

# A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY



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## Retrospect and Prospect

### The January Conference.

FOR many these Conferences at Honor Oak are remembered by designations which spring out of the dominant note and spirit. Thus different occasions are remembered by such names as "The Life Conference," because resurrection life in the Lord Jesus was our cause of glorying; then "The 'I Am' Conference" because of the contemplation of the Lord Jesus as the all-inclusive and manysided "I Am." Then again there was "The Holiness Conference" because we were held so strongly to the challenge of the Holiness of the Lord. And so a great many outstanding and abiding recollections and influences—and, we believe, issues—are preserved in such definite forms. The December Conference for many of us comes down with two impressions: the first, "The Sovereignty Conference" by reason of the vision of the sovereignty and supremacy of the Lord Jesus which was opened up to us; and secondly, "The Unfinished Conference," because we felt that there was much more to come. So it proved, for the theme and life continued after the Conference, but headed up to the January gathering in what will always be remembered as "The 'Wonderful' Conference."

In that blessed season of Grace we found our hearts leaping up and overflowing in the recognition of the Lord Jesus as He who is "Wonderful." We saw how the book of the "Acts" is a record of how the Holy Spirit came and made *that* name manifest in so many wonderful ways. Our hearts were held in a contemplation of "When He is come He will glorify Me," and how when He—the Spirit—did come the only word which expressed His activities in relation to the Lord Jesus was "Wonderful!" We need say little about the more earthly conditions of our gathering. The gatherings were large, the guest-house full, and many parts were represented.

On the afternoon of the Lord's day, after there had been some testimonies given to union with Christ in Believer's Baptism, two friends about to set forth on the Lord's service spoke to us. Our Brother Jacot spoke of the deep dealings of God with him during his prolonged stay with us, and of how, through much undoing and breaking-down he had at length come to a place of clearness with the Lord and a new

realisation of the Lord's sovereignty and mastery. This had all headed up to an open door as secretary of the Mission Brigade of France. We have all come to love our brother very truly, and feel that he is very much a part of us in France. Our sister, Miss Grace Bond, was about to return to Nyassaland, and she gave us a word by which a real prayer-link is formed with her and with that work of the Lord. Her testimony to what her sojourn with us had meant in fuller vision and increased life was greatly encouraging.

### Training Work.

With the January Conference this aspect of the work was definitely set forward and a company of "sent ones" joined us. We are a happy little band of those who have our faces set to His glory wherever He may appoint. The "training" is intensive but full of life, and rather than have to set ourselves with effort to do the work we find ourselves in a rich and deep stream which carries us on.

Our brother, Mr. Oliphant, returned from the Near East on January 17th. He concluded his ministry in Syria, Palestine and Egypt at the E.G.M. Conference at Zeitoun.

### Bognor.

We should like our friends to know of the regular gatherings at Bognor. Every Lord's Day there are meetings in the Market Street Hall, and ministry is provided from Honor Oak. There is also a meeting for prayer on Saturday evenings and around the Word on Tuesday evenings.

### Special Meetings at Honor Oak.

In future the monthly Conferences at the "Centre" will be limited to Saturday afternoon and evening and Sundays. There will be no Conference gatherings on the Mondays. This does not apply to the three special seasons of Easter, Whitsun and August Bank Holiday. At these times full Conferences will cover the entire holiday.

Already intimations have been made that our accommodation will be more than taxed at Easter, and we urge friends who think of coming to write early.

# The Reactions of the Lord

No. II.

(Continued.)

## The New Cruse.

II. Kings ii. 19-22; Acts i., ii.; Mark. ix. 50.

WHEN the above passages are read together it will be seen that they are bound by a common tie; namely, that which is meant by salt. Throughout the Scriptures salt stands for recovery and preservation.

In the first passage mentioned we have the waters of Jericho lacking in some constituent which resulted in the miscarriage of the trees; the fruit falling ere it ripened. Nothing reached its intended end. Nothing fulfilled its promise; all fell short of its design. Thus the labour proved in vain, and all the toil ended in heart-breaking disappointment. There was water; there were labourers; there was the field; there was much energy, there were good motives; there were trees. Withal nothing got fully and finally through; it all stopped short somewhere, and there was no maturity, satisfaction, and full justification of all the expenditure and effort. How different from the "trees planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth their fruit in their season," mentioned in Psalm i. 3. Some essential property was absent, and this absence made all else futile as to the ultimate issue. While it is the "salt" that is the vital and most important thing, it is rather in our mind to speak of the cruse for the moment.

Acts ii. undoubtedly brings the salt into view, but Acts i. precedes that. Our attention is first drawn to Elisha's request for a new cruse. Why a cruse? Why not a handful? And then, why a NEW cruse? Why will not any cruse do? Well, that is just the point. For work like this a vessel must be specially prepared and set apart. What is the nature of the work to be done? What is the condition of things? At rock bottom there is the loss and absence of a distinctive something. It is deficiency in respect of a certain distinctiveness. Everything is there but *that*. Things have degenerated into indefiniteness, vagueness, uncertainty, ambiguity, as to real meaning, life, and purpose spiritually. The original meaning

of things is no longer there. Things said and done do not mean what they did at first. Terms have come to be applied to, and be used of that which is not permissible in the realm of their original Divine employment. There is a difference of meaning, and the tragedy is that so many have gone on with the form and fail to see that the power is not there. If we take the book of Acts as the model, and the epistles as revealing the truth intended by the Lord to be the abiding basis of that which sprang into being in Acts, we cannot fail to be impressed with the presence of a certain something which made everything very much alive and superlative. As to what was individual and personal in salvation, service, and suffering; and as to what was corporate in fellowship, and practice; there is only one word that expresses the effect of that great something, it is "WONDER" or "WONDERFUL." There is hardly a chapter in this book but—when you have read it—provokes the spontaneous ejaculation "Wonderful!"

Now, without further delay, what was it that produced this atmosphere and spirit of wonder? What was it that made everything so wonderful to those concerned? There is only one answer.

## It was the Lord Jesus Himself.

The Lord Jesus had been glorified and the Holy Spirit had come as the Spirit of the glorified Lord to glorify Him on the earth (John xvi.). Was it the matter of salvation? Well, it was not salvation as such. It was not being saved, either in what it was from or unto, but it was the Saviour. The message of salvation was all focussed in Who the Lord Jesus was. Look at the preaching. "They ceased not to preach Jesus and the resurrection." Find a discourse anywhere in the Acts which "got through," and you will see that it is—not a treatise on Evangelical Theology—but a presentation of the glorified Lord Jesus. If it was Christ crucified it was not Christ dead but risen and glorified. Look at the address at "Pentecost" (Acts ii. 32, 33). See the words

to the lame man and the subsequent address in the Temple (iii.).

Listen to the words addressed to the Council in chapter iv.

So it is, whether it be to individuals or to companies, it is always the Lord Jesus who is in full view.

It is the same in the matter of service. In the Acts service is never something appended to salvation as a further consideration. One of the striking omissions in this record is that of exhortations and urgings to propagate the Gospel. Service here is never the result of organisation or special pleading and appeals. It is free, spontaneous, eager, "natural." It was not of constraint from without. "It was not by an appeal to a sense of duty or obligation. It was not something which was special in its connection and time. It was at all times, in every place, under all circumstances, irrepressible Testimony, proclamation, in direct public manner and in ordinary conversation. "They were all scattered abroad [by persecution]. And they that were scattered abroad travelled . . . preaching" (Acts viii. 1, 4, xi. 19). Well, what was it that created and produced this? It was the Holy Spirit's glorifying of the Lord Jesus in their hearts! He—the glorified One—was so real to them and the wonder of who He—"Jesus of Nazareth," the Crucified One—really was as now revealed and manifested to them and in them was so great that even these "new bottles" were finding that unless they let it out this new wine would burst them. What was true in the two matters mentioned, was also the secret of their ability to suffer. There is no doubt that it cost dearly in those days to take sides with "The Nazarene." This as amongst men, but to take sides with "The Son of God" was something which provoked hell. Put together, there is not a little in the record which indicates this suffering; but it seems all to have been accepted "joyfully." It all seemed in the spirit of Hebrews x. 34: "Took joyfully the spoiling of goods," or "Received the word in much affliction, with joy (I. Thess. i. 6).

This cannot be attributed to obtrusion, sanguineness, or merely human good temper. It was not a "make-the-best-of-it" resolve.

**It was the Reality of the Lord Jesus as Sovereign and reigning.**

As it was in these matters which came so directly home to the individual, and which were

always individual tests, so it was in the matters which were more of a corporate nature. A "baptismal service" in the Acts is a wonderful time, always accompanied by great rejoicing and a living witness of the Holy Spirit. There was nothing formal about it. It was not just a bit of "church" order or teaching. It was not just a command obeyed, or for personal blessing. It certainly was not a matter of compulsion, persuasion, or argument. It was in full view of the Lord Jesus as one Who died in the stead of all; whose death was the death of all, and in Whose resurrection "They that live should henceforth live, not unto themselves but

#### Unto Him

Who died in their stead and rose again." It was *Unto Him*. It was a testimony to a living reality, and a mighty spiritual fact, even that the one supreme object of life and all living was the Lord Jesus. All other objects, interests, concerns and visions had gone in their union with Him in His death, and all and only that which is of Him had come for them in union with His resurrection. This matter was lifted out of the realm of ordinances (such as the Jewish) and into the realm of testimonies. Jewish ordinances were looking on to something to come, and they never made anything complete. These *testimonies* looked backed to something consummated which was experimentally entered into.

So, also, when through its representative members the Church gathered round and laid their hands upon the head of such as had thus borne testimony, it was not some ecclesiastical and official act. (This was not always confined to the Apostles.) Neither was this an act by which something already done was confirmed. This was a further step, and was intended by the Holy Spirit to be a recognition of and testimony to the fact that salvation and baptism were not just individual matters, but that it was all corporate, and that baptism into Christ was into Him as Sovereign Head of the Church which is His Body; that they were members of Christ as members of One Body under One Head, and that the Holy Spirit is not merely individual, as such, but the Spirit of and upon One Head for all the members. "There is One Spirit, and One Body." Thus when his act to which we refer took place, the Holy Spirit showed that He was involved in this as it is His purpose to glorify the Lord Jesus as "Head of the Body."

It is not a performance or ceremony, but a testimony with the "joy of the Holy Ghost." There need not always be accompanying outward manifestations. In the beginning the Holy Spirit might be laying down the principle for all time that this thing is in line with His purpose and mind.

Then exactly the same atmosphere of glory surrounds the "Lord's Table" and the "Breaking of Bread." There was nothing of "Church" duty or regulation, or rules in this. This was not something apart and separate from the other life of the Church. This was not a "service" as something by itself. At the beginning (alas, it all too soon dropped from this plane) it suffered nothing by frequency. This was the centre and spring of all else.

Worship, praise, prayer, the ministry of the Word spontaneously sprang out of this. It was living, and fraught with "great joy." It was to those who thus gathered and worshipped that "the Lord added daily those who were being saved." What, again, was the secret? It was the appreciation of the Lord Jesus. That table gathered all other testimonies into itself and became an all inclusive testimony.

There was the Offering wholly given to God without a reservation, and the will of God utterly done. There was union with that offered One in His death, burial, and resurrection. There was the One life shared by all as represented in the Blood.

There was the One loaf which is the One Body, corporate oneness of all believers. There was the "One Hope," "that blessed Hope," His coming again—"till He come." So, then, ought not there to be a wonderful attestation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all? Yes, it was a time of great glorying in the Lord—the Lord was there! Each of the matters mentioned needs a book to itself, but we merely touch them to lead on to our further point and object. Referring back to the waters of Jericho, is it not true that in all these matters in a very wide-spread way that constituent of wonder and glory and life is lacking? That spontaneity and overflow in all matters which relate to the Lord Jesus.

What is needed? Well, our conviction is that, whatever may or may not be recognised to be needed by that which ostensibly stands to represent God in the world to-day. His own need in the earth is that which lifts all the phases and aspects of the Church's life and work into the realm where this glorying in and glori-

fyng of the Lord Jesus is the dominant characteristic; where formalism yields to life; where all is aglow with His wonderfulness; where His train *fills* the temple: where "ordinances" are living testimonies: and where all is vital, dynamic and effectual.

### The Lord's Present Need

No one will disagree with this, but they may with the next. What is necessary to the Lord to bring this about? It is a new cruse, a new vessel. There is so much mixture in the make-up of the vessels to-day. The world has got in on the one hand, and the natural man has so much taken hold on the other. Tradition, formalism, ecclesiasticism, and mechanicalism are like chains and fetters upon the Lord. Then, as we have already said, things are given different meanings today from what they had at first under the sanction of the Holy Spirit. *A new cruse is needed*, and it must be that which has been made like unto the Lord's vessel at first. That which stands upon an absolutely New Testament basis. That which marks the point where God has a clear way because the Cross has brought to zero all the personal interests and resources and confidence of such as formed that vessel. That which recognises and fully yields to and glories in the absolute government of the Holy Spirit in every detail of life and service. That which recognises the utter Lordship of the Lord Jesus. That which sees in Him all the fulness of wisdom, power, knowledge, grace and everything needed, and draws only upon Him. That which is completely selfless and has only one object in view, and that passionately the glory of the Lord Jesus. We leave till later the matter of securing the vessel, but here emphasise the necessity for it.

When the Lord gets it—and He is getting it—He will make it the instrument for the restoration and preservation of His testimony in the earth. This newness may be costly, but then special usefulness to the Lord is always costly.

T. A.-S.

(To be continued.)

For Special Gatherings  
During 1930

See page 23

# The Sign of the Prophet Jonah

(Continued.)

HAVING spoken of Jonah as a sign of that which is not acceptable to God, and which has to be cast into the depth of the sea, we now proceed to regard him in the light of that which is for the Lord.

When the Lord Jesus told the unbelieving people of His day that no sign should be given them save the sign of the Prophet Jonah, He was introducing that which for the rest of the age should be the one ultimate basis of relationship to Himself both as to faith and experience. In fact, He was setting forth that which changed the character of the dispensation and marked the passing from one age to another. This "sign" we know to be the Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. That which it signified was and is that He is the Son of God.

Let us at the outset make one all-inclusive and fundamental statement which is the cumulative testimony and declaration of the Word of God. It is this: that *the abiding attestation of the Sonship, Saviourhood and Sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ is found in the meditation, impact, experience or challenge of the power of His resurrection by the Holy Spirit wherever the forces of spiritual death are encountered.* This is the ultimate test and issue for everything that ostensibly represents Him on the earth.

## Secondary Lines.

There are some very clever moves of the enemy to turn this testimony off and change the nature of the test. "Fundamentalism," *as such*, may meet the arguments of rationalism as to the Person of Christ, the inspiration of the scriptures, etc., and serve a good purpose for those whose faith obtains largely in a mental realm, and who must have an intellectual counter to intellectual assault. Such may have a place of value, but it is completely secondary and is never *the* evidence of truth. Neither "Christian Evidences" nor "Fundamentalism," nor "Apologetics" are the final proof of anything. Sometimes and very often these are cold, cruel and spiritually dead and ineffective, even though pursued with zeal, intensity and fierceness. At best they are in the realm of the soul (psuche) and there-

fore the "natural man" (soulical man), and are outside of the realm of the "spiritual man," that is "the inner man of the heart" (always treated in Scripture as another and different man from the "soulical").

No, the real testimony after all is the fruit of the Risen Lord as borne in a garden of death. The real monument which is irrefutable evidence is lives and places which were once bound in fetters of iron, held in the grip of "him that had the power of death," "the habitation of dragons," transformed, raised and throbbing with the life, love and joy of a living Christ. It is this to the building of which all the attention of God's true people should be given. Many a great spiritual force is lost to the church by this turning work of the enemy from primary to secondary things; from the building up of a real spiritual life to the championing of that which is after all in the safe custody of the Holy Spirit. One of the greatest tragedies of our day is that of men who were once used of God to build up the spiritual life of His people and the making of saints as turned to be "fundamentalist" leaders, caught in the intellectual current of the times to meet the age on its own ground. Too often the result of this is that those taught have an argument from the head without a deep experience of the heart; a daily and ever deepening heart knowledge of the Lord.

## Watertight Teachings.

Then again there are those turnings from the ultimate and primary test and proof which take the form of "teaching" as teaching. There are all sorts of watertight "teachings" about. Companies of the Lord's people occupied with some interpretation, line of teaching, wonderful vistas of truth. The doctrine may or may not be right; it may be *more* or *less* right, but the point is this, does it work out in a definite and mighty impact upon and destruction of the forces of death as these forces hold lives in their grip and deny the *active* sovereignty of the Lord Jesus. Too often the effect of this kind of thing is to turn the people concerned in upon themselves, and curtail their effectiveness in the larger sphere of testimony. It is the

power of death, the spirits of death, the prince of death with whom the church has ultimately to reckon. It is the triumph of the Lord Jesus in that realm which is the final witness of the Lord's people. The more spiritual a people or a work are the more intense will be the pressing in of death and spirits of death. These will sometimes come like a thick blanketing cloud; descending upon a gathering or upon an individual spirit like the vultures upon Abraham's sacrifice. They seem sometimes to paralyse prayer, muffle praise, destroy fellowship, give lying impressions, create hatred, baffle testimony, confuse ministry and throw back utterance. Sometimes it is as though the bottom of everything has fallen out, and there is an overwhelming feeling of unreality, as though everything was a myth. Because of a touch of this many have decided to seek "safer ground" (?) and have gone back to what they call the "simplicities" of the gospel. And yet, and yet there it all is in the Word. This was the common experience of the Lord's people and servants in the New Testament times. But, they had a secret and they triumphed.

Their testimony was not only a doctrinal and objective truth, but a living and inward reality. The Holy Spirit had brought the death-conquering Christ into their hearts, and He made even death the instrument of His sovereignty. This brings us back to the sign of the Prophet Jonah. In the first place then the sign—not only the Signified—is in the hands of God alone.

### God's Unique Miracle.

Resurrection from among the dead is something peculiar to God. It is God's doing, and wholly of God. There are many things in which there might be an imitation or a counterfeit, as in the case of the Egyptian magicians, but the power of life and death is in the hands of God alone. That is, that to give life either by birth or from death is only in God's power. Thus this sign stands in a place by itself, and that place is inseparable from God.

Thus this resurrection is a standing where Satan and death have been rendered impotent. The ground of their power and authority has been dealt with and removed. Life reigns because of righteousness triumphant. It provides a basis upon which a superior authority and an indestructible life can be ministered and

mediated. It secures the power and jurisdiction of witnesses which brings the spiritual impact of the Risen and Enthroned Christ upon spiritual forces opposed to Him, and makes for a recognition of the sovereignty of His name amongst "principalities and powers." It is a fellowship into which believers on the Lord Jesus are called; united with Him through death in resurrection by the Holy Spirit.

Thus we come to recognise two further fundamental things. One is that the Lord Jesus is dead and always will be dead to unbelief—that is, so far as any personal saving experience or knowledge is concerned. It is not faith that makes Him live, but it is faith that brings Him as the living One into experience. The evidences which are the substance of the testimony are possessed alone by men of faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord did not show Himself alive after His resurrection to the world, but to chosen witnesses, and thus for ever the knowledge of Him as alive is not by ocular evidence but by faith in a testimony concerning Him. This then means that (a) the nature of relationship to Christ which alone means salvation is experience through faith; and (b) the only preaching which is according to the New Testament is that which is out of a living knowledge of Christ as alive, possessed through faith.

The words of the Master to the unbelieving generation were "There shall no sign be given it except the sign of the Prophet Jonah." In other words, "There *shall* be given it the sign of the Prophet Jonah." But if He never appeared to it after His resurrection, how could the sign have been given to it? There is only one answer; through the living experience and testimony of witnesses, and that to be proved by the obedience of faith! Does this not then establish the truth that the Lord Jesus depends for His vindication upon nothing less nor other than the living experience of His resurrection, Person and power in the lives of such as are thereby constituted witnesses unto Him?

The Adversary who would keep Christ dead to the world and the unbelief which is his means of so doing can only be met and overthrown by experimental possession, knowledge and outgoing of "the power of His resurrection." This is in and by the presence and fulness of the Holy Spirit. The other thing which is linked with this is the necessity for each servant of God to have come so much to the place of death as to himself or herself, and in all personal



resources and confidence, as to be this sign in their very being. The Lord would have all His witnesses to be, not just givers of objective evidence, but themselves personifications of the truth; a "manifestation of the truth"; an embodiment of the principle of life triumphant over spiritual death. Resurrection is life for ascension and impartation. Ascendency and transmission are features of the witnesses. This is the test of all profession, representation, claims. It is all too terribly true that there can be "a name to live, but dead." In the ship's company chiding Jonah there may be a type of the world

rebuking the church for its slumber. We are called, constituted and privileged to bring the fact of the Lord Jesus as living in the power of absolute sovereignty home to all that challenges Him.

And unless the powers of darkness and death feel and recognise the reality of His mighty victory over them, the mission of the Church has broken down, and there is no substitute for that object and purpose of its existence. There must be a crucified and resurrected Church to evidence the crucified and risen Lord Jesus.

T. A-S.

## For Girls and Boys

### The Gospel in the Farmyard (No 4.)

"Be not faithless, but believing."—(John xx. 27.)

On the day that I saw them, all the ducks were swimming about on the pond as happy as could be; but it had not always been so. In earlier days on the large open pond had lived one solitary duck. She needed only some companions to share the joy with her, and she would have been perfectly happy.

"Are you the only duck in the world?" said the pond to her one day.

"Oh, no," she replied. "There are many more like me. Why, I hear there are some at the very next farm to ours."

"And do they live on a pond, too?"

"No, there isn't one at their farm."

"What a pity they can't come and live here," said the pond, sadly. "I have room for so many, and you are the only one who has come."

"Perhaps they don't know about you," replied the duck. "If only they could be brought!"

On the neighbouring farm lived three young ducks. They had grown up on that farm and had never seen a pond, for there was not one close to them. They *seemed* very happy, but one day one of them said to the others:

"I wonder why we have such strange feet? The chicken who live in the farmyard with us have different feet from ours and yet they seem to manage just as well as we do. Why are ours webbed, and theirs are not?"

"I wonder," said number two. "And there's another thing: have you noticed how we ducks

love to walk in puddles of rain-water and to poke our beaks into the wet mud, but the chicken don't seem to care at all about doing so? I wonder why it is?"

"Ah," sighed number three, looking very sad. "What you two are saying stirs up in me again a feeling that I have often had, though I have never known what to make of it. I have such a longing for something, and feel as if I shall never be truly at rest until I find it."

"Can it be," said number one thoughtfully, "that we were made for something or someone that we have not yet found? If so, no wonder we are not truly happy—and that other 'some-one' must be longing for us, too. I wish we knew where we might find him."

\* \* \*

Now it so happened that the owner of the one duck decided one day to add to his stock, and what did he do but go to the next farm and buy the three young ducks! He presently arrived home with them, and shut them up in an empty pig-sty to keep them and feed them there for a few days until they grew accustomed to their new home. And then one morning he let them out. How delighted was the one lonely duck at finding some companions!—and after introducing herself to them she proceeded to lead them down to her beloved pond. On to the water she plunged at once and with a proud "quack-quack" turned round to watch her new friends plunge in after her. But imagine her surprise when she saw them standing frightened on the bank, not daring to follow!

She quacked with all her might, calling them in, and performed all the tricks she knew on the water, to show them how safe and delicious it was to be there, but all to no avail; they dared not trust themselves to the unknown waters. Again and again the old duck tried to induce them to trust, telling them of her own experiences and how kind the pond had always been to her. The pond himself added his appeal, promising them such rest if only they would come to him, and telling them how he had longed for other ducks to come and enjoy the good things he could provide. And he told them how in his waters there were crowds of things that ducks enjoyed eating, and that if only they would come to him they would find not only safety and rest, but also that on which they could feed and grow strong.

Thus for two or three days the battle went on. I wonder what brought the change in the end? Was it the loving appeal of the pond, who longed to give of his fulness to the little needy ducks? Or was it the testimony of the one old duck who not only told them how good a thing it was to trust the pond, but *did* it? Or was it that the old sense of need rose up again in the ducks, making them ready to take any course if only they could find rest? Perhaps it was all these reasons combined, and others, too: but the fact remains that on one eventful morning in went all of those ducks into the water, and—the pond did not let one of them sink! Of course not! Why, ducks were made for water, just as boys and girls were made for God: and whoever heard of a pond that did not safely keep the duck that trusted to it?

"I've discovered now why we have webbed feet," said young duck number one a few days later. "I see that I had to *believe* before I could *know*."

"And all my questions are answered since I learned to trust," said number two.

"And I have found that which fully satisfies all my sense of need," said number three. "I'm so glad we came."

"So am I," broke in the pond; "but I have one great desire still unsatisfied. I am thinking of all the other ducks who are without a pond, as you used to be. Couldn't you fetch them, too? I have room for so many."

\* \* \*

And as I heard from the farmer the story of the ducks, I remembered some familiar words:—

"Jesus said, 'Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'" (Matt. —).

"They were afraid. But Jesus saith unto them, 'It is I, be not afraid'" (John —).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts —).

"Other sheep I have....them also I must bring." (John —).

And I sang to myself a verse of a hymn which says: "They that trust Him wholly, find Him wholly true."

Will you find the Bible references for the above words? But chiefest of all, will you TRUST Him of whom they speak? And then, what about "the other ducks"?

G. P.

## The Nature and Function of the Church

A Conference Message.

Readings: Isaiah viii. 1-18; Hebrews ii. 10-13.

PERHAPS it would be more fitting if we read the last clause of verse 13 as it really is: "Behold I and the little children which God hath given Me." That word "children" is the same word as we have in John's Epistle: "I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father." We will rapidly survey the ground and then lead up to the point that the Lord has laid upon one's spirit for this morning.

We commence with verse 10 of Hebrews ii: "In bringing many sons unto glory." The Lord was speaking to us last night concerning the Holy Spirit and the Church, and the reason for the Church's existence, the commission of the Church and the function of the Church. Here is the goal. Here is the thing that is on God's Heart. He is engaged "in bringing many sons unto glory." This word "sons" is

quite a different word from "children." This is the word that speaks of growth, likeness, position, in bringing "many sons" unto glory. That is the thing on which God's heart is set. And what the apostle says here is this, that it became Him—God—"for Whom are all things and by whom are all things," in the accomplishment of that purpose, "in bringing many sons unto glory to make the Captain," the Author, the Princely Leader, "of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

Now that is the first thought. There was one Who was to be the "Captain of their salvation," which salvation was to have this wondrous and glorious issue "the bringing of many sons unto glory." And God's Will and God's way for Him was to bring Him to consummation, bring Him to that perfection of His Humanity, along the pathway of suffering. That is a very necessary emphasis, because those who are associated with Him will have to come to their consummation along the same path. If the Blessed Lord Jesus could only come to His fulness, His completeness—as a Man, of course—if He could (to use another of our texts) only "be made perfect through sufferings," then it is no matter for surprise that in the pathway to glory, in the progress from "little children" to "sons," we also should tread the pathway of suffering. The goal is the glory, the consummation is full sonship in glory. That pathway is the pathway the Master went. "It became Him for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory to make the" Author (the File Leader, the Princely Leader) "of their salvation"—to bring Him to His perfection, His consummation—"through suffering." We pass on!

### Christ's "Brethren."

"For both He that sanctifieth," that is, the Princely Leader and Captain of our salvation, and they who are in process of sanctification (for sanctification is a process) "they who are being sanctified are all out of One." That word "of" is the preposition *ek*, which has that significance and force. "out of" or "out from." Both He that sanctifieth and they who are being sanctified are all out of One (God), "for which cause He is not ashamed to call them 'brethren.'" One was reading this word yesterday morning, and, of course, it is a word which one has read many hundreds of times before, but it came home with new force to one's heart, that He, the Author and

Princely Leader of our salvation, Who has been consummated and perfected along the pathway of suffering, should call us "brethren." Oh! what a high and holy calling is ours! The Lord has been saying very much to us at Honor Oak recently about Who Jesus is, and He has given us some little conception of the majesty and glory of the Person of this One Who is here designated as "the Captain of our salvation." The more we know of Him, the more the glory of God is unveiled in the face of Jesus Christ, the more our hearts are smitten with astonishment at such a word as this "He is not ashamed to call us brethren." To me that is a very wonderful thing. Why? Why is it that He is not ashamed to call us "Brethren"? Well, because of the oneness of origin, because of the wonder of the New Birth, because our New Birth is out from God. It is not only that we are born again, but that we are out from God. We are made partakers of the Divine Nature, so that we are, not in any metaphorical sense, but actually and really children of God, born children of God, born into the family of God, children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. We know that in the pathway to glory, the process of sanctification is now going on, and as the blessed Lord looks on us, the members of the Church, the members of His Body, as He looks on us, He sees that we are out from God, we have the same origin, we are children of the one Father. He is the unique and only Son of God in that supreme sense, in that sense He is altogether other than we are, for there is only one Son of God in this uniqueness of Sonship which is His, the only Begotten of the Father, and yet, and yet, we are little children born out from God and Christ looks on us, and He is not ashamed to call us—a wonderful way of putting it—He is not "ashamed" to call us brethren. May we not put Him to shame, may we be worthy of the vocation, the calling wherewith we are called—"Go tell My brethren and Peter." That is the grace of the Heart of this Princely Leader of our salvation. Even erring Peter is included among the brethren, sinful Peter who denied with an oath. "Go tell My brethren and Peter." Well, it is a mighty encouragement to our hearts. We are His brethren.

### The Name Declared.

The next verse.... "Saying, I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee." What is the Church? The Church is composed

of those who are in this process of sanctification, of those who are born out from God, whom He is not ashamed to call "brethren." . . . "I will declare Thy Name." That word "declare" is a word that we might well stay with. It has just this emphasis in it, the showing, or the telling of all the content of the Name.

Now we dare not stay to even begin to speak of the content of the Name that He is declaring, but how wonderful it is that He Who knows that Name in all its majesty and glory is engaged in declaring it, in showing it, in telling it out to us. Who can tell the Name of God like the Son of God, like the Author and Princely Leader of our Salvation? He knows it in all its ranges, in all its lengths and breadths and depths and heights; He knows the meaning of Jehovah-Jireh—"The Lord will provide." He knows the meaning of Jehovah-Rapha—"The Lord that healeth thee." He knows the meaning of Jehovah-Nissi—"The Lord my Banner." He knows the meaning of Jehovah-Tsidkenu—"The Lord my righteousness." He knows as no one else knows, the meaning of Jehovah-Shalom—"The Lord send peace," and many another content and aspect of that Name. His mission is to show forth the glories of that Name, and by the Holy Spirit He is continually unfolding the wonders of the Divine Name to those He is not ashamed to call His brethren. In the midst of the company of those who are thus born out from God and have been made partakers of the Divine Nature, in the midst of that company which He speaks of as the Church, oh, wondrous title, "The Church of the Living God," He sings His Song of praise to the Father.

#### What the Church Is.

Verse 13: "And again, I will be putting My trust in Him." He links Himself with us in this dependence upon God. "I will put My trust upon Him," and again, "Behold I and the little children which God has given Me." This word "behold" is just an invitation to look. There is something wonderful for our attention, something wonderful for our concentrated thought, "Behold I and the children which God has given Me." You get this word "behold" in another form, when Philip and the Eunuch going on that journey, and the Eunuch, having received Christ, says, "see, here is water." Here is a sight for anointed eyes, here is something that merits our earnest attention "behold I" in living association with, linked

with "the children which Thou hast given Me"—that is the Church. We must not think of the Church as just a company of men and women, not merely a company of the redeemed or sanctified, but the Church as composed of the Head and the members. Is He glorious beyond conception, glorious beyond all telling? "I and the children whom Thou hast given Me." If you take that word "I" standing by itself you at once desire to add the other part of that Name, the word "AM." For He is the "I AM" from all eternity. He is God manifest in the flesh; He is God breaking into and taking upon Himself the form of our humanity, the likeness of sinful flesh. He is the "I AM," but it is to Him as Man, glorified in the Throne, that we, as the children of God, are joined and become the Church of the living God.

#### An Old Testament Picture.

What is this Church which is thus spoken of? "I" (the Lord Jesus in all His glory) "and the children whom Thou hast given Me." What is its function, what is its purpose? Well, we were hearing last night, and it seems to me that in the Scripture we read from Isaiah viii. this morning, we have a wonderful Old Testament picture of what the Church is, a very wonderful picture of the mission of the Church, and the purpose for which the Church is in the world. You noticed as we came to the 18th verse, that these very words which we are considering together this morning are there, and it is a wonderful thing that the Holy Ghost should have taken up those words and put them here with an altogether new meaning. What was it that we read in chap. viii. of Isaiah's Prophecy. Here was Isaiah, the servant of Jehovah, the prophet of God and his two sons, and he uses these very words, "Behold I and the children whom Thou hast given me." What were they? They were set there in the midst of an apostate generation. They were there as the testimony of God in the midst of the people of God who had departed from God. They were, if you like, the Church of the Living God in that place; they were there at any rate as a testimony for God. Not only, however, a testimony in word, and this is the emphasis one has been leading up to all the time, they were there not merely to utter the word of the Lord, but *as the very embodiment of the testimony*. They were the embodiment of prophecy, the testimony of God incarnate, they were in their very constitution and being the

testimony of God; Isaiah the servant of Jehovah—for that is the meaning of his name—and that son with the unpronounceable name (Maher-shalal-hash-baz)—a prophecy of judgment (literally, haste ye, haste ye to the spoil), what was it? Judgment was coming, judgment was coming upon the nations that were confederate against Judah. The judgment of God was about to come upon them shortly and because Judah was wrapped up in these people, thus denying the Lord, they would be involved in the judgment. These men were set there as a witness and testimony for God, and by their very names they were a living prophecy. The other son with a shorter name (Shear-jashub) also. His name means “a remnant shall return.” There you have the father and his sons, a prophecy of judgment shortly to overtake the nations, and every time the Israelites pronounced the name of that younger son of Isaiah, they were telling out the message that had come through the lips of the father, that judgment was shortly to appear. Every time they spoke the name of the elder son, there was the healing of the balm of Gilead, for “a remnant shall return.” There was Isaiah himself, his name meaning a servant of Jehovah, and Isaiah comes before God confessing the apostacy of the people, he tells all there was that came as a blow upon the heart of God because of the departure of the people, and he says, “We will trust in the Lord, we will wait quietly for God. If the judgments of God overtake the nation, we will be waiting for Him, we will be trusting in Him. “Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me.” But here is the emphasis, here were these three men as the testimony of God incarnate in the midst of the people...embodied prophecies. Now there to my heart is just a picture of what the Church is in the world, not merely an instrument for the sending out of the word of the Lord into the earth, but the testimony of God *embodied*, the testimony of God *incarnate*, a living exhibition in the midst of the people of what the testimony of God is in this day. It is only putting what we have said before in a rather different form. It is the testimony to the Person of Jesus, it is the exhibition of the glories of Christ Himself. That is what the Church is here for in the earth, that it should be the living embodiment of Jesus Himself, a vessel, an instrument, a medium for the expression in the earth of what Christ is, so that

when men run up against us, they do not merely touch men, or women, they do not merely touch the children of God, but they come up against the power of the Holy Ghost for the Holy Ghost is in us, and Christ is in us by the Holy Ghost and the Cross has been so worked out in us that there is a way for the expression of that mighty thing which is none other than the Life of the Risen Christ Himself.

### Set for Signs and Wonders.

Now take this word again with that thought, with that content, “Behold I and the children which God hath given Me.” Are we in the world, delivered, as we were hearing last night, from self in every form, set upon the glory of the risen Lord, so that we are in living relation to Him—and He is the great “I AM”—but one in aim, one in desire, one in purpose, delivered from the world, delivered from self and with a consuming passion for the glory of the Christ? If we are, then He will not be ashamed to call us brethren, then His Hand will rest upon us, then will the process of sanctification be speeded up, then indeed shall we speedily come to that which is the consummation—“Many sons in glory”—and all the while there will be this living testimony in the earth, there will be that in the earth now, answering to that which was in Judah when Isaiah, looking upon his sons, said “behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me.” “Behold I and the children which Thou hast given Me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts.” The Church laments its powerlessness, laments that nothing happens, laments that the gospel is preached, and the people are not saved. Why? This is what the Church should be—“I and the children whom Thou hast given Me for signs and wonders from the Lord of Hosts.” I wonder, I WONDER, whether in the circumstances—strange and perplexing—in which we meet this morning, this is being fulfilled; whether this Church, this Company of the Lord’s people, are set for signs and wonders, that the glory of the Lord might be seen in these circumstances in a way in which it could never have been otherwise. “Set for signs and wonders! Oh! let us not have heard this from God in vain, let us not have unbelief in our hearts, but know that the Lord is in control of the situation. He is working out His glory, His mighty hand has control of every-

thing, and whether we see the glory of the Lord in this thing or not, the Hosts of God will see, the hosts of hell will see. The Hosts of God will see with wonder and worship, and Heaven will ring with the praises of God because the grace of God has been displayed in the Church in these circumstances; the hosts of hell will see and gnash their teeth in impotent rage because the worst that they could do has not affected the situation in the slightest degree, except to increase the glory of the risen Lord. The Lord will be tender with His children as once again He will display to principalities and powers the riches of His grace and call upon them to behold. "Behold I and the children which Thou hast given Me."

S. A.

## HOLIDAY CONFERENCES.

As friends are beginning to make inquiries and have to fix their holidays well ahead, we have decided to hold two holiday Conferences at Bognor again this year (D.V.).

The Young People's will be July 5th to 12th; and the General, July 12th to 19th. It is necessary to book just as early as possible.

Announcement as to other Conferences will be made in next issue.

If any friends are interested in Conferences for the North, both east and west, we shall be glad to hear from them as we have the matter under consideration. We are thinking again of the west of Scotland, and also the east, possibly North Berwick.

## "Wherefore . . . . . Let Us Press On"

Hebrews vi. 1.

### The tremendous importance of spiritual maturity.

THE Apostle is distressed. As he writes this letter it is as though from time to time he meets something that almost pulls him up dead. Three times at least he suspends his main theme and puts in a parenthesis or a *sesumé*. The section from verse eleven of chapter five to verse three of chapter six is such a digression. What is this thing that makes his going so difficult and strenuous?

It is not the theme that is difficult!

It is not in the writer himself! It is certainly not a lack of urgency or importance! The issues are paramount. The whole significance of the Person, Incarnation, Cross and Worth of the Lord Jesus is at stake!

No, the difficulty is in those to whom he writes. Not that they do not know the Lord. They "have been enlightened"; they had "tasted of the heavenly gift"; had "been made partakers of the Holy Spirit"; had "tasted of the good Word of God"; and "the powers of the age to come": and yet, and yet, there is an immaturity, a failure to "go on," a spiritual infancy which threatens to be fatal in respect of all the ultimate purposes of their heavenly calling. It is this arrested growth, prolonged babyhood that holds back the spirit and the pen of the Apostle, and would even put restraint upon the Holy Spirit. (See the paragraph mentioned.)

The trouble was seen by their being always occupied with those matters—"principles"—which are meant to be built upon, not toyed with. Perhaps the trouble was deeper than that; it was a dwelling upon the *things* as such and a failure to discern their real spiritual meaning and implications. There are two maxims which it will be well for us to have settled quite early. One is that we can only "go on" in the Holy Spirit. The other is that the Holy Spirit can only take us on as the foundations and "principles" are laid and settled. There are many of the Lord's children who, after many years of being such, are under arrest, paralysed, ineffective, and almost counted out because they are in a state of unsettlement about the "first principles." With some it is a matter of "faith toward God"; with some it is the matter of baptism; with some it is "eternal judgment." Let it be clearly recognised that on all such matters the Holy Spirit Himself will demand an absolute settlement and will not take us on to "full growth" until the "principles" are established. Why are there so many old-aged infants, elderly dependants, spiritual "Peter Pans," amongst the Lord's people? Why is it that after years of work and service so many come to a place where they are beaten and helpless because of being "without understanding" in that sense

in which the words are used? Col. i. 9; I Cor. xiv. 20; Matt. xv. 16.

It may be—and certainly sometimes is—because at sometime the Spirit's requirement as to some basic principle was unheeded, argued aside, discussed, passed, or definitely refused. That is a sin against the Holy Spirit—while it may not be *the* sin—and that sin is bound to find us out sooner or later. What we have to say here as we proceed will make clear what we mean by this being found out. The letter to the Hebrews marks the transition from the fragments of the Prophets to the fulness in Christ, this fulness is spiritual and is consequent upon spiritual revelation which leaves all the "earthlies" behind and comes into the "heavenlies," even in the matter of Divinely constituted institutions, which nevertheless were but as "schoolmaster" to lead to Christ and maturity. We can still go on with the "things" and stand still as to the "meaning." For instance, it is *impossible* to have a *revelation* of the true nature of the Church—the Body of Christ—and remain a denominationalist or sectarian without joining issue with the Holy Spirit. It is equally impossible to remain a Jew as such (in the matter of Judaism) and be a member of Christ. Once the Holy Spirit has spoken or enlightened tremendous crises are reached on foundation principles, and these crises if not settled soon will come up later. The Holy Spirit never moves a fraction from His original premise.

Now, while this is all so important, it but opens up for us the way to a closer consideration of what spiritual maturity is.

There are three letters which deal especially with the matter of unduly delayed maturity, or spiritual childhood continued in too long. They are: "I Corinthians," "Galatians" and "Hebrews."

#### Corinthian Immaturity.

The believers at Corinth had evidently made some inquiries of the Apostle Paul concerning certain particular matters which they thought were the cause of trouble and bad spiritual conditions. The Apostle postponed his dealing with these until he had dealt with what he himself was convinced was the cause of the trouble. This was not the particular "problems" about which they were concerned, but that which lay behind them and much more. They were occupied with the externals of the faith both as to personal, domestic and church

affairs. The Apostle goes to the heart of things and makes it perfectly clear that their trouble was arrested spiritual development. Thus he mentions some of the symptoms which prove this. The first one was partisanship. They had men in their eye. Human selection, favour, preference issuing from temperamental reactions caused them to "hive off," form circles, parties around the mannerism, 'line off things,' or make-up of this man and that. Some would prefer the mystical and poetical to the practical. Others the opposite. Some would take up with the subjective line of things and decline the objective and *vice versa*. And so on and on. Then there would be the men themselves with what was liked and what was disliked. Concerning all this, the Apostle says "I could not speak as unto spiritual but as unto babes, I fed you with milk" (iii. 1, 2). The fundamental fault with all this was that with them the Lord Jesus had not become pre-eminent; it was not Him always in view, to whom they gathered, whom they were seeking. It was not a matter of what of the Lord Jesus had this one and that one to impart. It was the vessel not the treasure; the channel not the stream. In effect the Apostle says that it is a mark of real spiritual growth and maturity when the Lord's people are not influenced by the instrument as such, but have their hearts directed toward Himself, and are asking all the time, "What has this one and that one of the Lord?" So in this matter as in all others the remedy presented is a putting of the Lord Jesus in His place, which is the supreme place, and the place which excludes all human obtrusions, for or against.

The heads of these Corinthians were projected toward the servants of the Lord instead of their hearts being set on the Master. Divisions are so often childish, and when looked at from a point of greater spiritual advancement are seen to be so. Then it is perfectly clear that human elements played all too great a part, and if only the Lord Himself had been the dominating reality and object of concern things would have been different.

Then these Corinthians were all too much taken up with "gifts," experiences, demonstrations, manifestations. "Tongues," for instance, had come into prominence in a manner out of proportion to the general work of the Spirit. The display gifts were holding the stage of their interest and concern. This also is related to their immaturity. Infants like outward effects.

Children like sights and sounds. The Apostle again implies that this means that the Lord Himself is not the object, but the things. What a test this is! How many there are who must have "signs and wonders," sensations, evidences, outward proofs, things seen and touched and proved by the senses. This is all infancy, and as we go on with the Lord He woos us from this realm and personally takes the pre-eminence. It was in relation to all this that the Apostle appended or concluded with that which has become such a common form of "benediction"—"The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," over against works; "The Love of God," over against or deeper than signs and

"gifts" as such; "The fellowship of the Holy Spirit," over against divisions, partisanships, and distinctions among men. If in the relationship and connection of these words as originally used they were only a little bit as effective as they are now so largely employed as a formula, what a difference there would be in the testimony of the Lord Jesus in the world.

Oh, beloved friends, let us put the Lord Jesus in His place, and keep our eyes on Him and off men and things, and the enemy will have less ground upon which to dishonour His Name among men. In this matter "let us press on to full growth."

T. A.-S.

*(To be continued.)*

## The Service of the Lord

### Hindrances in Service.

THE Lord's work makes progress not only in spite of difficulties but frequently by means of them. Service to God is rendered in a world where the Enemy has power and uses it in untiring and varied aggression against all that is done for God. This ceaseless opposition, directed against the glory of Christ, has beneficial effects. It reminds His servants of their inability to do anything in their own strength and of their dependence on the Lord, and casts them upon Him for His ever-ready help. It thereby proves the means of strengthening them to continue their arduous labour with joy of heart, and to face and go through every difficulty, strong in the Lord and the power of His might, and undeterred by any obstacle however formidable.

### "But Satan Hindered." (?)

The way in which God turns to good account the Adversary's opposition to His servants is frequently illustrated in the Scriptures. One of the most striking cases is the result of the hindrance placed by Satan against the return of the Apostle Paul to the church at Thessalonica. He would fain have come to them, he says, once and again, but Satan hindered (1 Thess. ii. 18). Whatever the actual hindrance was—not improbably it lay in the fact that pledges against the renewal of trouble had been extracted by the city authorities from Jason and the other converts (Acts xvii. 9)—it nevertheless resulted in the Apostle's writing to them instead. Accordingly the effect of the Devil's

opposition is that we are in possession of the priceless treasures of the two Epistles to the Thessalonians. In a similar manner we might trace the circumstances which produced the later Epistles written during Paul's confinement in Rome. Again, in recording the events connected with the penning of one of these very Epistles, he says that the things which had happened to him there had proved to be for the progress of the gospel; for his bonds had become manifest in Christ "throughout the whole Pratorian Guard, and to all the rest." This suggests that the soldiers of this famous regiment, as well as others, had heard the gospel from his lips. A further result of his difficulties he speaks of as follows: "Most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the Word of God without fear" (Phil. i. 12-14, R.V.).

Here, then, was a missionary, hampered in his work, restricted in his activity, and circumscribed in the sphere of his service, the object of Satan's ceaseless and varied hostility. To all appearances the efforts of the enemy had resulted in a serious set-back to the spread of the gospel. One is inclined perhaps to conceive that greater advances might have been made, had this servant of God been at liberty to continue his journeys, founding new churches, visiting those already established, and otherwise furthering the cause of Christ. Not so in the thoughts and purposes of the Lord. God is not thwarted by the work of His foes. "None can stay His hand." How little we are able to



calculate the far-reaching effects of the Apostle's testimony in Rome, or the full extent of the meaning of his inspired statement, "The things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel"! And after all, was he not following in the steps of His Master whose faithful and devoted servant he was, and whose own claims and authority had seemed to the world absolutely invalidated by the overwhelming degradation and shameful humiliation of the Cross? The Death of Christ was but a seeming defeat. The Enemy who sought to accomplish it met his doom in his apparent success. The secret of the glorious victory over that effort of the Evil One was made known in Eden, at his first attempt to thwart the Divine will. The bruising of the heel of the Seed of the woman, would mean the bruising of the head of the foe himself. The death of the Son of God was the destruction of His adversary.

#### Satan Buffeted.

We similarly see God's wonder-working way in the matter of physical weakness. How many a worker who is tried in health feels that much more effective service could be rendered if only he were free from the malady! Here again the lesson of Paul's life had been recorded for our comfort. Doubtless he felt that his loved ministry was much impeded by his "thorn in the flesh." He besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him. Though his request was not granted, the Lord saw to it, not only that he should be comforted, but that all that was needed by way of explanation should be made known to him. There was both the preventive side of the trouble and the empowering side. Not only did he learn that it was inflicted lest he should be exalted overmuch through the greatness of the revelations he had received, but he also learned gladly to glory in his weaknesses, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Let us note, too, the abiding effort which the gracious word of the Lord had upon him. He records it not as a mere historical incident, but as something the comfort of which he had felt ever since, and was still enjoying. "He *hath said* (not 'He said') unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. xii. 9). The consequence was that he could say, "When I am weak, then am I strong." That was the outcome of Satan's buffeting. The hindrance became a help. Satan's messenger became the Lord's minister. Many and

many a servant of God has been similarly tried. How blessed the comfort of this record of Paul's experience! And how wonderful will be the revelation, in the coming Day, of God's dealings with us in our service here below!

#### Satan Traduced.

We learn from the Apostle of other ways in which his service was hampered. His heart must have been sorely tried by the constant activity of those who traduced him, imputing things to him of which he was not guilty, and seeking to undo his work by misrepresentation and insinuation. This he particularly mentions in the second Epistle to the Corinthians. The gospel had proved fruitful in Corinth, both among Jew and Gentile. During the initial difficulties the Lord had revealed to him that He had "much people in that city." We are therefore not surprised to find that the opposition of the Adversary was vigorous and varied. The character of his ministry was disparaged by influential opponents. He was accused of changing his opinion and of fickleness (2 Cor. i, 17, 18); of walking according to the flesh (x. 2); of inferior capacities in his ministry (x. 10); of acting toward the saints by guile and taking advantage of them for his own ends (xii. 16, 17). Unfavourable comparisons were made between him and other apostles (xi. 5, 6), and the service he had rendered in such disinterestedness and genuine love was in other ways defamed. All this must have been exceedingly burdensome. Moreover these matters required firm handling, not in the spirit of mere self-defence, but for sake of the Lord's work and the profit of the church. We can understand something of the stress under which this Epistle was written.

