, the universe would know the praise of that! It is a marvel of God, and when He can get a fellowship of this number and more, and He can get throughout all the world His own children living now unto this inner thing, this thing which is hid with Christ in God, and get it manifested here on earth, why here is the love of God revealed, here is the Redeemer's love in Calvary revealed in the unity of the Spirit. He gets His glory; and when He gets His base even in two or three, as we have seen, He begins to shake the heavens and the earth. It is a marvel that He gets the oneness realised at all. When He gets two brought into that Oneness, not because they have some predilection for one another, but

because they find themselves in a oneness in God, then He has got a manifestation of this thing; and He can begin; He has a basis. One feels that God is waiting for this more and more, to get the children of God into this oneness, into this Life that is hid with Christ in God, because in that oneness is the nature of this service. It is not that you and I seek to enter into some ministry of our own, but we come into this, and then God gets this manifestation of His glory before principalities and powers, and He then has a fulcrum from which He can begin to move the heavens and the earth. That is the wonder of this ministry we are called to enter into as it is found the energy of a life in us. Now notice in this 26th verse: "For as the Father hath Life in Himself, even so gave He the Son also to have Life in Himself." He means as Man He shared the Life with the Father from all Eternity. As Son of Man He is now having that same Life in Himself on earth, and it is this Life in Himself which contains the nature of the service. And for our comfort we read in the 6th chapter, 57th verse, that we also as members of His Body can have this Life in ourselves, "According as the living Father hath sent Me, and I live because of the Father [He was sent out from the Father by a begetting, and He was kept in this world serving the Father in one Spirit by an Anointing]; so he that eateth Me [the word 'eat,' as you know by this time is 'to ruminate,' to always have in the mouth; so to speak. It does not mean 'to eat' in the sense of having a meal at one time, and then there must be another meal. It means to have something always in the mouth] "so he that *ruminate*th Me, even he shall live because of Me." You and I are called upon to continually partake of Christ by faith, to ruminate upon Him, to always have Him in the mouth, to be continually drinking of His Blood and continually eating of His flesh. In the 53rd verse this term which is peculiar to eating, ruminating, is introduced which has not been used before; but He now uses it in relation to members of His Body. "Then Jesus saith unto them, except ye *ruminate* the flesh of the Son of Man, and continually drink His blood, ye have no life in yourselves." We are to have life in ourselves, not Life in ourselves as a self-sufficiency, but Life in ourselves as He had Life in Himself, that is the Eternal Life, and it is in this Eternal Life the service is. It is out of this Eternal Life the work proceeds.

Now we have had a vision of the work of

Christ. We have seen its immensity, and we know that by the finger of God He worked in this present world. How? Because of the refusal to do anything from Himself. Thus His words and His acts were of the Eternal Spirit, and His sayings were the actual sayings of God, and His deeds were the actual deeds of God. "So He learned obedience through the things that He suffered." By this self-crucifixion continually until at last He came to that place where the great work of God by the energy of the Eternal Spirit was to be wrought, and we know how He died. Here He laid down His "psuche" or soul in the energy of the Eternal Spirit, and He needed the power of the Godhead to do that. He received the commandment of the Father that He might lay down His "psuche," because His "psuche," or soul involved the Godhead. We need to recognise this, that God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost were implicated and involved in the "psuche" of Jesus, and thus that the Godhead was involved in the Blood of Jesus. That is a wonderful thing to have seen. We must get rid of the old idea of the blood merely as a corpuscular fluid. The blood was shed there at the foundation of the altar, but it is upon the horns of the altar that God saw the Blood as Life. It is by the Priesthood that that Blood was raised to be there; and that Blood was taken through into the innermost; and there by the priest is sprinkled out from between the Cherubim eastward—manward, indicating that it proceeds out from God. But what God sees is Life, not death. This is the spiritual nature of the Blood; and we need to recognise that the Blood of Jesus involves the Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—all involved in the "psuche" of Jesus. You cannot limit, or define the "psuche" of Jesus. It is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh; and now something of that which was the life of the flesh on the earth in the Blood manifested in the presence of the Godhead. Of course, we only have our finite human terms and types to indicate this. We need the Spirit to recognise that there has been a cleft in Deity, and it is in that riven cleft of Deity that Jesus Christ, truly Man, has entered in—Cleft! And you and I enter in through the Vail, that is to say, His Flesh. And then it is out of that Life, a Life hid with Christ in God that you and I are to serve. But this Life is found in a oneness, as we have seen.

We have seen also that that last work of His, the work of the Cross was in the energy of the

Eternal Spirit by which things visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, the visible universe, or the invisible universe have all been reconciled to God in the blood of Jesus. You can see its immensity, but you and I cannot understand the length and the breadth and the depth and the height if we are merely looking at things from our own mental objective, from the standpoint of a mere historical record, and of a mere geographical place. The thing has been done in time and space, but it is an infinite thing and reaches beyond all ranges. Now you and I have to get that vision of Calvary, and see the Lamb in the midst of the Throne, and recognise the Throne of God is also the Throne of the Lamb—One Throne—and God is involved in everything that was wrought in Calvary. If we have seen that, we have seen the infinite nature of God; and recognise that the last act of Jesus in His flesh was that tremendous work by which, through the Eternal Spirit, He rent the universe and offered Himself to God and has become in God the Man in Whom governs, "For in Him dwells the fulness of the Godhead in bodily form." We see, then, the nature of this work now entrusted to us as His children. He says in the 14th chapter of John, 12th verse:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth *into* Me [notice the word here] the works that I do he shall do also [the works of the Holy Ghost, the works of the Father]; and greater works than these shall he do."

Not a greater work than Calvary. That is the all-inclusive work. It does not need to be said that that is one all-embracing work, the work of Calvary; but greater works shall ye do because the works that prefaced Calvary were works confined to the sphere of this earth, but the works that followed them were the works made possible by the finished work of the Cross, whereby the works of God came down upon the heavenlies, down upon the principalities and the powers. Those are the greater works. We cannot go into this matter now, but there is a tremendous significance in the phrase that both the first and the last Adam were made for a little while lower than the angels. Yes. He also, the last Adam was made a little lower than the angels in the realm of His soul. "For a little while lower than the angels," but because He refused to live in His "psuche," or soul, He was able to live out from the Eternal Spirit. Here, lower than the angels, He brought the authority of the Throne right down here upon this earth, and there

functioned here, in his weakness, the eternal will of God; and He was able to bring upon the situation here, although in the realm of His soul under the principalities and powers, the tremendous dynamic of the Throne of God, and to break back through the Cross to the Throne of God as Man—"Lower than the angels"—you see all those works that He did up to Calvary were works done, as it were, when lower than the angels, under the principalities and powers in the realm of His weakness, His flesh, His soul, yet by the Eternal Spirit, doing down here on the level of the dust the works of Almighty God. Then He says to His church, "Greater works than these shall ye do because I go unto the Father." What works are those? We have thought they were more healings, more of the signs and wonders. We have labelled and tabulated works! No, you see that what the church is now called upon to do is the work of a Risen Life, the works of a Life hid with Christ in God, the works in the energy of a victorious Spirit Who has obtained the victory. God hath made Him to become a life-giving or quickening Spirit. It is the works of that Spirit, the works of the King, the fruit of Calvary. So you see the beginning of the works of the church are the works from the Throne down upon the principalities and powers; and they are the works first of all of prayer. That is why we need again and again to look into the heart of this matter of "praying in the Holy Ghost." What is praying in the Holy Ghost? We have a great deal to learn. We are only on the fringe of it. It is when two or three of us come together in the unity of the Spirit, in the oneness of that Life, the Anointing of God is upon us, and the Body is manifested. It is not that you and I are approaching from angles questions and matters upon which our own minds begin to bear, and we agree, and then pray as we think; but it is this, that when we do come together the Spirit comes through and prays the greater works, the works of the King Who has now ascended in the Throne.

Well, now you find in this passage in John xiv. the whole suggestion of this, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth into me, the works that I do, he shall do also [the works of the Holy Ghost]; because I go into My Father." It is because I ascend, because I break through, because I am going back to be in the Godhead, but now as Man, I will shed forth of My Spirit, the Spirit of the Godhead proceeding through Me to dwell in and upon

the church; not in and upon individuals as such, but in and upon the church: "Greater works than these shall ye do," the works not lower than the angels, but the works above the angels, the works of the heavenlies. This is the whole meaning of Ephesians—we cannot enter into it now—that you and I come into what we call "position," but while it is position, we come into a relationship in Christ whereby we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, and you find the Apostle lower down in that chapter, despite the fact that these people caused him gladness of heart in the faith of the Lord Jesus and love to all the saints, he yet prays that the eyes of their heart, or understanding, may be enlightened, and they may know ultimately what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from among the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies. That is, that you and I are to know now in fellowship that Life. When we come together we do not come together only as those who are interested in similar things, but we come together in order that the works of God might be manifest in us—*His works*.

Now we stay upon the fringe of that. We see the conditions. Our brother spoke to us very openly and straightly about the necessity of Oneness, and then there needs to be some further revelation. We think when we have obtained a unity that we can work; but "I can from myself do nothing." One has recognised this, that then we think we can do it, we have the secret we can do it. It is the flesh. The Lord has got to get the flesh slain and still, and make us recognise that we are impotent; and no flesh can glory in His presence. God is calling for a people who so recognise the Cross as it must be planted right in them to the dividing asunder between the soul and the Life which is hid with Christ in God, that when they come together there can be this mighty movement of the Spirit of the Eternal God in their midst, that they can pray those prayers which come out from God Himself, and, being heard in this world, bring about that thing which He is seeking to do, the shaking of things. You and I are called to this wondrous ministry. When the Lord has a people together, even a small number, who know what it is to find their life in Him in the Throne, He can begin to operate. You can see the massed gatherings of Satan. Anyone who can discern the signs of the times

can see how Satan is encompassing, and how he is involving the race, and the nominal church. What is God's answer going to be? What is going to be His vindication? What is going to be His manifestation? Oh, to get the weakest, the nothings, the hidden ones, if they will so have it and come together, that He may, by His Spirit, begin to show these greater works, the works of prayer, the works by which the travail of the Spirit shall be expressed in hearts that are broken, that live for their Redeemer, and brought into oneness with Himself, so that there shall, in these last days, take place swiftly that gathering out of the highways and the byways, if necessary, of those who must fill His house.

May the Lord give to us some hint of this truth for His Name's sake. Amen.

T. M. J.

“THE SERVANT OF THE LORD”

II.—THE WISE MASTER-BUILDER.

(Continued.)

HAVING spoken of the fact of the spiritual edifice which God is building in this age; of the specific endowment of Divine wisdom essential to all His “Fellow-workers”; and of the first expression of that wisdom in the matter of the Foundation, we now go on to speak of the means used by the Holy Spirit for the effecting of this purpose of God. Just a word on the method which leads to the means.

It is perfectly clear in the Word that the divinely appointed method in the first place is the preaching which is a proclaiming and an announcement. There are many other contributing ministries not less important, as they are all interdependent, but the first in order—not necessarily to large audiences—(there are instances in Scripture of preaching to one) is the proclamation and announcement of a certain comprehensive and all-inclusive fact. This being the case it is of very great importance that we should know that fact and its inclusions. Many inquiries have been set up as to the unsatisfactory situation which exists for so great an area in relation to the gospel and Christian life. Questions concerning wide-spread indifference, gospel-hardening, wholesale backsliding, disappointing “converts,” ineffective Christians, low level of spiritual life, worldliness in the “Church,” the

misleading of believers by false doctrine and deceiving spirits, spiritual immaturity, &c. &c. To some extent such conditions existed from the beginning, even in the great apostolic days, but it was then much more the exception than now. It was then something in the midst of the greater and better conditions which made the apostolic Church so mighty in the world. Now, it would seem to be the other way round. The genuine thing is the smaller company in the midst of the more general failure. Far be it from us to join in the tirade against that which bears “His” name, but we are so constantly confronted with the heart-breaking story of the difficulties of service, the disappointment of workers, the despair of Christians, that we must enter the inquiry and seek to help. Now without pressing it as our conviction—which certainly it is—we would present it as a question: may not this state be largely due to an inadequate gospel? Is the means used such as is calculated to achieve the tremendous end in view? Have we an adequate conception of what that end is? May it not be that such an inadequate conception has resulted in the eliminating or neglecting of essentials on the one hand and the labouring of certain unworthy factors on the other. With regard to the latter; is fear of hell and gain of heaven really worthy of the “so great salvation”? Is the horrors of being doomed to eternal punishment, giving rise to all the sensational means and methods by which fear is meant to be produced, really a sufficient motive? Is the personal going to heaven with all the personal gains and pleasures associated therewith, producing all the sentimental appeals intended to capture by pathos, emotion, excitement, pleasure, &c., really mighty enough to bring through the eternal purpose? Are souls ever born without travail somewhere, and will they ever get through without that travail becoming experimental in themselves to some extent? May it not be the gospel of “escape from hell and going to heaven,” with all the cheap elements of its proclamation which has nauseated so many, turning them away in disgust; which prejudices the true; and which has become played out in the emotions of many who can no longer be appealed to along these lines, setting up a gospel deadlock?

Perhaps, after all, the best method of dealing with such questions is the positive one, that is considering

THE NATURE OF THE GOSPEL OF THE WISE MASTER-BUILDER.

It is not that gospel itself in terms of doctrine that we propose to consider. That is dealt with elsewhere in the general teaching through this paper. But some essentials of that gospel.

In the first place there must be

AN ADEQUATE SETTING AND MOTIVE.

It is absolutely essential that if all the great purpose of God with its vast inclusions is to be entered into, and if there is to be an adequate impact upon men there must be the sufficient background of the New Testament evangel. It would be very salutary if every "Christian worker" were to sit down or kneel down and prayerfully consider the background of New Testament preaching, exhortation, admonition, entreaty, appeal, instruction. It will be discovered that that background begins in eternity past, before times eternal, in the eternal counsels of God. It will reveal a conception and design with which every movement and gesture of God throughout the ages is related. It will explain the existence of the universe and the purpose of the whole creation. It will set the sovereignty of the Son at the centre and make it also the circumference. It will reveal that each soul saved is a vindication of the wisdom of God in plan and creation, and the justification of the existence of the world. (See articles on "The Unveiling of Jesus Christ.") Salvation, conversion, is never something in itself. An ultra individualism in being saved or in seeking the salvation of others is contrary to the Scriptures; and is baneful. The "therefores" and the "wherefores" of the New Testament are pegs upon which hang vast ranges and mighty weights of spiritual significance and reason.

Why should men be saved? Why should I be utterly abandoned to Christ? Why should I accept the Cross of Christ in its total application to all the elements of my natural life? Why should I leave all for the Gospel's sake? These and many other such questions must be answered in the light of that infinite background of "the eternal purpose" in the first place.

True it is that conversions take place from the preaching of the immediate issues of sin and hell, and salvation from these. But so often such remains for a long time with but the personal salvation and the immediate issue and a single note. Why should maturity be so long delayed, the nursery so long occupied?

Why not the full compass of Divine meaning from the beginning? Again we ask, may not the wide-spread failure of a certain evangelism be due to an inadequate motive?

Then in the next place there must be

AN ADEQUATE DYNAMIC.

There is no subject which concerns the servants of the Lord more than that of spiritual power and effectiveness. We have prayed about this until we despaired. We have read books upon it until we were sick. Yes, we have spoken about it ourselves until shame has silenced us.

We see the Apostolic example and demonstration.

We know the Master's promise.

We know the doctrine and teaching basic to power.

But what of the power itself?

Far be it from us to think that we can improve upon, or profitably add to, all that has been written. But if the Lord has taken us through an experience which has made possible an unfolding of His secrets, it will not be conceit on our part if we humbly place such at the service of His children. It is not sufficient that we recognise the need for power and pray for it. Indeed it might be very unsafe for the gospel and for the name of the Lord if it were given. It is of primary importance that we should know the nature and the basis of power. It is equally important that we should recognise that it is that power which has as its object the building of the "House," the "Temple" of God. In the Old Testament whenever there is a need or a desire to give a *supreme* example of the power of God reference is always made to Israel's exodus and especially their passage of the Red Sea and Egypt's destruction therein. In the New Testament the paramount demonstration of the power of God of which the Old Testament example is but the type is the Resurrection of Christ.

