

The Abiding Ministry of Pentecost 15
The measure of Christ

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1931

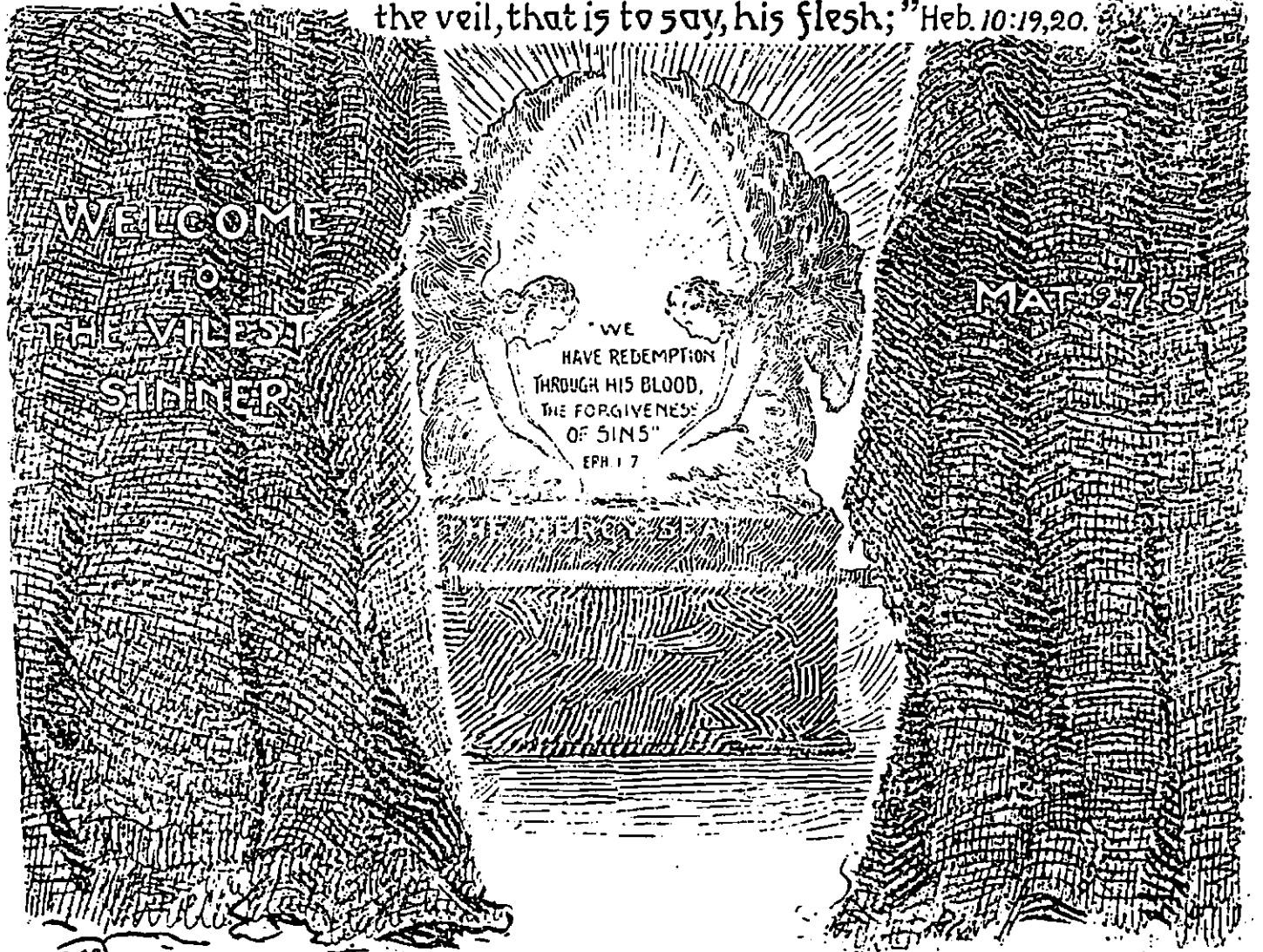
This Ministry 139

Vol. 9, No. 1.
etc. etc.

34

A WITNESS AND A TESTIMONY

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;" Heb. 10:19,20.



The Reactions of the Lord (cont'd from 1930)	3
The God of Bethel	6, 56, 27
For Boys and Girls	11, 30, 63, 8 ^c
Deliverance from Sin	13 ^{or}
✓ The Abiding Meaning of Pentecost	15
Further Talks on the Testimony in Relation to the Candlestick and the Glory	19
✓ Our Inheritance In Christ	22, 40
The God of Bethel	27
The Value of the Blood	32, 65 ^{or}
The Heavens Do Rule	46
Working in the Scriptures	50
✓ Christ Our Life	52
✓ The Time in which We Live	58
The Article on the Blood	65 ^{or}
The Recovery of Spiritual Power	68, 85 ^{or}
The Increase of God	73
"That Which is Born of the Spirit"	81
The Flesh Profiteth Nothing	91
Regeneration	94
The Rule of the Heavens (cont'd in 1932)	97, 117
"Because of the Blood of the Lamb"	104 ^{or}
Deliverance from Self	111
✓ The Measure of Christ	114
✓ Sovereignty	120
✓ Christ & All in All	127
Unanimity	136
"This Ministry"	139
Three Marks of Sonship	144

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

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

SUNDAYS at 10.30 A.M. (Lord's Table), 11.15 A.M., 3 P.M. (Young People), 6.30 P.M.
MONDAYS at 7.30 P.M. TUESDAYS at 8 P.M. (Young People).
WEDNESDAYS at 8 P.M. SATURDAYS at 7.30 P.M.

The Guest House is open to receive guests for the period of the conferences or at other times as the Lord leads.

Telegrams: "Syndesmos, Forest, London."

Telephone: Sydenham 5216.

Cables: "Syndesmos, London."

Editorial communications with regard to this paper should be addressed to Mr. Austin-Sparks.

Forthcoming Ministries

(THE LORD WILLING)

- Feb. 28. Honor Oak Conference.
- Mar. 1. do.
- " 1. Rotherhithe Great Hall: Mr. Fauch.
- " 8. Neasdon Railway Mission: Mr. David Davies.
- " 8. Willesden Evangelical Mission: Mr. Fauch.
- " 12, 15, 19. Wardley Hall, Wandsworth: Mr. Fauch.
- " 17. Edinburgh, Gartshore Hall: Mr. Sparks.
- " 19. Ferryhill, County Durham.
- " 22. Metropolitan Tabernacle, Men's Bible Class: Mr. Paterson.
- " 22. Welcome Mission, Heathfield: Mr. Fauch.
- " 26. Newcastle-on-Tyne.
- " 27. " " "
- " 29. Lighthouse Evangelical Church, Moston, Manchester: Mr. Fauch.
- Apr. (whole month). Glasgow, The Tabernacle: Mr. Fauch.
- " 3-6. EASTER CONFERENCE AT HONOR OAK.

There is regular ministry at weekends at Blackpool (Emmanuel Mission) and Deal (Central Hall). A conference gathering at Deal every Monday evening.

The Edinburgh conferences are held, if the Lord wills, on the third Tuesday in each month.

There is a desire for monthly conferences at Ferryhill, Durham, and these will probably be held on the third Thursday.

A weekly gathering around The Word is held on Wednesday afternoons at the Oakwollgate Mission, Gatoshead-on-Tyne.

HOLIDAY CONFERENCES

(D.V.)

JUNE 6th to 13th at

"SLAVANKA,"

SOUTHBOURNE

JULY 11th to 18th at

BOGNOR

All particulars from Mr. Paterson, 13 Honor Oak Road, London, S.E.23.

Our accommodation has been much overtaxed for the past years, we therefore urge early booking.

The Reactions of the Lord

Conclusion.

"Gather my Saints together."

"Gather my Saints together unto me, Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

Psalm 1. 4.

"Now we beseech you brethren touching the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him." 2. Thess. ii. 1.

"Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh." Hebrews x. 25.

In all of the above passages there is this one common factor that an end-time movement and feature is dominant. It must be remembered that the Psalms themselves represent what remains when a history of outward things as to the general instrumentality has ended in failure. The history of Israel in its first great phase closed with the book of 'Kings' in a calamitous and shameful way. Weakness, paralysis, declension, reproach, characterised the instrument in general. But out of that history now so concluded the Psalms are carried forward and they represent what has spiritually been gained and is permanent. This is pre-eminently a personal, inward spiritual knowledge of the Lord gained through experience. That is why they always reach the heart and never fail to touch experience at every point. To them the saints have turned in times of deep experience. They are the ministry of experience to experience, the only ministry which is permanent. The End-time instrument will always be that which inwardly knows the Lord in a deep and living way through a history fraught with much experience of the heights and depths. What David gave to the Chief Musician for the wind instruments and the stringed instruments touches the highest and the deepest notes of a mortal's knowledge of God. Worship, Salvation, Sorrow, Appeal, Victory, Battle, Faith, Hope, Glory, Instruction, etc., are great themes interwoven with the mass of matters touched, but the point is that all came in real life; he passed through it all. It is this, and this alone, which can serve the Lord when what He first raised up has failed Him as a public instrument. So the Lord would take pains to secure this, and this may explain much of the

suffering and sorrow through which he takes His chosen vessels.

"Psalms" is only one of the four books born of the history of Israel, each of which has its own feature to contribute to that which represents the permanent work of God, but especially as relating to an instrument of Divine reaction. But "Psalms" shows clearly where God begins and what in principle is basic to the first and most abiding work of God.

It does not need pointing out that in the other two passages with which we commenced, the End-time is in view; they definitely state it.

There is a further common feature, however, which is more particularly the subject before us. They all definitely refer to gathering together as something related to the End-time. The Day is drawing nigh, therefore there is to be a "so much the more" assembling together. The Lord is coming, and there is a gathering to Him.

A history of a religious system which sprang out of something which the Lord raised up in the first place has ended in weakness, chaos and shame. Therefore, there is to be a re-gathering to the Lord of His Saints.

Before we deal with the nature of this End-time gathering, we must get clearly in view those that are concerned in it. The passage in the Psalm would embrace and include those referred to in the other two passages.

"My Saints... those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

It need hardly be remarked that when all has been said and done through type, symbol and figure, the covenant means an entering into what the Lord Jesus has done by His shed blood. It is an appreciation and apprehension of Him in His Great work by the Cross. But we need to be reminded of what that involves as a covenant of God into which we enter. It is a theme which demands a book to itself, but we have to reduce it to a few lines, and to do so we must take a conspicuous instance and illustration. This is found in Genesis, chapters XV and XXII. In the former we have the basis of a covenant concerning Abram's seed.

Firstly, there is the comprehensiveness and inclusion of the offerings which came in later in Leviticus; an heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtle-dove and a pigeon.

These—with the exception of the birds—were divided in the midst, and laid one half on this side and the other half on that side. These were the two sides of the covenant, God's and Abram's. Later we see a flaming torch passing between the two halves (verse 17). Now, it is clear that Abram knew what this all meant. He realised that it involved him in something. God was saying quite clearly that He was wholly for Abram, that all that He was and had was being committed to this covenant. He would keep nothing back from him but place—so to speak—His very life, honour, name, glory, to the good of His word to Abram. This was adequately proved in the long run when He became incarnate in the seed of Abraham for universal blessing. But there were two sides to the covenant, and Abram understood this. He also was handing himself over to God with all that he was and had, to the very dearest possession, and to death, if need be.

That burning torch—that Fire of the Spirit—sealed the oneness of the consecration or devotion of each to the other. Now this explains chapter XXII.

By that time Isaac was born and grown out of childhood. He had taken his place, and was to Abraham what a first-born son is to his father in the East, but more, because of the miracle of his birth and the long-deferred hope. He was everything to Abraham—more than life itself. All his father's hopes, expectations, vindications, promises and Divine assurances were bound up with him. So "It came to pass after these things that God did *prove* Abraham: and said unto him, "Abraham": and he said, "Here am I," And He said, "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac . . . and offer him a burnt offering . . ."

This "proving" was concerning the covenant. Did Abram mean his part of it? Would he stand to it? Did he so utterly believe that God would be faithful to His part that, no matter what happened to Isaac, God could be trusted and His promise would be fulfilled? What a test! But "Abraham believed God." His faith in God enabled him to stand by his part of the covenant, and "he wavered not." The issue was that when *virtually* Isaac had been offered the Lord said to him, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld

thy son, thine only son, from me." Then the Lord came in with his oath.

"By myself have I sworn, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven"—etc.

Do we now see the meaning of "a covenant by sacrifice"? Then we shall see who it is that will be in this gathering together. It will certainly be only those to whom the Lord is every thing, to whom He is all and in all; and those who are all for the Lord without a reservation, a personal interest, which is less or other than Himself. Spiritual oneness is only possible on this basis.

The Lord's word at the end to Abraham was, "Now I know that thou fearest God." Malachi's End-time word was "Then they that feared the Lord . . ." The fear of the Lord is an utter abandonment to Him at any cost; His will being supreme, claiming and obtaining the measure of a whole burnt-offering.

The Nature of the Gathering together.

Having then in view the kind who are concerned, which forms a test as well as a testimony, we are able to look at the nature of the gathering together.

We are well aware that there is a widespread doubt as to whether we are to expect anything in the way of a corporate movement or testimony at the End. Indeed, it is strongly held by some that everything at the End is individual, and this conviction rests, for the most part, upon the use of "If any man," in the message to Laodicea.

Let us hasten then to say that we here have nothing in mind in the nature of an organised movement, a sect, a society, or a fraternity.

Having said this, however, there are some things on the other hand which need saying quite definitely.

The Church of the New Testament never was an organised movement. Neither was there any organised affiliation of the companies of believers in various places with one another. It was a purely spiritual thing, spontaneous in life and united only by the Holy Spirit and mutual love and spiritual solicitude. There were other factors which acted as spiritual links which we will mention presently. Further and still more important, was the abiding fact that a "Body" had been brought into being. This is called "The Body of Christ." You

can divide a society and still it remains, but you cannot divide a body without destroying the entity.

Are we to understand from the exponents of the individualistic interpretation that all the teaching of the Lord in nearly all the Scriptures concerning the House of God, and in nearly all the letters of Paul concerning the Body of Christ is now set aside or is only an idea without any expression on the earth? Are we to blot out the mass of the New Testament and live our own individual Christian lives with no emphasis upon working fellowship with other believers? Surely not. This would be contrary to all the ways of God in history, and would certainly spell defeat, for if there is one thing against which the Adversary has set himself it is the fellowship of God's people.

Ultra individualism is impossible if the truth of the "One Body" still stands, and what is more, the Lord's people are becoming more and more conscious of their absolute need of fellowship, especially in prayer. The difficulty of "getting through" alone is becoming greater as we approach the End.

What then is the nature of this gathering together?

I. It is a gathering to the Lord Himself.

"Gather my saints together unto me."

"Our gathering unto Him."

In times past there have been gatherings to men, great preachers, great teachers, great leaders; or to great institutions and movements, centres and teachings. This is not now in the Lord's way. Not that men sought to draw to themselves, or that the Lord was not reached through them, but people have a way of making a greatly used servant of God the object and attraction.

God's End is Christ, and as we get nearer the End He must take the place of even instrumentalities and become almost immediately the only object of appreciation.

Our oneness and fellowship is not in a teaching, a "testimony," a community, a place, but a Person, and He not merely doctrinally but livingly and experimentally.

Any movement truly of God must have this as it's supreme and all-inclusive feature, that it is the Lord Jesus Who is the object of heart adoration and worship.

Not things, themes, experiences, but the Lord Jesus Himself.

II. This gathering is a gathering together in prayer fellowship. One of the last things

said in the Epistle which presents for all time and eternity the true nature of the Church as the Body of Christ—'Ephesians'—is,

"Praying at all seasons in the Spirit . . . for all saints."

If the first thing in spiritual gathering together is "Holding fast the Head," or having the Lord Jesus, as the centre, the second thing is prayer fellowship with and for all the saints. "Gather my saints together." This is geographically impossible of full realisation, but it is spiritually possible by prayer. There is no space or time in the realm of prayer. A deep and travailing concern in prayer for the spiritual well-being of all the saints has ever marked an End-time movement of God. Not alone for those who were true and faithful, or had gone all the way with God. Not alone for those who had light and revelation. But for *all* the people of God, although such as were more immediately the objects of Satanic malice by reason of the faithfulness might provoke a special cry to God.

What we see is the Lord having a prayer instrument in every End-time when total destruction threatens that which represents him and the very burden of prayer which he lays upon His own in every part of the world is His way of uniting. If we prayed more for all saints we should find many of the things which divide—and wrongly so—falling away and ceasing to do so.

Prayer is a wonderfully "gathering" factor.

III. We take a step further when we recognise that food is a great factor in gathering spiritually.

The Old Testament brings before us many an instance of fellowship by feasting. Indeed, feasts were the nature of the fellowship, although not the occasion of it.

The New Testament takes up the spiritual principle, and the Lord Jesus makes the "Breaking of Bread" not only the remembering and proclaiming of His death and Himself, but the testimony of the "One Loaf—One Body." The Lord's Supper is represented as food and fellowship.

In the first years Christ was ministered to the saints by the Holy Spirit through ministering servants who moved from place to place. It was thus that the saints were brought into fellowship with one another. Not—let us say again—an organised affiliation, but by a ministration of Christ through His word in the Spirit. The ministers were "joints of supply."

It is all too obvious a thing to say that to-day there is a very real hunger amongst the Lord's people, they are not being fed. What so many of them are getting is not "bread." In every part of the world there are such; one here, another there; a little company in one place, and another, perhaps unknown to one another—in another place. The persistent and perplexing question asked almost everywhere is "What are we to do, there is no spiritual food where we are?" Will not the Lord raise up a ministry to these? We are persuaded that He will, and that He is now seeking to do so. A method of gathering together according to Christ will be that a ministration of Christ is sent forth and the hungry will be found gathered in spite of everything.

As there is a dissatisfaction with the religious system of the day on the part of so many who want to go on with the Lord, so there is springing up in the hearts of many of God's servants a longing to be free to minister to the saints irrespective of traditional ties and distinctions.

This all has its own perils, but we cannot fail to see the movement of God, and it is a gathering movement—to Himself.

The passage in Hebrews, x, 25, specifically has its local assembling in view. Well, no one can deny that this is the Divine order. The Lord desires to have in every place a representation of and a testimony to His House. His will is to have all such constituted according to Christ. Only the Holy Spirit can do this constituting. We cannot take a New Testament mould and pour people and places into it. We must come into it by the Spirit. This necessitates that the Holy Spirit has absolute sovereignty, clearness and right-of-way. This requires that the flesh be crucified and man be absolutely subject to Christ. We see nothing in Scripture to lead us to conclude that such can never again be.

It may be a "day of small things," but in the hands of God such are mightier than all the great movements of men.

T. A.-S.

The God of Bethel

A consideration of the great revelation in the Scriptures concerning the House of God.

No. I.

THERE are two great things which must impress thoughtful readers of the Word of God. These two things run from start to finish of the Scriptures. One is the breaking in of God in relation to this world, and His persistent and unwearying intervention in its course and history. The other is the unbroken chain of attempts to cast him out of the world and to rid it of God. It would appear that something like this latter had taken place before the creation, one was recorded in Genesis. After that attempt had been made which is recorded there, in which Adam was involved, and through him the entire race, the breakings in of God are for a time connected with individuals. These stand to represent Him and His rights, and to maintain His testimony, and the most conspicuous thing in that representation and testimony is an altar. Thus it was with Abel, Noah, Abraham, and Isaac. These men, standing by their altar, formed a break in the well nigh universal usurpation of God's

rights in the possession of the world and its government. Upon them fell the weight of holding it in token for God, and the test of faith was terrific. When we reach Jacob, while there is an inheriting of what has befeatured the testimony until then, there is a new development. This new and extra factor is the House of God. The greatest experiences and crises of his life are in some way connected with Bethel. The introduction of this feature is a landmark in the course of the ages. It is not *merely* a man's dream, it is a Divine intervention. Not many times do we read of the heavens opening and God speaking through the rifted clouds, but it is significant that whenever it is so in some way it relates to the great spiritual truth which is central to what happened on that night at Luz, and which caused it to be known for ever after by a new name—Bethel—the House of God.