There can be scarcely anything more trying for the servant of the Lord than misrepresentation of his motives and methods, and especially when he might have expected that those who act thus would seek an opportunity of an interview with him, and of becoming acquainted with facts. Sometimes it pleases God thus to test faith. Yet even these obstacles are under His control and become His instruments for the carrying out of His purposes. Difficulties are intended to draw us nearer to the Lord. Thus, learning that all our resources lie in Him, we derive from Him the power to enable us, if our private interests are at stake, to manifest the spirit of Christ towards our detractors. If, on the other hand, the honour of His Name and

the blessing of His people require that the matter be taken up in any way, the Lord is ready to impart the wisdom and strength to do so, and from Him alone can we derive it. In each respect the Apostle, who so closely followed the Lord, has set us an example.

#### **"God is His Own Interpreter."**

Hindrances in service come from within as well as from without. Against these we ever need to be on the watch. There is always a tendency for our service to become merely mechanical, in other words, void of that spiritual power which must ever be present if we are to be used of God. Only the help of the Holy Spirit is sufficient for the maintenance of that power. It is His gracious ministry to lead us constantly into communion with God, that is to say, into the realisation of fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and this He does through the Word of God. Times of communion, alone with the Lord, undistracted by earthly circumstances, are essential for spiritual vitality in service. We must be first occupied with Christ if we are to be occupied for Him. Indeed, the presentation of our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Him" is described as our reasonable (or intelligent) service (Rom. xii. 1). The word in this passage denotes that form of service which is itself an act of worship.

Then, again, the influence of the world without is apt to find a ready entrance into our inner life. Contact with the world, inevitable in our work for the Lord, tends to deaden our sensitiveness to sin. For the isolated missionary, surrounded continually by the grossness of heathenism, the conditions are acknowledged to be unspeakably testing in this respect; but nowhere can we afford to be negligent in watching against the gradual encroachment of the power of the world upon our spiritual life, and the consequent diminution of spiritual vigour.

How perfect is the provision made for us, by which the hindrances arising from the flesh within may be counteracted and removed! The unremitting ministry of our Great High Priest, the efficacy of His precious blood, the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and the restifying and guiding power of the Word of God, these are our unfailing resources.

#### **Rewards of Service.**

To the devoted servant of Christ the service He appoints carries its own reward. The love

that has liberated him from the bondage of sin has captivated his soul. For one who appreciates, even in a small measure, what his Redeemer has done for him, it suffices that he should be the bondservant of Jesus Christ. Grace it is that provides us with service to render. "I was made a minister (or servant)," the Apostle says, "according to the grace of God which was given me" (Eph. iii. 7). The unutterable love of Christ is enough to preclude our looking upon any reward of our service as the motive of that service. Still less as the outcome of merit on the servant's part. He Himself taught His disciples to say, after they had fulfilled their service, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do."

There is, however, another side to this, and the Lord constantly directed the hearts of His followers for their encouragement to the reward which would eventually be theirs. Thus, concerning deeds of kindness He said, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward, and whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. x. 41, 42, R.V.).

Concerning rejection and reproach for His sake, He said, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy: for behold your reward is great in heaven" (Luke vi. 22, 23).

Again, concerning self-sacrifice for His sake, "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke xviii. 29, 30).

Faithful stewardship would result in the reward of authority hereafter (Luke xii. 44), and similarly the Lord's explanation of the parable of the nobleman and his servants who were left to trade with his money, was "Unto every one that hath, to him shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him" (Luke xix. 26).

So elsewhere in the Word of God, the Holy Spirit constantly directs us to have regard to the reward, and warns us of the possibility of losing it. Moses is brought before us as a pattern for our faith in this respect. The reason assigned to his decision to be "evil entreated with the people of God," instead of enjoying pleasures of sin for a season, was that, "accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

**Reproach for Christ was his Present Riches.** The reward would come after. That is ever to be the order. Christ Himself, first; the reward He gives, second. Loyalty to Christ will never fail of present blessing and future recompense. Never did a saint suffer spiritually by accumulated wealth accruing from endurance of reproaches for Christ.

The manner in which the Apostle Paul had respect unto the recompense of reward is strikingly brought out in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. Speaking of his service in the gospel, he tells of his efforts to gain both Jew and Gentile; he says, "I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof" (1 Cor. ix. 22, 23, R.V.). How thoroughly the messenger was identified with his message! The blessing wrought by the gospel was his own blessing. There could be no half-heartedness about work carried on like that. He then applies to his service the metaphors of the race-course and the boxing-match, "I therefore so run," he says, "as not uncertainly; so fight I (the Greek word means 'box'; see R.V., margin) as not beating the air: but I buffet my body and bring it into bondage: lest by any means after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." There was no false step in the running, no random blow in the buffeting. We miss his meaning if we take him to indicate the actual beating of the body in outwardly imposed, ascetic discipline. On the contrary, he kept his natural inclinations and propensities in severe check, in order that his members might be in entire subjection to the will of God for His service. He mortified the deeds of the body. But while he does this for the Lord's sake, as His servant, his eye is on the Judgment Seat. It is possible to be eternally saved by grace as a believer and yet to be disapproved at the time of reward-giving there. In the

Olympian games in Greece, a competitor who had infringed the regulations was pronounced *adokimos* at the *bema*. But the matter did not end there. He was required to place at his own expense a bronze image of Jupiter at the entrance of the arena, as the lasting memorial of his disqualification. The intense solemnity of the possibility of disqualification at the Judgment Seat of Christ, led the Apostle to undergo the rigid discipline mentioned above. Stretching forward to the things that are before, he pressed on "toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

#### The Vital "How" and "What."

There is a solemn passage in the same Epistle regarding reward, and loss of reward, in connection with gospel work and subsequent service in building up assemblies. First, there is the metaphor drawn from agriculture. One labourer plants and another waters. Both are one, as God's fellow-workers. Their rewards are to differ according to the labour of each. Then there is the metaphor of the builder. "If any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. iii. 8-13). It is possible to engage in service in connection with the gospel according to methods which may appear attractive and successful, but which are not in conformity to the will of God. The Lord gauges our service, not by its success, but by our faithfulness to Him. Apparent success may after all be the outcome of building wood, hay, and stubble on the foundation. "If any man's work shall abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, but so as by fire." The fire will consume, not purify. Not the man himself is to be burned but his work, work which, figuratively, consists of wood, hay, or stubble, work that has been done in the energy of the natural will, rather than by faithful adherence to the instruction of God's Word under the guidance of the Spirit. How important it is to do all things "according to the pattern that has been shown us"! The theme is continued in the next chapter, where Paul speaks of himself and his fellow-workers as "servants of Christ." In this respect we are not to judge one another before the time. When the Lord comes

he "will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God" (iv. 1-5). We must not act toward our fellow-servants as if we were on the judgment seat. The Judge Himself, by whom actions are weighed, will in that day bestow upon each one the praise that is due.

How faithfully the Apostle wrought in building up the saints! How true to the pattern was his work! Consequently he is able to say with confidence to the Thessalonian saints, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye before our Lord Jesus at His coming?"—lit., "in His Parousia" (1 Thess. ii. 19). Similarly the saints at Philippi are his "joy and crown" (Phil. iv. 1). Here are rewards open to all, rewards for winning and caring for souls. Then, a special reward is to be given for faithfulness in pastoral work. The under shepherds who have themselves

been examples to the flock the while they have shepherded them, will receive from the Chief Shepherd a crown of glory at His appearing (1 Pet. v. 3, 4).

Let all our service be characterised by two things especially. Firstly, let it be rendered "heartily as to the Lord." For "of the Lord we are to receive the reward of the inheritance." Secondly, let our heart's affections be set upon His return. The crown of righteousness is to be given to all them that have loved His appearing. Loving His appearing is something very practical. With the Apostle it meant fighting the good fight, finishing the course, and keeping the faith (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). To the day of reward the Lord Himself looks forward, and almost His last word to His servants is, "Behold I come quickly; and My reward is with Me [suggesting His pleasure in bestowing it], to give every man according as his work shall be."

## The Whole Burnt Offering

### A Précis of Address.

Ezra iii. 1-6. The *Whole Burnt Offering* is an inclusive representation that *God has everything—the Whole Offering*.

And not only does this Altar represent God getting "the whole" offering, but also *God's rights* are represented by the Altar. The Altar was upon the threshold of the Tabernacle—right at the door. Ex. xl. 6, 29, and compare Lev. xvii. 9, Deut. xii. 13, 14.

Ezra iii. 3. The first thing that Ezra did when he began his ministry there, was to set the Altar in its right place.

So should the Cross be at the door. Even in heathen lands the threshold is recognised as a chief place and has testimony borne to it as being Sacred.

The Sovereignty of God is taught in this Altar—God first—God's place first. And God the right to "All." And *always* (Num. xxviii. 3, Ex. xxix. 38). Not the Church first, or oneself first or anything else in life. And not God first only on Sunday, and every other day ours—but *every day*. Ezra iii. 3, 4 (Offered the *daily Burnt Offering*). That in *all things* He might have the *first place* (Col. i. 18). In home, in time, in private life (and public) in friendship, relationship, and for time and for eternity. *All on that Altar*. Is it not so often *our time, our home, our things, and not "God's"?*

*All* have to be brought there into relationship with this Altar (Ezek. xliii. 10). And remember that there is no "revelation" and no prayer-life till He has His right place in our hearts and life, and everything is on the Altar. *His voice* is not heard fully till then (Ps. ciii. 20; Is. vi. 4). His voice was heard at the Altar in His House. His voice is not heard where there is any reservation. Next everything had to be sprinkled with the Blood (Heb. ix. 21; Ex. xxiv. 8, xxix. 20, 21). The ear—the hand—the foot, and *all the vessels*. In *this way* God's rights are realised in His House.

Everything in His House is only "living," as in right relationship to the Altar and the Blood. See the Lord's Table. How it is regarded to-day as Man's table and under Man's system. Some cannot come who are the Lord's true children—because prevented by Man, when the responsibility should be on *them*. No, it is the *Lord's Table* in His House and *all His true children* can come. Christ is the Head. And He as Son over His House is Head and Host.

*Christ* is the anti-type, the one Altar or meeting-place between God and Man; the one only atonement for sinners, the one sacrifice, and the one priest. Christ's Godhead, on which He offered His manhood. And *He* being the Burnt Offering prevents the Sacrifice being

consumed by God's fiery judicial wrath against Man. *He* the true Altar from whom We derive the spiritual food. The Holy Spirit teaching us that we must go forth after Him from legal ceremonialism (Heb. xiii. 10-13). The Epistle to the Hebrews written by reason of the adherents to the *visible* Altar. Paul says "We have an Altar" but it is a *spiritual* Altar and sacrifice. Now Hebrews contrasts the *outward* with the *unseen spiritual* things.

The Altar marks the *unity* of God—one God—as contrasted to the *Many* Altars.

Christ "the Sacrifice" and Christ "the Priest."

For us and God, Christ both Victor and Victim, and therefore Victor because Victim.

For us and God, Priest and Sacrifice, and therefore Priest *because* "the Sacrifice." Making us to God "Sons in Christ." As Victim He was the Sacrifice of the Altar (John i. 29).

The Lamb of God on the Altar, both Victim and Victor. As Victor He has "overcome" all in meeting Sin, Death, The World, The Flesh, The devil.

As Priest *He* laid down His life (John x. 18) And *He* dismissed His Spirit (Luke xxiii. 16).

## A Book with a Message

We have had much blessing in reading

"Meal in a Barrel,"

by Miss Amy Wilson Carmichael. Here are one or two fragments:—

"In order to produce a movement of a vital spiritual nature someone must suffer, someone must go through sore travail of soul before a living movement, outwardly visible, can be born."

\* \* \*

"Faith has nothing to do with circumstances. It deals entirely with the word of God. Faith does not feed upon the experiences of others, though these may be a stimulus: its food is found in the promises of God."

\* \* \*

"I used to ask for Gideon's fleece, a sign which I could not mistake, and how often He did kindly answer me by a sign. I knew, of course, that it was a child's way of guidance. As more comrades joined the Fellowship and so there were more with whom to confer and pray, this guidance by sign became less frequent."

"What really tries the soul is spiritual defeat, and the devil has seen to it that we shall taste of that. Sometimes the love and toil of years for some particular man or woman seems to go up in smoke. It is then we know what the trough of the wave can be. It is a place where feelings fail us, and even prayer can appear to fail us, and we can only turn to Him."

"It is a comfort to remember that the Lord does not look at feelings but only at desires. Prayers that are barren of feeling are not refused."

\* \* \*

"God is waiting to speak to us in the depths of our hearts, and he will speak if only we will be quiet enough to listen."

"We cannot go through life strong and fresh on constant express trains, with ten minutes for lunch; but we must have quiet hours, secret places of the Most High, times of waiting upon the Lord, when we renew our strength, and learn to mount upon wings as eagles, and then come back to run and not be weary, walk and not faint."

\* \* \*

"It requires much courage to be alone with God....It is then that all which is of self, all subtle egotism—the egotism which takes such a multitude of forms—is searched and hunted out of the soul. It cannot live in His presence. The praise of man becomes as dust beneath the feet, and the soul trembles even to receive any honour of men, or to be recognised in this world as of any worth."

\* \* \*

"Baptism, if it be vital, always leads straight to a new attack. Of course, if it be a mere formal function Apollyon takes no notice. Nothing happens, for nothing has been done."

\* \* \*

"And then? Perhaps sheer nothingness. Ashes of nothingness. A sense of innermost abandonment, an emptying out of each constituent and natural force by which we come to be...." "The Lord hear thee, help thee, strengthen thee, 'Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice, grant thee thy heart's desire, and fulfil all thy mind.' Accept thy burnt sacrifice—Turn to ashes Thy burnt offering."

## Spiritual Principles in "Acts"

### A Précis of Address.

THE record of the Holy Spirit taking things into His own hands in the outset.

Acts the record of the Holy Spirit beginning the building of the Church.

He has the whole pattern already in view and he is now building "according to the pattern."

The Tabernacle is *already* finished, perfected, and filled with the glory. In Acts the Holy Spirit is going to build the corporate Temple according to the pattern He has in hand, the *Perfect thing now (the Heavenly)*.

Acts is a book of principles.

Let us now notice the two records of the building of the Temple. I. Kings v and II. Chron. vi. are both different in points of record.

In *Chronicles* you have a great mass of details, such as the measurements, numbers, foundation, &c., while in *Kings* these are not there, but you have two other important things—the practical workmanship and the *glory of the King* (Solomon)

In *Chronicles* "the subjective" of the principles and the laws. In *Kings* "the objective" of the building going on.

Here you have something to build for—an *object* in view—*something* in view—and all the practical work has to be done in the light of *that*. It is the *glory of the King*.

The Holy Spirit has taken the building of the Temple into His hands in Acts. He has all the pattern and the principles, and *He is very particular even to a single number and the slightest deviation from the pattern he checks at once and arrests*. It is the vision of the *glory of the King* that is making Him careful to a detail, and recognising that, he honours all the pattern according to the Word.

Now let us take this type up into the New Testament where "we are workers together with Him" (II. Cor. vi. 1) the same principles are here. The Holy Spirit is exceedingly particular—*there is nothing careless in His work*. The builders here, too, must do everything in building "according to the pattern" to a detail, and not building as we may like.

According to the Divine order he must have the house in absolute order, even to a figure or fraction—but at the same time the Holy

Spirit is presenting the *glories of the Head* and in the light of that the *work—everything* must be perfect. If we violate a principle the Holy Spirit must withdraw from it and *He is not in it* and then it *becomes a dead patch*.

The Holy Spirit would save us from our own *personal* intrusion getting into the building, so He keeps the *Lord Jesus* and His glory always before us.

This in the Acts is the Building going on "according to the Pattern" and by the Holy Spirit.

Acts i. 14: "And Mary" . . . .

"*Subjection*" is the *Principle* of the House in the building of His Temple (subjection to the Sovereignty of the Holy Spirit). See this in the Life of the Lord when he was but 12 years old. He says "Wist ye not I must be about My Father's business"—*subjected* always to something higher.

See in the life of Mary also—to her there must have come the fear of misunderstanding. &c. Yet she says "Be it unto me according to Thy word" (Luke i. 39). Subjection to Him "not my will"—coming the way of the Cross. It is subjection for her all the way.

Mary as the mother of Jesus is distinguished *but* the purpose, not just because of her *human* importance. (Acts i. 14).

Ephesians v. 24 and 32. "Subjection" in the Church. The law of subjection is a *Divine Law*—it is God's appointed way for His redeemed ones, and *His* way to the Throne. *He* went down to Nazareth and was subject to His parents. He emptied Himself. He became obedient unto death (Phil. ii.).

*The Lord has modelled His Church on this very principle. Everyone has to come into subjection, even those who are in authority—they have to be subject to the Lord. No one is put into authority until they have learned subjection and to serve. Coming under, in order to be taught—made the foot-mat then He takes them up. Had to learn obedience till all is under Christ and all the self-principle broken and all recognising the Headship of Christ. We see all earthly relationships moulded on the same principle and His House also modelled on this same principle—Subjection. Not that He wants to suppress for suppression's sake, but that He knows that any*

personal taking hold is of the *flesh* and so of the Devil. Only those are put in places of authority who have learned subjection. This is a divine law—to serve like the Master. Even of Christ it is written “and then shall ‘the Son’ be subject unto Him” (I. Cor. xv. 28).

See too how “*Shepherds*” are made “*Kings*,” but first *Kings* become *Shepherds*. What would Moses be thinking to himself as he sat minding a few sheep and saying “Well, this is a job!” after his life in the palace of Pharaoh. But it was in order that he might become “the meekest man” and that “no *flesh* should glory in His presence.” Study the same principle as illustrated in the lives of women in the Bible.

Women in Scripture always represent some spiritual principle—human relationships as having been instituted by God and coming from the Mind of God and from the Hand of God, and intended as models of *Heavenly* things. Marriage relationships on earth represent eternal relationships and *spiritual principles*. The Holy Spirit is coming out with the mind of God on this matter.

Take three women in the Acts:

i. 14: *Mary*, the mother of Jesus—not because of her *human and natural* ground is she important—the Holy Spirit does not act in that way. *That* ground is gone—“Who is my mother?” The Holy Spirit has something else in mind—the angel Gabriel coming to her and announcing what He did—watching how with a pure spirit she accepted it in her utterance “Be it unto me according to Thy word.” There were two lines possible here for her—one of revolt and refusal and standing on her dignity in all that it involved (and she doubtless had to meet it in after years). Because of this she could have said “No never—Not that way.” But in humble *subjection* she subjected herself to the revealed will of God. She took that course and all her life was along this line of subjection. “Woman, behold Thy Son.” Even the Church in being built by the Holy Spirit on this principle. Compare Ephesians v.—the Holy Spirit there is saying the same: “Wives be subject to your husbands, as the Church is subject to Christ.”

The tremendous place the law of subjection has in the Word of God—God’s appointed way to the Throne, even in His Redemptive work in Christ, bringing in the Sovereignty of the Headship of Christ.

Acts ix. 36-41: *Dorcas*.

Another woman who represents another

principle—*Resurrection Life*. See contrast between the *natural* and the *higher* plane of the Spirit—the merely *human* and *sentimental* there weeping and making a lot of the woman. *That* is the *lower* plane and the Holy Spirit puts *that* out. *It is not merely human ground here*. He clears the ground of *that*. Not a question of *human merit* or appeals to the *sympathies*—the Holy Spirit cannot use that—He has to put it out. We are facing *death*—not the tears nor the story told of her good works. Peter knows that all that is on *natural* ground must go out. The Holy Spirit knew just where Peter was—he did not just *happen* to be there—nor did the Holy Spirit do it because she was a *good* woman. No, “get that all out” (v. 40). The Holy Spirit is building the Church on *Spiritual* and *Divine* principles of life and that *Resurrection Life*—the *false life* must go out. It is *death* we are dealing with and we cannot touch death on *lower* ground. Building on *human* sympathies and *stirring stories* and *tears* is on the *human* plane—it is the *false life* which the Holy Spirit brings to death and “He puts them all forth” (v. 40) and brings in *Divine Resurrection Life*, and God alone did it and no one else. Here is the Holy Spirit building the Church on Resurrection Life. Acts xxvi. 13-15, 40: *Lydia*.

Another woman who represents another principle—that of *Spiritual intelligence*—“the Lord opened her heart” so she gave heed by the opened heart. Compare Eph. i. 18 “the eyes of our understanding being enlightened.” The apostles found their place of rest in the house of spiritual intelligence. The “enlightened” ones gravitated to the house of Lydia after being let out of prison—no doubt knew of her *spiritual* intelligence. (We would rather stay in prison than go to some homes where there is no sympathy or openness of heart.) People of spiritual intelligence are to-day building the house and they gravitate likewise towards such and the house is built in strength this way, but the Holy Spirit is the Builder. It is never given to *man* to build alone. “I will build My Church,” the Lord always the Builder. God will get a *company* who will satisfy Him on the *plane* He has set down—and it must be wrought out by the Holy Spirit and not *man* only. We are *only* builders when governed and dominated by the Holy Spirit.

Further study. Acts xviii. 2 and 18-26: *Aquila and Priscilla*.

# SPECIAL GATHERINGS DURING 1930

Particular attention is invited to the dates, as under, of the SPECIAL GATHERINGS which it is proposed to hold (God Willing), from March to August, 1930. Information in due course will be furnished concerning the period after August.

## AT HONOR OAK

MARCH	-	-	-	1st and 2nd, also 29th and 30th.
APRIL	-	-	-	(Easter) 18th to 21st.
MAY	-	-	-	- 10th and 11th.
JUNE	-	-	-	(Whitsun) 7th to 9th.
JULY	-	-	-	- 5th and 6th.
AUGUST	-	-	-	- 2nd to 4th!

Except as here stated, these will take the place of the Special Gatherings usually held during the week-ends containing the first Sunday of the respective months.

## HOLIDAY CONFERENCES AT BOGNOR

JULY 5th to 12th	-	-	Especially for YOUNG PEOPLE
JULY 12th to 19th	-	-	OPEN TO ALL

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# A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

*"Till heaven and earth pass,  
one jot or one tittle shall  
in no wise pass from the  
law, till all be fulfilled."*

*Mat. 5:18.*

*"And the scripture can-  
not be broken." John 10:35*

*Our confidence in  
the Book rests upon  
our Lord's unqualified  
endorsement. Where  
He stood we take  
our stand.*



**THE HOLY**

THE LAW,

THE PSALMS,

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**"ABLE TO MAKE THEE WISE UNTO SALVATION  
THROUGH FAITH WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS"**

*1 Tim 2:3*

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London, S.E.23.

### BELOVED OF THE LORD,

In coming to you in this personal and direct way we are led by a strong and pressing constraint, and we want that, if it be from the Lord, this should be shared in prayer by all who have His interests at heart. Our desire is to be but a voice with the Lord's emphasis for the time; not to organise anything. Ezekiel in his vision did but speak the Lord's word in the power of the Spirit to the scattered and dry bones. The rest was spontaneous because it was of God. This is all that we desire or hope for, if it might be. The burden of our hearts is gathered up in the word "Fellowship." There is no end to the enemy's activities to destroy and prevent this amongst the Lord's children. It is his most fruitful and successful method of work and campaign. And there is nothing which means such loss to our Lord. The means used by the adversary are legion, and to try and catalogue them would mean just to miss that other one by which he would gain his point after all. So it is safest to watch the end first and then note the method. Between the open and unconcealed assertivenesses of the flesh to the fog or vapour of suspicion, doubt, reservation, there are labyrinthine ways and innumerable tracks by which that end is reached which sees fellowship broken or paralysed.

Then back of these there is another uncountable set of causes: intellectual, ecclesiastical, social, teachings, acceptances, temperaments, appreciations, levels of light and grades of maturity, &c., &c., We do not want this letter to develop into a treatise on Christian unity, but there is one thing which seems to us to be a vital key to the greater part—if not all—of the difficulty. What a difference might be brought about if we fully recognised that the fellowship of believers is "The fellowship of the Holy Spirit," "The unity of the Spirit."

Every born anew child of God has—as differing from all others—something of the Spirit in common. It may be but in its infant stage, or it may be almost smothered and buried by many other things, but it is there, and with

steady refusal to be put off by the other thing present or "to know after the flesh," that thing of the Spirit may be discovered, appreciated, led out, and made the basis of increase. Are we not too much put back by that which we do not have in common so that ALL is lost? Surely it is here that we begin. But then, oh that the Lord would in these days of such terrific spiritual resistance and inroads of the enemy bring a cry into all hearts for a standing together just as far as possible in spirit, and spiritual co-operation of all who are on the common ground of the "Name," the Cross, the Sovereignty of the Lord Jesus!

Perhaps in this matter there will have to be a great repentance and confession of sin. In a day when the people of God were torn and sundered, Hezekiah instituted a "sin offering for all Israel after which he sent to gather to the Passover—the Lamb slain—all of Israel from Dan to Beersheba—who would meet on that common ground. Some mocked, but some "humbled themselves." It is always so. It can only be by an appreciation of the Lord Jesus. Not to a teaching, or specific testimony (as such) or organised centre, but—whether to places on earth or not—it must be in spirit. Fellowship is a thing of spirit upon a common basis of life and appreciation. We are to love all men, but we can only have fellowship where the Lord Jesus is the conic centre of occupation and exaltation. We are not concerned with the problem of whether there can be or is to be a great coming together of all Christians in union before the Lord comes. To face that mentally would paralyse. But we are concerned with the spirit of fellowship, which is the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, to allow it to go as far as it will. So we bring our burden to you, and ask you to take it up with us before the Lord.

Knowing what we do as to the thoughts of many concerning us, we are perhaps bound to say something about ourselves in this connection. Whatever may be the impressions abroad, we want to say again with greater emphasis than ever that we stand with and for the whole Body of Christ! We are not a sect. We are not an organisation. We are not a headquarters with branches in different places. We are not a closed company. We do not say

or think that we are in any *special* way "the Body of Christ," or that that which we teach is essential to make anyone a member of that Body. We have always and at great cost stood for all the people of God as one Church. We left denominationalism purely and solely because we saw this oneness of the Body, and that to press denominational interests and programmes—which we were regarded as under obligation to do—was to be inconsistent with that vision. The Lord's children of almost every denomination and connection used to come to the full message which we sought to give, and we could not thrust denominational enterprises before them. Thus, not being allowed to be free in title or nature we had to come out. But it was never our desire to set up something distinct and separate as such. We had a message, a testimony, it may be fuller than some, and we feel that the Lord has given us light, but, beloved, it is not bound up with us, it is for all the Lord's people who need it, and it is held in trust for the whole Body.

We have yet much to learn, and, *as we have the Spirit's witness in us to the truth*, we want to profit by HIS teaching of all those whom He is

leading in the way of life and light. When we speak of "Centre" as at Honor Oak, we mean nothing more than a gathering point for the Lord's children as unto Himself, and whatever may take place in time to come in the way of "development," it will not be intended to be a crystalising a separate movement, but only the fulfilment of that ministry which we have received of the Lord. We do so very much desire that all shall be the work of the Holy Spirit. He creating a need in others and providing for it. Not our imposing something on others and demanding a tocing of our line. We pray that the Lord will ever preserve that which, being a taste of His best, shall make His children dissatisfied with the less.

Pray for us. It is in our hearts to seek a prayer fellowship of all those with whom we have contact, and we shall, from time to time, send a letter by which the *Witness and Testimony* readers all over the world may be brought into this oneness at the Throne of Grace, and so fulfil a ministry to the Lord in His Own House.

With assurances of love and prayer.

Yours in our Sovereign Lord Jesus,  
T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

## Retrospect and Prospect

### Monthly Meetings at Honor Oak.

FEBRUARY.—A very blessed time was spent as we gathered again for this season with the Lord. We were very conscious of a deep work being done in particular, and a gracious ministration of life and love in general. The matter with which we were occupied was "The Holy Spirit and the Living Testimony." This was opened up in relation to Life, Fellowship, Fruitfulness, Testimony, Freshness, Fulness. Our vision was that of a glorified Saviour and Lord coming by the Holy Spirit to fill with sap the trees of His own planting, that they shall be ever green, bountiful in fruit, defiant of drought, and strong against tempests.

It was indeed a time of His preciousness.

Again we had a full complement for the Guest House and the farther places were represented.

MARCH.—This season of gathering together was not one of words. Any words spoken were only to lead quickly to a turning to the Lord.

It was with a sense of great burden that we met; a burden too strong and heavy for words. There was a cry and a groan in our hearts which no words could express. The special direction of this spirit of travail was for a new mighty movement of the Spirit of the Lord in relation to the Lord's people, the Body of Christ. We were not concerned for a moment with the aspect of sensation, demonstration, "signs," &c., but with the matter of fellowship, life, testimony, and in all the glorifying of the Lord Jesus. It was something laid upon us, not something mentally conceived and adopted. It broke us down before the Lord. Neither was it something just of the time, for it had been growing for months. It has not passed, but we believe that something has been touched and brought forth, and we are not without what we believe to be some new movement as a result.

### Mission in Lincolnshire.

During March some of the students have been

out on special service. Our sister, Miss Eva Otter has been greatly used of God in a mission in Lincolnshire. At the outset, and for a day or two there was some stiff going and resistance. This meant that "All Prayer" was the weapon called into action, and every moment outside of the meetings was used in taking the ground thus. Then came the break and a mighty yielding to God took place.

Nineteen souls came right through into salvation. Breaches between people were healed, and many other marks of a real work of the Spirit of God were apparent. Pray for these brands plucked from the burning.

#### Ireland.

Our brothers, Speedy and Harper, have also had a young people's convention in the south of Ireland near Cork. There are evidences of a real work of God having been done.

#### Blackpool.

Our brother Oliphant has been ministering in Blackpool for a week or two. A little company of the Lord's people meeting in "Emmanuel Hall" are seeking to be an instrument for the meeting of spiritual need, and there is promise of something very useful to Him there.

Friends might like to know of these gatherings at "Emanuel," Talbot Road.

#### Newcastle.

Again we met with the Lord and a goodly company of His children in the "Belgravia

Hall," on Thursday and Friday, March 20th and 21st. The word came through in strength. Our sister, Mrs. Mentiely, is carrying on with a little company week by week, and she has now been joined for work round the district by our sisters Clarke and Walker before they go to China, if the Lord wills.

#### High Wycombe.

Our brothers, Speedy and Justin, have been conducting a mission for a week in Wycombe Marsh Baptist Church from April 6th. There has been considerable blessing.

#### Cork, Ireland.

Mr. Sparks has been in Cork five days from April 6th. Pastor Gracey arranged these gatherings which were held in the Y.M.C.A. Hall.

#### Easter Conference at Honor Oak.

Good Friday to Easter Monday (inclusive). Gathering all day, each day.

#### United States.

Mr. Sparks expects (D.V.) to leave shortly for America to carry out ministry in various centres. It is probable that he will sail on the 'Aquitania' on May 17th, and that Mrs. Sparks and Graham will be going with him. All particulars of meetings in U.S.A. can be had from Mr. N. F. Douty, Hephzibah House, 51 West 75th Street, New York.

Will friends be continually in prayer for blessing and God's glory in this undertaking?

### Acknowledgments

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## Holiday Conferences at Bognor

YOUNG PEOPLE'S

July 5th to 12th

FOR ALL

July 12 to 19th

# The Reactions of the Lord

No III.

(Continued.)

## The New Cruse.

TOWARD the close of our last chapter we expressed the feeling that, while many would agree with the statement that a general renewal of spiritual life is very much needed at this time, there might not be such agreement with our further observation that what is needed specifically is a New Cruse, an instrument conformed to the mind of God and solely upon the basis of sympathy with the Holy Spirit's order and requirements. Perhaps such reservations might be justified. People would mentally picture some new exclusive body; some select company; some iconoclastic movement; some spiritually superior class. This would create or arouse suspicion, prejudice, resentment, fear, and apprehensiveness, and even although these might betoken the "flesh" and the activity of the Spoiler—the Adversary, yet much might be lost quite unnecessarily, and things be made more difficult for the Lord than they need be.

How, then, shall we substantiate the strong conviction that a NEW cruse is imperative? Surely the only way that carries any hope is by a recognition of the fact that in the history of the Divine re-actions the instrument was always definitely relative, and not exclusive and isolated. Although that instrument may have been comparatively small in itself, it was representative and linked with the whole company of the elect.

## Relative and Representative Ministry.

Did Esther represent an instrument brought to the throne for such a time as a plot by the adversary for the death of God's people and the wiping out of His testimony in the earth? Then her life and the life of the whole company—although they were in captivity and "out of the way"—was one, however privileged and exalted may have been her calling. She was involved in the testimony, and this brought her into a travail concerning the whole chosen race. We shall have more to say about Esther.

This same relative and representative function characterised Daniel and his brethren.

They took the condition of the whole captive nation upon their hearts, and entered into what we might call a vicarious repentance for the sin of all their brethren. They themselves were the "Overcomers" of that time, but all their experience, revelation, and victory was in a deep relationship to the people of God, though apostate.

When Hezekiah was instrumental in turning back the awful idolatry and wickedness made so complete by Ahaz, he first of all instituted a sin offering "for ALL Israel," and then sent letters throughout all Israel to call them to the Passover at Jerusalem. This is striking when we remember that Hezekiah was king over Judah, not Israel; the kingdom being rent, and entirely schismatic, with Israel much more idolatrous even than Judah. Hezekiah's heart went out to all, and did not allow the grossest idolatry to create a *spiritual* abandonment of his so greatly erring and sinning brethren. This principle of relationship and representation can be traced throughout the Word, and is a most important one. There is no such thing as a "section of the Body of Christ." "the Body is One," but there are "bands" and "joints of supply," fulfilling specially related and representative functions or ministries. All the "members" may not be in equal good health, development, life, fellowship, but they are not thereby cut off.

## Christ will never have a mutilated Body.

We are not unaware of the greatness of the difficulty and problem with which we are here confronted. At the same time we make bold to tackle it for the Lord's glory. If only certain principles are recognised and established there is some hope of improvement, at least to some extent. We must, therefore, in the first place keep clearly before us that it is only the really born anew children of God, in whom there is something of the Spirit, who are in view. Not the vast accretion to "Christendom" or "organised" and traditional Christianity of "mixed multitudes." However bad may be

the condition spiritually of the former, they are not to be excluded from the *spirit* of fellowship. That does not mean fellowship in works or that which is wrong, but it does mean earnest and loving solicitude for recovery therefrom. How patiently and diligently, and ingeniously has many a surgeon or doctor worked to find some point of contact with life with a patient whose hold and interest was practically imperceptible. Should it be less so with us in this so much greater battle with spiritual death?

But the main point is this. The Lord must have an instrument which He has formed in the fire and to which He has given peculiar revelation of Himself. This instrument will have to stand upon a peculiarly pure basis of life in God. Whatever the rest may do, it dare not take its lead from them. Its methods, means, and standards are those which have shed the less mature elements. Of some it would stand as God's plummet to reveal crookedness; to show shortness of God's best, or God's better. (Who would claim to have reached God's best?) A much greater cost will have to be met by such an instrument, and there will be little place left for spiritual pride if it is spiritually constituted as against mentally apprenended. Now the chief difficulty, as history has shown, is how to have such a ministry, constituted by revelation of the Lord through suffering, and hold it in relation to ALL the Lord's people, and avoid separation in spirit, schism in the "Body," exclusiveness and "watertightness." It is the easiest thing to withdraw to some given point and look down on all others, and make it a matter of "We are *the* people, you must come to us."

The Lord will lose much this way. No; while in *practical* matters for consistency's sake, there may *have* to be withdrawal, as also where error predominates, yet the preservation of what there is of God must be diligently sought in spirit. While there can be no official link with what is wrong, there can and must be a reaching out in spirit to keep the door open for the more excellent way.

The next thing is to apprehend the Divine meaning behind the creating of this instrument. Surely it is twofold. Firstly to have for Himself that in the earth which is as close a proximation to His own mind as possible. That it should not be true that there is nothing which is in any real way an expression of the Lord's

mind. Thus further, He would have that which cleaves a way through for others: So it ever was in battles of old. The specially trained and disciplined broke through for others. Again, there must be that which gives the Lord His point toward which to work. As He creates a sense of need in His people and leads them on thereby, He would have that which can be His means of meeting that need in spiritual knowledge. That the Lord directs hungry ones to such as know Him through special dealings is a principle not far to seek in the Divine record. A Cornelius and a Peter (Acts x.), an Apollos and a Priscilla and Aquilla (Acts xviii.), &c. There is such a thing as

### Election to Special Service

and there ought to be mutual recognition of this.

When the Lord Jesus took Peter and James and John into the more inward activities and revelations of His life, especially up to the Mount of Transfiguration, He was not guilty of an act of schism in the Body in principle. What the others thought or felt we do not know, but in the long run we know that it was ministry in view, not personal preference or to make them a specially privileged and separate company. A great need was coming, and this was His method of providing for the need which would one day be created.

The appreciation of what He did and what they knew had to tarry until that need arose. There will never be an appreciation of special resource without conscious need, but such need will justify God's methods, and prove His wisdom sound. God has from the beginning of the world always had His escape ready before the fire broke out; His lifeboat before the wreck; His store before the famine; His Cross before the curse. His peculiar ways with some are in view of a coming need which will give them a peculiar ministry. There are those who are out on a general basis of activity with the Lord, going all the time in a continuous stream of good works. There are also those who are cut off from much in measure and reserved for what the others cannot do; less in bulk, but perhaps of indispensable worth and service in emergency, and beyond a certain general point of attainment. The latter have to bide their time in patience, but when their time does come it is *their* time in the Lord, and no one else can do the work. Let us return to our main principle, namely that

### Remnants are Relative.

The remnants of which we spoke in our first chapter were not something conclusive in themselves. Sometimes a remnant of only a couple of tribes is referred to as "All Israel," showing their representative character. While in the first instance the movement was on the part of a few, comparatively, there was a trickling after them from time to time as there was that to which such tricklings could come. The remnant was not conclusive.

We *must* keep clearly and strongly before us the fact that, while the Lord must have His testimony maintained in the earth, and while He desires all His people to enter into the fulness of light and truth, and while there is clearly seen to be different companies of His people in heaven, both as to time and position, the main characteristic of any company which may be termed "a remnant," or "Overcomers," is that of vocation; that is, they stand in a vocational relationship to all other really born anew children of God. It is something which they are called to be and to do which is preparatory for the rest. They have, amongst other things to "pass over fully armed before their brethren" to cleave a way and take the first shock of spiritual antagonism.

Now, before crystallising the nature of this instrument we will say just a little more on the matter of fellowship. We have recognised two things namely, that fellowship is limited to the measure of life and of the Spirit, and that for fuller fellowship there must be progress in the life of the Spirit; and then that, inasmuch as every true child of God has *something* of Himself in them, there should be care and diligence in discovering, unearthing, and fostering that. We now come to that sphere where there is a going on with the Lord or a seeking so to do, but which can only be *true building* up of the "Body" on the ground of fellowship and love.

### A Satanic Master Stroke.

Perhaps the most—or one of the most—*significant* things to any who are not in "ignorance of his (Satan's) devices" is that there never has been a specially spiritual movement of God in the earth, calculated to serve Him in a particularly useful way, but what Satan's animosity thereto has been manifested along the line of division, schism, discord, separation, and a breaking down of fellowship. And how often has the real sting and stigma been modified by a feigning of love unbroken

and preserved, when the divided parties would have no association with each other in the things of God. Love, let us again say emphatically, whether feigned or unfeigned, is incumbent by the Lord's people toward "all men," whether of the "Household" or otherwise, but fellowship is something more. It is the most spiritual things which suffer the greatest shocks in this matter, and again we say this carries its own Satanic significance. The methods of the enemy are numberless, the "wiles" unfathomable by human wit. A suggestion of suspicion is enough to completely paralyse the work of God and spiritual progress where that suspicion finds lodgment. Have a doubt and you are done. There never was a time when positive spiritual work was more jeopardised and made so largely impossible by suspicion as now. It would seem that hell is mainly employed in issuing forth smoke, clouds, vapours, mists, of suspicion, question, reservation, by which there is an infecting with uncertainty, mystification, prejudice, fear, discrediting, distrust, aloofness, &c. It is in the "heavenlies" that this is most registered; that is, the higher ranges of spiritual things. It is an *atmosphere*, and it is everywhere. You sniff it wherever you go. In some places it is stifling, there is no clear breath of the Spirit, and a word of life is almost choked back.

Of course, this is no new thing, although so much more intensified. The New Testament is full of it. The Lord Jesus met it, but not in spiritual people, only religious people. John met it. Paul met it in every direction. It was made to circle round his person, his methods, his character, and his message.

Even some members of the mother assembly at Jerusalem showed suspicion and lack of cordiality toward him. Paul's setting aside of the Law, for instance, seemed to go beyond even the Lord Himself, Who had not openly abrogated it. Then Paul appealed to "visions" and "revelations," but they asserted that these were dubious, or at best they could only serve to ratify his own personal convictions. Again, both Paul and his opponents appealed to the Old Testament, but the letter of the Old Testament seemed undoubtedly to favour the literalists, and his "attempt to read new meanings" into the old revelation seemed to them mere cleverness. They looked on it as barefaced denial of the Divine Word. To them it looked as though he did not believe the Bible. They regarded his innovations as



morally dangerous. Of course, this in *substance* ought to have no parallel to-day, but it has in spirit. There is nothing added by revelation to the scriptures since the New Testament was closed, but there is much recognised in them by the enlightenment of the Spirit. There is no new meaning, but there is much new recognition of the meaning.

#### Causes and Precautions.

The point is not that there never was or never will be an absence of this Satanic enterprise of smoke to prevent or destroy fellowship, but what is our attitude to be in such circumstances? It would be hopeless to try and deal with all the secondary causes. Sometimes the ground of the adversary's success is a living in some proximity at some point or points to the "flesh" and "natural man." Some secret pride making possible jealousy, criticism, envy, hurtness, fear of loss, self pity, comparison, a wish to be out of the place of difficulty. Sometimes immaturity, and again, sometimes imperfect knowledge or understanding; seeing "through a glass darkly." There are worse things than these, but there are also such things as are either utterly imaginary, or real only because they are real to those who register them. That is, the enemy can set up situations which are utterly false in themselves. They have no foundation in *fact*. They are phantoms, but how terribly real phantoms can be! How shall we meet all this? It seems so hopeless, and would almost tend to drive to an ultra individualism. Let us not abandon it until we have been faithful to the exhortations "Give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit," and "Prove all things." The final test will, of course, be—Is the Lord there in blessing? If so—and we ought to have spiritual discernment—then up to that point we ought not to either oppose or have *no* fellowship.

But before we are so general, perhaps we have a duty which costs a little more.

Seeing how great was the matter involved, no less than the Holy Spirit's presence and ministry, Priscilla and Aquilla might easily have labelled Apollos as in error and altogether wrong and wanting, and left him and the assembly of which he was Pastor. But they saw the lack and lovingly took him and in a humble spirit helped him to see it (Acts xviii.). There is a fine record of this man after this. It could so easily have been a breach and a loss.

We must always be sure that those who seem to us to be wrong are not capable of being helped on those matters which are absolutely vital to fellowship. What have we done and what do we do in the matter? To come to a conclusion and forthwith to abandon those from whom we differ is a positive violation of scriptural method and instruction. This is often great loss to the Lord when there might have been gain. It would seem from the Word that the grounds of separation *when established* are brought within a small range as to number, but of course, outweighing all others in importance. They are the denial of the person of Christ, that He is truly God come in the flesh (2 John ix. 10). The denial of the necessity for and sufficiency of His death for reconciling men to God (Gal. i. 6-9), or the practice of moral evil, or the defying of the united judgment of the whole assembly in a matter of wrong doing (Matt. xviii. 17), or finally, the refusal to accept the authority in the house of God of the Apostles and their writings (II. Thess. iii. 14-15). All else is gathered up in these.

It would seem necessary to say again here what we have said earlier, that we are not dealing with the matter of co-operation in doubtful methods and on an unspiritual basis, or a compromise on truth. There will ever have to be separation in these matters, but our point is the *spirit* of fellowship; that we should not close ourselves up as apart from and superior to all others. Many of us were on a much less spiritual basis once than we are now, and we owe much to the spirit of fellowship on the part of others. We must be out to help, to win, to cherish, if we feel that we have something more than some; and we must keep our hearts open and our spirit pure, and avoid getting to a *set* place where no one can teach us. It is so possible for us to get so that we are always in an attitude that we can teach others, and that they are the ones who are not going on with the Lord. This hinders fellowship rather than fosters it.

Now we must close this chapter, but with one important reminder. A great safeguard and security to that fellowship without which there is no building and progress in the House of God is to *recognise* and bear continually in mind that the master tactic of the enemy is to somehow, by hook or by crook, get in between the Lord's people and cause strain and break. Our "diligence" must be along the lines of

(Concluded on page 47.)

## For Girls and Boys

### The Gospel in the Farmyard (No 5.)

Cheep! Cheep! . . . . . Chirrip!

A HEN lived with her brood of newly hatched chicks in a quiet meadow by the side of the farm house, and as evening came on the farmer's wife shut them up in the coop which was their home, that they might be safe from all enemies. Presently, as she sat quietly in the house the farmer's wife heard the faintest little cry, again and again repeated—"Cheep! cheep!!"—just as though one of the little chicks was in trouble. She ran out at once to the meadow. It was now quite dark and a flash lamp was the only light she had, and with this she searched diligently but unsuccessfully. Still she could hear the cry, its tone so evidently one of alarm, as though a little chick were calling out "Help, help, I'm lost"; but in the darkness it was difficult to tell exactly where the cry came from. After much searching she went indoors and fetched her husband to help her, and together they continued the search, hearing still the faint cry for help, until with a glad shout one of them at last tracked it down—and there they found the chick at the bottom of quite a deep, narrow hole down which he had evidently fallen. They pulled him out and found that he was not hurt, and took him to join the rest of the family under his mother's wings. Oh, what a different cry he now gave! No longer one of despair, but the glad chirrup of a heart that was safe and satisfied: a new song indeed was in his mouth. And he was not the only one that was happy. The mother hen clucked with a real note of satisfaction; and the look upon the faces of the farmer and his wife as they returned indoors seemed to say that all the trouble to which they had been put was nothing compared with the satisfaction of finding the missing chick.

Of course you have already thought of another story very like this, in which a sheep, instead of a chick, was lost. In both stories we are made to see

#### 1. The Greatness of the Need.

There was no doubt that the chick was lost and in need. Try as he would he could never have saved himself out of the pit into which

he had fallen. He might have said to himself—as I have heard people say sometimes—that it was cowardly to call for a saviour and too humbling to have to confess that he could not save himself. In that case he would have remained silent, trying to plan out a way of escape; and perhaps in the night the cold frosty air or a heavy downpour of rain might have come, more than the little chick could endure, and his end would have been death—and all because he had no Saviour in the time of his need. But our chick did the very wisest thing possible—he CRIED, and it was the cry that brought the saviour for his deliverance.

There is a book in the Old Testament in which we read more than once that "when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a saviour. And David in one of his psalms tells us that he was in a horrible pit and cried unto the Lord, and the Lord brought him up from it. I wonder if you who are reading this have ever realised that you also have need of a Saviour to deliver you out of the horrible pit of sin? It is true of all of us, not that we have *fallen* into that pit, but that we *were born* in it, and we cannot by any means save ourselves out of it. Only One can save us, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ who, like the farmer, can reach down from above and draw us out by His Own power. And remember, that it is possible even to know of our need and yet be content to stay in it: it is "who-soever shall call upon the Name of the Lord" that shall be saved. Have you yet called?

#### 2. The Diligence of the Saviour.

It would have been so easy for the farmer and his wife to say, after hunting for a while, "Well, we have done our best—the silly chick should not have lost itself and now it must suffer the consequences. After all, it is only one out of a dozen or more and we shall not miss it: why should we waste our time looking any longer for it?" A shepherd who spoke like that of a lost sheep would hardly deserve the title of a good shepherd would he? No, the good shepherd seeks *until he finds* that which was lost. If the shepherd were of a

different nature, I am afraid there would be many lost sheep never found, even though they cried for salvation. How great a comfort it is to know that our Lord Jesus considered no cost too great to recover us. His own comfort counted for nothing; "though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor"; though He might have destroyed all sinners in His anger, He chose rather to pour out His own life at the Cross for their sakes. And now He seeks those sinners, to bring them to Himself. Be sure that you cannot be anywhere that He will not find you—provided He can hear your cry to Him. Are you calling upon Him? How glad both you and He will be—and many others too—when He truly has you for Himself.

### 3. The Safety of the Saviour's Keeping.

Now if you had been the farmer of whom I have spoken, what would you have done before letting the chicks out next morning? I believe you would have done exactly as the farmer did—he filled up the hole, so that no danger should come to the chicks again from that direction. Ah, the Lord Jesus removes many of our pitfalls when He has found us. For all who know Him as their Saviour the great pit of death and judgment for sin has been

for ever closed, and they can never fall into that. But there are other holes into which we often tumble—some evil habit, some foolish practice, that does not show forth the glory of the Lord Jesus in our lives. He can fill up those pits just as He did the greater one. Where sin used to have power over us, to make us stumble and fall, it need no longer have power. Jesus breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free. Where we formerly were defeated He gives us victory; where fear used to fill our hearts, He gives us peace and joy; where we used to say "I cannot" we may now say "I can do all things in Christ that strengtheneth me." Oh, how great a change comes into the life when Jesus takes charge! "Old things are passed away, all things are become new"! Hallelujah, what a Saviour! And "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."

Now are you inside the pit or outside? And what holes are there in *your* meadow that need filling up?

(I have mentioned a story, a book and a psalm. Can you find them in the Bible, and also trace the verses which are quoted above?)

G. P.

## The Sign of the Prophet Jonah

(Continued.)

### No. 3.—The New Thing which is Old.

WE have already seen that Jonah's dilemma—purely a mental one—was the result of an innovation on the part of the Lord. Jehovah is here breaking into the life of Israel and sending Jonah out to minister to the heathen, the Gentiles. For this Jonah had no precedent, nothing like it had happened before. There had been many references made to the Gentiles, but nothing as to a direct saving ministry to them. The Gentiles were at this time locked up in a reign of death. Israel was locked up in tradition, formalism, declension, exclusiveness, and religious pride.