From Genesis to Revelation resurrection is invariably the basis upon which the direct purpose of God is carried forward. Every instrument which is used in that *direct* purpose has to be wrought on to a basis of resurrection. In another place we shall shortly be showing how this is so. Here we just affirm the fact. In order that this truth may be the more apparent God took pains to secure a situation which was utterly hopeless apart from that miracle. The persons concerned were each brought to the place where there was no resource in themselves. The situations into which they were brought also proffered no

possible ground of hope. Death reigned! Then God came in.

There is no more desperately hopeless situation than that which naturally existed when Christ died, and the disciples knew it. Sin has triumphed. Satan has triumphed. Hell has triumphed! Unless—unless He can rise again, and then sin, Satan and hell are vanquished. For this in His case and for an *abiding demonstration of the fact*—*this all inclusive fact*, there must be the exercise of the exceeding greatness of the power of God. And as in His case so in the case of every one who is to be a living testimony to *that* power there must be a background which is hopeless; not theoretically but actually and experimentally hopeless. The death of the Lord Jesus did register the verdict of God concerning the Adam race in every unit. That race was not only incapable of realising the purpose of God, but now had elements in it which were positively inimical to that purpose. God never intended that such beings—such a species—as the fallen Adam race should occupy this world; it was never made for such, and in the end He will literally carry into effect that which He representatively did in the death of Christ, namely, sweep them away, “cut them off from the land of the living,” even all those who are not “in Christ Jesus.”

In the meantime the “eternal purpose” proceeds, but it proceeds only in those and through those who have firstly recognised the death of Jesus as *their* death; and then accepted

it in one all-inclusive reckoning of faith, and trusted God to make it actual; and then claimed and apprehended by faith their inheritance in the Risen Lord, even resurrection life. The very nature of that life will progressively make clear that it is a thing alone and can tolerate no mixture. It becomes the exclusive basis of all the activities of God within and through His children relative to the eternal purpose. But it is *resurrection life*, mighty, unconquerable, indestructible, deathless. *The Holy Spirit is the seal of the Resurrection and the Holy Spirit's law of operation is Divine Life.*

By that life the Holy Spirit constitutes the believer a personal demonstration of the resurrection, and the word of testimony thereto is only a consequence, but it is a consequence. Pentecost was on an eighth day, eight being resurrection number in the Scriptures. The experimental spiritual ground upon which the Church stood at Pentecost was the Resurrection. The testimony which the Church publicly bore at Pentecost was to the Resurrection. Paul's whole life and work rested upon his own *experience* of the Resurrection. We have said enough to lead to an enquiry along this line, but let it be understood that the basis of power is Resurrection union with Christ. The principle of the “eternal purpose” is Resurrection Life in Christ. The Holy Spirit comes only upon Resurrection ground. Power is to “know Him and the *power* of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death.” T. A.-S.

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, HONOR OAK ROAD, LONDON, S.E.23.

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship.
Sundays: 11 a.m., 3 p.m. (Young People's Meeting), and 6.30 p.m. Mondays: 7.30 p.m. Wednesdays: 8 p.m.
Saturdays: 7.30 p.m.

Conferences are held every week-end (Saturday and Sunday), and also a longer week-end at the beginning of each month, this fixed by the first Sunday. (Friday to Monday evenings, inclusive.) All particulars may be obtained from G. Paterson, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

Ministers: T. Austin-Sparks; T. Madoc Jeffreys; G. Paterson (General Secretary).

Guest House Hostesses: Lady Ogle; Mrs. M. Brand.

Telephone: Sydenham 5216.

Telegrams: “Syndesmos, Forest, London.”

Cables “Syndesmos, London.”

The Cross and our Conversation.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue."
Prov: 18:21.

The Death side.

The Life side.

The tongue--"set on fire of hell" James: 3.6.
 " " "a world of iniquity."
 " " "defileth the whole body."
 " " "can no man tame."
 " " "full of deadly poison"
 " " "death--in the power thereof." Prov: 18:21.

"A lying tongue." Prov: 2:17
 " " "6.17
 " " "12.19
 " " "26.28

"A flattering tongue." Prov: 28:23
 " " "12.23

"A mischievous tongue." Prov: 17:14.
 "A deceitful tongue." Rom: 3. 13
 "A backbiting tongue." Prov: 25.23
 "An unbridled tongue." James: 1.76
 Unclean lips. Isaiah: 6. 5.
 Rash words. Prov: 12.18.
 Tale-bearing words. Prov: 20.19

Feigned lips. Psalm: 17. 1.
 " " "1 John: 3. 18.
 " " "Isiah: 29.13.

Lips that speak guile. Psalm: 34.13.
 " " "Peter: 2.12.
 " " "3. 10.
 " " "Rev: 14. 5.

Lips that speak perversity. Prov: 4. 24.

Renewed in the spirit of your mind.

Eph: 4:23

"Lo, this hath touched thy lips." Isiah: 67
 "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." Eph: 4:29
 "Speak evil of no man." Titus: 3.2.
 " " "Eph: 4:31
 " " "James: 4.11.
 " " "1 Peter: 2.1.
 " " "Col: 4.6.
 " " "Eph: 4.15
 " " "James: 3.2.

"Words seasoned with salt."
 "Speaking the truth in love."
 "If any man offend not in word"
 "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life."
 "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." Mal: 3.16.
 "So speak." Jas: 2.12
 "Slow to speak." " 1.19

"Teaching and admonishing one another." Col: 3.16.
 "By Him let us offer the fruit of our lips." Heb: 13.15
 "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Prov: 15.1
 "Whoso keepeth his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles." Prov: 21.23

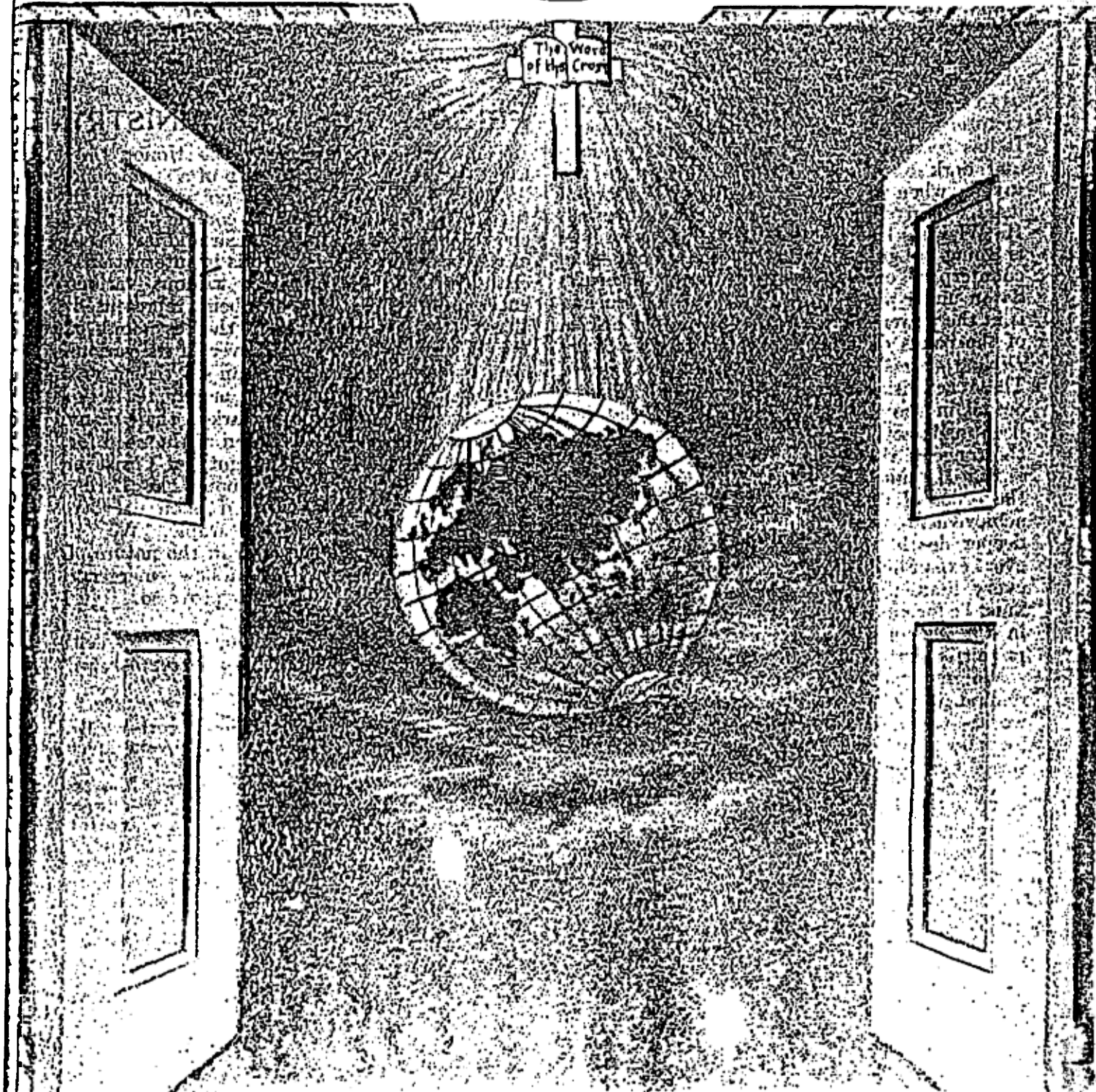
"To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." Psalm: 50.23.

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

NOVEMBER, 1928



VOL. 6. No. 11



MINISTERS' LETTER

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CENTRE,
HONOR OAK.

Nov., 1928.

BELOVED OF THE LORD,

It will be patent to you from the contents of the paper that for some time past the Lord has been stressing amongst us the matter of His triumphant Life. We have been made—not only to see—but to recognise and know that that Life which in Himself has proved triumphant in every realm, and which He has given us to share, is the only, but the sure basis of our victorious progress and effectual testimony. It has become the explanation of all the deep and dark experiences through which we are taken; when at times it has seemed that hell itself was given some leash to wrap us around. He Who has bruised Satan under His own heel is going to give the Church—His Body—the counterpart of that and “God shall bruise Satan under *your feet* shortly.” This bruising is in the power of a life which cannot be holden of the pangs of death. *It is the basis of every Divine activity in and through the Church.* These activities are undoubtedly the making actual in the “Body of Christ” all that has been made actual in the “Head.” Can we get the range of that?

But He must have an adequate basis, and the order of this ever increasing basis of His achievement is life, light, faith, obedience, deeper death, more life. There is a cycle of ever-expanding dimensions until at length every limit will be transcended. Our prayer must be for more and more life, and a confidence in the wisdom of the process by which the prayer is answered, even if it seems like death.

We greet you in the Lord's name, and would remind you that you—our readers in all the world—are upon our hearts, and that we pray for you continually. We are constantly besieged by many who are anxious that we should accept this or that line of teaching, system of truth, “fuller light,” &c., but we would like our friends to know that it is not merely upon a basis of the right or the wrong, the truth or the error of such that we do not respond—though in many cases this exists—but because we see clearly our calling and know that ministry to the whole Body of Christ with which we are charged, and we cannot be turned aside on to what would be merely departmental and phasal.

The testimony of Jesus is that of His Life triumphant in resurrection, and everything has to be tested by this. Not a matter of fascination, sensation, interest, apparent solution of mental perplexities, but whether it is life, mighty, liberating, with an impact upon darkness, desolation, and death. And Jesus is *that* Life.

Then let us make all our quest to be—

“That I may know HIM.”

Yours in that testimony,

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

T. MADOC JEFFREYS.

FELLOWSHIP AND MINISTRY

The November Conference at Honor Oak found us once again in the grip of a strong and definite purpose. There was no weakening in the strength of the numbers coming together, and friends came again from near and far. One of the chief joys of this work is its international character. We rarely meet without various nations and spheres of service being represented. The Lord kept us closely to the testimony of His Resurrection life and power in its various aspects, and we feel that we can say that it was a testimony in fact and not merely teaching. This conference was more marked than many by the world call. The burden of the need for the testimony to the sovereignty of Christ in the nations, and in and among the Lord's people in all the world rested upon us to a degree sometimes almost unbearable. We believe that this is something in the nature of that travail which precedes a new emergence of the Lord's purpose. May it prove so.

The next monthly conference will be held (D.V.) from November 30th to December 3rd inclusive.

HOLLAND

THE reports of the visit of our brother, Mr. Jeffreys, to Holland are such as to provoke much praise to the Lord.

Meetings were held in several centres, Amsterdam, Arnhem, Santpoort, Zandvoort and there were also many personal contacts which were fruitful. The visit revealed a real hunger and a fruitful field, and it is felt that much more must follow.

On the closing night nine children of God testified in baptism to their union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. This was followed by prayer and the testimony to the Oneness of the Body of Christ in the Lord's Table.

Our brother returned in great joy, and we have heard since of the going on of the work commenced.

BLACKPOOL

THE first monthly Conference held at Emmanuel Fellowship, Blackpool, where our dear brother, Mr. K. P. Oliphant came to minister the Word, was the occasion of a very real Testimony to Christ crucified and risen from the dead. The seal of God was on the word of His servant and there were several who will be living witnesses to these basic facts. The messages were largely concerning 2 Cor. v. 14-18, and the word was most clear in the Spirit, showing the place of the old life on the Cross, and the Life of Jesus risen from the dead being the New Life in us; and how in the New Creation all things in our life and service are only to be of God.

The Saturday evening gathering was perhaps the clearest and most blessed to many of those present. The reason for this was, that there had been a definite victory wrought over the enemy during the previous prayer time. Though there had been much prayer, it was felt that there was an enveloping of unseen forces in conflict. Recognising this, it was agreed that we should ask of God what was this grip upon us, and when the answer came, as it did to two or three in their spirits, prayer was concentrated upon this thing. Then it was that the powers of darkness gave place, and we had surprising evidence of the triumph of Christ. It was at once a revelation and a victory, teaching us to know the way of God more perfectly in knowing how to pray to the overcoming of the adversary, and the manifesting forth of the Presence of our Lord Jesus in life and victory. Mr. Oliphant also visited Fleetwood on the Monday night, when a definite testimony was borne to the Heavenly and present Ministry of Christ in His Body; and doubtless there will be abiding fruit there from that visit.

R. S.

FORTHCOMING MINISTRIES

November	24th to 30th.—Glasgow.	Mr. Sparks.
"	24th to 26th.—Blackpool.	Mr. Oliphant.
"	24th to 28th.—Cork.	Mr. Jeffreys.
"	25th.—Wimbledon (Gordon Hall).	Dr. Lumsden.
"	27th.—Welcome Mission.	Dr. Lumsden.
"	28th.—Southfields.	Dr. Lumsden.
"	" Streatham.	Dr. Lumsden.
December	5th to 7th.—Newcastle.	Mr. Sparks.
"	5th.—Rusthall (Tonbridge Wells).	

Before returning to America our sister Mrs. Lemmell spent much time with us, during which she wrote several new hymns specially for our use. We give the first of these on page 175.

"SOVEREIGN HEAD"**"THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST."**

HAVING seen Jesus in the counsels of God "before times eternal," and then in His creative activity and purpose, as the explanation of the universe in general and man in particular, we proceed to consider two other phases of this unveiling and testimony.

These will have to do with history in general on the one hand, and spiritual experience on the other. Two words will gather up all that can be said in these realms, namely

SOVEREIGNTY AND GRACE

Sovereignty governs and controls history and forces it to serve a specific end. Grace operates in history to secure out of it that upon which the Divine Heart is set.

Firstly, then, we see Jesus as the "I am" in history, and the testimony concerning Jesus persisting through the course of the ages, and like a steady, strong, unwavering line running through all events, laying hold of world movements and making them bend to that inner thing. We see the rise and fall of Empires, Dominions, Thrones, Nations; the pageant of world-powers; the glamour and glory, the pathos and tragedy of historic epochs. If our inner eye is open we can see that all this is related to one thing—"The Testimony of Jesus," that He is imminent in all, though by the world unrecognised, and often unseen by the very people with whose affairs He is most intimately associated.

Someone has aptly said "History is His story." Paul undoubtedly saw this to be so. O, what a different conception from that which "Saul of Tarsus" had of Jesus. Why, now he saw that that "Galileean upstart, a mere flash in the pan, who carried away a lot of poor ignorant folk and deluded them, and then was put an end to," this same Jesus goes back to eternity and then travels down the ages with His hand upon the ages and history, "upholding all things by the word of His power," and that the deepest thing in all is that testimony concerning Him.

Now there are many phases of this great fact, and a whole and large library would be required to embody them, so that we are compelled but to indicate it along one or two lines only.