All the continuously growing revelation of the truth of the House of God through both the Testaments can be traced back to and gathered

up in the breaking in of God that night with the result that that designation sprang spontaneously into everlasting being. One wonders if it *was* an inspiration which came to Jacob on the spur of the moment, leading him so to decline and express his experience, or whether the spontaneity of it did not imply a familiarity with the idea of God having a house here. However that may be, we know now that it was not new at that moment to God Himself, but that the thought and intention sprang out of the Counsels of the Godhead in the past eternity. That being so, we might expect to find in the first definite reference to it a good deal, at least, of what would subsequently be made more clear. Not only is that true here, but, as a matter of fact, there is a most comprehensive microcosm of all subsequent revelation in "Bethel" as Jacob first had to do with it.

We shall proceed almost immediately to note these elements, but it may be as well to warn readers that we are approaching, not just a study of Bible teaching, or an interpretation of Scripture, but a tremendous challenge to our whole mentality and acceptance. So many of us from our infancy upward for many years thought of the house of God as some one or other special kind of building where the public religious service took place. Either a church, a chapel, or a mission hall. It was linked in our minds with the idea that the Church is either a building for the formal worship of God or it is a denomination, such as the Anglican, Roman, or Nonconformist.

Probably there are tens of thousands whose mentality in these matters does not go much beyond that. Their horizon and definition is limited either to a specific material place, or a specific historic "connection." Thus we hear of such things as "church connections," "the church," and "church membership," &c. Now it need hardly be said that the mentality which is indicated by such speech is foreign to the Scriptures, and the "church" or "house of God" which is meant by this manner of speech is not that which is revealed in the Word of God.

We are not embarking upon mere Bible study as such, but we are very seriously and solemnly burdened with a sense of the need for a fuller recovery of the real spiritual truth of things, and that the Lord should have that in the earth which is according to His own mind. We may be assured that all that is otherwise is going the way of the "wood, hay, and stubble," in the fires of His testings, no matter

how expensive and elaborate and long-standing it may have been. We are entering more and more deeply into a time when historic structures are failing to meet the need and justify their existence. There is a growing sense of weakness and ineffectiveness and failure in the hearts of religious leaders and God's servants. On the other hand there is a deepening spiritual hunger in the true children of God; a longing for the Lord; a disappointment with things as they are; and a growing realisation that the "churches" have not got the real thing to offer for their spiritual sustenance. There is a tremendous amount of bolstering up having to be done, and weakness is advertised in glaring ways by the introduction of all kinds of institutional and social means of maintaining the "church."

Many of the true servants of God are breaking their hearts over the state of things spiritually. Conscious in themselves of the need for a new vision and a new power, they feel the acute pain of a sense of something akin to

Putting money into bags with holes,

pouring water into a sieve, or seeing the fruit fall to the earth long before it is ripe.

We beg to offer the suggestion that God cannot support what is not according to His mind, and in a day when it is becoming more than ever necessary for Him to have something as such, He is less and less able to bless even a good thing when it is the enemy of the best: to use what He has used when it fails to lead on to what is His ultimate object and thought.

If some of the Hebrew prophets were here to-day there would have to be a very little revision of many of their recorded utterances to make them apply to things as they are now. Isaiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, would easily recognise the symptoms, and have the explanation. They would say, "Yes, I see how it is. I have seen it that way before. You are tremendously busy in your religion. You seek with great energy to keep your religious system going. The strength and energy, and wit, and ingenuity, and effort put into it is considerable. You are concerned for the traditions, and are ready to try any new and novel idea if you could thereby obtain success. But, withal, you know in your heart of hearts that it is like flogging a dead horse. You know that you are, for the most part, having to prop up a leaning wall. You know that the expenditure of time, strength and means produces

nothing like a commensurate result. You try to be philosophical and talk about it not being for us to "count heads" or trouble about results, and that statistics are not a true means of judging. But, however true this may be in some realms, you know that this philosophy is often only something to cover what would more honestly be called failure. You are busy but not effective. Many years ago I put it this way—"when one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten (that is they were disappointed to the amount of half their expectation), when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty vessels, there were but twenty" (less than half). "Mildew, blasting and hail, smote your field and your barn. You looked for much, and lo, it came to little, and when you brought it how it vanished as by a breath." Yes, yes, and you are getting weary of it all, and asking questions, and wondering if God is really in it all, and why He does not more manifestly co-operate and prosper. The fact that you have to resort to so many means and measures to try and maintain things is only your unconscious acknowledgment that the thing would dry right up if you did not, and therefore its life is not in itself.

Well, well, we could explain it all for you, as we did in similar conditions long ago. On one occasion it proved to be as we said because there were those who harkened and obeyed; but on another occasion almost entire extinction came—but for a few secret souls—"because our words were unheeded."

If we were to ask these prophets for an explanation of the situation, and what the vision is that we so consciously need in order to bring things up into the sphere of Divine interest and power, while there might be several things mentioned by them, they would undoubtedly say with instant precision and emphasis—

"My house, saith the Lord."

They would then take us to the Scriptures and we should rub our eyes and open our mouths in astonishment as they led us from Genesis onward and showed us God's all but supreme concern for His house. We say "all but supreme" because there is one thing above it and that is the purpose for which it was conceived. Bearing this distinction in mind, we should be almost startled to see how God has linked everything with His house; all blessing or judgment, prosperity or curse, glory

or shame, life or death, service, discipline, fellowship, revelation, administration, authority, &c. We should be solemnly impressed when we saw that He has linked Himself with His house so that the fullest knowledge of Himself is only to be had in relation to His house. Thus He would say to an enquiry as to why so much miscarriage and labour in vain in His name—

"Because of My house which lieth waste."

Let us hasten, however, to say that this has but a very remote connection with the empty pews of "churches" or "chapels." This is no attempt to deal directly with the present problems of "church attendance," or non-attendance, or the decline in the general religious life of the nation. The two things may be and probably are related, but we do not begin at that end.

It is of the greatest importance that we very early in our consideration get clear of some false mentality as to what the house of the Lord is in the mind of God, and as to the dispensation in which we live.

We would again point out the tremendous difference between an appraisalment of any great truth of Scripture by an intellectual process and that truth coming as a revelation from God by the Holy Spirit to the heart. Some of us have had our lives entirely revolutionised by the latter even after we had known and preached all the same truth for years. It is not the difference in the substance of the truth, but it is the difference between head and heart, between intellect and the Holy Spirit; which is all the difference between death and life, labour and inspiration, man and God. The one is arrived at through study; the other through spiritual experience. The question naturally arises, how can one come to the latter position? The answer is that first of all there must be a deep and desperate exercise concerning the need for it. It must be a matter of life and death, that or nothing. Not just a quest for power, influence, usefulness, a blessing, but the honour and glory of God being so much involved that nothing less than His absolute and utter and best can possibly be accepted. This must be accompanied by a willingness to pay the price and go all the way whatever the cost. Then finally there must be a definite transaction with the Lord in an understanding that He takes in hand the bringing of one there by any necessary means or way.

The probability is that sooner or later a breaking up or drying up process will begin, and an experience of deep death will be entered into. This is necessary if things are all to be constituted on a basis which is all of God and none of man in the natural. There must be such a transition from one realm to the other through death and resurrection. It has ever been, and is a fixed law of the realm of the heavens. There are three things which, if brought to us in this way will mean a new world, a new vision, a new power, and a new ministry. Each of them can be had in the natural without the said result, even though the conviction may be very strong and the emphasis upon them be with passion and great earnestness. Still the great difference remains, and some of us know that difference experimentally. These three things are :

The Person of the Lord Jesus.

The meaning of the Cross.

The Nature and Purpose of the Church which is His Body—the House of God.

It is quite pertinent to ask those who speak of these things, has it come to you by revelation of the Holy Spirit ?

Now having said so much by way of approach, we are ready to return and see something of what the House of God is as represented in germ in Genesis xxviii., where Jacob's vision is recorded.

We gather up the elements and leave the fuller consideration of them for the later chapters.

I. Where Jacob was.

He was in a place of detachment.

The narrative would lead us to think that the dream took place on his first night out. But unless he went by fast camel this was not possible. The distance from Beer-sheba to Bethel was about sixty miles as the crow flies. It is more probable that it would be his third night, and he had yet over two hundred miles to go. It is interesting how time and distance or space do not enter into this story. The feature here, however, is that Jacob was well out away from everything, apart from all his connections in this world. Bethel came in *there*. The House of God has this feature spiritually. That will come up again.

II. What Jacob saw.

1. "*A ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven.*"

This represented a link and a communicating link between heaven and earth. The heavens

and the earth were united and made one by this instrument. Heaven came into touch with earth, and earth with heaven by this means.

2. "*The angels of God ascending and descending on it.*"

Angels in Scripture represent the agents of Divine administration in relation to men concerning the purpose of God.

They are "all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall inherit salvation" (Hebrews i. 14). They are connected with the purpose of God in Christ and with the work of Christ in relation to men.

3. "*And, behold, Jehovah stood above it.*"

The supreme and all dominating thing is the place and revelation of the Lord Himself in this matter. He has broken in here in the place apart, as it were, out of the world, and is in evidence in sovereign activity. The pre-eminent feature is God's association with this. It constitutes, defines, and gives character to all else. It remains the factor which governs all that takes place from that time onward. It comes to be realised that He has associated Himself with something, and never again does He disassociate Himself from that which is spiritually introduced. He is for the rest of the ages the God of Bethel, the God of the House of God, and for all the *fulness* of His mind and purpose men will have to come into that which is meant by His house.

III. What Jacob heard.

"I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed: and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed. And behold I am with thee and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again unto this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Now without analysing the above we take its general implications and effect. It represents several things:—

1. Bethel is linked with a continuous purpose of God which was related in a spiritual way with God's dealings with Abraham and Isaac. The spiritual elements in the relationships and experiences of those two are carried on to Jacob and come out at Bethel—the House of God.

2. In an outside place—a place apart—with one who is not personally according to God's

ninrl, He sovereignly and in grace makes covenant announcements and commitments, and involves Himself to unconditionally secure an end, and exercise that sovereignty. The purpose is His and does not begin with or *ultimately* rest upon man's action.

3. Man is in view, however, and what is said relates to man in a very real way; not in a limited way either, but Bethel takes a relationship to all the families of the earth. What God had said concerning Abraham and Isaac is now said concerning Jacob, but it comes in in relation to Bethel. A glance forward will show that this is not straining the point, but Bethel has come to stay and be vitally connected with the future of this purpose.

IV. What Jacob said.

"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I know it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

The inferences of this statement are very plain.

1. The House of God is where God is.

2. Where God is that which is not in accordance with His mind feels it to be a terrible place and is smitten with fear. Jacob here is the man in the flesh, and the flesh is not fitting to the presence of God and must realise that it is so. "Holiness becometh Thy House, O Lord, for ever," and to bring an unholy condition into God's House is not meet and a sense of the unfitness must strike awe into the conscience.

3. "The gate of heaven" at once brings us into the place where directly above the heavens are open and the voice is heard. An open heaven, a voice, and a revelation of the mind of God were the features of the commencement of our Lord's life and ministry at the Jordan; also at that climax in relation to

His Cross in the mount of transfiguration. They were also connected with Pentecost and the conversion of Paul. These instances are all one in their deepest connection with the eternal purpose of God. Bethel, the House of God is characterised by the open heaven, the voice of God, and a revelation of His mind.

V. What Jacob did.

"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel."

A pillar in Scripture is always the symbol of a witness or a testimony. See Genesis xxxi. 52; Joshua iv. 7; Isaiah xix. 19-20.

The oil is a type of the Holy Spirit. So that Bethel is symbolised by a testimony set up under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This also is seen in the case of the Lord Jesus on the far side of Jordan, and of the Church in the same position on the day of Pentecost.

Having surveyed the features of this first bringing in of the House of God, we shall, with all that we have to say, find ourselves moving almost entirely within these principles. If there is a spiritual apprehension of them there will be some very rich and true knowledge of what the House of God really is as to its nature and its purpose.

The vehicles of revelation change, the instrumentalities vary; the true develops; the forms pass; the aspects are different; but the purpose is the same, never changing, never abandoned, always surviving every failure in the means used. It is a spiritual thing, and when the material agencies of representation break down, the spiritual reality only becomes the more intense.

T. A. S.

(To be continued.)

Acknowledgments

The following gifts received between December 1, 1930, and January 31, 1931, towards the expenses of this paper are gratefully acknowledged:—

Atlanta, Ga., U.S.A., 4s. 2d.; Swarthmore, U.S.A., 18s. 7d.; Germantown, Pa., U.S.A., 3s. 7d.; D'Arcy, B.C., Canada, £1; Toronto, 10s. 3d.; Rockmount, S. Africa, 5s.; Bulawayo, S. Africa, 5d.; Chididi, Nyasaland, 10s., 10s.; Nairnsbi, Kenya, 4s.; Christchurch, N.Z., 4s.; Dublin, 2s. 6d., 5s.; Edinburgh, 3s., 5s., £1 1s.; Glasgow, 3s., 2s. 6d., 2s., £1; Aberdare, 4s.; Boxhill, 2s. 6d.; Bembridge, I. of W., 3s. 4d.; Birkenhead, 3s.; Blackpool, 6s. 6d.; Bognor, 7s. 6d., 2s.; Bourne-

mouth, 10s.; Camberley, £1; Carlisle, 1s. 5d.; Eastbourne, £1; Hayling Island, 2s. 8d.; Hove, 1s.; Hereford, 2s.; Heaton, 5s.; Harrow, 1s. 6d.; Jarrow, 10s.; Ipswich, 2s. 6d.; Leigh-on-Sea, 1s. 3d., 10s.; Leeds, 5s.; Millom, 3s. 6d.; Newport (I. of W.), 5s.; Swindon, 2s. 6d.; Southampton, 5s.; Southport, 3s. 6d.; Tunbridge Wells, 2s., 2s. 6d.; Wolverhampton, 4d., 5s.; Worthing, 2s.; Anerley, 4s.; Bow, 10s.; Clapham, 10s.; Crowhurst Road, S.W., 10s.; Forest Gate, 2s. 6d.; Konnington Road, 5s.; Leo, 5s.; Paddington, 2s. 6d.; Stroud Green, 3s.; Plumstead, 5s.; Upper Norwood, 6s., 5s.; Willesden Green, 5s., 5s., 5s.; Woolwich, 2s. 6d.; Anon., 3s. 6d.; Local, £27 10s. 7½d.—Total, £47 6s. 1½d.

For Boys and Girls

The Gospel in the Farmyard (No. 10)

“Faithful unto Death.”

IN our last talk together we were speaking of a swarm of bees which made their home in our farmer's house, and which the farmer eventually drove out. I want to tell you what happened to them.

They flew out into the open air and circled round and round for a time as though wondering where to go. They looked like a cloud in the air, for there were hundreds and hundreds of them. Presently they set off in the direction of the orchard, and the queen bee came to rest on the branch of an apple tree. Immediately all the other bees settled down too, gathering around the queen as closely as they could. The first comers, of course, rested nearest to her, and others, as though trying to reach as near as possible to her, settled on the bees already there, and then still others settled down on those, until there were layers upon layers of bees that hung down from the branch of the tree in a great bunch—a strange kind of fruit to find on an apple tree! Boys and girls who live in the country may perhaps have seen this kind of thing happen, and will know that the bees were “swarming.” Generally, when a swarm of bees is found someone near by is glad enough to fetch an empty hive and hold it, opened, beneath the swarm. Then by a gentle shake the bees are knocked off as a bunch into the hive, the hive is closed up, and there is a colony of honey-makers ready to work for the advantage of the fortunate man who found them.

I do not know why our farmer, or one of his neighbours, did not come and hive the swarm in the case about which we are speaking. Evidently no one wanted them. Whatever the reason may have been, the bees were left to hang on the branch. And how long do you think they remained there? Day after day went by, and still they stayed. A week passed, and they faithfully clung to the place where their queen was. I expect some days brought unfair weather, and the nights must have been chilly, and of course none of the bees had anything to eat; but still they clung on, until

at length they began to drop off exhausted. Sometimes one by one, sometimes in little clusters, they fell to the ground and died. At length, after a whole fortnight, the queen herself and her last faithful followers, dropped also; and there upon the ground lay a heap of dead bees—now of no value to any one. They who might have been living still and precious, if they had been cared for, were now gone for ever. But, oh, how their death should speak to us who read their story!

Let us notice first of all the wonderful faithfulness of the bees to their queen. Where she went, they went; where she stayed, they stayed; where she dropped in death, there everyone of them died with her. “Faithful unto death” might truly be said of them all. I hardly need remind you, I think, what their story teaches us. In the place of the queen and her followers we may put the King, our Lord Jesus Christ, and those who are His. The most precious thing in the sight of God that any of us can do is to be devoted to the Lord Jesus. God values far more a deep, deep love for His Son—a love that leads us to any sacrifice or to bear any suffering willingly for His sake—than all that we might do without that love. Do you remember how, when the Lord Jesus came to the house of His friends in Bethany, Martha was very busy making things ready for Him, but her sister Mary sat quietly at His feet, taken up entirely with Himself? And He said that it was Mary who had chosen the better part. Oh, it is a far greater thing to have a heart that loves Him deeply, than hands that are busy, even though they are busy for Him. Do you and I love Him sufficiently to follow Him even into places that we should not choose—places where the chill air of trouble and difficulty and suffering blows upon us and there is nothing of earthly comfort to sustain us—where we have nothing and no one else than Himself? Let us each ask Him to give us a love like that.

And do not think, although all the bees died, that loving faithfulness to the Lord Jesus

ever means loss or waste—it is all gain when we follow Him. Perhaps you know the story of the Island of Erromanga in the New Hebrides. One of our greatest missionaries, John Williams, after working devotedly amongst the other islands of the South Seas, endeavoured to bring the gospel at length to Erromanga, an island where the people were fierce cannibals, and where the Lord Jesus Christ had never been preached. At his very first landing on the island the natives cruelly killed him and his companion. Later, other missionaries followed, and no less than three more were killed in a similar way. All these had gone simply out of faithfulness to their Lord—they believed that He was leading them, and they were going with Him. Was their death waste and loss? We are sure it was not. To-day, the Island of Erromanga is no longer peopled by savage cannibals, but throughout its length the name of Jesus is loved, and many, many hearts have been won to Him; and this is the fruit of the lives that were laid down there for Jesus' sake. Life always comes out of death, and gain out of loss, when we take the path of faithfulness and love to Him. The secret is, that unlike our queen bee who ended in death, our King, the Lord Jesus, though He became dead for our sakes at Calvary, rose again out of death and is alive for evermore in the power of an endless and triumphant Life; and this very Life He gives to those that are His, and the power of it may work in all that is done in obedience and in loyalty to Him.

Remember, then, this very important thing—though you may one day become a great servant of God, known all the world over, or though you always remain an unknown and hidden one of whom nobody on earth takes any particular notice, the one thing above all else that God will regard is not so much the work you have done but the extent to which you have loved the Lord Jesus and been faithful and loyal to Him. And so you see that a boy or a girl,

or any other of God's "little ones," may take heart and need not complain that they cannot do much for Him. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. ii. 10). And then it will be your joy to be one of those of whom it will be said: "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. xiv. 4). Tell me, are you being loyal to Him now even in the small things? If so, this is service on which He puts the highest value. And if you are not—nothing else counts.

I expect you have already thought to yourself that it was a great pity someone did not save the swarm of bees from death, and turn them to a useful purpose. It certainly was. Yet there are many people who treat the Lord Jesus like that—He who waits to bring richness and blessing into the life is so often ignored or rejected. I will not stay to dwell on this now, but will you think about it? There is one other thing I want to mention. The mass of bees hanging from the bough reminds me of the mass of mankind waiting for a Saviour. In China, in India, in Africa, in S. America—yes, in England, too, *and in the very place where you are*—there are masses waiting to be saved. The Lord Jesus came that all might have Life; and yet because they have not received the message of His love many are passing out one by one into darkness, just as the bees dropped off one by one in death. Will you let me speak to your heart concerning the great need that exists for the going forth of the message of salvation to unsaved people, and offer yourself to God to be used in meeting the need just where you are, or anywhere else where He may lead you? I wonder how many more bees will drop from the bunch before we go out to seek and to save those that remain?