Nineveh was the most renowned city of heathendom then on the earth. There would be no meaning in preaching a coming judgment to the people of Nineveh if repentance and thereby salvation was not possible.

This all being so contrary to all that Jonah knew would make him very careful for his reputation; to say nothing of the peril to Israel's interests that the saving of Nineveh would mean. He does not seem to have revolted from preaching the judgment, but from the mercy of God if they repented (John iv. 2). But what did this signify in the mind of God? Was God doing really a *new* thing? Was this something in the nature of a vagary or new idea with the Lord? No, surely not!

There is nothing new with the Lord.

He is always working backward to a plan fully outlined before the world was. Everything that is a new phase or aspect with us is only a step backward with Him to that "purpose which He purposed in Christ before the world was." Jonah, like all others of those ages moved in the dark. According to the

purity of their spirit, the measure of their faith, the completeness of their obedience, they sensed or had revealed to them that some great future development would complete and vindicate their life and work; they knew that they were not living for their own age only, but in those "other ages" the mystery was not made known, although so constantly intimated, suggested and prefigured.

If Jonah was the sign in the matter of death, burial, and resurrection, the issue is clearly seen to be "that the Gentiles should be fellow-neirs" (Eph. iii. 6).

Surely it is not difficult to see that with the resurrection of Christ of which Jonah was a type, the Church comes into view (John xii. 24, &c.).

Thus we see—

### I.—The Church's Constitution.

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

"And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

"And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

"And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentles, in him shall the Gentiles trust."—Romans xv. 8-12.

"How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

"Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

"That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel;

"Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, in this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

"And to make all men see what is the

fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."—Ephes. iii. 3-9.

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."—Col. i. 26, 27.

The words of scripture speak for themselves, and little need be added. A glance at their context will make quite clear that the Church is constituted by resurrection union with the Lord Jesus.

What is of immediate concern to us here is that God *must* and *will* have His people and the full range of His testimony and glory. When Paul was in Corinth the whole situation was intensely difficult. The conditions set forth in Romans iii. are the actual local colourings of Corinth from where the letter to the Romans was written. The word of the Lord to Paul in the midst of such a setting was "I have much people in this city." It reminds us of the Master's words earlier, "Other sheep I have." The Lord *had* them before ever the Gospel was preached to them, before they had known anything about His salvation: He had them. In that "foreknowledge of God the Father. They were His, and "all that the Father hath given me shall come unto me"; even in Corinth, Rome, &c. Thus we see that "Ephesian" truth, (if that is a right way of putting it) is implied in Jonah's commission outside of the limits of the Jewish covenant. This was the principle which so greatly provoked the Jews of Nazareth when the Lord told them that, while there were many widows in *Israel* in the days of Elisha the Prophet, it was to an outsider, a Sidonian widow alone that the prophet was sent; and while there were many lepers in *Israel* in the days of Elisha it was only Naaman, a Syrian—an outsider—who was healed. The sign of the Prophet Jonah then reaches on to embrace the nature of God's eternal purpose realised in resurrection, and the Church is the abiding shrine of that sign and testimony.

### II.—The Church's Power.

The Lord Jesus within such as have become united with Him in the likeness of His death and resurrection, joining them into one spiritual

body causes that body to persist in the power of a deathless life. This testimony must of necessity be a practical one, and therefore all the forces of death gather round to quench that life or submerge it, and "wheresoever the body is thither are the vultures gathered together" to devour. Many many times both corporately and individually it has seemed that there was "the sentence of death," and the Lord's people have "despaired of life," but although "cast down" they have not been "destroyed" for that which has been destroyed (Heb. ii. 14) cannot destroy that which has destroyed it.

As a corporate whole, represented *on earth* by one united people, the world does not see the full meaning and measure of this testimony. It sees divisions, schisms, and internal conflicts and disagreements, but the miracle of the child of God persists, and in another realm of higher intelligences the testimony is recognised to the full (Eph. iii. 10). There is little doubt but that—given spirituality—(that is, a fellowship in life with the Holy Spirit) the powers of death will exhaust themselves without success in the matter of the testimony of the Resurrection of Christ in His people. Viewed superficially there may often *appear* to be a triumph on their part. The merely human factors may entirely come to an end. The man or woman may "despair of life" in more ways than one. Understanding and sentient assurance may be totally eclipsed.

The individual's own victory may go, and on every count be termed defeat. But it is God's victory not ours, and it is not that He "causeth us to triumph" (this is an inaccurate translation) but He "leads us in the train of His triumph." Paul said this (II. Cor. ii. 14) immediately after he had touched upon one of the periods of most questionable success in his life—from man's standpoint, of course. The Lord had the victory even while Paul seemed almost under.

The Lord already has his end, and it cannot be taken from Him, but the working out or working back to it is a tremendous business in which man is involved in a practical, active, co-operating way. The truth of the representative and inclusive resurrection of the Lord Jesus has to be wrought into the very being and life of the Church and its members.

### III.—The Ministry of the Church.

Ministry comes by enlightenment, and doc-

trine only comes vitally through experience. Before Jonah could preach effectively to Nineveh he must be made the thing which he would preach.

The disciples had every fact concerning Christ which they were intended to preach from the moment of His ascension. But they did *not* have the inner spiritual meaning of those facts. Hence they had to spend the interval in prayer rather than preaching. Vital ministry is not just as to the great doctrinal facts of Christ, but the inner revelation of their meaning; and this comes by being "baptised into His death," and "raised together with Him." While there is an initial and crisis aspect of this, it is a thing which in principle operates continuously. The more this is entered into in experience the more effective does ministry become. The Church does not exist to be just a notification or expostulation of the great facts of the Person and work of Jesus Christ; but it is intended to be a representation and embodiment of the power and spiritual nature of those facts. It is not what is said but the influence emanating, and the irresistible force, not only over the minds and wills of men, but over the power of the devil.

It is the power of the Church, and the power of the Church is "the power of His resurrection."

### The Nature of the Strength of the Church.

Eph. i. 17-22; iii. 16-19; Heb. ii. 14.

"Since then the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also Himself in like manner partook of the same, *that* through death he might *bring to nought* (nullify, destroy) him that had the power (marg. might) of death, that is *the devil*."

Here we have clearly stated the very object and reason of the incarnation, that His partaking—sharing—of flesh and blood was to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. It means that, God was not going to destroy the devil apart from flesh and blood; God would not as *God* destroy the devil, but He would as man destroy him.

This is the key and way into the Ephesian letter, and sums up the whole truth of the letter, and lets you into the deep truth: the building up of the Church which is His Body. This letter is filled with the building of the Church.

There are two main characteristics of the Church in its building up.

1. "that God...the Father may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the *knowledge of Him*...that ye may know."

The Holy Spirit's strength is needed for knowing Him—the Lord Jesus; the Holy Spirit's strength is needed for knowing the Hope of His Calling and the glory of His inheritance in His saints.

2. "That he would grant you according to the riches of His glory that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man...to the end that ye...may be filled into all the fulness of God."

The Holy Spirit is needed for energising, on the ground of spiritual revelation, unto all the fulness of God. The Holy Spirit and the strength of His Might needed for illumination and for energising into that fulness.

Do we see that the building of the Church is going on by the super-surpassing power of God by His Spirit? The full force of the words here is tremendous, literally it is: "the all else excelling power of God's almightiness"; *this* is the energy, the force by which this building is going on; the Church, His Body as a whole is in view all through this letter, yet this which is spoken of the whole has got to be true of *every* member of that Body: and it will really only be fully true in the whole completed Church, for the *fulness* is to be and can only be realised by the Church—the Body of Christ.

When it is builded, then the all-excelling power of God's almightiness is brought into fulness of manifestation.

Note here, deeper than the letter of the word, but deep in the language of the Apostle is made manifest, that it is the same Power of God which *increated faith* in you. Faith is not only a grace it is a miracle; a miracle of God. Faith in us is the miracle of the resurrection, and our possessing faith, that faith which was wrought in Christ in the power of His resurrection; this is more than just "saving faith" as we say. But even simple faith unto salvation is not our own, of ourselves, it is the gift of God, and saving faith is a mighty thing, it has in it all the potentialities of that faith by which He raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.

Faith is the gift of God, and being the gift of God has in it the germ of the exceeding greatness of His power...the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead"—raised Him from the

abyss to the Throne by "the all else excelling power of God's almightiness."

And there is the tremendous emphasis on what the Lord *must* do in the Church; it is that the Church may receive from the Lord by the Holy Spirit a revelation of the calling, a revelation of Him, and then receive by the same Spirit a strengthening in all might into the inner man according to that *working* (inward energising) of the strength of His Might, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. In both cases it is to be an expression of the same exceeding greatness of His power, that was seen in the raising of the Lord Jesus from the dead, the all else excelling power of God's almightiness.

We must remember the Lord Jesus was not the first one to be raised from the dead; there was Lazarus; the widow's son, Jairus's daughter; and in the Old Testament times the *Shunammite's* son, and the man thrown into Elisha's sepulchre; these all rose from the dead, but had to go back again to the grave, it was only a temporary thing, and at length they had to surrender to death. But the raising from the dead of the Lord Jesus was other than that, when He rose something happened that made it impossible for death to have any more claim upon Him, and that something was the all excelling power of God's almightiness to destroy, bring to nought him that had the power of death.

#### Death and the Disintegration of the Creation.

Right away at the beginning, when death entered through sin, everything broke up, chaos everywhere, disintegration, nay, more, decomposition; the very component character of creation was lost, fallen apart in death. Then came upon that a moving of God and out of it an ordered creation, arose, the cosmos; then when sin again entered and death by sin, a further disruption, disintegration; all relationships break up by death.

Here is a body: while there is life it is held together by and under a controlling living head, all the separate members are brought into order and co-ordinate functioning in subjection to a government of life from the head, making it one whole body: life passes out of that body, there is now no central controlling force, all organs cease to function, and there is disintegration—it has lost its life-controlling power. That's death in a body or a whole creation. There is one responsible for that; Satan achieved his

object, which was to break creation away from its Headship, and get in between the government of life of the Head, and the Members. Death is separation of anything from its base of government and life. The cosmos demanded a head to hold it into ordered creation, by sin came severance from its government of life, and it fell into unrelated parts, into disintegration and decomposition. Man himself became a chaos, the earth ran riot and became chaos.

### **Christ unifies a Disintegrated Creation in Himself as Head.**

It may have been in upsetting the order of the universe this earth as a planet fell out of the ordering of God and chaos was brought about through him who had the power of death.

The Lord Jesus comes into the chaos and takes the nature of flesh and blood and through death destroys him who had the power of death.

And God hath made this same Jesus Head over the Body, His new creation ; and you have the new creation under its divinely appointed Head, and so a bringing about of spiritual order in the fulness of His power (Eph. i. 22-23). The Church is not just a congregation of units, the Church is a body with all its members and organs brought into a functioning relationship of co-ordination under the controlling life of its Head, partaking in that life and governed by that life. This new creation, this Church which is His Body is God's answer to what happened back in Genesis.

Now we begin to see what the Church really is, and what the Church is a product of and what the resource of the Church is.

At the beginning of the letter to the Ephesians you have manifested the nature of the Church, and at the end of the letter, the nature of the Church's warfare, it is the same conflict as away back in Genesis, *but* we are not up against it in the old creation, but against it in the *strength* of the New Adam, in *the exceeding greatness of His might*.

In the first part of the letter we get the first great statement by revelation of the Holy Spirit, of the Eternal Purpose and then the mighty energising by the same Spirit into that Purpose : and then shown the spiritual forces against that Purpose, seeking to bring about chaos and then in between, you have the Holy Spirit trying to tell you, that your daily affairs, relationships, daily duties, business concerns and all that touches your life from the kitchen

to the study, in private life and public life are to be brought up into the heavenlies ; for if the enemy can get into the common intimacies of daily living he will bring in disorder, chaos ; he is out to bring about a break of relationship between the Sovereign Head and the Members and also seeks to create strain, provocation between member and member.

Lift everything into the light of the Eternal Purpose, and there is nothing private, personal or isolated, it is in detail and as a whole related to the whole Body, and it is the one battle with the enemy. Don't regard the happenings in home or business on the level of the ordinary world system ; bring all up into the light of the Eternal Purpose and when brought there, into all these things can be brought the operation of the greatness of His Power by which He raised Christ from the dead.

If we live our life down here on the ordinary system, the enemy will make an awful mess and there will be defeat. As the Lord's people we cannot live our life on the world's line of things even in the most ordinary connections, because of the strange forces of antagonism against us ; we cannot meet with the ordinary resources, we need extraordinary resource with which to meet them.

Get a vision of the Holy Spirit to know the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance and what the exceeding greatness of His power, and then get an energising accordingly by the same Spirit and bring that into the daily meeting of enemy's provocations, and creating strains, &c., meet all his activities and subtleties in that "all else exceeding power of God's almightiness."

It is not necessary for us to be down on level of others in meeting things ; or in resources ; for the exceptional circumstances of our life there is the exceptional might of God.

We meet something those who are not the Lord's do not meet, but we need not be cast down or brought under by that, for to meet it we have the "all else exceeding power of God's almightiness."

*Oh ! we need to grasp this*, for we are *not yet* there in our daily experience, sometimes we have a touch of it, but we need to *live* in it, and walk up and down in the strength, peace and victory of it ; we need to bring it right alongside our daily life, and realise it for ourselves in our daily walk and experience.

We are part of the Church His Body, and so need to see by revelation of the Holy Spirit

the hope of His calling and then be strengthened, energised by the all might of His Spirit in the inner man and so meet these forces in the might of His strength that hath already conquered.

Heb. ii. 14: "Since then the children are partakers of flesh and blood He also Himself in like manner partook of the same *that* through death, He might bring to naught, nullify, him that had the power of death, that is *the devil*."

We have not grasped the tremendous truth of these words and laid hold of them and brought them down into our experience and related them to ourselves.

*He did it, it was an act, He has done it, He will never again be flesh and blood; He took flesh and blood to bring to naught the devil, and through death destroyed him that had the power of death.*

There is an inheritance to enter into, a victory over him that had the power of death. Eph. vi. 10-12: "our wrestling is against Principalities and Powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places, but we are not wrestling with a doubtful issue, it is a wrestling energised by this increased faith which raised Christ from the dead that makes the Lord's won victory ours in experience; it is not fighting *for* a victory but fighting *in* a

victory, appropriating His victory as we go along.

The Holy Spirit by this increased faith is bringing us back to a position, back to that Cross, when He shook off from Himself the hostile princes and rulers and boldly displayed them as His conquests when by the Cross He triumphed over them (Weymouth, Col. ii. 15).

There is a point of faith in the child of God which brings him into a position of immunity as to whatever the devil can do; he can torture him, tear him asunder, persecute him, bring about his death; and bring about such darkness of seeming forsaking of God, yet there is a point of faith in the child of God, that he is not moved by all these things. This increased faith of the Holy Spirit is the strength of the might that raised Christ from the dead.

See all the workings of the enemy since the cross, as they *really are*; it is all camouflage, and the devil can only get an advantage in so far as we are faithless; when faith gets to a certain point the devil is powerless and impotent; *this* is the victory that overcomes him, this increased faith of the Holy Spirit.

The old dispensation was ever looking towards Calvary and in the new dispensation it is an ever looking back to the accomplished work at Calvary of the Lord Jesus, Son of God, Son of Man.

T. A.-S.

(To be continued.)

## 1930 Jericho and Faith's Persistence

### A Précis of Address.

JOSHUA VI.—On the seventh day they compassed the city seven times. "I have given. . . ye shall compass."

I Kings xviii., 41-45.—"I will send rain." . . . xviii. 42.—Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, he bowed himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees. . . he said to his servant go up now and look. . . he went up and looked and said there is nothing, and he said go up again *seven* times."

I. Cor. xvi. 13.—"Watch ye, *stand fast* in the faith."

I. Cor. xv. 58.—"Be ye *steadfast*, unmovable."

Gal. v. 1.—"For freedom did Christ set us free, *stand* therefore."

Phil. i. 27.—"Let your manner of life be

worthy of the Gospel of God, *stand fast* in one spirit. . . in nothing affrighted."

Col. ii. 5.—"I am with you in spirit joying and beholding your order, and the *steadfastness* of your faith in Christ."

Eph. vi. 11.—"Able to stand." 13: "having done all, to stand, and withstand."

Heb. iii. 2.—"Moses faithful. . . for a testimony."

II. Peter iii. 17.—"Beware lest ye fall from your *steadfastness*."

The keynote running through all these passages is *endurance*. The endurance of faith; was the method by which the land was to be possessed, and is God's method in all times and ages by which we are to possess the heavenly things.

The Lord said to Joshua two things—"See



I have given ; ye shall compass.”

There are always two sides, the Divine side, where all is secured and abideth always ; and man's side where what is settled by God has to be made actual by faith.

In Joshua vi. we have here a spiritual principle by which all the land was to be possessed and the enemy overthrown.

Jericho was the first city in the land of seven kingdoms to be conquered. Note the frequency of the number seven in this chapter—all this is most significant. A sevenfold encompassment—seven priests—7 trumpets, and on the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times. The number seven in scripture means spiritual perfection, and you find this number closely related to the Holy Spirit and His work throughout the scriptures.

In Joshua vi. we see faith brought to completeness, finality, full maturity, Jericho the earnest of the whole land ; there were seven kingdoms to be conquered and possessed before there could be full possession.

Faith had to be brought up to its sevenfold perfection ; this chapter is a record of steadfast, persistent endurance of faith in the midst of seeming contradiction and the unyieldingness of the situation.

Even prayer in the Holy Ghost does not dispense with the necessity of perseverance.

Elijah prayed in the Holy Spirit, but not until the seventh time did he see the coming rain ; Elijah knew faith's exercise, see him *after* the Lord's word : xviii. 1, “ I will send rain ” ; xviii. 42, “ head bowed between his knees,” go seven times, faith persevered through to the end—through to completeness, when the thing promised is an experienced reality. Compassing the city daily for seven days, and *nothing* happening, no sign from God. On the human side each day could naturally by the very circumstances bring about a weakening of faith, and perhaps an increase of questioning.

But this is the Lord's way, His order in the Life of the Spirit, and we trace this method of the Lord all the way down the ages.

It is God's way of bringing to an *utter end all* confidence or hope in anyone or anything, and cast us in utter helplessness and need upon the Lord Himself, and a strong faith in Him.

The seven days tell of the accumulated strength of the six days, all the strength of that period gathered up into the seventh day, so there is a sevenfold increase of faith—mighty, strong faith.

The Divine order right at the end gathering up all and so arrive at the completeness of faith's exercise.

God has got to get us to nothingness and to know *God only* can meet the situation—but *He can*.

Prayer in the Holy Ghost does not dispense with persistent holding on in faith, and even possessing the promises of God does not set aside the need for persistent faith—God's end is our beginning.

To possess the promises demands the persistence and endurance of faith, while every day shows a lessening of resources in ourselves.

What would happen if in answer to our prayer we immediately received the things asked for ? If immediately we prayed things happened ? Would we not be in peril of thinking it was *our* praying did it, and would not others be gathering around for us to do their praying for them God takes precaution against these dangers, therefore His delays, seeming not hearings, even when we know it is according to the revealed will of God.

What does the Lord mean by this ? It is God's way of getting rid of any natural resource, any manner of entering in, and taking hold of by our “ flesh ” ; that is God's method and we know it is necessary.

God is just seeking to get us to a point of utter, pure faith in Him, Himself.

The Holy Spirit has made it His law, that with faith's exercise there is experimental removal of all natural ground. Faith reaches a point of completeness *in God*, not in signs, workings, and things yielding, so all this testing but finds faith at the end more deeply rooted *in God*.

Notice how faith in the word of God is linked with the Holy Spirit, “ Filled with the Holy Spirit and faith ” (Acts xi. 24). “ A man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost ” (Acts vi. 5). This is *our* need.

Every day will find us with more doubt unless the Holy Spirit is there stimulating, energising the mighty “ faith of the Son of God.” One of the greatest needs of the Lord's children is spiritual courage and holy boldness.

Look at the disciples *before* Pentecost, and remember it is *after* they had those wonderful forty days with the Lord after His resurrection ; and with this wonderful message of Him risen, living ; and they are found behind *closed doors* for *fear* of the Jews, but after Pentecost, when full of the Holy Ghost—a Holy Ghost boldness.

It takes courage just to *go on with the Lord*, to do the thing the Lord has said to you. It will cost you friendships, relationships, and bring much misunderstanding and—misjudgment, but the Holy Spirit is equal to all this.

Basic to all work for God, the mighty faith of the Holy Ghost, that has been tested out; tested out by God's delays, yes, even after witness born in your spirit that the thing is of God, the known determination of God, which you in faith have come into relationship with—yet delay, seeming denial, Oh! the divine mystery of God's delays.

Why? To get away the heats of personal desire, soulish cravings, &c.—and have but one passionate desire—*God's glory*—by any way, at any cost.

Why do we want Jericho to fall? Search out motive. The work of the Holy Spirit is to purify the heart, that the Lord can get everything, and everything for the Lord Himself.

Then the necessity for *holding on*. "I have given...you shall compass." Hang on until what has been done in the Spirit is a reality in experience. Two aspects of the one truth here seen; as, for instance, "We have eternal life" (John iii. 15-16); but we may "*lay hold of eternal life*" (I. Tim. vi. 12 and 19). This great ministry of securing for the Lord; stand on that ground and don't let go, for if you vacate the spot the enemy will occupy it.

God keeps us in daily exercise of faith, until on natural ground no hope whatever; and on the Divine side just Him and Him only.

The whole conquest of the land bound up with faith's coming to this point at Jericho. The future hangs on coming to this point, where it is all *the Lord*, where we know and confess we haven't anything but the Lord. It is His way.

What a lot the word has to say on "*Stand-fast*"; the whole question is the *power to endure*;

the whole matter, of steadfast, unmovable faith in the Lord, that will not let Him go; that will not be shaken off. Sometimes it seems as if the Lord would shake us off and we have to say "Lord you *can't* shake us off—for we are in you." The Lord is but proving us out, seeing if it is really *Himself*, and not Him for His gifts, &c., but just *Himself*.

Look at Elijah and Elisha, how it seems Elijah tried to shake Elisha off—"Tarry ye here," but Elisha would not be shaken off. "As Jehovah liveth and as thy soul liveth *I will not leave thee*," a test as to being shaken off, and if Elisha had not persisted he would not have seen the ascension of Elijah, seen the falling mantle and received the double portion of the Spirit; and so it seems sometimes as if the Lord is trying to find out if we can be shaken off.

"Standing" in the Lord is always related to His heavenly purpose (not to our salvation). The Lord must have a people *proved*; who have stood the testing and who have come to the end of every resource in themselves, having only one asset—the Lord.

Our relationship with the Lord, must be for *Himself*, must not be gifts, or the seeing of mighty works that keeps us following Him; but must be for what He is in Himself. *God Himself*. When He can get a people there the thing is settled.

The disaster at Ai, because they had forgotten the six days foolishness on *man's* side—Faith's compassing and dependence upon the Lord's accomplishment; they being brought to the place where *only God* can do it. Must have foundation well laid, where He only is reckoned on—but in faith's strong reckoning. Is delay shaking you?

Will you accept something less than *the* thing God is after? There will be plenty of opportunities for you to do so—many ways of escape—but with an eternal loss. T. A-S.

## CONFERENCES at Honor Oak (D.V.):

MAY 10th and 11th.

JUNE 7th and 8th and 9th (Whitsun).

JULY 5th and 6th.

AUGUST 2nd, 3rd, and 4th.

## For Holiday Conferences at BOGNOR

See Page 28

## Suffering and Glory

(Luke ix. 18-36 ; Rom. viii. 17-19 ; 1 Pet. iv. 12-16 ; 2 Tim. iii. 10-12, iv. 6-8.)

I HAVE read these passages because they bring out very clearly that the Christian's path here is one of suffering but it leads to glory. But *coronation* is preceded by *crucifixion*, or, to use very familiar words, "No cross, no crown." The Lord had all along been preparing His disciples for the announcement He makes as given in Luke ix. But never before had He fully unfolded what is here brought out. The disciples had, however, been daily more and more impressed with His competency to take up the ruined or falling interest of Israel, and to set them free from the dominion of the Romans and deliver them from all evil, and as Messiah to reign over them and bring in the long-promised kingdom. But, strange to say, Jesus is about to tell them that their hopes for the immediate setting up of the kingdom in power and glory and the removal of the outward pressure and evil could not yet come to pass. Before Jesus unfolds this to them, we find Him alone praying. His disciples being with Him He asks them, "Whom say the people that I am?" They answered to the effect that there were different opinions. Upon this Jesus said to them, "But whom say ye that I am?" and Peter answers with the greatest decision and certainty, "The Christ of God." The disciples had no question about it at all. It was evident to them that He was the long-looked-for Christ, and that He had all the power needed to deliver man and to set up the kingdom over Israel. But to their astonishment they are strictly charged and commanded not to tell any man that He was the Christ! Jesus takes another title—that of Son of man—and says, "The Son of man *must suffer*." Instead of showing them that their hopes for earthly blessing were to be immediately realised, He closes such hopes for the moment, and says He must suffer! He takes a grand title—that of Son of man—a title connected with far more glory than that of Messiah, Israel's King. Psalm viii., written long before Christ came, shows it is connected with universal dominion and glory, but that first He would be made lower than angels. Hebrews ii. shows that it was "for the suffering

of death," but that it leads to all things being put under His feet in the coming day. He told the disciples not simply that He *would* suffer, but that He *must*—there was no way of avoiding it if men were to be saved. He must die for them. So He says, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day." The last words, however, showed that the suffering was not to end in death, but in resurrection and glory, for He would be raised again, yea, He *must* (God's glory demanded it) be raised again the third day. What an eye-opener this was for the disciples! They naturally would have looked for the elders and chief priests—the leaders of religion—to receive Christ, but no, they would reject Him and kill Him! But for their encouragement He shows that the elders, &c., would not succeed in their plot to get rid of Him, for the third day He must rise again!

### The Master's Way—that of His Servant.

Then He shows them that, if they would follow Him, their path also would be one of suffering, for He said to them *all*, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Now this is no light thing. We may deny ourselves hosts of pleasures, &c., and yet not deny *ourselves*. To let self go is the last thing we want to do. It means real suffering to refuse ourselves, but we cannot follow Christ truly unless we deny ourselves. Yea, more, for the Lord added, "and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Christ took up His cross willingly for the glory of God and in His love for us, that He might die for us, and we are called to follow Him. But we cannot take up *His* cross—we are not called to do so, nor could we. We are called to take up our own. Each man has his own cross to take up. Men were not crucified on the same tree. Each had a tree or cross to himself, and had to carry it to the place of crucifixion. Your cross is not mine, nor mine yours, but every disciple has to carry his own cross. This must mean suffering and shame here, and even moral death. If a man was seen carrying his cross, every one knew that he

was on the way to be crucified, and that he was considered not fit to live. This is the place the world will give us if we are true in following Christ, and we have ourselves also to take that place as being in ourselves not fit to live. The cross represents the end of man. That is why we read in Romans vi.: "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Also Galatians v. 24 says: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." This we are called to do practically every day—not to spare the flesh, but to deny ourselves, and that without anybody knowing it perhaps in this world. If we sought to get a name for it, and to be thought something of for our self-sacrifice or self-denial, it would not any longer be carrying our cross, but the very opposite. It is a great test for us to do this *every day*. A man might be willing to do some heroic deed for Christ once and for all, and perhaps lay down his life, but to do this daily, week by week and year by year, for many a long year, this is where the test comes in. But the Lord is sufficient for us and can enable us to do that which He encourages us and bids us to do. He said, moreover, that whosoever desires to save his life shall lose it, but that whosoever should lose his life for Christ's sake should save it. He would find life in a far better way, above and beyond this world, and he would gain far more than all that could be got in this world. Besides in what way would a man be advantaged if he should gain the whole world and lose himself or be cast away? For in any case he would lose the whole world after gaining it, for he could not keep it, nor take it with him when he dies.

#### The Master's Threefold Glory.

Then to help us and encourage us He speaks of His coming in glory, and that in a threefold character of glory, and shows how serious it would be if He had to be ashamed of us then. The Lord does not want to have to be ashamed of His people. It is a delight to Him to be able to say, "Well done!" He does not want us to receive some mark of shame and disapproval on His part at that day, but rather a mark of approval. So in His love and care for us He warns us beforehand, and speaks of the threefold glory of His coming.

**First, He would come in the glory of the Son of Man.**

This glory is opened out in Daniel vii., where

the thrones were cast down, that is, the cushions were thrown down for the monarch to sit upon, and "The Ancient of days did sit.... thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." Then, after the destruction of "the beast"—that is, the Latin empire in its last form—a Man is brought near before Him, and everlasting dominion is given to Him, a kingdom that can never pass away. For we read, "Behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." We find, too, in the same chapter that "the saints of the most High," or, rather, "of the most high places," the heavenly saints who died in faith, and who served Him faithfully here, take the kingdom with Him and reign with Him then. It is needless to say that the Son of man of Daniel vii., to whom is given, by the Ancient of days, that vast dominion, is the despised Jesus of Nazareth whom we find in Luke ix. quietly opening out His glorious future to His dear disciples. How rightly proud, then, should we be at that day if He were to own us when coming in such amazing glory! But how sad if we were passed by in shame, or if we had to receive some mark of disapproval, or if He could not own us at all as belonging to Him! Let us then carefully consider those words, "ashamed of me and of my words." Many perhaps would not exactly be ashamed of Him, but are ashamed of His words. Perhaps we slight what He says about forgiving our brother, or about fighting for our rights; or about not being of the world, or about taking up our cross and denying ourselves. If so, we shall find He will have to show His disapproval of us in that day when His approval and glory will be found to be of eternal value.

He will come, too, in the glory of His Father.

This is even a greater glory than that of having universal dominion as Son of man, the last Emperor of the world, if I may so speak of Him. He is more than universal Ruler, He is the Son and is the object of the Father's love and delight. What He is with the Father is

even more than what He is as having universal dominion. What an honour to be associated with the Son of God! Yea, even to be brought through Him into the same blessed relationship with God as His dear sons, so that the world will know at that day that God has loved us as He has loved His Son! Ought not such a thought deeply to affect us?

Again, there is a third glory, for

He comes in the glory of the Holy Angels.

Now Christ Himself it was that made those holy angels, for the direct work of creation is attributed in scripture to the Son, the second Person of the Trinity. Jesus is not only Man, He is God, and He made the holy angels to do His will and carry out His pleasure, and they are all at His command, and they delight to serve Him. Think, then, *what a magnificent escort for the Son of man!* For He will come accompanied by His mighty angels, whose power is far greater than that of men, and all ready to serve Him! We read of one angel slaying an army of one hundred and eighty-five thousand men! What resistance, then, could the world make against Christ establishing His kingdom and reigning over the whole world? He will carry all before Him, and men who do not want His kingdom will be cut off and perish. What an encouragement, then, to suffer with Him now, if we are to reign with Him then, and have some distinction. It may be, in a kingdom that will be so glorious that all other kingdoms in the past will be absolutely forgotten or sink into the shade. If through grace we are God's children, heirs too of God and joint-heirs with Christ, as we read in Romans viii., we must not forget what follows: "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together," and that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

A Foretaste.

But to further encourage His disciples, Jesus said that some of them should not taste of death till they saw the kingdom of God. And accordingly, eight days later, He took three of them up into a mountain. We read, He went up to pray—an expression of dependence on God, for there never was a man so dependent as Christ, and He it is who will bring in universal happiness for this world. It will not be brought in by the independence of the rulers of this

world, nor by the independence and will of the people, but by the praying and dependent Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was evidently night time, for the disciples were heavy with sleep, when suddenly the praying Man is shining like the sun (Matt. xvii. 2), and "his raiment was bright and glistering." There were also two men with Him and intimate with Him, "talking with him." They were Moses and Elias, and they appeared in glory and spake not of Christ's glorious kingdom, but "of *his decease*, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem," that is, of *His exit* or *exodus*, the glorious way He would leave this world by Calvary's cross. For what men look upon only as shame and weakness—the death of Christ—was really a moment of supreme moral glory. For He shone out in those closing moments more gloriously than ever before, in His grace and love to man, and in His devotedness to the will of God in giving Himself a sacrifice for sin, and in expressing fully the love of God to man. He won the battle of Calvary not at the cost of the blood of thousands, but only of One—of Himself, the Son of the living God, so that through the shedding of His precious blood we might be cleansed from all sin, and might never perish, but be eternally saved. Moses and Elijah also appearing in glory, expressed not only that the law and the prophets of the Old Testament were fulfilled and made good in Christ's glorious kingdom and on the ground of His death, but they are also figures of the saints who have died in faith and of the saints who are, as Elijah was, taken up without dying when Christ comes for His own. Then we shall be caught up to meet the Lord, together with all those who have fallen asleep through Him; in other words, with all those who have died in faith, and we shall all come with Him in glory. Thus Moses and Elijah are a picture of the heavenly company in glory with Christ, while the three disciples represent the earthly company who will enjoy the reign of Christ over the earth in the coming day. What a day will that be when the praying Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, comes in power and majesty and rules the earth for God, and when all the heavenly saints come in glory with Him!

But there is a still greater thing than the manifested glory of the kingdom. We read that as Moses and Elijah departed there came a cloud, a bright cloud (Matt. xvii. 5), and overshadowed them, and that the disciples were afraid as they entered into the cloud, and

"there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him." That cloud was the cloud of "the excellent glory," and was the Father's dwelling-place, the Father's house. It represents the brightest portion and privilege that we can have—namely, to be associated with God's own Son in the Father's presence, before His face, to know and enjoy His love as revealed to us by His Son. This is why the voice out of the cloud said: "This is my beloved Son: hear him." As we listen to Christ, and learn of Him, all fear goes, and He unfolds to us the place we have in the Father's bosom of love, and in the Father's house. Only the Son could reveal that love. How foolish then was Peter, or ignorant, to put, as it were, Christ on the same level with Moses and Elijah, and wish to make three tabernacles, &c. But he soon found his mistake when Moses and Elias disappear and they find themselves overshadowed by the cloud of glory, and hear the Father's voice calling attention to His Son. After that "they saw no man any more, save Jesus only."

#### Suffering Saints in all Ages.

Surely, beloved, it is worth while suffering for Christ here in view of such glorious privileges! And it is nothing new that saints have to suffer. They have always had to suffer from the very beginning of time. And they suffered for many and various reasons. The Old Testament scriptures reveal many kinds of suffering.

#### Abel

is the first case. *Abel suffered for righteousness* at the hands of Cain, who hated him and slew him. He slew him "because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." Abel owned by his sacrifice that death was on man, and therefore he slew a lamb and offered it to God, and was accepted. He was righteous and suffered from Cain whose works were evil.

Then we have

#### Enoch

who walked with God three hundred years, and who prophesied of the Lord coming "with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly . . . of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." It is evident that *Enoch suffered because of his godliness or piety*. Piety brings

God into everything in daily life, and Enoch lived godlily in the midst of an ungodly world, and God owned him by taking him away without his passing through death. "He was not; for God took him." Then we come to

#### Noah

—he built an ark to the saving of his house, believing that God would drown the world by a deluge. *Noah suffered because he acted under the influence of "things not seen as yet,"* for before the flood the earth was watered by a mist rising from the earth, and there had never been any rain. For one hundred and twenty years he testified that God would drown the world, and as Peter speaks of scoffers in the last days who say, "Where is the promise of his coming," so no doubt in those early days, before the flood came, *Noah had to suffer from scoffers* and bear any amount of ridicule. But the flood did come and "swept them all away." We too must expect suffering in this world, if we live and are moved by the light of the world to come and by the things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," but which God hath revealed to us by His Spirit. The world vainly hopes it will continue for ever, and we must expect their ridicule if we maintain that God is going to judge it and bring in a world of life and glory to take its place.

Then

#### Abraham

*had to suffer in leaving his country, kith and kin,* in obedience to the call of the God of glory who appeared to him. For one hundred years he was a pilgrim and a stranger in the land of Canaan, with no politics in this world—no patriotism—for he looked for a city which had foundations and for a country which was heavenly, and "rejoiced to see Christ's day." How often we allow natural relationships or false ideas of patriotism to prevent us following the Lord! But if we answer to the call and live as belonging to another country, we shall have to suffer here. What wonderful compensation, however, when we find ourselves part of the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from God for the blessing of all the nations!

Next,

#### Joseph

*suffered from his brethren.* He suffered for several reasons—because his father loved him, and because of his coat of many colours, and because of his visions and revelations, and also

because he exposed their evil ways. So the Christian who enters more than others into the Father's love, or who comes out distinctly in the beautiful moral clothing of Christ, with its many colours or varied graces, is often hated or disliked by his fellow Christian, who knows little of that love, and does not seek to know it, though the same love is for him too, and whose clothing is more that of the world than of the beauty of Christ. He is hated too by the world which has always shown great antipathy to the chosen objects of the Father's love and care, and who are morally altogether different from themselves. Then, too, Christians have to suffer because of the wonderful revelations of God's purposes of love which the Spirit reveals to those who love God, and again they often have to suffer, not only because by their walk they convict the world, but because their godliness is a rebuke to their brethren who walk carelessly, and hand and glove with the world. *Joseph also suffered under a false charge* when sold into Egypt, and he was imprisoned, though perfectly innocent, and was laid in irons until what God had said came to pass, and the king sent and let him go free and exalted him to be the chief ruler in the land. And perhaps to be falsely accused and misunderstood in this world is one of the hardest kinds of suffering; but let us remember the time is fast approaching when God will publicly justify His maligned people, and at the judgment seat of Christ every one will be manifested, and no false charges will stand then, and the approved will be publicly manifested.

Then again,

#### Moses

*suffered for identifying himself with the despised people of God, the children of Israel, when they were still in bondage under Pharaoh.* He might have remained great in Pharaoh's court and have been the *patron* of the Israelites, but he "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." It was the first time in scripture we have a people who were the people of God, and Moses had the courage to leave all and identify himself with them. Now this to-day means real suffering if we identify ourselves with the Lord's people, however much they are despised and however poor, or of what nation they may be. But they will not always be poor

and despised. Very soon now they will be seen in the glory of Christ and shining like the sun, and will be by far the most exalted people in the whole universe, and they will have the highest place in heaven of all God's creatures. Do not then let us now be ashamed to own and identify ourselves with those who love the Lord and who are bound together in true and holy fellowship, waiting for Christ.

Again, *Moses also suffered because he was the servant of the Lord.* He is the first one so called in scripture, and is a striking figure of Christ. He was a very remarkable servant. He brought Israel out of Egypt and served them forty years in the wilderness. His was a very difficult service and cost him much suffering. At one time, in his faithfulness, he had to stand alone for God against the whole vast congregation of Israel. But God sustained him till the end, and Luke ix. shows him in glory in the coming day. So, too, all who serve the Lord here must expect to suffer, and sometimes even to stand alone, but remember, "if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

Again,

#### Caleb and Joshua

*suffered because they brought a good report of the land, the whole congregation of Israel, six hundred thousand men, spoke of stoning them, when the glory of the Lord interfered, and the six hundred thousand had to perish in the wilderness, and the two faithful witnesses alone survived to go with the children of Israel into the land forty years later.* So, too, if we are faithful in our witness and testimony and encourage one another to take a present possession, in the power of the Spirit, of what God has purposed for us, as His own dear sons and as belonging to heaven, we shall have to suffer at the hands of those who, as it were, despise the pleasant land.

Again,

#### David

*suffered because he was the Lord's anointed.* Saul was the people's choice, but David was chosen of the Lord; he had, however, to suffer many a long day, and his people with him, before he eventually came to the throne. But they were happier in the cave than Saul and Jonathan were in the palace, for God was with them. So all who are anointed with the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, are sure to suffer in this world. The world does not like that Spirit. It is too blessed for them. "All that

will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," but relief will soon come, and if we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him.

Then, too,

the prophets

suffered for having the word of God. They had a word from God, and it reached the conscience and heart of man and exposed him. It also brought God to him, and called for repentance, and testified of Christ as the only hope for man. But they all had to suffer for their testimony. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering and affliction and of patience." So to-day, if any one now has anything at all of a prophetic gift, in the way of bringing God to people, and thus causing the secrets of the heart to be made manifest, however small his service in this way, whether it were a brother or a sister, he would have to suffer. Sisters may have some prophetic gift, but if so, they have to exercise it in a way suitable to a woman. Many a mother has in this way brought up her family for the testimony. But whoever at any time has a word from the Lord, even in a little way, he must expect to suffer if he is faithful to what the Lord gives. The prophets took the side of God in a day when God was dishonoured and forgotten, and this meant suffering.

The last character of suffering that I have to mention from the Old Testament is found in the Book of Daniel.

Daniel

and his three friends suffered from Babylon. They refused the defiling food of Babylon. Also Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down to the golden image and join in the world's united religion. They were thrown into the fiery furnace for it, but God delivered them and publicly honoured them. Daniel, too, refused to pray to man instead of God, when all agreed to displace God and set up the King in his stead. It cost Daniel the den of lions. But the living God closed their mouths and vindicated His servant before the world. What an encouragement all this is for us, to refuse the

modern Babylon, the proud system of this world's glory, which is quickly approaching its end!

Then in the New Testament the leading sufferer is

Christ.

He suffered beyond all men. He suffered because of what He was—absolute blessedness embodied in a Man, the full expression of God. Also He suffered in making atonement and in bearing the wrath of God for us as the sin-offering. He, of course, was quite alone in this.

Then, too, He suffered for all the reasons I have mentioned above. He is the expression of all the varied sufferings the saints have been called upon to endure, for He is the leader. He was the greatest of all sufferers, and consequently He leads the way in glory, as far beyond all. The prophets all united in testifying to the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

But in a similar way we are called to suffer too. All who have Christ's Spirit are called to suffer for Christ's sake. Christian suffering is more intense than anything known in the Old Testament. It is more inward than outward, more in spirit than in flesh, though there is also often the outward as well. But, "if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you," and "the God of all grace hath called us into his eternal glory," and will not fail to bring us into it after we "have suffered awhile." Let us take care we have nothing to do with suffering as an evildoer, &c., but only as a Christian, and when the crowning day shall come how great will be our joy and our reward.

For how will recompense His smile  
The sufferings of this "little while"!

May the Lord keep us faithful till then, so that we may receive the "crown of righteousness" which the Lord will give at that day not only to Paul, but "to all those also who love his appearing," for His name's sake!

H. D'A. C.

(Continued from page 32.)

"proving all things"; refusing the opinions and judgments of others—even the most spiritual—not listening to gossip or criticism; not going by appearances; and always keeping a very close walk with the Spirit and listening to Him on all matters. More later. T. A.-S.

Lord, lay some soul upon my  
heart

And love that soul through me,  
And may I nobly do my part  
To win that soul for Thee.



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MONDAYS at 7.30 P.M. TUESDAYS at 8 P.M. (Young People).

WEDNESDAYS at 8 P.M. SATURDAYS at 7.30 P.M.

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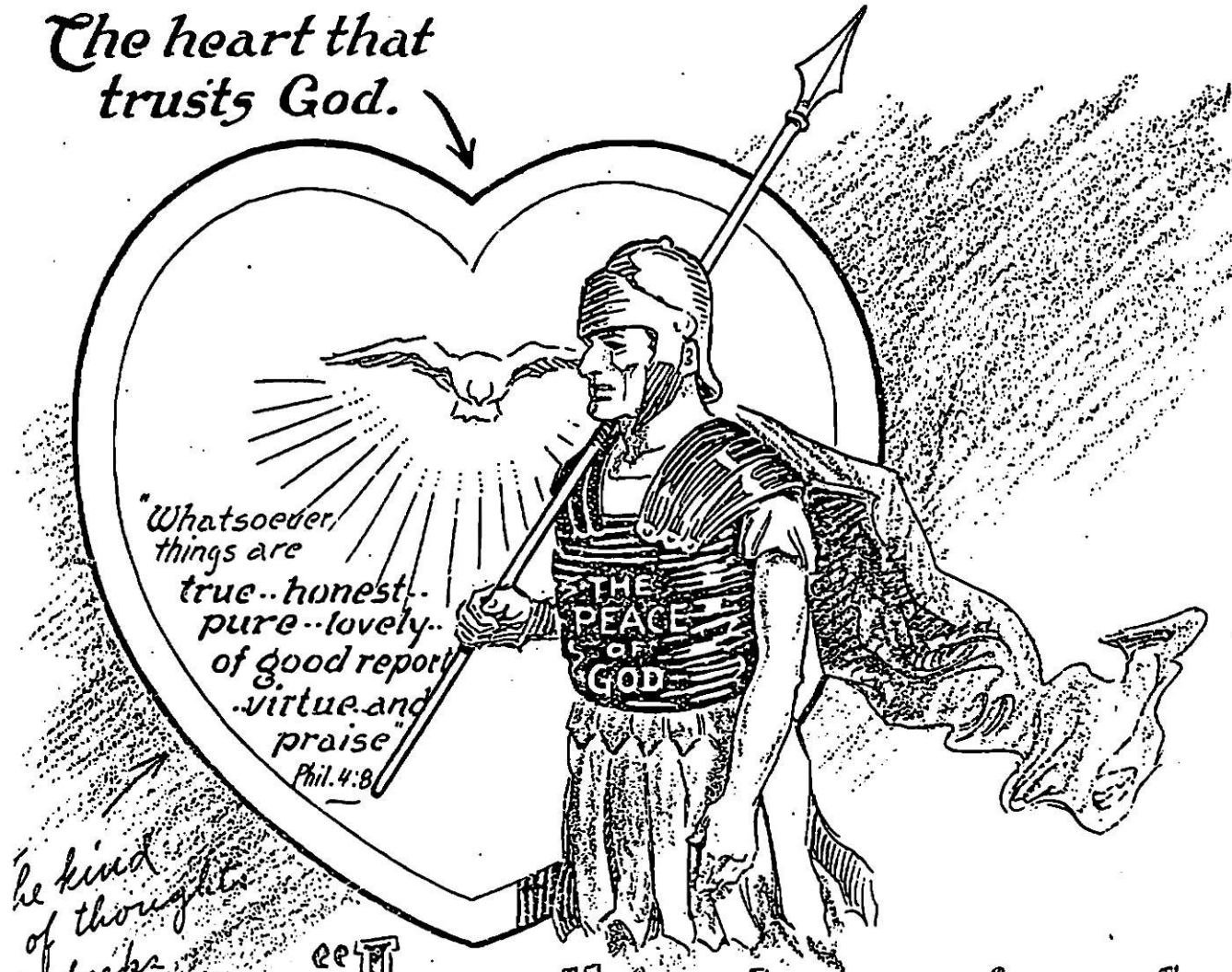
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## FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

" I have mentioned a story, a book and a psalm. Can you find them in the Bible?" See page 33.

# A WARRIOR AND A TESTIMONY

The heart that trusts God.



the kind of thoughts he keeps

“In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the **Peace of God** -- shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.”

# WOMEN



The following is a list of the names of the women who were members of the  
 Association of Women of the State of Texas, at its annual meeting held at  
 the Hotel Sherman, Dallas, Texas, on the 15th day of October, 1908.  
 The names are given in alphabetical order, and are those of the members  
 who were present at the meeting.

## Retrospect and Prospect

### Wycombe Marsh.

IN our last issue we just intimated that our brothers, Speedy and Justin, were engaged in a mission at Wycombe Marsh. Since then we have been able to get some idea of the Lord's goings there, and we have a very great cause for praise. Purely for the encouragement and praise of God's people we make these reports, and in this case we think that extracts from a letter of the secretary there will best set forth the Lord's praises. He writes:—

"....We should like to express our heartfelt thanks to Almighty God for the mighty word which has come through the ministry. We have prayed for a long time past for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the work in this neighbourhood, but the outpouring has surpassed all our hopes, indeed we are staggered by it, and overwhelmed with what is involved in the immediate future. Many hearts have been won for Christ."

Some of these dear folk who met the Lord in a new way have been up to see us, and indeed they do bear witness to a wonderful new fulness.

To God be the glory.

### Easter at Honor Oak.

For long before the Easter Conference there had been deep and solemn exercise to and in prayer, with a real sense of big things pending. And this exercise was well explained as we went from day to day in that season. Truly our theme bore out its importance, and we realised that we were truly being brought to face the "ultimate things." It is a wonderful thing to be for days in an atmosphere of things being fought out in the heavenlies; mighty business being transacted in the realm of the spirit. It was thus at this time. So different from just a series of meetings with a course of interesting or informing addresses. The Lord was there in those energies by which He is "working all things after the counsel of His own will." In some respects we were led on beyond all the past in the vision of "the Lamb in the midst of the Throne" as central to that concrete expression of the results of His slaying—the City of God.

The weather did not permit of our using the tent, so that at times we were hardly pressed for room in the hall. Many distant parts were again represented. We have gone on in the continuity of that time, and with the house almost full ever since we entered upon the May Conference, on which we shall report later.

### The May Conference.

Since writing the foregoing we have had a very blessed season at the May Conference. For an ordinary monthly conference out of holiday time this has been an exceptional occasion from every standpoint. Larger gatherings than usual, specially significant events, and strength of purpose were some of the features.

The theme with which we were engaged was 'The Divine Energies,' which was unfolded from hour to hour in its various directions as seen in the Word.

We have very good reason to believe that the Lord had some unusually valuable interests bound up with this Conference, and the whole Body of Christ stands to be enriched thereby. This will be manifest in due course.

### Brother Gordon Holloway.

There is no doubt a Divine standpoint from which—if we were in it—we should have no regrets or sorrow when a loved one is taken from us, and especially one so young and from whom we were expecting so much for the Lord as our brother Gordon. But we only now see through a glass darkly, and we still feel these things very deeply. Truly "His ways are passed finding out." This is the path of the infinite wisdom which "the eye of the eagle hath not seen." Gordon and his dear wife, full of zeal, and so glad, after the delaying hand of the Lord seemed to be lifted, to set forth to the land of their vision, left us for Nigeria only a few months ago. And now he is no more, for God took him. Our hearts have gone out to the Lord for his dear wife and related ones. May the God of all comfort be their portion in a rich way, and may we keep steadfast in the work until the time when we see the complete justification of His ways and vindication of His wisdom; for we SHALL see "when the mists have rolled away."