You begin to read the Roman letter, and by the time one has got to the end of the third chapter (and there were no chapters in his letter) he has swept the world. He has dealt

with the whole race, Jew and Gentile, every department of the race, all nations, and he has shown to you that there is an abiding testimony to great spiritual facts related to God in every part of the creation. "The invisible things of Him are made manifest by the things which are seen." There is a witness. From that great general witness in the creation, the witness to the fact, and the power, and the wisdom, and the glory of God, he brings the thing down steadily, like the mills of God grinding exceeding small, and he tells you that you cannot put your hand upon a being in the whole race of humanity who has not at the very centre of his being a consciousness, however dim and darkened and covered by rubbish, nevertheless, a consciousness of himself as standing in vital relationship to a supreme object of worship and reverence whom he calls God, and that he goes to work to give expression to that consciousness, hewing out idols of wood and stone, but he is giving expression to a fact that somewhere deep down in the very centre of his being he is conscious of standing in that relationship to some supreme object which claims his worship, and that consciousness gives rise to three elements, the fact of sin, the fact of righteousness, and the fact of judgment. It may be imperfectly understood, and apprehended, vague, remote, but there in the whole creation there is a testimony, and then you sweep in all the systems of expressing that fact and that consciousness, all the heathen modes and methods, and you find that one thing is common, that in relation to that consciousness and that demand, propitiation is seen, a life for a life, a getting even somehow, and that on a basis of sacrifice. That is there. Paul goes to Athens, and he sees the altars, "I saw on an altar an inscription TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship Him declare I unto you." Here is the underlying consciousness, the fact, the nature of which they are altogether ignorant, but the fact is there demonstrating itself in these expressions, and here is the Testimony of Jesus. Beloved, however false, wrong and distorted and wicked and devilish may be the nature and form of the expression in the race it had its roots in God. You trace it right back to the very first fact that before the foundation of the world a Lamb was slain. O yes, distorted, taken hold of by the devil and used to sensual ends, made the very basis of devil worship—yes, that is the devil's way, to take hold of the things of God and turn them to account for

himself—yet however poor and awful the form of expression, trace it back, and you get back there where God with a pure and true and clear and high and right meaning and significance laid down the foundation of a right relation to Himself in the Blood of a Lamb. And we don't talk about the religious system of Israel and the primitive ideas in Israel of sacrifice and so on as being derived from the heathen. We say that this distorted thing amongst the heathen was derived from the pure; it is the other way round, the right thing gone wrong.

Now, here, you see, is the Testimony, and Paul sees this, that the Lord Jesus has persisted in the deepest consciousness of the race, demanding rectification, laying the sense of sin, of judgment, and the demand for righteousness in every being.

When the Lord Jesus said that "When He the Holy Spirit was come, He would convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment," He was not announcing a new fact in the matter of the convicting, although there would be a new emphasis of this through the gospel, but He was particularly declaring the basis of that new emphasis—even His work at Calvary. It was to be related to Himself in a new way and the preaching of "Christ crucified" would be the occasion of the convicting. "Of sin—because they believe not on ME; of righteousness because I go unto my Father; of Judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged."

Another phase of this very broad outlook is the fact that the whole creation groans for incorruption and "eternal life." Why is it that the secular press finds that the most popular and attractive stunt that it can introduce is to open up the subject of the continuity of life; existence after physical dissolution, immortality? The thing is pathetic, tragic, and often ridiculous, in as much as those who write on it have no authority whatever, and that it is only possible of conviction in the spirit and not demonstration to the intellect. Does not I Cor. ii. 14 settle this finally? Nevertheless the fact remains that the vogue is successful as an advertisement because of the universal consciousness of man that he was made for something more; that there is something more; and that if this is all then life is a mockery; there is no justice in the universe; righteousness is not to be found; judgment is non-existent; sin goes eternally winked at.

But it is a constituent of man that it is not so, and that—whatever may be his false,

mistaken, unenlightened, apprehension, his wilful and persistent refusal in days of health and prosperity to measure up and take account, his preparedness to take his chance; or his closing of his eyes tightly to the fact—he knows within himself that there is something beyond. This, also, is the Testimony concerning Jesus, and it declares first, the fact of an *eternal* purpose, the principle of which is the basis and constituent of man's very nature and being; but also that that purpose can only be known or realised and that nature satisfied—as experience proves—in Jesus Christ.

These are great generalities in human life and history, but we must narrow down to the more particular.

Paul saw—not only this broad sweep of the Testimony of Jesus—but that that testimony was being in a specific way established by a chain of elect links through the ages. I am not going to discuss again the question as to whether Paul wrote the letter to the Hebrews, but believing that he had a hand in it in some way, read again the eleventh chapter. Here the line is traced from Abel through Enoch; Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Israel, &c. We leave these links for consideration later on, but here consider Israel; Israel among the nations, with the eyes of all the nations upon that elect nation.

Now in numerous ways Jesus is imminent and pre-eminent in the testimony of Israel. Take it from this standpoint alone; the unifying factor in the entire national life of Israel was the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was that which held Israel together as a spiritual whole, and made of them a spiritual nation with a spiritual mission. Now we know, do we not, that there is not a single thread in any one of all the curtains of the tabernacle that does not declare Jesus. You cannot find a bolt or a bar, a hook or a pin, a strip of ribbon, a tag, from the remotest point right through and through and right up to the very Mercy Seat that does not declare Jesus. It is called the "Tabernacle of the Testimony." And what Testimony? The Testimony concerning Jesus. The Testimony which in spiritual reality is that which is mentioned at the other end of the Book in Revelation—the same Testimony. Note now, Jesus then being at the centre, the unifying fact in this nation as a spiritual force right in the centre of the nations, upon which the eyes of all the nations rest, was the great object lesson through those ages. It was perfectly impossible, so long as Israel was faithful to that

Testimony for any one of those nations, or for all of them combined, to crush Israel. So long as they stood faithful to that central testimony, be they in themselves a weak, comparatively insignificant people, without military caste, or history, or training, be they the most helpless among the nations from any natural standpoint, they are more than a match for all the nations. What does it mean? It declares this, the sovereignty of Jesus amongst the nations. So when they come to cast out the nations from the land which they are going to possess, the very first thing that is said to them in Jericho is, "We have heard of you and your God, and we know quite well that the game is up for us." The nations knew. And what about those Jebusites who came along having obtained some old bread, and put on old clothes and shoes and said they had come on a long journey and when they started it was fresh baked bread and the clothes and the shoes had got worn out (although in truth they had not come from afar off) "because we have heard of you!" The nations knew the testimony of the sovereignty in Israel. Even taking the dark side, when the very Divinely raised up institutions of God fail Him, He persists; and when Israel failed through idolatry and went into captivity the Testimony does not cease, for even in the land of their captivity that Testimony goes on. He has His red line running along in a Daniel, Shadrach, a Meshach, an Abed-nego. The nations passed through their desolated land. They look at the desolation and say, What is the meaning of this? And the answer is "because of their unfaithfulness to their testimony." You see there are two sides to this testimony, the testimony which is glorious, and the testimony which proceeds, nevertheless, and shouts through the wreckage of unfaithfulness. And you know those words which are so often used in their prophetic sense and forgotten in their historic sense bear this out—words that have been prophetically put into the mouth of the Lord Jesus on His Cross, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." Historically these words belong to Israel. They were the words which the broken-hearted prophet put into the mouth, as it were, of the land desolated, and the travellers of the nations, passing up and down that desolated land hear the cry of the desolation of Jerusalem and the land, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" Is *what* nothing to you? That this speaks of my

unfaithfulness to a testimony. This is because that great thing which was the very constituent element in my national being was violated. This is the result. What a testimony to Jesus that when Jesus goes out wreckage and ruin comes in, and the very wreckage is a testimony to His sovereignty, to His supremacy!

Now you see the point is this, that He is all the way through proceeding in His testimony. It is there in history. Babylon the great, the wonderful—crushed because of the testimony of Jesus. To save that testimony He has got a remnant, but in order to get that remnant out Belshazzar must be slain, his throne upset. This law of the sovereignty goes right the way through. Now, if only we knew it, it is in the nations; it is making the nations rock; it is the cause of all the upheaving. It is that testimony—Jesus is there, imminent. Take the case of His church. He goes out of the objective in the care of Israel, and comes into the subjective in His church after His resurrection, and He is again imminent there—Sovereign Lord in the church and Sovereign Head of the church, which is His Body. Now touch that church! The mightiest nation that this world has known with all its force and resource exhausted itself to destroy the Testimony of Jesus as it was in a company of those whom the world said were "the weak things, the foolish things and the things that are not." God in Christ entered into that company and constituted them His Body in which He was resident, and Rome may exhaust all its resource to wipe out that Testimony, as represented by that company, and what is the issue? The issue is that Rome is torn limb from limb, shattered, and is as a tale that is told. But where is the church? It has gone on, and the Testimony of Jesus has proceeded, and the more it has been assailed in the church, the mightier it has grown. Persecution and adversity has been the very best thing for its growth. Beloved, there are many things that ought to come to us out of this truth for practical use and service in our own lives and in our own hearts. One simply mentions that, for our own encouragement and comfort, we who are in Christ Jesus have come into a sovereignty which all hell cannot overthrow. Jesus *shall* reign because He *does* reign, always *has* reigned, and so may this Apostle, either directly, or indirectly, it matters not, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost take up the scripture and say of *Jcsus*, "Thy throne O God is for ever and ever." Here you have the great "I AM" out

from eternity creating the ages and proceeding through the ages, in spite of everything that sought to rule Him out of the ages and out of the universe. O what a Christ, what a "Head!" And O, what a wonderful revelation of Who Jesus is and what Jesus is! Can you again wonder that Paul said up to his last breath, "THAT I MAY KNOW HIM?" T. A.-S.

(To be continued).

THE LOCAL FELLOWSHIP

THE Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre is not a church, there is nothing in the nature of a membership; neither is it the centre or base of an organised movement. It is simply a place at which the Lord's people of various connections and many spheres gather for spiritual edification, fellowship, and renewal for service, and from which such as the Lord equips and anoints go forth in ministry as request is made here and there. A continuous ministry goes on in one way or another to meet the need of such as are constantly coming and going, and to make possible the more thorough spiritual help of some of the Lord's servants. The house exists as a spiritual home for the time being. It is not a home for Christians in the general sense, but only for those who come for the special ministry at the "Centre."

The first week-end in each month is given up to special conference gatherings, commencing on the Friday evening and continuing until the Monday night.

While definite evangelistic work is directly engaged in, and various other forms or phases of activity as the Lord leads, we feel that the main object for which God has raised up this ministry is to meet the needs of His servants that they may in all the world fulfil their ministry the more effective and triumphantly. This is greatly born out in experience, and these servants of God are all the time coming from all parts of the world. This is all we desire—to serve the "Church which is His Body," and not to set up a "new thing."

THE MOTTO CARD FOR 1929 is now in print.

It presents in red and black the message of
The "I AM."

"I AM... Jesus."

"Before Abraham was, I AM."

"I AM, be not afraid."

"I AM ALIVE for evermore."

"I AM... the LIFE."

"I AM with you all the days."

The price is three-halfpence.

THE PRISONER OF THE LORD

[Words and music by Mrs. H. Howarth Lemmel.]



"THE prisoner of the Lord,"
This glorious bondage mine!
What wonder! in captivity
The chiefest joy to find!
As in His train triumphant, He
From place to place e'er leadeth me.

"The prisoner of the Lord."
How fierce the battle fought
E'er He from Satan could declare
My freedom fully wrought!
To be through all eternity
A trophy of His victory.

"The prisoner of the Lord."
Forever dedicate
As spoil of battle to maintain
His House and high estate.
Enchained by love to serve Him there;
A slave, with joys His marks to bear.

"The prisoner of the Lord."
No thought nor deed nor word
But out from Him; all captive now
To Him, the Sov'reign Lord.
In all things, His the dominance,
That He may have pre-eminence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the following sums received during October for A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY:—

Local, £5 1s. 11d.; Bermondsey, £3; Beoston, 1s. 6d.; Bow, 5s.; Brewer Street, E.C., 2s. 6d.; Cambridge, 2s. 9d.; Ealing, 5s.; Fairlight, 2s. 6d.;

Grimsby, 5s.; Horsforth, 2s. 6d.; Holland, 4s.; Hong Kong, £1 9s. 3d.; Liverpool, 2s. 6d.; Old Kent Road, £1; Palmers Green, 10s.; S. Kensington, £1; St. Keverne, 5s.; Sandown, 2s. 6d.; Swindon, 5s.; St. Beawells, 3d.; Tunbridge Wells, 5s.; Watford, £1.—Total, £15 15s. 2d.

THE VANQUISHING OF DEATH

(PSALM LXXXVIII.)

I RECOGNISE, beloved, that this Psalm is a very oppressive one, but there is one relieving sentence in it, which is the key to the hope that lies therein, and that is the address in the first place where the Holy Ghost through the psalmist cries, and therefore the Spirit of the Eternal Christ, the Spirit of Jesus, Son of Man, "O JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF MY SALVATION," and that is the word that gives the answer to all that follows, because here you have undoubtedly, by the Holy Spirit, the terrific cries of the Son of Man as He is tasting the bitterness of spiritual death, and as He discovers the awfulness of that judgment that is upon sin, and as He takes the sting out of death, and ourselves also, in the mighty power of His victory in that day when the Father addresses Him—"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee," in that begetting of the new birth in which you and I share; but it is well for us to read such a psalm as that ourselves in solitary meditation, always having the safeguard of the opening address, lest our hearts fail us, in order to recognise what is the profundity out of which we have been saved. We shall be saved from superficial Christians if once they know the depth out of which they have been saved.

One wanted really to connect that with the word in Romans vi. 9 where it reads, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more lordship over Him."

6th verse: "Knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be made of none effect, that henceforth we should not be the bond-servants of sin."

Now here is another aspect of that knowledge, "Knowing that Christ being raised from among the dead" (it is always well for us to realise the force of that preposition "from among") "dieth no more: death hath no more lordship over Him," or as the literal translation is—Death no more rules over Him. The suggestion is that there was a time when death ruled over Him, and you have the cries of His heart in the 88th Psalm when He was under the lordship of death.

You read in the 2nd chapter of the Hebrew epistle words that still further relate themselves to this thought, in the 9th verse: "But we see Jesus Who was made a little lower than

the angels for the suffering of death [notice there is the suffering of death] crowned with glory and honour, in order that He, by the grace of God [here is an act of the grace of God, something coming out as a free and wondrous dispensation of God Himself] should taste death for every man." Or it might be translated "for everything"; that He might taste universal death; that He might know what death is and He might taste it as a universal fact for every man, everyone, everything: and there can be no doubt that the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, the temptations of the Lord Jesus were the sufferings and temptations of death, death seeking to invade and to conquer a Life which was lived in this world sheerly by faith. That is the thought that is found in all the passages.

You find in the 10th verse it says, "For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and through Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain [or the file-leader] of their salvation perfect through sufferings." He is the type also of their salvation, He comes in Himself, the manifestation of what kind of a salvation this is, this so great salvation, and He is the file-leader of it. His emerging out of that which sought to engulf Him is the all-inclusive representation of what in degree we are delivered out of, and into what we are brought. The File-leader, or Captain of our salvation is made perfect through sufferings, and those sufferings are the sufferings of death. Read the 14th verse: "Since then the children are partakers of flesh and blood [the children of the household of faith], He also Himself in like manner partook of the same that through death He might render powerless [or destroy, or annul] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." And then as you read down the chapter to the last verse you read, "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted He is able to succour them that are tempted in the same manner."