(Will you find, and learn, two verses in Ruth i. and two more in Luke ix. which are strikingly illustrated by this story?)

G. P.

Deliverance from Sin

To speak of sin as being uprooted or eradicated is a fundamentally wrong conception arising from an incorrect apprehension of the nature of sin. Nowhere in the Scriptures is God's salvation expressed in that way, but the Word of God does speak of being made free from sin.

In John viii, 31-36, Our Lord says: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free . . . Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin . . . If, therefore, the son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The truth shall make you free: the Son shall make you free—free from the servitude of sin.

Sin then, is here regarded, not as a weed growing out of the human heart, but as a master, a tyrant, holding in thralldom or bondage; compelling its slaves and holding them. Sin has reigned unto death (Rom. v, 21). "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. Ye were the servants of sin. Ye have yielded your members servants to iniquity" (Rom. vi, 14, 16, 17, 20). "I am carnal, sold under sin" Rom. vii, 14.

Sin is a principle, like death. By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned. "Here is a law of sin," says Paul, "which is in my members, having its residence in the human nature bound up with these bodies": so that the apostle calls it the body of sin in Rom. vi, 6, and the body of death in vii, 24.

God's salvation from sin is expressed in Rom. viii, 2. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

There is deliverance from sin, from the compelling drive and hold and bondage of this crippling, corrupting death working principle.

This law, to make it operative, must have a source of power. That source is a spiritual personality opposing the law or rights and sovereignty of the Godhead. The source of sin is described in Eph. ii, 2, as the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now energising the children, sons of disobedience. It was in him that iniquity was 'found,' Ezekiel, xxviii 15.

The principle of sin, of lawlessness, is in the

nature of a spiritual emanation from this potent fallen Son of the Morning. His pride and self-will and hatred against the Holy One is broadcast into the Universe and, by reason of that initial inclusive act of surrender by Adam, our federal head, every human being is born in a condition of responsiveness to that anti-God principle. You cannot "uproot" this from the human heart any more than you can "uproot" those remarkable ether waves emanating from the wireless broadcasting station but, praise God, there is deliverance from sin.

It is the truth that shall make you free, and the essential condition is that you know the truth. The conception of uprootings in this connection is not a true conception, and no amount of trusting for something other than God has said He will do, will bring one into the freedom which comes from knowing the truth.

Nowhere in the Scripture is the idea to be found that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the Divine method of deliverance from sin. The Holy Spirit is not given for this purpose at all. The making free from sin is the blessed work of the Son of God. "The Son shall make you free . . . ye shall be free indeed."

There is a word in Isaiah xxii, 14, which apart from its immediate context, has a spiritually prophetic application. "It was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of Hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you *till ye die.*" That word gives us the key and the clue to God's deliverance from sin. You cannot uproot the principle of sin but, because of Calvary, you can become dead to sin. You can *become* dead to sin because Christ the Son of God on your behalf died to sin once for all. On the cross the Christ was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He died for all, an inclusive representative death which, by faith, we may appropriate, the implications of which we may accept and yield to; and if we do so the promise and the declaration is, "Sin shall not have dominion over you."

Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. The truth is that *Christ died for us.* That statement is true, yet the truth of it is not merely the faithful declaration, but the

actual eternal, infinite reality that Christ, the Son of God, the One by Whom, and for Whom, all things were made, the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His invisible essence, the incarnate God, as Man for us men, representing and holding us in His own blessed Person, **DIED TO SIN FOR US** in such fashion to God that that dying of His is our death. We who believe into him and have been baptized into Jesus Christ have been baptized into His death. We are buried with Him by baptism into death in order that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness—a new kind—of life.

You cannot root out sin from your being, you cannot root out a law, a principle, a continually energised, anti-God emanation, which is universally operative, but you may be dead to it—this body of sin may be destroyed, *i.e.*, rendered inoperative, put out of action, like a wireless receiving instrument, put out of tune!

This is the truth by which, in knowing it, ye shall be made free.

Ye shall *know* the truth. "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified together with Him, that the body of sin should be annulled: that henceforth ye should not serve sin," should not be subservient, slavebound, to sin. . . "For he that died has been justified of sin. . . We died with Christ." Rom. vi, 6-8. How may this be known?

First there must be the clear conception of the fact by faith which cometh by hearing the word of God—so we see quite clearly what God has in mind for us: then there must be the confidence of faith that God is able to make this faith experimental in us: and there must also be the willingness to have it so, the consent of faith. In verses 11 to 13, the Apostle gives instructions concerning three acts upon our obedience to which deliverance is conditioned.

"Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus our Lord." This is an act of faith: a condition to be fulfilled by a determined, once for all assumption, followed by a perpetually maintained stand. The truth is that when Christ died, He died for you. His death was your death so that potentially, spiritually, representatively, in Christ you died. Now reckon it to be so. By sheer faith take your stand in spirit there. I died to sin in Christ's death for me. Understand it? Explain it? Impossible, may be, but it is the truth. I take it; I claim it; I

reckon it to be so now, and I count on God Almighty to make it good.

The next is an act of will, an attitude to be taken, a choice to be made, the setting of the helm of the soul in a definite direction: "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." This calls in repentance, a change of mind, of attitude, of opinion. This is a relaxing of your own grasp upon the fetters with which the tyrant has bound you. Some of them are silken and soft and seductive. The will must come into action here, choosing to say No to sin.

The third condition is an act of surrender, very thorough and complete: "Do not be yielding your members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield—in a definite, decisive, once-for-all act of renunciation—yourselves UNTO GOD, as those that are alive from the dead—united in resurrection-life with Him in whose death ye died—and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Yield (1) yourselves unto God and (2) your members unto God. Not only yourself in a general kind of way, in which you give your consent to the Lord's disposal of your service or life or affairs, but in a very specific and spiritual and deep way, yield your **SELF UNTO GOD**. Your self! The central citadel of the will, the heart's affections, the disposings of the mind, these are to be yielded up. This means an end of self-will and makes possible the bringing to an end of old Adam and the energising of the whole being by the Holy Spirit of God.

The three commands are to be obeyed. They are not doctrinal platitudes, but definite instructions, to be literally practiced on our part: and then follows the promise, Sin shall not have dominion, shall not lord it over you.

P. W. F.

Our Inheritance in Christ.

(Continued from page 18.)

not of Himself, until it is *only the Lord*; this is the Spirit's work, and is not power or sanctification as such, not in a thing, it is the Lord; and when it is the Lord you have come to your possession and can go in and possess.

We come to it through pressure, through fire, through water, but God says!—

"I HAVE GIVEN . . . YOU POSSESS."

T. A. S.

The Abiding Meaning of Pentecost

A Conference Message.

Readings : Acts ii. 1-36 ; Isaiah ix. 6 ; Matthew xvi. 28 ; Acts ii. 34 ; 1 Corinthians xv. 25.

ACTS is pre-eminently a book of principles ; and it is just here we so often go wrong in looking for the repetition of the form by which those principles were expressed ; forms of expression change, but the principles abide.

Though the Lord may do a fresh thing, He will not necessarily use the same form, but He will do it on the same principle ; these principles are eternal, changeless ; they abide for ever.

We are so often wanting a repetition of Pentecost in the form it took then, of manifestations and demonstrations on the outside. The Lord will do a new thing ; and things basic to His activity then will be basic to His activity always. Principles, and not forms are the things we are to look for.

Everything at Pentecost centred in and related to *one thing*, the enthronement of the Lord Jesus in heaven, in the full virtue of His universal triumph. So far His universal triumph has not reached its full end : " Sit thou on my right hand UNTIL—" (Ps. cx. 1). He sits there in virtue of His universal triumph ; and that triumph in this age is working out to its full issue ; " until "—

1 Cor. xv. 25 : " For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet ; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death." " But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." He must reign until—His reign has now begun !

Everything that took place at Pentecost centred in that and related to that enthronement of the SON OF MAN.

Acts ii. 22 : " Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God... this Jesus did God raise up... being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath poured forth gifts, which ye see and hear... let all the House of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made HIM both LORD and CHRIST, *this Jesus*, whom ye crucified " (32, 36). That is the centre, pivot and heart of all that took place at Pentecost.

Too often our attitude suggests that the Lord

Jesus is hardly equal to the situation, and that Principalities and Powers, and the Devil have the dominion and authority, or that it is a very big fight with an almost doubtful issue !

Pentecost represents the beginning of the heavenly sovereignty of the Lord Jesus, and some of them saw the Son of Man coming into His kingdom ere they tasted of death. " Jesus said unto them, verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power " (Mark ix. 1).

Pentecost presents a crisis and a climax, connected with which are quite a number of things. In Acts ii. see the different connections with the O.T. Scriptures and the climax to them ; link Acts ii. with Ephesians iii. 8, 19. " To make all men see what is the dispensation of the MYSTERY which for ages hath been hid in God... to the intent that *now* unto the Principalities and Powers in the heavenlies might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Let us trace the connections and the climaxes :

1. As to the Old Testament Scriptures ;
2. As to the Lord's Person and work ;
3. As to the training and preparing of His instrument—the Church.

Firstly, the climax in relation to the O.T. Notice how it is taken up in this record in Acts ii., and read Luke xxiv. 26, 27, 44 : " Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and enter into His glory ? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself... and said unto them, these are my words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you ; that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me."—A.R.V.

Pentecost linked with all the O.T. Scriptures, and was the climax to all that had been written. The Holy Spirit came with the full virtue of everything that had been written in the O.T. concerning Christ to make them real and to fulfil

them ; to bring those fulfilments into the personal experience of the Believer. The Holy Spirit's advent was to make all the O.T. a manifested fulfilment in the Person of Christ Jesus.

In this record of Acts ii. there is a breaking up and opening of the meaning of the Scriptures. Joel ; What was the burden of the Word to Joel ? "The Day of the Lord." "But this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel." "This is that," the day when the Lord came into His own. We speak of having our day, the Lord comes into His day. Pentecost is the Lord coming into His day, He is enthroned ; and this Day of the Lord is in two parts ; the former took place at Pentecost, and the latter part in the Book of Revelation.

Pentecost was the introduction of the "Day of the Lord" on the GRACE side of His Sovereignty, and in the Apocalypse, it is the JUDGMENT side of His Sovereignty. ONE DAY, but in two halves ; and as surely as the Lord Jesus has commenced His reign in Grace, so surely He will take the rod of iron to smash the nations in judgment who resist and reject His reign in grace.

The Day of the Lord is in our hearts now. He is SOVEREIGN LORD ; and so He is offered to the nations in *grace*, but also we have a message of authority, and if there is a refusal of His grace, there *must* be an acknowledgment of that sovereignty in judgment ; for everything shall confess Jesus Christ is LORD.

"Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him the Name that is above every name. . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9, 11).

In another part of the same record the link is with David and Solomon. You have introduced with David and Solomon a revelation of Grace, glory and wonder ; it needs the two persons to illustrate the reign and work of the Lord Jesus ; and you come into Pentecost where it has its fulfilment and spiritual realisation.

David and Solomon are types of the Person of the Lord Jesus, in His work and reign ; He is David and He is Solomon, but He transcends them both ; He takes up all that is typical in them and fulfils it in His own Person ; Pentecost is the climax to the O.T. scriptures concerning Christ.

Now as to the Person, life and teaching of the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh. Pentecost

was a recognition and a proof of all Christ came to be, and all He taught, and all He did. All the spiritual value of that comes by Pentecost into its full vindication.

His claim to sovereignty is established by the moral and spiritual results of the Holy Spirit coming into the life of a child of God and transforming it, by causing it to know in experience (not by intellectual argument) the life of His sovereign triumph, that inward reigning in life by Christ Jesus. All that the Lord Jesus taught and did is vindicated by the Holy Spirit inworking into the life of the believer the victory of that resurrection life of the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus was vindicated by a mighty experience of the Holy Spirit ! It is the spiritual and moral value of the Person, and the bringing of the fruits of that by the Holy Spirit into the life ; it is the change the Holy Spirit makes in the moral life, that is the vindication of the Lord Jesus. You cannot divorce moral responsibility and spiritual experience, there is no vindication thus, but chaos and contradiction. Pentecost is the climax to the Person, work, and teaching of the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh, as it gives spiritual and moral value to those in whom He dwells ; *i.e.*, proved in experience by the Holy Spirit.

Why did the Holy Spirit come ? To make experimental in the life by the same Holy Spirit, all that Jesus is for the believer. This is the progressive and constructive work of the Holy Spirit, the transforming of life in men and women.

Thirdly, Pentecost was a climax in relation to the training and preparation of an Instrument.

The first chapter ends with the presentation of that instrument ; the completion of the Apostolate with the inclusion of Matthias. An instrument had been trained and prepared for the continued work of the enthroned Lord. This preparation is in three parts :—

1. In the days of His flesh ;
2. The forty days after His resurrection ;
3. The ten days after His Ascension.

I. In the days of His flesh ; one year after He started His public ministry, He called and had in training for about two years those whom He choose ; and what were the chief features of that period of training ? First, a seeing and a hearing without understanding ; a very real thing. As we read the Gospels we see it was a time of laying in of a subconscious store of not understood deeds and words. Oh ! but did not the Holy Spirit work on that afterwards !

What does the Holy Spirit coming into our life mean? An explaining of who Jesus is; "He shall take of Mine and show it unto you," and until He comes words have not that potent force; "it is the Spirit that gives LIFE."

Second, being allowed to participate in the works and supernatural powers, and being given flashes of spiritual revelation; "flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto you, but my Father in heaven." Only flashes, immediately passing, but a knowing something of "the powers of an age to come."

Do get the principle of this. Very often the Lord antedates things for us, and then we find them go down into death; but this is training; and has to be in order to get *us*, our *flesh* hold out of it; it is a principle of training, and so the Lord brings us into spiritual co-operation with what He is doing.

Pentecost is necessary to put things into another realm, where the "I" is utterly out and *the Lord* is utterly in. Pentecost is the climax to this. This was all accompanied by and headed up to a complete breakdown and personal failure on the part of the disciples, they failed Him all along the line; see them with the Syrophenician woman, distraught with trouble, crying unto them, "Have mercy on me!" and they "besought Him to send her away, for she crieth after us."

Again, "Lord, how oft shall I forgive my brother, till seven times?" "Lord, we have left all to follow thee, what shall we have?" Bargaining to get more than they gave up! and caring not for the others, only let *us* be first; ambition for a place of prominence; this is not the spirit of Him who emptied Himself, and humbled Himself unto the death of the cross!

Now Pentecost comes to rule them out utterly; it is no longer themselves but HIM; now they can follow to the death, now they can forgive, the personal has gone, no longer their interests the predominant thing even in the things of God; but solely and utterly His GLORY at any cost.

Pentecost demands that ground, speaks that ground—we finished! There is no place for mere soul-force here; soul-force in the things of God is a denial of the Holy Spirit; He is the "Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 2).

It is no longer our efforts, our achievements, we are out of it, and it is henceforth, "The Lord did it!" That is Pentecost.

The Lord is seeking to get an Instrument,

by and through which to present the Lord Jesus to the nations as "PRINCE and SAVIOUR" (Acts v. 13). And there must first be a realisation of the absolute sovereignty of the Lord Jesus in the life before there can be such a presenting of Him to the nations.

Contradiction in life, brings weakness in testimony, and there can be no ruling in prayer through being in touch with the Throne. Where there is any contradiction, authority in prayer is paralysed. All this is preparation and training to gain an instrument; an instrument for the enthroned Lord, to meet His need and to establish His sovereignty in the earth.

The second part of the training; the forty days after the Resurrection. This is another phase of their training; note the feature of this. It was an establishing in their experience of what He said He was—Resurrection in PERSON.

In the days of His flesh. He had claimed power over His life. "no one taketh it from me, I have power to lay it down and power to take it again, this commandment I received from my father" (John x. 18). And for forty days He was establishing in their experience, what He said He was, and all He had claimed to be. It would have been a catastrophe without those forty days, they would have lost the reality of the *living presence* of the Lord.

It was also the establishment to them of all He had promised in relation to His resurrection; "I will never leave you." "I am with you always—all the days." "Because I live ye shall live also." He had made many promises on the ground of resurrection, and came back and established them all; and theirs was a faith in a risen, living and present Lord, and not only in an historic Jesus.

Next, He established the fact, that He is *Lord of men*; and we see the inclusiveness of His claim. All forces that could be used of men, were brought in by them to put Him out of existence; but He came back! Man cannot get rid of the Lord Jesus. He is Sovereign of men.

Back of men is the Devil, he is involved in all this, and he has exhausted himself and resorted to his last weapon, Death; the answer to that is the Resurrection: "I am...the LIVING ONE, and I became dead, and behold, I am ALIVE FOR EVERMORE, and I have the keys (authority) of Death and Hades" (Rev. i. 18). He has established His Sovereignty over all, men, devil and death; established it

in every realm. This was the Testimony being brought home those forty days; His SOVEREIGNTY in all these things. He was making them know the *literalness* of His Person in resurrection to be equal to that in the days of His flesh; He was not a spirit, but literally as real in Person as before His death. Pentecost the climax to the literalness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Next, the emancipation from the limitation of time and space. Still training an instrument for future usefulness! He is no longer bound by limitations of time, and He is seeking to bring home to them, that though not seen, His absence is never to be taken for granted. He is there all the time, and there is no time when He is not with them!

Next the establishment on the ground of their world commission.

Forty days, the period of probation which ends in a demand to assume responsibility. After forty years in the wilderness, the Israelites were commanded to occupy the land.

Probation and training issuing in the taking up of responsibility. Ten is the number of responsibility. See the boards of the Tabernacle ten cubits high and covered with gold. Here you get the type and teaching concerning man's responsibility towards God; man is only able to meet that responsibility (but he *is* able to meet it!) on the ground of redemption and in the power of the divine nature.

Ten days praying, entering into this thing by prayer, busy with no other burden! And Oh! with all the revelation He has given us, should it not bring us to our knees in prayer?

Pentecost did not come one day short of full prayer preparation; forty days of revelation and then ten days' prayer; a clear manifestation of Himself and His new thing; and the first carrying of that responsibility in ten days of prayer.

And what was the result of that praying? A thrusting out by and in the power of the mighty Holy Spirit! Resurrection revelation; and a seeing the fields white unto harvest, and then a giving of themselves unto prayer, until sent forth of the Spirit. Vision, prayer, go; yes that's the Lord's order.

A threefold preparation, and Pentecost the climax to that preparation, and the ground upon which the Holy Spirit comes.

"Ye are witnesses of these things....but tarry ye until ye be clothed with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 48, 49).

"He was received up after He had given command through the Holy Spirit unto the Apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also showed Himself alive by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God; and being assembled with them He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father which ye heard from Me....ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (Acts i. 2).

"Then they returned to Jerusalem....these all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and His brethren."

T. A.-S.

Our Inheritance in Christ.

(Continued from page 24.)

land: "And it came to pass when all the Kings....heard how....the children of Israel had passed over that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel" (Joshua v. 1). The peoples of the land were in terror because of the children of Israel; immediately upon which the Lord gave instructions for re-circumcision; why this upon crossing the Jordan and being in the land? The Lord saw the peril of their taking on the thought of the peoples of the land about themselves, and making something of them instead of the Lord, instead of making *Him everything*, so He says, "circumcise."

And beloved, you are never free of the peril of people making something of you as soon as they see you have got something, the Lord says at once, "cut off the flesh."

The Lord is wanting to bring us into a wealthy place, and He is working in the energies of the Holy Spirit with that in view; He has foreknown and always acts in relation to that foreknowledge: the inheritance is in view, and He by the Holy Spirit would bring us into that full place in Christ.

The large place in life or vocation depends upon whether we have the Lord as our LIFE, and not things or people as such, but HIMSELF.

Our emancipation into the fulness of God's provision for us in Christ Jesus, depends upon how far we have let the Holy Spirit sovereignly apply the Cross of the Lord Jesus to all that is

(Concluded on page 14)

Further Thoughts on the Testimony in relation to the Candlestick and the Glory

(As spoken)

Ex. xxiv. 17, ix. 34, 35 ; Eph. iii. 21 ; II Thess. i. 10 ; Jude 14, 15.

We see in these passages, the common element in all is the breaking in of the Lord in glory ; the breaking into this world of the Lord in glory. In Zech. iv., the Lord is bringing into view, in the symbolism of the candlestick all of gold, an instrument, a vessel for His Testimony, which is utterly and wholly for God.