**An Event.**

Before this issue of the paper is through the press a goodly number of friends will have met in the "Centre" to express their good wishes and Christian love to our brother and sister, Mr. Oliphant and Miss Rogers, on the occasion of their marriage on Thursday, May 15th.

Our sister, as many will know, has been working with Miss Tre Carson in the Shemlan Orphanage, Syria, for some time, and our brother was out there last year to minister to the Lord's servants who go up there from many parts during the hot season.

May this union mean an instrument of double usefulness to the Lord and great serviceableness to His glory.

**United States of America.**

Two days after the above event Mr. and Mrs. Sparks are due to sail for America. The first week there will be spent in gatherings in New York, after which ministries are probable in Chicago, Boston, Michigan, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, concluding with a conference at Hephzibah Heights, Monterey, and several days at the Canadian Keswick.

We earnestly solicit the prayers of the Lord's people for all this ministry and what is related to it.

**The Whitsun Conference.**

This will be held from the Saturday afternoon to the Monday night, June 7th to 9th (D.V.). Already friends are booking accommodation. We advise others who are being led to be present to notify of their intention as soon as possible.

**Bognor Holiday Conferences.**

July 5th to 12th, 12th to 19th.

A goodly company have already booked for this time with the Lord by the sea. There are still some vacancies. Early application should be made.

**Blackpool.**

The friends at Blackpool have asked us if we will arrange to supply ministry for monthly conferences there during the summer, and in the will of God we will do so. The dates in view are: July 19th and 20th; August 16th, 17th; September 20th, 21st.

Particulars can be had from Honor Oak, or from Miss Moore, 130 Reals Avenue, Blackpool.

**North Berwick.**

There are a number of friends in the north who might like to know that the ministry of the Word at the Regions Beyond Missionary Union Conference, North Berwick, will (D.V.) be through Mr. Sparks, and the R.B.M.U. friends will be glad to welcome such to the Conference. The dates are September 13th, 14th, 15th.

All particulars from Miss Murray, R.B.M.U., 5 St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh.

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## HOLIDAY CONFERENCES AT BOGNOR

July 5th—12th.

Especially for Young People.

July 12th—19th.

Open to all.

We have reserved the whole of the accommodation at "Hurlingham," Park Drive, Bognor, for our use during these two weeks.

Friends desirous of using this accommodation are asked to notify us as early as possible.

The terms are:

July 5th—12th. £1-15-0 per guest.

July 12th—19th. £2 per guest, where 3 or 4 share a room. £2-10 per guest, where only 2 share a room.

No single rooms are available.

Where circumstances warrant, special consideration will be given in the matter of terms if friends will write to us explaining their position.

We hope to have with us for the ministry of the Word, our brethren K. P. OLIPHANT and P. W. FAUNCH, with others.

# The Reactions of the Lord

No. IV.

(Continued.)

## The Overcomer.

BEFORE we proceed to consider more definitely the nature of that "New Cruse" of which we have been speaking, a few further words on the relative aspect of such are needed. We have said that in the Scriptures it is clearly seen that all the reactionary instruments of God are of a relative character; that is, that they are related to and in behalf of a body larger than themselves. This is an underlying principle in the progressive activities of God. The point which we feel needs to have this extra emphasis is that in *securing* all the elect territory, habitation and inheritance, whether as His first choice or as of necessity by reason of so general an apathy and worldliness on the part of His people, the Lord uses what might be termed advance parties. It is not necessary in this connection to present or argue for any theory or "teaching" concerning "selectiveness," or "partial" or "first fruits" in the matter of "Rapture." The historical, literal and time aspect is of secondary importance. What is of primary account is the spiritual fact, and this, we believe, is incontrovertible. It is a principle in every realm of creation and Divine method. There are

## Harbingers in Every Sphere.

Originally an harbinger was one who went before to provide lodgings, but the term has now come to be applied to any forerunner. An adequate recognition of the *spiritual* element in this universal fact, and especially in relation to "the Eternal purpose," would correct and adjust much on both sides of a set teaching—acceptance and rejection—of "Partial Rapture." That is, if the vocational factor were kept mainly in view it would supply the lack of motive and stimulus so common amongst many who reject that teaching; which lack has very largely become the strength of the teaching and its propagation. And on the other hand it would both obviate the difficulty concerning "all being of Grace" and not of works, and remove any "selectiveness" of spirit and temper

as—"the elect of the elect." Let us repeat with strength, there is undoubtedly an advance party in every movement of God. This is spiritual before anything else, and it is vocational rather than meritorious. That there will be special rewards for such seems quite clear and without doubt.

When we contemplate the churches in Asia as presented in the "Revelation," and admit the respective age application, it is difficult if not impossible to conclude that in respect of at least five we are dealing with the unsaved and ungodly: assemblies of religious people without any true spiritual history. It is undoubtedly a case of declension, and failure to go on with the Lord. Are all these to be eternally lost? And yet they represent the majority in every age..

We know that one answer to this is that all will be adjusted at the Judgment Seat of Christ; but what concerns us is what about the others, the Overcomers, the Remnant? Surely it is more than being different from the rest and getting a better reward. Yes, the point is that the Lord must and will have His testimony according to His own mind in the earth, and such as provide Him with the instrument for this fulfil a special mission not only in the earth but in the heavenlies now.

We should like to dwell at greater length upon this aspect, but few there are who can go further, and we have to speak to a larger company. We are now able to come to the consideration of more definite nature and function of this peculiar vessel for God.

There is a great difference between a people moved by mere disaffection, disgruntledness, discontent, difference of opinion, personal dislike or preference, and the constraint of a great Divine vision; the inwrought reaction of God, registered with pain in the heart.

This latter—a heart-longing—found expression long ago in classic words:—

"By the rivers of Babylon,  
There we sat down, yea, we wept,  
When we remembered Zion.  
Upon the willows in the midst thereof

We hanged up our harps.  
 How can we sing Jehovah's song  
 In a strange land ?  
 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,  
 Let my right hand forget her skill,  
 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,  
 If I remember not thee ;  
 If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chiefest  
 joy."

Psalm 135, 5-7.

The implicates of these great heart-yearnings represent the crystallising of the Divine purpose from before times eternal. The ultimate thing in the heart of God and that into which all the interests of those in real oneness of spirit with Him will be gathered is presented in, what is known as

#### The House of God and the City of God.

When we speak of the "*ultimate*" thing, we mean as to the Divine method and means. The thing which is primary and final is the place, worship and glory of God in the universe. This factor will be implicit in all that we have to say. Were we asked what are the major lines and subjects of Divine revelation throughout the whole Scriptures we should say with considerable conviction that they are :—

1. The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. His Cross—death, burial and resurrection.
3. The Church or House of God.
4. The Coming again of Christ.
5. The City of God.

There are other phases, but these *taken relatively* are the primary themes, or aspects of one theme.

While the Person of the Lord Jesus as God manifest in the flesh is the sum of all revelations, it requires the Cross to give the full *meaning* and reveal the full *value* of that manifestation, and it demands the Church to display the full *content* of that manifestation ultimately ; and it calls for the City to define the *nature* of that manifestation. In leading men on to the appreciation of the Person God begins with the Cross. If the House is the House of the Divine Son, and if the City is the City of the great King, then the House and the City are based upon the Cross. Moreover, if the House and the City are for the glory of God in Christ and His universal worship, then the Cross represents the nature of worship and the way of glory. To put this more precisely ; if the Lord has in view a people for His Glory, by whom the content of The Son of Man is

ultimately displayed to the universe, then this people will be fundamentally

#### A People of the Altar.

This we believe to be the all-inclusive theme of Scripture.

The Cross is the central recognition of the eternal rights of God.

At the Cross and in the Cross all the rights of God from eternity to eternity are recognised and acknowledged ; that is central to Calvary. God has rights. God's rights are that the whole universe should render Him undivided, unrivalled, unreserved worship, acknowledging that all things are His by right, and that no one else in the universe has a right before God. That great fact is here gathered up in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He brings to God in His Own Person His rights, offering Himself in the greatness of Who He is and What He is—the rights of God.

God, by His Son, created the worlds for His Glory. The Holy Spirit was agent in the creation of the world for the Glory of God, in order that the whole earth should be full of His Glory. The Holy Spirit is likewise agent in the redemption of the world for the Glory of God and it is of perhaps deeper significance than we have recognised that the great song of the redeemed at the end when the work of Calvary is consummated is gathered up into one sentence,

"Hath redeemed unto God,"

and redemption is unto God, it is bringing back to God His rights, and the Holy Spirit is the agent in this redemptive work which has the Glory of God as its objective, just as the Holy Spirit was the agent in creation for the same end.

Worship, then, with all its depth and fulness, is the key word. In the great consummation when God is to be worshipped in the whole of the universe, and the different songs of worship break forth—the song of one company, an hundred and forty and four thousand, worshipping God and the Lamb, and then the song of the great multitude which no man can number worshipping God and the Lamb, there is the unveiling of the worship of the beast, and that is another consummation. The two consummations of worship are there unveiled ; the worship of the beast is one, a worship which has been going on ever since Lucifer secured a following, a reverence from angels in his high estate in heaven. He managed to

gather and draw to himself a company when he found it in his own heart to make a bid for the place of the Almighty, to exalt his throne above the clouds, to ascend into the heavens, to be equal with the Most High; all with the intent of drawing heaven's worship away from God to himself, and ever since that lifting up of his heart in that infamous ambition another worship has been going on. He drew that company with him, the company of angels, "who kept not their first estate, and are reserved in chains unto everlasting darkness." Then he appeared on the earth and sought again to usurp the place of God in the worship of His creation here, and obtained that place and became, by reason of a conquest and the assent of man, "the god of this age," "the prince of this world." And he set up from that moment a spiritual system of worship which is perceivable back of the whole record of history and we have the breaking in of this evil element all along the line of worship, wherever and whenever the rights of God are recognised by sacrifice.

#### The Two Worships.

Immediately Abel recognised the rights of God and erected his altar and slew his sacrifice and shed sacrificial blood in the simplicity of the testimony of faith, that here on the earth God has sole rights, there broke in the very thing against that testimony and the murderer came in to withstand and destroy that testimony, and Cain as his instrument who also set up an altar and made a pretence in his darkened understanding to worship God—but that never got through to God—and it is the very ground upon which that Satanic element of jealousy and pride is churned up within him, and he became, because the Devil had got a purchase upon him, the instrument against the worship of God. The enemy's scheme is deep laid, and he knows what he is doing, and through the other worship he breaks in against the recognition of the Divine Rights, the worship of God; and from Abel onward it is always so.

Noah set up his altar upon the renewed earth, and in so doing declared that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," but very quickly there broke in the other thing again and you find that even in that representative one the element of evil rises up to contradict the testimony and before long the worship of God becomes associated with shame, and the glory is hidden again; the testimony on the one

hand and the breaking in to contradict on the other.

In Abram's whole life is this story that heads right up to the 15th of Genesis where that altar is finally set and the sacrifice is offered and then the battle begins, and while Abram holds on to God and waits and stands, the vultures descend and a mighty conflict ensues for the preservation of that testimony to the rights of God, the worship of God; and then the horror of great darkness. When Israel in the fulfilment of the vision which was then given to Abram in that very hour of conflict came out into the wilderness and the worship of God was set up, there broke in this very element and you find the golden calf.

And so the story goes on, and you come to Balaam seeking to curse Israel but not permitted, and then setting up by insinuation the evil thing, fornication, a form of idolatry, and the Lord's glory obscured once more. It was a beautiful picture that Balaam gave in his prophecy, perhaps one of the most beautiful things in the Old Testament. As Balaam stands wanting for gain to curse but constrained by the Spirit of God to bless, and as he speaks concerning this people dwelling alone, wonderful things are said and the glory of the Lord is presented concerning Israel; and then, as round by a back door for that gain, he teaches Israel to commit fornication, and that glorious picture fades and the glory of God is again obscured in Israel because of this other worship, the rights of God all the time being disputed.

Solomon: the wonderful story of Solomon on the one hand, and his building of the House, and his setting up of the altar and then the fire of God descending. Here you have the Cross and the Church and the Spirit. And then the after story of Solomon. What a tragedy! What a ghastly tragedy! The latter story of Solomon—the glory of God contradicted again by the very man who had set up the testimony in Israel so beautifully. And so the devil is breaking in all the time to rob God of His glory, to take God's rights from Him.

It is the story of ELIJAH, fighting for the testimony in Israel in a day when the glory of God was hidden; and on Carmel the great issue is the altar, the Cross and the fire—the Spirit, and the testimony is once more established in Israel; but then the reaction of the powers of darkness through Jezebel to destroy the man who has restored the testimony. It



is a dark story of how Satan is all the time against this worship of God, this bringing to God of His own Divine Rights. The issue in the word of Elijah is "How long halt ye between two opinions, if God be God worship Him, if Baal, then worship him," but you cannot divide the issue, it is one thing or the other. That is the testimony of God having His Rights utterly and no one else getting a look in. And oh, let the critics say what they like about Elijah destroying the prophets of Baal, four hundred on the spot, there is a very deep principle involved, beloved, a deep principle, and this hewing of Agag in pieces before the Lord is the outward demonstration of a deep spiritual principle that here is that which is set against the Throne of God. And whether it be Agag or the prophets of Baal the thing is God's rights. Is He having the worship and the honour and the glory in this universe?

That is a very broad and general survey of things through the Old Testament, this breaking in of this evil element along the line of worship always.

#### The Depth of Calvary.

Now, beloved, the Cross of the Lord Jesus gathered all this up, and through the eternal Spirit Christ secured the rights of God in His Own Risen Person, so that through the eternal Spirit Christ met the whole of this thing in the universe at Calvary: He met it all. Let us get behind Calvary, ever more and more behind, until we get to the ultimate. The Lord has led us by degrees deeper and deeper into the meaning of the Cross. There was a time when we thought that we had fathomed the Cross, when we saw the "old man" being dealt with, but we see that there are still ranges that we have not before seen. It was the Throne of God that Christ was standing for at Calvary, it was the ultimate and universal glory of God that He was fighting for in Calvary, and He met all this that was set against the Throne, and He met it victoriously and secured those eternal universal rights of God in His Own Risen Person; which means that Christ risen and ascended has secured in His Own Person all the rights of God for the glory of God for evermore. God has His rights in the Lord Jesus secured. I hope the Lord enables you to enter into that. Jesus Christ, "Who by the eternal Spirit offered Himself" now standing in the Presence of God has secured in His Own Person all God's rights for ever,

and the ultimate filling of the universe with the glory of God is secured in the Risen Person of Christ, that there is no longer any doubt about the issue. God is going, without any question, to be universally worshipped, and the glory of God is going to fill the whole universe without any rival, because THE LORD JESUS is in the presence of God victorious over every other thing which was against the Throne of God. It is an immense thing that, and so He said "Lo I come to do Thy Will," and the will of God done utterly is the recognition of the utter rights of God and God becoming possessed of them. When we talk about doing the will of God and wanting to know the will of God, oh! let us get the immense range of such words. The will of God means nothing else than that God shall be universally glorified and that He shall be the central object of worship in the universe. Read the Book of Revelation with that thought again and the Book will become new. You find then that the Book of Revelation is the Book of worship, and you see that that worship which is there by ever increasing widening circles to the ultimate bounds of the universe: that worship is brought about by the Lamb through the eternal Spirit; the Lamb in the midst of the Throne.

Now the Holy Spirit is thus the minister of the glorified Christ as He was the agent and the dynamic for the accomplishment of this great thing in the Cross and the securing of this thing in the person of Christ in the glory. He is now the minister of the glorified Christ to work this thing out in the earth, and will bring us to one or two very big and important issues. It will bring us first of all to this;

those that enter most fully into the meaning of the Cross, which is the will of God wholly done, will run counter to the supreme assault of Satan.

Do you wonder that Satan hates the Cross? Do you wonder that He by any means will get the Cross set on one side? Do you wonder that those who go into the meaning of the Cross spiritually, find that they have come immediately up against the whole system of antagonism from the Devil? It is so inevitable. We have seen Abel in the very earliest and simplest form of the presentation of the meaning of the Cross. Immediately he enters into relationship with that blood, that sacrifice, that altar, he comes spontaneously—one was going to say mechanically—up against

the adversary. The Holy Spirit through John says of Cain that "he was of the evil one."

So with Abraham, so with Moses, so with Joseph, so even in what might be thought to be the simple case of Esther. Might we pause with Esther for a moment? The Book of Esther has been thought to be a commentary, an exposition upon the providence and sovereignty of God. Well! it is that, but there is a bigger background to that book. Here is one who is "brought to the kingdom for such a time." What time? When the testimony of God in His people was so set against by the enemy that he wanted the last Jew exterminated. You know the story of Haman, Haman the Agagite. A remnant of that seed which had always been against God. Haman the Agagite had become inspired with this further purpose, to utterly and finally exterminate the Jew; and Esther came to the kingdom for such a time as that, and put her life in the balances. "if I perish, I perish," and met that, that awful deep thing of Satan, that scheme, that device. It is ever an illustration of the ultimate thing of the Cross. We will come back to Esther at some other time, but here it is, you meet with that thing behind when you stand for the testimony of God in the earth.

Daniel! The story of Daniel is the same thing. Two gods. The god set up by Nebuchadnezzar, and THE God. Who is going to be worshipped? Daniel is not long in coming to his decision that Jehovah alone is to be worshipped in this universe, His rights alone are to be recognised, and no other god. Well, he meets the thing back of that system and is called upon to pay the price. It is the same issue with Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

And so it leads right up and heads into the Lord Jesus. From the very birth of the Lord Jesus in some subtle deep mysterious discerning or perception of Satan it is known, who He is: and the scheme is put into operation to engulf Him in the massacre of a whole multitude of infants. The cruelty of the evil one to murder a mass to get *one*! He is after One, he is not after the crowd.

### The Supreme Effort of Satan.

We have no record of any efforts of the enemy from that time until the Lord steps across the line which runs between His private life and His public life and then He meets the enemy

immediately. And what is the question? "If Thou wilt worship me." That is what he is after. It is right out, he is betrayed again, and it is that issue right up to the Cross. "If Thou wilt worship me." It comes in a multitude of different ways. It is only an acknowledgment of Satan, and the ascribing to him of some rights in the universe, but oh! the Lord never recognised those rights; just as Mordecai refused to recognise the right of Haman. It is one of the most beautiful things in the Book of Esther. Here is Haman claiming to be somebody. Yes, he has gained eminence and everybody is bowing to him, but Mordecai refuses to recognise any of his glory, and ignores it all. And you remember Haman's story to his family. "I am a great man, I have much goods, many children, but what is the good of it all if this one man will not recognise me?" It is a foreshadowing. There is One Who counts more than all the rest and until He can be captured or got out of the way the enemy's fulness is divided. That One will not recognise his rights and that One is destined to bring about his doom.

The Lord Jesus met that all the way through, refusing to attribute to Satan one atom of right in this universe—out to challenge that and secure all the rights for God in His Own Person, and come to the Throne Himself with those rights, and when He has done it we still see the thing going on with the Church, and it is the Church's great issue. We have got to deal with that when we deal with the Church, but it is still the issue, the worshippers and the worshipped and the place or the no-place of the enemy.

Now, beloved, only the Holy Spirit in the power of the victorious Christ and by virtue of His shed Blood can meet that challenge. We do not talk glibly, lightly, frivolously about this thing. We view the ultimate issue with joy and exultance, but we recognise that this thing is "not by might nor by power but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." And if the Lord Jesus Himself needed that it should be through the Eternal Spirit that this thing was wrought out, oh, how much more we! How much more we to-day! We should not rush into this battle; we recognise that nothing but this mighty energising of the Holy Spirit could meet this great issue and challenge, but we recognise also with confidence that the Holy Spirit is the minister of the Victorious Christ and that His very advent is on the ground of

that Victory, to work that Victory out in the universe, and we thank God for it. Why has the Holy Spirit come? Oh! not that we might have blessings and what we call power and influence and opportunity and service. No, He has come as Representative and Agent of the Christ, Who has secured the rights of God in His Own Person to bring about the recognition and realisation of those rights in this earth; that is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The second thing that comes out of this is that **THE HOLY SPIRIT DEMANDS THE GROUND OF THE CROSS** for His activity, always, always if the glory of God is in view. Then, the Cross registers the removal of all that serves Satan. Now it would be a long business to cover that ground again to see the things that served Satan. What was it that served Satan in Cain? Covetousness, personal ambition, jealousy, pride. Well! that worked itself out in the murder of Abel, but the murder of Abel as an expression of hatred for God. (Although Cain may have been blind to the deeper nature of the thing.) What was it that served Satan in Balaam? Greed, covetousness, world-gain. The Cross registers the removal by the destruction of all that served Satan, and for us it is gathered up in one word—**SELF**. But, oh! what a wide word that is; what a comprehensive word! "Self," the stronger word is "the flesh." Some people do not know what you mean when you are talking about the "flesh." They begin to think of positive vices and iniquities of deep dye. Beloved, the "flesh" is only another term for "self" and self is a very subtle thing, a many-sided thing; self-interest, self-glory, self-preservation, self-realisation, self-advancement, all those considerations of influence and good standing and prestige and following and being understood and spoken well of. Oh! the phases of "self" are legion, they, every one of them, serve Satan and they serve him in this other sense, and they divide the rights of God and usurp the place of

God, and therefore the Glory of God is obscured wherever there is the slightest suggestion or insinuation of self, and the Cross has got to be applied there. The Cross is not applied in the Word of God just because God wants us out of it for the sake of having us out of it, to humble us, to crush, to break us; no, it has this great end in view—**HIS GLORY**, and our glory depends upon His glory. We cannot come to glory until He receives His rights in the universe; the Cross is the way there. The Holy Spirit demands the ground of the Cross in us, because the glory of God is in view. The Cross, beloved, means utter devotion to God's glory, that is what it means. The Holy Spirit only works on that ground, He has only worked ever on that ground. A pure work of the Holy Spirit completely immune from Satan's touch is by the Cross, which means complete separation from all of the old ground. A pure work of the Holy Spirit, completely immune from Satan's touch requires the Cross, which is separateness in everything.

I have been reading that wonderful record of a work of God in China through His servant, Dr. Johnathan Goforth, a work of the Spirit in mighty revival. I don't think I have read many things which are more literal fulfillments of words which are often mentioned amongst us, "Call upon Me and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." This true man of God went to some place and he was told immediately he got there not to expect anything there like he had had elsewhere, for there were difficulties. The Holy Spirit came in and brought different people there confessing such things as were never suspected, confessing them in public—a mighty movement of God, but oh! I did see how the Spirit of the Lord kept very short accounts with His servant, and every suggestion and insinuation of the devil through his flesh had to be met. T. A. S.

*(To be continued.)*

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## For Girls and Boys

### The Gospel in the Farmyard (No. 6)

#### How to take the NOT out of CANNOT

ON a recent visit to our farmyard I noticed a lamb, grown to quite a good size, and looking as healthy as could be ; but it was always lying down, for it had no strength in its legs. It never had been able to walk. Sometimes it tried hard to rise, but its best efforts to stand always resulted in failure. It certainly did its best, making a great show of activity, and sometimes managed to wriggle its way along the ground for a short distance, but it could never raise itself from the ground—it truly was a creature that belonged to the earth. The farmer wished he had killed the lamb at its birth, but he had allowed it to live and had fed it, hoping that its legs would grow strong in course of time ; but it gave no indication at all of improvement, and the farmer had to come to the conclusion that it was only fit to die. And I am afraid he was right : fair and gentle as the little lamb was, it could never be of any real value to the farmer. Its weak and faulty nature ruled it out of all usefulness, and the word "CANNOT" might well be written over it.

As I looked at the lamb I thought what a happy thing it would be if the life of another lamb, strong and able, could be put into it, so that in the power of a new life the little legs could be made to do their work and the "cannot" could be turned into "can." But there was no other life that could be given to the lamb, and it could only go on in its own weakness until death came.

If you look in your New Testament you will find again and again the word "cannot," or other words which amount to the same thing. Particularly in the first three chapters of I. Corinthians you will find that such words are used concerning the "natural man" in regard to the things of God. The "natural man" is man just as he is apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. As you look at people you may think how good they are, how fair their lives appear, how clever are their works, and that surely all their kind and busy labours must be very acceptable to God. But the Word of God

makes it quite clear that even the very best that *we* are, or do, does not satisfy God and is of no service or glory to Him, and over it all He has written the word "CANNOT." Be careful, therefore, not to conclude that kindness, cleverness, hard work and such things *by themselves* are all that we need for God's service. Those who have no more than these things are those who are of the earth, like the lamb possessing no power to rise to any higher level ; and the cause of all the weakness is the sin which is in their very nature, however good they may be thought by men to be. *God* sees what we do not, and He sees sin in every man's natural self, and because of it He has to say—You cannot serve Me, for I am Holy.

What, then, are we to do ? Can we never be otherwise ? Yes, thank God ; He has made a way of escape. The Lord Jesus Christ took that old nature, with all its sin and weakness, upon Himself at Calvary and took it out of the way in His death ; and then He arose from the dead in the power of a new life—sinless, strong, victorious, and wholly acceptable to God. That new life He offers to us, and we receive it when we receive *Him*. How much better off we are than the poor paralysed lamb—there was no chance of a new life for it, but we have a Saviour—*such* a Saviour !—who longs to come into our hearts and live His own life through us, changing us from weakness to strength, from sin to holiness, from "I cannot" to "I can"—provided always that we let Him have His own way in us. This means, of course, perfect obedience on our part to all His will, and the crowning of Him as King of our whole life. Have you received Him, and crowned Him King of *all* ? If so, then by the power of His Holy Spirit within and through you, you will become of service and glory to Him, and though you know yourself to be weak and perhaps not very gifted, and one who would be inclined, like Moses and Jeremiah and many others of God's servants, to say "I cannot," you may become great in Him and do those things in His service which you never imagined

you would be able to do. The great secret is "Not I, but Christ liveth in me."

A little lame chick on the farm reminded me further of this. It had always been lame, one leg being so twisted that the foot could not be put to the ground. The chick was, of course, greatly hampered in its movements, and could not get along as fast as its companions for it had to hop on one leg only. However, it made very brave efforts to keep up with the rest, and I noticed that whenever feeding time came round the lame chick was always on the spot and captured its full share of the food! A brave little fellow, with a stout heart, even if it had only one leg. The point to note is that every bit of what it did possess was brought fully into service.

There are many people in the world like the chick—they are without something that they think they badly need. It may even be a leg, like the chick, or an arm; but perhaps it is courage, skill, education or something else that

they see in other people. Are you one who is conscious of not being very clever and do you feel therefore that you cannot do much for God? Then remember first of all the paralysed lamb. Though you were the cleverest person living you could not by yourself serve God at all; but if you will let the Holy Spirit come in to take full possession of what little you have, how greatly He will use it! Give to Him, therefore, your little—your "one leg." Give Him your whole self, weakness and all, and determine that for you to live henceforth shall be Christ only. He can do wonders through you if He has you *all*, even if that all is very little. It is when He has only a part, even if that part itself seems large, that He is hindered in His work. Far better to be like a chick with only one leg, if the Holy Spirit can use that one to the full, than to be like a healthy chick with two good legs only one of which is given to God to use. G. P.

(See page 64.)

## Proximity to Christ

Opening Message at the Easter Conference.

*Readings* : Genesis xliii. 1-34 ; Genesis xliv. 1-12.

In connection with the above chapters will you turn to the Letter to the Ephesians ii. 11-13, and 17-18 ; Matthew xxvi. 39a.

There is a word on one's heart in connection with proximity to Christ. It is very clear in the Lord's Word that there are differences in the matter of proximity to Christ; that distances from Christ are very different, are greater and lesser. You have but just to take that thought and carry it for a moment into the New Testament on the literal side to see the bearing upon the spiritual side. There is this passage here in Matthew xxvi. 39, and you begin at the most advanced point where the Lord is alone "and He went a little farther." His "little farther," of course, was going all the way with the will of God. That bit just spoke of the utterness, the completeness of His separation unto His Father's will. He went the bit farther than any one else, He is seen there alone. From that point you get differences of distance from Him. If you go back (reading backward) you find in the previous verse He has taken Peter and James and John, a little farther than the others. They have gone a little farther than the others,

they are nearer to Him than the rest of the company which came into the garden with Him, but they are not immediately with Him. You would have thought, perhaps, and I suppose if it had been us it would have been like this, "Now let us get down and have some prayer together. There's a great battle on, there's some great thing to be met, we cannot meet it alone, let us pray together." But there was something which made it necessary for Him to forego that fellowship, and so instead of doing the thing which doubtless His own heart was craving for, that is, entering into this thing in fellowship with His brethren, or bringing them into fellowship with it, He went a little farther, and they could not just go that extra bit, but He left them there. And then, reading back one verse further, you find the eight are left at a greater distance, a distance between the eight and the three and a distance between the three and the One: and then if you go over into the Book of the Acts and read in chapter one, you find one hundred and twenty. These surely were all followers before the Cross, they haven't become disciples since Calvary. They were of the larger company, but they are not in

the garden. They are somewhere else ; they are not in the same proximity to Him as the eight and then the three. And then if you go further into I Corinthians xv. 6, you will find there were about five hundred. Paul says " He appeared unto about five hundred at once." Where are the three hundred and eighty when the one hundred and twenty are gathered together ? Three hundred and eighty are missing, missing in that upper room in prayer during the days of waiting for the Promise of the Father. The five hundred is split and only one hundred and twenty are there, three hundred and eighty are somewhere else ; and so you go on, and you find in this literal way there is the Lord and then a very small company nearest ; then a little larger company not so near as those ; then a larger company ; and then a much larger company, and who shall tell what the company was of those who were on the outermost rim of things. But you see—proximity ! And I think that is suggestive of spiritual fellowship with the Lord of those who will go a little further ; those who will go all the way, those who will go further than most, than some ; and beloved, it is my belief that the Lord gathers us here at this season because He wants a company who will go *all* the way with Him, who will come into the Master's own intimate and immediate fellowship.

We know, do we not, of many who will go just so far with the Lord and then they draw the line ; some will go a little further but then they stop short, and it seems that very few, very few indeed, go right into the absolute oneness with Him in His Heart, His Mind, His Will : and He is seeking for those who will be of His own Spirit, who will go a little further than the rest, than perhaps the most advanced of all the others, a little further still, to take them into the innermost secret and suffering of His own Heart. And it would seem that these differences of approximation to Him would reveal spiritual state. I do not want to make much of that on the literal side, but on the spiritual side, undoubtedly it is true, a spiritual state is disclosed by just how far you go with the Lord. To begin with, you have the matter of apprehension and appreciation ; the grasping, the apprehending of the innermost desire and longing and secret of the Lord and an appreciation of Him, of His will, His Mind, His purpose. It does seem that some of these have a fuller apprehension and appreciation than others, and they went further, therefore. He was constantly suffering, was He not, from that lack

of apprehension and appreciation ? Again and again He gave expression to some feeling, some inner knowledge that they were not grasping it, that they were not getting hold of it, that they were not understanding. " I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them yet." All the time they were just failing to apprehend the inner thing, they were grasping the outer and missing the inner, they were not appreciating His feelings—" Lord wilt Thou that we call down fire from Heaven ? " ; but, " you know not what spirit you are of ! " You see, a lack of appreciation of His Heart, His feelings, His thoughts, His mind there.

If we are not going on with Him, if we are not going to find a response in our hearts, may it not be that it is because we have not a due apprehension or appreciation of the heart, the mind, the purpose of the Lord. And then the question of devotion and sacrifice would come in, naturally, just whether they were prepared to pay the price of going on. The measure of devotion, the measure of sacrifice, what it was going to cost and then a hesitating because of the cost ; and to go all the way with the Lord would necessitate paying the whole price, whatever that price might be, of suffering, suffering !

Now that brings me back to these chapters which doubtless you are wondering about as to what connection they have, these chapters in the Book of Genesis—this matchless story of Joseph and His brethren. Linked with the words we have read in the Ephesian Letter is a deep spiritual affinity between these portions of the Word. We have recently seen that Joseph himself stands to represent the Lord Jesus as the great Overcomer, the One Who by Divine right and revelation was to be the object of universal worship where the sheaves of earth bow down and make obeisance to Him where the sun, moon and stars of Heaven also bow down and proclaim Him Lord. And that One, that One passing through rejection, sold for thirty pieces of silver, led in chains by His own consent—in the case of the Lord Jesus—and then passing into the dungeon, humiliation, and into the place of darkness where it would seem that all the promises and all the visions were totally eclipsed and impossible, at length exalted to the Throne. The great Overcomer ! Wherefore, because " obedient unto death," " wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him," " Who for the suffering of death " is now in the presence of the glory of Heaven. Now that is

Joseph here, or Joseph is here as a type of that.

The next outstanding figure in this story is Benjamin, and Benjamin represents the believer as the Overcomer. You will be helped by a study of Benjamin. He is marked out, he is distinguished. "There goes little Benjamin." Benjamin is the Overcomer amongst the Lord's people, just as Joseph was distinguished amongst his brethren at the beginning as the son of the father's love, so now Benjamin is called the son of the father's old age, and upon him everything hangs, upon him, for the brethren, apart from Joseph now; so Benjamin is the overcomer amongst the brethren. The brethren were at a distance; all the others are in no proximity to Joseph, the one on the throne. You see the distance? Everything speaks of distance. There is no fellowship. Oh, Joseph yearns, he longs for what is in this fellowship, but he can't have it yet. Benjamin is not there, and so the brothers are at a distance, separated, and he says, "It is impossible for you to see my face, to come into fellowship with me unless you bring Benjamin," and we hear the argument with their father about bringing Benjamin, and they determined they would not go if Benjamin could not go with them because they would not see his face; and then when they took Benjamin the distance was not altogether overcome. Yet Joseph had seen him at a distance, and then he ordered his steward to set on bread for himself apart, for his brethren by themselves, not feeding together yet: the Egyptians are present. You know the meaning of Egypt surely by now, the realm of natural resources, the strength of the flesh. How is the final distance broken down? How do they all come into the closest fellowship as of one man? He put his cup into Benjamin's sack, and off they went with his silver cup in Benjamin's sack, and then sent his steward for them and brought them back. You know how it happened! That ruse, that trick, so to speak, was the way in which everything was broken down. By that way fellowship was brought in. What was it that did it? It was his cup in Benjamin's sack, his silver cup out of which he himself drank. Have you got it? To the overcomers—one cup, a silver cup. The Master said to these "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" They said "we can"! He said, "you shall"! And that is absolute fellowship, it is fellowship in the cup, oneness in the cup, the silver cup. That means going all the way in

closest proximity—the cost! Have you got it? We need hardly say any more.

That is the story. That which looked like, in the mind of the world, a trick, was that profound wisdom with a love motive in it, that they shall become ONE by that cup. The Spirit writes deeply beyond the wisdom of men, what men would call anything but wisdom and love. The Spirit writes the story of Calvary as the ground upon which perfect fellowship is brought about between the Lord and His brethren. But, oh! there is this other word. Benjamin, the least, the smallest, was brought into that relationship on behalf of all the brethren, the more important ones, according to the flesh, but who are spiritually discounted. The Lord depends upon a little one coming into relationship with Him in the cup. It is the overcomer of the Revelation. You have the brethren in the Churches, but they are spiritually at a distance, and in the Churches you have a little "overcomer" company who come into fellowship with the Lord in His passion and travail. That is the message of the first three chapters of the Revelation. Coming into fellowship with the Lord in His Cross as representative to save the Lord's testimony. You follow on in the Revelation and you find the small company are there first and the larger company afterwards, but they are there in behalf of the rest; the others would never get there if they did not get there first, but they have got through in the cup of His sufferings and the others will come into fellowship with that cup, "for they will come up out of the great tribulation and wash their robes and make them white in the Blood of the Lamb."

Now I am not concerned with times in this matter at all, but I am concerned with the spiritual facts and spiritual laws. All the way through from Genesis to Revelation is that law that He must have one or a little company, a remnant, an overcomer body, coming into full fellowship with Him by the altar, by the Cross, on behalf of all the rest. We have often pointed out that in the remnant of Israel only two tribes were called "all Israel." It is the remnant who came back and put the altar in its place and built the House, and yet they were called "all Israel." You see it is relative.

Now, beloved, it is that small company which can go all the way which the Lord is after, that little flock that comes into closest fellowship with Him in His suffering, in His passion, in

His purpose. There are only a few who can come there. He took with Him Peter, James and John, and then He Himself went a little further; and so you get the ranges; and it speaks of just how far you will go, according to the price you will pay—the fellowship of His sufferings. But too often in the Laodicean age there is that which is sickening to the heart of God about the spirituality of the majority. They are neither hot nor cold. There are those to whom He speaks right in the Laodicean conditions, “He that overcometh will I give to sit with Me in My Throne even as I have overcome and sit with My Father in His Throne.” Here is the Throne you see—“If we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him.” Now that is the call of the Lord to us in these

days, and I believe that will be what the Lord is pressing home in everyone of these gatherings during this season.

Are you going further? Are you going *all* the way? The end of the way is the Throne; to get there means to go by the way of the Cross, by the way of the cup. The cup was found in Benjamin’s sack, a little one, a little one, a small company. By Benjamin the others were brought into fellowship with the exalted lord—complete fellowship. There are no more separate tables and the Egyptians are gone out, and there is perfect fellowship in the Spirit.

May the Lord get us to be such a company.

T. A.-S.

## Spiritual Grafting

AMONG the words of Jesus there are seven little monosyllables so simple that a wee child can understand every one of them, and yet they sum up the whole of the Christian life. To add more would be a superfluity; to attempt to get on with less is simply impossible. Simple though they be, it is doubtful if any saint in either Heaven or earth has ever been able to plumb the depths of those seven little words.

You will find them imbedded within the twentieth verse of the fourteenth of John. They are: “*Ye in Me, and I in you.*”

Observe first that the order is correct. “*Ye in Me*” must always precede “*I in you,*” for “*Ye in Me*” signifies *position*, while “*I in you*” denotes *possession*, and there never can be possession until there is position. The scion must be grafted into the tree before the life-giving, fructifying sap can enter the grafted twig.

This figure of the grafted twig as applied to spiritual relationship is quite Scriptural.

In Romans ii we Gentiles are paid the rather doubtful compliment of being designated branches of an “olive tree that is wild by nature,” and were grafted into the good olive tree “contrary to nature.” From this ancient and well-known practice of horticultural grafting we purpose to gather a few lessons, and note first:—

### I. “Ye in Me.”

The Believer’s Position.—We shall gather our thoughts about three primal positions. (a) The twig *must* be grafted into the foster-parent tree; (b) the twig enters the tree precisely where the tree is wounded for it; and (c) where it enters there it stays.

(a) The twig *must* be grafted into the tree. What a graphic stroke of characterisation is that of Romans xi. 24: “An olive tree wild by nature!” Surely this old Adamic nature of ours is an olive tree “*wild by nature,*” implying deterioration, degeneracy, and general worthlessness, our fruit shrivelled and bitter, and the whole “cumberer of the ground” under the doom of a curse. As well expect grapes of thorns or figs of thistles as to look for the fruits of holiness upon the gnarled old stock of Adam. It is a corrupt tree and can only bring forth evil fruit. We as twigs upon that wild tree *must* be “cut out and grafted into the good olive tree” if we would escape the doom of that tree, for is it not written: “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire” (Matt. vii. 19).

(b) We note the second proposition. The twig is grafted into the tree precisely where the tree *was wounded for it*. Some time ago near my home in Florida I had occasion to visit a citrus nursery, and I asked the man in charge to show me how he grafted fruit. He



willingly complied, and led me to the grove of young trees. He then carefully cut from a little sapling a very small twig with a swelling bud at the end of it, and proceeding to another tree near by he deliberately cut in the bark of it a CROSS, and where the tree was expressly cut to receive it, he deftly inserted the scion. To assure a perfect graft he bound about the scion and the tree a bit of adhesive paper to hold it steadily in place until the twig had time to interlock its fibres into the woody structure of its foster parent. "Oh, what a picture," I said, "of our entering the True Vine, Christ Jesus!" Was He not "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities?" Are we not merged with Him precisely where He was wounded for us? It is at the Cross where the believer finds position. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into HIS DEATH?" And "if we have been planted together (the Greek word signifies 'grown together'), in the likeness of His death, we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection." Until the soul of man is one with Christ in His atoning death he can no more bring forth "fruit unto holiness" than briars can bring forth grapes. Let us never forget that only where He was "wounded for us" can we enter into vital union with Him.

And now for the third proposition, as obvious as the two foregoing.

(c) Where the twig enters the tree there it stays. This identification with Christ in His death is an integral part of justification. It is the obtainment—not attainment—of *position*. We are only right, or righteous, when attached to Christ, as the graft of the tree which, as we have seen, is at the Cross. But does the believer think he can ever be perfected into a healthy fruit-bearing Christian except he abide constantly at the Cross? Nowhere in the Scriptures is a believer said to be *justified* more than once. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." And an aged saint who has lived the Christian life full three score years is no more justified than a babe in Christ not three minutes a Christian. We never improve upon our position in Christ, for that

is impossible; and gladly do we sing till our pilgrimage is ended:—

Ere since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply.  
Redeeming grace has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die.

Where the graft enters the tree there it stays.  
And now for the last three of our seven monosyllables.

## II. "I in You."

The Believer's Possession.—Let us take another look at our passage in Romans and note another deft stroke. Not only is our family tree "wild by nature," but we are grafted into Christ "*contrary to nature*." Oh, how carefully guarded is Scripture from erroneous statement! It is common knowledge that the practice of grafting is to insert into a tree of poor quality, but of hardy health, a scion of fine quality; furthermore, the fruit that is borne by the graft is of a kind with the tree from which it was broken off. It bears the fruit of the *old* tree and not the new. But in this spiritual horticultural surgery we poor scions of a corrupt and evil tree are grafted into the infinitely superior tree Christ Jesus, and the fruit-bearing is exactly the reverse of the natural, it is "*contrary to nature*," for united to the good olive tree each abiding scion bears fruit of the *new* tree and no longer of the old.

One with Him in His death, we are also one with Him in His resurrection. As the sap of the new tree enters into the grafted twig, so His Holy Spirit flows into our whole being, and the result is "fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life." The twig retains its outward form even while abiding in the new tree, but within there is a new life. So we who are one with Him bear outwardly the aspect of the rest of the sons of men, but within we have His life, and bear His fruit to the glory of God the Father. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." And "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance," a glorious cluster of luscious grapes, worthy the True Vine—and delighting the Husbandman  
E. J. P.

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### STOP PRESS NEWS FROM THE FARM.

The paralysed lamb is dead. The "old nature" always ends in death. How blessed are we if we have the "new nature" of Christ in us, bringing us always into fuller and fuller life.—See page 59

# The Strength of the Church

## Precis of Address.

John xiv. 25-26, xvi. 25 ; II. Cor. iii. 2-3, vii. 18 ; Eph. i. 17, iii. 16-20, vi. 10.

“Be strong in the strength of His Might.”

THERE are one or two things on my heart to say which I feel are of very great importance to us and to the Lord at this time.

The letter to the Ephesians is not simply a presentation or conception of the Church as to its nature and existence. It presents tremendous and intensive activity concerned with the building of the Church. A very energetic process is seen to run throughout the whole of this short epistle.

This word has mainly to do with “*Strength*”—the strength of the Church: do trace this through the Word, it will open up much both as to the nature of our calling and the character of the conflict the Church is in at this end-time of the age.

When the Lord Jesus first introduced the thought of the Church, He said: “Upon this rock I will build My Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it,” the predominating element seen here is a mighty strength. Yes, all these counsellings of Hades shall not prevail against this mighty rock strength and this thought of strength is connected with the Church all the way through. It is spiritual strength in view, inward strength. It is the strength of Who and What the Lord Jesus is as very God, Almighty.

It is very necessary and most essential to recognise the inwardness of the new dispensation after “Pentecost”; everything now related to the Lord Jesus is inward, no longer outward, objective. He is God in the Throne, but He is known experimentally through the Holy Spirit within.

Turn to the second letter to Corinth III. The old Covenant was an outward thing written on tables of stone; Paul bringing it down to our times writes: “written with ink”; but the new Covenant is not a thing of time, but an Eternal Covenant; not an outward writing but an inward writing by the Eternal Spirit of the living God and written in our hearts.

Oh! do we get the greatness of this fact, it is so necessary and vital to see the *inwardness* of everything, this *must* be recognised by the Lord’s people. The life of the believer is inward and everything to do with the life of the believer is inward, and in so far as the believer’s life is outward and dependent upon outward things, to that measure it will be weak; in so far as the believer’s life is *dependent* upon gatherings and to be ministered to by others and knowing the Lord *only* in this kind of outward manner, instead of that deep inward knowing Him, alone in secret with the word and prayer, the expression of life will be weak and not constituting spiritual strength to the assembly, but rather bringing in a weakness (a dead weight and even ground for the enemy to work on and from).

All is now inward and we do recognise that “*all*” is the Lord Jesus Himself.

The Church is an aggregate of individuals and it needs each individual to know the Lord in this inward manner and to live this inward life; and to have a dictating by the Holy Spirit of the “Law of the Lord” inwardly to our hearts and to know the heavenly things within as inwrought by the Holy Spirit.

The essential point is this—the very great need, the desperate need of the Church being strong in every individual member. The great need of this day is more strength in the Church, for the Lord’s people individually to be Strong in the Lord, and so able to personally contribute to the assembly, and be a strong factor in the Lord unto the realisation of His purpose.

In our gatherings together, the strength of the gathering is determined by the strength of the individual and is no stronger than the strength of the secret life of each individual in his or her personal secret history with the Lord.

We do not just come together to hold meetings, to sing, to have a nice time: we meet together that there may be spiritual strength both manifested and received through meeting with the Lord. (I am not forgetting the first and chief purpose—to worship Him—all else is nothing apart from worship of Him unto Whom are all things.)

But the question here is of spiritual strength. The effectiveness of our gatherings together and its impact in the spiritual realm is a question of spiritual strength; when we meet together there is far too often the aspect of passive expectation instead of recognising the very fact of our being gathered together should be the occasion for a mighty expression of spiritual power for the accomplishing of spiritual ends.

We are up against great spiritual forces.

The Ephesian letter heads all up to the realm of wrestling in spiritual places where nothing less than the exceeding greatness of His power will accomplish the purpose and enable the Church to fulfil its vocation: that is the realm of the Church's activity on behalf of brethren in Christ in all the world; it is the one battle throughout the world against the one enemy against the Church of Christ. Oh! that we would recognise there are always terrific issues at stake when the Lord's people assemble together and there should be a strong expression of power and influence against the whole system of evil—the impact of the Lord's children meeting together into the Name, should be the setting back of the adversary and a celebration of the triumph of Christ over His enemies; meeting together thus there can be the winning of the battle miles away.

Paul attributes his own victories and escapes to the prayers of the assemblies far off (II. Cor. i. 2). When we get together there are tremendous issues for the Lord Jesus at stake as gathered up and focussed in the Church.

We are in a universal fight, the battle is on and the Church is never going to get through to the throne without a fight.

While all is secured in the Throne in our Lord Jesus Christ by His complete and perfect triumph in His Cross, yet that triumph has got to be wrought out and manifested, and the Church is His instrument unto this, so the battle is always focussed in the Assembly.

The need is great for the Lord's people to recognise this and so to be gathered together unto action, and in spiritual power for the whole body of Christ. It is the business of the whole Body and of every member in that Body. So the question is one of spiritual strength and power; and the power and spiritual strength of the Church assembled is the individual quota of spiritual life and strength to the whole.

There is a tremendous amount the Lord wants to reveal to His people, that, by that revelation they shall possess the spiritual knowledge of Himself that is necessary for the further unveiling and full realisation of the ends of God for this time. It is very important to know the time we are living in, and God's Eternal Purpose in relation to it.

You cannot fight without spiritual knowledge and the Church cannot be built without spiritual revelation; and you cannot get one ray of revelation without a fight; for the enemy is out in full strength and subtlety to cut across the revelation, and ever seeks to prevent spiritual revelation, being given or received.

In Daniel x. we read of the terrific conflict on earth and in the heavens; and see it all related to revelation. (Dan. x. 1 A.R.V.) "A thing was revealed unto Daniel...and the thing was true, even a great warfare, and he understood the thing and had understanding of the vision. I Daniel was mourning for *three whole weeks*...I did not anoint myself at all until *three whole weeks* was fulfilled...Fear not, Daniel, from the first day thou didst set thy heart to understand and to humble thyself before God, thy words were heard, and I am come for the words sake, but the king of Persia withstood me *one and twenty days*...the vision is yet for many days (margin. for the end of times.)"

Daniel stood in relation to the whole Body of the House of Israel; and the Church gathered together is representative of the whole Company of the Lord's people. The Lord must have such an instrument in these latter days—end-days of this dispensation.

This chapter in Daniel shows it was a costly business to receive revelation; yes, it *costs* to receive revelation and it costs to give it out; *spiritual* ministry is tremendously costly and there is a battle every time for every bit of revelation.

This revelation is not something extra to Scripture, but what is hidden from unenlightened eyes in Scripture.

It is absolutely necessary to be strengthened with all might in the Lord. "Be strong in the Lord and in the *strength of His might*" (Eph. vi. 10). "Strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inward man...that ye may be *strong to apprehend...strong to know*."

We require an inwrought strengthening in order to know! Spiritual knowledge is far

more than mental acquisition ; and it is only spiritual revelation that accomplishes things, and is the strength of the Church in its nature and constitution unto the enabling for its mighty work. The strength of the assembly is just the strength of the several individuals who are gathered together, and our gathering together does not lift us up above our personal relationship to the Lord, together with other of the Lord's children we are still the same measure in ourselves, and that measure is the measure of our secret history with the Lord, and unto that measure is the spiritual exercise in the assembly. The individual has got to be exercised in the things of the Lord and his inward man gains strength through such spiritual exercising.