You remember in the 4th chapter [Hebrews] you get this word of great comfort to our hearts as the children of God besieged by much temptation, and we ought to consider the 15th verse with the 14th, because this shows the range of the Saviourhood of Jesus. He is the Saviour of His heavenly people; He is not only the Saviour of us as sinners, but He suffers us when we are His people, and I am thinking that the Saviourhood of the Lord of

His people, as His people, is so wonderful that there should be no comparison as His saving of us from our sins. There is a salvation of infinite range going on in you and me. We are saved, but there is another sense in which we are being saved. Our salvation is complete; we can rest back upon that, but we are being saved now as we have come out into another relationship altogether from that which we were in when we were dead in trespasses and sins. You and I are now out in the open; we are meeting a different set of propositions altogether as the children of God to those we meet when we are not the children of God. You have merged, in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, as you share His Life, into a realm where you need a Saviour Who saves us as being a Great Priest over the house of God, and that is the revelation here in the Hebrew epistle: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that has passed through the heavens [notice the expression here, not passed into, but passed through the heavens], Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." You see our confession is the same confession as His; it is a joint confession. It is a confession concerning Eternal Life, concerning the Life of the ages, the Life that was in Him on earth as the only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth, but it is the testimony, or confession now that we make together with Him. "For this is the testimony that God hath given concerning His Son that God hath given to us Eternal Life [that is, the church which is His Body], and this Life is in His Son." That is, we share a Life with Him, and we make the confession of the sonship. That is the confession—we cry together with Him, Abba, Father. He cried on earth, "Abba, Father." You and I here on earth affirm that our Life is hid with Christ in God, and there is immediately aroused all the antagonism with the challenge of that confession, which makes it necessary at once to vindicate the grace, and He is the High Priest of our confession; He prevails over this confession that we make together with Him as being heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. You see we have a Saviour Who has passed through the heavens and, as the Great Priest over the house of God, He saves His people in that realm. It is not only that He has saved us out of our sins, and out of that spiritual death in which we were lost, but having begotten us again out of His ascended Life, by the Spirit, He saves His people now. One who has passed

through the heavens. And then we read for our comfort, "For we have not a High Priest not able to sympathise with the feeling of our infirmities" as we meet the impact of all this that besieges and assails us—the principalities and powers, the world rulers of the darkness of this age, the host of wicked spirits in heavenly places. You and I in our infirmities, in these mortal bodies, with the flesh here yet with us, and with the world engulfing us, and with Satan actively besieging us make the confession, nevertheless, that we are sons of the living God with the Christ, sharing in Him, and with Him one Life. Well now He is able to sympathise with our infirmities as we make that confession, because He made that confession on earth, lonely and solitary as the only-begotten of the Father here in the likeness of sinful flesh, and all hell sought to quench it, all the power of the lord of death was out to encompass the extinction of that; if possible, and you and I are meeting the same thing, the lord of death, the powers of death, the gates of hell, but you see we have one who is able to sympathise with our infirmities. It says, "He was at all points tempted like as we are, but apart from sin."

He was not tempted as we are in that respect, because He was not a sinner. We need to recognise the extraordinary statement here. It was the kind of temptation that you and I are now meeting that He knew, and if we read the rendering correctly we see that here is the significance of it. Andrew Murray gives this translation: He was found in our likeness, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and in the likeness He was encompassed with temptation at all points; He was besieged with temptation, and He is able to sympathise with us in our infirmities as we are tempted [tried] in this realm of the heavenlies in which you and I are now living a life of faith as the children of God, encompassed with the powers of darkness seeking to quench the testimony of Jesus which is in the church, which is His Body, and so it says, "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace for every season of need. And they are consecutive, they follow one another these seasons of need, but we come as the children of God to a throne of grace, and find mercy and reasonable help.

In the next chapter we again get the significance of the Lord's sufferings and His temptations, 7th verse, "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears

unto Him that was able to save Him from death and was heard for His godly fear." There was a godly fear in Him, lest death should overcome Him, lest this encompassing pressure that was from all points should extinguish the testimony of God by the Holy Spirit. Now this refers by implication to the garden when His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and when He was pressed beyond measure, but I have a thought that it might cover a wider ground than that, that there were other seasons that we know nothing of. We read of the temptation in the wilderness when He was tempted of the devil for forty days, when He was besieged and pressed at every point by the powers of darkness, then we get the climax of this which we very often pay attention to, only which came because of the pressure of the forty days, that the devil leaveth Him for a season, but there are other seasons known only to the Father and Himself when He meets the encompassment of the principalities and powers and world rulers of this darkness, and had need to spend nights of prayer, as we get glimpses of that life of prayer given to us now and again, "And He was heard for His godly fear. Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered"—the sufferings of the Christ as He lived that life which you and I are now called to live by faith as the children of God, as He lived that Eternal Life uniquely, of course, and alone as the only-begotten of the Father. He lived it here by faith on the earth in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was pressed around by those powers of darkness.

Now no man meets that but the child of God, and what one wants to really point out is this, that when you have become a child of God, when you are born from above, and when you are making the good confession of that Life which you share in and by the Lord Jesus, then the battle commences, then the fiery trial starts, then these temptations of which we read here, the like of which the Lord knows which He passed through, but uniquely, begins; and there is one thing the children of God need to learn, and that is, that as you come out into this life of being a child of God, the seed of God in you, and make the good confession, you meet another set of circumstances altogether, you meet the unseen world, and the life you are to now live is a life of faith. You are justified by faith, and you fall back upon that justification, but now you are to live a life of faith. You find in Romans iv. that Abraham,

who is a type of this justifying faith, goes out to live a life of faith on the ground of his justification. He is justified in Ur of the Chaldees, the God of glory appears to him, and he is made to recognise his ungodliness, that his nature is inimical to the God he had thought to find, and we read in the 5th verse: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned unto him for righteousness." And so you have this justified man, Abraham, on the basis of his justification now living a life of faith. He comes out from the security of this world; he obeys the call to come out, not knowing whither he was going. And that is your pilgrimage and mine in a sense, although we do know the goal, but there is another sense in which we know not whither. We are being led by the Spirit, and we are out in a life of faith. You will recognise that after Abraham had become a sinner he was justified by faith, and therefore was in relation with the God of peace, and was a friend of God. Now he is to live a life of faith out in a realm of circumstance the like of which he had never known before, and you discover that he is tempted, he is tried in every realm, and he is tried more and more until he comes to the unique revelation that the God who justifies him, is a God Who raises the dead, a God Who quickens, and that is the revelation that the life of faith will bring us to. As you read down the chapter you discover that Abraham through God Who justifies him, who accepts him on the ground of the Lamb that has already been slain in the purpose of God, Who shall yet be manifested on the earth, comes out into a life where now he recognises that the promise can only be fulfilled by the power of a resurrection. It is only by the power of a resurrection can the promise be entered into, and so you find as you read down the chapter you get the revelation of the God that quickens the dead coming through. You find in the 17th verse: "According as it is written [here is the promise], I have made thee a father of many nations," in the presence of Him Whom he believed, even God Who quickeneth the dead, and "calleth those things which be not as though they were."

You find that Abraham in this life of faith is stripped and stripped of everything, and he has to learn that he is now in a sheer dependence upon God for everything. He is justified; he is ready to appear before God, but he has to live a life of faith to secure an end, and that is typical of your life and mine. You and I are

justified by faith; we are saved, we are ready to go home, O, but the Lord has called us out into a realm, of which the experience of Abraham was but typical, where you and I have to fight the good fight of faith, and meet a set of conditions similar to those that Abraham met, but upon another range altogether, as the sons of God. You see, for instance, when he comes into the land of promise, he has to depend upon God for resource, for there is a famine there. When he has passed through that, and God has given him resource you find he has to depend upon God for fellowship, because God takes all fellowship from him, even Lot, the one who had been with him is separated from him, and Abraham has to go on alone. So these phases of the testing of faith pass along until you come to the place where the promise can be fulfilled. Abraham is as good as dead. There is no life in him, and you discover as you read down the chapter that this was the unique character of the revelation. At last it says, "Who against hope believed upon hope that he might become the father of many nations through the seed, according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead, seeing that he was a hundred years old and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yea, looking unto the promise he staggered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised He was able to perform, and therefore it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was reckoned unto him, but for our sake also unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on Him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Now that is the key to the whole matter. You and I are living a life of faith by the Spirit out in the open. We are in there among the clay—dead to trespasses and sins, but we have been awakened unto God. O, we are awakened to much more; we are alive to other things; we have come up against the spiritual forces of the universe. When the word of God says our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places; it does not mean there is a realm where you may now and again touch it if you like, it means you are there, you are out, you are up against a set of powers that could wreck you and break you and fling you broken and rent aside, but for the cover of

the grace of God, because you are making a confession of a Life that is hid with Christ in God here on earth. You are justified by faith, but you have got to live here, and you live here amongst temptations, but a different set of temptations now, not only temptations to sin, but temptations to doubt, and oh, how the mind becomes besieged; and that is what the children of God need to learn that you and I are meeting the lord of death, he who invades, besieges the soul, seeks to extinguish and smother and quench and slay that which is begotten, and never so much as now as you and I are moving toward the last hour of the age-long conflict. This thing is going to become more and more intense, but there is a revelation on the other side that, God enabled, you and I may go through and be more than conquerors through Him Who loved us. That is the meaning of this word in Romans, "Knowing that since Christ hath been raised He dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over Him."

T. M.-J.

(To be completed.)

Look not for a true living strength, in the life
of the *Me* and the *I*,
With nothing to love but its selfhood, and
fearing to suffer and die,
As thou seekest the fruit from the seed-planted
grain,
Seek life that is *living*, from life that is slain.

Then hasten to give it its death-blow, by nailing
the *I* to the Cross;
And thou shalt find infinite treasure in what
seemed nothing but loss;
For where, if the seed is not laid in the ground,
Shall the germ of the new resurrection be found?

The soul is the Lord's little garden, the *I* is
the seed that is there;
And He watches it while it is dying, and hath
joy in the fruits it doth bear.
In the seed that is buried is hidden the power
Of the life-birth immortal, of fruit, and of
flower.

'Tis hidden, and yet it is true; 'tis mystic, and
yet it is plain!
A lesson, which none ever knew, but souls that
are inwardly slain;
That God, from thy death, by His Spirit shall
call

The life ever-living, the life ALL IN ALL.

PROFESSOR T. C. UPHAM.

“THE SPIRIT’S LAW OF LIFE”

(ROMANS VIII. 2.)

THE first thing in experience on the subjective side is not the Cross, if by the Cross you mean the death. The first thing in experience on the subjective side is the Resurrection, and the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus made experimental by the inward reception of His Risen Life is the basis of everything else. The Cross has a place prior to that, but not subjectively. Where then, and how then, does the Cross take the prior place? Objectively! Now it is important that we recognise this, that death union with the Lord Jesus Christ is a thing to be recognised as having already transpired, long ago, milleniums ago—“The Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world,” but of course this thing was put into action on this earth in Calvary, and if you like to begin there you may. We will, for our purpose begin there, that, as we so often say, the Lord Jesus Christ died an inclusive death—“We thus judge that one died in the stead of all, therefore all are dead.” Now that is an objective fact. He did that, and we have got to recognise that we died at least two thousand years ago in Christ. By faith we accept that. That is objective.

“My faith would lay her hand on that dear head of Thine.” That is the objective fact that the all-inclusive, all-meaning death of Christ was mine, by faith. I accept that, and take my position in that. I look at that, and I say there I am in Calvary; there I died.

Now most of the trouble has arisen through an inadequate recognition of that fact; that we have merely seen that Christ did something for us in the matter of our sins, and not that He did something *as* us. There is a lot of difference, and what so many of the Lord’s children come to recognise after many years of trusting in the Lord for salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin is that they did not know that they, with all that they are, good as well as bad, were abolished in that death. They thought of SOMETHING having happened, SOMETHING of themselves having been in that death, and not THEMSELVES as having died. It is most important that we should have the inclusive and conclusive recognition of that fact, and accept it by faith, for that is the basis upon which God begins His activity in us. Now faith begins by recognising and accepting and submitting to an all-inclusive fact as objective there in Christ.

Faith immediately demands obedience, for faith and obedience are one law with two sides, and you cannot separate them. You have to be obedient unto that death by faith, and give a very definite declaration of faith to that fact and bear testimony thereto. There is a practical side to it in which you are involved. Now having in the obedience of that faith in the objective thing come to that point where you accept your death you have come just to the point where God gives you the gift of Eternal Life.

Now the first thing which is subjective, and not objective, is that union with Him in His Risen Life, and having taken your place in the objective fact you come to know the subjective result that you are raised together with Him. That is, you receive the Life of His Resurrection. You only receive it, true, in its beginnings as it were, as a babe, an infant, but you have it, and then from that time that Life is the basis of everything. It makes possible everything. Beloved, if you were to come experimentally into Calvary without that Life there would be nothing left of you. The Lord dare not take us experimentally into Calvary until He has got something in us that will bring us up, but He can do anything with us when once that Life is really there.

Now the order is firstly, faith in the objective fact, and our obedience of faith in an acceptance thereof, and a declaration of our position therein. That is the first phase of the divine order. The next is, the inward, the subjective, the receiving of His Risen Life by faith. Then the third thing is the Cross being made subjective.

I am perfectly certain that much confusion and a terrible amount of paralysis and death is resultant from a continual emphasis upon the subjective death of the Lord Jesus before the Life has had a chance. I wonder if you understand me. I don’t want to confuse you, but a continual emphasis upon death, crucified! crucified! will bring you into death, unless you really do know, and unless you do count utterly upon the power of His Risen Life within you. Every bit of the prospect in Life and in service depends upon His Resurrection. If you study that as a truth in the word of God right through, not only in the New Testament, but in the Old, and especially in the New Testament in the actuality of the thing, you will find that everything rested upon the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. You will find that every movement, the slightest gesture, every step of progress toward

the realisation of the Eternal Purpose of God, was by reason of an uprising of that Risen Life; was upon a basis of Resurrection. Now you are launched out into a fairly large realm, but once you get that key, and once the Lord says that in your spirit you will find that your Bible will become a new book, absolutely alive, and wherever you look you will see the law and truth of Resurrection. You know that Pentecost was upon Resurrection ground. Listen to Peter preaching again and see what He is saying. What is his theme? Here is the church merging into its great world testimony, its world vocation by the uprising of the Risen Life of the Lord within it. Now I dare not stay just for the moment to show how far-reaching that truth is: but we must recognise this as the law, that everything, without a single exception depends upon the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ being made a subjective reality in us, and it will only be by that Life that we are able to put to death the deeds of the flesh. That is, to make the Cross subjective it will only be as that Life is the actuating principle, the dynamic of your experience that you are able to do anything at all inside, or outside.

The Cross becomes subjective when the Life has become subjective by reason of an attitude and an obedience of faith toward all that the Cross means objectively. You see the order. Now I am not saying this without, I think, an indisputable background—I am as confident of this as I am of anything in the universe, and the Lord has shown me this so clearly and so thoroughly for sometime past now that I can see that this is the way through, the way out, the law of everything, and there are no possibilities at all until we recognise this fact, that the Resurrection is the supreme thing in the universe. It gives birth and rise to every other possibility in our union with God, and that fact of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus becoming an inward reality in the members of the Body of Christ is the guarantee,—provided it is given a clear way, a free course and not checked,—of the accomplishment and the achievement of everything that is in the mind and will of God.

Now one is not for a moment putting the Cross in a secondary place—do not misunderstand me—the Cross is absolutely essential, you never get into the Resurrection until you have recognised the Cross; you will never get into the fulness of the Life until, firstly, by faith, you have accepted all that that Cross means for yourself and your whole life, and then

having so accepted it you receive the Life of the Resurrection within your spirit. The order of spiritual experience is this: There stands the Cross, there is Christ crucified, and in that One Person God has included all of us, we are all in Him. We recognise that His death is our death. His death is not only the pardon and propitiation for our sins (it is that, blessed be God); it is not only our salvation from hell, and our assurance of heaven (it is that, blessed be God), but that is not enough, it is that it is linked with that great Purpose of God before the world was to have for Himself an instrument for the universal manifestation of His glory, and that instrument a glorified humanity. It is that the Cross represents the putting away of a humanity that can never be glorified, and in the Resurrection the producing of a humanity that can be glorified. You get an adequate background for this, and you see why you ought to mortify the deeds of the flesh by the power of His Risen Life. Not just because the Lord wants you to go without this and that, and to rob you of anything that is yours, and to narrow down your life and cut off. When people get that conception of the Cross, that the thing is one continuous cutting off, giving up, saying, die, die, all the time, Oh, they get such miserable, such lifeless people, such confused and confounded people, always introspective, looking round to see whether this ought to be, or that ought to be. Oh, it is an awful state of things to be there. Get your background, this vast thing that God has concerning the universe, the revelation of His glory in the universe through a glorified humanity, then put the Cross there, and say, I can never have a place in that as I am. My humanity, thus poisoned at its very spring by sin God can never glorify, therefore that which is impossible of being glorified must be put away, and I pass out in the humanity that is sin-poisoned and impregnated. But I accept that by faith, I cannot bring that about in myself, but I accept His act for me in that by faith, and I give my deliberate and definite and practical testimony to the fact that when the Lord Jesus died He died in my place—I died. Now I take that as the objective fact by faith, then claim, upon the ground of my faith in that death of the Lord Jesus, His Resurrection Life, the gift of God, which is the Life of the ages, Eternal Life in Christ Jesus our Lord, and then that Life becomes the principle and basis of making all that that Cross held objectively in itself subjective in me. I can now by a law put to death

the deeds of the flesh ; I can now, because I am in a place of risen ascendancy, say no to my "old man," to my own natural will, No! I could not do it whilst I was down there in death. You see what people are trying to do—dead people are trying to get the better of dead people! Death cannot cast out death! It wants LIFE to conquer death—"The Life whereby Jesus conquered death," says Paul. Now we, by the Life, have a spiritual ascendancy and can say, No! effectually from a vantage ground of our Life with the Lord. That is to be our attitude, so that what was in the Cross objectively, can now be made by God subjective in us, and the Life increases and abounds as by the Life we conquer the death. We take our position over death in all its forms of expression. Now you see that is the order. I hope it is very clear. Just ask the Lord to write that within.