A candlestick—that is the instrument.

All of gold—that is, which is wholly for God.

In the sanctuary the golden candlestick occupies the place midway between the Holy of Holies and the Tent of the Congregation : midway between heaven and earth ; and the testimony is maintained in unwavering light by the supply of the Spirit, God-ward, and man-ward.

From Zechariah we see the True Testimony was lost in Israel as a whole, and was recovered to God in a Remnant. Carry this over into the Book of Revelation and in the letters to the Seven Churches, you find the professing mass of Christians had lost the Testimony, and the Lord was recovering it in a Remnant ; He was calling out from the rest ; the Overcomers.

Zechariah had a spirit of inquiry, which was encouraged by the Angel, and he drew it out in the questions Zechariah put to him : “ What are these two olive trees . . . ? and I answered the second time and said unto him, what are these two olive branches ? . . . And he answered me and said, knowest thou not what these are ? And I said No, my lord : then he said, these are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

Oh ! we do want to get the tremendous significance in the last clause—“ that stand before *the Lord of the whole earth* : that is—**ANOSAI, MASTER**. The Master of the whole earth : this is the title used here by the Holy Spirit, and declares the *Lord's right* to the earth, and that the Lord must have His Testimony maintained on the earth to the right which is His as Master. He breaks into the earth as Master.

The two anointed Ones, are types of Joshua the High Priest, and Zerubbabel the Governor, but are really the Lord Jesus in type on two sides of His Person : it is HE on either side of the candlestick maintaining the testimony, HE the High Priest, and HE the Sovereign Lord, and the spirit in the candlestick maintains the testimony to Him as such.

In Ex. xxiv. we see the glory of the Lord in the mount : “ The cloud covered the mount, and the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days, and the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount.” It was an unspeakable, terrific glory !

In Ex. xl. we see *that* glory coming into the House : “ Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle, and Moses was not able to enter into the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”

Pass over to Solomon, II Chron. vii. : “ Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house, and the priests could not enter into the house of Jehovah, because the glory of Jehovah filled Jehovah's house.” Thus the glory of the Lord came in again.

Pass over centuries, and come to a little town called Bethlehem, and the Lord breaks in again in glory. Angels know who HE is, demons know also, if men do not ! As HE breaks into the earth in Bethlehem, angels sing, “ Glory to God in the highest.”

In John i. it is written. “ WE beheld His glory . . . He came unto His own things and His own people received Him not.” Pass on to when He was received up in glory, and then again at Pentecost when He entered His Church, which is to be the shrine of His glory for this age.

In the breaking in of His glory, two things come into view, or two halves of one thing.

Firstly, a present place for the Lord of Glory to dwell in. Secondly, a coming in the fulness of His glory to be "manifested in His saints, and marvelled at in all them that believe" (II Thess. i. 10). **The Lord must have something in which He dwells as Lord of Glory.** He *wants* to come in, and must have something that brings Him in, so that His glory may come in full manifestation.

Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel saw the glory of the God of Israel.

Ex. xxiv. shows that God wants to come in. He wants to break into the earth in His glory, but in order that He may do so. He first *calls up* a company to Himself, and then comes *down* into the tabernacle. Why *go up*? To get instructions of the thing in which He would dwell. He must have something absolutely in every detail an expression of the Divine mind; in which He would dwell, and in which, and through which He could express His glory. He must have a place where He *is* Lord of glory, before He can come as Lord of glory; and before He can come down someone must come up!

That which is typical in the O.T. is fulfilled in the N.T. There is a sense in which, after breaking into the earth in His incarnation, He never left it again; for He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." I am with you all the days. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus and He is *here now*. "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever. . . . He dwelleth with you and shall be in you; I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you (John xiv). The Holy Spirit has been given to glorify the Lord Jesus, and to establish His sovereignty *in* and *through* the Church, His Body—His instrument, that which He is forming, and conforming; and that coming in His glory is because there is something, which He has fashioned by the energy of the Spirit, in the inworking of the Cross—a House that He has constituted for Himself, and He is by that, and through that, coming to be glorified: the glory of the Lord comes, because He has already come *in* His saints.

The coming of the Lord is very closely related to His having something here in which He already dwells as Lord of Glory; and the glory manifested will be because of the glory already come in, but veiled; and this is not only the occasion of His coming, but the means of

His coming, and how that very coming is brought about.

In Ex. xxiv. Before the Lord came down and manifested His glory in the midst of men. He called *up to Himself*, "seventy of the elders of Israel." What is that? Seventy is a representative number, a number representing the Church.

Note the difference in the sending forth of the Twelve, and of the Seventy. To the Twelve the Lord said, "go not save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But for the Seventy He broadened the compass of their ministry to beyond the borders of Judaism. The church is in view.

Seventy is the number of a representative company of the Lord's people: and **the Lord must have a representative company**, who have the vision of His glory, and are in fellowship with Him in the desire of His heart.

He cannot come into all Israel, until He has got a representative company to leave the plains and come up to Him in the mount, and know HIM in that close, intimate fellowship, which is implied by "And they beheld God, and did eat and drink."

Yes, the Lord must be brought in by a representative company who have left the ordinary religious level, and come into a heavenly fellowship with Himself.

So the Candlestick, all of gold—altogether according to God, is brought into view with the Remnant, as fulfilling a representative ministry. The two tribes of Israel were representative of the whole of Israel. And in Rev. ii. the letter to the Church in Ephesus is written to saved ones, but fallen from their first love: we cannot say they are done with for ever, and lost! Yet God is calling out of the Church in Ephesus a company of Overcomers to come into fellowship with His own mind about things, and be part of the Instrument for the Testimony of His glory: the Lord would call a representative company up higher into fellowship with HIMSELF.

The Principle is this, the Lord works through a representative company, you can trace this through the Word, and will find it is always God's way. The Lord maintains what is according to His mind through a small company; even though the main company have come into relationship to Him through His shed Blood, yet out of that company He is getting, as representative of the rest, that instrument which is wholly according to the mind of God;

that "Seventy Company" of pure gold, wholly for God; where all is according to His mind, and who are with Him in the Ephesian heavenly places. You know what that means, that it is not just a theory, or doctrine, but a living reality, inwrought by the Spirit through His Cross; yes, *beaten gold*.

If you have seen the Lord, you cannot live in the plains! They went up the mountain and saw the Lord of Glory. Have we seen the LORD? I do not mean seeing with our mortal eyes, or in visions, etc. No, nothing of that kind of seeing; that is perilous; I mean that true, deep INWARD SEEING of the LORD. Have we truly seen the Lord? Are we enraptured with HIM. When you see HIM you are changed for ever, and you cannot live on the plain; you are Mountain people, you belong to the mountains! That is the secret of wonderful endurance.

What is the secret of Paul's ascendancy? He has seen the Lord, and in the light of that, goes from the stoning back into Lystra, until the Testimony is established in a little group of men and women there; he is willing to die a thousand deaths, if only the Testimony to the Sovereignty of the Lord Jesus is established.

It is a desperate fight for the Cities. What do cities stand for? Are they not centres of organised evil and iniquity, where Satan has his seat? But in those very strongholds of Satan, the Testimony to the Sovereignty *must* be established.

Jerusalem, a great religious centre of the world, crucified the Lord of Glory without its walls! And it was in a little upper room in that very city, that the Holy Spirit established the Testimony to the Sovereignty of the same Lord Jesus, on the Day of Pentecost.

It is very vital to see that it is a corporate Testimony. "The candlestick shall be of *one piece*; three branches of the candlestick out of one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof. . . . the whole of it one beaten work of pure gold. . . . out of a talent of pure gold made he it. . . . the whole of it was one beaten work of pure gold" (Ex. xxv. 32, 36; xxxvii. 22, 24). How often is the reiteration, "of *one piece*," thus emphasising the cor-

porateness of the testimony, and the corporate nature of the Instrument of the Testimony.

When you get vision *your* ministry falls away, and it is no longer *our* life work, or the life work that *belongs to us* for the Lord, we are no longer troubled with *our* life work for the Lord, the only thing that matters, and is of concern to us is, not *our* testimony, but HIS TESTIMONY, and when it is thus, things as things will be all right and settled. Get occupied with the Lord Jesus, this will be our emancipation. A representative company eating and drinking with HIM: "And they saw the God of Israel, and there was under His feet, as it were a paved work as of sapphire stone." The sapphire, the heavenly colour, symbol of the heavenly thing, the heavenly nature from centre to circumference, that is the walking place of God; that is what the Lord puts His feet on! He must have a company cut off from the things of earth, and wood unto Himself.

It is a law. God is coming to break in, in glory, and it will be into the heavenly thing, and not into this world as yet, but into that which is according to His own mind, and has not got its roots in this world, but a cut-off people, a people who have come up to Him, the Lord of Heaven, in the mount, to prepare a way for His coming in glory, and for this He must have a company separated unto HIMSELF in a heavenly life; and of whom it can be said, all their well-springs are in Him.

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was one man in a godless world, and yet who had got a vision of His coming (Jude 13, 14).

The Instrument of the Testimony, that Nucleus Company, that Remnant People, Overcomers, that Seventy Company, call them what you will, are those who have got a vision of the glory of the Lord, and in the light of that glory have fellowship one with another in the Lord. This fellowship of the Lord's people is a vital factor in the manifestation of the Lord, and a very important element in the Instrument of the Testimony to the Sovereignty: fellowship with the Lord and with His people is that which gets nearest to the heart of God, and is the target of the Devil, and Hell's master-stroke against it is division! T. A. S.

Our Inheritance in Christ Part I

A Message as Spoken.

Joshua i.

JOSHUA is the book of the inheritance in the O.T. and there are some significant things attached to the occurrences and usages of this word "inheritance." In the Book of Numbers it occurs 35 times, in the Book of Deuteronomy 18 times, but in the Book of Joshua 44 times, that is striking! Numbers is the book of the ordering of the hosts with the inheritance in view. Deuteronomy is the book of the establishing of the basis for possessing the inheritance; therefore you would expect to find the word frequently. In Leviticus the word "inheritance" occurs but once. Now Leviticus does not deal with inheritance, but with *God's rights*; it is the book of relationship to God by the altar; the book of approach and access to God, where God's rights are recognised, and God secures His rights by the Cross. God must have His rights before we can get our inheritance, as Leviticus teaches. Then when you come to the Book of Joshua, you find the whole subject of the inheritance dealt with, and the entering into possession.

Coming over into the N.T. you find the letter to the Romans does not present "inheritance" in any concrete form, it is a book that deals with the spiritual foundations, and this is its link with the Book of Leviticus.

Joshua, the man (in type the energy of the Spirit) brings to the inheritance. It is important and both interesting and significant to notice when Joshua comes into view.

In Exodus xvii. we find Joshua coming into view at Rephidim, the place of the smitten rock, where the waters came forth giving life to the people: type of the life of the Spirit as the inward life of the people of God: (see John iv. 10-14), then it is that Amalek immediately comes on the scene as type of the flesh, rising up and crossing the path in order to prevent possession of the land, to hinder going into the inheritance. Amalek comes out to withstand Israel, and God immediately brought Joshua in to order the camp.

Immediately you receive the Holy Spirit or experience a fresh filling of the Spirit, flesh rises up, Amalek comes out, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against

the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other" (Gal. v. 17) These two are in age-long conflict, in antagonism. It is ever so; when you have a fresh experience of the Holy Spirit, the next thing you find is that you are in a new conflict against the old flesh-life in yourself; this rising up of the flesh within is provoked by the devil, because he sees the inheritance in view, for when the Spirit comes the inheritance comes into view, HE has come to bring to the inheritance. So do not be surprised if after an experience of the Spirit the next thing you have to face is this conflict with the assertion of the flesh across the path to hinder your going into possession.

It is only when you have received the Holy Spirit that you know the conflict of the flesh, and what is the withstanding of the flesh, those who have not the Spirit have no such conflict of flesh and Spirit; they are not in that realm, but wholly in the flesh realm.

The Holy Spirit has come in relation to the end, and the end is the inheritance in Christ, and flesh moved by Satan rises up to frustrate that end, and to rob you of the inheritance. The peril is that having begun in the Spirit, you might turn aside to make some compromise with Amalek, because of the hardness of the way, the greatness of the cost, by reason of the conflict and forgetting God's word—"utterly destroy Amalek" (1 Samuel xv. 3). "Walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 4).

This is where Abraham Lroke down. Isaac—son of the Spirit—he was impossible as son of the flesh (Heb. xi. 11, 12)—Abraham's faith tested, wilderness conditions prevailed; there was delay of the fulfilment of God's promise, and apparently nothing developing as to Isaac; he had the assurances of God, but seemingly nothing coming to pass: the flesh could not wait, it never can wait for God, so Ishmael the outcome, with what terrible consequences; and there came a time when Abraham had to cast out from his home and life that which his flesh had built up: this is a terribly painful thing to do, to pull down what he had built up; and this holds many from coming into the inheritance. Abraham had brought something into being

by mixing flesh with Spirit, and God will not have it, but says—"CAST IT OUT." This costs shame and sorrow, it is not easy to cast this out, it is shameful, but it *must* be done, it must be utterly cast out!

Joshua came in at that point as the energy of the Holy Spirit to carry on to the end and to secure the inheritance. We see Joshua related to all the spiritual activities of the Children of Israel; it is significant to note he is spoken of when first introduced as the attendant of Moses; who also went up into the Mount with Moses. His name is not mentioned in Heb. xi. Why is the name of Joshua left out of that great list? Because he represented the Holy Spirit in them all! The activities of God are all carried on in the energies of the Holy Spirit, and it is He who brings into the inheritance.

Joshua represents the energy of the Holy Spirit in relation to the ultimate thing, which is our inheritance in Christ. Joshua was the energy of the life of the Children of Israel as to their going into the land to possess. "Be strong"—and on that strength the people were strengthened; Joshua the person was the energy of their life. "Strengthened with all might by His Spirit into the inner man" (Eph. iii. 16). Colossians and Ephesians are the letters concerning our inheritance in Christ, and it is the energies of the Holy Spirit which are to bring us into the possessing of it.

The letter to the Ephesians declares our inheritance in Christ as *a fact*. Chapters i., ii., iii., are occupied with bringing us into the recognition of this. "Having the eyes of your heart enlightened that ye might know." All is related to our inheritance in Christ, and it is the energy of the Holy Spirit bringing us into that. "That God the Father of glory may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." We need to get the foundations well laid.

From Genesis up to Exodus xi. election is presented, God is choosing according to His own sovereignty and wisdom (and not telling why), an elect line: a man, a family, a race.

Exodus shows us a people though even in Egypt and under cruel bondage, yet a people distinguished from the Egyptians; and as things intensified for them, so did the difference intensify between them. When there was darkness over the land of Egypt it was light where Israel was, they are in Egypt, but God hath chosen!

God has chosen, predestinated, foreordained; God has foreknown and in His foreknowledge He has made certain decisions. The fact is His foreknowledge and in that foreknowledge He did predestinate. This foreknowledge is not with us, we are to preach Christ to all the world and to give no case up as to being too hard, but to follow on to the end; the issue is with God, and not with us.

From Exodus xii., on through Leviticus and Deuteronomy it is preparation by the Spirit of those out of Egypt, a people who had been marked out in Egypt, and now have been brought out from Egypt; and when you come to the Book of Joshua, you have the inheriting by a Spirit-prepared people; for it is an inward inheritance and position first.

Predestination, Preparation, Possession.

1. God knew and predestinated: "Election according to the knowledge of God the Father" (I Peter i. 2). "Whom He foreknew He foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29).

2. By a course of preparation by the Spirit in relation to the nature of the election—a separation unto God.

3. Inheriting on the basis of Spiritual preparation to inherit, this means a deep, and oft-times drastic work of the Spirit, in the separating from *all* flesh, so that *now* we might come into our inheritance in Christ. God wants us to cross Jordan now, into the land *now*, and now to have the earnest of our inheritance. This brings us back to the Ephesian letter. "Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit. . . which is the earnest of our inheritance (Eph. i. 13, 14).

The Holy Spirit has come and dwells within the born-again child of God to cause that one to *begin to possess now*.

We come out of Rom. iv. and v. through vi. and vii., on into viii., where we have the energies of the Spirit in relation to "Sonship" on resurrection ground. We cannot immediately enter into our inheritance, this entering is caused by a deep work of the Spirit within us. We must ever remember the preparation is *governed by the Object*, and that object is *the knowledge of the Lord*: making the Lord everything to us experimentally, for the knowledge of the Lord is our inheritance, and is the result of the preparation of the Holy Spirit.

All preparation is governed by the object; and the object is to come to an experimental knowing the Lord, schooled to know Him, that is the key all the way along. Every

experience brings us to know Him, this is the work of the Holy Spirit : and when we come to a knowledge of Him, we are come to the inheritance, for *He is the inheritance* ; and we never come to the inheritance until we have a deep experimental knowledge of the Lord. When Israel left Egypt, they expected to enter the land immediately, and to come into the inheritance at once ; they had their eyes on the land and things ; so a long preparation was needed. First there had to be the wilderness experience to bring to them the knowledge of the Lord, and on the other hand the forty years in the wilderness was necessary to make them to know what was in their own hearts ; but it is the knowing of Him by which He governs the making them to know their own hearts. Had we knowledge of ourselves apart from knowing Him, it would be death to us we could not bear it, so all is governed by this one thing—*knowing Him*. When you have come there in any commensurate measure, you have come to your inheritance !

Three Wilderness Features.

There are three things in this wilderness period :—

1. A BARREN PLACE OF DEPENDENCE. This is a tremendous factor in coming into our inheritance in Christ ; for a wilderness is a wilderness, a dry barren place, where you cannot see anything, or feel anything ; where if your only resources were in your senses you are at an utter end ; it is a barren place of utter dependence upon God, and there is nothing else to depend upon. This is an essential feature in order to possess, a vital factor for obtaining the inheritance ; how often God says to His people, "I am your inheritance" (Num. xviii. 20). "The Lord is my portion" (Ps. cxix. 57). "The Almighty will be thy treasure, and precious silver unto thee" (Job xxii. 24, 25, A.R.V.).

In Christ you have all that, "For all things are yours. . . the world, life or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's (I Cor. iii. 25).

He is shutting you up to exclusion where in that barren place He can be your life and you have to depend on Him for everything : thus you come into your inheritance, which is—HIMSELF. It is an utter separation from all and everything unto God.

2. The wilderness is a BOUNDED PLACE OF SEPARATION, within the limits of God's appointment, where you are separated unto God ; there must not be the slightest overlapping

with Egypt, "not a hoof to be left behind" and there had to be "three days' journey into the wilderness" (Ex. viii. 27). The separation is unto the degree of Divine completeness, it is being wholly separated unto God ; God has come in between and defined the limits to our life and what it means to be separated unto God.

3. The wilderness is A HEDGED PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT to God, there is no getting out of it, you are imprisoned, given wholly to God and for Him, and know Him as your only object.

God shut Israel into the wilderness and there was no way out ; Pharaoh saw that, see what he says about it : "Pharaoh will say. . . they are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in" (Ex. viii. 27).

Yes, the devil knows all about it ! He says "the wilderness shut them in"—*but, God shut them in*. What a place of imprisonment where you have come out wholly for the Lord ! Yes, that is the way, the Lord has imprisoned you, and you cannot run away. There are sometimes fiery trials, and often Satan says, quit, quit, and you know you cannot. The flesh would love to be released and find a way out, but you know you have got to go through, and He is holding you. If He had not hold you, where would you have been ? We would kick and run away, only He holds, and will hold until He has done the work ; and you will say, "the Lord did it" ; you are hedged by a Divine compulsion.

The Lord sovereignly held the children of Israel in the wilderness, while the testing and training was going on, the preparing for the inheritance : and He is holding *you* while HE does the same, you are the prisoner of the Lord, hedged in unto His Divine completeness ; the Lord is sovereignly holding and getting us through, the credit is not ours, but His, it is all Grace.

THE DURATION OF THE WILDERNESS depends upon our maturity in our knowledge of the Lord, until He becomes and is our "all in all," HE—HIMSELF. When He has His place we come into our large place, for our coming into a large place is on the ground of our personally knowing in a very real way the Lord—HIMSELF as our all : and conquest depends upon this knowledge of the Lord.