Take the matter of prayer : What about our private prayer life ? Now, beloved, these questions are not meant to be criticisms but unto a constructive purpose only. The assembly is no stronger than its individual prayer life. If we come to the assembly and do there our private praying, that praying which we should have had alone with God, or get others to do our praying for us—the Lord does not accept that kind of substitution ; only as we are individually mighty and strong in our private prayer life will the assembly reap the strength of it as they come together. Each one gathered into the assembly having a strong, true private prayer life in secret with the Lord, means a strong mighty power of spiritual effectiveness in the Body of Christ and unto a definite realising of the specific ends of God for that hour as related to His Eternal Purpose in Christ Jesus. But if we are doing our private praying in public the Lord knows and there is weakness and ineffectiveness in the assembly ; and if strong in private prayer life the assembly will feel it and the whole Church of God will benefit.

What are you doing in your personal prayer life ? Of course there is an added strength by all being together, and there is gain to the individual by corporate prayer.

And what is true in the prayer realm must be true also in the realm of the Word.

The Holy Spirit strengthens us in this way by exercising our inward man in the Word.

What time has the reading and study of the Word in your life ? Are you getting all your knowledge of the Word from other servants

of the Lord, instead of getting down on the Word yourself as well ?

The Holy Spirit demands work and perseverance with the word ; it is very necessary for us to have the Word *in* us for the Holy Spirit to work upon ; this is the way of strength, down on the word working, reading persistently, meditating, praying, and not giving up when we come to a dry spell—but persisting on and on. The Holy Spirit needs this exercising of our inward man in the study of the Word and prayer, to build the Church strong, and the Lord will make use of every bit of the Word thus individually planted, and the Holy Spirit will come down and operate upon that.

The Word of God is the *sword of the Spirit* (Eph. vi. 17). " Let the Word of God dwell in you richly " (Col. iii. 16). What is true of prayer and the Word for making us strong with the inward spiritual strength is also true of Witness.

When I say we must ever be alert to witness for the Lord Jesus, I do not mean that we are to button-hole every one to speak with them about their soul. What I mean is, do we at the outset of the day definitely seek the Lord to be made alive to every opportunity for Him, to be on the look out, alert to take the opportunity as it comes along, are we prayerfully and eagerly looking out for it ? Are we *alive* in spiritual watching for souls ?

The strength of the Church depends upon the spiritual *life* of its members. How often do we ask the Lord to make us alive for contacts ? Are you on full strength to witness ? The feature of the Church after Pentecost, was that *all* believers went everywhere preaching the Word—wherever they went, in their daily life there was a proclaiming of the Lord Jesus—they were in all circumstances a witness and a testimony to Him ; a *living* testimony, a witness of Life ; and, beloved, it must be so.

And then the wonder, when we come together, Oh ! how vital it would be, how alive unto God, and the whole Body of Christ throughout the world would feel the impact of so coming together in the Name of the Lord, and there would *have to be* a standing back of the onemy.

May the Lord bring us into this for His Name's sake in an increasingly fuller measure.

T. A.-S.

## A Mixed Life

From 'The Way of the Cross,' by J. G. M.

IN the beginning a threefold separation was accomplished before the command was given: "Be fruitful, and multiply." God separated the light from the darkness, the waters beneath from the waters above the firmament, the sea from the dry land.

To show His jealousy for physical order still further, He forbid an Israelite to plow with an ox and an ass under the same yoke (Deut. xxii. 10). The ox is a clean animal and works with a yoke on his neck. The ass is an unclean animal and works with a collar on his neck. They are contrary to each other in their nature, in their walk, and in their mode of pulling the plow. The sowing of a field with mingled seed, and the wearing of a garment mingled of linen and woollen were also strictly forbidden (Lev. xix. 19). To this day an orthodox Jew will not mend a woollen garment with a flaxen thread. One of the preparations made by the Jews for an approaching Passover was to go over the fields and root up plants that had grown from mingled seeds. These prohibitions were intended to cultivate in the mind of the people the sentiment of reverence for the order established in nature by God. Wool and linen come from separate kingdoms in nature, one from the animal, the other from the vegetable, and unmixedness of moral character is clearly fore-shadowed. To wear, in the same robe, the wool of selfishness and the linen of spirituality is contrary to the law of order which prevails in the kingdom of grace as in the kingdom of nature. God is as jealous—nay, more jealous—of moral order than of physical order, and in the management of their cattle, in the cultivation of their fields, in the making and wearing of their clothes, God was whispering in their ear, "Be ye separate." "Be pure in heart and life." "What communion hath light with darkness?"

This thought of unmixedness is still further illustrated in the dress of the priests: "When the priests minister in the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; no wool shall come upon them while they minister in the inner court, and within" (Ezek. xlv. 17). Woollen garments would occasion sweat. Sweat

is a sign of the fall, and of man's sin. It is part of the curse and penalty of disobedience. Linen is entirely free from grease, and it is always used as a type of grace separate from sin. To enter "within the veil" and dwell there in the presence of God, there must be a laying aside of all that appertains to the dark world—the world of our selfhood—and we must be clothed with the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteous acts of the saints and the robing of the Bride of Christ (Rev. xix. 8).

Few will deny that this mixedness in Christian life and work is a great bane, and seriously interferes with the effectiveness of both. This must be so, because it is a subversion of God's order, and, as we have previously intimated, the creature will not be permitted with impunity to interfere with the laws established by the Creator. This was Paul's trouble in the Corinthian Church. The Christians were possessed of a regenerate babe-life which Paul calls "carnality." They lived a kind of suspended life, now dominated by the flesh and now by the Spirit, and the result was an elementary experience, envying, strife, and division (1 Cor. iii.). Those who are living this mixed life are spoken of as double-minded (more exactly double-souled) men (James i. 8; iii. 8). There is only one cure for such a condition. It is the converging of all the desires and affections in the same centre, viz., the love of God's will and glory. When this is the case true singleness of heart is experienced. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

Before we can live the unmixed life, and belong no longer to the carnal but to the spiritual Christians, we must be willing to know the extent of the mixedness in our own character, for what the eye does not see the heart will not grieve over. Before we invite God to search us, let us pause and ask whether we are willing that He should make a thorough work of this self-discovery, however painful and humbling it may be. If not, we had better not begin; for it is better to be without the light than to possess it and be disobedient.

For obvious reasons no branch of knowledge

is so neglected as knowledge of ourselves. In other sciences knowledge flatters the vanity of the unsanctified heart; it exalts men in the eyes of others, it increases their influence in the world. But true self-discovery wounds our pride, and spoils the good opinion we had formed and cherished of ourselves. We may be skilled in every other science and ignorant in this. We may be able to calculate the motions of the heavenly bodies, and know nothing of the movements of our own sinful nature. We may be able to plant our foot on a mountain summit where no human foot has ever before trod, and yet be ignorant of the dimensions of the black mountain of evil in our heart. We may be able by chemical analysis to detect and decompose the material substances around us, and yet never analyse the motives by which we are influenced, and which colour and stain all our conduct.

"Self-love conspires with trust in our own hearts to make dupes of us as regards our spiritual account. Proverbially, and in the verdict of all experience, love is blind; and if love be blind, self-love being the strongest, the most subtle, the most changeless, the most difficult to eradicate of all loves, is blinder still. Self-love will not see, as self-trust cannot see, anything against us." It is this ignorance that leads to quiescence. The hateful foe assumes such disguises, and appears so exactly the opposite of what he really is, that we lose sight of the fact that he is a devil still, and that, as Luther was wont to say, the white devil is more to be dreaded than the black.

What is necessary, then, since self-love will cause us to live in such a fool's paradise if we follow its interested opinion, is the search-light of God. This, and this alone, will disturb our self-complacency and self-deception. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see" (Rev. iii. 17, 18, R.V.). "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the heart; I try the reins (the hidden part) even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings"

(Jer. xvii. 9, 10). What are spoken of as the reins, hero and elsewhere in the Bible, are the secret thoughts, desires, and affections of the soul.

The heart is so exceedingly complicated and intricate; it is so near the eye which seeks to investigate it, that it baffles our research. There are a few things about the heart which are broad and open, and which we can, in some measure, discover. But there are chambers, receding within chambers, which no human investigation can ever reach. To explore these hidden chambers is the prerogative of God alone.

We live in an age of shallowness and superficiality, and we possess a marvellous capacity for self-deception. This capacity the enemy finds to be one of his most effective weapons for destroying the souls of men.

Our love of ease and our unwillingness to be disturbed, lead us to avoid the prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any way of pain or grief in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24).

Painful and humiliating as the searching and exposure may be, the very beginning of a life that is all for God turns upon our being absolutely honest with Him about our present spiritual condition.

The two great pillars upon which true Scriptural Christianity rests are the greatness of our fall and the greatness of our redemption. "Until," says William Law, "you are renewed in the spirit of your mind, your virtues are only *taught practices* and grafted upon a corrupt bottom. Everything that you do will be a mixture of good and bad; your humility will help you to pride; your charity to others will give nourishment to your own self-love, and as your prayers increase so will the opinion of your own sanctity. Because till the heart is *purified to the bottom*, and has felt the axe at the root of its evil (which cannot be done by outward instruction), everything that proceeds from it partakes of its impurity and corruption."

Nothing is easier than self-deception; few things are so difficult as real self-disclosure. We may be claiming and even professing the experience of holiness, and yet know nothing of a total death to the carnal or natural life. The dress and conversation of the inhabitants of Canaan are imitable; but the true Divine life is as inimitable as life always is. Let us not mistake phraseology for experience, the

maining of the enemy for his death, sanctionousness for sanctification, unctuousness for unction, or the knowledge of the truth for the Spirit of truth, for "when truths have once been fully revealed and been made a part of orthodoxy, the history of them does not necessarily imply an operation of the Spirit of God."

There is a striking thought in the literal translation of Hebrews iv. 13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked, and lying open unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do." The passage might be rendered: "All things are stripped and stunned," the figure being that of an athlete in the Coliseum, who has fought his best in the arena, and has at length fallen at the feet of his adversary, disarmed and broken down in helplessness. There he lies, unable to strike a blow or lift his arm. He is stripped and stunned, disarmed and disabled, and there is nothing left for him but to lie at the feet of his adversary, and throw up his arms for mercy. It means, as Alford reminds us, not only the stripping off of all coverings and concealments, but the lying prostrate in exposure before the eye of God, the God "with whom we have to do." That is what the Holy Spirit and the searching Word will do for us if we are willing; and until we are willing, we shall be living a mixed life, with more or less of self, and more or less of Christ.

The ingratitude and unreasonableness of offering the Lord Jesus Christ a mixed life, a

divided heart, has rarely been better expressed than in the searching and forceful lines of quaint old Francis Quarles:—

Give Me thine heart, but as I gave it thee;  
Or give it Me at least as I  
Have given Mine  
To purchase thine.  
I halved it not when I did die;  
But wholly gave Myself to set thee free.

But whilst thine heart's divided, it is dead;  
Dead unto Me, unless it live  
To Me alone.  
It is all one

To keep all, and a part to give:  
For what's a body worth without a head?

Yet this is worse, that what thou keep'st from Me  
Thou dost bestow upon My foes:  
And those not Mine  
Alone, but thine:  
The proper cause of all thy woes  
From whom I gave My life to set thee free.

Have I betrothed thee to Myself, and shall  
The devil, and the world, intrude  
Upon My right  
Even in My sight?  
Think not thou canst Me so delude:  
*I will have none, unless I may have all.*

I made it all, I gave it all to thee.  
I gave all that I had for it:  
If I must lose,  
I'd rather choose  
Mine interest in it all to quit:  
Or keep it whole. Oh, give it whole to Me!"

## Enfolded in I Am

OUR only safety is to be hidden in God. And that is exactly the safety we may have if we will. Christ longs to have us in this safe place, so he pleads, "Abide in Me." When we first received Christ as Saviour the Holy Spirit grafted us into Him, as a branch in a vine; thus having placed us in Christ in organic and eternal union, he asks us to recognise this fact and rest quietly where we are. That is abiding in Christ. The moment we were born again by faith in Christ his death became our death, and his resurrection our spiritual resurrection now and here—it will be our bodily resurrection when he comes again. Therefore we read the good news: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). Someone has well said: "Satan cannot understand the omnipotence of a life that is homed in God." For Satan cannot successfully reach that life; the shield of faith, as we abide in Christ, is "able to

quench all the fiery darts of the evil one" (Eph. vi. 16). At the last Thanksgiving Conference at America's Keswick, Thomas M. Chalmers, of the New York Jewish Evangelisation Society, brought a marvelous message on "Life Before God," and he called attention to a startlingly beautiful fact in the Word of God. When our Lord said to the disciples just before his ascension from the Mount of Olives, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age," his words as given in the original Greek of the New Testament were: "Lo, I with you am all the days, even unto the end of the age." "I—with you—am." "You" are in the midst of the Jehovah Jesus, the great I AM. As Mr. Chalmers said: "The great I AM is enfolding us every day, no matter what kind of a day it is." Do we need to be in a safer place? Shall we not rest trustfully and joyously just where we are? From *S. S. Times*, U.S.A.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The University of Toronto was founded in 1827 as King's College, a branch of the University of London. It was the first university in North America to be founded as a separate institution. The college was named in honor of King George IV and was the first of a series of colleges that would eventually form the University of Toronto.

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MONDAYS at 7.30 P.M. TUESDAYS at 8 P.M. (Young People).

WEDNESDAYS at 8 P.M. SATURDAYS at 7.30 P.M.

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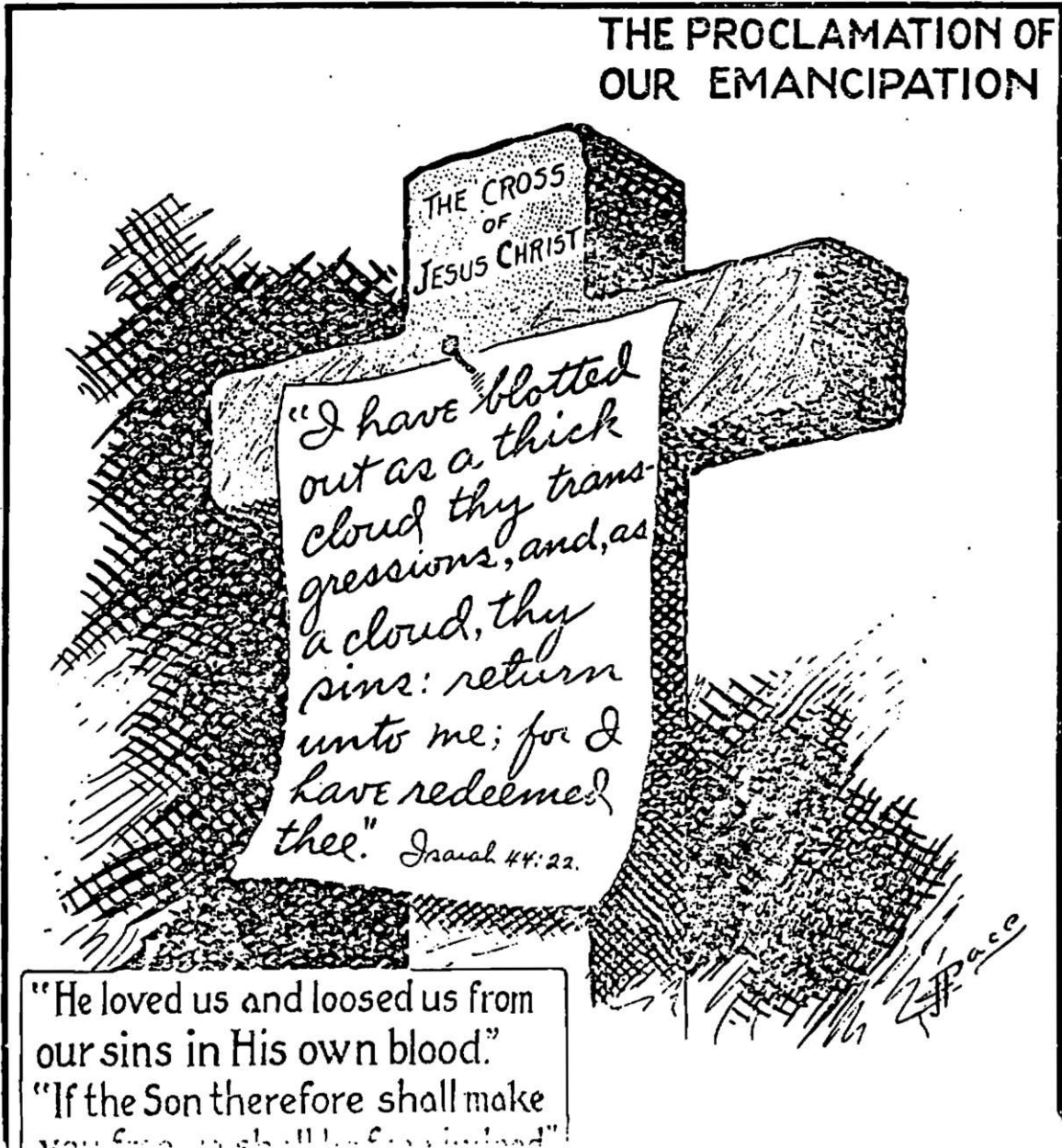
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JULY—AUGUST, 1930

Vol. 8, No. 4.

# A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

THE PROCLAMATION OF  
OUR EMANCIPATION





## Retrospect and Prospect

### Conferences at Honor Oak.

THE faithfulness of God in maintaining the ministry at Honor Oak has been again and again an occasion for worship and praise. We were very conscious of His control and sustaining at the Whitsun and July Conferences. At the former the ministry of the Word came through several brethren, and though the presentation was varied we felt that in the main the Lord was laying a fresh emphasis upon the necessity for His Own holiness to be wrought in His people by the Holy Spirit. We were challenged anew by the demand of that holiness, and encouraged by further reminders of the almighty power of that Holy One who indwells the believer and over Whom sin and death and hell have no authority or power. The Conference strengthened in us the cry that the Lord had been giving in prayer earlier, that we might be found to be truly "a people for His Name."

The July Conference was smaller than usual in regard to numbers, this being largely accounted for by the fact of the Bognor Holiday Conference being held at the same time; and it would not have been difficult to fall into the trap of assuming that the gatherings at Honor Oak were of less vital significance than usual. But the Lord was present in very evident power, and gave strong and clear ministry of the Word. The emphasis was on the two-fold note of the nature and need of revelation, and the sovereignty of that Living One who is resident in the Church by the Holy Spirit. We thank God for the very definite way in which He met His people in this Conference, and for the fresh tokens that were given that wheresoever His people are gathered together in His Name, however little significance may appear to attach to the gathering, there is He in the midst in all His omnipotence and all His yearning to unveil Himself to every willing heart.

### Holiday Conferences at Bognor.

These were seasons of blessing that will not soon be forgotten by those who were privileged to be present. The numbers desirous of attending exceeded the capacity of the accommodation which we had reserved, but God had His resource ready; and "Hurlingham" was filled

to its utmost limit, with an overflow at "Shalimar." Most of those who attended had come expectant of a blessed and happy holiday, but the highest expectations were transcended as to both the pure delight of the holiday and the measure of the blessing of the Lord. We could not but wonder and worship at the wisdom of God, who had frustrated all our efforts to secure a public building suitable for the holding of the gatherings, and thereby brought us to the assembling of ourselves together in an unconventional way which removed every trace of formality and stiffness, and greatly facilitated free and open fellowship. By the kindness of our friends at "Shalimar" we were enabled to hold most of the gatherings on their lawn in the shade of the trees, and when the weather conditions made this undesirable we met in the drawing-room at "Hurlingham." Each morning and evening we gathered around the Word, and every such season was marked by abundant life. In the first week, when most of those present were Young People, the note to which the Lord held us was that of the necessity for recognizing the *completed* character of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary, and of the need and *availability* of the Holy Spirit for every believer who would come into an adequate experience of that completed victory. Many present were brought to recognize that they had long been praying for that to be done *which had already been done*, and that their spiritual poverty was due to their own failure to appropriate by faith the fruit of Calvary. We trust that this message may come home to any who read these lines, and that, like so many at Bognor, they may claim and receive—not by feelings but by faith—the fulness of the Spirit, who comes thus only where there is fulness of surrender to the claims of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. "I am redeemed" was the song that won all hearts at Bognor, and the testimonies that were given at the closing gathering of the first week made it abundantly clear that on the part of practically all present there had been a new entering into the enjoyment of that redemption. It was especially encouraging to note how strongly the need for confession of Christ *with the mouth* had been

recognized, and several for the first time in their lives publicly spoke of their faith in Him. How greatly would the Lord's people everywhere be enriched and emancipated if they recognized the need for opening their mouths in His praise!

The second week—not exclusively for Young People—was of rather a different character as to the ministry of the Word, but of not less directness and effectiveness. Once again the Lord in His faithfulness brought to light and gave grace for dealing with problems that had for long existed in lives, and emancipations of a very real character were wrought. The wisdom of God was once again wonderfully manifest in the ordering of the ministry, and almost all who were present were able at the end of the week to bear testimony to the reality of their meeting with Him. In a manner quite unexpected and wholly outside any human arranging the Lord brought up on the last full day the matter of the testimony of baptism, and so worked in the hearts of some who were present that quite independent requests were made by three friends who desired to bear testimony before they left Bognor. The final evening therefore witnessed the baptism in the sea of two sisters and one brother, followed by a season of special prayer with them in "Hurlingham."

The Lord's works always go beyond the visible, but those that were evident at Bognor brought us to our knees in worship and praise. Truly we were living in the very midst of acts of the Holy Spirit. Some present with whom the Lord had long had a controversy yielded to Him and found thereby the joy and peace they had lacked; one was born again; several discovered that the Lord was calling them to steps of obedience hard indeed to take but in which grace triumphed; one at least heard His call to the mission field and gave herself to Him for His will. And all discovered—some to their own surprise!—that the presence of the Lord and of the things of the Lord in so large a measure in the holiday did not take away from the joy, but was the very cause of it! And we think that some learned how to laugh and be glad *in the Lord*. Thank God for such a lesson well learned!

The holiday was by no means a time lived for ourselves alone. Opportunity was found on a number of occasions for bearing testimony in the open air, both in Bognor itself and in the neighbouring villages. Moreover, it has been an occasion of great rejoicing since to learn that,

as a direct result of the testimony in word and life of some after their return home from the holiday, other souls have been won to Christ and backsliders restored. To God be the glory for such a work of grace as that which was done, and the more that was made possible, through "Bognor, 1930."

#### Trek.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." With this God-given promise, six young men set out on "trek" through the south of England, to prove the Lord, and to proclaim His glorious Word in "the highways and hedges."

With a minimum amount of kit, mounted on a trek-cart provided by the Lord in answer to prayer, we started out on foot towards Crawley, where the first week-end was spent. On the road, while four were pulling the trek-cart, the other two were well-engaged "sowing the seed" with tracts. No brass band was needed to draw attention to the party, for six lusty voices shouting out texts from the Word of God, made many aware of the fact that something unusual was taking place. Nor were they left long in doubt, as to the reason of such procedure when they were faced with bold-type placards bearing the Word of God hung on each side of the trek-cart, and were presented with tracts, or heard the Gospel proclaimed.

Crawley was well "saturated" with the Word over the week-end, in the open-air, and services were held indoors in the "Welcome Mission," and in another neighbouring Mission Hall.

From Crawley the Lord led towards Bognor. Day by day we looked to Him for guidance, and many incidents bespoke His leading. For our daily provision, as for our nightly camping ground, we found the fulfilment of His promise in response to His command "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."

Keeping as far as possible to the roads and villages off the beaten track, we sought to proclaim the Word where the name of the Lord is not so frequently heard. In the still country air the message of Life and salvation, and the declaration of the sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ caught the ear of many a one "hidden" behind a curtain, while it was not infrequent to see the dear folk come to their doors or stop their work to listen. Personal

talks revealed the realisation of the need of unsaved hearts; and not a few who heard the Word, we believe, will be found in the presence of the King when He comes to make up His jewels. If no other evidence was given (and we praise Him there was!) the presence of the Lord day by day was sufficient to assure our hearts that our labour was not in vain.

The second week-end, at Bognor, proved to be a time of real blessing, especially on the Sunday evening at the open-air meeting, where the Lord spoke in power. When Jesus Christ is proclaimed as Lord, in the power of the Holy Spirit, something is bound to happen, as contacts afterwards proved. Praise Him!

Proceeding from Bognor, the Lord led on to Eastbourne for ministry the following week-end, mainly in the neighbouring village of Polegate. The Children's meeting on Sunday morning was not the least important gathering in the midst of an intensive "open-air assault" on the village. Back to Bognor by another route was the completion of a three weeks' trek which covered a direct mileage of approximately 250 miles.

Space forbids more than a mere mention of the loving kindness of our God expressed through not a few of His children, some of whom, strangers indeed in the flesh, proved to be "joints of supply" in the Body of Christ. Nor is it possible to enter into details of the Lord's gracious dealings with us; but to His loving enquiry, "Lacked ye anything," we respond with hearts full of praise to Him, "Nothing"—and would add "Thou art the God that doest wonders."

#### Deal.

The Lord is graciously putting His seal upon the ministry in Deal. The morning gatherings for "Young People," on the beach, are being attended with interest by many adults as well as the boys and girls. The evening open-air meetings are being blessed by the Lord. A noteworthy feature is the way in which we are hearing of various individuals with whom the Lord is dealing "behind the scenes," as well as some who have spoken to us on spiritual matters apart from the meetings.

#### United States and Canada.

On Saturday, July 26, a large company of friends gathered to a "welcome home" after our ten weeks' absence across the ocean, and after tea we had a time of fellowship

and report. The itinerary was outlined as having included the following places of ministry: New York; Monterey, Mass. (3 times); Grand Rapids; Lansing; Kent City, Mich.; Chicago, (Moody Institute and North Shore Church), Boston; Philadelphia; Swarthmore; Downing Town; Dudley, Mass.; Providence, R.I.; and The Canadian "Keswick" Convention. This is only a broad outline and does not represent all the ministry. For instance, we were in six different places in and around Philadelphia. We have to lay a tribute of very great praise at the feet of our Lord for His wonderful sustaining of spirit, mind and body through the many demands and considerable pressure. Not infrequently was it necessary to link conferences immediately by long journeys, several times all night, and at times the heat was very exhausting. But He triumphed, and apart from a measure of tiredness and sometimes conflict in relation to the spiritual issues we suffered not a bit. I think we can truly say that in every place visited there was something for the Lord. He was most certainly discovering spiritual desire and hunger, and meeting it. There was a very real linking in spirit in many places with the desire of the Lord for His fuller work, and His "New Thing." Of course, as usual, the ministry concerning the utterness of the Cross and the life in the Spirit was sifting and dividing, and there was—as there is everywhere—the expression, if not in words, in clear manifestation—"These are hard sayings, who can hear them?" But how blessed it was to find that in every place the Lord has a sacred remnant who want to go on wholly with Him. It was a joy to meet several of the Lord's servants in Grand Rapids and feel that spiritual hunger for Himself which made ministry so easy. Then what a wealth may be for God in being given a message to that great crowd of students at the Moody Institute, where we were privileged to speak three times. Here it was a peculiar joy to meet and have fellowship both personally and in ministry with our dear brother, Capt. Wallis of Dublin. Our brother is fulfilling a great and valuable ministry in the States.

By reason of its great area the United States makes impressions much more vivid than in other places, and therefore one returns home, not necessarily with a *different* conviction but with a much stronger one that the great and desperate need is for real foundation work: deepening, deepening, deepening! And inasmuch as there can be no foundation work

without excavation and displacement, there is undoubtedly a great need for much to go that holds the ground.

We repeat that this may not be more so in the U.S.A., but it is a very great need everywhere. The characteristic of so much of the Christian life of to-day is—some would call it superficiality—but we would perhaps include this and get nearer the trouble if we said externality. The terrible lack everywhere is that of inwardness. It is not enough that a thing should be deep in itself, it is essential that the depth should be inward in the case of the believer. There are many handling deep things in a superficial life.

We are convinced that it will only be at cost and through suffering that all the fulness of God will be attained unto. Our hearts go out to God in real travail for His people in the States, as everywhere, and we cannot but feel that many perish for want of knowledge.

#### Staffordshire.

While the Bognor Conferences were being held, and for a period of six weeks our sisters Chapman and Otter were engaged in ministry in Staffordshire. This time is reported to have been a "wonderful time of Holy Spirit ministry." We give the report as we had it.

#### Our (Venture) His Work.

Our visit to Staffs. was truly a venture of faith accompanied with many difficulties, *but* we had our faith in the God who doeth wonders and He did not fail.

The first Sunday saw a real beginning. We were asked to take the morning service—knowing it to be God's will we did, praise God it was an earnest of all that followed.

Then began a very wonderful time of Holy Ghost ministry; for we had no programme, yet we were never idle. God met many of His hungry ones in His Word—in "Sisters meetings" and many others. Three weeks we spent in Gornal, obeying Christ's injunction, "Feed my sheep." In Bible classes, meetings, visitation and personal contact many of God's going on ones were definitely met of Him. Then together with this was the sorrow in our hearts for the babes in Christ without adequate teachers who had gone back and had grown cold. God reclaimed many during our stay.

We then went to Highgate common and had all our ministry in the home with the exception of one meeting; for this time we must praise God. Many got a new vision of the Christ and a divine incentive to go on despite the cost. God's Word stands immutable always. From *here* we went to Bromley for a week's mission, for deepening of spiritual life. Both very conscious of our deep need were standing in for God's will to be done. It was. Many babes in Christ were given keys to the reading of His Word and hungry ones met, but oh, how the outworking of the Cross is needed to bring a spirit of true love and fellowship in His children.

This report is all too inadequate, but we would lay upon the hearts of God's children many dear souls for prayer. Those really who long for a deeper life and are teachers, *Pray*, pray through. There is an intense famine of the hearing of the Word of God. Souls are perishing for lack of vision: we could go on at length like this, but realising the futility of words we ask of God—Teach us how to pray and adjust ourselves to the meeting of His need on the earth at this time. E. O.

#### August Conferences.

The August gatherings at Honor Oak were times of a blessed sense of the Lord in the midst. We were led to dwell upon some of the abiding meanings of "Pentecost."

The great truth which held us in these days was that everything at Pentecost centred in and related to one thing, namely, the enthronement of the Lord Jesus in full virtue of His universal triumph to begin His heavenly reign—"Sitting on the right hand of the Father until His enemies are made His footstall." We saw David's greater Son on the throne bringing the "House" into view; and building it by the Spirit of wisdom with which He has been anointed. "A House of prayer for all nations." "A House of the priestly ministry of the Saints."

The gatherings were large throughout, and probably larger on the Monday than for years. We had the joy of the presence of several overseas friends, including Pastor and Madam Eberhard of France, Mr. Bert. Rice of Toronto, Miss Forel of Switzerland, Miss Weideman of France and Mr. and Mrs. Elder of Spain, and Mr. Henry Johnson of France. Most of these friends spoke to us in the gatherings.

# The Reactions of the Lord

No. V.

WE now desire to gather up in a positive presentation—even at the risk of some repetition—what we believe to be the essence and substance of the testimony for which the Lord has ever reacted and would now react in a day of declension. There are three words which represent this testimony, and these three words may be clearly seen to govern and interpret the whole of the Scriptures. There is no part of the Scriptures which does not relate in some way to one or more of these words or objects. They are, in the Old Testament,

The Altar, The House, The Name,  
or in the New Testament,

The Blood, The Church, The Sovereignty.

## 1. The Altar and The Blood.

Every reaction and new beginning that has come from God has been by an altar. The first of these was that of Abel, although there must have been an earlier shedding of blood, when the consciousness of being uncovered led to God's clothing or covering the expelled two with skins of animals. Then when that world was wiped out in judgment by the flood a new beginning was made with Noah's altar.

When there was nothing of a distinctive character speaking for God in the days of Abram, the Lord laid His hand upon him, called him out as an elect instrument, brought him to an elect land, and with the man and the place of His new beginning brought together an altar was erected. There was a brief lapse when Abram went down to Egypt, but on his return the original ground was retaken with a reconstructed altar. Thus a distinctive seed was marked out; and some four hundred years later that seed in being constituted a corporate testimony against world-wide misrepresentation of God, an altar was the conspicuous factor, initially and continuously. It is significant that, although many thousands of lambs were slain on the night of their separation, the record always speaks in the singular never in the plural. It was always "the lamb" or "a lamb." There was only One Lamb in God's sight, and

although every threshold was an altar, only one altar was in heaven's view. (The Word in Exod. xii., 22, translated "bason" is in the Hebrew "threshold.")

This truth of new beginnings with the altar can be clearly seen afterward in the case of

The receiving of the law and the Pattern of the heavenly things by Moses.

The great altar of the Tabernacle and Temple governed the life of Israel for many years, until the times of declension set in, and then each movement back toward God was markedly the altar coming again into its place. So in Elijah's stand.—I. Kings, xviii.

So with the revival under Hezekiah.—II. Chron., xxx.

Then again with Josiah. II. Chron., xxxv.

Hardly had Josiah passed off the scenes than his work fell to ruins, judgment fell, Jerusalem was destroyed, the Temple burnt, and the people went into captivity.

After seventy years a remnant returned, and we read in Ezra iii. 3, that the first thing that the remnant did was to "put the altar in its place." This is God's new work in reaction. We have not gathered in every instance, but only enough to indicate, and perhaps establish, a recognition of the principle. We leave the matter of the altar there for the time being while we consider the essential element in the altar, which is the blood. The testimony of the altar is the testimony of the blood. As we approach this sacred thing may we urge our readers to give the most careful heed to this matter. Here we touch the heart of everything. There has been nothing so assailed as the testimony of the Blood. By ridicule, a sneer, and intellectual superiority from one direction. By an ignorant and false refinement which pretends to be shocked, from another. By a merely rationalistic and philosophical interpretation which sees no more than a crude system of ritual and rite by which a universal religious instinct expresses itself; a form and idea which belongs to times of immaturity and unenlightenment. These and many others from its opponents. Then from its would-be friends it



suffers in numerous ways, ranging from the ritualistic and sacerdotal, which has names and forms without life and power, to the other swing of the pendulum, which is marked by a frivolous, noisy, superficial, cheap, jazz-chorus singing about this most holy and sacred thing—"The precious Blood." There is nothing in the universe more bitterly hated and more terribly feared by the Adversary than the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. But if it is to be a mighty operative factor in life and service, faith must have as intelligent a basis concerning it as possible; and we are especially concerned with the vocation of the people of God here!

Let us then see

### What the Blood stands for.

#### I. It is the testimony of a holy, incorruptible, and indestructible life.

Having dealt with this aspect in "The Centrality and Universality of the Cross," we shall not do more than point out the essential elements here:

Firstly, let us note the sacredness of life as in the blood, for we are now familiar with the scriptural teaching that "The life is in the blood, and the blood is the life."

There is a tremendous emphasis in scripture upon the sacredness of blood. Indeed the word "Soul" is often used interchangeably with both "blood" and "life," and all the characteristics and values of the soul are associated in the same way with the "blood" and the "life." But the blood as the life is related in a peculiar way to God as representing His specific prerogatives. Thus the whole matter is gathered up in a preservation or reservation and a provision as laid down in "Leviticus" and "John."

In "Leviticus" the Lord repeatedly stresses that blood is not to be drunk. This rule would be broken under a penalty of death. (Lev. vii. 26, 27; xvii. 10-12.) The law concerning blood and its sacredness was carried so far that if a man went hunting and, in killing his quarry, if the blood flowed on the ground he was not to leave the blood exposed, but cover it over, as he would honour the body of a fallen man, showing the same reverence.

Now does it not strike you with a great force of significance that when we have repeatedly read "Ye shall eat not manner of blood... if any eat any manner of blood he shall be cut off." Then we turn and read in John vi. 53,

"*Except ye... drink the blood of the Son of Man ye have no life.*" Surely the very first thing which this implies is that the whole question of life has been shut up by God to the Person and Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the life of the Person, and gives the Person a uniqueness and distinctiveness which no other in history has ever had. Then it gives to the Cross of the Lord Jesus an unique and supreme meaning and value in that it was there that He shed His blood and poured forth His life; releasing that life to be received by all who believed on the Person and accepted the meaning of His Cross.

The spiritually blind Jewish religious leaders of John vi. would naturally be very scandalised at His words about drinking blood, and would revert to the tradition of the letter of Leviticus. This would be because on the one hand they did not realise the meaning of that reservation, and on the other hand they did not recognise who Jesus was. To recognise the Lord Jesus is to be lifted above law into life.

The thought of the sacredness of the blood as the life is that of the Divine relationship of it. That is that it is bound up with the Lord and no man can touch it. All of a piece with this is

### The Holiness of the Blood.

We are familiar with the injunctions concerning the spotlessness of the offerings of old. "Without spot, or blemish." There was a sense in which the priests were expert fault-finders. Their business was to find fault if they could. The discovery of a blemish in a proffered sacrifice meant its immediate rejection. Their eyes were as the eyes of God in this matter, therefore what passed was after the most scrupulous investigation when the formula "Tetelestai"—"it is perfect"—was pronounced over it. Such was the blood then, and this is the testimony of the holiness of the Life of the Lord Jesus, and consequently the nature of that Divine deposit within the born anew Child of God. We are not perfect or spotless, but the life from Him in us is, and by its vital activity through faith and obedience we are to be conformed to His image, and are assured that one day we shall be like Him. Blessed be God, we have the earnest of perfection.

This precious blood does cleanse.

This leads us at this point to say just a little word on the

### Shedding and the Sprinkling of the Blood.

If we are not mistaken the shedding relates to the whole question of sin, guilt, death, judgment; and by the shedding there is the remission, and the whole ground of salvation is secured.

The sprinkling is that by which we are brought into living vocational fellowship with God. The Tabernacle and Priesthood of old represented, not only Israel's salvation, but Israel's priestly ministry in the nations.

They were meant to be "a kingdom of priests," and God's ministering instrument among and to all nations.

Hence there was a special significance given to the sprinkling of the blood. Although the Tabernacle was perfect as a structure, and the "pattern" was carried out to the last detail: although the priesthood was complete in number and adornment, nothing and no one could function until every part, altar, laver, table, curtains, candlestick, golden altar, mercy-seat, vessels, instruments, ear, thumb, toe, etc., had been sprinkled with the blood. It was regarded as a higher function to catch the blood for sprinkling than even to slay the sacrifice and thus shed that blood. *Nothing lives in the service and ministry of God only in virtue of sprinkled blood.* Oh that men would see this to-day! The most perfect structure, the most complete outfit, the most ornate edifice, the most extensive organization, the most fastidious order, and the most devout purpose will all fail to function in the eternal interests of the Lord apart from the virtue of the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit—the Fire of God—is indispensable to spiritual life and energy, and He only comes where that blood has been sprinkled. The Spirit and the Blood are one, and always go together, one as the preparation the other as the attestation. Calvary precedes Pentecost. The Cross is the way to the glorifying. To be crucified with Christ is to have put away that "flesh" upon which the Holy Oil may not come. God is never going to quicken and vitalise what He has for ever put away; neither will He glorify and use in His service what is of man.

Whatever the means and methods or necessities which come in its course the one allinclusive object of the Divine reactions is to have that in the earth which is wholly and undividedly of God. To this end it is essential that the Cross be wrought so deeply into the experience of the Lord's servants that they shall come to utter despair as to themselves and

all else; and a full heart-cry for the fulness of the Holy Spirit. To such a crisis the Lord will work by all manner of means, slowly breaking down all other ground of confidence, and writing "failure" on all other resource.

The testimony of the Blood, the Cross, then, is the testimony of that which is uniquely, wholly, sacredly of God in absolute holiness.

The next related factor in the Blood as the Life is its incorruptibleness and indestructibleness. These elements go together and are one. What is incorruptible is indestructible.

This is a life over which death has no power. Death has been met in the power of this life. Hades has been entered and plundered in the power of this life. Satan and his entire kingdom has had his might exhausted by the power of this life. He who was and is this Life now lives for evermore as the Testimony to the universal triumph of His own blood over every force that has stood in the way of God's end.

By this imperishable life He has perfected salvation. Nothing was ever perfect of old because the mediators constantly changed by death; and death breaking in all the time meant no completeness. But this High Priest perfects for ever because He lives after the power of an *endless* life. Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost, *i.e.*, the ultimate and final end.

By this imperishable life He has bound His own to Himself. They share this life by new birth, and they will never die. Death is not cessation of being, it is something spiritual. Life triumphant over death is spiritual, and means ascendancy over sin, self, Satan, death. In other words it is power and victory.

By this indestructible life the Lord Jesus has inaugurated a ministry and a work which will persist to its ultimate consummation in spite of every force of hell and earth which may be hurled against it. Mighty empires and powerful hierarchies have been brought to ruins in setting themselves against that which He said He would build. "The gates, [*i.e.*, counsels] of Hades" have *not* prevailed, intensely as they have striven. It is a blessed thing to be in and a part of that work which shall abide for ever. For a man's work to go to pieces when he is withdrawn is no compliment to him. It only means that it was man's work, not God's.

Like kingdoms, men rise and wane. Are we seeking to make a name for *ourselves*? This is very short-sighted at best. The testimony

which God is reacting to is that relating to a work which stands and persists when every destructive force has spent itself. This testimony and such a work is in virtue of the Blood of the Lord Jesus.

There are all kinds of alarms to-day because of rapid and drastic changes. Historic creeds are being treated as mere scraps of paper, and that by the leading ecclesiastical representatives. Hoary institutions and traditions are rapidly losing their hold and influence. Organised Christianity is markedly on the wane. The maintenance of the religious system is demanding all the wit, ingenuity, cunning, acumen and resource of men. There never were so many "attractions," schemes, popularising methods, &c., to keep up the "church"? Even in fairly evangelical quarters the appeals for help are so numerous that it is becoming—as someone has said—a matter of not being able to afford to go to church.

All this and much more speaks of failure and defeat, but the Lord will have that in the earth which is His triumph. To "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints," is something more than to contend for orthodoxy of doctrine; to champion an evangelical creed; to be a "fundamentalist"; it is to recognise and fervently seek to secure for God that upon which His own heart is set; namely, a people of the Altar, the Cross, the Blood. A people who have been crucified with Christ in spiritual reality and apprehension, and whose life is an abiding testimony to Calvary's victory over all Christ's foes, within and without, and from whom there flows the stream of Divine, holy, mighty, energising and indestructible life to the ends of the earth.

T. A.-S.

*In our next issue, D.V., we shall speak of the Testimony of the Blood in relation to the New Covenant.*

## For Girls and Boys

### The Gospel in the Farmyard (No. 7)

"Is Anything too hard for the Lord?"

ON my last visit to our farm I saw there a white calf—a sturdy, plump little fellow, the very picture of health, frisking about as merrily as any proper calf should do. But it had not always been like that, and I want to tell you its history.

Like the lamb of which I told you in our last story, when the calf was born it had no power in its legs, and although it appeared to be otherwise quite strong it could not stand up. Of course the farmer fed it, hoping that in a short time it would be well; but as day followed day without any change taking place the farmer began to grow concerned. For what use would a calf be that could not stand up? If the farmer had known for certain that it would never be any different he would probably have killed it at once, thus saving any further expense and trouble in feeding it, but then, he thought, suppose it is going to recover? what a pity to kill it now and lose the greater value that it would be later on. You see, the farmer was not thinking so much about the calf as he was of his own business—and of course, we cannot

blame him for that, can we? for he had his living to make. He would naturally have preferred the calf to live, if it was going to be a strong and healthy animal: but if it was not—well, the sooner its life ended the better.

Now I want to break off the story here to point out first of all some differences between the farmer and God, who has especially under His care every boy and girl.

1. The farmer would have been relieved if the calf had died, but God desires only that all should *live*.

We need to remember that with God to live means far more than for our bodies only to be alive—it means to enter into all the fulness of His blessing not only during our stay on the earth, but also, through all eternity. I expect you have noticed in reading the Old Testament how again and again when people provoked God by disobedience and rebellion He might have destroyed them and given them no further chance of repentance, and yet He forgave when they cried to Him and did not cast them off. His message to them through His servants was

"Why will ye die?" On His side He was always seeking to bring them back to Himself that they might live and enjoy all the blessing and prosperity that He desired to bestow upon them. Yet despite all that He could do we find that very often His love was scorned and His blessing was lost: but it is clearly to be seen that He had no pleasure in this. And when we come to the New Testament how much we see of God's desire that we should live and not die. You remember that the Lord Jesus Himself said, amongst many other similar words, "I came that ye may have LIFE, and may have it abundantly." (John x, 10). Will you find other verses which contain the same thought of God's desire that we might live and not die? So you see, if any be in the end lost to God, and pass into that awful state of eternal separation from Him which the Bible calls death—something far, far more than the death only of the body—they will never be able to say truly that God *willed* this for them; He longs with all His heart that they should live, and has done everything in His power to save them from death. And this brings us to the second important difference between the farmer and God.

2. The farmer desired only the end which would be the least costly to himself: God counted no price too great to pay for the salvation of the least boy or girl.

Here we are touching something very sacred—the price God paid to save us from death. Have you ever thought what it cost our Lord Jesus Christ to come into this world? He had lived in all the perfect purity and glory of Heaven, and then came down into this world of sin and death, feeling all the time the awful contrast, and yet living here a life of perfect holiness and love—for our sakes. And then came the still greater sacrifice—that of meeting all the horror of sin coming upon Him at the Cross and pouring out His soul unto death that He might bear the judgment due to our sin and also overthrow Satan who held us all in captivity. No wonder it is written: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John III, 16). Here we see God's desire that we might live, and what He gave to make that possible—His Son; and the reason for it all—His Love. Yes, it is the Love that makes all the difference—the farmer did not love his calf, but God loves you. Have you realized it?

The third great difference is this:

3. The farmer did not necessarily want the calf for himself—it was worth to him only the amount of money it could bring him, and he would have been quite prepared to sell it, but God wants us *for Himself*.

I expect you have all known what it is to have a toy of your very own which is worth more to you than all the money in the world; and sometimes perhaps you have hugged it and said, "This is my very own!" That is just how God loves to regard boys and girls—He longs to say it of all, but He can really say it only of those who have given themselves to Him and are content to belong to Him. He is seeking to have a people for Himself—His "peculiar people" or "a people for His Own possession" the Bible calls them—that through them He may show forth all the glories of His Son; and in that company He needs boys and girls. Of such He says "They shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels" (Mal. III, 17). Can you say, on your part, "I am the Lord's—I am not my own—I am bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ"? Such a declaration means utter surrender to Jesus Christ as King of every part of the life—but happy is the boy or girl who can truly say it.

If you read carefully the two epistles of Peter you will find there words which will confirm what is said above in regard to 1, 2, and 3. Here is a Bible treasure hunt for you.

Now to resume the story of the calf. The farmer went on day after day feeding it, again and again wondering after all whether to kill it because there was no hope of any improvement. And then at last, one glad day, he noticed a sign of strength in its legs; and in the course of a few more days the calf was standing upright, and as I have already said, it soon became as frisky and well as any other animal on the farm. Here was long patience rewarded for the farmer, and all his labour and expenditure recompensed! I expect he said again and again, "I am glad I did not kill that calf!" And perhaps it was a lesson to him never to give up hope, however hopeless the conditions appeared. And here we can gladly point out how the farmer speaks to us of God Himself:

*God never looks upon any soul as either not worth saving, or as too bad to be saved.*

We read of the Lord Jesus that "He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near

*(Continued on page 90.)*

## “The Flame of a Sword”

“He placed at the East of the Garden . . . the flame of a sword which turned every way . . .” Genesis iii, 24.

A GLANCE at the context will show that this deliberate act of God was a precautionary measure against fallen Adam and his race as now “flesh,” attempting or assaying to touch or appropriate that which symbolises the holy Divine Life of the ages. Ultimately it points to Christ as the Life, The Way of Life, and The Source of Life. Trees are always symbols of men, and man is always the symbol of representation.

The principle here so early established is then clearly that for “flesh” or man in his “flesh” to presume into the realm of what is wholly and utterly of God is to be cut down. This is not only true when the flesh would advance directly in proud self-sufficiency, or in ignorant and immodest presumption, but this “flame of a sword turned every way.” Every kind and direction of the advance of the flesh is met in the same way. Who shall ever tabulate or define the ways of fleshly activity and projectings of itself in relation to that which is of God?

The Scriptures, however, give a great number of instances; too many for our consideration here, but we may note some as typical and suggestive. Let us first, albeit, realise that the Scriptures establish abiding principles by powerful and drastic methods, and if at a post-scripture age (that is, after the canon of scripture is closed as to content), the Lord does not invariably come out in the same flaming expression or form, the principle remains, and there is no departure from what He has laid down in His Word.

It would be well if we recognised the great law of “Holiness unto the Lord”; consecration to God; and upon what this law rests. The two great factors in this relationship to God are

### The Blood and The Spirit.

Where these are the holiness of God appertains and is involved. That which had its being in virtue of these is touched by the flesh at its peril. Hence in the great symbolic system of the Old Testament the most scrupulous care is taken that nothing which is a type or suggestion of flesh shall ever appear uncovered before God or in relation to His things.

Egypt, which means fleshly strength in the realm of will often came into *assertive* relation to what was of God, but never without judgment. Pharaoh represents the “I will” of God’s adversary, and as that eventually reaches out its hand to take hold of what had been consecrated by the Blood of the Lamb and had come under the régime of the “Pillar”—the Spirit, it is smashed with a terrible judgment; through entrapping and confusion and overwhelming. The flame of the sword came round *that way*.

This fleshy will is not all at once eradicated from the servants of God. It limits the Lord and brings much suffering upon them often through many years of their lives. So often the best and greatest work is accomplished through them in a comparatively brief period when the “Natural force” in Spiritual things has abated, and they had learnt that only God can do His own work (In the Old Testament natural force in God’s servants, *i.e.*, preservation of faculties and health, is only a *type* of spiritual energy. See Moses, Caleb, etc.). Eventually it will have to be recognised that the Lord has not been working sympathetically with the self-strength of the will of His servants, however good may have been their motive and object. If the Lord Jesus is an example of anything, He is more than anything else an example of dependence. The staves of His journey were very long and can be clearly seen. His serenity and confidence, His tranquility and possession are the issue of a life lived in secret with His Father, to whom He is seen to resort continually. “Nothing of myself” is a watchword of His.