RESURRECTION LIFE.

Now one has said this is the basis of everything. You have received a new Life ; it is a brand new one such as you knew nothing of before. It is so absolutely fresh to us that in most things we are utter strangers to it in all its laws and workings; so that we now in a new Life have got to learn everything over again from the beginning. We are babes—"Except ye become as babes ye cannot enter into the realm of the heavens." You cannot enter the Life of the Heavenly Man without beginning all over again. In the first place you have got to know all over again how to live by a new Life, and not by an old one which is called life, but which God calls "Death," and you will discover if you are really going on with the Lord in his own power, He will teach you that your life is utterly incapable of meeting the requirements of a Heavenly Life ; that in no phase or resource of our own natural life can we rise to the demands of a Heavenly Life, and the Lord will all the time be smiting our life, and saying to us, no, you cannot attain unto this in your own resource, this thing can only be done by this new Life. Some of us who have so much of this old life—it is so strong in us—have to be very badly broken all the while in that realm and shown in a very drastic way that this can only be done by His Life, and it will be utterly fatal for us to attempt to do it otherwise. It will be fatal to all the purpose of God in us and through us if our life tries to get in there to do it. It is His Risen Life which is the accomplishing, the achieving, the executive principle of this new realm, and oh, it is so new.

That is where you start, and you will find the Lord works that out. If your life gets up and tries to intrude into the realm of things heavenly, the things of God, you will get smitten, and you will go down. You will discover the Lord simply brings you back to where you were, and you have to start all over again. That is the history of Christendom ; it is the history of multitudes of those who profess to be the Lord's people, and everything has got to be learned all over again from babyhood. You have to learn how to walk in this Life and according to this Life, and the baby learning to walk just takes one step at a time—it may be in too much of a hurry with sometimes a tumble and much reaching out to cling on to something. It is learning to walk, finding its feet. It is just where we are in this thing, it is all so new, but we are learning how "to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," and we are learning by the law of this Life. I do not want to be guilty of underrating your intelligence, but I wonder if you are able to see how this works ; how this Life operates to dictate to you in the simplest things, the most commonplace things. You are about to say something, and if really you did listen inside you would hear something, not in word, but in feeling saying, "steady, careful now" ; but then you say it. You did not give heed to that Life principle—what is the result ? Well, a mess, and you know it ; and when you come to sit down and reflect upon it you say, "really I did have a check inside, if only I had listened." It is "the law of the Spirit of Life" trying to "make you free from that law of sin and death." But you see you have learned now, and next time you listen. So in deed, so in methods ; and the remarkable thing is that things you never for one moment had any shade of a doubt as to whether they were right and proper come into a realm of question. That is quite all right, you are moving on, you are discovering things, you are in a new world altogether. Things which were to the highest moral sense of the natural man quite correct come into doubt now you have come into another realm so much higher. You see you are learning how to walk by a new law of Life. And, beloved, listen, you may have accepted some system from *without* of laws for daily life, but the Life dictates what you should do, and what you should not do. You have this thing inside which is saying all the time, "yes," and "no" ; "you may," and "you may not," and what we have to learn is to walk by that—the Life. And we learn

very often by violating it, as we discover by its violation, death, and we have to have in that a hand to hand tussle with the Lord's enemy, with the death which has resulted from the resisting of that very, very sensitive still small voice of Life within. Of course, it is the Holy Spirit in all His intelligence working by the law of Life, because this is "the law of the Spirit of Life." The Spirit of Life in intelligence is not an abstract influence of some kind that is given unto us, it is the Holy Ghost Himself resident within, but His law is Life, and when the Holy Spirit is against the thing there is death, and that is how we know.

RESURRECTION TONGUES.

Now we want to get right back here at the beginning. I have not got past that stage; here I make lots of blunders, and when I sit down and think it over, I know that I was warned, if only I had paused and waited and listened a little longer inside. But we are learning to talk all over again. Then we have to learn to TALK in newness of life. You remember the word of the wise man "Death and Life are in the power of the tongue." You remember what James says, "The tongue is a little member, but see how great a forest is kindled by this little fire. A ship is a mighty thing, but see how mighty a ship a little rudder can turn," and he says "You can tame any beast in creation, but the tongue can no man tame." "Death and Life are in the power of the tongue." And what we need is Resurrection tongues! Oh, the death streams that go out through our talk, our conversation, our criticism, our talking people over; no bad intention, but just talking them over—death; and you know it. And after a little bit of that you know things have gone wrong; you have dropped down somewhere, and your spiritual life has been checked, blighted, and you have got to have a real good time with the Lord to be able to breathe freely again. You are learning all over again how to talk life. The Lord wants to make us talk in life, instead of death; to cut off by this life the stream of death. You cannot do it until you get life, more life to overcome the deadly poison of talk. You begin there, and don't let anybody think that the Lord will be able to use them with a message of life out to the world until they have learned how to speak in the ordinary way of life, according to life. Your testimony in the gospel, in spoken ministry, beloved, will be based upon this, that He hath touched your lips. "I am a man of unclean lips," and that testimony in that

ministry will be completely crippled, paralysed, if in the ordinary conversation of life there is not this principle of life at work controlling the death. Well, the Lord must teach us that. I can see that more and more clearly we have got to learn how, by the Spirit, to refuse to discuss people, criticise people, talk people over. With some it is a greater besetment than with others, but with all of us there is a need for this hold of life over death in our lips. We learn to talk all over afresh, we stutter and splutter to begin with and put things wrongly, but we learn by this inward law that says all the time "you know you ought not to have said that." If only you had waited, you knew there was something that would have stopped you from saying it. There is this all the time—to live—to walk—to talk—to know.

RESURRECTION KNOWLEDGE.

We are learning a new knowledge according to the heavenly wisdom. One need not stay to speak about that at length, but we have got to come to know things all over afresh from a heavenly standpoint, and our natural wisdom as an expression of our natural life and resource, can never get us through on spiritual matters. You come up against some of the simplest spiritual matters, matters of God, and you will find your most highly and fully developed natural wisdom and knowledge cannot stand you in stead. You are beaten, you cannot handle this thing, and it is only a simple spiritual problem. You cannot get through with any resource of natural understanding, and you come to see that there is something behind these familiar admonitions of the Word—"Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding." There is a big truth there, that *your* understanding can never get you through on spiritual matters, and that though we may have all knowledge according to this world, we simply fall right short of the simplest Divine knowledge, the gift of wisdom and revelation. It is a new knowledge. You can break that up into its many phases. We know we cannot do things now as we used to do them, we have come to see that our works *for* the Lord are not necessarily *the* works *of* the Lord; that our multitude of activities in the Name of the Lord with the very best of motives and the purest of desires do not accomplish the end of God. We do not get through, we are beaten; we have gone out to do the Lord's work instead of coming to the place where He can do His own

Continued on next page

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(Continued from previous page.)

work through us. A big difference, a mighty difference! Beloved, unless the Lord does every bit of the work it will never be done, and the Lord's end will never be accomplished. And that is why the Lord has to tie us up sooner or later so that our own work—that is—our works for the Lord come to an end, and we recognise that it is death.

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OUR HOME IN GOD

MATTHEW viii. 20.—"And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

"Christ had no home, not even a few inches of ground to call His own. He travelled about and shared the homes of others. Put yourself

in His place—He, the greatest Home-maker of all, had not where to lay His head. We ought to be so thankful for home, never to murmur or find fault against any of God's provisions for our physical life. Pity the men who have no home, no Home in God, nor any expectation of getting Home. Christ's homelessness was for our sakes—substitutional—He left His Father's bosom, something He lost, denied Himself, and all the Heavenly company, we cannot think what He left for our sakes. Our home—God—was lost by sin. We are a homeless race. God is our HOME. Christ left the home of the Godhead; He was homeless in the incarnation, homeless on the cross, when the Father completely forsook Him; suffered three hours on the Cross, absolutely alone in the whole world. For what? That we might have God for our HOME. He went still farther, when His soul was without a body, or home, in Sheol—unbelievers will enter into that, when the spirit is unclothed. Hell is the eternal condition of homelessness. What a wonderful home for the soul is the body. The Lord Jesus has provided us that an Eternal Home.

"Are you 'at home' with God? God and I have a home-life together, a homo-fellowship. How can we please God—by being like His Son. We try to please God just as we try to please our home-folks. When God sees the image of His Son being conformed in us He is pleased, and we have communion, a home-life with Him. 'That where I am, ye may be also' Jesus said, and 'Whom have I in Heaven but Thee' Psalm xc. *Through Christ I have my Home in God. We cannot be at home so long as there is lack of harmony, discord, between us and God. Quickly stop that thing which threatens to come in between God and us. Make God a HOME in the place of all the homesickness when you are bound for or on the mission field.*"

HENRI DE VRIES.

MOTTO FOR 1929

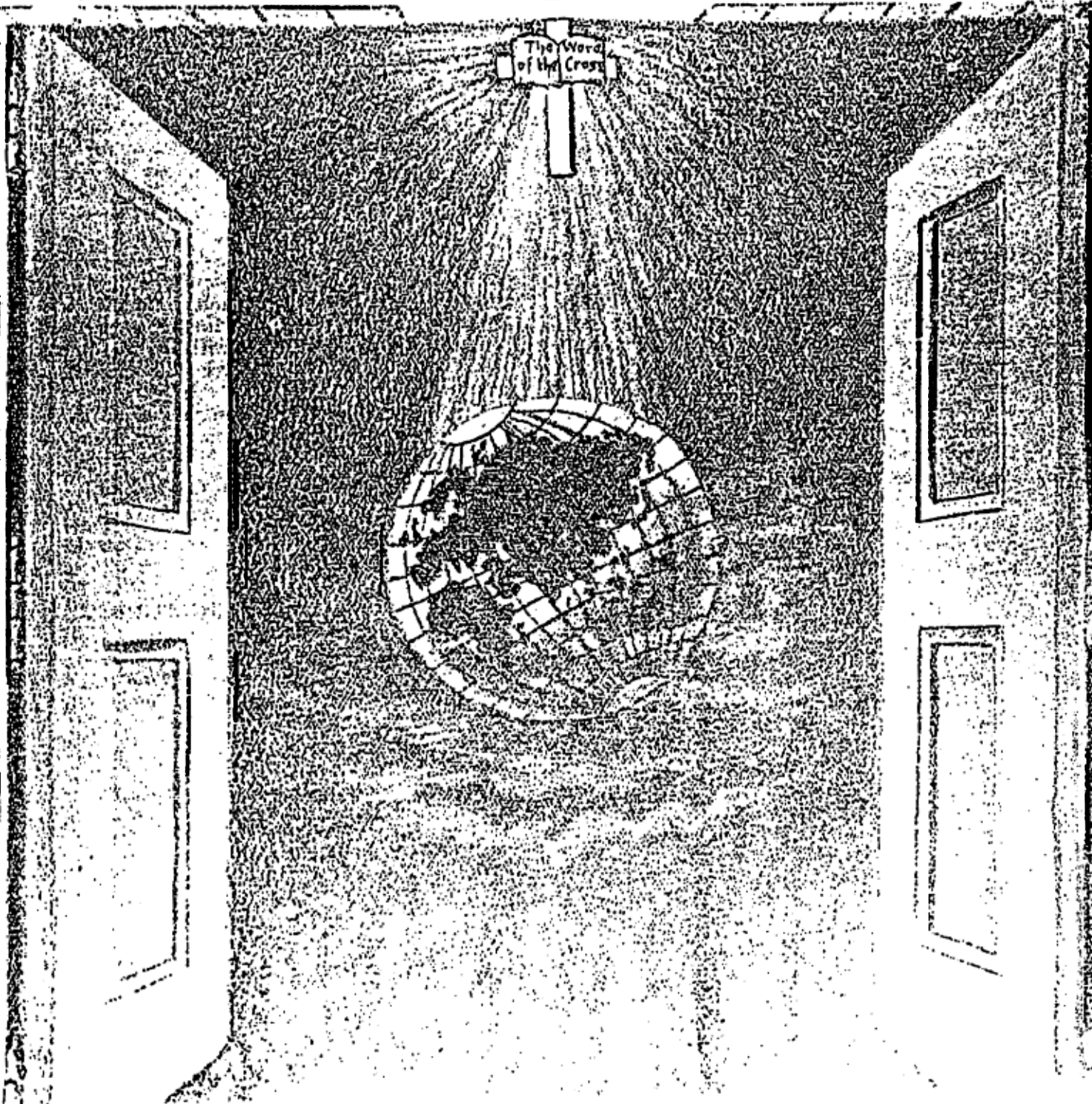
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A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

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HONOR OAK,

December, 1928.

BELOVED OF GOD,

We would greet you very cordially in the Lord at this time and make this letter and issue of the paper an instrument of interchange of love between all who receive it, near and far. To those afar off—not spiritually but geographically—we would say that the company of your fellow-labourers in Christ here continually have you in prayerful remembrance. The recipients of the WITNESS AND TESTIMONY in every land are prayed for without ceasing. May the Christmas and New Year time be the occasion of a very special visitation of the Prince of Peace and of the manifestation of the "Alpha and Omega." It might be well for us to remind ourselves once more that that word "Peace" may quite correctly be translated "Harmony," and this is really its essence.

Peace is the elimination of discord and chaos, and peace within is the arrest of that conflict between our wills and the will of God; the establishment of the sovereignty of Christ in our hearts. "In the world we shall have tribulation, but in Him peace." Discord shot through the universe by the revolt of Satan and its later success in man's complicity. The Lord Jesus came and met the rebel and cast him out, and now there is a sphere where Satan's reign has ended and the harmony or "peace of God garrisons the heart and mind through Christ Jesus." Here there are no longer rival claimants and an endless war. What war there is for the believer should be without not within, and it should be, so far as the believer's spirit is concerned—fighting **IN** a victory not **FOR** one.

The Lord would have us receive "the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls," and "hope unto the end." This means that by faith we are to now accept the consummation of God's work of grace and power, and never have any doubt and thereby defeat, by reason of fearing that the realisation is questionable or uncertain. The life upon which we have entered in all its phases is no speculation, but one which has already been consummated in Christ, "The file-leader of our salvation," and the perfected thing is being meted out to us on a basis of faith and obedience.

We would ask all our fellows in "the testimony of Jesus" to be with us much in prayer

in these coming days as the Lord seems to be saying "Lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes," that is, "expand and consolidate." The demands for ministry are greatly increasing and the spiritual needs of the Lord's people everywhere are very great. The meeting of these needs does require a deep and very clear knowledge of the Lord gained through experience and revelation, and we must ask the Lord to produce ministries of this quality. Such cannot be trained by man, but we are sure that He has in secret many who have been deeply in His "chastisement," that is, "child-training." We feel that 1929 may see great developments in this spiritual work, and thus we ask your fellowship in prayer. For this paper also we seek your prayer. It is intended for the hungry, and truly needy, and can never be made a "popular journal." There are many ways in which its helpfulness can be increased and we hope to follow these as we are able. Many who think it "heavy" ask for popularising methods, but they know not of the deep and grateful appreciation of many lonely and isolated children of God in numerous parts of the world. Beloved, pray with us, for we are in a living thing and the very life sometimes creates the embarrassment.

The Lord Himself be with you at all times in all ways; the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Yours in the fellowship of the Spirit,

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

T. MADOC JEFFREYS.

FORTHCOMING MINISTRIES

OUR brother, Mr. Jeffreys, has felt led to return to Holland and will be ministering there if the Lord wills until Christmas. Reports of this ministry will be in our next issue.

December 18-21.—Newcastle area: Binchester, Oakwellgate, Swalwell, Jarrow, Croxdale, Rowlands-gill.

January 4-7.—Honor Oak Conference.