There will never be a time when we shall escape the uprising of the flesh ; when we are over Jordan the peril of the flesh is still with us, and you find Achan gets up. Again you find flesh manifesting itself in self-confidence in Israel when they are over Jordan and in the

(Continued on page 18).

Our Inheritance in Christ.

(Continued from page 24.)

land: "And it came to pass when all the Kings....heard how....the children of Israel had passed over that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel" (Joshua v. 1). The peoples of the land were in terror because of the children of Israel: immediately upon which the Lord gave instructions for re-circumcision; why this upon crossing the Jordan and being in the land? The Lord saw the peril of their taking on the thought of the peoples of the land about themselves, and making something of them instead of the Lord, instead of making *Him everything*, so He says, "circumcise."

And beloved, you are never free of the peril of people making something of you as soon as they see you have got something, the Lord says at once. "cut off the flesh."

The Lord is wanting to bring us into a wealthy place, and He is working in the energies of the Holy Spirit with that in view; He has foreknown and always acts in relation to that foreknowledge; the inheritance is in view, and He by the Holy Spirit would bring us into that full place in Christ.

The large place in life or vocation depends upon whether we have the Lord as our LIFE, and not things or people as such, but HIMSELF.

Our emancipation into the fulness of God's provision for us in Christ Jesus, depends upon how far we have let the Holy Spirit sovereignly apply the Cross of the Lord Jesus to all that is

not of Himself, until it is *only the Lord*; this is the Spirit's work, and is not power or sanctification as such, not in a thing, it is the LORD; and when it is the Lord you have come to your possession and can go in and possess.

We come to it through pressure, through fire, through water, but God says!—

"I HAVE GIVEN....YOU POSSESS."

T. A.-S.

A | a Testimon

VOL. 9.

No. 2



A beautiful symbol of Christ's resurrection was the "wave-sheaf" ceremonial of Leviticus 23. As the passover typified the

the third day after, spoke of His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20, especially 23). The "wave-sheaf" was at once an off

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

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship
 SUNDAYS at 10.30 A.M. (Lord's Table), 11.15 A.M., 3 P.M. (Young People), 6.30 P.M.
 MONDAYS at 7.30 P.M. TUESDAYS at 8 P.M. (Young People).
 WEDNESDAYS at 8 P.M. SATURDAYS at 7.30 P.M.

The Guest House is open to receive guests for the period of the conferences or at other times as the Lord leads.

Telegrams : "Syndesmos, Forest, London."

Telephone : Sydenham 5216.

Cables : "Syndesmos, London."

Editorial communications with regard to this paper should be addressed to Mr. Austin-Sparks.

Forthcoming Ministries

(GOD WILLING).

MAY.

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 5. Zion College (Moravian Missions). | Mr. SPARKS. |
| 10. Willesden Green (Donnington Hall). | Mr. SPARKS. |
| 11-12. Wolverhampton. | Mr. SPARKS. |
| 15-18. North Berwick (R.B.M.U. Conference). | Mr. SPARKS. |
| 17. Willesden Green (Donnington Hall). | Mr. FAUNCH. |
| 19. Stratford. (Gurney Rd. Baptist Church). | Mr. FAUNCH. |
| 19. Edinburgh (Gartshore Hall). | Mr. SPARKS. |
| 20. Ferryhill (Co. Durham). | Mr. SPARKS. |
| 21. York. (Watermen's Mission.) | Mr. SPARKS. |
| 22-25. Rothesay (E.U.S.A. Conference). | Mr. FAUNCH. |
| 26-29. Glasgow, Stirling, etc., (E.U.S.A.) | Mr. FAUNCH. |
| 22. Newcastle. | Mr. SPARKS. |
| 23-25. Honor Oak Whitsun Conference. | Mr. SPARKS. |
| 31. Willesden Green (Donnington Hall). | Mr. FAUNCH. |

JUNE.

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 4. Leytonstone. (Central Hall). | Mr. FAUNCH. |
| 6-13. SLAVANKA. SOUTHROURNE. HOLIDAY CONFERENCE. | Mr. FAUNCH. |

A SPECIAL MISSION AT DEAL FROM MAY 9-17 INCLUSIVE.

There will be no week-end Conference at Honor Oak at the beginning of June.

Mr. Austin-Sparks and Mr. Speedy expect to sail for ministry in the United States and Canada on June 20.

"Witness and Testimony"

Literature

By T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

- 'The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.' Price 9d. Postage 1½d.
- 'Incorporation into Christ.' Price 6d.
- 'The Release of the Lord.' Price 6d.
- 'The Inner Man of the Heart.' Price 3d.
- 'The Watchword of The Son of Man.' 3d.
- 'Vision and Vocation.' Price 2d.
- 'The Prisoner of the Lord.' Price 2d.
- 'The Holy Spirit and The Cross, The Church and The Coming Again of the Lord Jesus.' 2d.
- 'The Cross and the deliverance of the Mind.' Price 2d.
- 'The Candlestick all of Gold.' Price 1d.

Diagrams.

1. The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.
2. The Cross and our Salvation.
3. The Attitude of the Crucified Ones Toward Each Other.
4. The Cross and the New Creation.
5. The Cross and the New Man.
6. The Cross and the Promise of the Father.
7. 'In Christ Jesus.'
8. The Cross in the Life, Work and Teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ (No. 1).
9. The Cross in the Life, Work and Teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ (No. 2).

1d. each, or 9d. per dozen.

By P. W. FAUNCH.

'Deliverance from Sin.' Price ½d.

Obtainable from the "Witness and Testimony"

Bookroom,

13 Honor Oak Road, London, S.E.23

The God of Bethel

Continued.

In the opening of this consideration of the great revelation in the Scriptures of the House of God we noted the fact that God, in His creation of the world, had in view His dwelling with man. The end of the revelation sees that realised when the great declaration is made, "The Tabernacle of God is with men." At the beginning there was something which pointed to this in that He walked in the Garden and conversed with unfallen man. Then things became unsuited to His presence, for His rights had been challenged and man was found on the side of the challenge rather than on that of the Challenged: and more, man was—and has for ever since been by *nature*—on the side of the challenger. This fact comes out invariably when faith in God is subjected to certain tests.

From the time when He could no longer move freely in a state suited to Him, the Lord sought to have a place among men, and thus He never abandoned His original purpose, but persistently broke in and sought to have His rights recognised. Men of faith who had taken up the testimony to the utter rights in Lordship of God have always had to meet the full impact of a spiritual hierarchy which is set on keeping God out of the world. "The whole world lieth in the wicked one," hence, that which is God's house must be utterly separated from the world: though linked with it in testimony, yet not one wit *of* it. This leads us to the first and pre-eminent feature of God's House: remembering that believers individually and corporately are His house, His dwelling (This we shall consider more fully later.)

We proceed then to consider what, in Ezekiel, is called

"The Law of the House."

"This is the law of the house: upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold this is the law of the house."—Ezek. xliii, 12.

This principle of suitability to the presence of the Lord runs throughout the revelation of all His associations with man. Holiness has often been taught as a branch of truth in itself, but every great aspect of truth in the Word of God is related to a centre, and that Centre is the Lord Himself. To have the adequate motive

for any one requirement it must be seen in its setting with its great eternal and universal background. It is perilous to concentrate upon a fragment or a phase and give it a place in itself, and it robs it of its own dynamic to do so. So holiness must be seen—like all other Divine elements—in connection with the one great all-inclusive purpose of God, and the "House of God" is intended to be a cumulative, concrete, crystallisation of all the Divine features as capable of impartation to man. (This does not include Deity.)

Thus the matter of holiness applies to the whole desire and intention of God to make His dwelling with man, and carries with it the fitness for that abiding.

Seeing—as we have previous pointed out—that the House of God first definitely comes in with Jacob at Bethel, we go back in that connection to take up this "law of the House." From the time of his meeting with God first at "Bethel" till the time when he was Divinely commanded to "arise and go to Bethel" (Gen. xxxv, 1,) twenty years elapsed. What a twenty years it was! suffering, testing, being sinned against, sifting, and proving God. He had had plenty of time for thinking over the events and elements of that historic night, and of coming to some fuller understanding of its meaning and implications. So it was that when—after twenty years—the command came he instantly gave to his household some significant instructions. "Put away the foreign gods from among you." "Bethel," the house of God, is no place for other gods, that which suggests the false god, "the god of this age," or divided worship. That is unholiness and is utterly unfitting for the presence of the Lord. Not only is this so in the case of worship, but it is also true in the matter of the whole resource of the flesh. Before the Lord commanded Jacob to go up to Bethel there had taken place that terrific episode at Jabbok where the sinew of his thigh—the symbol of his self-strength—had been withered. To the end of his life he carried that weakness, and when at length, an old man, he blessed his sons, he did so in *faith*, "*leaning upon the top of his staff.*" What a reminder that faith in self has to be broken and faith in God is

our only strength. Yes, from that time onward this great fact is always kept in view, that the flesh is altogether out of keeping with the House of God. God never has committed Himself to man's "flesh," and He never will do so. If Paul brings in the House of God more fully than any other, then he will have more than any other to say about the "flesh" and the need for its putting away. Note this in connection with every reintroduction of the House of God. What elaborate precautions were taken in connection with the Tabernacle that all who were associated with it should have their flesh covered. Linen robes long enough to cover the ankles. Linen, without an admixture of wool lest perspiration of flesh should be induced. The holy anointing oil was not to come upon man's flesh apart from the blood. There were to be no steps to the altar lest lower extremities should be uncovered in going up. The physical flesh of the Old Testament was but a type of that moral "flesh" of the New. It would seem that the one great concern in all this exhaustive system was to guard against man's natural life as such coming uncovered before God.

Then when the Temple comes in through David the same law is immediately met with. David must not build the House of God because of his hands being stained with blood. This was true in a general way, but there was also that specific thing which had made him unclean and had weakened him for good. He had been the cause of death and plague in a realm which was not just straightforward warfare, but where Satan had had an hand, and where the "flesh" had governed. So, while the plan could be given to David, the execution was committed to Solomon. Then again there is the elaborate care that everything shall be suitable to God.

There are few more impressive things in the Bible than the three great Confession chapters of Daniel (ix), Ezra (ix), Nehemiah (ix). These all are related to the house of God at Jerusalem and the unhappy state of things amongst the Lord's people. They represent one great cry and sob because of conditions which are entirely out of harmony with the glory of God. What were all the splendours and glories of Babylon to Daniel when the House of his God at Jerusalem was in ruins. To him there was only one thing that mattered and it was the glory of God. That glory was beclouded while things were as they were there. That state of things,

that departure of God from His house was—as the confession makes clear—due to "flesh" being in evidence in the Holy Place and in the holy things.

Ezra's prayer is a terrible thing, it moved all who heard it to action, and action of the most drastic and costly character. The holy seed had become mingled with what was foreign. Foreign wives had been taken and there were families. Speaking in spiritual symbolism this represented the affections being set on things beneath, and the results. It speaks of affectional principles influencing the Lord's people earthward, and then the responsibilities which follow. How difficult it is to get rid of these! How costly this is in the matter of the Lord's presence and glory.

Carrying all this forward into the New Testament we see, firstly, how the Temple is set aside because of inward uncleanness. The Lord Jesus takes its place as the true Temple, but for those who do not as yet recognise the significance of His Person He is saying and doing those things which—being placed on record—will for ever reveal His mind as to what is related to the House of God. Vehement denunciations of all that is not holy to the very core, and burning acts of indignation against any caricaturing of the Divine dwelling. A passion for holiness and truth marked His attitude to all who had any official connection with the Temple. Going on still further we see that before the "Body" which is the Church, can be brought in in Romans xii, all that work of chapter vi has to be settled and a chapter viii position has to be occupied, leading on to xii 1. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, which is your *spiritual worship*: and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the *renewing of your mind*."

The same is true in both Ephesians and Colossians, where death, burial and resurrection unto newness of life are placed before the into the "House" or "Body" or "Church."

All this is one great prolonged emphasis upon the words of the Psalm, "Holiness becometh Thy House, O Lord, for ever."

Again let us say that Holiness is not a department of truth, a line of teaching, but it embraces the whole house of God from centre to circumference, from foundation to top-stone, and all that is in it.

Men organise movements and constitute societies. God sanctifies people as the instruments of His purpose. Men think more of the

work to be done. God thinks most of the spiritual state of His children.

Of the twenty-seven books comprising the New Testament, six are largely history with much spiritual teaching in them, and all the rest—twenty-one books—are devoted to the spiritual life and state of believers.

God never guarantees to keep work or workers going beyond the *spiritual* condition or standard that He requires. There comes a point where *men* have to assume the responsibility and take the strain, and the Lord lets it fall on them if the spiritual standard is lowered.

Bigness and what man calls success is not the determining feature of spiritual value, but spiritual suitability to God. What determines things according to God is whether they proclaim *Him* at every point.

The last verdict of man passed upon Christ here on earth was, "truly this was a *righteous* man." Not "a successful man" or "an able man" or "a clever man," but "a *righteous* man." Our chief concern must be, not for what others will call successful, but for what God can establish for ever: what can be made to really serve His end—*i.e.*, the manifestation of Christ, and such must be above all else marked by holiness.

The one thing upon which the Lord Jesus could challenge men as to Himself was the question of sin.

He did not say, "Which of you can charge me with being unlearned, or without ability, or prestige?" but, "which of you chargeth me with *sin*?"

Nothing is of value in God's eyes beyond the degree of its holiness. The instruments which have been mostly used of God have been those which had a spiritual state mostly in view. With these the spiritual state of the Lord's people was of infinitely greater influence than the success of the enterprise embarked upon.

Many great instrumentalities have sprung out of ministries concerned with full sanctification. If Jacob is to be God's "Prince," which means to have power with God and man, and this is to be related to Bethel, The House of God, then, if it takes twenty years to do it, God will discipline and chasten and smite the flesh in order to make him a suitable head of the House of Israel—which was God's dwelling.

It is important and helpful to note that often the Lord gives some revelation of truth far ahead of it becoming effectual, and then begins a history of dealings with us to bring us into conformity—spiritually—with that truth. So it was with Jacob. When the time arrives then we know quite well why He has so led us and dealt with us, and are able to enter into it in a living way, rather than just a mental way.

T. A.-S.

(To be continued).

Acknowledgments

The following gifts towards the expenses of this paper, received between February 1 and March 31, are gratefully acknowledged:—

New York, 10s., 10s., £2, 10s., 4s.; Atlanta, Ga., 5s. 9½d.; Tangier, 5s.; Shomlan, Syria, 10s.; Edinburgh, 5s., 1s.; 3s., 1s. 3d.; North Berwick, £2 10s., 1s., 5s., 2s. 6d., 2s. 6d., 5s.; Glasgow, 4s. 4d.; Belfast, 5s., 3s., 6d.; Dublin, 5s.; Blackpool, 5s.; Burnham, Bucks, 5s.; Brighton, 10s.; Eastbourne, £1; Farningham, 10s.; Goudhurst, 3s. 6d.; Gatheshead-on-Tyne, 2s.; High Wycombe, 5s.; Hook, Basingstoke, 2s. 6d.; Leeds, 5s., 2s. 6d.; Leigh-on-Sea, 2s. 6d., 2s. 6d.; Leicester, 2s.; Ryton-on-Tyne, 1s.; Ryde, I. of W., 5s.; Sandown, I. of W., 10s.; Salisbury, 2s.; Southampton, 2s., 5s.; Tunbridge Wells, 5s.; Wanstead, 3s.; Wolverhampton, 10s., 1s. 6d., 10s. 6d.; Wallasey, 5s.; W. St. Leonards, 5s.; Finchley, 2s. 6d.; Forest Hill, 2s. 6d.; Goodmayes; 5s.; Huntingfield Road, S.W., 3s.; Herne Hill, 2s.; Lewisham, 5s.; Palmers Green, 6s.; Sydenham Hill, 3s. 6d.; S. Norwood, 2s. 3d.; Tabard Street, S.E., 2s. 6d.; Wembley, 2s.; Wimbledon, 2s. 6d.; Willesden, 3s. 6d., 2s., 2s. 6d.; Local, £1 5s. 5½d.
Total, £20 3s. 7½d.

HOLIDAY CONFERENCES

(D.V.)

JUNE 6th to 13th at
"SLAVANKA,"
SOUTHBOURNE

JULY 11th to 18th at
BOGNOR REGIS

All particulars from Mr. Paterson, 13 Honor Oak Road, London, S.E.23.

The accommodation has been much overtaxed for the past years, we therefore urge early booking.

For Boys and Girls

The Gospel in the Farmyard (No. 11)

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."—Matt. vi, 21.

No doubt you have all seen a mother hen with her brood of baby chicks: how proud she is as she struts around the farm, with her family running about her! And then at the end of their walk I expect you have seen them creeping in under her feathers as she settles down in the coop where she lives, so that presently there is nothing to be seen but the hen with her wings outspread and occasionally a little head peeping out from beneath them. This kind of thing goes on until the chicks have grown to some size and then, little by little, they and their mother seem to lose interest in one another, and presently they all join the company of the other fowls in the farmyard and go to rest at night on a perch in the hen roost; and the happy family is broken up.

But this was not the history of a certain brood of chicks on our farm. In their case the love (if we may use such a word in connection with chickens) between the mother and her babies never seemed to grow cold. Even when the chicks had grown to be quite big "boys" and "girls" they continued to follow their mother and to shelter under her wings. It was not long before she had no room for them under there, but they crowded in as far as they could and the rest huddled around her, outside. The farmer thought this was a very stupid proceeding and tried to separate them—but all in vain. More than once he shut the mother up for a time in a secret place, but as soon as he let her out again she found her family and they went off together as before. In the end he gave up trying to separate them, and provided them with an extra large hen-coop and allowed them to live their family life there. "What a silly lot of chickens," you will say—"great big 'boys' and 'girls' trying to huddle under their mothers' wings!"

Yes—but please note this very important thing: their hearts were set upon their mother and she alone satisfied them. They did not care whether they lived in a hen coop or a barn or a stable, on hard ground or on soft hay: *their mother* was all that mattered to them. And

as long as she lived they were perfectly satisfied, for in having her they had all that their hearts desired.

Now there was another brood of chicks on the farm whose story is quite different from this. These were chicks that had left their mother in the ordinary way as soon as they had grown to a fair size, and had been taken by the farmer to live in a certain field. There they remained for quite a while until the farmer, to suit his convenience, moved them to another field. At the first opportunity the chicks returned to their old home in the first field and the farmer, on finding them there, took them back again to the new one. But back they went once more and once again the farmer brought them to their new home. But it was of no use—the birds would not stay, and in the end the farmer decided to waste no more time on them and allowed them to remain where they wanted to be. Evidently their hearts were set on a *place*, and they could find no rest anywhere else. There is a passage in the Bible which says (I John ii, 15): "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . . [for] the world passeth away . . ." I wonder what those chicks would have done if their favourite field had 'passed away' by being ploughed up and turned into a cornfield, so that they could no longer walk about in it? How utterly lost they would have been!

Perhaps at this point you are thinking that the loss would be just as great for the other family of young birds when the day arrived (as it does for most chicken!) for the mother to be killed for someone's dinner. True; but supposing the mother could have lived as long as the chicks themselves—what joy for them all! You see, it was the companionship or (to use a Bible word) the "fellowship" that they had together that made their joy—not things, not places, not circumstances, not other people, but one another. It reminds me of a familiar word—"Where Jesus is, 'tis Heaven." And that brings us to the centre of everything. Do *you* know anything of the real joy of the presence of the Lord Jesus? Can you rejoice in Him even when you have not other things that would

make you glad, and everything around you is black? If you will read Acts xvi you will see a picture of two men who enjoyed His companionship even when they were prisoners in a dungeon at midnight. What a wonderful Lord he must have been to them. Why, to be with Him in a dungeon was far better to them than to be in the luxury of a palace without Him. He thoroughly satisfied them, because their hearts were wholly His.

How different a picture is this from that which we find in Luke xviii, 18-23, where we read of a young man who was not satisfied with the Lord Jesus alone but wanted earthly possessions as well, and was in consequence "exceeding sorrowful."