One of the most damaging things in the realm of God’s work; a thing which eventually leads to shame and confusion and much sorrow is

### Natural Soul Force

projected by strong-willed, determined, aggressive Christians, who have not come to a spiritual state where they are able to discriminate between stubborn indomitableness, and personal determination and resolution, and what is altogether another thing—spiritual grace in endurance, perseverance, Divine in-strengthening.

The Lord has often to break the former to make place for the latter. Do not talk about

Paul's wonderful will to go through. Let Paul talk to you about the Lord's wonderful grace to continue.

Whenever a man or a woman really recognising the truth that Calvary means the end of "I" commits himself or herself to the Lord to work it out, the flame of the sword will come round to the point where that "flesh" would seek to enter into the realm where the first Adam no longer has any standing.

The features of a personal strength of will are hardness, coldness, death, resentment of interference, suspicion of rivals, intolerance of obstructors, detachment, independence, secretiveness, heat, etc. While spiritual strength is always marked by love, warmth, life, fellowship, openness, confidence, and trust in the Lord.

If the Lord at any time of old desired to refer to and give an illustration of His exceeding great power He brought Israel's deliverance from Egypt and Pharaoh to mind. Egypt was the great world-power, and Egypt held out against God to the last ounce. But what was the instrument of the overthrow of this power? It was the Lamb and its shed blood. At the end, in the Revelation, the dragon, the whole power of Satan is overthrown by the Lamb. The Lamb is the synonym for weakness and yieldingness. If the weakness of God can do this mighty destruction, what can His strength not do?

Paul says of Christ that "He was crucified through weakness," and, he adds, "we also are weak with Him." Yes, but he also says, "by the Cross he triumphed." Triumphed through weakness!

One of the most difficult lessons that the Lord's children have to learn is how to

### Let Go to God.

Even in a matter that is right and in the purpose of God there has to be the lessons which Abraham had to learn through Isaac. It is not in our personal clinging to a God-given *thing*, whether it be a promise or a possession, but faiths restful and fear-free holding on to the Lord himself. If we had a thing from the Lord Himself we can rest assured that what He gives He will not take again without some larger purpose in view; and on the other hand, none can take from us what He has determined for us. But there are many dangers which arise from our own will in relation to a Divine gift or purpose.

The first is of making that thing ours instead

of holding it in and for the Lord. This leads to fierceness and personal uprisings. Then jealousy will not be long in showing its ugly head, and jealousy with its twin—suspicion—soon destroy fellowship and spontaneity of communion. Does not jealousy declare most loudly the fact of personal possession, personal interest? If we realised how privileged we are to have even a very small part in the things of God, and how it is all of His Grace, surely we should be very grateful that we could just have the remotest connection with Him.

Then further, when we hold things received or as promised or believed to be for us as only unto the Lord, in restful trust, we make it possible for the Lord to save us from being mistaken in the matter. It is not an unusual thing for a child of God to come to see that a thing which he or she most strongly believed to be God's will or way for them was not so, and it had to be surrendered. If there was any personal element of will in it the experience has proved terrible, and has left works of bitterness and mistrust. Yet once again, a strong personal mind and will in relation to things of God too often makes us a law unto ourselves. That is, we get into an attitude which implies that we *only* know the will of God in the matter. We do not trust that others also may be led of the Lord in this thing, and so the corporateness of guidance so necessary to the house of God is destroyed or paralysed. It is true that when a thing is really of God, in His will, by gift or by promise, and we begin to try and work it, realise it, use it, make it effectual by our own strength, or wisdom, then it seems to harden and become dead. Then through a battle in which all sorts of questions, fears, heats and chills are mixed up we have to come to the place where we say "Well Lord, if this thing is from you, I trust you to realise it; if it is not, then I let it go." That is victory! The Lord's way is clear! "The good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God" is only known when we—our bodies—had come unto the altar. Let us be sure that what we believe to be a strong faith-stand and fight for something which we are convinced is of God is not fraught with those baneful elements which spring from a natural determination, and a constitutional or temperamental dislike for letting go or giving in. It depends on whether we let go in unbelief or weakness, or whether it is *faith's glorious victory of letting go to God.*

More another time.

T. A.-S.

# The Cross and the City of God

A Consideration of Ultimate Things.

No. 1.

Rev. xxi. 9-11—"He carried me away in Spirit to a mountain great and high and showed me the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone clear as crystal."

Rev : xxi. 15.—"The building of the wall thereof was jasper and the city was pure gold as it were transparent glass."

Rev : xxi. 21.—"The street (way) was pure gold as it were transparent glass."

Rev : xxii. 1.—"And He showed me a river of water of life clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

Rev : iii. 12.—"I will write on him the Name of my God, the name of the City of my God . . . that cometh down out of heaven from my God, and my own new Name."

Heb : xi. 10.—"The City which hath the foundations, whose builder and architect is God."

Heb : xi. 16.—"God is not ashamed to be called their God ; He hath prepared for them a City."

Heb : xii. 22.—"The City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem."

Heb : xiii. 14.—"We seek the city which is to come."

Gal : iv. 25-26.—"Jerusalem which is above is free which is our Mother."

Phil : iii. 20.—"Our citizenship in Heaven."

Our main difficulty in contemplating the City of God will be to get the literal and material out of mind, we are dealing pre-eminently with what is spiritual.

The City of God is not merely a place to which we are going, but is the Church of God of which we are part.

We are going to Heaven, a place ; we are not going to spaceless clouds for all eternity ; but in considering the City of God, the Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem, we are considering the Church, the Body of Christ ; and we are only dealing with the nature and characteristics of that City as related to the ultimate things. We are not now touching questions related to

times and dispensations. The last thing in the Word of God is a City and everything heads up to that. He is related to the City and the City to Him.

It is a concrete and all inclusive presentation in finality of all the spiritual elements and features of divine life in the individual and in the Church ; the full and final expression of conformity to the image of God's Son ; "chosen and fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of His Son." Rom : viii. 29.

Here in Rev : xxi. we see the City of God, a realisation of that fore-ordination told of in Rom : viii. 29, and it is only another way of contemplating the glorified Son of Man, in His corporate expression and all that is in Christ for the believer being realised.

We must ever remember, the one central and dominating factor is the Lamb in the midst of the Throne, because everything here is the expression of Calvary's work and is the realisation of all that the Lord Jesus came to do by His death and resurrection. The elements of divine life are spirituality, heavenliness, transparency, elevation, stability, fulness, love, fellowship, sovereignty, government, openness and exclusiveness, light, inwardness, glory, and many more.

We are dealing with spiritual factors that go to make up the Church of God, the New Jerusalem, and when you see the Church of God presented here in Rev : xxi. you have it presented in its final fulness in Christ, to which we are now moving. Cp. Eph. i. 21-22, as things are now it is the building of the Church, the *growing* up into Him.

Let us stay awhile with the features and the characteristics of the City of God.

## The First Feature is Heavenliness and Spirituality.

"it came out from heaven" therefore it must have been first in heaven before it could come down out from heaven.

"they looked for a heavenly city" Heb : xi. 10.  
"He looked for the City which hath the foundations whose builder and maker was God."

"Our citizenship is in heaven" Phil: iii. 20.

We find much in the Word of God about material for the heavenly City, and the suggestion runs clearly through the Word that since the fall, everything God has brought in is heavenly and not earthly. God's people are of heaven, a heavenly people, and not of the earth; a heavenly seed, and the heavenly seed began in type with Abel, and there can be traced out the heavenly line all through the Word.

Cain is a man of the earth and as such is rejected. Later Israel becomes the type of the heavenly people—they are a people taken out of the earth, extricated from the earth and its ways, taken out from Egypt, through the blood of the Lamb Who is now their true life and its source; cut off by the Red Sea and out in the Wilderness under government of the "Pillar of cloud"—The Holy Spirit; a people as out from the earth and unto God. This in type constituted a heavenly people, a people from above and not of the earth.

The predominating colour in Israel's camp was heavenly blue. Each had to have a piece of blue like unto the High Priest's ephod; typical of heavenliness.

John's Gospel is pre-eminently the Gospel for the Church and its main emphasis is heavenliness and spirituality—"born anew" "born from above" "born of God."

The word 'LIFE' in John is always related to the heavenlies, it is *heavenly life* "I am the life" "I am come that ye might have life." He came to give in His own person this life: "In Him was life" "I am come down out of heaven."

In John ii. He takes up the relationship of the Lord's people. John ii. 4 literally is "woman what have you and I in common?" As in Matt: xii 48-50.—". . . but He answered—Who is my mother and who are my brethren? for whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother." Yes, the heavenly relationships of this born-out-from-God people transcend earthly relationships all the time; it is a bond in the spirit, deeper and more abiding than any earthly bond; the interests of the heavenlies and the Lord's things far transcends interests of worldly relationships and concerns. The more you have in common with the Lord, the less you have in common with the world, and the greater the strain when you have to be in it though not of it. You violate the laws of your

spiritual life and nature if you ignore this spiritual relationship, and cripple your own spiritual effectiveness; it will be impossible finally for the heavenly people to have any fellowship in spirit with the old creation.

Rev. xxi. 22.—"I saw no temple there" Why? The people are a worshipping people—they *are* worship; it is spiritual worship not localised.

John iv. 20.—"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, but ye (Jews) say that in Jerusalem must men worship." The Lord answered, "the true worshippers shall worship the father in spirit and in truth for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers." The Father is the seeker of the eternal City as well as its builder and architect.

The entire sustenance of the Lord's people is spiritual and heavenly (see John vi.). Life, sustenance, development, maturity, the whole basis of life and growth of the City of God is spiritual. Spiritual growth by heavenly food and spiritual sustenance by feeding on the living Bread from heaven—"I am the Bread of Life."

And all service is out from above—heavenly, words and works from above; that which the father doeth and speaketh, John v. 19, 36. How does He see what the father doeth? Only by the Spirit.—Matt, x. 20. "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." All this is not of the earth, it is heavenly, and is all gathered up and related to the heavenly Person, the Person from above, the Lord Jesus—"I came forth from the Father." John vi. 28 "I came down from heaven." John v. 38, and yet having an abiding residence in heaven even while on earth. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John i. 18.

Pass to the Ephesian letter, written especially for the Church. How much it has to say about "in the heavenlies"; Cp. Eph. i. 3, ii. 6, xi. 10.

The Lord's people are so slow to accept the implications and cost of this. We do so want something on the earth, something of the nature of a quick return for our labour. Some gratification to our senses, something to see. We do groan so constantly under the labours of the Lord to get us cut off from the earth and to get us a heavenly people. We so often fail to see what the Lord is doing. We must be extricated from earthliness if we are to be made heavenly in character, and this is going to



cost if we yield to the Lord's hand. The power that raised Christ from the dead, the exceeding greatness of that might is called into operation to get the Church into its right place in the heavenlies, cut off from the earth, in order that it might come down out from heaven (Ephes. i. 19-20) God's great might called forth to extricate us from earthliness. Ps : 87.—“ His foundation is in the mountain, the Lord Loveth the gates of Zion.”

Rev : xxi. 10.—“ He carried me . . . to a mountain . . . and showed me the Holy City, New Jerusalem . . . the bride the wife of the Lamb.”

It is interesting to note, the same angel took him into the wilderness to see Babylon, Rev : 17 1-5. No need for a high mountain from which to see that wicked city, it is of the earth ; but the Holy City is most high.

In Ps : 87 God's City is set over against all other Cities mentioned in the Psalm.

Rahab—Egypt, symbol of natural resource.

#### Egypt and Zion.

Abraham comes into *the* land—God's land of promise—by faith and found a supreme test of faith waiting him there ; found the heathen in occupation, their idolatrous altars everywhere and a great famine in the land. So he turned to Egypt as an alternative to apparent contradiction and denial ; to Egypt, the place of natural resource, Abraham turned under testing.

Whenever Israel's spirituality was low they turned to Egypt for help ; when, because their faith was out of order, they found the Lord no longer sufficient.

A *little* natural resource will mar the City of God and bring a cloud. In the City of God *all* natural resource is cut off, not permitted by God, and by God cut off, brought to an end.

Egypt doesn't come into the New Jerusalem, they are two different Worlds, one earthly the other heavenly.

“ Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God.” Ps : 87.3. Have you dealt with Egypt by knowing the cutting off from natural resources ? Do we accept this *law* of the City of God ? Natural resource in spiritual things is not admitted in the City of God, and *all* natural resource must come to an end. Once you *know the Lord* as your resource you are not depressed to hear natural resources are cut off, you don't want Egypt. Egypt has got to be smitten, and the Lord is smiting Egypt for

us and taking away our natural resources in spiritual things.

The “ natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them.” 1 Cor : viii. 14. This cutting off from natural resource is foolishness to the natural man ; is it foolishness to *you* ?

“ Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man . . . but unto us God revealed them through the Spirit ” ; “ the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God ” ; “ we received not the Spirit of bondage, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might know the things which were freely given to us by God.” 1 Cor : ii. 9-12.

To see the City of God needs spiritual capacity—The Blood of the Lamb comes in between you and Egypt, the sea rolls between and after that the earth is but a wilderness, resourceless for them, they now live by a heavenly life in a whole and utter dependance upon God. Egypt has been smitten and is lying behind on the other side of the Red Sea ; O blessed position ! “ I will make mention of Egypt, but God *loveth* the gates of Zion.”

#### Babylon and Zion.

*Babylon* : the product of human effort and the glory of fallen man. “ Let us build a city . . . let us make us a name ” ; Gen : xi. 4 ; and in Dan : iv. 29-30 “ Is not this the great Babylon which I have built . . . by the might of my power and the glory of my majesty ? ” Here we see the glory of natural religious man, for we note that Babylon is always religious. Turn to the book of the Revelation and we find Babylon dressed in religious garb. Babylon is always religious, the religion of fallen man, Satan inspired. Gen : x. : 8-10, the beginning of this kingdom was Babel. What you can make or reach by your own effort, that is man's product by his own resources. Note, that Babel was the first city built on the new earth, the earth that had come through the flood of divine judgment, on *that* ground, typifying the ground of regeneration, this religious construction of man's ambitions in the realm of religious activity. And this thing, this religion of natural man is with us to-day ; yes, it will patronise God, even bringing His Name into it, as of old—Babel :—“ Gate of God,” but touch it with the eternal fact and purpose of the Cross, bring Calvary's work and claim upon it and man

will rise up in enmity against the preaching of the Cross by the Holy Spirit, and defend his natural religious work and worship, and in the background will be discerned the Satanic hate and rebellion against God; and we see also in it Lucifer's bid for universal worship. Isaiah xiv. 14. It is our own glory in the realm where things are exclusively of God; yet how often there is found even here a personal interest in the things and work of God. Is not this so with the spirit of jealousy, disclosing a secret reservation of some personal interest? Or it may be pride, and assertion of "my right," wanting to be something, wanting to see *our* efforts produce something for God? All this will result in confusion and loss of effectiveness.

See the difference between the Corinthian and Ephesian believers. At Corinth they wanted something with man's name on it (I. Cor: i. 12-15) In Ephesus it is, in the heavenlies with God's Name on it (Eph. i. 3, 22, ii. 20).

#### Philistia and Zion.

*Philistia*, type of man's natural mind intruding into divine things; the people of Philistia are always in the Word called uncircumcised. Man's natural mind taking hold of divine things apart from the cross. In Babylon we see natural man's *effort*. In Philistia we find natural man's *reason* taking hold of the things of God and intruding into them.

There is a preaching of the Cross in the wisdom of words that makes it of none effect (1 Cor: i. 17). The Devil does not altogether put out the Cross; the Cross can be preached without the preacher having been to the Cross; this is a subtle work of the devil.

*Tyre*. Business World; expansion the order of the day, but expansion and activities under the authority of the Prince of this World, the commercial spirit brought into the things of God, using the World's way, advertisement, much machinery, organisation, etc., this is not the way that the City of God is built.

*Ethiopia*, turn to Acts viii. 26-30. The Ethiopian reading from Isa. lüi. 7.—Philip meets him with the question "Understandest thou?" and he replies "How can I except one teach me." Here is the type of the darkened mind concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus, It takes the light of God to shine into our hearts, to reveal the Lord Jesus. It takes divine shining to show *who* Jesus is. 2 Cor: iv. 6.

Over against these cities, Zion is placed, and is different. It is not that which we see in the other cities, it is different, and those born there

find also their well springs there. Zion is heavenly, and the Lord loveth the gates of Zion; and those born in Zion say "All my well-springs are in thee; nothing now in Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, etc.

Zion and Jerusalem though inseparable are not the same, Zion is only a part of Jerusalem, the citadel where the King dwells. Zion typifies the Lord Jesus. He as Zion is altogether different from all these other things represented here. He is God's ultimate, and that to which God is moving; the result of the Spiritual process which is going on now.

The Lord is seeking a people cut off from the earth and its ways, and brought into relationship with Himself, and it must be true of them that their affection is set on things above, not on the earth. Col: iii. 1-2.—"If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above" where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Remember resurrection and ascension is one act, see John xx. 17. "Touch me not for I am not yet ascended unto the Father . . .but . . . I ascend unto my Father and your Father." "Touch me not," "don't make of me something earthly on the part of natural affections" He is now a heavenly Lord and that fact has got to be recognised.

We have got to be a people whose life is wholly on the things of God, living out from heavenly resources and fulfilling a heavenly vocation; partaking of a heavenly nature. This is made possible by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, for the Bride, and to take her back to the Resurrection Man, that she may come forth as Bride out from heaven. Are we walking, living, in the Spirit, being cut off from the earth?

We are "in Christ," in the *second* Man, the Lord from heaven, are we living our *life in Him*? Is this true of us in life, nature, sustenance, service, are we looking for the Lord from heaven?

The City of God is most vividly distinctive from all that marks other cities of the earth Cp: Rev: xxi. with Matt: xi. "Woe unto you"; and it is not without significance that Matt: xi. closes with "Come unto Me." Come out from those cities upon which judgment is announced—come unto the city of Rest—that in which God finds His satisfaction. "Come unto Me and I will give you rest"; His city; in these Spiritual elements—where He is pleased to dwell.

"The throne of God and the Lamb shall be therein.—Rev: xxii. 3. T. A.-S.

(Further chapter on page 91.)

## The Gospel in the Farmyard

(Continued.)

unto God through Him" (Heb. vii, 25) and "whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x, 13). Is it possible that you who are reading this have come to the conclusion that you are not worth saving or are too bad a case for the Lord Jesus to save, or that something in your life which has defeated all your own efforts to deal with is hopeless also for the Lord? Will you believe that no case is hopeless for Him, and that if you are willing and obedient to His revealed will He can save you to the uttermost? Or perhaps your difficulty lies in someone else, and you have despaired of their ever being saved, and perhaps you have given up praying for them as a "hopeless" case? Oh, remember that He does not despair of any soul, and that He will follow, follow, follow the most "hopeless" case, seeking and willing and able to save if only the one concerned will turn to Him. And it may be that what He is needing more than anything else for the winning of someone is the renewing of your prayers for that one and your own confession that you had given up the case as hopeless whereas now you see that

"with God all things are possible" and "all things are possible to Him that believeth." Give yourself afresh therefore to seeking God for that person or thing that was once on your heart to pray for, and if you are sure it is in God's will to do the thing that you desire—and you may be quite sure of that if you are praying for the salvation of a soul—then refuse all doubt as to God's willingness or power to save, and pray and work until your patience and labour, like the farmer's, are recompensed with an abundant reward.

Just one further point. If you feel sometimes that your progress in the Christian life is very slow despite all your desire and endeavour to do God's will, remember that He Himself does not despair of you and that it is written in His word, "the Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." (Ps.cxxxviii 8). Count therefore on His persistence and His patience, and believe that "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i, 6). To this very end He has given His Holy Spirit to all who have yielded their hearts to him, and we can surely say of such a one as the Holy Spirit "there is nothing too hard for the Lord."

G. P.

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## FUTURE CONFERENCES

(If the Lord wills).

HONOR OAK, Sept. 6th, 7th, Oct. 4th, 5th, Nov. 1st, 2nd, Dec. 6th, 7th.

Mr. SPARKS expects to be at:—

Newcastle, September 25th, 26th, (Church Institute, Hood Street).

North Berwick, Sept. 13th, 14th (Tantallon Hall).

Dieulefit, France, Sept. 17th—19th.

Great Malvern, Nov. 13th.

Glasgow, The Tabernacle, Nov. 20th—30th.

In addition, we have been asked to supply the ministry for the following:—

Wycombe Marsh Baptist Church, Sept. 7th.

Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, Sept. 7th & 14th.

The "Welcome" Hall, Crawley, Sept. 28th.

Hoxton Market Christian Mission, Sept. 28th.

"Emmanuel," Blackpool, Sept. 21st.

**THE CROSS AND THE CITY OF GOD.—NO. H.**

WE have seen that the Holy City, New Jerusalem, is the nature of God's own people consummated, perfected, and glorified.

He is now constituting this city through the cross by the Eternal Spirit; shaping the individual members after His own image, the image of His Son; and for this we were ordained (Rom. viii. 29).

The people of God are a proclamation of Christ (2 Cor. 3 and 4).

**The Gates of the City.**

In Rev. xxi. the gates of the city are frequently mentioned as to number, measurement, position and nature; they are positioned by God the Builder and Architect of the city.

Gates throughout the Scriptures are symbolic of a spiritual feature; they stand for counsel.

In ancient times the kings, rulers, elders sat in the gate of the city and deliberated concerning the affairs of the people and the interests of the kingdom. Absalom met the leaders of the nation in the gate of the city.

Christ said, I will build My Church and the Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18).

Wherever the Church is in power, there are active the counsels of Hades which seek to thwart, hinder and obstruct the power from going forth, but they cannot prevail against it, for the Lamb on the throne has the keys of Death and of Hades (Rev. i. 18). And He hath said, His church would upset all the counsels of Hell; and Hell's weapons have written on their blades, "It shall not prosper." The Lord hath decreed it.

In the Gates of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, are held the counsels of God; the administration of the Lord in the gates,—the Lord united with His people in the secret counsels of His heart; so these gates represent a coming into fellowship with the deep secrets of the Lord's heart.

Is the Lord getting together His leaders, His elders, to discuss those inner secret things, known and understood only by those who are really one with Him in fellowship and desire; a talking over with these the affairs of citizenship and throne interests.

All who will, may be included in this fellowship; it is for all who are with Him in His thought, intention and purpose. That is fellowship with the Lord in the inner things of His heart.

Trace the word "gates" through the Scriptures and you will find great richness, and as you trace out the Gates of God's House you will find spiritual elements there.

"Thy gates praise" (Isa. lx. 18). Always praise when there is complete fellowship with the Lord.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates and be lifted up ye everlasting doors and the King of Glory shall come in....strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle, Jehovah of Hosts He is the King of Glory" (Ps. xxiv.). Here is the Lord coming in through the gates of counsel, and unfolding of His glory.

Strength in the Word is also associated with gates, and is there not strength in *knowing* the mind of the Lord? What strength there is in being in oneness with the will of God; admitted into fellowship with Him in His thought and purpose. What strength there is in that. Yes, there is strength in the gates when you know what the Lord is after; uncertainty always makes for weakness. Gates of iron and brass (Ps. cvi. 16) speaks of strength and resistance.

**Suffering and Preciousness.**

Gates also speak of preciousness; "every several gate was of one pearl." How is the pearl formed? By a small piece of grit lodged in the opening of the oyster-shell. This wounds and pierces the oyster, so that it bleeds. This blood is acted upon by other elements and so the pearl is formed, but it has given its very life to make that value—a pearl.

In the word of God, "pearl" is mentioned in terms of great endearment. He saw that in His church which was more than all the glory of heaven and He let go the glory of heaven unto suffering and death to secure His pearl, to gain His Church; He saw her as a pearl of great price, and He suffered and bled to secure her; Matt. xiii. 45, 46; Phil. ii. 1-11; Eph. v. 25-27.

So in thus sharing His secret counsels we must in measure know the fellowship of His sufferings. Every gate one pearl. Yes, there is only one way, death via the cross; but unto life triumphant over death, resurrection life.

The Lord suffered and died to get that people and bring them into fellowship with His own heart, endeared and sharing with Him His own counsels. O, to get to the heart of the Lord, to be endeared like that; oneness with Him in His own heart's desire; this is the strength, praise and glory of the gates of pearl.

There is only one way. Sin in the race called for something to meet the need of healing. Sin is disease, and the something to meet that is nothing less than the precious blood of the Lord Jesus; there is no other way, death to one means life to the other, the cross is the gate of life.

The keepers of the gates, twelve angels. The Lord the Keeper, He gives charge concerning the gate of holy fellowship and counsel He guards it.

"Open" access through grace into this fellowship; a coming into oneness with the Lord through grace. We get the openness of the gates and the exclusiveness of the walls.

The gates are open, but it is a divinely guarded fellowship, nothing that defiles can enter by those gates. Sin, death, destruction cannot pass where the blood is, it has swallowed up death in victory.

#### Transparency in Everything.

Transparency is a very prominent feature of this city—"Jerusalem . . . her light clear as crystal (Rev. xxi. 11).

The city was pure gold like unto clear (transparent) glass" (Rev. xxi. 18).

"The street of the city pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Rev. xxi. 21).

"The river of water of life clear as crystal" (Rev. xxii. 1).

Yes, transparency the very nature of this city, and it is the mark of the life of the people of God; crystal clearness all clear, nothing dim.

Turn to Jer. xvii. 9 "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the heart."

By grace we have been brought to renounce the hidden things of darkness, and God hath shined in our hearts the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. iv. 1-6).

Mal. iii. 3, "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver and He will purify the sons of Levi as gold and silver." He does the refining necessary until He gets His pure gold.

Isa. iii. 17, "The daughters of Zion . . . Jehovah will lay bare their secret parts" (A.R.V.).

John xviii. 20, "Jesus said, I have spoken openly in the world . . . in secret (under cover) I spake nothing."

Rom. ii. 16, "God shall judge the secrets of men . . . by Jesus Christ."

1 Cor. xiv. 25, "The secrets of his heart are made manifest."

Luke ii. 35, "Yea a sword shall pierce through thine own soul that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

All these passages emphasise an essential element in spiritual progress; for there can be no growth without absolute transparency. The entire history of spiritual things is the contrast of the state of light with darkness; truth with falsehood; purity with mixture; clearness with cloudiness; openness with secretiveness; reality with pretence; genuineness with imitation; sincerity with deceit; these two things are over against each other all the way through spiritual history.

Transparency on the one hand is utter, and has no degrees; there are no degrees of truth, only degrees of approach to truth and some go further than others in approach to truth, but truth is utter and final. So with transparency, it is not transparent if there is the most minute mixture in it, you get varied degrees of shades of approach to transparency but one shade of darkness, then all is not light. One little cloud (earth born) dims transparency; and these shades and clouds come from another realm than the realm of the glory of the divine nature.

God's purpose is to have a thing without the suggestion of cloudiness or mixture; and in order to build His city He must get rid of all that which is not transparent. Hence the necessity for the inworking of the cross.

The measure of a man is what he is before God, and only that measure counts before the Lord. We may have measurements of one another in varying degrees, and we find something unsuspected that shocks us. The only measure is—not our measurement of one another—but the Lord's measurement in that light which no man approacheth unto; if we would but adjust ourselves to that, we should find our rest there before the Lord. What is true in God's sight, that is finality. All the dealings of God with us are related to this transparency of character, and His purpose of securing a people unto Himself of utter transparency, pure gold, clear as crystal, partakers of the divine nature.

See Jacob and how God dealt with him. Why was it necessary for God to so deal with him? Was it not because he was bound up with the testimony of the Lord, and must he not therefore be transparent?

Jacob's scheming ways must give place to the Lord's openness. If Jacob deceives he will surely be deceived. "God is not mocked, for

whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." It is a law. His purpose is to have a pure thing, and He will smite us to the ground with that thing within us; yes, that thing within us which is not transparent will be the very trap by which we fall. There is no secretiveness with God; all must come into the open before Him.

Delay, arrest, confusion, deadlock, these are all due to some secretiveness, some ulterior motive, something in the background not clear; that dark thing, that doubtful thing which is like a cloud or mist. *That* is the thing which is bringing the arrest, the confusion; that something that is not absolutely true, some secret thing that is not of God, not out from Him, but comes from the realm of our flesh and from the pit.

#### Progress is Hindered by Secretiveness.

The city cannot proceed with anything like that. From the river at the centre to the walls on the circumference, all has to be utter transparency. All these thicknesses of our natural life, our soulish elements, arrest and confuse. There must be absolute transparency of spirit. Fogs come because we are not outright clear before God and man. Christian fellowships are wrecked upon this thing. Failure to apprehend spiritual truth is due to this. Lack of transparency prevents Divine revelation because there is not an open heaven.

Have you noticed the emphasis the Word puts on confession before God? There is no getting through with the Lord until there is confession. Why? He demands it; because it is a yielding up of that dark thing, an acknowledgement, a bringing of it into God's light for judgment and putting away. You will never get liberty before there has been confession before the Lord; it is a principle.

Fog is unredeemable and does not absorb one ray of heaven's radiant light; nothing can redeem spiritual fog but confession to the Lord, and cleansing by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

It is a law of spiritual growth that we have nothing hidden, nothing not clear and true.

This flesh of ours is a vaporous gaseous cesspool, and these exhalations of flesh blot out the face of God, put us in a mist, a fog, and there is no clear, strong going on in the way.

Pride has robbed many of the Lord's children of fulness of life and light, and spiritual pride is

pride in its worst form, there is nothing more blinding than pride.

Anger, a measure of the flesh rising up and pulling us earthward. Can you be angry and keep your flesh out of it? How often fellowships are spoiled by the uprising of this fleshly anger! Anger white and holy is a high altitude; but the cesspool of our flesh is behind much of our anger.

Unbelief, suspicions, blind spiritual eyes and doubt breaks fellowship; all these mists come from our flesh and blind us to the glory of God, and prevent that transparency which is essential for a clear witness. Transparency is the pre-eminent and predominant feature of God's people when He has them where He wishes to have them.

In the city there is only one street. "The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Rev. xxi. 21).

Does this not speak of the fellowship of the Lord's people? The one way of fellowship, see in the Word how streets represent fellowship.

"The river of water of life, clear as crystal" (Rev. xxii. 1).

Witness of an absolute transparent life; transparency begins within, then naturally flows out as such.

"Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. iv. 2).

"If we walk in the light as He is in the light then we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John i. 7, A.R.V.).

"Whosoever believeth on Me may not abide in darkness" (John xii. 46, A.R.V.).

The Lord is compelling us to a plane of clearness; and the Holy Spirit has come to lead us into all truth. Only He knows the dark things in us, and He will convict of that thing in us which is not of God, and apply the cross to all forms of self life, so that we may confess the evil thing and have it put away by the precious Blood.

See what God has in view for us; fellowship and service in the city of God: to be a people for *His own* possession: "Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blemish before Him, in love having fore-ordained us unto adoption as sons through Christ Jesus unto Himself" (Eph. i. 45, A.R.V.).

T. A.-S.

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# Witness and a Testimony

SEPT.—OCT., 1930

VOL. 8. No. 5

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper;—This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Isa. 54:17.

1ph.  
:13-18.





## To Our Readers

BELOVED OF THE LORD,

We do not make a practice of writing a personal letter with each issue of the *Witness and Testimony*: the reason being that it is our desire that the personal element should be kept out as much as possible, and that there should be the very least suggestion of our being anything private or detached. If the Lord has given us a ministry we desire to fulfil it in fellowship with all His children, and not in separateness of spirit. If separateness does exist it will be our constant effort to see that it is not because we separate ourselves from other of the Lord's children, but purely because of *their* reaction to the message which is given us to deliver. In other words, we shall not take the initiative in separation *in spirit* or allow ourselves to be so separated. Our ministry in the Lord is available to all who desire it. Isolation will be what others do, not because we limit ourselves to anything in the nature of a constituency. We do not conceive of it as being our business to destroy what exists for God anywhere. We are not out, as some seem to think, to destroy or break up the "churches" and "organised Christianity." We never do say to anyone that they should leave their church. Such matters are between the individual and the Lord, and—as we have ever sought to emphasise—it must be by revelation of the Holy Spirit. We realise with intense sorrow of heart that all is not well with that which ostensibly represents the Lord here, and that there is a state of things widely prevailing which does not truly accord with the revealed desire of God.

"We live in a time of more than usual dearth spiritually.—the state of things may well remind us of Ezekiel's valley of dry bones—we have not merely to cope with evils which have characterised bygone ages, but also with the matured corruption of a time wherein the varied evils of the Gentile world have become connected with, and covered by the cloak of Christian profession: and when we turn to the state of those whose knowledge of truth and high profession might naturally encourage the expectation of more healthy and vigorous Christian action, we find, alas! in many—yea, in the majority of cases—that the knowledge is

but cold and uninfluential theory, and the profession but superficial." Christianity has become so largely a matter of doctrine and creed. The test of Christian life is very much a matter of subscribing thereto. Christian experience has become largely limited to a matter of being saved, without the great Eternal and universal relative factors and issues. Christian service is resolved far too much into a matter of enthusiasm in a great enterprise apart from an adequate apprehension of what the Lord is really after and the indispensable energy and equipment of the Holy Ghost. The Christian "Church" is very largely reduced to earthly institutions, societies, denominations, buildings, activities and orders, and the spiritual revelation and apprehension of "the One Body" and "One Spirit" is forby far the most part lacking. Christian teaching has very largely become—at best—a matter of giving addresses and preaching sermons with a presentation of "the letter of the Word," a giving forth of truth as truth, but lacking in "revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph. i. 17); that true inwardness of meaning which reaches the heart and meets the deepest spiritual need of the hungry.

The result of all this is that the impact of that which stands for God upon the world, and particularly upon "the world rulers of this darkness" is almost nil, or a minus quantity.

Missionary leaders who are in a position to speak with authority are almost of one mind and voice in saying that the only hope of an adequate movement amongst the heathen lies in the direction of a new spiritual movement amongst God's people in the home countries.

As we get nearer the close of this age the contact with and impact of the forces of Satan is going to be such that only those who know the full testimony of Jesus and stand experimentally in it will be able to go through without being paralysed. The aspect of things is fast changing. The past twenty years has seen a movement into a realm where the old methods and means no longer prove effectual. We shall soon find a tremendous pressing down of the powers of darkness upon this earth, using the world-powers to such a degree and in such ways as to eclipse anything which has hitherto been.

This is in full accord with the Word of God. There will be one, and only one hope for God's people, and that their knowledge of Him in Christ and the power of His resurrection as a present spiritual reality. Not their activities, enthusiasms, organisations, enterprises, creeds, "churches," orthodoxy, &c., but HIMSELF. That time, which is now coming upon us—though imperceptible to so many who are pre-occupied with plans and programmes—will make manifest the principle of the "One Body," for each of the Lord's children will feel keenly the need of the fellowship of another, no matter of what connection so long as they know Him.

The bringing in of the ministry of the Prophets of old had its occasion in the breakdown of the Lord's true order. Theirs it was to keep before His people what that order was, and to call back to it, against a day of fire. We are in such a time, and what the Lord needs is that

instrument by which He can keep His mind about things in view, and call back to it: an instrument which will pay the price of being refused a hearing, ostracism, false imputations, slander, and cruel calumny. This needs faith, boldness, and a preparedness to leave all vindication with the Lord.

Beloved fellow members of Christ, will you have it urged upon you to seek the Lord for "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him," a pure spiritual unveiling of the Lord Jesus as God's representation of His thought concerning all those matters which we have mentioned, and as He gives you light will you seek grace to stand for Him in the day of His need, with all boldness, and whatever the price. All other questions will answer themselves as you do this.

Yours in the bonds of His One Body,  
T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

## The Reactions of the Lord

The Testimony of the Blood.—*Continued.*

No. VI.

As we proceed it is necessary that the testimony to which the Lord reacts should be presented more and more concretely. When all is said that can be said about the Blood, and this is not a little, the whole matter is resolved into but two aspects, viz: The death side and the life side.

We have said with perfect certainty as to the truth of the statement that:

**There is nothing which Satan fears so terribly and contests so fiercely as a true and living testimony concerning the Blood of the Lord Jesus.**

Not a teaching, doctrine, creed or phraseology, but that which is wrought out in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is therefore necessary for us to seek to recognise this fact, to understand, as far as we can why, and to know our position of victory because of the Blood.

Unto this threefold apprehension we shall begin at the ultimate issue of the testimony which is

**The Divine seed in prosperity and Sovereignty.**

It is this that Satan cannot bear to contemplate, and against which he is bitterly set,

because it represents a menace to his kingdom at every point.

There is a tremendous significance attached to the introduction of the book of Exodus with "the names of the sons of Israel who come into Egypt." The title "sons of Israel" represents their dignity as sons of "A prince of God."

They came into Egypt and were in great prosperity and strength, while yet a separate and unabsorbed people. This dignity, prosperity and power came to be regarded as a distinct peril to the king of Egypt and he projected a plan for humbling them, bringing them into bondage, and making them rather to contribute to his prosperity and power.

Thus Exodus presents firstly God's mind concerning the princely dignity and spiritual prosperity and ascendancy of the "sons"; then the activity and object of the Adversary concerning them; and finally the divine thought and intention established in the realm of "far above all rule and authority" in virtue of the shed blood of chapter xii. So then, sonship and sovereignty are the two factors present throughout. Sonship is the basic principle. Sovereignty

is the issue involved in the conflict. The Blood is the instrument by which both are established.

These are the names of the sons of the "Prince of God" is the introduction. "Let my son go that he may serve me" is the challenge to Pharaoh; and "If thou wilt not let my son go, I will slay thy son," is the sovereign factor at issue. Now these elements are carried forward throughout all the scriptures. It does not matter where you look, the thing which lies behind all the conflicts in the history of the people of God is concerning the existence of a Divine seed in prosperity and power—spiritually, and the factor which is mainly involved is that of the altar and the blood, everything hangs on that. This all heads up and finds its supreme expression in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus. As with Moses typically so with Him antitypically there was the recognition of the one through whom this Divine seed would be constituted in its "power over all the power of the enemy." So from birth a dead set was made for His destruction. Not only by direct onslaught but by subtle subterfuge to get Him to act upon a level of self by which the Divine protection would be forfeited. The point at which we meet this whole matter of the testimony of the Blood is with

#### An Elect in Bondage.

There is abundant scripture to show what the thought and intention of God was originally for His spiritual seed, and this is a very important matter for the apprehension of the Lord's people. But what we are so much occupied with is the coming to that. It is not a little impressive that of the twenty-seven "books" of the New Testament at least twenty-one have to do with the bringing of the Lord's children into their right spiritual place; and how many of them have directly to do with the matter of the actual or threatening loss of spiritual prosperity and ascendancy through some form of bondage. There is the bondage of iniquity, of sin and sins, of the Law, of tradition, of fear, of the flesh, of the carnal mind, of reason, of the righteousness of the flesh, the wisdom of the flesh, the spirituality of the flesh, and many other forms of bondage. The bonds of Satan are very numerous, and he suits the kind to the case. A prince in chains and a member of the seed royal in servile oppression is a pitiable sight, and this is what the devil delights in. The "man-child," whether individual in Moses and Christ, Exodus i. and Matthew ii., or corporate

as in Revelation xii. is the object of the Dragon's venom. This is the Divine seed.

Think of the Sons of the Prince of God engaged in building store-cities for Pharaoh, and thus adding wealth and glory to his world-system instead of serving the Lord in freedom and victory! Such is the state of the elect, more or less. From the position of servitude to sin, self, the world and the devil before salvation, through all the stages and phases of spiritual weakness and defeat up to a paralysing introspection and spiritual self-analysis, the true dignity of princeliness of sonship is assailed. Now, if we did but know it there is always some ground for the bondage. Satan must have ground. His power cannot function without ground. He was utterly impotent in the case of the Lord Jesus because there was no ground. "The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me."

The ground which issues in defeat and bondage at the hands of the Adversary is as varied as the bondage itself, but when the full total has been made and the complete sum ranged it all amounts to a matter of lack of apprehension.

Is it the natural condition of the sinfulness of human nature? Is it the unfitness and unsuitableness of that in man to the presence of God? Is it that the Divine will represents a standard of perfection in moral excellence which sets back from God even the very best among men? Is it a secret thing, hidden in the inward parts which in itself becomes the weapon in the Enemy's hand to knock us down? Is it sin done in ignorance, where the intention was good, but fuller light reveals that it was wrong after all? Is it sin unconsciously committed in the sense that we did not even know that we did the thing? Yes, all these, and many more are grounds that Satan uses, and rightly so, if we fail in one all-embracing respect. This failure is in the matter of recognising the virtue of the Precious Blood, and the value of Him Who shed it. In saying this we are but bringing into view the offerings of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

A close study of these offerings will reveal two things; one that

**God has searched out sin and tracked it to its most hidden and secret lair, even to the place of unconsciousness.**

The accidental, unwonted, and unsuspected is all taken into His consideration. He regards sin now as a state, not merely as a matter of our deliberate act. It is here, universal,

operating in innumerable ways and finding common ground of affection in the whole creation. This all comes out so clearly in a careful reading of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. But having tracked sin to its remotest haunt. He has made provision for the dealing with it to the very last suggestion.

A Whole-Burnt-offering that the believer may stand accepted and perfect in relation to all the will of God. Lev. i., Heb. x. A Meal-offering that he may be able to come in possession of moral perfection, not his own, but presented by faith. Lev. ii., Rom. xii. 1, 2, Heb. x. 10, Col. iv. 12, Heb. xii. 21., etc.

A Peace-offering that there may not only be access and standing, but fellowship and oneness with God. Lev. iii., Col. i. 20, Rom. v. 10, etc.

A Sin-offering that sin in its more positive aspects, and sin in ignorance and without consciousness may not interfere with living fellowship by bringing in spiritual death either by our own failure or by the contamination of contact.

Not only in the matter of our relationship with God, but in co-operation with God by priestly ministry, effective spiritual service in its many-sidedness, does the Blood make an all-sufficient provision.

So then, the first and primary thing in a living testimony to the complete overthrow of the dominion of Satan and the destruction (bringing to nought) of his works is

#### **A due and adequate apprehension and appreciation of the Lord Jesus in the value of His Blood.**

There is something almighty in the death of Jesus Christ. Many of God's people have failed to recognise the important distinction between His Crucifixion and His death. The crucifixion is man's side. The death is His own. All the crosses ever made and all the men who ever conceived them could never have brought about the death of the Lord Jesus apart from His own voluntary act of laying down His life. "No man taketh it from me. I lay it down of myself. I have power (jurisdiction) to lay it down, and power (jurisdiction) to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John x. 18.

The preaching of Christ crucified is not the preaching merely of what men did to Him, but of what He *allowed* men to do, and in and through *what they did what He did*. The *death* of Christ in its real meaning is not man's act, nor is it the Devil's act. Satan and men had made many

unsuccessful attempts to kill Him, but *His* hour had not come. *He* fixes the time for what *He* will do. The rulers said to Judas "Not on the Passover." but the Lord Jesus took it out of their hands and out of the hands of Judas and precipitated it on that day in the Upper Room; so deftly leading it up that Judas was as one under authority: "What thou doest, do quickly."

When He "lays down" His life that He may "take it again," there is infinitude in the deliberate act, and it relates to universal sovereignty. Sin, as the principle, the old creation as the sphere, Satan as the ruler in that realm, death as the consequence, and judgment as the inevitable prospect and reality are all involved in the death of Christ. That entire ground was dealt with, and that regime brought to an end in that death. The whole thing centres in the Person of the Lord Jesus. The same person must be able to act as representative of man rejected of God because of sin, and as representative receive all the judgment of God upon man and sin, and yet because sin is not inherent in Him, but in Himself He is utterly sinless, render death and hell incapable of holding Him. There never was such an one other than Jesus Christ. Son of man—Son of God.

The pouring out of His Blood was, on the one side, His voluntary yielding to wrath and destruction from the face of God as man for man, and on the other side, a saying in effect to death, the devil and the grave, "I concede you all your claims unto the last atom, and exhaust all your demands as being made sin and a curse, but you have another in me also over whom you have no power or rights, because you have no ground in him. You cannot hold me, I defy you, and what is more, I now take you as my prisoners, henceforth I am your Lord, and I will plunder your domain and rob you of your spoil."

"O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?"

"Up from the grave He arose,

With a mighty triumph o'er His foes."

"He invaded death's abode and robbed him of his sting."

"He hath crushed beneath His rod

The world's proud rebel king.

He plunged in His imperial strength

To gulfs of darkness down,

He brought His trophy up at length,

The foiled usurper's crown."

So on the other hand He, because of his sinless perfection, can stand in complete acceptance

with God, suitable to God, and this representatively as man (though more than man). His blood, therefore, representing His sinless and victorious life is given to us and in virtue of it there is constituted that princely seed in all the good of His triumph. This does not make us sinlessly perfect, but He who is in us is so.

What remains to bring us into that good is a spiritual appreciation and apprehension of the transcendent greatness of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit revealing Him in us and then the link of faith unto obedience between what we are not and what He is. The bridge is faith. Some act as though it were struggle or puzzle, or any one of a number of things which are in the nature of self-effort. It will be found that faith is no mere passive acquiescence. But it is not

the *degree* of faith only, but the *object* of faith. It is after all the place which Christ has in the apprehension of his people which makes for the prosperity and ascendancy which should characterise them. The supreme days of Israel's history, were those when Christ in type was largest and most dominating. The Feast of the Passover was the focal point and the pivot. There never was such rejoicing as then, and in later times when idolatry had gained a strong footing it was after the restoration of this feast that the people instinctively returned to destroy the false system. Thus the testimony of the Blood is basic to victory, ascendancy, spiritual prosperity and is the most deadly force against all the works of the Adversary. T. A.-S.

(To be continued).

## The Battle for Souls

As Christian workers and soul winners, we should remember that when entering personal work, we deliberately enter a realm of spiritual conflict. Whenever the Holy Spirit is seeking a soul, there is a clash of spiritual forces. A proper understanding of this throws light on such questions as "why are some people never converted?" Does every man possess a free will to accept Christ? Why do some people assert and honestly mean it "I *want* to be saved, but I **CANNOT** believe." Speaking of such cases we sometimes remark almost casually, "The Devil has a stronghold in that life and refuses to let go," without realising the full truth of the statement or the implications involved in it. We are sometimes baffled at a soul's constant rejection of Christ. Acceptance of Him is obviously the wisest thing in the world to do, and to reject such love is the height of folly. Many a soul knows that the Christian life is the right life; that it is a life full of true joy and the best of blessings, romantic in its experiences, and providing the best programme in this life as well as in a blissful eternity, yet he deliberately rejects it! **WHY?** Is it because, deep down in his heart, he has fully decided to go to hell, and chooses to miss God and Heaven? Surely not. In many cases, on the contrary, there is an almost subtle hope in the back of his mind—yet planted there by the suggestion of the evil one—that somehow things will turn out all right in the end, and God, being **LOVE**, will never allow him

to be lost. *Why, then, does he refuse Christ?* There is only one explanation, his eyes have been blinded by the god of this world, and **HIS WILL** has been captivated by the enemy. In that sense, therefore, he no longer possesses a *will of his own*. Through sin and the Fall, his will having been snatched from the Divine control and transferred to that of the adversary, no longer affords him the power of choice, until such time as that will is released. It is vitally important to realise this. We must remember that there is a great spiritual conflict in progress throughout the universe, between two challenging wills. On the one hand the Divine purpose for this age is to call out a people for God's own possession—the formation of the Church, the Body of Christ—composed of all who are redeemed by the blood of Christ. To redeem is to "buy back"; it is the recovery of lost property. But how was man lost? He was created in God's own image, and for His own glory, to be a habitation of God in blessed communion. Such was the **WILL** of God. What happened in the Fall? Another **WILL** intruded itself into the realm of God's estate, representing a rival claim, and seeking, along the most subtle avenues of approach, to capture the territory created for the Divine purpose. Lucifer, son of the morning, rises in his boastful assertiveness and declares "I **WILL** be as God," and at once there is the clash of a spiritual conflict. Our first parents possessed a divinely-imparted volition, but

through an exercise of the emotions and sensibilities of the soul, responded to the alluring enticements of the Devil, thus falling from their high estate, and becoming "totally depraved" as before God. In the Fall, man lost every God-given moral possession, including—and here is the important focus point of this consideration—including his free will and power of choice! Having thus yielded his will to the enemy, this initial transgression has consigned the whole of the Adam creation into a condition of spiritual impotence and bankruptcy, involving an utter forfeiting of that Divinely-given birth-right, the right and power to choose for himself. No man initially chooses servitude to sin and the Devil. We all begin badly—"born in sin," children of wrath, and everyone of us slaves to the great satanic taskmaster until the proffered mercy of God is received. We should bear this in mind in soul-winning activity. *Every time you seek to win a soul for Christ, you are not merely dealing with the conflict of a human will, but you are deliberately defying the enemy by entering his domain.* Every soul won for Christ represents a spiritual challenge, and involves a hidden conflict, not between the soul itself and the soul-winner, but a Divine bid for a will which has been usurped by a great hierarchy of evil. Thus the word of God emphasises the fact that every unsaved one is *dead, blind and bound* in his will by the enemy, utterly incompetent in *himself* to adopt any attitude, take any step, or exercise any human will power in decision for Christ. Indeed, the Scripture describes such as "led captive by the Devil, at HIS will." His own will is in abject slavery, and he can determine nothing in and of himself. The only sense in which he possesses volition—if it may be so called—is within the realm of service and subjection to his taskmaster, the greater Pharaoh. Or, to state the case differently, he possesses a will, but no longer a FREE will. He is in slavery. Hence, many in themselves *desire* to be saved, yet find their will incapable of exercise towards God, because the prince of this world, with his supernatural influence, refuses to "let my people go." Thus the Scripture pronounces that those who receive Christ are "BORN, not of the WILL OF MAN."