January 11-24.—Glasgow—Mr. Sparks.

January 25.—Newcastle.

A NEW BOOKLET

'The Pathway of His Glory.'—Being fragments from addresses given by T. Madoc Jeffreys.

Very suitable for a New Year gift.

Price 3d.

The Motto for 1929 is now on sale, price 1½d.

"SOVEREIGN HEAD"
"THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST"
IN HISTORY AND IN GRACE
(continued.)

Now all too briefly we must look at this other side.

GRACE.

Paul saw this wonderful majestic side, the Lordship, Kingship, Headship, Sovereignty of Christ proceeding through history, triumphant all the time. But he saw that the Eternal Purpose out from the Eternal Counsels of God was also and only to be realised upon a principle and basis of GRACE. We come immediately now to the direct application of that principle without illustrating it at all through the ages and in the greater revelations, but come right down to what we ourselves are learning of this fact. To begin with, you can never enter into the Eternal Purpose, and take your place as the "called according to His Purpose," except on a basis and principle of grace. Try and get in on anything else and see how far you get. That is, you try by struggling to be saved. Put it in that simple way. Many have worn themselves out to utter despair in trying to contribute something toward their own salvation; to get salvation by something that they could do. The Lord has stood aside all the time until everyone has come to see that they have nothing in themselves whatever that can get them through. You start there. You struggle to come up to this and that. Have you ever said, "Well, I must be better before I can come to the Lord." "I have to make this adjustment and that adjustment before I can be a Christian." "There are certain things that I can see will have to be given up before I can give myself to the Lord." You know the common talk, and yet how mistaken all that! Some have even thought that they could pray themselves through into salvation, or shed enough tears to get through. It is not either tears of repentance, or prayers, but the Blood that avails for the soul, and the explanation of the earliest spiritual experiences of a penitent is found in this principle that it is not their penitence which is of avail, whatever form it may take, it is the grace of God and that alone. If, beloved, for one moment in all eternity any man, or any woman could lay their salvation to the account of their own strength of will, their own power to break with evil habits, their own persistence, it would

entirely upset the whole system of grace, and throw into confusion the whole case for salvation, because there are multitudes who, in themselves, have not persistence, or strength of will, or determination at all, and therefore they must go to the wall, and it is a case of the survival of the fittest. That is not salvation. That is not the system of grace. God takes the strong and the weak on the same footing, and He says right at the beginning that this Eternal Purpose can only be entered into on a basis and principle of grace, and from that moment onward it is all of grace. The sustenance of your spiritual life, beloved, is not upon the basis of your exhaustive study and apprehension of the word of God as such. There are some people who have the most comprehensive and marvellous grip of the scriptures who are the leanest souls in creation when you come to real spiritual body. They are as thin as rakes, and yet they have a marvellous knowledge of the book. Now that does not mean—of course you will not misunderstand—that there is no place for the study of the word of God, as I should be a denial of my own theory if I were saying that, because I do believe, as much as anybody does in plunging deeply into the word, but you understand that is not the basis of my spiritual growth. It may be an instrument of grace. But what is the basis, the law of my spiritual sustenance and growth? It is the same law as my initial entering into the Eternal Purpose. "I AM," all the way through. It is the "I AM, the Bread of Life." "I am come down from heaven for the Life of the world." It is grace all the time, by which Christ imparts Himself in some mystic way to my spiritual nourishing and upbuilding. It is the Lord Jesus being imparted to me. Now you have come back to "THAT I MAY KNOW HIM." But how are you going to know Him? You are going to know Him on the principle of Life which is the free gift of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Life Bread given by Christ continuously imparted. Oh, how the enemy assails, how he afflicts and tortures on this matter of accusation and condemnation! It certainly is not a matter of passivity, or fatalism, it is a matter in spirit of strongly looking toward the Lord, and in spirit strongly drawing upon the Lord by faith. But, beloved, it is the Lord freely, in Christ, imparting Himself all the time. Hurl that back at the enemy every time he accuses you and robs you of your spiritual vitality by telling you that because you have done so and so, or failed to do so and so you are

going to lose your salvation. One has met that continually from the enemy, and one has learned that this is the law: "If I have made a mistake, I deeply and terribly grieve—I would not consciously make a mistake that would injure You. I would rather die. Take me out rather than I should in any way fail you consciously or persistently. Now I take the precious Blood as over against my failure, believing your grace to forgive." Thus you cut the ground from under the feet of the devil. He has no ground for accusation. You have got to believe in this whole thing as being a matter of grace, and it is not upon a matter of my faultlessness; it is His grace. It does not give me licence to go on as I like, to be careless, but it does call upon me to believe strongly in His grace. Grace that will flow as He knows my heart is right toward Him, and I would not wilfully or consciously blunder and fail, and every time there is any suggestion that I do so, I simply tell Him of my grief, and that I do believe in His grace to cover all my sins.

Then, not only in spiritual sustenance and growth, but in spiritual service it is all of grace. Here we learn many lessons and not least among them is that we cannot take anything for granted in ministry. Because the Lord used us on one occasion we cannot take it for granted that that will be repeated and proceed upon this assumption. It is not because of some position that we hold, or some programme to which we have been committed, or some expectation from us, or some preparation that we have made. We cannot programme the Holy Spirit, or commit God to our system.

Reputation, position, prestige, commitments, or any human ground whatsoever which is thought or assumed to be a reason why the Lord should come in and stand by is of no account to Him. He will shatter and shame and confound if we fail to recognise that it is all of grace. Oh, the perils to any *spiritual* ministry when the man is in view; when people take hold of the man and circle round him. That we are nothing and have nothing, and depend upon the Lord for every breath, every step, every word, every resource, is a fact which the Lord will take infinite pains to establish if a truly spiritual and Divine ministry is to be fulfilled.

Now He stood upon that law Himself, and showed that as Representative Man, even in the service of God. He was truly dependent upon God for every word that He spoke. "The words that I speak I speak not out from Myself!

And if God ceased to be gracious, well, that was an end of divine ministry. He might go on as a popular leader, and have a great future as an eloquent preacher, but that would all be a horrible deception, and the real thing not there. "The works that I do I do not out from Myself." "I am truly dependent upon God being gracious to work through Me every work." There are people who seem to think that because you have a testimony you are an expert on certain lines of spiritual work, and they look to you as such experts, as if you had set up a spiritual surgery. But no such ministry can be taken for granted, every single case is by itself and rests upon a specific act of Divine Grace.

Now you see that law of grace as the principle which governs all spiritual experience. Why does the Lord empty us? Why does the Lord constantly pour us out, keep us at an end? Why is it that one of His chosen methods is to bring us to weakness, to emptiness, and to keep us there? Because it is all of grace, and grace was the principle that made Him empty Himself. "Ye know the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Who though He was rich, for our sakes became poor." Though He possessed all things He emptied Himself. That is the grace of the Lord Jesus. And He set the standard and initiated the law of all spiritual service, which is the emptying of ourselves that God might do the thing Himself, and do it through an instrument, and everybody would say, "now if you knew the truth about that man or that woman you would never for a moment suggest that it was out of themselves that they did it, you would know that it was the grace of God that was doing it." It is the explanation of His method with us in His spiritual works. Why He shatters, empties, gets us down to the end, and why He all the times gives us nothing beyond the present moment, so that we have to come again for the next time, and start all over afresh with Him as it were. Why He keeps us on short commons in ministry so that sometimes it is true we do not know how we are coming to this ministry, and we come to the conclusion that we have nothing whatever to give, and then, in His grace He rises up and brings something through. And the same thing has got to be done again before there can be any more ministry. Self-sufficiency, self-confidence is the antithesis of the law of grace. Grace then is the law.

Now the whole of the Eternal Purpose is not going to be realised because we see, because

we have a wonderful comprehension of that Purpose. No. Thank God for the revelation, but to make that revelation real, and to bring through the Eternal Purpose—Oh, He can do it, and He will do it, in His sovereignty He will accomplish it. To be of any use in its realisation, we shall come in to that sovereign Purpose and abide in it only on a principle of grace. Just as the initiation and the continuation is by grace, so the consummation will be by grace. The problem of how it is going to be done arises in the natural world. The cry in the natural world is, "How can a man be born again?" There is no resource on the natural side for that, it is all of grace: and as to a man's continuation in spiritual life and strength—"How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" There is no explanation on the natural side at all, but the answer is, He does it by His grace. When we come to the consummation there is still a problem on the natural side—"How are the dead raised up?" There is no explanation and no resource on the natural side, but He will do it by His grace. "He will raise us up at the last day." The explanation is in grace. That is the two-fold law all the way through—Jesus Christ as Lord, in the Eternal Purpose of God realising that Purpose through "the things which are not," and that is grace.

T. A.-S.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT GLASGOW

THE Lord was graciously with us during the week's ministry in the Tabernacle, St. George's Cross, November 24th-30th. A very real readiness for and response to the Lord's word was manifested in large companies of His people who came together repeatedly. This hunger registered itself in the closing meeting through the lips of the beloved Pastor (D. J. Findley) in a definite invitation to a further visit of longer duration in January, God willing.

JARROW

In spite of the howling hurricane which proceeded outside a good company gathered for the re-instituting of the monthly meetings in Jarrow on November 23rd. A number of friends there have seen that vision which is too big for the traditions and institutions of "organised Christianity" as such, and have overflowed these walls of partition to meet on the one ground of the One Life, which they all

share. Led by a local doctor and his colleagues they have asked for this ministry from month to month. The Lord was there and life abounded, and we believe He has a purpose worthy of Himself to realise there.

HONOR OAK

The November Conference was in strength and life. The guest house full to capacity again represented many parts of the country, and the gatherings were large. Our brother, Mr. Jeffreys, advised us that the ministry which he was fulfilling in Ireland was being so much blessed that he was urged to remain. Thus we were deprived of his presence and ministry at this Conference. The Friday evening was given mostly to prayer. On Saturday afternoon testimony in baptism was born to union with Christ in death and resurrection, a word being given on "The answer of a good conscience" (1 Peter iii. 21).

In the evening the Lord gave a message on—

The Resurrection House—the Body.

The Resurrection River—the Life.

The Resurrection Candelabra—the Light.

On Sunday morning friends gathered for prayer at 10 o'clock, and at the Conference meeting following our brother, A. S. Crowe, gave a strong message on—

THE GLORY OF CHERUBIM

Sunday afternoon at conference time is usually devoted to the Testimony of Jesus and the World Situation. At this meeting our brother, N. F. Douty, gave a message which stirred our hearts. He spoke of Israel's election to bring blessing to "all nations," and of Israel's tragic failure in the past because of self-centredness and exclusiveness. The warning was passed on and pressed home to God's people to-day.

This message was followed by Mr. Sparks with a word on the type of people by which alone the world-commission of the Lord can be carried out effectually.

On Sunday evening the message was on the nature and testing of sonship and the triumph of Faith as illustrated in the wilderness temptations of our Lord. This was followed by our united testimony to the Oneness of His Body in His Life as declared in His Table.

Monday.—The morning was given up to open conference when difficulties in spiritual life and the Lord's work were dealt with. This was a particularly helpful course, and we believe brought forth light to more than those immediately concerned.

In the afternoon we were led to Romans i. 4, and to deal especially with the location of the spirit of Sonship as in the resurrected spirit; deeper than soul-sense, feeling, emotion, sensation, circumstance, mental apprehension, &c., and of how stripped of all these the fact of Sonship still remains.

The closing meeting was the occasion for the Lord to give a strong message upon the sovereignty of the life which is given and shared in resurrection union with Himself. It is essentially—as Paul puts it—“the life whereby Jesus conquered death,” and “they that have received the abundance of grace shall reign in life by the One Man, Jesus Christ.” It is throne life in its very nature and sovereignly executive in its effect and impact.

NEWCASTLE

The December visit to Newcastle proved to be a conflict of unusual severity, but we are confident that the Lord wrought a great victory and that the visit was fraught with far-reaching issues for the Kingdom.

On this occasion a special three days' conference had been arranged from December 5th-7th, meetings being held in the Connaught Hall each afternoon and evening. The hand of the Lord was upon our brother, Mr. Sparks, for practically the entire ministry of the three days, but he was greatly helped by the co-operation of Mr. Oliphant and Mr. Douty.

The afternoon meetings without exception were seasons of difficulty, the Word of the Lord getting through only with much battling. The theme throughout was “Jesus and the Resurrection,” the main afternoon ministry gathering round the great words, Life, Light, and Liberty. The evening meetings commenced with a strong word on the true nature of Sonship from Romans i. This was followed on the second evening with a message the burden of which was that this Sonship is pre-eminently and inseparably related to Sovereignty, “The Risen Life ever gravitates to the Throne.”

Most present felt that this word was the great act of God at this conference, and it was preceded by the fiercest of onslaughts on the part of the powers of darkness at the afternoon gathering when at times it almost seemed that the message would fail to be completed.

The closing message was in the nature of a surprise, turning as it did on Justification and Judgment. But as the message was unfolded few could have failed to discern the wondrous wisdom of the Spirit in closing with this theme.

The real nature of Salvation came under review, the believer's position and liberty in Christ, and then a searching application of the Word to the present walk and conduct of all who were followers of the Lamb.

We cannot but feel that the Conference will have provoked very deep inquiry in many hearts and in some lives issues of a very vital character. We praise God for all that He has wrought, and while we do so there is much that calls for continued prayer that the fruits of this ministry may be fully gathered.

THE VANQUISHING OF DEATH

(Continued.)

Now *what is death?* Well we often say it is more than physical death; it is more than cessation of our physical being. Yes, it is the invasion of Hades; it is the coming into the realm of human consciousness of the powers of hell. You read the 5th chapter of Romans, and you recognise in these familiar words a suggestion of the measure of the death of Christ. It says, “Wherefore as through man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.” Now the word there for “passed” is very significant. It is death passed through, something came in; sin opened the door—disobedience, and there was an inrush of something into the soul of Adam, and we are children of that seed into which he fell, and you and I are dead to trespasses and sins, even dead to a consciousness of the reality of the universe. That is the awful darkness that lies upon the world that you read of with such tragic reality in these days in our newspapers, with all the learning and light of science, a complete darkness with regard to the actual state of things—dead to trespasses and sins, dead to the reality of the universe, dead to the fact of hell, dead to the fact of Satan, dead to the fact of sin. But here you find that Adam was not dead in that sense, but very much alive in that sense. He knew into what he had fallen: he knew that his soul was now engulfed in the power of Satan, and what Abraham had, by the grace of God, was just a glimpse of being taken back into that condition of Adam after he had fallen and before he was restored, and he knew something of what death was, that invasion

of the powers of darkness into the realm of the human soul.

Now when you and I are born again that is the thing that you and I have to fight, the invasion, the attempted invasion of the powers of darkness into the realm of the human soul—Death! And that is the second death; it is the touch of that awful thing. Mere cessation of physical being is nothing, it is this other thing. Have you ever felt the breath of hell upon your soul, the accusations of the enemy, the torture of the damned that he would seek to bring upon you? O there is many a child of God knows something of that in these days. What is the reason for the wreckage of Christian lives, men and women who have known something of the grace of God, and fill the wards of our asylums. It is because of this. What is this crying about the unforgiveable sin on the part of the children of God? It is this death, the invasion of the powers of darkness, and this is the secret we need to learn, "That Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more lordship over Him." He came under that; He knows what that is. He was tempted of the devil, tried, pressed, besieged forty days without food or drink, and at the end of the forty days the challenge "If Thou be the Son of God!" Do you know what it is to be pressed and burdened and accused, your head apparently uncovered and thoughts raining in, under pressure and encompassed? Well, He knows something of what that is, but we you see have a great Priest who ministers the blood that He has shed out from the throne of infinite glory. He has passed through the heavens, through the principalities and powers, and He is able to succour those who are tempted, those who are tried in this way.