The most wonderful thing of all is to know that the Lord Jesus has utterly satisfied His Heavenly Father—the holy God Who cannot be content with anything that is not perfect; and that He is the centre of all things, the One by Whom all things in the universe hold together, and in Whom all fulness dwells—the One Who abides for ever, eternally the same: Who for love's sake gave Himself for us at Calvary, and now offers Himself to dwell in our hearts, bringing us into the enjoyment of His Own fulness. Do we need more than such an one to satisfy us? Must we have, with Him or instead of Him, something of this world? Oh, the poverty and brevity of earthly things when compared with the heavenly and eternal glories of the Lord Jesus Christ! Which will you have? You may have either—but if you desire *His* things you must have your heart set wholly upon *Himself*. And then you will have found true rest and joy. You will have a

friend always with you who will never fail you as earthly friends so often do: a new hope in your heart—that of soon seeing your Friend face to face when He comes again for all those who look for Him; and the encouragement of serving Him with your whole being in order to hasten on the glad day of His appearing—for He has said, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." And you will know that when all the things of this world have passed away, thereby robbing many people of the only things upon which their hearts were set, you will still have Him who is your all in all, and it will be your joy to be with Him for ever.

And for your life here on earth you will have all your questions answered and all your problems solved—for the Lord Jesus is God's answer to everything. You will know what to say and to do—only that which will please Him; and where you may go—only where you are sure He will gladly go with you. He will be your teacher in everything and the supply of your every need and the strength by which you triumph in every battle. Oh, He has set His love upon us: should we not set our whole hearts on Him and say:

"Now none but Christ can satisfy, none other Name for me,
There's love, and life, and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee."

Happy is the boy or girl whose heart is not divided but who can look into His face and say in absolute sincerity: "Lord, Thou *knowest* that I love Thee."

Which family of chicks do *you* belong to?
G. P.

U.S.A. Ministry

For interested readers in U.S.A. the following are some of the Conferences at which Mr. Sparks and Mr. Speedy will minister, if the Lord wills:—

June 27-28. "Maranatha" Church, Darby, Philadelphia.

July	1-6.	Hephzibah Heights,	Montreoy,	
		Mass.		
"	8-12.	do.	do.	do.
"	24-26.	do.	do.	do.
Aug.	16-20.	do.	do.	do.
July	31-Aug. 4.	Montrose.		

There will also be ministry in Grand Rapids, Chicago, etc., dates not quite settled.

The Value of the Blood

In considering the Biblical revelation there is one phrase that gathers into itself everything of spiritual value, and that phrase is "the blood of Christ." That blood constitutes the very essence of Holy Scripture. Therein lies the answer to every conceivable need. Accordingly, all the antagonism and subtlety of Satan are mobilized against a spiritual apprehension of its significance. We shall need to seek Divine illumination if we are to see its worth. ...

The Incarnation.

The introduction to this mighty subject is presented in the second of Hebrews, where we are told that since the children are sharers in flesh and blood, the Eternal Son "also Himself in like manner partook of the same." When The Word became flesh our blood flowed in His veins. His was blood of our blood. This means that he was truly and profoundly one with us.

We pause to emphasise the fact that though our blood and His are one and the same in substance they are absolutely different in character. By this is meant that whereas both issue from the same source in Adam, the corruption that characterizes the blood in us did not characterize the blood in Him, for the blood in Him was included in the designation, "that Holy Thing" (Luke i, 35).

Identification.

Since sharing our blood involved oneness with us, we see that by the Incarnation the Eternal Son involved Himself in our situation. That which pertained to us now pertained to Him. That which was ours became His. He inherited our most dreadful estate. He fell heir to our liabilities. By way of Bethlehem the Eternal Son took upon His shoulders the world's problems. By incarnation he became the representative of the fallen race. The consciousness of this fact shines forth with noon-day brightness in His frequent application to Himself of the title "The Son of Man." As His Divine union with the Father resulted in His participation in all that the Father had, so His connection with us through the Virgin Mary resulted in His participation in all that belonged to us. He now stood before God not only for us but most definitely as us.

This brings us to observe just what our Lord

involved Himself in by uniting Himself to the race. He involved Himself in Adam's situation, seeing the whole race was created in Adam. We all inhered in him. He was therefore, not only an individual but also the race in concentrated form. So that if we ascertain the position in which fallen Adam stood we shall have ascertained the state of his race, and consequently the status of the incarnate Lord. By turning to the opening chapters of Genesis we shall find this information. What is presented there is the essence of all succeeding declarations concerning our natural condition.

I.—Guilt.

"Jehovah God commanded the man, saying Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it" (Gen.ii, 16,17). Therein is presented the law of God. But that law was violated: "She took of the fruit thereof and did eat: and she gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat" (Gen. iii,6).

Thus fallen man is a criminal in God's eyes. The New Testament expands on this. In the epistle to the Romans the apostle paints for us a court scene. The Judge is on the bench; the jury is in the box; the witnesses are on the stand; the accused is on trial. God is the Judge; righteousness is the jury; conscience and Scripture are the witnesses; sinful man is the accused. The testimony is conclusive. The jury is without dissenting voice and The Judge has pronounced sentence.

When the Eternal Son became man He Himself became chargeable with that guilt. Though absolutely flawless in His own perfect character, He was made accountable for the sin of the world. Being now the world's representative He was held legally responsible. Our sins became His so far as the law was concerned. It is most illuminating to note that the familiar word used in both the Old and New Testaments for "bearing" sin has a two-fold meaning. It signifies first, to "take up" and then to "take away." It is the picture of a man stooping down and putting his shoulders underneath another's burden to lift it clean off the oppressed and then to carry it away. At Bethlehem God's Son "took up" the sin of the world in order that by His cross He might ultimately

“take it away.” To this the Apostlo referred when he said, “Bear ye one another’s burdens—and so fulfil the law of Christ.” When the cross was reached, Christ proceeded to render account, to solve the situation. There Ho stood before God as the representative of a race so terrifically involved and undertook on its behalf.

By men he was considered the concentration of sin. They came out against Him as against a robber. They put Him on oath because they were unwilling to grant His truthfulness in simple utterance. They charged Him with perjury in that they refused His word given on oath. They pronounced Him worse than an insurrectionist and a murderer, for they preferred that Barabbas should be delivered unto them. “Ho was numbered with the transgressors” (Luke xxiii, 37). He was executed as a criminal. Man dealt with Him as though He were the sum total of iniquity.

But all this was but the visible shadow of the invisible spiritual reality. For on that cross God was righteously dealing with His beloved Son as our representative. “God made Him to be sin for us.” “Christ died for our sins.” “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “He was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.” God dealt with Him as though He were the all-inclusive sinner of the world. There was no mercy mingled with judgment on Calvary. It was judgment in the absolute.

2.—Death.

But what was the penalty attached to the infraction of the Divine law? What was the sentence imposed by the Just Judge? It was the penalty and sentence of death: “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. ii, 17). “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” “The wages of sin is death.”

Having become involved in our guilt the Lord Jesus was necessarily involved in our death. It was now incumbent on Him to suffer the infliction of the penalty. Dying, He must die. Accordingly, from Bethlehem the cross is in view. Its shadow is cast backward over the whole earthly life of the Son of God. As He enters upon His public ministry by His baptism in the Jordan He enters upon it through the gateway of a symbolic death. In connection with the performance of His first miracle in Cana of Galilee He speaks of His hour which is not yet come. By which He means His death. At Caesarea Philippi He makes His first explicit declaration that He must go to Jerusalem and

die. From that point Ho is entirely different. The consciousness of His impending death lays hold on Him. For the first time the chosen twelve experience a sense of fear in their contact with Him. He steadfastly sets His face to go to the cross. He was steadily heading for that hour when He would discharge the obligation assumed by His incarnation.

In the cross He died our death, just as in the incarnation He shouldered our guilt. He died on another man’s cross. The sentence of death due us He endured. He experienced both spiritual and physical death as the full penalty of our transgressions.

3.—Separation.

But in what does death consist? In the Scripture it does not signify annihilation but separation. Spiritual death means the separation of the person from God. This is symbolized in the fact that God “drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden the Cherubim and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Gen., 3, 24). “Vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus—punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might” (ii Thes., i, 8-9).

Physical death is the outward expression of the inward reality. It consists in the separation of the person from the body. “Till thou return unto the ground; for out of it thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen., iii, 19). “The body apart from the spirit is dead.”

On Calvary God’s Son suffered that dual separation of ours. He was banished from the face of God. He suffered destruction from the divine Prosonce. And He passed through physical death. He was separated from His body. “He was buried according to the Scriptures.”

4.—Bondage.

But man’s sin was not only a turning away from God; it was also a turning unto Satan. The rebellion which was in his heart entered into man. His self-will was communicated to us. This participation in Satan’s self-assertion constituted man Satan’s captive: “led captive by him at his will.” “The whole world lieth in the lap of the evil one.” By nature we are under the authority of darkness (Col. i, 13).

Since man in his sin has not only turned away from God but turned to Satan, God has decided that man shall ultimately be given over to the full power of his choice. "Because they received not the love of the truth . . . for this cause God sendeth them a working of error" (2 Thes. ii, 10-11). Man eventually then is to be delivered over to the power of Satan. Such is the destination of sinful man. He chose Satan and he shall have him in his fulness.

All this the Saviour suffered as our representative. He came under the hand of the devil. Hear Him in Gethsemane as He says to sinful men who are the instruments of Satan, "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (Luke xxii, 53). Since He represented fallen man He was delivered over into Satan's power. We are told that wicked men "abound Jesus" but that material binding was just the outward expression of the great spiritual fact that Satan laid hold on Him with every ounce of authority he had over Adam's race. All that Satan had to heap upon man he heaped upon Christ. He exhausted his ingenuity and devilry in devising ways and means of torturing the Son of God. All that was coming to us from Satan fell on Christ, representatively committed to him. There was no restraint from God.

5.—Poverty.

The outcome of man's departure from the living God Who is the fountain of every precious thing involved the loss of the riches intended for him. Instead "cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee" (Gen. iii, 17-18).

The climax of man's sin means that he is stripped of everything that is blessed. Shut up to an everlasting curse. Given over to infinite poverty, devoid of God. Throughout the ages of the ages, overwhelmed in spiritual privations, bereft of everything worth while. What a prospect.

Identified with us, the Lord Jesus suffered this kind of thing. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor." This poverty expressed itself in the agonizing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The darkness which covered the earth from the sixth hour to the ninth hour was only a faint reflection of the inward darkness of spiritual abandonment. The stripping from Him of His garments was expressive of the fact that He was bereft of

all. He was left desolate. The awfulness is unspeakable, inconceivable. The New Testament gathers it all up into two brief words, "He suffered."

Summary.

Such is the character of Adam's situation. Such is the character of our situation since one with Adam. Such is the character of the situation in which God's Son involved Himself by partaking of our blood. The pronouncement of guilt, the sentence of death, the separation from God and from the body, the bondage to Satan, the absolute poverty—the full weight of it all came down upon the Son of Man. He bore the entire burden of our load. Behold our guilt, our death, our separation, our bondage, our poverty endured by Him for us. He took another man's place. He died on another man's cross, He was buried in another man's grave. He suffered another man's separation, He was stripped in another man's stead. That is why the New Testament is so full of the phrase "for us." For us he was chastised; for us He died; for us He suffered banishment; for us He was delivered up unto Satan; for us He was stripped of that blessedness. It was all for our sake. Such is the gospel of God. Herein behold the love of the Father, the compassion of the Son, the pity of the Spirit.

Precious Blood.

And what is the value of that suffering? The value of that suffering is determined by the value of the blood poured out. The value of any blood is determined by the value of its possessor. Human blood is transcendently more important than animal blood but what shall we say when it comes to holy blood, which belongs to the infinite and eternal, the absolute and perfect Son of God. What can we say but that its value is as infinite and eternal, as absolute and perfect as Himself? This "blood His own" is therefore infinite in its value, eternal in its efficacy, absolute in its power, and perfect in its effect.

Another World.

This brings us to the very heart of our subject. By that blood our Lord Jesus has fully met our situation and has emerged into a now and glorious realm. By that blood He has utterly solved every one of our problems and has entered upon another and altogether blissful

plane. In the virtue of that blood He has forever passed from the domain of suffering to the domain of glory. Instead of our dreadful negative he now possesses a mighty positive. He has exchanged one condition for its exact opposite. Everything is wholly altered, entirely different.

But in all this Christ signifies us. In all this He stands for us. In all this He is in the Divine mind equivalent to us. He is our representative. Accordingly, in Him we have passed from the old realm into the new. Those whom He represents pass with Him there. Behold, then, your own emergence from the sphere of horror into the sphere of glory.

Faith.

At this point we reach that which is crucial. It is true that the Lord Jesus represents Adam's race and that in His entrance upon another plane the race has entered representatively there. Hence the "whosoever" of the Gospel. But it is only those in Adam's race who definitely claim the Lord Jesus as representative who get the value of it all. That is why all through the New Testament there is such tremendous emphasis on faith. Everything depends on our receiving. He that believeth, and he only, hath. This is the strain that runs through the entire New Testament proclamation of the gospel. We must take the cup of salvation. We must for ourselves call upon the Name of the Lord. We must have a personal transaction with God whereby we appropriate the salvation, whereby we embrace the Saviour as our very own. If we do not accept the Lord Jesus by a definite action of the will, by a positive laying-hold in the heart, we miss all the splendour of the Divine provision. Apart from such an exercise of faith we abide in our original position before God.

This believing on the Name of the Son of God is signified in what the Scripture calls the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter, i, 2). The first instance of it in Exodus xii, referred to in Hebrews xi. The passover lamb had been slain. Its blood had been shed but it was absolutely necessary to dip the hyssop in the blood and sprinkle it above the door and on the two side posts. The Divine assurance of protection was connected not with the blood shedding but with the blood sprinkling. Wherever God saw the blood sprinkled there and there only would He spread over the wing of His sheltering power. The sinner must have his

"heart sprinkled from an evil conscience" through a definite exercise of faith. Through the pouring out of Christ's blood we have representatively become possessed of a glorious inheritance. But only by the sprinkling of that blood does that inheritance become actually ours. Whatever the Lord Jesus entered upon on the basis of the shedding we in turn enter upon by the sprinkling. Let us now consider this new domain into which Christ has come and therefore the new domain into which every believing sinner also has come.

1.—Justification.

The burden of guilt with which the Lord Jesus was weighed down on Calvary was completely lost by the shedding of His blood. In the virtue of that pouring forth He was forever cleared before the bar of God. Thereby He was discharged from all obligation. In the Supreme Court of the Universe He stands acquitted. Nothing against Him through all the ages to come. Sins remitted. Every legal blot completely removed. Perfect standing accorded Him. Utter satisfaction supplied. The demands of Divine righteousness wholly satisfied. The curse of the law exhausted. Never another stroke of judgment. The cup of wrath emptied. Jesus Christ exonerated. Henceforth and forever justified in His blood.

Now the moment a sinner receives Christ as Saviour that moment this representative justification becomes his actual possession. As soon as the blood of Calvary is sprinkled upon us we are made participants in the legal standing of the Lord. This is the New Testament doctrine of justification by faith. We are accounted righteous before God. First of all, there is remission, full pardon, forgiveness. But we are not merely forgiven all transgressions: we are also considered as having done the good instead of the evil. It is not just a clean slate. It is being viewed as though we had fulfilled all righteousness in a positive manner. But still more the righteousness that is credited to us is the very righteousness of Christ Himself. That righteousness is the righteousness of God. We have been made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor., v, 21).

2.—Life.

But that blood procured for Him not only a new standing but a new life. In Hebrews xiii, 20, we are told that the God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus in the

blood of an eternal covenant. This shows that God had made a contract with His son vouchsafing to give Him resurrection life on condition that He pour out His soul unto death. This document was to have no effect until the pouring out had taken place. Accordingly, when the blood of Calvary had been spilt God proceeded to fulfill His agreement and raised Jesus Christ from the dead. By the exceeding greatness of His power He brought Him up out of the abyss and granted Him life that is deathless, transcendent, triumphant, eternal life. Now He is the Immortal Man. Death no more has dominion over Him. He can say "I am the Living One: and I became dead, and behold, I am alive forever more" (Rev. i, 17-18). He lives after the power of an endless life. He is the resurrection and the life. Death is swallowed up in victory.

Now just as the representative justification becomes an actual justification through faith by the blood of sprinkling, so the representative resurrection becomes actual at the same moment. The risen life of the Son of God is communicated to the believing sinner. He shares in the resurrection. This is the New Testament doctrine of regeneration. Regeneration simply means our participation in the deathless, transcendent, triumphant life of the resurrected Christ. The believer has in him a new kind of life, newness of life, eternal life. He has been joined to Him Who was raised from the dead. However much death may be in us there is much more life. God would bring us to a clear recognition of the fact that Easter is a perpetual reality in those who believe. What Jesus Christ experienced in His body then, the believing sinner experiences in his spirit now. Thus what was once true only in a judicial sense is now true in spiritual reality. "Raised together with Christ." For this reason the gates of Hades shall not prevail. For the life that is in us has already triumphed over Hades and holds its keys in its grasp. Mighty, glorious relationship, "grown together with Him in the likeness of His resurrection."

Sonship.

But this resurrection life of the Lord Jesus is not a life created, but a life begotten. He is the first born from the dead (Col. i, 18; Rev. i, 5). It is sonship. "Thou art My Son. This day have I begotten Thee" (Ps. ii, Acts xiii, 33, Heb 1:5 and v 5 This does not mean that

our Lord Jesus Christ was not Son before the resurrection. The Scripture speaks of three sonships belonging to Him. First, He is the Eternal Son, God the Son. That sonship, in the nature of the case, is unique and incommunicable. Secondly, as conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, He is called the Son of God (Luke i, 35). But that begetting was individual in character.

The third sonship is that now under consideration: "Horizoned the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead." Here the sonship is representative, official. When God raised Him from the dead He raised us together with Him. This is suggested by the historical fact that when Christ arose others came forth with Him. (Mt. xxvii, 52-53). The Epistles are full of this truth. Peter says God "begat us again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." The resurrection sonship of Jesus Christ belongs to us. His very first message that first Easter morning was: "I am ascending to My Father and your Father" (John xx, 17). Thus He embraced us in His own filial relationship to God. Accordingly, every one of Paul's church epistles declares in the salutation that God is our Father. Sons of God in Christ Jesus.

Sonship involves fellowship, and thus location within the circle of Christ's sonship means location within the circle of His fellowship with the Father. His "Abba, Father," becomes ours, and the Divine address to Him as "Beloved" includes us.

3.—Nearness.

In the power of this same blood our Lord returned to the Father. In the ninth of Hebrews we are told that Christ "through His own blood, entered in once for all into the Holy Place." In other words, His blood was the ground of his access; it was the means of His entrance. That blood constituted the key wherewith to unlock to Himself the Holy of Holies. It enabled Him to get back to the Father.

But that blood was so tremendous in its value that His entrance was not just conceded by God, but definitely effected by Him. Instead of being acquiescent in the matter God was positively active. Hence we read no less than nine times in the New Testament that our Lord Jesus "was received up" or words to that effect. He was being acted upon. God was the actor.

But still further, the manner in which God received Him up into His presence was by means of what has been aptly termed the Divine "Chariot of State." It was the Shekinah cloud of ancient days. That cloud had appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration. It will again appear when the Lord Jesus comes as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Thus with the highest honors which God Himself can command our Lord Jesus was carried up in triumphal fashion into the Divine Presence. Yea, into the Divine embrace, there to abide forever and ever, never again to be distanced from God. Blessed unalterable, ineffable nearness, unto the ages of the ages.

And that unspeakable nearness becomes our actual possession through the obedience of faith. The blood which brought Him near brings us near the instant it is sprinkled upon our hearts. That very moment we become joined to the Lord one spirit. We are involved in Christ's reception within the veil. We are included in that glorious access of His. Every Christian is therefore a present and over- lasting participant in the Lord Jesus' position in the Father's bosom. The instant of faith, the Father, as pictured in the parable of old, falls on the repentant's neck and showers him with kisses of welcome (Luke xv, 20). Surely none but the Son of the Father Himself could have ever pictured to us so intimate a view of God. Therefore let us settle it in our hearts once for all that we are near to God in the nearness of Christ. Within the sphere of the Saviour's intimacy with God. So near "that nearer we could not be."

4.—Sovereignty.