This can be illustrated by the converse truth of the Christian life. What happens at regeneration? There is a transfer of the human will from one dictator to another; from the cruel tyranny of the monarch of sin to the blessed government of the indwelling Christ. Now,

can a Christian do as he likes? No, a fully surrendered believer *has no will of his own*. His own will is lost in the all-conquering will of another, and henceforth his motto becomes "Not I, but Christ." "He must increase but I must decrease." Even the Son of Man "pleased not Himself," and in the hour of His greatest testing declared His utter subjection to the Father's will and the complete absence of self-will "NOT MY WILL, but THINE be done." Conversely, the will of the natural man is surrendered to the powers of darkness, and as he *cannot* please God, so the fully yielded spiritual man, in the very nature of the case, cannot serve sin, for he no longer possesses a will so to do. Now if this be true as a principle, that man's whole being has been so depraved by sin that he has been robbed of his volition, we come to the next consideration—How is it that some choose to believe and are saved? This necessarily implies that the human will must have been released from its one-time bondage and liberated in order to make decision possible. Such release is effected by the operation of another and greater power in the world, which binds the strong man and annuls his captivating influence. What is this influence? It is more than an influence, it is a PERSON, the blessed third person of the Trinity, whose gracious function is to convict the world of sin, thereby opening the eyes of the blind to see their peril, and releasing the will from the bondage of the enemy. Of course, the whole work of grace in a sinner's heart is the operation of the Holy Spirit from start to finish, but it is the preliminary process of conviction with which we are concerned to-day. Without this influence and power, no child of God would ever have found it possible to accept Christ. No human being in himself possesses any quality or capacity in the flesh to respond to the call of God. Decision is made possible by the convicting, wooing and liberating work of the Holy Spirit. This is very clearly inferred by the words of our blessed Lord Himself, "No man cometh to me except the Father *draw* him." The Holy Spirit imparts the ability to decide, and also the necessary faith which alone can produce a spiritual change of heart. No man in, and of himself, can manufacture, work-up, or by any means produce, saving faith. "It is the GIFT of God."

Thus we see at once the real cause of condemnation; the sin for which God in His justice must consign a soul to eternal perdition. It is a sin against the Holy Spirit—the culminat-

ing guilt of "doing despite to the Spirit of Grace." Some would call this "the unpardonable sin." Whether that be so or not, it is certainly AN unpardonable sin. God never condemns a man for not taking a step of which in himself, he is utterly incapable. If a blind man is unknowingly heading for a precipice, he cannot be blamed for walking into danger; but if he ignores the warning, he seals his own doom. No man is judged because he is "born in sin" or because, by nature, he is in a state of captivity. "THIS is the condemnation, that LIGHT has come into the world, but men love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil." The Holy Spirit's purpose in the world is to shed light on man's sinful condition, release the will from its tyranny, and thus impart the power to exercise a free choice in decision for Christ. The next step is for the soul thus wrought upon to make the choice, and say "yes" or "no" to the claims of the Saviour. Should this divinely imparted power to choose be continually resisted, the spirit may cease to strive, and the will irrevocably revert to its original bondage. "Ephraim is joined to idols, LET HIM ALONE." The terrible indictment which is finally brought upon a lost soul is this—"Ye do always RESIST the Holy Ghost." Any person in such a case will never be saved, having lost all power and aptitude to choose. A soul is lost, therefore, not because the human will, being in bondage, COULD not decide, but because the advances of the Holy Spirit to make decision possible were finally spurned. It is a divine impossibility "to renew such an one to repentance." Having been enlightened, and refusing the light, the Holy Spirit recognises that further striving would be useless. This always happens, of course, at the death of an unbeliever, but may take place during life through constant hardening of the heart. Thank God, it is not our business as soul winners to determine such cases. We can continue to preach a "whosoever" gospel, but we should bear in mind the sad fact that there are some who will *never* be saved because they no longer possess any freedom or aptitude to respond to the invitation.

Whom does God draw? Are there a few favourites only upon whom the Holy Spirit exercises this liberating power? Surely NOT. The message of conviction is "UNTO ALL," and with an acknowledgment of need comes the power to choose. "There is a light which lighteth EVERY man coming into the world," but, alas, that light may become darkness if spurned, and

the Spirit's voice be stifled. The uplifted Saviour draws ALL unto Himself, but the drawing may be *resisted*.

Now, finally, what is the practical purpose of this consideration? Every born-again person is a co-worker with God, and the blessed Holy Spirit condescends to use us in the accomplishment of His purpose. In this way, you may be used to speak a word which brings conviction; or you may give out a tract or sing a solo which the Holy Spirit may apply to the heart and conscience to bring enlightenment. *Our main co-operation, however, in this matter is by the ministry of victorious and strategic prayer.* Why the Lord has so decreed it is beyond our comprehension—except that "its just like Him"—but I firmly believe that every soul saved is an answer to somebody's prayer. (There are several great paradoxes in the Scriptures. One of them is the fact of Divine sovereignty and prayer. The Holy Spirit acts sovereignly, but somewhere back of that there is an occasion in intercession on the ground of merits not in man, but in a provision of the grace of God.) The Holy Spirit would bring us into fellowship with Himself in His work of liberating the wills of unsaved ones for whom we have a burden of prayer. Let us therefore claim our authority in the name of the Lord Jesus over the usurping enemy, proclaiming the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ, the defeat of the Devil at Calvary, and our stand with God for the release of the sin-bound prisoners. I feel that in our evangelistic intercession we should pray more than we do along aggressive *victory* lines, recognising that those for whom we pray need release. May He write this word upon our hearts, and so work out the Cross in our experience, that day by day we may increase in spiritual effectiveness, and more particularly in that realm of effectual fervent prayer which avails much in the liberation and salvation of those who labour in the bondage of sin under the cruel taskmaster. "Such were some of you, BUT—" Hallelujah! R. W.

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The crying need of mission work to-day is for a mighty revival in the Church at home. God give us grace not only to come to that conclusion but to make revival to ourselves and to the circles in which we move our real heart-cry, earnestly seeking from Him what He would have us each do towards this great end.—From *E.G.M. News*.

## For Boys and Girls

### The Gospel in the Farmyard (No. 8)

Boys and girls, have you ever tried to catch a lamb in a field? If you have, you will know it is not an easy task! When I visited our farm last spring the farmer took me to one of his fields, a very large one, in which were many sheep with their lambs. As we walked round looking at the flock we noticed one lamb limping badly, and the farmer at once knew that there must be need of his help, to remove the cause of the limp. We thereupon tried to catch the lamb: but it did not want to be caught! I suppose to a little lamb we looked like great monsters seeking to do it harm, and no matter how carefully we tried to drive it and its mother into a corner, it always managed to escape us, despite its wounded foot. We felt sorry for it, for every step it took must have caused it pain and made its trouble worse, and we wanted only to help, not to hurt it: but the lamb did not understand, and would neither come to us, nor allow us to come to it. We had no sheep dog to help us, and unfortunately had very little time to spare, and at last we had to give up the chase. The farmer said he would come down again as soon as possible, and with the help of his dog catch the lamb and attend to it.

It was a day or two before the farmer could again visit the field, for it was situated some miles from his house. There was the lamb still limping along, looking in greater trouble than ever. This time the farmer had his dog with him, and soon the whole flock was rounded up into a corner and the lamb was captured—though still struggling with all its might to escape. The cause of the trouble was just what the farmer had expected—a large thorn had pierced the foot, and made walking painful. But more than this—because the thorn had not been removed earlier, and the lamb had continued to walk on it, the wound caused by it had enlarged and festered and the foot had become very much worse than it would have been if it had been attended to earlier. Now, who was to blame for all the trouble—the shepherd or the lamb? The lamb, of course—it could not save itself, and yet it would not allow the shepherd to be its saviour.

Now I want to remind you first of all that every boy and girl is a lamb needing a shep-

herd's help. The Bible makes it quite clear to us—can you find any passages that tells us so?—that *everyone*, young or old, in this world is a sinner needing salvation and that no one can save himself. There is only One who can save—He who came forth from God to be the Saviour of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ—and He is continually seeking every one, that He may deliver them from sin. He is seeking each of you thus: are you running away from Him, like our lamb, or allowing Him to have His way with you? Remember that every step the lamb took in running from the shepherd only made the trouble worse. To resist the Saviour's love is to add sin to sin, and though we may not recognise it at the time, to add pain to ourselves and sorrow to our Saviour. Thus it was with the people of Jerusalem over whom the Lord Jesus cried so bitterly, "How often would I have gathered you...and ye would not!" (Luke xiii. 34). We know what trouble followed for the Jews and their city; and can you not imagine the anguished sorrow in the heart of the Saviour? The only thing to do in face of the Saviour's love is to yield utterly to Him—and yield to Him *now*.

And though you may already have yielded your heart to Him, when He first showed you your need of Him, I wonder if there is still some matter upon which you have been trying to avoid Him? Has He called upon you for some act of obedience? Has He required of you some surrender to His will, to allow Him to be not only Saviour but *Lord* also of your life, and up to now you have been rebelling—or perhaps, have been afraid to let Him have His way? Afraid of *Him*? Why, like the shepherd His only desire in your surrender to Him is to remove some troublesome thorn that hinders your progress, and to make you better able to walk and run for Him in this world: and surely you know what a relief it is to have a thorn removed! That pricking at your heart of which perhaps you are conscious as you read this may be the thorn of something that is not in His will for you. Surrender at once to Him and the thorn will be gone. You will be much happier without it and you will run in His service much better. And do not forget the added trouble that follows by delay. G. P.



## A Peculiar Vessel

“For such a time as This”

1 Samuel i.

THE state of things to-day is very similar to that which existed at the beginning of the first book of Samuel. Three things in particular seem to stand out there as features of those days. One was a formality in the things of God pursued in the energy of the flesh, resulting in mixture and spiritual adultery, and spiritual weakness and ineffectiveness. Another was the absence of spiritual revelation and perception. “There was no open vision.” The “Spirit of wisdom and revelation” was inoperative amongst priests and people. Spiritual intelligence and apprehension was a minus quantity. The third thing was constant menace of the Philistines, which eventually issued in the departure of the glory from Israel and the absence of the testimony of the Sovereignty from the midst of the people of God. When we remember that the Philistines always represent the intrusion of the natural man (uncircumcised, Col. ii. 11, 12) into the things of the Spirit, it is a very significant feature.

We leave it with those who have eyes to see to judge whether there is any similarity between then and now. What we have on our heart is to note the method by which the Lord reacts to this situation.

The two things, then, which immediately come out are that the Lord is not satisfied to have it so and does not abandon it. Rather does He begin in a secret way to secure the instrument for recovery. The second thing is that there has to be a very deep and peculiar travail in the bringing forth of that instrument. Samuel represents that instrument, and Hannah the travail which produces it.

What is clear in this first chapter is that this will not come about in the natural course of things. The usual way will not produce it. Indeed, it is declared that there was a deliberate act of God against that course (verse 6). Hannah's state was the Lord's doing. In other realms and for less important purposes—or shall we say, for more general purposes—the usual method may be followed. Samuel was not an after thought. He was foreknown and foreordained and yet humanly he was im-

possible. Why had the Lord so acted in this matter? How do we relate and reconcile the two things that Samuel was determined and yet humanly impossible by the act of God? The first part of the answer is that the bringing of this instrument into being was to be by a fellowship in the Divine travail in relation to the testimony.

Hannah went through unusual and uncommon soul-agony in the matter. She is here represented as “in bitterness of soul” and she “wept sore” (verse 10). It was not just simply a personal interest or a selfish end in view. When at length Samuel was given she placed him at the disposal of the Lord as soon as she possibly could. Concerning Isaac it says that “when the child was weaned” but in the case of Samuel it says of Hannah that “she weaned him,” as though she was not letting things go on, but bringing about a separation unto the Lord as soon as possible. She was concerned for the Lord's interests in a specially eager way. This is impressive when we take into consideration the cost of this child, and therefore the peculiar endearment to herself.

Let us get the full force of the truth here. *A thing which is to serve the Lord in a specially vital way is not born easily, and is not brought into being without some unusual suffering and travail. There is much bitterness of soul to be gone through, and many tears.*

For a time, a drawn out time, it appears that there will be nothing. The heartache and sorrow seem to remain long in the place of barrenness. And yet there can be no philosophical acceptance or fatalistic capitulation. The Lord is a factor and there is a “hoping against hope, a wistful look toward “the God who raiseth the dead, and calleth the things that are not as though they were.

Not one of the least painful aspects of the suffering is the taunting of Peninnah (verse 6). Now Peninnah was of the same household and a co-wife with Hannah. She was not a stranger or foreigner. It was as such that she “provoked sorely to make her fret.” Peninnah had plenty of children, there was none of this (divinely appointed) human impossibility.

Things were more or less simple and easy with her.

So it is, when the Lord determines to secure for Himself that vessel of peculiar purpose, and cuts off all the many activities, works, and occupations which, while being in the same household of faith and in some relation to Himself, are largely by the energies of nature and the facility of man. When and where there are not those usual accompaniments and out-workings, those issues and results, the evidences and proofs; then there is criticism, taunting, pointing of the finger, and grievous imputations. The very acts of Divine sovereignty are given a twist to mean just the opposite of God's thought. So one system of things taunts the other. Well, well, so be it. It ever was. It ever will be. But wait. Samuel did come, and one Samuel meant more to God than all the children of Peninnah put together. And yet it is not a matter of comparative values. Samuel was for an hour of peculiar need. The

suffering related to his coming into life was so deep as to solemnise beyond the suspicion of pride or comparison. All questions of self-realisation, vindication, or satisfaction had been tested in the fire, and the refined issue was the glory of God.

Samuel came, and in the purpose that he served the suffering and sorrow were made well worth while, and the wisdom of God's mysteriousness was established. God was justified and the channel used was satisfied. We can leave it there. When the Lord wants something for an hour of peculiar need, the methods have to be out of the ordinary. To those concerned He has to say "Others can, you cannot."

We are more and more deeply entering into such an hour at this time. The general thing is not meeting the situation. The Lord must bring through something which will "come to the Kingdom for such a time as *this*."

Who will pay the price ?

T. A.-S.

## Captivity in the Lord

Ephesians iii. 1, iv. 1; 2 Timothy ii. 9; 2 Timothy i. 8.

THERE is a very real sense in which the Apostle Paul in his own person and experience was an embodiment of the history of the Church in this age. Indeed it would seem to be a principle in the Divine economy that those to whom a revelation has been entrusted should themselves have it so wrought into their very being and history that they are able to say "I am your sign." To take the one fragment which is now before us, the end of Paul's life saw a process of narrowing down and limitation working itself through by "a great falling away" on the one hand, and a closing up from the general to the specific in the case of that which (him who) represented the testimony on the other. This is precisely what is foretold as to the conditions at "the end," and it is not a little significant that this is specially referred to in prophetic utterances to Timothy—the *end* letter. So that this phrase "The Prisoner in the Lord" occurring as it does in the last writings is prophetic in its meaning and wonderfully explanatory of the end way of the sovereignty of the Lord.

What we have here, then, is

I. The instrument of the Lord's testimony in a place of limiting by the will of God.

As we read the record of the incidents which led up to Paul's going to Rome as a prisoner, and especially when we read the words of Agrippa: "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar." we are not far from feeling that there were mistakes and accidents, but for which there might have been a much more propitious issue, and the ministry of the Apostle at large might have extended. There may have been times of stress when Paul himself was tempted to wonder if he had not been impulsive in that appeal to the Emperor. But as he went forward and when the Lord spoke to him from time to time giving light, it became clear that however the thing might have been construed humanly, there was the sovereign government of God in it all, and that he was in prison not as the Emperor's prisoner, but as the prisoner in the Lord.

Perhaps Paul did not accept this all at once. Possibly he did not realise just how it would work out. A more or less quick trial and release may have been in his mind. Some hope of further ministry amongst beloved

saints seems not to be absent from his correspondence. At length, however, he fully accepted what was becoming increasingly clear as the Lord's way, and it grew upon him that this way was in the greatest interest of the Body of Christ. Thus we see that when the time comes for the Lord's people to be brought face to face with the ultimate and supreme things of the revelation of Jesus Christ: things beyond personal salvation: things which relate to the mind of God from before times eternal as far above being saved; then there has to be a narrowing down, a closing up, a limiting. Much activity that has been, and all quite right for bringing things to a certain position and state, now ceases to carry them further, and something more intensive is needed.

That which represents the testimony in its fullest and closest approximation to the ultimate purpose of God then has to be shorn of much that has been good, necessary, and of God in a preparatory way, and shut up to what is ultimate. The captivity is not to a conceived truth or a superimposed doctrinal acceptance. It is wrought into the very fibre of the being by experience following revelation, and revelation interpreting experience. It is not the championing of some espoused interpretation: it is that it is the very life of the instruments and the instrument is *that* in its very being. It is not a matter of want or not want, but of cannot be other, a prisoner, the sovereignty of God has done it.

## II. The importance and value of seeing and accepting things in God's light.

This applied both to Paul and to those who were brought into touch with him. For the Apostle the settling in to the sovereign ordering of God in his imprisonment issued in increasing illumination leading to spiritual emancipation.

No one can fail to recognise the tremendous enrichment of ministry as contained in what are called "the prison Epistles." If he had been restive, piqued, rebellious, or bitter, there would have been no open heaven, and a spirit of controversy with the Lord would have closed and bolted the door to the fuller Divine unveilings and clarifyings.

When all was accepted according to the mind of the Lord, then "the heavenly places" became the eternal expanses of his walking about, and earthly bondage gave place to heavenly freedom. So it must be with every instrument set apart in relation to the higher

interests of the Lord's testimony. Then the reading of certain passages in his letters and the record of his imprisonment shows how this applied to others. Take the following:—

"Be not ashamed, therefore, of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner" (2 Tim. i. 8).

"And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went unto him ... teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus" (Acts xxviii. 30).

"The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but when he was in Rome, he sought me diligently, and found me" (2 Tim. i. 16).

Clearly the effect of these passages is that there had to be a Divine apprehension and not a merely human appraisal of Paul's position. Human levels of mentality would have produced an atmosphere of doubt, suspicion, question, and let in elements of false imputation. Regarded on merely natural lines association with the prisoner would have involved such associates in the suspicion and prejudice. Doubt of the Lord's servant was very widespread, and even many of the Lord's people were not sure of him. But the Lord was shutting up a very vital revelation to this channel, and for such as were really in spiritual need, and such as were to stand in a living relation to a fulness of testimony from identification with Christ in death and resurrection, on to throne-union with Him in power over "Principalities, Powers," &c., and on to the ministry "in the ages to come," there had to be a putting aside of all human, personal, and diplomatic considerations and a standing right in there with the instrument where God had put it in honourable imprisonment. For the possession of that which is to come through the vessel there has to be a coming where the vessel is, without consideration for reputation, influence, or popularity.

In this way the Lord sifts his people and finds out who really is wholly for Himself and His testimony, and who is actuated in any measure by other considerations and interests. The instrument in this position of popular rejection is thus the Lord's means of searching out the truly needy and pure spirited. They will search it out, and it will thus meet their need.

III. The other truth that remains here, then, is that

Shame, reproach and limitation are often God's ways of enriching the whole Body of Christ.

This has always been so. The measure of approximation to the fulness of the revelation has always been accompanied by a relative cost. Every instrument of the testimony has been laid under suspicion and reproach in a measure commensurate with the degree of value to the Lord, and this has meant that they were limited that much humanly. Many have withdrawn, fallen away, held aloof, doubted, feared, and questioned. But as Paul could say "my tribulations for you, which are your glory" (Eph. iii. 13), or "The prisoner of the Lord in behalf of you Gentiles" (Eph. iii. 1). So the measure of limitation in the Lord is the measure of enrichment in His people. The fuller the revelation the fewer those who apprehend, or the greater the number of those who stand aloof. Revelation only comes through suffering and limitation, and to have it experimentally means sharing the cost in some way. But this is God's way of securing for Himself a spiritual seed plot.

A seed plot is an intensive thing. There things are narrowed down to very limited dimensions. It is not a great extensive show that is immediately in view, but things are all considered firstly in the light of seed. The real

meaning of things is not always recognised there, but you can travel the world over and find a great many gardens which are the expression of that intensive and restricted seed plot. If ever there was such a seed plot it was Paul's prison in Rome.

All this may apply to individual lives in relation to the Lord's testimony. There may often be a chafing against limitation, confinement, and a restless hankering after what we would call something wider or less restricted. If the Lord has willed us to the place where we are, our acceptance of it in faith may prove that it becomes a far bigger thing than any human reckoning can judge. I wonder if Paul had any idea that his prison meant his continuous expansion of value to the Lord Jesus through nineteen hundred years? What applies to individuals also applies to corporate bodies, assemblies, or companies of the Lord's people scattered in the earth but one in their fellowship in relation to the Lord's full testimony. May the Lord be graciously pleased to cause the merely human aspect of prison walls to fall away, and give the realization that, far from being limited by men and circumstances, it is imprisonment in the Lord, and this means all ages and all realms are entered through that prison.

T. A.-S.

## The Cross and the City of God

Continued—No. II.

In the earlier chapters we have seen some of the characteristics of the "City of God."

1. A spiritual people with a heavenly nature. "According to the Eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Eph. iii. 11.

2. The glory of God in the people of God; the revelation and realisation of his own nature in a people;

"He hath granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the Divine nature."—II Peter i. 4.

3. Elevation and holiness; ascendancy is a feature of the people of God after His own heart;

"His foundation is in His holy mountains."—Ps. lxxxvii. 1 (87')

"Like as He who called you is holy, be ye yourselves holy in all manner of living, because

it is written, 'be ye holy for I am holy.'"—I Peter i. 4.

Babylon is of the earth; Zion of the heights.

4. Life. The "River of Life," clear as crystal. This denotes transparency. The "Tree of Life," twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month, Rev. xxii. 2 A.R.V. (Marg.) and the leaves of the tree for the maintenance of health in the nations; a life triumphant over death. Christ has conquered death; this "Life" within to be a feature of His people, beginning now and increasing day by day. To that we are called and in that "life" we should be moving.

5. The fulness and greatness of the city, "he measured the city, twelve thousand furlongs. . . . the city lieth foursquare. . . . the length and the breadth. . . . and the height thereof are equal."—Rev. xxi:

You could not find land space for twelve thousand furlongs each way in the Western Hemisphere in which to place the city: we turn to the Ephesian letter, iii. 17, 19, and read again the prayer of the Apostle Paul, "that ye may be strengthened with power through the Spirit. . . . that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled into all *the fulness of God*," the fulness and greatness of this City of God—a people filled into the fulness of God; here we find the realisation of the Apostle's prayer; and unto that we are called.

6. The feature of transparency; everything that makes up this city is said to be clear as crystal, transparent. So the people of God are to approximate to this thought of God, and transparency is to characterise their spiritual life now.

We now come to consider the characteristics of

#### **Strength, Stability, Light, Sovereignty.**

The foundations of this city, this people of God, are very solid, the foundations are tried stones, and the wall is great and high; all this speaks of strength and stability.

The throne is central, and is the manifestation of the might of God in weakness—the "Little Lamb" in the midst of the throne is greater than all the might of hell and sin; the *Lamb* hath conquered, and the Lamb in the midst of the throne is the LIFE that hath triumphed over death in all its range and depth, in every realm; a strength out of weakness, a strength that endures from eternity to eternity; and the people of God, who are the called according to His Eternal purpose are a people possessing this eternal life in Christ Jesus.

As God's people, ours is an eternal calling, unto an eternal purpose possessing an eternal life; a life that lasts out and triumphs in all and over all; "They overcame. . . . by the Blood of the Lamb."—Rev. xii. 11.

"God has given unto us eternal life and this life is in his Son, he that hath the Son hath *the Life*."—I John v. 11, 12, A.R.V. John vi. 53-56.

The Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone clear as crystal.—Rev. xxi. 10, 11.

"The city hath no need of the sun. . . . for the

glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.—Rev. xxi. 23.

Her light as a stone most precious, no need of the sun—the light was over all in its sovereign power.

These features all blend and are all related to one another, strength and stability are related to light and all three lead to sovereignty; thus we are given to understand the *nature* of sovereignty.

"His foundation is in the holy mountains, Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion. . . . glorious things are spoken of thee O city of God. . . . the Most High Himself shall establish it."—Ps. lxxxvii.

This—in relation to the City of God—is a key to a tremendous unfolding of the strength, stability and sovereignty of this city.

See the significance of the Name of God which the Holy Spirit chooses to use here "Elyon" the Most High God Possessor of heaven and earth.

Turn to Isa. xiv. 12-14.—"How thou art fallen from heaven, O Lucifer Son of the Morning. . . . for thou hast said in thy heart, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the most High." Yes, it was the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth whom Lucifer challenged; it was his aspiration to possess heaven and earth.

The Lord Jesus, when on earth, referred to Satan as the Prince of this world; and in Eph. vi. the church of God is shown her warfare is in the heavenlies.

The establishment of the city of God is by El-Elyon, the Most High God and is unto the casting down to hell of all the powers of Satan; Satan and his sovereignty cast down for ever.

Trace the word "to establish," through the Scriptures.

"The Most High Himself shall establish her."—Ps. lxxxvii. 5.

"He brought me out of a horrible pit, (Heb. a pit of destruction). He set my feet upon a rock and established my goings."—Ps. xl. 2.

"Beautiful for situation—(beautiful in elevation, A.R.V.) a joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion. . . . the city of the great King. . . . God will establish it for ever."—Ps. xlviii. 2, 8.

"He shall build a house for my Name, and he shall be my son. . . . and I will establish the throne of his kingdom. . . . for ever."—I Chron. xxii. 10.

"I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed

will I establish for ever and build up thy throne to all generations." Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4.

"He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."—Heb. viii. 6.

"Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and offerings for sin Thou wouldst not. . . lo, I come to do Thy will O God ; He taketh away the first that he may establish the second."—Heb. x. 8, 9.

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God even our Father. . . establish you in every good word and work."—2 Thess. ii. 17.

"It is good that the heart be established by grace."—Heb. xiii. 9. A.R.V.

"Now to Him that is able to establish you."—Rom. xvi. 25. A.R.V.

"Rooted and built up IN HIM and established in your faith."—Col. iii. 7.

"Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."—I Cor. xv. 58.

"Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to Him be glory, majesty, dominion and power both now and for ever, Amen."—Jude 24. 25.

All these passages and many others teach us that this work of establishing is a working principle. To-day the Lord's people need establishing, for on every hand there is going on a great falling away because of the pressure of the enemy. This could not be if the people were properly established in the Lord. Lack of assurance on the part of the people of God generally is the devil's weapon in his great campaign of error, false teaching, counterfeit, suspicion, etc.

#### Uncertainty, A Master-stroke of Satan.

To prevent assurance of faith is the devil's own work, it is his aim to get the Lord's people unsettled ; and doubt is one of his most subtle means of working. It was so in the beginning—"hath God said ?"—Gen. iii. 1, and it is still his method. The way and the only way to frustrate this is by being established in the faith, Acts xvi. 5 ; Col. ii. 7. Stand fast in the faith."—I Cor. xvi.

"A true heart in full assurance of faith."—Heb. x. 22.

"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour : whom resist steadfast in the faith."—I Peter, v. 8, 9.

"I know. . . where thou dwellest even where Satan's seat (throne, A.R.V.) is. . . and thou

holdest fast my name and hast not denied my faith."—Rev. ii. 13.

The great need of God's people is to be established in the faith, not just established in doctrine, in an orthodox gospel, or by acquiring knowledge of fundamental truth, but established by an *inward knowledge* of our standing in the Lord Jesus on the ground of His finished work and complete triumph over the devil and all his works. So many of the Lord's children lack this assurance of their position in the Lord ; yet it is written : "God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. . . in love having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself."—Eph. i. 4, 5.

"There is *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus."—Rom. viii. 1.

"He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Eph. i. 6. This acceptance has to do with warfare, all things in our "so great salvation" are related to God's Eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Eph. iii. 11.

"Thanks be to God who leadeth us from place to place in the train of His triumph to celebrate *His victory* over the enemies of Christ."—II Cor. ii, 14,

The people of God are robbed of their fighting power when the enemy has got them to doubt and question their standing in Christ. God *must* build His city in certainty, and we must stand in the full assurance of faith.

"The foundations of the wall of the city were furnished with all manner of precious stones."—Rev. xxi. 19.

"The trial of your faith being much more precious than gold. . . though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—I Peter i. 7.

Get the internal troubles settled, then you can get on with the work. To be established in the faith with full assurance enables us to strike a blow at Principalities and Powers ; but the devil and his hosts have much power where there is uncertainty, doubt, question. When the believer knows the power of the personal "*I know*" because of full assurance in the word of God, then that very knowledge is a weapon of defence against the enemy ; hence he desires to prevent assurance by inserting doubt whenever he gets a chance.

Stand on God's facts and not on the quicksands of your own feelings. Some are doubting simply because of feelings ! Salvation is not a

matter of feeling, it is God's fact.—“It is written”—God hath said. The word of God is “no condemnation” “There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.”—Rom. viii. 1.

We are perfect in Christ the day we are born anew, that is as to our *standing*, we have good reason to be sorry for our *state*; but the word is “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—II Peter iii. 18. “My little children of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you.”—Gal. i. 4, 19 A.R.V. Yes it is to be a day by day growing in grace.

Salvation seems for so many of God's children to be a matter of feelings, therefore there is no fighting force that counts against the enemy; (they have not put on the whole armour of God so as to be “able to stand against the wiles of the enemy.”) “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.”—Heb. x. 35. Your great reward!—that ye might be filled into all the fulness of God.”—Eph. iii. 19.

There is an assurance of faith which sets us free from all the power of the enemy and self as well; enabling us to endure and be strong in the Lord. Having the ground of our salvation settled, we now have ground from which we can wield sovereignty in the Lord.

Here we are passing through trial, adversity, sorrow, suffering, and we are tempted to think the Lord has given us up; the enemy presses in on every side with accusation, condemnation, question, doubts, fears. “Be ye steadfast, immovable,” for beloved, this is the establishing principle at work, our faith is being exercised; We know anguish, travail. Remember the establishing work is done while our eyes are unto Him; when things are against us, seeking to press us down, *then* we look off unto Jesus now in the presence of God *for us*, having all authority in heaven and on earth, and a NAME that is above every other name, a title of Sovereignty above every other title of sovereignty.

“The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened (full of light), that ye may *know HIM*...and what the exceeding greatness of HIS power to usward who believe according to that working (in-energising) of the strength of His might which he wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that

is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”—Eph. i. 17-23.

*This* is the ONE unto whom our eyes are. Faith is thus exercised and enables us in the very midst of pressure and contradictory circumstances to rise upward and stand in Christ Jesus in the position he has given us “seated together with Him in the heavenlies.” “Ye are made full in him in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead in bodily form.”—Col. ii. 9.

So through trial, the establishing work is done; it is the manifestation of *His Victory* over all the power and pressure of the enemy, “God who giveth us *The Victory* through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—I Cor. xv. 57. Yes, it is HIS victory, a life that hath conquered death.—I Cor. xv. 54.

The City of God is being built, and its very nature is Eternal life, indestructible life, this holds when we break down. He abides faithful. He still holds on because He is Eternal, unchangeable. There is that with us that persists, that goes through, “in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”—Rom. viii. 37.

It is the same with service; the conflict so great, the experiences through which we pass so strange and weird, so inexplicable, everything seems upside down, promises do not seem to be taking effect.

Abraham in the Land, yet the very promises given him of God seeming to be denied. Was Abraham mistaken? Are we not sometimes bewildered with the Lord, and are not His ways past finding out? It all looks such a muddle, but as faith holds on, one day we shall praise Him, as we see the reason for it all afterwards; “the path of the just...shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”—Prov. iv. 18. Note “PATH.” not things! These mysteries of the way contain some secret mystery of God; and are they not another opportunity to show forth His wisdom and power? When all seems gone, the conflict so great, the experience so strange and there is no key to the situation; we are tempted to question whether the promises were even of God; everything is so contrary to what we expected, we begin to wonder if we are all wrong! *Just then*, is the time for us to stand fast in the Lord and maintain that stand in faith.

After all, our experiences are very much alike. There is perplexity, there is apparent contradiction, there is conflict; the forms of experience may vary, but it comes to all of us in some way or another—still "He abideth faithful."

How does this establish us? By the very

helplessness of the situation, and ourselves, which causes us to cast ourselves upon Him, and it is then we prove Him. You are coming to the place where you know the mystery of God, and it is a glorious opportunity for Him to show His wisdom and so you are established. It is all a matter of endurance. 11

## The City of Light

This leads to Light, the second thing is a question of light; strength and light are always related in the Word of God, spiritual strength is linked with spiritual light, illumination or revelation.

Eph. i. 17, 18, 19. Here we find Light and Strength related to "knowledge of him," and in Eph. iii. 16, 18, 19 "Strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man... that... ye may be strong to apprehend"; Not to do, but to know. Revelation in relation to power; we stand by revelation, II Cor. iv. 6-11. "God who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "God... called me through grace to reveal His Son in me."—Gal. i. 16, A.R.V.

How are we going to be made to stand, to be established? How is this endurance going to be put in us? By knowing the Lord Jesus in this inward way, by revelation. The people who are going to stand are those in whom this thing has become a living revelation; "God hath shined in our hearts," this is one side, the other is, "pressed on every side, perplexed, pursued, smitten down," "yet not unto despair."—II Cor. iv. 6-10. We are troubled and pressed down, why? "that the LIFE of JESUS might be made manifest in our mortal bodies."—II Cor. iv. 11.

Is not that endurance? Pressed on every side yet not strangled! "In pressure Thou hast enlarged me."—Ps. iv. 1.

What was meant to be "pressed down," God has made for enlargement. Cast down, yet a wonderful rising up; Why? How? It is "God who hath shined in our hearts... in the face of Jesus Christ," therefore you can go through and survive.

Nothing can carry us through but the revelation of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit in our hearts; an inside knowledge of Him—not

mental assent to a creed or a doctrine, but a living, vital reality in our very being.

For strength to overcome and press on *only* a revelation by the Holy Spirit in us can suffice.—but it can! A revelation that is within one's spirit and not a mental appreciation of truth even though it is truth about God. Oh! the power to be able to say "I KNOW," not I have heard or read, but "I KNOW." It is an experience nothing can rob us of. It is absolutely essential to have this revelation by the Holy Spirit because we have to meet forces of evil against which nothing can stand save that which is of God.

"In pressure Thou hast enlarged me." How? Because of the constant uprising of THE LIFE within. Trouble, trial, sorrow, we are subject to these things, they are common to all men, but we rise above them through the "strength of His might" within, we are strong because of the light given in the knowledge of God.—Eph. i. 19.

This is a growing revelation. Paul is writing to the Ephesian saints, and what a wonderful history these had! See Paul's words to them in parting. Acts xx. 17-38.

To such he writes and says, "that ye may be strengthened to apprehend." Showing the necessity for the mighty power of God in bringing through revelation. The enemy mightily withstands revelation; to mar or hinder that, he'll stop at nothing!

Light and strength go together; endurance is by revelation, "I know." Establishment in the truth by revelation of the truth, this brings an impact on Satan and his hosts; light leading to might.

When the Lord opens eyes you see what happens, "the eyes of your heart being enlightened, that ye may know" this—the result of opened eyes. "Knowing that He that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus."—II Cor. iv. 14.



"I send thee to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God."—Acts xxvi. 18.

Paul was sent by the Lord Jesus with a message to open the eyes of the people that would turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to their inheritance in God; this, the inheritance of eyes being opened; sovereignty follows opened eyes.

### The City of Divine Government.

Rev. xxi. is the very embodiment of Divine government in man, everything in the chapter is talking 12, in something or other! Twelve is the Biblical number of government, and signifies perfection of government; and the city is that, a sharing of government, dominion.

We find here throne authority from centre to circumference, thus constituting the city a sovereign city; "and he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof."—Rev. xxii. 1, 2.

By sharing the *Lamb life* we also share the *throne life*, but the throne life is only possible where the Lamb life is shared; to share *then* we must know it *now* in our experience, and this is not a mental knowledge.

All authority was given to the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, on the ground of His obedience to the will of God even unto death.—Phil. ii. 5, 11. Even so He is able to give us authority over all the power of the enemy, as we too are obedient.

We have got to learn sovereignty now, we are called into throne fellowship now, and have got to learn to reign now; this, is spiritual ascendancy. But how can we live and reign in spiritual ascendancy? It begins by a revelation of the Lord Jesus in your heart by the Holy Spirit, and this instrengthenes our inner man unto ascendancy in the midst of pressure; it is in the daily test. Are we going under or rising up and taking position in spirit? The Lord never delivers out of, until our spirit is on top; we are not meant to be beneath, "thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath."—Deut. xxviii. 13.

Look at Moses;—"Jehovah said... lift thou up thy rod and stretch out thy hand over the sea and divide it."—Ex. xiv. 16. In other words, take a position in the name of the Lord and then you discover the way through. We learn to take everything in spirit, and having dominion in spirit, then, and only then, can we lift up the rod of authority.

When a thing comes from the Lord, grace comes with it; but take the thing out of its time, then the Lord is not in it. See how Moses was able to lift up the rod of authority where Pharaoh was concerned and with triumphant power; but only at the word of the Lord.

"Behold I give you authority... over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."—Luke x. 19.

"Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.—Mat. xvi. 18.

T. A. -S.

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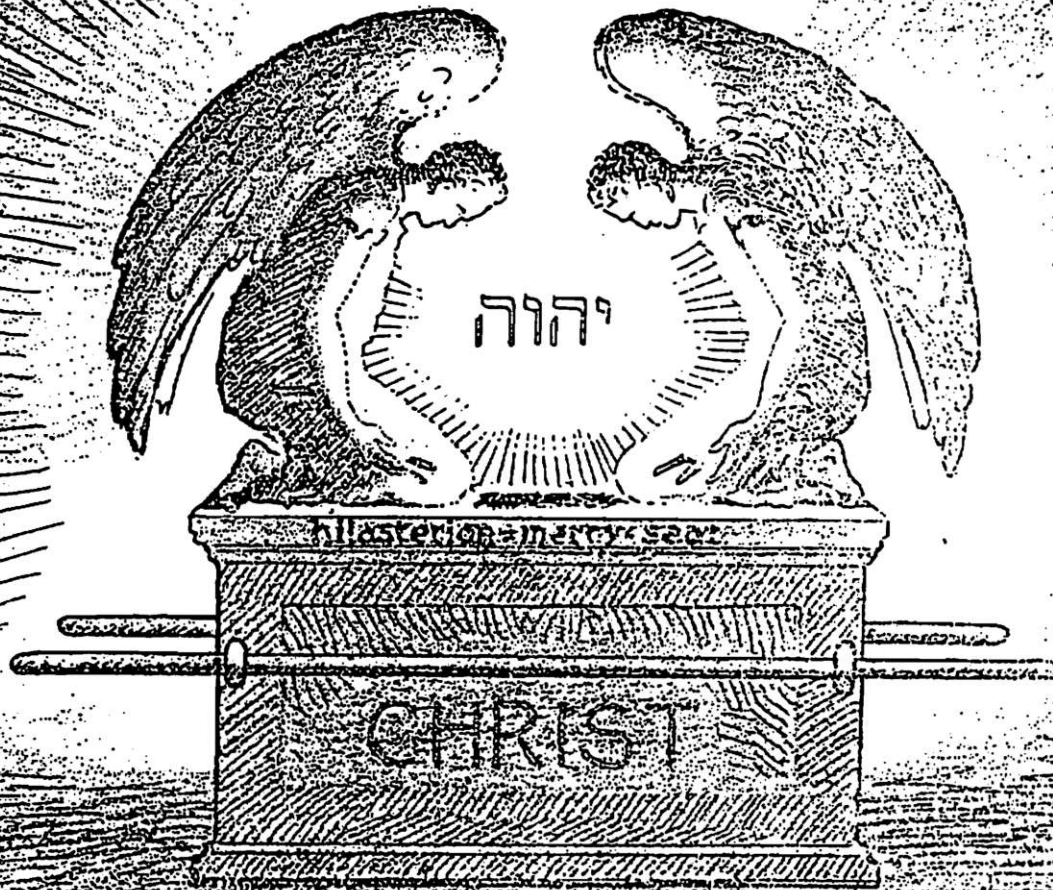
# Witness and a Testimony

NOV.—DEC., 1930

VOL. 8. No. 6

WHERE GOD AND MAN MEET

"There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony"



"Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" Rom. 3:25.

## To Our Readers

### BELOVED OF GOD,

This issue of the WITNESS AND TESTIMONY marks the passing from one year to another. We do not make too much of this, being people of Eternity and not of time, but these time-marks do serve the purpose of helping us to register the progress and development of the "Eternal Purpose." The year 1930 has been one of marked intensification. This surely is realised by all the Lord's people. Things are becoming more and more tense. The process of this feature as foretold by Our Lord in the parable of the Wheat and Tares is—despite the strong delusion—clear to all who have spiritual discernment. There is no doubt that, whether they like it or not, whether they openly admit it or not, whether they surrender to it or put it back and seek to go doggedly or despairingly on, a great number of the people of God and the spiritual leaders are aware of a breakdown, a hold up, a paralysis upon the institutions and agencies of long standing; a famine period, a bankruptcy, and a desperate need for some new thing of God. There is an almost universal sense of such a need. This sense has been the occasion of an organising of Christian forces to pray for revival. What concerns us is, What kind of a revival does the Lord desire? Every true initiation of God has—so far as we can see—been marked by a specific emphasis. We have elsewhere pointed out that each such successive breaking in of God has been to bring in some lost spiritual reality which was in the original pattern. If our own registration of the will of God is a true one, we believe that every fresh activity of the Holy Spirit will be to have things more utterly according to Christ. This is undoubtedly the objective of God as revealed everywhere in His Word, and this is the goal of all the Spirit's energies. Wholly according to Christ; that is the divine end in view! Such as have this as their vision, dominating all work and living are in line with the resources of God, and will wax stronger and stronger. It is not a movement, a testimony—as such—an interpretation, a teaching, a sect, an enterprise. It is Christ! During the past year more than ever in our experience we have been occupied by the Lord with His Son, our Lord Jesus, and we can truly say that it has been a year of unequalled depth, joy,

strength, and spiritual progress. There has come a sense of solidarity and establishment which was a conscious need.

Beloved, the Lord is coming! But His Word everywhere makes it unmistakably clear that unto His coming there *must* be that here which shall be wholly according to His mind. "The Bride has made herself ready." Rebekah must be in an absolutely detached and responsive state. The Holy Spirit pleads for a decision saying, "Hinder me not" (Genesis xxiv.). There must be a state of enrapturedness with the Lord Jesus before there can be a rapture to Him (see same chapter and 1 Peter i. 8, 2 Cor. xi. 2, Rev. xix. 6-8). One of our perils to-day is that we should seek to reconstruct or resuscitate things and methods which are no more God's way, and be unwilling to put everything into the melting-pot to have something more utterly than ever according to Christ brought out by the Holy Spirit. We have travelled a long way from the New Testament position. Evangelism has become mainly a matter of getting men saved for the sake of their being saved. The "deepening of spiritual life" has become a matter of having Christians sanctified.

These and other things have become ends in themselves. In the New Testament it is not so. The Apostles and first Christians had a definite vision of a heavenly pattern for the fellowship of the Lord's people, and their corporate vocation, and everything was related to that. The end in view was not individualistic in any sense, it was the Church conformed to Christ. Corporate companies of the Lord's people under the government of the Holy Spirit are a necessity to the Lord; just as necessary to Him as is a laboratory to the chemist or scientist for the demonstrating of certain laws and properties. The manifold wisdom of God is to be made known to the principalities and power by the Church now. What the devil hates is *companies* of believers according to Christ. What "Laodicea" sees is NOT an individualism as against fellowship, but personal responsibility to see that we are where Christ is and that we know what the Spirit is saying.

(Concluded on page 135.)

# The Reactions of the Lord

Continued—No. VII.

## Zechariah iv. Features of the End-time.

NOTE.—*The term "reactions" as employed in these chapters, means that acting-again on the part of God when that which ostensibly represents Him no longer represents Him either vitally or adequately. He reacts against what is merely ostensible and for what is living and wholly according to His mind.*

THE chapter which is now before us features in a remarkable way conditions and divine aims in the "End-times." There are striking similarities in it to certain things mentioned in the first chapters of the Revelation. These we shall see as we go on. The chief value is in its reduction of all that is essential to a concentrated essence, and when you have this you have everything vital.

Let us take the chapter bit-by-bit. What first comes into view is

### An Angel Talking.

"And the Angel that talked with me," verse 1. "The Angel that talked with me." verse 4. The parallel of this in the Revelation is the phrase seven times repeated (note seven = spiritual perfection, completeness) "What the Spirit saith to the Churches."

The Lord has something to say at the End. The book of the Revelation is full of voices. It begins with "I turned to see the voice." A strange way of putting things. Did ever anyone see a voice? There is, however, no mistake made. A vital reality is in this seeming error, as we shall see. We have known much to be made of this "voice" factor in the Bible. True as it is that God can make himself vocal and audible, taking up men and articulating His thoughts through them, as He has ever done, yet we beg to stress that in this case it is not the voice of man in view, and it is not primarily the voice at all, but it is that there is something God has to say, and that a very important something. The most pertinent question that can possibly be asked at this time is

### What is God saying today?

A striking feature of our time is that so few of the voices have a distinctive message. There is a

painful lack of a clear word of authority for the times. While there are many good preachers of the Gospel, and while we are not without champions of the vital verities of the Faith, we are sadly in need of the Prophet with his "Thus saith the Lord" which he has received in a commission born of a peculiarly chastened fellowship with God.

Why is it so? May it not be that so many who might have this ministry have become so much a part of a system? A system which puts preachers so much upon a professional basis, the effect of which is to make preaching a matter of demand and supply; of providing for the established religious order and programme? Not only in the matter of preaching, but in the whole organisation and activity of "Christianity" as we have it in systematised form today. There is not the freedom and detachment for speaking ONLY when "The burden of the word of the Lord" is upon the prophet, or when he could say "The hand of the Lord was upon me." The present order requires a man to speak every so often; hence he *must* get something, and this necessity means either that God must be offered our programme and asked to meet it (which he will not do) or the preacher must *make* something for the constantly recurring occasion. This is a pernicious system and it opens the door to any number of dangerous and baneful intrusions of what is of man and not of God. The most serious aspect of this way of things is that it results in voices, voices, voices, a *confusion* of voices, but not the specific voice with the specific utterance of God for the time. Too often it has the effect of causing men to hear and read just with a view to getting preaching matter, subjects for sermons, and the value of things is judged by their suggestiveness of themes. The man may be a Godly man and the message may be the truth, but there is something more than this—is it *the* message which relates to the immediate time—appointed purpose of God? There are many good men who are giving out what they know and believe of the truth, but at the same time there are many of the Lord's children who are hungry and not being fed.

The food question amongst the Lord's people to-day is a very acute one, and a more or less good ministry is not going to meet the need. There is a growing concern to know as distinct from the generalisations of truth and service what is the Lord's word for now, where we are, and what in the Divine purpose belongs to this present hour ?

This brings us back to the first thing in our chapter ; God has something to say, but it also leads us to the next thing, "The Angel that talked with me came again, and waked me as a man that is wakened out of his sleep."

Here we have the necessity for

#### **An Awakening to what God has to say. . .**

In the Revelation this is "He that hath an ear, let him hear," and in the case of Laodicea—which represents the end—it is "I counsel thee to buy of me eyesalve that thou mayest see." "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me," said John. God is speaking, He has something to say, but there must be "a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the Knowledge of Him. The eyes of your heart be enlightened."

Spiritual discernment, perception, understanding and intelligence are all too rare. The causes are many. The engrossment with the work and its multifarious concerns; the rush and hurry of life; the restless spirit of the age; these with an exhaustive provision of external religious facilities, all tend to render the inner place of Divine speaking inoperative or impossible of functioning. Perhaps we had forgotten that the Bible is not only a revelation but also contains a revelation, and that that deeper spiritual content is only possible of recognition and realisation by such as have had their eyes and ears opened; in other words—who have been awakened. Some of the Lord's most faithful servants are still only occupied with the letter of the Word, the contents of books, topics, themes, subjects, outlines, analyses, etc., and in the deepest sense are not in "revelation." (This is not meant as a criticism). The difference too often is that of a ministry to the mind or head, and that to the heart or spirit.

The former will sooner or later tire and weary both the minister and those ministered to. The latter is a ministry of life to both, and is inexhaustible in freshness.

Whether it comes at the beginning or later, it is the greatest day in our history of which we can say: "It pleased God to reveal His Son IN me." "I received it, not from men but by

revelation." That is the beginning of an inwardness of things which may have many crisis issues. One of these is the one of which we are particularly thinking now, namely, the awakening to see what is the thought and desire of God at given and specific times. Such a revelation—through the scriptures—is nothing less than revolutionary, though usually costly.

Would to God that there were an adequate number at this time who, like the men of Issachar "Had knowledge of the times." We now proceed to see what comes into view when God's instrument is awakened, and is able to answer the heavenly interrogation "What seest Thou ?"

#### **"Behold, a candlestick all of Gold."**

Every ministry in the Scriptures appointed by God, was constituted upon something having been seen. The test of a Divine commission may be found in this question "What seest thou ?" and the credentials may well be the answer upon the basis of God having shown something very concrete. It is not a matter of winning the sermon or winning the audience, but declaring the truth for the time as it has been made a fire in the bones. It would be rather pertinent than impertinent to challenge the servants of God with this question, relative to the time in which they live, and relative to the immediate concern of God—"What seest thou ?"

There is no doubt that what God has seen at all times as His objective is "A Candlestick all of Gold," but from time to time there has been a special necessity for Him to bring it into the view of the people, and especially His prophets. It is for this that he reacts, and the end-time must see a renewal of His reaction.