O, that the children of God knew that the Life of God is in their spirit, not in their soul, which is but the flux and the flow of life as it comes to the surface, changeful day by day. Your soul is but the surface of a continual uprising from the heart. In singing hymns this evening you may have feelings unto glory, to-morrow you may be down in the valley of depression; you may feel, or will everything to go through with God, and to-morrow you will be as flat as possible: you may have your mind now filled with thoughts that are wondrous and sublime, and you may have a spring of evil try to impinge upon your mind to-morrow, which is only the soul, the surface consciousness. O, but this Life is in your spirit deep down.

and it is there by faith, and faith alone. That was the victory by which He overcame, it is the faith of the Son of God—the victory by which you overcome and I overcome. Death hath no more rule over Him, and this Life is hid with Christ in God, and you and I have to come to the place where we know that all the powers in the universe cannot extinguish and cannot overcome the seed of God in you and in me. It is the Life that has conquered death: it is this death though. It is this invasion of the powers of darkness that came into human consciousness through sin. You find in the first chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthian church, eighth verse, a wondrous word. You might take it typically to refer to some incident in the Apostle's life at Ephesus, as recorded in Acts xix., but I do not think it is so entirely, I think it covers the whole range of spiritual experience, it says, "We were pressed out of measure (and the word there in the Greek is we were burdened out of measure, out of strength) insomuch that we despaired even of life, but we had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves." And the Greek again is very informative, it says, "Ourselves in ourselves have the sentence of death in ourselves," and the children of God are going to be brought there, ourselves in ourselves are going to have the sentence of death, "Lord, Thou art Life, though I be dead." The sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God Who raiseth the dead, the same God that Abraham came to believe in. He believed that God could raise the dead. The promise was fulfilled in him by faith in a God that quickened the dead, and even when he had that which was begotten by the Spirit, through faith in a God who resurrects, he gave that up again at Moriah, believing that God would restore him from the dead. That is the faith that you and I have now in this spiritual realm in which you and I are living where we are invaded and besieged by powers of darkness. We believe in a God who raises the dead, quickens the dead, yes, the dead now, as you and I, in ourselves have the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God Who raiseth the dead. And notice now the next verse. "Who delivered us from so great a death." What was that death. You find that death and hell are always related, death and Hades go together. It is the kingdom of the dead. And he met that; He went into that realm that rushed into this world when Adam, by

transgression, let it in, and He led captivity captive. He broke the power there, and death hath no more lordship over His Life, and that is the Life that you and I share. You and I have not to go through as He went through as we have that Life in us. The Life that conquered death is in our spirit. "Who delivered us from so great a death and doth deliver," in Whom we trust that He will yet deliver us, delivering us day by day from this death that invades our soul; the accusations and pressure of the enemy, the challenge that he makes continually and will make successfully as long as we look in ourselves, as long as we have confidence in ourselves, but when we, by faith, believe in the fact of the Christ indwelling, whether we feel it or not, a Life that is joined to the Christ in the glory, then we have a Life in us that conquers death, and it is a Life of faith.

Then notice in the 11th verse there comes another stage, that at the end of time, in the phase of the church in which we are living we shall need this more and more, for there comes a time when pressure is so great on the children of God that they need corporate action to deliver them, and we have to learn that. We are pressing on to that. There will come a time when the enemy will so besiege the souls of the children of God, except as they learn this lesson of the Life of faith, and except as they learn that this Life is shared in a Body, and is not in ourselves individually to do as we please with, and to go along our own line, that we shall discover we need to encompass one another, "The righteous shall compass me about." This law of the Spirit of Life in the Body of Christ will have to so work that we shall have to compass one another, jointly help one another to live, and we shall be sending S.O.S.'s to one another in despair, but hopefully recognising that corporate action will be the thing. Prayer in the Holy Ghost will be the thing to bring the church of God through. There will come a time when we shall sense one another in that way, and there will be a ministry of prayer, I am convinced, of the children of God set aside for that very thing. We talk about the ministries of the platform, but I am convinced that the greatest ministry yet to come through is the ministry of prayer, and I believe there are some whom God is trying to teach that this is their ministry, to give themselves to prayer, to have a room or a place where they can come aside with God and pray for the Body. That is a ministry that is going to cost,

and I believe that the Lord has raised this testimony here mainly for this. There will come out the utterance, the work, but here I am sure there has got to be a base of men and women whose ministry is this, who take it as deliberately and as seriously and more so than ever we do, or should do in coming to this platform, and recognise that they are called to pray in the Holy Ghost, the prayers of the Son of God for the church, which is His Body. When as the lord of death, and the powers of darkness seek to press in upon the church of God, upon those who share the testimony of Jesus, there can be the reinforcement of the Life of the Spirit, and there can be that securing of the testimony in that coming to the oneness of the faith of the full knowledge of the Son of God until that portion of the Body which shall be on earth at that time shall break right through the principalities and powers, and the universe of God will come into the fulfilment of His Purpose because you and I have recognised what the ministry in the Spirit is.

Well you see what we are in when we become the children of God. We have merged into another realm altogether, a realm of temptation, of trial, but the trial of our faith is more precious than gold. O, there are the temptations of course that belong to us as are common to all flesh, but there are these temptations, these trials of the faith, and I believe that some of the children of God who are here this evening are beginning to meet that kind of temptation. The enemy is pressing; the powers of darkness gather around the mind and the consciousness of the soul—accusations and pressures. Well now that is death, and you have got to recognise that that is going to be the condition of your life. You are going to be a dead man, "always bearing about in the body the deadness of the Lord Jesus." Well God will meet that by faith. You will feel very dead in the realm of your consciousness, O, but there is another Life, "That the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal body." The word "dead" there in 2 Cor. iv. 11 is very significant, it is the same word as is used to describe Sarah in her deadness. It means a sheer inability to do anything, an uablement. Only twice does the word occur in the New Testament. You and I are brought in the realm of the psychical man with all his glory of his former thought of self-sufficiency in mind and feeling to where we are unable, but recognising we have another Life within, and that Life joined to the Lord one Spirit, then out of faith in the

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

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indwelling Christ who also is the Ascended God in the throne, you and I are able to meet that challenge of the enemy.

May the Lord help us to recognise what death is. There has been long pressing upon us, one feels, death, the spirits of death, death to all consciousness of spiritual Life. Death to all prayer, because the Lord had to dry up our own utterance of thoughts, addresses that we made to the Almighty that did not proceed from the burden of the Spirit. The Lord has had to allow this to pass, but now you see the spirits of death are seeking to press in. There is many a child of God made dumb by the devil so that they never utter the Name of the Lord Jesus in voice and prayer. You will find it, as we have often said a very simply prescription, if one might use the word, if you open your mouth and addressed the Lord Jesus

as Lord and adore Him and confess Him and worship Him. You would find His Name uttered from your heart when you feel as dead as possible would release unknown energies in your spirit. We have met this pressure of death, but death hath no more lordship over Him, and this Life in you is not subject to death, and you will find at the end that we are going through on that faith which is energised by love.

May the Lord make the significance of this word true in our hearts, and make this a fellowship which knows the victory over death. Death in that sense—death in the sense of spiritual pressure and invasion, and talkings and whisperings and accusations that there might be the triumph of the Cross made manifest in our midst for His great Name's sake. Amen.

T. M. J.

DRAW NEAR, O LORD

[Words and music by Mrs. Howarth Lemmel.]

Zoe

Draw near, O Lord, we pray
In this most hallowed hour
And in our hearts display
Thy resurrection power.

Deep buried 'neath Thy Cross
May we our sins behold,
And let Thy Sepulchre
The Adam life enfold,

In union sweet with Thee,
Upon Thy Father's Throne,
Born of Thine agony,
With Thee forever one.

Then rising free this day
In Thee our glorious Head,
Grant that the Heavenward way
Unfaltering we may tread.

"THE SPIRIT'S LAW OF LIFE"

ROM: viii.-2

(Completed.)

Now you see the Heavenly Man represented in the Lord Jesus on the earth. The type of what God intends us to be is the man who says, "The works that I do, I do not out from myself, it is the Father doing the works." "The words—not out from Myself, the Father speaketh the words." "There is nothing that I can do out from Myself," says the Master. These things are very simple, elementary, but you cannot get past them. If you are coming into that realm of real spiritual life you will discover "That if any man is in Christ Jesus he is a new creation and all things are new, and all things are of (or out from) God," for the old things are passed away." But how is it done? Simply by this working of life in its simplest beginnings, its gentlest forms of expression, and you learning to listen, to put faith in that and to obey, and you find you are safe, and the life increases, and the Lord is able to move on and do things that were impossible before the life increased.

Now in one or two other matters one might just point out how this law of life works. When you come into the spiritual realm, beloved, nothing of the old life will stand you in stead. Your human love will be no good in this realm. The strongest human tie will fail here; it is all right in the natural realm, you get on beautifully with those you love—the relationships are all right (I am speaking now of the best in human love where there is genuine human love), but you come into the Heavenly Life, and will very soon discover that there are factors which you have not met before, all new, and which are entirely beyond you, and beyond the power of that strongest human love to meet, and if that is all you have, and you do not recognise this principle your human love will break down; and your relationships upon that basis will all become upset. The relationships of husbands and wives, parents and children, children and parents in the natural life, until there is a movement into the heavenly life, meet strange difficulties and a break down. Now what is going to happen, are you going to accept that and sit down and say, Well, I suppose I must resign myself to it. It is my cross—there is misunderstanding and we cannot get on together any longer? What

is the way through? You need the love of the Resurrection Life which is mightier than death—I am speaking of people who are in the Lord, and here the Love has got to triumph over death. Take it in going to the heathen. You go out in the strongest sympathy for the heathen, and see how long you will stay there on that basis—it will not be long before you come home! Oh, yes, you want a Heavenly Life that can go right through with the business. Human love won't stand the strain of that. It starts off all right, but before long you find you are dealing with the forces of hell which have made their dead set upon the relationships in the Body of Christ, and human love cannot survive that. It is only the power of His Resurrection that can destroy the power of hell, as it has done in our Lord Jesus. When we take the matter of our relationships on the natural level we shall find that all the temperamental things, the constitutional things, will begin to irritate us and influence us and affect us, and we shall soon come to the point where because of these things in others we recognise we cannot get on with them. It is no good, that thing is there, and we cannot have fellowship. Now when you get there what is going to happen? Is this right? This is surely a denial of the testimony, and you try to adjust it and smooth it over, but it won't be smoothed over. You tell yourself that you are not going to be affected by it, but you *are* affected by it. It is no good putting on blinkers, you only want to be caught at an unguarded moment and it is all up again. Oh, beloved, how are these things going to be dealt with? I have discovered this, that it is no use my dealing with the thing, but that the way out is this: an accession of Divine Life, a new uprising of Divine Life. This is death, what I need is life, and if the Lord ministers life, gives a new accession of spiritual life, that thing ceases to trouble. It is there all the time, it has not gone in me, or the other. If I drop down there I have all the old trouble again, but if I am in life it is all right.

Now you see that the law of life is the law of our oneness in the Body of Christ. We are one by One Life, and it is only when that life is at the flood that we have an absolute rise above all these schismatic things that are in us by nature. The need for the church in all the world to get over its divisions, all its schisms, disagreements, is the uprising of the power of His Resurrection. You cannot organise that union, that oneness; you cannot bring it about

by having Conferences and decide that you will cease to regard non-essentials, and be one on the great things, and so on. You find sooner or later that you are all disagreed again; but when the Body of Christ comes to know Him and the power of His Resurrection, it will come into oneness which makes possible the impact of the one testimony of Jesus. It is the testimony that Jesus lives triumphantly by the power of a Risen Life. You see this is the principle every time. Everything, beloved, our hope of coming into the Purpose of God depends upon our Resurrection union with the Lord Jesus, upon the fact of His Resurrection becoming an experimental reality within our own spirit; we shall never get there apart from that.

Now I have only touched one or two matters by way of illustrating this thing, but it touches everything. First of all we have got to recognise and accept that the old nature must go, and we say to God's declaration about that, "Amen, I am willing to go, and by faith I do go. Now I claim upon that faith position the life of the Risen Lord" and if you want to know really if you are born again, listen inside, you will have the answer—"The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit." The law of life is saying to you, "Now steady, be careful." That is the proof that He is there—"Christ in you, the hope of glory." It is not the coming of some mighty cataclysm from heaven breaking through, some objective appearance, and your being swept up into something of a mighty sensation. You begin as a babe all over again with the new principle, and that principle is the promise and assurance of your full maturity to the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ if you are obedient to the law of the Spirit of Life. O, that the Lord would get us more on to that level, on to that basis of His own Risen Life, and there is nothing else for us to talk about, but that it is the beginning and the continuation and the end of all things.

Now I have put it in words, you apply it in your way to your own experience. What the Lord is after is to demonstrate the greatest thing in the universe, the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and all that it means, and He wants to demonstrate it in us, the members of Christ's Resurrection Body.

For the Lord's people there are no such words as "In the midst of life we are in death," but the other way round—

"IN THE MIDST OF DEATH WE ARE IN LIFE."

T. A. S.

MAZAMET 1928

[Although belated we feel that there are many friends who would like to have the report of "Mazamet" as written by our brother, Mr. Johnson, as so many prayed for this convention.]

THE sixth convention of the Missionary Brigade of the Drome has again provided evidence that the Spirit of God is moving in revival power in Franco. The explanation is an open secret. The "logos" of the Cross has had free course, it has run triumphantly. Each succeeding year the gatherings have registered both outwardly and to the inner consciousness, a richer, deeper measure of the Divine presence and blessing.

How strangely glorious the three-fold cord. The Holy Spirit, the Risen Lord, and His Body the Church.

A vision of the earlier conventions of the Brigade surges upon my memory. It is 1924, a band of ex-modernist pastors and about one hundred and fifty persons are assembled in a remote village bordering on the Alps. The theme to be developed is "The Body of Christ." The essays read are clever scholarly productions, but little reference is made to the Body of Christ.

The scene changes to the Convention of 1925, the subject treated, 'The Powerful Life and How to Obtain it.' The very atmosphere seems to be charged with agitation, excitement, clamour, "How can I obtain power in my life, &c."

Mr. Sparks has no enviable task. As a stranger and at the opening meeting of a series, he must speak after an Indian Sadhu, and the audience has already listened for an hour to an avalanche of words translated from English with bewildering rapidity, until our heads were reeling with the vain attempt to keep pace.

One brief moment of intolerable anguish of spirit and then a wondrous calm seemed to come over the whole assembly. Mr. Sparks begins "Beloved of God," "Dear friends" wearily murmurs the translator, but the speaker's smile conveys the love. Then comes the text so well-known at Honor Oak, 2 Corinthians ii. 14-15, and the story of the 'Prisoner of the Lord.' In the first five minutes of the address a work was done that will, I believe, stand the test of eternity. A vision of the Risen Lord in the majesty of His triumph suddenly "shone upon us"—"a light from heaven."

The other seven meetings given by our Brother only developed the truth which had been revealed to the pastors of the Brigade and many others, as by a lightning flash. And they have "not been disobedient to the heavenly vision."

Notwithstanding the full force of Satanic attack—the periods of seeming confusion, in comprehension even of friends, the calumnies which the enemy knows how to invent—the three succeeding years have witnessed giant strides in experimental knowledge and in spirit-bought utterance, as also

(Continued on back page.)

THE WATCHWORD OF THE SON OF MAN

We are being led to consider briefly that solemn watchword of our Lord's life on earth by which the stages of His advance toward His ultimate purpose were governed and marked: for He went toward that ultimate purpose by stages governed by a consciousness which found its expression in a familiar phrase, "Mine hour." That was the solemn watchword of our Lord's life and progressive movement into and unto His ultimate purpose, and we shall look at some of those movements as defined by that expression.