Turning again to the Hebrew Epistle we find it repeatedly indicated that there is a deep and vital connection between the blood of Calvary and the right hand of the throne of God. In virtue of the cross the Lord Jesus has been granted universal dominion.

It was God's will for Christ to pour out His blood. This commandment He received of the Father (John x, 17). The devil tried to dissuade Him. First in the wilderness and then at Caesarea Philippi. This endeavour made it imperative for Him resolutely to set His face like a flint and press on determinedly to the Cross. Then the final decision in Gethsemane. There He flung far from Him the self-will which Satan was desperately seeking to press upon

Him as he had upon the first Adam ages before. "Not my will but Thine be done." He was obedient unto death even to the length of the death of the Cross. The pouring out of His blood therefore signified utter allegiance to the will of God.

But the pouring out of His blood signifies something more. Since Christ represented Adam's race His blood was considered our blood—the blood that is full of self-will. The shedding of that blood meant the pouring out into death, of the self-will of fallen humanity. Since that self-will constituted Satan's hold on man, the pouring out of that blood was the utter setting aside of Satan's power over man. Satan had no authority over the Lord Jesus Christ personally because there was no self-will in Him. Therefore He could say, "The prince of this world cometh, and he hath nothing in Me" (John xiv, 30). But considered as our representative, Satan had authority over Him. By the pouring out of His blood that hold was forever broken. Adam's race which turned away from God in Eden under the best of circumstances and turned after Satan, now, in the person of its representative, declared null and void that evil alliance and under the worst circumstances, turned back to God.

By that unreserved subjection to the Divine government our Lord Jesus qualified for the position of world dominion. Because He was subject to the throne He was seated upon the throne. God made Him to be Lord. All authority in Heaven and on earth is His. He is on the right hand of the Majesty on High. Throughout the ages to come it will be the throne of God and of the Lamb. By the blood the throne.

Again we observe that in all this the Lord Jesus was our representative. His position at the right hand of God is ours. In Ephesians i we behold Him seated far aloft above all, but chapter ii informs us that we have been seated together with Him there. We therefore have the ascendancy over all the powers of darkness. We have been joined to the Lord—one spirit—joined to Him in His Lordship, made sharers in His transcendent position. He has constituted us kings (Rev. i, 16). By losing our life in the person of our representative we have become divorced from that which gave Satan dominion over us and we in turn have become invested with dominion over him, "Ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John, ii, 13).

5.—Fulness.

Finally, as the climax, we learn that in virtue of His blood our Lord was given by the Father the Holy Spirit. We have just observed that because Christ poured out His soul unto death God highly exalted Him, giving Him the name of universal sovereignty. Peter adds that "being by the right hand of God exalted He has received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" (Acts ii, 33). Thus we learn that the ascended Christ was endowed with the Holy Ghost, and this in fulfilment of a specific promise. In Paul's letter to the Galatians he tells us that the promise was made when God said to Abraham, "And to thy seed." Now after so long a time comes the realisation and it comes in connection with that exaltation which is rooted in the precious blood. Peter says, "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." That means Calvary leads to Lordship and Anointing. Thus the glorified Jesus is made the possessor of the adorable Spirit (Rev. iii, 1). It is the Lamb, standing as though it had been slain, who has the seven spirits of God (Rev. v, 6). Consequently, the Holy Spirit is now known as the Spirit of Jesus and the Spirit of Christ. He is the Spirit of the Lamb. Since the Holy Spirit is the embodiment of the Father's fulness, the Immortal Man is infinitely enriched. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

As soon as the sinner accepts the Saviour he is made a co-possessor with him of the gift of the Spirit. If the Lord Jesus representatively, through His blood, received the Spirit, the sinner personally possesses Him the instant that blood is sprinkled on him. This truth is emphasised from the beginning of the Bible to the end. Calvary issues in Pentecost.

When we receive the Lord Jesus as our Redeemer, the Holy Spirit takes up His residence within us. This is the consistent testimony of Scripture from beginning to end. First the blood, then the oil. This represents the two sides of our redemption. The shed blood removing all that is evil. The shed Spirit endowing with all that is good. John the Baptist first testified that Jesus was the Lamb of God bearing away the sin of the world and then that He was the Son of God baptizing in the Holy Spirit. The risen Saviour first shows them His hands and His side; then He breathes on them and says, with a view to Pentecost, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." On the day of

Pentecost Peter tells the inquirers that if they repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of their sins then they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the house of Cornelius as he testifies that through Christ's Name everyone that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins, then the Holy Spirit falls on all them that hear the Word.

As it is in Moses, in the Gospels and in the Acts, so it is in the Epistles. If we have been justified through the blood, the Holy Spirit has been given unto us (Rom. v). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. iii). Having redemption through His blood, we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. (Eph. I). Wherever the blood is sprinkled the Spirit enters. He who comes to Calvary finds himself straightway at Pentecost.

Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured Him forth (Acts ii, 33). That is to say when He received the Spirit He shared Him with all who identify themselves with Him by faith. And so we find it consistently stated right through the epistles sent to the churches. The Holy Spirit is ours since He is Christ's. Observe the emphasis on our present possession of the Spirit in the following: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. viii, 9). "We receive . . . the Spirit which is from God" (1 Cor. ii, 12). "The Holy Spirit who is in you, which ye have from God" (1 Cor. vi, 19). "God . . . gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i, 22). "God who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. v, 5). "The promise of the Spirit) by faith in Jesus (Christ . . . given to them that believe" (Gal. iii, 22). "The Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. i, 14). "The Spirit which He gave us" (1 Jo. ii, 24). Never once is there a suggestion that there is such a thing as the blood of atonement without the oil of the Spirit. Never once is the believing sinner urged to seek for the Holy Ghost. The Cross is inevitably followed by Pentecost.

Summary.

So all this wealth of justification, of life of nearness, of sovereignty and of fulness pertains to the Lord Jesus not as an individual but as the representative of Adam's race. It was not personal at all. Christ Himself never needed these things. In Himself He never had guilt not the things that follow in its train. No, it is

official. He stands for us. When He passed from guilt to acquittal, from death to life, from estrangement to fellowship, from the dungeon to the throne, from poverty to fulness, He passed as the One who in the Divine thought signified us. Hence, as it was our guilt, so it is equally our justification. As it was our death, so it is our life. As it was our estrangement, so it is our nearness. As it was our bonds so it is our exaltation. As it was our poverty so it is our fulness. In both aspects He is representative. He signifies us not only in the first but also in the second. And so all that He has, He has in reference to us. He has it on our behalf.

And faith makes it actually ours. Thereby the spiritual values of the cross, the resurrection, the Ascension, the Exaltation and Pentecost become our own heritage. By the sprinkling of the blood the representative becomes actual because through faith we are just as vitally joined to Him as He in turn is joined to the Father. The believer is livingly united to Christ, grown together with Him. This union is so deep that what is Christ's is ours. By faith we partake of everything He at present has.

Therefore it is written, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v, 1). So, too, "He that believeth hath eternal Life" (John vi, 47). Again it is written, "Let us draw near with a true heart in the fulness of faith" (Heb. x, 22). In the fourth case, "This is the victory that hath overcome the world (including its prince) even our faith" (1 John, v, 4). And lastly, "The promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. iii, 14).

Thus through faith in His Name (the Name made efficacious by the blood) we are brought within the sphere of Christ's own justification, and life, within the realm of His very own nearness and sovereignty, within the domain of His own fulness. All these are the present possession of all believers. All of this in virtue of the blood of sprinkling. Such is the character of the Divine provision. This is what the apostle means by the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. To this he refers when he says we are enriched in everything. This is the glorious gospel of the blessed God. N. F. D.

(To be concluded.)

From 'Streams in the Desert'

By MRS. C. E. COWMAN.

"Who is among you that feareth Jehovah, that obeyeth the voice of his servant? He that walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the name of Jehovah and rely upon his God."—Isaiah I. 10, R. V.

WHAT shall the believer do in times of darkness—the darkness of perplexity and confusion, not of heart but of mind? Times of darkness come to the faithful and believing disciple who is walking obediently in the will of God; seasons when he does not know what to do, nor which way to turn. The sky is overcast with clouds. The clear light of Heaven does not shine upon his pathway. One feels as if he were groping his way in darkness.

Beloved, is this you? What shall the believer do in times of darkness? Listen! "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and rely upon his God."

The first thing to do is do nothing. This is hard for poor human nature to do. In the West there is a saying that runs thus, "When you're rattled, don't rush"; in other words, "When you don't know what to do, don't do it."

When you run into a spiritual fog bank, don't tear ahead; slow down the machinery of your life. If necessary, anchor your bark or let

it swing at its moorings. We are to simply trust God. While we trust, God can work. Worry prevents Him from doing anything for us. If our minds are distracted and our hearts distressed; if the darkness that overshadows us strikes terror to us; if we run hither and yon in a vain effort to find some way of escape out of a dark place of trial, where Divine providence has put us, the Lord can do nothing for us.

The peace of God must quiet our minds and rest our hearts. We must put our band in the hand of God like a little child, and let Him lead us out into the bright sunshine of His love.

He knows the way out of the woods. Let us climb up into His arms, and trust Him to take us out by the shortest and surest road.—DR. PAR-DINGTON.

Remember we are never without a pilot when we know not how to steer.

Hold on, my heart, in thy believing—

The steadfast only wins the crown;
He who, when stormy winds are heaving,
Parts with its anchor, shall go down;

But he who Jesus holds through all,
Shall stand, though Heaven and earth should fall.

Our Inheritance in Christ Part 2

Notes of a Message as Spoken

We have seen :—

1. The Book of Joshua to be the book of "inheritance"; Joshua mentions the inheritance 44 times.

The N.T. counterparts are the letters to Ephesus and Colossae; setting forth our inheritance in Christ.

2. Setting forth the basis and preparation for entering into that inheritance.

3. The wilderness as the place of the Spirit's preparation for the inheritance; where we have learned there is nothing but the Lord and He the only one; thus we get to know HIM who is the inheritance.

There is no inheriting but by preparation of the Spirit, through a wilderness experience, where you have nothing but the Lord and HE the only factor; this is preparation unto the inheritance.

4. Then the "inheritance" has regard to the authority and government of the Cosmos, this embraces all the world, in it and around it; all this is in the "inheritance."

This government and authority fell into the hands of Satan, he captured the world and enthroned himself in the heavenlies—the spiritual realm around the world, and from there he rules and governs.

Now the inheritance is with Christ. HE as MAN and for man recovered the Cosmos. God could have recovered it as GOD and never become man, but the redemption had to be in relation to man as man had forfeited it.

Man, in the eternal purpose of God is bound up with the government of this world for God's own glory. Since the Lord Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father all the powers and forces of evil and good are under His control. Satan is out to impress us that he is still Prince of this world, but he is not ultimately and finally so, and *now* there is ONE over all his working, overruling and directing it to the glory of God. Satan's regime is now within the compass and control of the Lord Jesus; and we being in Christ are translated out of his authority and out of the power of darkness, and being in Christ we inherit that which he has recovered. This inheritance is only on the

ground of and by way of the wilderness, the place of spiritual discipline, by which the flesh is entirely ruled out: for where the flesh is the enemy makes a terrible mess.

In the Book of Acts you have a refusal on the part of the Lord's own people to recognise the authority of Satan in this Cosmos, but they acknowledge an overruling by the glorified SON of MAN in the throne—the Lord Jesus Christ: whom God hath made HEAD over all things to the Church which is His Body; and HE is the HEAD of all Principality and Power. (Eph. i, 20-23. Col. ii, II).

The fact brought out in Acts is, Satan is not really lord; the Believers know ONE, the LORD JESUS, over all the authority of Satan, who is going to make the workings of Satan serve HIS ends. This is the faith that gets outside of the authority of darkness, which in the face of all the suffering refuses to accept the authority of Satan, but stands in the faith of HIM who truly reigneth; "the SON of MAN" to whom all authority hath been given in heaven and on earth (Matt. xxviii, 18).

Oh! to have the faith as found in the Acts, which possessed "ALL in Christ."

Redemption of the Whole Man.

In Colossians we see this "inheritance" relates to man's state and estate; both of which were lost to man and brought into captivity to Satan. The Lord Jesus as MAN redeemed and recovered all in His own Person by way of the Cross, and carried it beyond the power of death out into resurrection and glorification. This is an accomplished thing in Christ: and now man's spiritual state is seen in Christ Jesus glorified: "for whom HE justified them HE also glorified" (Rom. viii, 30). Scripture constantly emphasises our being partakers of His glory, not partakers of the glory of His deity, but as glorified SON of MAN; "glorified together with Him." (1 Peter, V, 1). All is secured right up to the end in the Person of the Lord Jesus, that is as to man's estate, but there is also his state: our being justified is heading to being glorified. Our inheritance in Christ relates to the whole of man's being, spirit soul and body.

Everything begins with the spirit, but redemption applies to the rest of man's being, for soul and body are also redeemed. New birth has all its meaning in our spirit, it begins there, but God has not ruled out our soul, He has redeemed it. There is a pernicious thing in dividing spirit and soul; for there are people who have a spiritual life which is a denial of the moral: they get so spiritual that they neglect their families, their business, and so on. Our moral life must be absolutely in keeping with our spiritual life. Domestic life, business life, all must be on the same spiritual level, in the same realm. If you divorce these things the devil will make a horrible mess.

In the book of Joshua you start on a very high level, but soon after you come to the terrible tragedy of it; there is a division between the spiritual and moral life. Christ has redeemed our soul and our soul-realm has got to be purified. Spirit relates to spiritual life, soul relates to moral life; and a spiritual life which denies a moral life is a LIE. We have got to see what redemption of the soul means; and that our moral life is brought up to the level of our spiritual life: for we have no spiritual *life* beyond our moral life. The soul-life is in relation to this world and the spirit-life is in relation to the Lord, and both are to enter into redemption, which redemption embraces the whole man: in Christ our bodies are also redeemed—potentially.

In Colossians and Ephesians you start by first seeing all in the Spirit, all in the heavenlies; our spiritual possessions in Christ Jesus in the heavenlies, but it is the same Spirit saying a little further on, "husbands, love your wives, children obey your parents." This is not a coming down but bringing the domestic life up into the heavenlies, regarded as part of the whole, we cannot divorce them, they are both in the same realm and the moral and spiritual have got to be on the same level, if not the enemy will make confusion.

The earnest of the same Spirit of Jesus which raised Him from the dead is in us to give us a taste of our resurrection life *now*; the Spirit as resident within us as the life of Jesus by which he conquered death.—"But if Christ be in you, though your body be dead because of sin (to which its nature tends), yet your spirit is life (life triumphant over death) . . . yea, if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead be dwelling in you. He who raised Christ from the dead shall endow with life also your dying

bodies, by His Spirit which dwells in you." (Rom. viii, To. II Conybeare). We have now an earnest of the fulness to come—the inheritance. In our spirit we have the germ of resurrection by which either through the grave or by translation our body will be changed.

Christ in Glory as Representative.

The Lord Jesus holds in His own Person the state and estate of redeemed man. The question is often raised, is the Lord Jesus still man? I believe He is glorified man in glory. (At the same time He is very God). Look at the book of the Revelation, which is history ahead of the New Testament on to the end of the age. It begins with Him in glory and it is a matchless presentation of Him. Then see Him moving through these earthly-heavenly activities, whereby heaven is explaining what is going on in the earth. He is presented as LORD of lords and KING of kings; then at the very end of the book of Revelation, He takes up the title of his earthly life, "I JESUS," this is the very last thing recorded of Him. What does He mean by putting this at the end? Is it not to let all know and to put His seal to the fact that He is still SON of MAN. This is not taking away from His deity. He is very God, yet also very man. In His redemptive work He is very man indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and as man won back man's lost inheritance—yet He IS GOD.

There's a Man in the Glory
Whose Life is for me,
He's pure and He's holy,
Triumphant and free,
He's wise and He's loving,
Tender is He;
And His Life in the Glory
My life must be.

There's a Man in the Glory
Whose Life is for me,
He overcame Satan;
From bondage He's free.
In life He is reigning,
Kingly is He;
And His Life in the Glory
My life must be.

There's a Man in the Glory
Whose Life is for me,
In Him is no sickness:
No weakness has He.
He's strong and in vigour.

Buoyant is He ;
And His Life in the Glory
My life may be.

There's a Man in the Glory
Whose Life is for me.
His peace is abiding ;
Patient is He.
He's joyful and radiant,
Expecting to see
His Life in the Glory
Lived out in me.

In that marvellous position as Son of Man He brings us into relationship with Himself ; and all the "inheritance" is in Him—"I JESUS" ; and that inheritance involves the Church. Christ the Head, wo the members—ONE BODY : "Joint-Heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii, 17). The Body being a kind of crystallisation of the activities of Christ : this defines the nature of the Church and the object of God's activities in this age—unto the formation of the Body.

Corporate Inheritance.

We cannot get fully into this inheritance as isolated ones but only corporately. it is one Body. We are saved as individuals, but saved and sanctified in relation to the Body, to the building up of the Body of Christ. Soul saving has been made an end in itself, sanotification has been made an end in itself : God never meant this to be so, but rather all to be related to the corporate entity—the ONE BODY of CHRIST. Believers staying at anything less than this *fall short* of their inheritance in Christ, and don't come right through into the fulness of Christ (Col. ii).

We see in the book of Joshua, two inheritances mentioned, one by Moses to the two and a half tribes ; the other by Joshua and Eleazor to the nine and a half tribes. Note the significance of this—all went over Jordan, but not all entered into their possessions. The two and a half tribes inheritance given by Moses was with stipulations, "bring us not over the Jordan." They had an inheritance, but a less : thing than God had intended for them. They went over Jordan to stay for a bit : but it was a different going over from that which the nine and a half had ; the two and a half had was an *objective* going, while the nine and a half was a *subjective* thing (speaking in spiritual terms) they went right through to possess. And to-day there are those who are content with something less than God intended them to have ; content with a bit

of the inheritance, and are not out for the *fulness* of it ; this means an eternal loss of something which could have been theirs.

Ephesians and Colossians take you back to Romans vi and viii : but are much beyond Romans. In Romans vi you have going over Jordan, identification with Christ's death, and in Romans viii it is having the spirit and taking possession ; but this points you on to Ephesians and Colossians, and the inheritance in Christ in the heavenlies ; it is "Christ in you" subjectively. There are those who have got an inheritance (Romans vi) ; they have got the Spirit (Romans, viii) but their inheritance is so largely outside of themselves. This explains so much that we see and why the call for "overcomers," who will go right through and not be content with something less than God's full purpose for them in Christ Jesus.

Both Ephesians and Colossians take you back to Romans vi, "to the circumcision not made with hands" (Col. ii, 11, 12). In Romans you have an apprehension of all that Christ has done in an objective way ; and in Ephesians and Colossians it is all that Christ has done *in you*, subjectively, and a going on unto the end, unto the full inheritance. "If ye continue in the faith" (Col. i, 23). "If we hold fast . . . firm unto the end." (Hob. iii, 14). This is not a question of salvation but of fulness in Christ ; and not to only just get something down here : God wants to bring us right into all the fulness there is for us in Christ Jesus.

Joshua marks the point where preparation is intended to give place to full inheritance. God meant something great, but these two and a half tribes are content with something less ; this explains the constant urge in the New Testament, to go right through to that for which we were predestined—the full inheritance.

The great feature in all this is the rolling away of the reproach of Egypt : those days of bondage under Pharaoh ! It is the putting away of the flesh, so that now everything is "in Christ" and of Christ, and in the heavenlies ; and by the Spirit ; everything—resources, methods, wisdom, relationships, manner of life, ways ; and there is no drawing on the flesh : and unless God does all by Christ nothing can be done. We draw on Christ for all : our words, judgments, deeds, steps, all out from God, for spirit, soul and body ; yes, for life itself, all out from Him who is now our life, "To me to live is Christ."

At the End of Ourselves.

In the wilderness the whole of our natural life is brought out, and we come to know our weakness and emptiness, that we have nothing. Thus it is that we now find everything in Christ and so can go over and possess. What is the secret of possession, of coming into our inheritance? It is that we have come to the place where all things are "in Christ" and HE is everything—our very life and being. Our flesh is cut off and we know as the deepest thing in our being, that unless God does everything in us by His Spirit, all is of no value. *We must come to an end of our own working in order to come into His fulness.*

It is so easy to sit down in our weakness and nurse ourselves, but the Lord says at that point, "Arise and possess." Your inheritance is not here on earth it is in "Christ" in the heavenlies; not in yourselves, your fulness is in Him. It is ever HIS FULNESS over against your emptiness; HIS STRENGTH over against your weakness; your inheritance is ALL HE IS, as typified to Israel by the land flowing with milk and honey.