Now ignoring that there is a difference between the seven-branched candlestick or lampstand of the Old Testament, and the seven lampstands of the Apocalypse, there is a relationship of both in a common principle. That common principle is that they both represent

#### **The Instrument of the Testimony in the House of God.**

While that innermost light of the Most Holy Place—the light of Christ in the presence of God—remains undimmed and inviolate, there is that which is midway between heaven and earth—the Holy Place—where the testimony has to be kept clear both Godward and man-

ward. Concerning this—as differing from the other—God has given very careful and explicit instructions and injunctions for its perpetual maintenance. He is peculiarly jealous over this testimony. So we find that it is here in the sphere of this that the prayer-life (Altar of incense) and the feeding-fellowship (Table of shewbread) of the Lord's people has its true value and vitality. The instructions for the making of the Candlestick in Exodus xxv and xxxvii are full of the richest significance. First in these is the material—"pure gold."

If it is to have a sevenfold fulness, intensity, and expression, which refers to spiritual completeness, then it must be preeminently suitable to the Divine purpose. The meaning of the "all of gold" then, is that it is

#### Absolutely according to God

Be sure to get the force of this; an instrument of the testimony wholly according to God!

There is only One Who is thus wholly according to God's mind and heart, and He—the Lord Jesus, and if the whole Tabernacle in every part came firstly from God and then was Christ in type throughout, then this lampstand speaks of a vessel of the testimony of God in which the Lord Jesus is absolute and complete. God would have everything according to Christ. This fact governs the whole revelation in the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. It is typified and prophesied in the Old Testament. It is presented in the Gospels, demonstrated in the "Acts"; defined in the Epistles; and consummated in the Revelation. But, alas, what a tragic and heart-breaking history is associated with this fact, and how difficult has it ever been to get anything wholly according to Christ. In an earlier chapter we saw God's reactions to this in Bible times, and suggested that he has again and again so reacted since.

The Reformation was such a reaction, and by it He recovered the Great foundational truth of Justification by Faith; which puts Christ into His absolute place as the Chief Corner-stone of the House of God. It was a grand thing, though very costly, but all too soon men pulled it down on to the earth, and the "Protestant Church" as such issued; a tree under the branches of which almost every kind of credal bird can lodge, and Protestantism as such is by no means a synonym for what is wholly according to Christ.

Since then the reactions of the Lord have been seen in other instances.

The Moravian Brethren through a great fight and affliction, were used to recover the great truth of the Church's responsibility for the testimony of Jesus in all the nations. Not a missionary society or adjunct to the Church, but the Church itself directly. This was, and is, wholly according to Christ. But again, human hands mould this movement into a "Church," with all the outward elements of a religious order. There is no question that there has been considerable spiritual loss.

A further reaction of God is seen in the Wesleys and Whitfield. Here, in addition to a mighty recovering of soul-saving Evangelism, there was the recovery of the doctrine of practical holiness. This was grand while the instrument remained, but, alas, there came those human hands again, and an earthly organizing into a system—the Wesleyan Church. We are perfectly sure Wesley would not have wished this. Then about a hundred years ago there was what all ought to recognise as movement of God in the case of those who are now known as "Plymouth Brethren." There were several most precious recoveries made in this instance. The Lord Jesus was given an exclusive place which was not common in those days, nor is it common now. The great truth concerning the Body of Christ—the One Church—was brought again into view after perhaps centuries of obscurity. God was in this, and is still in it, but the most ardent devotée to this community is both grieved and ashamed to contemplate its divisions to-day. Is it that men had again been insinuated or had insinuated themselves? Has this, like so much more, been taken into the governing hands of men? Has that subjective work of the Cross, by which in a very deep way man is cut off and the Holy Spirit governs, failed of adequate application or acceptance here? These are only questions, not charges. Indeed, all that we have said is not meant as a charge or as a criticism. We are seeking to speak constructively, not destructively. Many more are the reactions of God through the past nineteen centuries, but we only use these by way of illustration. It will be seen that each fresh movement was in advance of those before in the matter of truth recovered. So that from the Divine standpoint it was a movement nearer to the original position. The big question which at once arises is, will the Lord do a new thing yet? Are we to know of a fresh reaction to His first position? The only answer we can



give to this question is that whether or not there should be anything in the nature of a "movement" as open to general recognition, we are certain that there is a more or less hidden movement on the part of the Spirit of God, working through deepening dissatisfaction with things as they are toward that which is nearer the original thought than has been since the beginning. It will be such a thing as cannot be "joined" by men, but into which there will come only such as come by deep inward exercise, so that it is a matter of common spiritual travail and inwroughtness.

What next comes before us in this vision which is more than Jewish, but has that invariable double application of Old Testament revelation is

### The two Olive Trees and the two Anointed Ones.

The symbolism here is familiar. Two is the number of testimony or witness. Trees are very often symbolic of man or men as witness or witnesses. The Olive, as is apparent in this chapter, especially relates to the oil. The position of these two trees is on either side of the Candlestick. From verse 14 we learn that "These are the two anointed ones which stand before the Lord of the whole earth."

There is no doubt that the two olive trees bring into view, firstly and historically, Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel the Governor. Chapter III deals with the one and Chapter IV with the other. The first speech was concerning the High Priesthood and its ministry, and the second speech of iv, 1, is concerning the Government or sovereignty. This interpreted prophetically relates to the Lord Jesus. His High Priestly work and position first come into view and are established in glory. Then He is established by God as Lord and Sovereign-Head. On these two sides of His one Person He ever gives the meaning of the candlestick; that is, He defines the nature of its vocation, and supplies the unfailing resource for that testimony. It is, as we have said, constituted according to Christ, and maintained by Him in all the fulness of His anointing. The Divine explanation of this is "This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Here we reach the central meaning of the vision as to the executing of the purpose of God. It speaks for itself. Its clear affirmation is that this instrument and this testimony must

be utterly in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Not might, nor power of brain, will, emotion, organisation, machinery, committee, influence, reputation, numbers, name, personality, outfit, enthusiasm, etc., but solely the Holy Spirit! The accounting for this will never be *in truth*—whatever superficial observers may say—attributable to any human force or resource, but all who have any spiritual intelligence will have to recognise that its energy and power is Divine. This will also be proved by its endurance and persistence through the intense fires of opposition and antagonism. Here the Holy Spirit is allowed to govern and dictate, to direct and choose or reject, just as in the "Acts" at the beginning. To have such an instrument and such a testimony there will need to be a very revolutionary re-shaping of ideas. It will be necessary to realise that all those things upon which men have come to count as most important factors in the Lord's work are really not necessarily factors at all. It will have to be recognised that education, business ability, worldly wisdom, personal ability, money, etc., *as such* have nothing to do with the work of the Holy Spirit or with Christianity. The Lord may use these, call them in, and if they are kept in their right place they may serve Him greatly, but they are secondary, and He can easily dispense with them. It is of infinitely greater importance and value that men should be filled with the Holy Spirit, and if a choice is to be made the very first consideration should ever be as to whether this is the case. There is a wisdom, judgment, discernment, knowledge, understanding by the Holy Spirit which is the only kind which is equal to that which is to be wholly according to God. Thus the Lord Jesus as the Great Mediator and Sovereign Head would maintain His testimony wholly in accordance with His own nature and mind in the fulness of the Spirit of His own anointing.

When things are thus there is no need to be unduly oppressed by

### The Great Mountain.

"Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain (verse 7)."

The mountain is a figure of the accumulation of difficulties. The completing of the House of God will be no less fraught with difficulty and obstruction than the commencement, but, as then, so at the end where the Holy Spirit is absolute Lord, these difficulties will be proved rather complementary than otherwise. The

"many adversaries" will only be sovereignly used to further rather than arrest the consummation of "the Eternal purpose." "The hands of Zerubbabel had laid the foundation of this house; his hands also shall finish it."

The Greater Zerubbabel laid those foundations at Pentecost. The finishing will be by His hands alone. The same Glorious Lord Jesus will bring forth the topstone with shoutings of Grace, Grace unto it.

Then there is presented for our contemplation, by way of an interrogation, a matter which is indeed very challenging "Who hath despised

### The Day of Small Things."

There is an unhealthy lust for big things amongst the Lord's people in these days. Something to attract attention, to impress; a demonstration to capture, an appearance to impress. Big names, big places, big titles, big sounds, big movements, big sweeps! If the dimensions are big according to men's standards, the success is judged accordingly.

God has ever found it necessary to reduce in order to get and maintain what will preserve the recognition of wholly Divine factors. End-times are always days of small things. See the testimony in the Revelation; it is only represented by the few who "overcome." Bigness is material or temporal. Greatness is spiritual and eternal. Too often men—even Christians—despise that in which God delights. The significance of things according to God is so often seen in an "upper room" over against

the whole city, but the city succumbs to the upper room. When dealing with the "world rulers of this darkness" the Lord has frequently made an upper-room His Throne-room. "These seven eyes of Jehovah shall rejoice when they see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel." What is that? Well, the seven eyes symbolise the perfection of spiritual vision, taking in everything as it is. The plummet is that by which crookedness is brought to light and made manifest. When Jehovah sees the Lord Jesus with that instrument in His hand which so represents His own standard and mind that by it He can correct what is not so, and show the all-unsuspected leanings, angles, bulgings, and dangers of that which is related to His House; when He has that instrument by which He can make manifest how His House should be built according to Christ, then His perfect spiritual vision will rejoice and be satisfied. This is what He needs. O, that we might be to Him such. It will cost! It will not be a popular ministry, but it will be precious to the Lord.

As we close it will be no little gain to note the names of the Lord in this Chapter. The thing as in view is related to Jehovah—the Almighty, Eternally Self-Sufficient One (verses 6, 10). The executing and sufficiency of the purpose is related to Jehovah-Sabaoth—the Lord of Hosts (verse 6). The place of the testimony is related to Adonahy—Master, or Lord; that is, He who owns and has the rights of proprietorship.

(Part II = found in printed book) T. A. S.)

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## Forthcoming Meetings and Ministries

(IF THE LORD WILLS)

HONOR OAK JAN. 3 and 4  
 PARIS. Mr. SPARKS. „ 5 to 12  
 GLASGOW. Mr. FAUNCH. All January  
 (THE TABERNACLE).  
 EDINBURGH. Mr. SPARKS. JAN. 20  
 (GARTSHORE HALL.)  
 HONOR OAK. FEB. 7 and 8

Mr. Sparks is provisionally booked for a number of engagements in U.S.A. and Canada next Summer.

# For Boys and Girls

## The Gospel in the Farmyard (No. 9)

### Treasure Trove

HERE is a story of the discovery of some hidden treasure on our farm.

Our farmer friend noticed above the back door of his house a little hole in the wall, and now and again he observed a bee going in or coming out through the hole. He wondered at first what this meant, but one day he was left in no doubt, for he saw a whole swarm of bees flying round like a cloud in his garden and then suddenly the largest of them all—the queen—flew straight to the hole in the wall and disappeared through it, followed one by one by all the other bees—hundreds of them—until all had disappeared. The farmer knew then that the bees had made their home somewhere inside his house. For a while he was not troubled by them, but after a time so many of them began to make the rooms of his house their flying ground, to the great annoyance of the people in the house, that he decided to try and get rid of the bees. By this time he had discovered where they had made their home—in the space between the floor boards of an upstairs room and the ceiling of the room below—and he tried various simple remedies for driving them away, but all in vain. At length he felt he could put up with them no longer, and so pulled up the floor boards and by means of some smoke-producing material drove the bees out through the hole in the wall. He found the space under the floor boards filled with honeycomb and honey, which he proceeded to remove; and if you are fond of honey you will readily agree that he had found some treasure worth having.

Now our farmer had had inside his house all the time something which was very valuable. It was worth much, but he might even have starved in the house, not knowing that there was something hidden away there which could meet his need. You see he might have said—“Oh, they are only bees under my floor.” *But where the bees were there was honey,* and this he had to discover. You know, boys and girls, you may have something which is really very precious and yet not know its value. You may have the Lord Jesus actually in your

heart and yet not know *His* value. The great treasure hunt for every one of us throughout our whole life should be to discover the treasures that are *in Him*.

You have perhaps often been urged to take the Lord Jesus into your heart and told that you will find He makes such a difference; but even when you have received Him you need to discover how precious he is. We are always having to say as we go on—“to think that I have had the Lord in my heart all these years, and yet I never before knew that He could meet such and such a need in this way!” None of us yet knows fully how precious He is, but we want to go on to know. The Apostle Paul himself, right at the end of his wonderful life, expressed his own need and longing in this way: “. . .that I may know HIM.” There is a passage in the first letter to the Corinthians (please find it) which says that Jesus Christ is “made unto us from God wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” I want you to know that He is so precious, of such value, that He brings to us in Himself from God *everything* of which we can ever have need. Oh, what a Saviour! And our needs are very varied. Our first is of peace with God in the knowledge that our sins are forgiven. The Lord Jesus is our peace, that is, when we receive Him we receive peace. Sometimes we need joy. The Lord Jesus brings to us God’s own joy, which can be truly in our hearts even when our circumstances would otherwise make us sad. Sometimes our need is for wisdom—we don’t know how to do this, or whether we ought to do that: He brings us wisdom from God, and teaches us how we should act and speak. And much more than this, for sometimes when we know what we ought to do we find sin too strong for us and we have no power in ourselves to do the right. Why, the Lord Jesus *is* the power of God and He brings to us from God the strength to overcome. Some people are sad because their hearts are cold and not full of love, and others because they feel their faith is so small. Why, all love and all

(Continued on page 135.)

# Looking for a City

## A Conference Message

Readings and references :—

Revelations, iii, 7-22 ; Hebrews, xi, 8-10.

THE word for our meditation this afternoon is that central phrase of the 9th verse of Hebrews xi, "dwelling in tents," in contrast with a phrase in Revelation iii, 10 "they that dwell upon the earth." Those two phrases hold entirely different ideas, they are in complete contrast. I trust that in the goodness of God we shall see the contrast as we proceed. Dwelling "in tents" on the one hand, dwelling "on the earth" on the other. There are four original words in the New Testament translated by our English word "dwell" or "dwelling" and they hold rather different ideas.

There is one word which just has the ordinary significance of "remaining," "to remain." That word we find in Acts xxviii, 30 : "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house." The idea is he just "remained" there, he *dwelt* in that house. There is a second word which has the significance of "to use" or "to have a house." You get that in Romans viii, 11 : "The Spirit of God *dwelleth* in you." That is, "if the Spirit of God has a house in you. . . ." There is a third word which has the significance of making a tabernacle, or dwelling in tents found in John i, 14 : "and the Word was made flesh and *dwelt* among us." Dwelt in a tent amongst us. But the word we have in both the portions we are now considering is a different word from any of these. It has the significance of *settling down*, and what the Holy Spirit is really saying concerning those who are mentioned in the letter to the Philadelphian Church is that they "settle down" upon the earth, they deliberately "dwell" upon the earth and mind earthly things. Now the same word is used in connection with Abraham, but the idea is that he "settled down" to tent life. At first blush you may say that is a contradiction in terms, but it is not. He weighed up the whole situation and settled down to tent life—that is, he settled down to a life that is unsettled. He of set purpose gave himself to a nomad's life, because of a vision he had received, because of something of superlative worth that had come to him : "Here we have no continuing city."

The Holy Spirit says in Hebrews xi that he "dwelt" in tents with Isaac and Jacob. We are to understand he made up his mind that for the rest of his time on earth he would know nothing but tent life. This is in contrast to those who have their "dwelling" upon the earth—not in a tent—with foundations upon the earth, roots running into the earth, earthbound, therefore committed to all the things that are to come upon the earth. The Lord gives a promise to the Philadelphian church that it shall be kept out of that hour of tribulation which is coming upon all the world to try them that are "earthdwellers." So we have these two contrasted ideas.

Abraham was originally a man who "dwelt upon the earth," he was a citizen of Ur of the Chaldees. Some of us have been most interested lately to discover what a wonderful city that was, what a marvellous civilisation they had in those early days. We have sometimes thought of Abraham as living in the midst of a very primitive state of things—nothing of the kind ! He knew civilised life fully developed. Abram was a citizen of Ur of the Chaldees, an "earth dweller," a man who had his roots and foundations in the earth. But something happened to him. A word came to him from God, a vision broke upon his spirit : "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham before he dwelt in Haran." An emancipating word reached him, cut the very foundations of his settled life, his earthly dwelling and made him into a man who was content to settle down to another kind of life, a tent life, to forego all that bound him to the earth and to have no continuing city. What was that vision, that costly yet emancipating vision which came to him ? Well ! Hebrews xi, verse 10 tells you. One does not suggest that this came to him all at once. The call came to him and he obeyed only in part, at first. He made a wrong movement, yet took a big step in obedience, but finally he obeyed completely and came into the land which God had spoken to him of, and there he was set completely free. He was content to hold nothing for himself but to wait for the thing that he saw. What was that ? "For he looked for"

—that word “looked” is a strong word—“he waited for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” It was a vision of the City of God. The vision of the final and ultimate purpose of God which broke upon his spirit in that early day set him free from the earth.

One says it without any hesitation, that if the vision of the City of God breaks upon our spirit it will have exactly the same shattering, yet emancipating effect. It is a costly vision. If you view it from the standpoint of earth, it is a shattering vision; if from the spiritual standpoint, a blessedly emancipating one. If an earthbound soul saw something of the vision and compared it with the cost of following it, he might say, no! it is far too costly, but the man in whom the Lord Jesus is dwelling by the Holy Spirit, the man who is determined at all costs to go on with God, if he gets the vision of the City of God, the ultimate purpose, toward which God has been working all through the ages, that final consummation, well, it will be for him a blessedly emancipating vision. He will hardly speak of the cost because of the glory. He will speak of it in such terms as “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory . . . . the things that are seen are temporal but the things that are not seen are eternal.” And Abraham, far away back in the early history of things, has this vision, and it emancipated him. It took him right out of Ur of the Chaldees into Canaan and it made him content to dwell in Canaan as a man living in a tent. Lot could go to Sodom, to the well watered plains and enter into the life of the cities therein, but for Abraham there were only two things—a tent and an altar.

I am sure of this, that what the Lord is seeking to do in us is to bring us into the place into which He brought Abraham, where we have two things, two symbols. A tent which speaks of our roots having been taken out of the earth, our foundation destroyed so that we here simply require a covering, a house, a tent, and the altar which speaks of our relationship to God and our devotion to Him in the Person of the Lord Jesus.

I suppose there is not one of us who is seeing this vision of the City of God who does not feel a strong desire to come experimentally into the understanding of what it is, both in our individual life and in our lives as to the people of God together, that there

might be seen something of the glory of God, that glory which shall be seen in its fulness in the City of God when that is brought through finally and ultimately. Well! someone has said, I forget who, that salvation is the only thing in the Christian life which we get for nothing. Everything else has to be paid for. That is a very wise and true saying. While our sins are forgiven for His Name's sake, and we receive eternal life as a free gift on the basis of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, having received that gift, and being possessed of life, everything else that we acquire has to be purchased—that is to say, every step forward means a surrender of something. The reason why so few of the Lord's people, comparatively, go on unto perfection is that they hold with too tight a hand things which bind them to the earth; too true it is of many of the Lord's dear children that they are “dwellers upon the earth,” earth bound. Oh! the Lord wants a free people, a people who are not bound by the earth, a people, heavenly, not only in their origin, but in character, in disposition, heavenly because they have been taken out of the earth in spirit and seated in the Heavenlies with Christ. We only come into the experience of that as we pay the price: therefore, one says that the vision of the City of God is costly, and the Lord's challenge to our hearts is just this simple one—are we prepared to pay the price and be set free, so that the tent becomes a fitting symbol of our life here on the earth?

What is a tent? A tent is that which you can strike at a moment's notice, which can be taken down whenever a call comes. The Lord's trouble with so many of us is that we take such a tremendous lot of moving. Now, of course, we live in the twentieth century and are in the world. We can't help the circumstances of our lives, but this is a matter of the spirit, not of circumstances. The Lord knows all about our circumstances, and can deal with them if we will let Him when the call comes. Are we in spirit living in a tent, so that, the Lord has a free way with us and can do as He will—if it would serve the interests of His Kingdom, we should be prepared to let everything go at a moment's notice, and march having nothing but a tent. This depends upon our relationship to the altar, it depends upon our apprehension of the Person of Christ, and the purpose of God in Christ. That is why the Lord is speaking to us in this Conference, in

order that He might strip us of everything that holds and binds us to the earth. It is significant that in the letter to the Philadelphian Church, the word is that the hour of temptation, the hour of trial which is coming upon the whole earth will try all those that "dwell upon the earth." This is not merely a physical fact, it does not simply mean that those who happen to be upon the earth when the great tribulation comes will pass into the hour of trial: this is a spiritual fact and it is a challenge from the Lord as to where we are "dwelling" and what kind of life is ours. The promise to the Philadelphian Church is that it shall be kept out of that hour of trial. The point is this beloved. If you are dwelling upon the earth in this specific spiritual sense, you are bound up with the earth, and you will go through that which comes upon that earth. But if you are the Lord's free people, then you will enter into this promise, you will be kept out of that hour of supreme trial which is coming upon all the world to try them that "dwell upon the earth."

Now in order that we may develop this I want to look a little carefully at the two letters to the Philadelphian and the Laodecian Churches. Most spiritual commentators are agreed that the seven letters to the churches, as well as having a specific and local application, present to us a view of the course of church history through the age. I think we may accept this as true, and that the Laodecian letter does speak in clear terms of the conditions which will obtain in the last hours of the dispensation immediately preceding the coming of the Lord Jesus. It is, I think, a striking fact that the coming of the Lord Jesus is not so much as mentioned in that letter, but it is referred to, indeed it is in one way the burden of the letter to the Philadelphian Church—"Behold I come quickly." "Hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown." "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." This has a direct reference to the coming again of the Lord Jesus—"because thou hast kept the word of My patience. . . ." Clearly, therefore, both these letters relate to the end time and show two companies of the Lord's people upon the earth, the Laodecian letter describing the condition of the professing Church viewed as a whole, and the letter to the Philadelphians

relating to a small company within the larger whole who keep the word of the Lord's patience and look for His appearing. The Lord has a message to the whole professing Church which bears His Name, but He also has a special message to those who are described in the Philadelphian letter. Who are they? The faithful remnant, those who are really going on with God, who are not "earth dwellers," whose roots are not in the earth, but who are symbolised by the tent and the altar.

Let us look carefully at this Philadelphian letter and note some of its main features. *Verse 7*: It is both striking and significant that in the description of Himself, the Lord gives His imperial qualities as recorded in the opening vision which John had of His Person. He speaks of Himself as "Holy and true," "He that hath the key of David." What is the key of David? The key of David is absolute sovereignty in respect of service.

The letter to Philadelphia is one written to a remnant people. It is not the Church in its original strength and expansiveness, it is a remnant of a time of weakness that is yet faithful. You have faithfulness both negative and positive. "Thou hast kept My word." That is the positive element. "Thou hast not denied My Name." That is the negative. That is set over against the condition of the Lord's people, where the Name has not been kept, but denied. Why only a little strength, only a little power? Well, it does seem not only from our study of the Word of God, but from experience also, as confirming what the Word of God would indicate that the fulness of power can only be experienced when there is a real going on with God in a considerable measure. But here is a little company, a church with a little strength. Nevertheless, it has an open door before it, a door that had been opened by the Lord on the ground of its faithfulness and the little strength it possessed, an open door for witness and testimony. And there is something else here which is very significant. There is religious opposition to the testimony, satanically inspired. You will find that the more faithful you are to the word of God, the more rigidly you are careful not to deny His Name, the more you get into any open door that the Lord sets before you, the more you will experience opposition, not from the world, but from those who profess the Name of our beloved Master, and that opposition will be Satanically inspired.

Thus we have here, a company in weakness, having only a little strength, entering into the open doors, opposed by Satan operating through the religious world. "Thou hast kept My word . . . ." (verse 8). Here is something more than that. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience . . . ." What is the "word of my patience"? Patience is endurance. It is not our ordinary thought of patiently waiting for something. It is not passive, it is the Lord who speaks, the Lord of glory, and these Philadelphian saints have entered into fellowship with their Lord in something that He speaks of as the "Word of My patience." The word of My endurance. Hebrews x, 13 I think gives it to us—"From henceforth expecting until His enemies be made the footstool of His feet." Here is the Lord in glory, seated upon the Throne, in a spirit of expectation, patiently waiting, enduringly waiting. What is He enduring? He is enduring all the waywardness of His people, all their lack of response to Him, all their lack of coming into fellowship with Him in His own desire and passion; patiently enduring, waiting until that consummation arrives when His enemies shall be made His footstool.

God has established the Kingdom in the enthronement of the King, but God is waiting, the King is waiting for that to be established and made good on earth. Waiting! The Kingdom for which He waits, oh! what a wonderful kingdom it is. Turn to the Book of Daniel. Just read one or two words there, in order that it may come to our hearts again:—Chapter vii, 13-14: "I saw in the night visions and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

"And there was given him dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

It is that for which He is waiting, and it cannot come to pass until the Church has first been taken home. The immediate thing for which the Lord is waiting is therefore the reception of the Church to Himself, the faithful company, those who keep the word of His patience. Are our hearts beating with His heart in desire for the bringing in of the Kingdom? The promise to the Philadelphian

Church is this—an open door set before them first of all on the basis of the faithfulness and strength that yet remains to them, but this also if they keep the word of His patience: "I also will keep them out of the hour of trial which is coming upon the whole world to try them that dwell upon the earth." "Because thou hast kept . . . . I also will keep." Here is a conditional promise to those who are faithful, God's remnant people in a time of apostasy, when in the midst of much self-satisfaction there is spiritual poverty. "Thou sayest 'I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing,' and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." That is the general condition in the end days, the condition of that which bears the Name of the Lord, and we do not say it because we judge our fellow believers, our hearts are burdened with desire that all the Lord's people should come through into this, and keep the word of His patience, but there it is. Those must be strangely blind who do not see that it is even so. Where is the dynamic of the Church? Is it not true, that notwithstanding the much effort, the much success upon an earthly level, there is very little which really brings the purposes of God to pass.

We were speaking of Abraham. When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, God was beginning to move toward this ultimate purpose. He had in His Heart, the City of God, and that was His initial move, as it were. God was taking out the man in order that He might make a people, in order that through that people the Christ might come and then the Church be gathered out, and the City of God brought to pass. Abraham entered into that fellowship with God, and became a stranger and a pilgrim. We are creatures of a day, but there is no time with God. God has been working all through the ages, to bring this purpose through, and is still working. The way that the Lord is speaking to us in this Conference is a part of the great plan to bring it through. Are we keeping the word of His patience? The word comes to us this afternoon as a challenge.

"One thing more." "Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out, and I will grave upon him the Name of My God and the Name of the City of My God which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from My God, and My New Name." That is the promise made to the overcomer in the Philadelphian Church,

that he shall be a pillar in the temple of God. It is very interesting to refer to Solomon's temple and see the two great pillars of that temple which are named Jachin and Boaz—1 Kings vii, 21. The margin gives the meaning of these names. The right pillar, Jachin—"He shall establish"; and the left pillar, Boaz—"in it is strength." He that overcometh in Philadelphian conditions is to be made a pillar in the temple of his God, having these elements, establishment, strength, and will have graven upon that pillar these blessed names. What are they? First, the Name of God, secondly, the name of the City of God, the New Jerusalem; thirdly, the new Name. The symbolism is very plain. The name is always the nature. To have written upon one the Name of God is to have the Nature of God. To have the Name of the City graven upon one is to have all the elements that constitute the glory of that City worked into one's being. To have the New Name, well, that is to be brought into a special association with the Lord Jesus in all those elements of His Nature and His Person which will be revealed in eternity. What promises!—to be

made a pillar in the temple, to go out no more, and to have graven upon us these glories of Christ. These are the promises that are set before us. If we are to know anything of them in the power of the Spirit, it will only be as the vision splendid has dawned upon our wandering spirits, and as that vision has emancipated us from the earth so that we settle down to tent life as Abraham did. Are we prepared for that? Are we prepared to hold everything in this world loosely, in order that we might be instruments through which that purpose can be accomplished? It was the vision of glory that emancipated Abraham, and it will be as the vision dawns upon our souls that we shall not desire to have riches here, the tent and the altar will be the symbols which characterise us. It will be worship and a life that is absolutely at the disposal of the Sovereign Lord. We shall come into fellowship with Himself, our hearts will beat with His heart, we shall with Him keep the word of His patience, and so we shall be kept out of that hour of trial which is coming upon all the world to try them that "dwell upon the earth."  
S. A.

## What Colour is Your Map?

I was *en route* for Scotland, specially to visit some fellow Christians whom hitherto I had not seen, and of whom I entertained some notions not altogether favourable to them, or creditable to me. The opposite corner of the compartment was occupied by a little girl not more than nine years old. I discovered that she was travelling alone to Edinburgh and we became good friends. It was the first time that she had gone so far, and when our train crossed the border into Scotland I said, "Now we're in Scotland." "No, this isn't Scotland," replied the little maid. "Why do you say that?" I asked. "Because Scotland's yellow," she said with utmost gravity. I lay back and laughed at my dogmatic little friend, and then asked, "Whatever makes you say that Scotland's yellow?" "Well, it's yellow on my map," said she with great assurance, and in a manner which meant that that's the last word on the subject. And though around us stretched

fields of lovely green, it was not Scotland to her because all she knew of Scotland was what she had learnt from her map. I laughed again and again at the *naïveté* of that little Yorkshire maid; then I grew grave, and the tears forced themselves from my eyes as the lesson forced itself upon me. I, too, had had a map, and on my map my brethren were yellow, and to be avoided; *was my map right?* I prayed for grace to destroy my map if it proved to be wrong, as it most surely did, for my brethren surprised me by the freshness of their love for our common Lord and His precious truth.

I prayed for grace to discard my prejudices and endeavour henceforth to look upon my brethren as the Lord Who loves them looks upon them. It was a needed lesson, and one that has meant much blessing to me, and I shall never forget the little maid who thought that Scotland was yellow; so like me was she.

J. T. M.



## On Knowing the Lord

"That I may know Him."—Phil. iii. 10.

"Have I been so long time with you and yet hast Thou not known me."—John xiv. 9.  
Phil. i. 10. Heb. viii. 11. 1 John ii. 20, 27.

It is of the greatest importance that the Lord's children should fully recognise that, above all other things, His object is that they should know Him. This is the all-governing end of all His dealings with us. This is the greatest of all our needs.

It is the secret of strength, steadfastness, and service. It determines the measure of our usefulness to Him. It was the one passion of the life of the Apostle Paul for himself. It was the cause of his unceasing striving for the saints. It is the heart and pivot of the whole letter to the Hebrews. It is the essential nature of the New Covenant. It was the secret of the life, service, endurance, confidence of the Lord Jesus as Son of Man.

All these facts need looking at more closely.

We begin always with the Lord Jesus as God's representative of the Man after His own mind. In His life on earth there was no part or aspect which did not have its strength and ability rooted in and drawn from His inward knowledge of His Father, God. We must never forget that His was a life of utter dependence upon God, voluntarily accepted. He attributed everything to the Father: word, wisdom, and works. The miracles were made just as possible through His Apostles as through Himself. This does not put them on the same personal level as Himself. His deity remains. He *is* God *manifest* in the flesh; but He has accepted on His human and manward side the limitations and dependence of man so that it might be God *manifested*. There is a man-side here which is able to do nothing of Himself (John v. 19, &c.). The principle of His entire life in every phase and detail was His knowledge of God. He knows the Father in the matter of the words He speaks, the works He does, the men and women with whom He has to do, the *times* of speaking, acting, going, staying, surrendering, refusing, silence, the motives, pretensions, professions, enquiries, suggestions, of men and of Satan. He knows when He may not and when He may give His life. Yes, every-

thing here is governed by that inward knowledge of God. There are numerous evidences in the "Acts" as the practical, and in the Epistles as the doctrinal revelation of God's mind that this principle is intended by God to be maintained as the basic law of the life of the Lord's people through this age. This knowledge in the case of the Lord Jesus was the secret of His complete ascendancy and of His absolute authority:

Masters in Israel will seek Him out and the issue which will precipitate this will be that of knowing. "Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things?" Nicodemus has come to One Who knows. His authority is superior to that of the Scribes, not merely in degree but in kind.

Toward the end of that Gospel which especially brings into view this very matter—John—"To know" occurs some fifty-five times). Our Lord makes the statement that "this is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou didst send" (John xvii. 3). This does not mean merely that eternal life is given on the basis of this knowledge. There can be life with very limited knowledge. But life *in fulness* is closely related to that knowledge, and the knowledge of Him increasing manifests itself in increasing life. It works both ways; knowledge unto life and life unto knowledge.

Seeing, then, that the Lord Jesus Himself represents—as Man—man according to God, we are well prepared to see that

### The Dominating Objective of the Divine dealings with us

is that we may know the Lord.

This explains all our experiences; trials, sufferings, perplexities, weakness, predicaments, tight corners, bafflings, pressures, &c. While the refining of spirit, the development of the graces, the removing of the dross are all purposes of the fires, yet above and through all is the one object that we may know the Lord. There is only one way of really getting to know the Lord, and that is experimentally.

Our minds are so often occupied with service and work. We think that doing things for the Lord is the chief object of life.

We are concerned about our life-work, our ministry. We think of equipment for it in terms of study and knowledge of *things*. Soul-winning or teaching believers or setting people to work are so much in the foreground of our engrossment. Bible study and knowledge of the Scriptures with efficiency in the matter of leading in Christian service are matters of pressing importance with us. All well and good, for these ARE important matters; but back of everything the Lord is more concerned about our knowing Him than anything else. It is just possible to have a wonderful grasp of the Scriptures, a comprehensive and intimate familiarity with all doctrine; to stand for cardinal verities of the faith, be an unceasing worker in Christian service, have a great devotion to the salvation of men, and yet, alas, have a very inadequate and limited personal knowledge of God within. So often the Lord has to take away our work that we may discover Him. The ultimate value of everything is not the information which we give, not the soundness of our doctrine, not the amount of work that we do, not the measure of truth that we possess, but just the fact that we know the Lord in a deep and mighty way.

This is the one thing which will remain when all else passes. It is this that will make for the permanence of our ministry after we are gone. While our work *for* others may rest upon much other material and resource, our real service *to* them is based upon our knowledge of the Lord.

The greatest of the problems of the Christian life is

#### The Problem of Guidance.

How much has been said and written upon this subject! The last word for so many is "Pray about it, commit it to God, do the thing that seems right, and trust God to see that it turns out all right." This to us seems weak and inadequate. We make no claim to ability to lay down the comprehensive and conclusive basis of guidance, but we are strongly of the conviction that it is one thing to get direction for the events, incidents, and contingencies of life, and quite another thing to have an abiding personal inward knowledge of the Lord. It is one thing to call upon a friend in emergency or at special times to get advice as to a course to be taken; it is another thing to live with that friend so that there is a sense of his mind on things as a general matter.

*We want instructions and commands, the Lord*

*wants us to have a "mind."* "Let this *mind* be in you." "We have the mind of Christ." Christ has a consciousness, and by the Holy Spirit He would give and develop in us that consciousness. The inspired statement is that "the anointing teachest you all things." We are not servants, we are sons. Commands—as such—are for servants, a mind is for sons.

There is an appalling state of things amongst the Lord's people to-day. So many of them have their life almost entirely in that which is external to themselves: their counsel and guidance, their sustenance and support, their knowledge, their means of grace. Personal inward spiritual intelligence is a very rare thing. No wonder that the enemy has such a successful line in delusions, counterfeits, and false representations. Our greatest safeguard against such will be a deep disciplined knowledge of the Lord.

Immediately it is *things* that we reach out for: *e.g.*, experiences, sensations. "proofs," evidences, manifestations. &c. We become exposed in a perilous realm where Satan can give a false conversion, a false "baptism of the Spirit" (?) a false evidence and guidance such as in spiritism. Then with the withdrawing of those he immediately suggests the unpardonable sin. When this suggestion is accepted, the ground is taken from the Scriptures, the Blood, and the assurances of those interested. And it may be all a lie, after all.

To really know the Lord means steadfastness when others are being carried away, and through times of fiery trial. Those who know the Lord do not put forth their own hand and try and bring things about. Such are full of love and patience, and do not lose their poise when everything seems to be going to pieces. Confidence is an essential and inevitable fruit of this knowledge, and in those who know Him there is a quiet restful strength which speaks of a great depth of life.

To close for the moment, let me point out that in Christ are "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden," and the Lord's will for us is to come to an ever growing realisation and personal appreciation of Him in Whom "all the fulness dwells."

T. A.-S.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

# The City of God

A message as spoken

(Continued.)

Readings: Psalm xxiv.; Rev. xxi. 9-21.

WE now come to consider further features of this people of God as represented in this symbolic designation, the City of God; and we are going to have before us these features and elements which are suggested by—

## The Walls and the Gates.

You will have noticed in the readings from the Book of the Revelation how much is said about the walls and the gates of the City. If you will just put a mark underneath these two words "walls" and "gates," you will at once see what is the place they get and how much attention is directed to them. *"Having a wall great and high, and having twelve gates and at the gates twelve angels and names written thereon which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates and on the west three gates. And the wall of the City had twelve foundations." "And he that spoke with me had a golden reed to measure the City and the gates thereof and the walls thereof...and he measured the City with the reed twelve thousand stadia, the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal, and he measured the wall thereof 140 cubits according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel."*

Now, what is the significance of the walls and the gates, in general? I think the significance is very rich and very searching. The walls represent the bounds of the city and the bounds of the city determine and define the inclusiveness of the city. Everything is gathered within those walls; they represent all the extent and all the content of the city. Those measurements are very interesting. The tremendous size of this city! We have already said that if you were to sit down and work that out you would have something to think about, you would discover that there is not a patch in the whole of the western hemisphere of this world in which you could put that city down without it falling into the sea. It speaks of immensity, greatness, the inclusiveness is tremendous.

Now, get these thoughts together. At once you see that this city, this people of God is

immense in its inclusiveness, in its content, in its embracingness. But what is the inclusiveness of the Lord's people? Oh! that I could ravish the heart of any unsaved one with a true and adequate presentation of what the Lord gives to His people. The apostle Paul found himself so taken up from time to time with this thing, he saw it so plainly that he simply cried out "Oh! the depth of the riches." Turn back again to the Ephesian letter, chap. iii. verses 14-16-19: "According to the riches of His glory...that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." Listen, "according to the riches of His glory to be filled unto all the fulness of God." That is a big city. The language of Ephesians iii. is the language of Revelation xxi—"the breadth and the length and the height and the depth!" Mighty! Extensive! It is necessary to be filled unto all the fulness of God. That wants a big vessel, a big receptacle, a very big container. "Unto all the fulness of God!" We can't contemplate that, we have no conception of that, but evidently the apostle Paul, who had been caught up into the third heaven and shown unspeakable things—"unspeakable things," he says "which it is not lawful for a man to utter" knew something of it: and so he speaks here of the fulness of God. "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that He would give you this mighty inward strengthening in order that you may be able to apprehend with all saints the breadth and length and height and depth, to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, to be filled unto all the fulness of God." Paul had some little idea of it—some big idea of it in comparison with ours, and yet even Paul will discover more than ever he knew.

Well! the walls represent the inclusiveness: they speak to us of the greatness and fulness to which God has called us. Oh! that this might come to us in the power of a great spiritual reality, for if you take up this thought of divine fulness for the people of God you will find it everywhere.

So, then, the 12,000 stadia, the 144 cubits, the four dimensions, the fulness of God, that

is our calling, beloved. That is possible of being lost, and I think that poignant eternal remorse would be the more poignant by the discovery of what was lost than by perhaps many other things. I believe this, that once a soul wakens up to discover all that it has lost, hell is begun. If hell were only recollection that could be quite enough. To have been made in order to share the divine nature, made to enter into the divine glory, made to have all the fulness of God to share with all His people, and to have lost it because you have rejected the Lord Jesus, as the door, the way, the truth, the light—surely there would be hell in that! But, beloved, we most of us have a better outlook than that—"and I am persuaded better things of you." This is our calling, this is what God is seeking to bring about, this is what God is doing—"according to the riches of His glory." We must leave that and pass on quickly.

We note the next thing, that these walls represent the character of the Lord's people, inclusiveness and then character. We have said that the City is the people of God and the walls are a presentation of the character of the Lord's people. You look at them! There is the jasper, the diamond of clear lustre; the sapphire in its beauty of ethereal blue; the chalcedony, the deep dark red of the carbuncle; the emerald, clear, pure, transcendent green; the sardonyx, black and white merging; the sardius, which is the ruby by another name; the chrysolite, a light yellow, golden stone; the beryl, the crystal rock; the topaz, with its richest tones of yellow; the chrysoprasus, which is the agate; the jacinth, which to-day is called the ligure—orange, red and purple mixed—and then the amethyst, with its tender violet tones. That is all a wonderful, beautiful presentation, but what does it say to us?

Well! it says variety at any rate, doesn't it? You can arrange the rainbow there. All the primary and secondary colours are found here—marvellous variety and beauty. There is no sameness about the work of God, there is no dullness about the work of grace, grace is many-hued. Grace has many phases, grace is many-sided in its glory; and the people of God are very different, hardly two alike. There is a vast variety gathered here, yet the Lord through grace can fit the whole variety into a unity and make it one complete, beautiful, perfect whole. You may perhaps have despaired of me, I may perhaps have despaired of you; the Lord's

grace is going to fit us all in, however different we are. I do not believe that, in spite of the talk about doubles, there are two people exactly alike on all points in this world, you will find a difference somewhere. That is the problem of racial relationships. Now, the Lord has got over that problem in grace. We are all here, every variety is here, oh! and shining with lustre, filled with glory; that is the character of the people of God. God doesn't despair of you! Beloved, whatever you may think of yourself, however you may feel about yourself, however depressed with your own nature and constitution and temperament and character the Lord has His way of getting you there to His place of perfection. The Blood of the Lord Jesus is sufficient, the grace of God is sufficient. Have you despaired of someone else, who is awkward, difficult, cantankerous, hopeless? The Lord hasn't given them up! I think it is going to be one of the glories of that City if we discover what the Lord has been able to make of "rough diamonds," as we call them; that He is going to make of them jasper, a diamond of clear lustre.

So, then, the stones speak to us of variety which God has blended into a unity and made whole. I go back over the old dispensation and read the story of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, and for the most part it is a sorry story. I remember a very, very dark page in the story about Benjamin, one of the most awful stories in the whole range of the Bible; one of those stories that to-day the ethical people desire to leave out as not fit to be read. Oh! why put it there then? Does the Lord think it fit to be read? Why. Benjamin is here, in the City glorified, that dark thing is here glorified. If God can do that, what can't He do! Go through the tribes and follow their history, and you will often wonder why God doesn't blot out this whole lot. Why is He so forbearing and long-suffering with wayward Israel? He will not allow Balaam to curse. Oh! what cannot grace do. The names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel are here shining with the lustre of eternal glory, and the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. I must confess that oftentimes I should have washed my hands of those twelve in the old days. They are very disappointing, they are always saying the wrong thing and doing the wrong thing. "Lord, wilt Thou that we call down fire from heaven and consume them?" The Master says "you know not

what spirit you are of." "Lord, send her away, she crieth after us." Here is the woman who is distressed about her daughter—and the idea of Christian disciples is, "send her away." That is not the Spirit of Christ. "Lord, we have left all for Thy sake, what shall we have?" You see the avaricious spirit coming into the realm of devotion to the Lord. There is no disinterested service there,—what are we going to get? Well, none of us like that spirit however it may be in us; and then Peter denies with oaths and curses at the end, and they all forsook Him and fled. And that is not the whole story by a long way. They are all here in the walls, shining with their lustre God given; diversity, variety, but all in glory through grace. These names of the twelve tribes and these names of the twelve apostles represent something, they represent the whole company in two dispensations of the redeemed. Saved, sanctified, glorified—through the Blood of His Cross. And what a humanity it represents apart from grace. You, I know, have had those problems of the scripture—why is Jacob given the place that he is. How we despise Jacob, the supplanter, the man who was so mean, the disreputable man, all that about Jacob that we hate. Why is he given such a place? To glorify the grace of God. There is hope for us all! "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." It is the sinner who glorifies the grace of God; and yet there are none righteous, no, not one, in the eyes of God. So these names represent a very poor humanity saved and lifted by grace.

Those walls not only represent the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of the divine fulness in the Lord's people, they not only represent the character of that redeemed company, but they represent exclusiveness. There at once has to be, has there not, the note of warning? For it is distinctly said here certain things about what is outside, and what shall not come in. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie, but only they that are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, for without are the dogs, the sorcerers, the fornicators and the murderers, the idolaters and everyone that maketh a lie." Indeed, those are strong terms. That is very strong language and you may say that surely relates to a very, very bad type, but if you would take the scriptures you would discover that those are also symbolical terms—fornicators, idolaters. You say you are not

that! Sure? What is that in the scripture? It is those who are called to be the chaste bride of the Lord Jesus, according to the eternal will of God, who have given others the place that He ought to have. That is all. He is the Bridegroom in the purpose of God. Paul saw that his ministry and his mission was to present this Church a chaste virgin to Christ to be His bride and we are called for that according to the eternal will of God before the world was. Called for that, created for that, and then after the Son has come in He has redeemed us for that, and it is by His precious blood that this Church is secured to be His bride. The Word says so, and those who were created for that were redeemed for that, for Christ, died unto that end. Giving something else His place—that is idolatry, that is fornication! Oh! well, that brings it down to every one of us. What is taking the place of the Lord Jesus in our hearts? What is it that is having our love in His place? That may exclude us from the City of God. Fornication is spiritual, it is giving the place to something else, that the Lord Jesus ought to have. That is all, Murderers! Oh! listen to the Lord Jesus. You have not got to do the deed, you have only got to be angry with your brother and it is there. It is the sin of the spirit, beloved, not only the sin of the flesh that God is reckoning with. You see, this people in finality is a people whose spirit has been sanctified, whose spirit is sanctified, and murder is not the slaying literally of another, it is the spirit of hatred toward another. That is murder in the eyes of God. God sees the end of that, if it were unrestrained. God sees how that very thing has worked out all the way down the ages. Cain was angry with his brother first and then he killed him. He was guilty of murder before ever he struck his brother, it was in his heart. You see, it is the heart, and therefore this people is the people whose heart has been cleansed by the blood of the Lord Jesus, and nothing contrary than that can come in here. Oh! then, there is an exclusiveness about this which forbids anything which is contrary to the nature of God. "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself." He must be pure. "I saw the Holy City." "Be ye holy for I am holy," saith the Lord. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But wherein lies our confidence, our strength, our hope? He hath sent forth His Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts to do it, for God does not leave it to us.

T. A.-S.

**For Girls & Boys.**—Continued from page 124.

faith dwells in Him, and if we have Him we have love and faith as much as we can ever need. And if there is any other need of which you are conscious as you read this, and you are saying, "Ah, I only wish my life were richer in such and such a matter"—good temperedness, perhaps, or obedience or cheerfulness or one of many other things—remember that where the bees are there is honey, and the Lord Jesus, if present in your heart, can be that very thing in you if you will trust Him and obey Him in all that He shows to be His will.

And thus the truly wealthy people are those in whom the Lord Jesus dwells and who have discovered to the greatest degree how rich He is—for all that He is is their's! Oh, to know Him better, and to enjoy Him more, and to appreciate His treasures more! No longer should we complain with long faces that God was always requiring us to give up this or that thing which we valued: but we should joyfully realise that He is seeking to deliver us from things of small and temporal value to make room in our lives for the wonderful and eternal treasures of Christ Jesus. A line of a favourite hymn says "How rich am I, such wealth possessing!" Let me ask you—how rich are you? Are you a poor, struggling person with barely anything of love and joy and peace and grace in your heart, or have you discovered such hidden treasure in Him whom you have received into your heart that not only is your own life rich and full but there is an overflow for other people also? Jesus said "He that believeth on me... out of his inner man shall flow rivers of living water." Are you full to overflowing? If you are not, make sure first of all that you have received the wealthy one into your heart, and then pray continually that the Holy Spirit will show you more and more of the treasures that are in the Lord Jesus for you.

When our farmer drove the bees out no more honey was produced in his house, and when the Lord Jesus is not present there is none of His preciousness. You cannot have the treasures I have been telling you about apart from Him. You cannot have His joy in your heart unless you have Himself. You cannot have power over sin without having Him who has conquered sin. He Himself said: "Apart from me ye can do nothing." It was possible for the farmer to drive the bees out and lose their honey making, and it is sadly possible also to reject the Lord Jesus and lose his treasures. Rebellion and mistrust and disobedience on our part always means that we lose the treasures. May

it never be said of one of us that we drove out the bees.

I have not space to tell you here what happened to the bees, but perhaps I will return to it another time. The farmer lost them every one, and no rich stores of honey are now found in his house or on his farm: and all because he drove the honey-makers away. It reminds us of the words "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh" (Heb. xii. 25) and "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. ii. 3).

There is a chapter early in the book of Proverbs which speaks of "hid treasures," and these refer to the Lord Jesus. Will you see what it says there, and then find something in the New Testament also about hidden treasures? Above all, be sure that you find Him in whom all the treasures are hidden! And finally, as a text card for the new year, will you copy out and colour the words in Romans viii. 32?

G. P.

Remember this is only a farmyard story which we have used to remind us of the Lord Jesus. It should be pointed out that in the Bible honey does NOT speak of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus.

(Continued from page 118.)

The "Revelation" does not contradict the entire teaching of Christ and the Epistles, but consummates it. The only individualism there is that of responsibility. The final word is "as you see the day approaching assemble yourselves together *so much the more.*" Surely, then, the end must see a *gathering to Him* here leading unto our gathering unto Him at His coming. "A great falling away," must be the signal for a tightening of the bonds of fellowship on the part of the faithful. If the Lord will enable us to fulfil a ministry by which there is made clear what is according to Christ, we feel that we shall have served the highest possible end. This is our desire.

This little paper has readers in practically every nation, and many in most. It is usually only sent by request, which means that it is meeting a need. To all you dear fellow-heirs of Christ we send our warmest greetings in His name. Many of us have not met in the flesh, but we *shall* meet, and if in that day we can say that the link by the WITNESS AND TESTIMONY here on earth meant a deeper and fuller appreciation of our One Blessed Lord Jesus, then we shall have the greatest possible occasion to rejoice together.

The Lord be with you.

Yours in His love and hope.

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.