THE SIGN OF THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE

In the first place let us turn to John ii. You know this is the account of the miracle of turning water into wine at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the thing upon which everything turned was this utterance, "Mine hour is not yet." Mary, His mother in the flesh, had come to Him saying, "They have no wine." Whether she was anticipating a miracle on His part or not we need not stay to discuss. Probably not, for His answer is illuminating. It is very harsh in our English language, which does not convey a certain softness that really was in His own words. Our language simply bluntly puts it this way, "Woman, what have I to do with thee. Mine hour is not yet." Literally He said this, "What is there is common between you and me," which being expounded means this, You are thinking of one thing and I am thinking of another. Your mind is in one realm, my mind is working in another; you are wanting one thing, I am after another. What is there in common between thee and me, we are in two different realms of thought, of inclination, of intention, of desire. That, I say, is very significant and very suggestive, as the original language makes it perfectly clear that that is what He said, and therefore you come to this conclusion, that He had a mind, a very clear mind, a made-up mind, a settled mind as to what He would do. What He was after and the thing that was going to happen had a significance in His mind which far transcended anything that was in the mind of anyone else: that there was really no comparison or relationship between these other thoughts and His. He had something in mind which they did not discern or perceive, and when you realise that this was the beginning of His ministry, and that this was the first manifestation of that

Divine Sonship in its sovereignty, then you have a clue, you recognise that He is making this first thing a very very significant thing indeed, that in His mind this is full of eternal significance, and no one saw that, but He knew, and He was moving in a definite and deliberate act and stage toward that ultimate thing toward which He was now projecting in this positive and definite way. Now you break the thing up, and you find that the key-words are "Mine hour," and the last word "manifested His glory." Then the miracle, or the sign, as you notice, had wine as its occasion and basis. As we have often pointed out, wine is a symbol in the word for blood and life, very often interchangeable words, and very often synonymous terms. As we gather around the Lord's table we recognise that the wine is the symbol of the blood which contains the Life, and this symbol was the basis and the occasion of this sign, or act, which issued in His glory relative to His hour, and marked a definite stage toward an ultimate purpose. Here He ceases to be a private person, and crossed the line into public life, and from that moment He was a marked man. On the one hand, sought after because of certain benefits which He was considered capable of bestowing; on the other hand, sought after for His destruction, but from this moment He was out in the open, and it was this deliberate stepping across the line with this thing which was in His mind relative to "the hour" that committed Him to the battle which had its consummation in the last declaration of this watchword. "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be delivered into the hands of wicked men and should be crucified." He crossed the line in Cana of Galilee and related this to the first expression "Mine hour," "the hour," and in between you mark the stages, the progress toward that. Now what is the thing that is in His mind? Everything that the Master did was deliberate, beloved. There was nothing casual; there were no side-shows in the Master's life; there was nothing that was merely incidental. Everything was in the direct line of His ultimate purpose, and He would not accept an invitation to a marriage festivity just on sentimental grounds. This thing was not a social incident in His life, it was brought right into direct line with His ultimate purpose, and that is why the whole thing was made to centre in this "Mine hour." This beginning of signs related to His glory. Then if He takes hold of this thing and turns it thus to be a sign,

the meaning of this is that He projects, as it were, upon the screen all the purpose of His coming, a marriage relationship upon a basis of Life, and that Life as found in His blood, and the ultimate Purpose looms into view. The hour in which He is glorified is that when He gets that which stands in relationship to Him as a bride, and it throws you right on into that unveiling through Paul, "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her." That is the end of this. His hour is related to that, and His glory is related to that. In simple words it is this, the Son of Man requires for the manifestation of His glory that church which stands in this relationship to Him upon a basis of One Life for which He gave Himself. He takes hold of this which otherwise would have been an ordinary occasion of social festivity, He turns it to account and makes of it the occasion of the sign of His ultimate Purpose. "This beginning of signs"—that is what it signifies here, and the miracle of death and resurrection by which He gets His church is foreshadowed, foreseen in this—the Life poured out, a basis of a union. "Mine hour." That is "the hour," and He has, as we have pointed out, deliberately stepped out to that. As we pass on, let us take with us this central thought. It is a Life which is in question which is to be shared by a corporate company in a marital union with the Lord Jesus in His Resurrection; a Life, a triumphant Life, by which the church is secured triumphantly over death. Now we cannot stay for anything more about that, but we take up the clue and pass on with that in our hands.

THE SECURITY OF THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE

The next is in John vii. 30: "They sought therefore to take Him: and no man laid His hand on Him because His hour was not yet come."

What was His own comment upon that later? "I lay it down of Myself, no man taketh it from Me. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. This authority have I received from My Father." No man laid his hand upon Him because HIS HOUR was not yet come, THE HOUR of His authority for laying down that Life. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ was not just to be murder. The murderer was out, he of whom the Lord said, "he is a murderer" was out to murder the Son of God, and he is seeking all the way through to bring about His untimely

death, His destruction, and you notice how varied are his methods. The first temptation—"Cast thyself down for it is written He will give His angels charge concerning Thee. In their hands shall they bear Thee up lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." You see he was trying to bring about His undoing and His death by not keeping in the way of God. If the Lord had acted upon the basis projected by the devil the angels could not have upheld Him, He would have been dashed to pieces. That would have been the untimely end. The Master saw through it, and from that first time of temptation onward the devil is out to murder, but the death of Christ is not murder. His death when it came about was to be deliberate and in the will of God, and therefore victorious, not defeat. Now as you have the sign of the ultimate Purpose in the first occasion, here you have *the security of the ultimate Purpose*: that that Life cannot be touched by man; that Life is a thing which man cannot interfere with. The laying down of that Life is a deliberate act of authority, and in the same authority it will be taken up again, the triumph of that Life in Resurrection, because it is in the will and purpose of God, and neither devil nor man can touch that. It is a very blessed thing, beloved, to know this as a practical thing, that if we possess that Life and are keeping in the way of the Lord there can be no untimely end. Everything will be deliberate, however it may appear. The murderer is defeated, the Purpose is secured in that Life, the triumph of that Life as it is kept sheerly in the way of the Divine will. Get out of that and deviate, and you have no guarantee of protection from the murderer. Keep in that, and "no man laid hand upon Him"; "His hour was not yet." The security of the ultimate Purpose is in that Life maintained in the will of God.

Pass on hurriedly to the 12th chapter. The Greeks enquired for him saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." His response to the enquiry is, "THE HOUR is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die," &c. Perhaps no more familiar passage to us than that—a corn of wheat issuing in the Resurrection Body; the Son of Man thus glorified; the triumph of Christ over death in a bodily form. It is true that in an isolated capacity and apart altogether He triumphed personally over death, but that is not the final method of God of demonstrating the fact. The fact of His

triumph over death is in a Resurrection Body with all the members sharing that Resurrection Life. That is the testimony to the fact that He has risen: that is the Instrument by which it is to be proved to the universe that He is alive from the dead.

THE LAW OF THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE

The law of that ultimate Purpose is here seen—
"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die."

The sign of the ultimate Purpose; the security of the ultimate Purpose; the law of the ultimate Purpose. What is that? **LIFE THROUGH DEATH.**

Now we are so familiar with this truth here that it hardly needs further emphasis or words, but, beloved, let it be said as we pass on that everything to the most minute detail which relates to that ultimate Purpose of God has to be born in the power of His Resurrection. All relationships! O, how we are tested upon that! A relationship, and the Lord calls upon you to let that relationship go. The Cross and your position in relation to the Lord Jesus costs you that, and that is to go down into death. The relationships are all tested down there, and then, what is of God comes back, it must survive. What is not of God we become quite content to do without. We come up in the victory of His Life. If a thing has been sown of God in the grave of the Lord Jesus, it is in the power of a Life that cannot see death, which cannot see corruption; it will come up, but this time on a higher level. That is the history of many a personal experience. It is the history of this thing here at Honor Oak. Two years ago one word which was always being spoken amongst us was Resurrection Life—the Life of the ages; all the time we were beating that out, the truth of it was being presented to us all the way round from every standard. What happened? We have been baptised into death since then, all of us, aye, and we have been baptised into hell, for all hell seems to have been let loose upon this thing, and we pass through the darkness, the bitter agony, and the spiritual antagonisms to a point of almost intolerable pressure. Where are we? We are coming up, and, praise God, we are not coming up on the level of two years ago, we are higher than ever. That is the continual order, the cycle of the law of this progress of the ultimate Purpose, and I think the Church will be baptised into a deeper death just before the Lord comes than ever it has been before, and

then it will go higher than ever; it will not be able to get any higher, it will bound to the utmost heights "far above all." This is the law of the ultimate Purpose which is wrought out in individual lives in every relationship, in every thing. It results in this, that you do not come back to the single plane, you come back to the multiple plane—*increase*—the one corn changed to the many, all sharing One Life.

THE INSTRUMENT OF THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE

Hurriedly again, let us turn to Matthew xxvi. 18. Here the Master is preparing for the Passover, sending a messenger to a certain man he evidently knows in secret, and He says to this man, "My time is at hand; prepare me a place where I may keep the Passover." The Passover; here the Blood is again in view, but what is the most conspicuous thing relative to this particular Passover Supper and the shed Blood? It is a covenant. Do we not read, "This is the new covenant in My Blood which is shed for the remission of sins." The blood of the Eternal Covenant. It is a covenant in view. Now in the Passover, as we have often seen before, tracing this thing through the word, as in the case of Israel and the Passover, it was in that blood of the lamb, a covenant between the Lord of Life and His people as against the lord of death and his authority, and in that covenant with His people made in the blood of the Passover Lamb they were secured from the tyranny of "him that had the power of death, that is the devil," and we are brought out from death into life, from darkness into light, from bondage into liberty, from shame into glory, from desolation into fruitfulness. That covenant was the basis of their emancipation, and all that is bound up now with this—a new covenant in My Blood—is the covenant between Himself, the Lord of Life and His own elect ones by which they are going to be made victorious over death in their union with Him as members of His Body, as seen in the other side of the supper; the covenant with His Church by which death is robbed ultimately, finally of its power. Here you have *the instrument of His ultimate Purpose*, and, beloved, it will be upon the basis of that covenant in His Life that we are maintained victorious. That is, here you have the thing made in the Blood and in the Life of the Eternal Son of God, Whom God brought again from the dead, by the Blood of the Eternal Covenant, which is the absolute ground of your victory. "He is a God Who keepeth covenant." This covenant

is an Everlasting Covenant, the Eternal Covenant of a Life which cannot see corruption, and upon that basis we are bound to go through triumphantly. He will not break this covenant with us. This covenant stands to bring us into that union with Himself which is going absolutely to triumph.

Now you see what He secures here in His covenant is an instrument; that relationship in Life by which He is going to work out all that was wrought in the Cross, and in the Resurrection. We have anticipated this, but here the stronger emphasis comes. How is He going to demonstrate throughout the Kosmos that He has triumphed over death? In those who are in covenant relation with Him upon the basis of this One Life? So He sits down with His disciples, and in this testimony He declares that oneness in His death and in His burial and in His Resurrection—victory! "God says what is true of Me is going to be true of you, and here I make the Covenant which cannot be broken that we together are going to display this victory of this Life throughout the universe." A Covenant in Life. That is THE HOUR. "MINE HOUR IS AT HAND."

THE MIND AND THE METHOD OF THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE

Now let us turn to John xiii. Here you have the account of the feet-washing. "Jesus knew that His hour was come. And the Father had delivered all things into His hands. He came forth from God and went to God." How rich that is! But that is the basis of what is going to take place now. All things delivered unto Him of the Father, knowing that He came forth from the Father and returned to the Father. Upon that basis He rose from the supper and took a towel, laid aside His garment, girded Himself and poured water into a basin and washed the feet of the disciples. Then cometh He to Simon—knowing that the Father had given all, and then this remarkable statement so full of significance, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know afterwards." Then this must be a symbolic act, and mean a sign. It is a sign of Jesus. It ranges the ages, and it ranges the eternities, and could truly be paraphrased in this way:—

"He rose from His Throne; He laid aside the garments of Light; He took the poor towel of our humanity and wrapped it around His glorious Person, and poured His own Blood into the basin of the Cross, and set Himself to wipe from the universe the foul stains of sin."

That is what is signified in this. O, you say that is imagination taking flight. O, no, come again to Philippians ii. There He is in the throne with God. "He thought it not something to be grasped at to be on equality with God; He emptied Himself; laid aside the garments of glory. He rose from His throne of equality with God and took upon Himself the form of a servant, "being found in fashion as a man." There is the towel of our humanity. He came forth, poured His blood out to wipe the stains of sin from the universe, and that is why there is this basis. "Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and He came forth from the Father and returned to the Father." You see that is the background of this thing. "What I am doing thou knowest not now," but they do know hereafter; that all this said to them, this is the way of the highest service, not to be important, not to be high and lifted up above everyone else, for this, as we have before pointed out, was a blow at their attitude at this very time, when no one would take upon himself the form of a slave and wash the others' feet, a rebuke; but this is the way.

Now recognise this one central thing. Pride was the source of all human sin. Satan started this awful thing there. "Thou saidst in thine heart, I will be equal with the Most High," he who had no right to it, and sought to grasp at that. He who had the right to it did not think it a thing to be grasped at and saw a need for laying it down, so He rebukes them thus. Pride was the source of all human sin, and the wreckage of the world; so Christ must needs provide an antidote for the source of sin. What is that? His own humiliation. He reverses the order, and ends all this work of the devil by His humiliation. Now He says in fact to them, and to us, Do you want to destroy the works of the devil, pride must be torn from your hearts, and you must pour yourself out unto death; pour yourself out for the sake of the Name, and for the sake of others. Position, prestige, reputation, these must be of no concern whatever. The spirit of victorious service is this. So here you have *the mind, and the method of the ultimate Purpose*, "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be grasped at to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He

(Continued overleaf.)

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, HONOR OAK ROAD, LONDON, S.E.23.

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship. Sundays: 11 a.m., 3 p.m. (Young People's Meeting), and 6.30 p.m. Mondays: 7.30 p.m. Wednesdays: 8 p.m. Saturdays: 7.30 p.m.

Conferences are held every week-end (Saturday and Sunday), and also a longer week-end at the beginning of each month, this fixed by the first Sunday. (Friday to Monday evenings, inclusive.) All particulars may be obtained from G. Paterson, Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre, Honor Oak Road, S.E.23.

Ministers: T. Austin-Sparks; T. Madoc Jeffreys; G. Paterson (General Secretary).

Guest House Hostesses: Lady Ogle; Mrs. M. Brand.

Telephone: Sydenham 5216.

Telegram: "Syndesmos, Forest. London."

Cables "Syndesmos. Tondoo."

(Continued from previous page.)

humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the Cross. Wherefore (knowing that He returned unto the Father—this was the way up; this was the way back to the glory—He came forth from God and He was going unto God, and all things are His) God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name." T. A.-S.

(To be completed.)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WE gratefully acknowledge the following sums received during November for A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY: Local, £5 15s. 4½d.; Brixton, 10s.; Blackpool, 7d.; ditto, 2s.; Camberwell, 5s.; Cardiff, 5s.; Catford, 5s.; Eastbourne, 5s. 8d.; Exmouth, 6s. 6d.; Holloway, 2s. 6d.; Kijaba (Africa), 9s. 1½d.; Lewisham, 5s.; Leigh-on-Sea, 10s.; Manchester, 2s. 6d.; Malta, 10s.; Newcastle, £1 5s. 6d.; Raleigh, 1s. 5d.; Sandown, 6s. 10d.; ditto, 4s. 1d.; Sidmouth, 2s. 6d.; Shortlands, 2s. 6d.; Southampton, 6s.; Wolverhampton, 1s. 5d.; Westcliffe, 5s.; ditto, 5s.—Total, £12 14s. 6d.

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in untiring service by missions throughout the length and breadth of the whole country and even in Belgium and Switzerland.

Reluctantly I pass over the last two years and the added fruitful ministry of Mr. T. Madoc-Jeffreys in 1927, to the new ground of the gatherings at Mazamet.

Not only has the Convention been removed from the proximity of the Alps at Dieulefit to the country of the Albigenes, the Black Mountains, and the not far distant Pyrenees, but there is even a greater change in the spiritual outlook: "Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord." "The Man with the measuring line" has brought His people to the place and vision of waters which

bear up and carry on the "swimmer" into the fulness of Divine Life. Once it was working up to the blessing—now it is getting it through and out (Ephesians vi. 19).

The ministry of Mr. Sparks was remarkably appropriate to the need of the Conference as may be gathered from the following lines I have translated from the monthly organ of the Brigade, *Le Matin Vivant* (the morning comrad).

"There is in the message of the Rev. Sparks a majestic and glorious elevation. A gospel with a retrospect stretching back from before the creation of the world into the intimate communion of the Father and the Son where the immolation was consummated for the salvation of the world. A gospel which unfolds the eternal plan of God for the formation of a glorified humanity in conformity with the risen Son of God. A gospel with eternal perspectives having nothing in common with the diminutive gospel considered sufficient in many evangelistic meetings, which consists in the advantages and small profits of the Christian, or the fear of hell. The gospel of the living Christ brings souls to the victorious fulness of His life of resurrection, which is a flood of light, a rivor of life overflowing its banks. How many souls, weary, discouraged and crushed in our churches need this message of victory "with the great outstretched wings." Another report reads: "This convention has been quite an event for our little town. Many souls were quickened; such crowds have not been seen since the visit of Coillard in 1897. Hearts have been touched, jewels, gold pieces were handed to the Brigadiers, pastoral vocations were brought about—even some who from a worldly point of view had brilliant prospects—30,000 francs were found in the boxes at the doors—250 visitors were received."

I could write many pages concerning different phases of this new movement in France and the repercussions affecting the whole of French Protestantism, but I must terminate by asking special prayer for the new book "The Centrality and Universality of the Cross" now in the press—for its wise diffusion throughout the land.

HV. JOUSSON.