Paul says of Timothy, "he worketh the work of the Lord" (1 Cor., xvi 10). There is to be an end of our works so far as we are concerned, nothing of *us*, as out from ourselves; but God says, in effect; "with your nothingness I will possess the heavens and the earth."

Oh! to be such a people, chastened and emptied of self, for the Holy Spirit by His energies to display the moral glories of the Lord Jesus *in us* and so through us. "To the intent that *now* unto principalities and powers might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii, 10,11). "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace . . . for we are His workmanship." (Eph., ii, 7, 10).

The Inheritance an Inward Thing First Man's state and estate.

We want to get to the heart of this matter, which is to be in a position where we possess. The Lord is wanting us to be somewhere and to possess something in that place; and unto that God has to take us through experiences; but He always has that end in view—to possess the inheritance; and He is moving towards His end, getting us to a spiritual position within, where Christ is our inheritance.

When He in sovereign purpose took an elect individual. Abraham, He immediately brought

His purpose for choosing him into view; and associated the elect one with the land, linked the "call" with the end—"the inheritance."

We were chosen in Christ before the world was, and with that He linked the inheritance; "Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world . . . having foreordained us unto the adoption of sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself . . . He purposed to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in Him in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph. i, 4-11), A. R. V. God has that always in view and all His dealings with us are unto that end, and it is towards this He has been moving through the ages.

This inheritance must first be an inward spiritual thing; must be a spiritual thing within us before we can come into our possession of it. Possessing the nations in Christ is quite impossible until we have reached a certain spiritual state, that is, ascendancy in spirit, sovereign rulership in Christ Jesus in our own spirit. We have got to have sovereignty within us before we can manifest sovereignty without.

This is in view in Joshua, preparation for what God has and intends to accomplish. This wilderness and all its meaning is the place of preparation by God unto possession of the land. Our longer or shorter stay in the wilderness depends upon our knowing the Lord in experience, this Knowledge of Him governs the length of our stay in this desert place.

Let us get back in mind to that wilderness in which the children of Israel spent forty years, remembering they could cross it in eleven days and that they had a good objective ahead of them; yet year after year passed by, ten years, twenty, thirty, thirty-nine years passed and it seemed the end was still no nearer, not in view, just as far away as ever, there is nothing but wilderness, it all seemed a hopeless thing and the land most remote. This was their mental state, and there was nothing to give them any encouragement as far as eye could see, their soul life was starved, there was nothing for them in the realm of the senses, nothing to gratify the natural man.

The Goal is the Lord Himself.

What is God after in this procedure, by this method? He is after this—it has all got to be a spiritual state before it can be a literal thing

This inheritance is not in things, not even good things in relation to God or Divine things as such; we are not to have our eyes fixed on any object as on the earth, the Lord is not out to give us something here of earth, yet a possession that we can possess here. What God is after is that HE should be our possession, and that is the final test of everything. Starved in even what we have a right to because it is from the Lord, and you know the Lord called you to it, yes even in the very thing you have taken direct from Him, starved! This is His way until we are content to possess the LORD (and not His things) as our sole inheritance and only possession; till we can be in the wilderness with barrenness all around, but we are possessing and knowing the Lord, *HE is our fulness*, even in a desert place.

Not oven souls saved as our possession, no not *our work*. The greatest thing that matters is to have the Lord, to see the Lord, to possess the Lord; and unto this the soul or natural realm is kept in a wilderness. Again and again a crisis has come to us along that principle, and the Lord has had to ask us, is it *some thing* or ME you are after? Am I more to you than anything? The wilderness experience leads to the discovery that it is not always and only HIMSELF. Some demand things of the Lord and He gives them, but He sends leanness into their souls (Ps. cv, 15). We have lived to see this, when we have said, "If the Lord does not do this we are not going further," and He has given it. We have insisted to have what we have wanted and got it, and found we have been after some *thing*, and as with Ishmael it had to be cast out. It's not the work, or ministry, or things developing, even the things of the Lord, but it is the Lord HIMSELF who is to be our goal. And if we insist on something or things, sometimes He says, "you can have it, but to your loss."

This is what the wilderness does, we come to the place where the Lord is our goal and our end. "Seek ye the things that are above" (Col. iii, 1). The Holy Spirit energises in us to do this thing and to bring us to the place where it is for us utterly and only the LORD HIMSELF. Colossians iii ends where Colossians ii, begins (there are no divisions into chapters in the original writings) and that is where you are brought by Jordan, when you are clean over the place of the cutting off from the cravings of your flesh, from knowing after the flesh our *sense, seeings, feelings*, or of having to have

something tangible in our hands as it were. No it has to be all of faith when we can say even in the terrible wilderness "I believe God and He is my portion for ever, for mo henceforth *life is Christ* 'To me to live is Christ.'"

In the wilderness gap a reducing process is going on and a bringing home to these people with a new emphasis their littleness. Even Joshua is not mentioned with any glory but called the minister of Moses. The man himself is taken no noto of, but there are features in the record which stress the nothingness of the instrument, thus showing it all to be of God's grace and energy (Joshua i). And notice there had to be a space between the Ark and the people "about two thousand cubits by measure" (Joshua iii, 4). Yes, there is a big space between the Lord Jesus and us; He is infinitely greater, and He goes into death the dimension of which we do not come into, we should have been swamped in its floods and lost; it is at a distance and on a much less scale we go through, but the shadow of it. If He had not met that in advance of us, we should not be able to go through, but because of what He did, we go through on dry ground (Joshua iii, 17).

Secondly, when they are clean over Jordan, and about to take possession of the land, another thing happens, "the Captain of the Lord's hosts appears" (Joshua v). "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" which of these two? "Nay!" To what does that "Nay" belong? It covers both questions: Nay, I am not with you; Nay, I am not with your adversaries, but as Captain of the Lord's hosts I am come, and if you are in the Hosts of the Lord I am in that. He is in that which stands wholly for God and with a people who are wholly the Lord's and while they in holiness of life and purpose are all wholly for God, in that thing or that people He is Captain, and so we come under His Sovereign Headship, but there must come into this nothing of Man. The Holy Spirit is not going to recognise flesh, and says, "Nay, I am not with a company of people as a people, but am only in and in control of that which is wholly the Lord's."

Thirdly, that which comes up with Jericho is the final proof of all we have said. Jericho represents the key to the seven nations: seven, the Divine perfection of possession by conquest; so the nature of Jericho's conquest is the key for everything, and shows why it was necessary for the Lord to make clear to them that HE was not

with them as men but only so far as they were utterly and wholly for the Lord.

The Perfecting of Faith.

The nature of Jericho's conquest is purely a faith movement, it is not the impulsive hot action of man but the Divine perfection of faith in God related to the perfection of possession: where they are able to say "We can be silly in the eyes of the world and jeered at by it; for the inheritance is ours, we have got it, all we have to do is to believe God and obey Him." If you can go out into the world with that as a settled background, that you have the LORD, and can say, "we have got HIM, HE is the inheritance, we KNOW HIM" you are where the enemy is in defeat before you, and it can be a dry wilderness all around you, but the 'LORD is your portion' and you can say, "I know God" then you have entered His rest; rest and inheritance go together; Christ is GOD'S rest, the rest that remaineth, God's Sabbath.

If we are going out to preach the Gospel, we have got to be where all our questions have ceased, for when we are questioning, "Have I made a mistake? Did God mean me to come this way? Are we wrong?" we are in weakness rendered unfit for fighting, nor can we fight till we have entered into His rest and until we have come there we have not come into the Inheritance, the two are brought together, the one goes with the other. Yes, difficulties existing, and starvation all around, but we can rest there in spite of those things, because *we know* GOD. That is coming into the inheritance, into perfect satisfaction with the Lord Jesus.

What is rest? Christ is the sum total of rest, God's perfect satisfaction and ours too. We shall never be able to possess in the nations our possession in our redemption in Christ Jesus until we come into the inheritance of rest in HIM. That is where Paul was, he had come to that rest in Christ. See him on his way to Rome, how easy it would have been for him in that shipwreck to have questioned everything, as to whether he had been in God's will in appealing to Caesar and so being sent to Rome. How the enemy could have got in with all manner of cruel doubts, suggestions and questions; but Paul was *in fellowship with God*

and saw the marvellous overruling of God through all. He was the only calm one on the ship in the great storm. He took command and gave the orders (Acts xxvi, 22, 36).

The Lord is after getting us *inwardly resting in HIMSELF*. Unrest, anxiety, is ever the ground of defeat. Uncertainty about the Lord brings weakness and defeat; the Lord sets great value on BELIEVING GOD—faith in GOD. In the list of the heroes of faith in Heb. xi, the Holy Spirit records Rahab the harlot, and links her with Abraham in James; she believed God and leapt out of one realm into another, because she believed God and put her faith into action. Rahab comes into the list of Hebrews justified by faith; yes she the one time heathen harlot, now justified by faith, has her place in the House of God. Does this not show forth the GRACE of GOD? Likewise you get the Holy Spirit going outside the covenant people, after the "Man of Ethiopia" (Acts viii); and in Acts ix we have Saul of Tarsus, the Asiatic; Acts x, Cornelius the European. GRACE is a wonderful thing, it links Ethiopia, Asia, Europe together in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; FAITH being the basis for all that God does.

"JESUS the author and perfecter of faith."
(Hob. xii, 2).

T. A.-S.

"RICE CHRISTIANS" (!)

At the annual "Ingathering Service" (a sort of Harvest Festival and Thanksgiving) in a small village church near Madras, the people were bringing their gifts of rice, fruit, vegetables or money. One poor coolie carried up a basket of rice. "How much have you brought?" asked the evangelist. "I do not know," was the reply. "Do not know! What foolishness!" said the evangelist. The man simply answered: "We do not measure what we give to God."

The Heavens do Rule

"The heavens do rule" (Dan. iv 26).

The Gospels were written many years after the things recorded in them had taken place; there had been a considerable lapse of time. It is important to note *why* they were written. The Apostles had been witnessing a long time to the things here recorded, and had brought those things also among men, and had sought to establish the spiritual truth behind those things. Thus having borne witness to those things and brought them amongst men, and having sought to establish the spiritual truth in the hearts of men, they now write by way of confirming that to which they have borne testimony; that is the meaning of having these records.

The great thing is this, GOD had broken into this world in the Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus. He had intervened in the course of the history of this world with one main intention—to assert the fact of His rights, to bring in His prerogatives in this world: these had been disputed, challenged and refused.

Israel had been raised up to be an embodiment of these rights, and Israel as a whole had failed; failed as an instrument through whom God's rights were testified to and maintained on the earth; Israel did not represent in any concrete public way the Divine rights and prerogatives; although there were still those faithful ones here and there, secret for the most part.

That intervention of God to bring in His rights was fourfold:—1, His rights in the matter of Sovereignty, as seen in the Gospel of Matthew; 2, His rights in the matter of Service, as seen in the Gospel of Mark; 3, His rights in the matter of Grace, as seen in the Gospel of Luke; 4, His rights in the matter of Love, as seen in the Gospel of John. These four Gospels represent one breaking-in of God in Christ Jesus. They represent ONE PERSON with one object: to manifest the rights of God and secure those rights for Him; and the Gospels were written to confirm by permanent record in permanent form that to which the Apostles had been bearing witness:—1, Sovereignty—God's rights in sovereignty and the nature of that sovereignty made known; 2, Service—God's rights in service, and what is the nature of the servant and the service; 3-4, Grace and Love—God's rights and prerogatives in these.

These were the things by which they called men to recognise the claims and rights of God and to respond to them; and wherever they went proclaiming this Gospel of His Son, there were added to them those who came to accept the rights of God and so become living witnesses to those rights and prerogatives.

The Gospels bring in four aspects of the rule of the Heavens; Matthew introduces the King and the Kingdom of the Sovereignty; "The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David" (Matt. i; 1 marg. A.R.V.) And it is most striking and worthy of note how Matthew finishes his Gospel "And Jesus came to them . . . saying all authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth, go ye therefore and make disciples of (out of) all nations" (Matt. xxviii 18-20). Matthew's Gospel finishes with "All nations."

Mark's Gospel ends with the whole creation: "He was manifested as they sat at meat . . . and He said unto them, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the *whole creation*" (Mark xvi. 14, 15). Hence servant and service.

Luke—had *the race of men* in view the context clearly shows this. The key word of his gospel is "Son of Man." He is writing to the race of men. "All things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms concerning Me . . . Ye are witnesses of these things." (Luke xxiv. 44-48). Hence the grace of God to all men.

And in John's Gospel, it is not all nations, neither is it the whole creation, nor the race of men, but it is the testimony to *the world*. "God so loved the world that He gave His Son" (John iii. 16). "For God sent the Son . . . that the world might be saved through Him." (17). "This is indeed the Saviour of the world" (iv. 42). Hence the message of love.

Each of these four Gospels have their own great importance, a vital rich and significant importance to the ONE GOSPEL in its fourfold aspect.

For real adequate effectiveness in the preaching of the Gospel the first supreme need is the absolute assurance of the sovereignty of the Lord in government; that is basic. If you have not got that you have not got your foundation; *you must* know that the sovereignty is in the hands of the Lord Jesus *now*. It is the

Gospel of His Son—"For God is my witness whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son" (Rom. i. 9). And to serve in the Gospel of His Son you have got to have full assurance of the sovereignty of that Son in the matter of government. Ho HIMSELF has declared "All authority . . . has been given unto ME" —it is now in the hands of the Lord Jesus.

In Matthew's Gospel the Church is introduced in the New Testament, and introduced in relation to the sovereignty of the heavens;—Jesus asked—"Who do men say that I the Son of Man am? (A.R.V. marg.). Who say ye that I am? . . . Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God! . . . Blessed art thou Simon . . . for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but My Father who is in heaven . . . and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it . . . whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. xvi).

Here are several important and significant features in this first introduction of the Church in the New Testament. The Lord is the Builder of His Church; "I will build my Church" (Cp. Zech. vi). Hell is against this building of the Church but the Sovereign Lord says: "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." This implies that there is conflict. The "binding and loosing in His name on earth and in heaven speaks of sovereign authority, and makes the Church to be the Administrative instrument on earth of that sovereignty as it [the Church] is in touch with the throne in heaven: and this in relation to government."

The vital and all embracing fact is that the Church is built on the *revelation of who the Lord Jesus is*: He asks "Who say ye that I am?" . . . "Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God": ". . . On this rock I will build." The Church is the administrative instrument of that sovereignty.

It is striking that the Church is introduced as the Lord Jesus turns from Caesarea with set purpose towards the Cross, by which He will secure the Church and the consummation of the purpose of God. Link Matt. xvi. with Rev. i, and there we see the Lord Jesus with the sovereignty in His hands, and there it is connected with the Church: why? Because the Church is intended to be the Administrative Instrument of that sovereignty. "I saw in the midst of the candlesticks ONE like unto the

Son of Man . . . when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead, . . . He laid His right hand upon me, saying fear not . . . I am alive for evermore and I have the keys of Death and Hades, write therefore . . . and send to the seven churches." (Rev. i, 13, 17, 18, 19, II).

All the political divisions of this earth come under the hand of Christ, for nations represent the political divisions of this world, and His authoritative commission is "therefore go ye to all the nations." He does not say they will not kill the messenger, or that evil does not exist: but the issue is secured and revealed as already possessed. The book of the Revelation sees it already in being, for Revelations is the issue of Matt. xvi, "I will build My Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on the earth" (Matt.) "Therefore go to the nations, I have all authority, and I send you unto them; Hell shall not prevail against you."

Pass to the Epistle to the Ephesians, and we see that God the Father hath made the Lord Jesus "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 . . . and He *hath* put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body." (Eph. 1, 20). "God being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us . . . made us alive together with Christ . . . and raised us up with Him, and made us sit with Him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii, 4, 6). He is seen far above all authority and every name that is named: now we have to see the link between Him and ourselves in this: it is necessary and vital. We have always got to see the instrument of government—the Church in relation to its spiritual elevation, as seen in the Ephesian letter, "far above all." It is very significant that the rule of the Heavens is so emphasised in Matthew and brought out in various ways: and Matthew is the Gospel that introduces the Church in the New Testament.

Symbols of Spiritual Ascendency.

I.—Mountains.

Mountains have an important place in Matthew's Gospel, and this is significant in the Gospel which introduces the Church: for the Church has got to be seen in spiritual altitude.

out of the world in spirit, and out of the world as to voluntary connection with it: for a true seeing of the Church it must be seen from the standpoint of its altitude, which is—"with Christ far above all," that is how God sees it, and only so is it the instrument of the administration of that sovereignty invested in the Sovereign Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus.

Mountains are mentioned fourteen times in Matthew, and mountains in the Scriptures represent spiritual ascendancy. The Lord is governing things from the mountains in Matthew; we read of Him spending nights of prayer in the mountains. He appoints a place in a mountain to meet them when risen from the dead, and He risen has put His Church in the mountains; "The disciples went . . . unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them . . . and Jesus came to them . . . saying, all authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth . . . go ye therefore . . . lo, I am with you all the day even unto the consummation of the age." (Matt. xxviii, 16-20, A.R.V.)

"And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow into it." (Isa. ii, 2). The Church in its administrative position is always related to the heavens, and the Lord meets the Church and commissions it in the mountains before He passes up in glory. Judgment is also from the mountains: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. xxiii, 37-38).

The end of Matthew's Gospel sees Jerusalem set aside, ignored—"The eleven disciples went into Galilee unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them" (Matt. xxviii, 16). Here the Lord is speaking to them of sovereignty: but sovereignty as related to the nations. Galilee is a question of sovereignty, not grace: it is grace that takes Jerusalem in—"He led them out until over against Bethany, and lifted up His hands and blessed them, and was carried up into Heaven, and they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." (Luke xxiv, 50-53). Only grace takes Jerusalem in, sovereignty sets authority aside as to having its base in Jerusalem, and brings all sovereignty into the Person of the Lord Jesus: and He in a mountain in Galilee away from Jerusalem. It is the authority of the Person of Christ, the

authority is not in Jerusalem but in HIM and HE is universal, not merely local.

Luke begins at Jerusalem, and grace continued in Jerusalem until they slew Stephen, when they committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, and the Lord moved out from Jerusalem to the Gentiles, i.e. the nations: but first He gained a company out of Jerusalem at Pentecost in relation to all nations. Wonderful grace to those who crucified Him. He could have cast them off, but no! He got His representative nucleus out from Jerusalem; here is sovereign grace at work!

Again He did the same thing in a member of Christ, thereby showing who touches a member of the Body of Christ, directly touches Christ HIMSELF: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Saul was persecuting Him in the person of Stephen and sinning against the Holy Ghost; and the Lord moved out from heaven. Grace strove with Saul until he became Paul.

The Lord does not recognise authority as having its seat in Jerusalem, but in dealing with authority to all nations He moves into Galilee. Matthew brings in authority as invested in the Person of our Lord Jesus, then brings in the Church as the administrative instrument of that authority, and lifts it out as of the earth, bringing it into the heavenlies and the universal. A Remnant, an Elect Company, an Overcomer Vessel, a Called out People, or whatever you like to name them, has to be brought into position of spiritual altitude and ascendancy, and so have administrative government in the nations; but it is the *sovereignty in Grace*; in this age it is a *Throne of Grace*. And the sovereign grace of God in Christ Jesus is being proclaimed to the nations and calling out from them a people for His name.

II.—Heavens.

Seventy-five times the "Heavens" are mentioned in Matthew's Gospel, which is the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven—the rule or the sovereignty of the heavens.

The heavens are seen ruling at the birth of the Lord of Glory, the star seen in the East was the one star which ruled the heavens at that time, and was governing things on the earth; bringing Wisdom from the East to worship at the feet of the Lord Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem. The heavens are sovereignly ruling in relation to the coming of the Son, for the "Greater than Solomon" is here: and a new day has dawned for the world with the coming of Jesus Christ. The "East" signifies the dawning of a new day.

Herod tried to break in, but the heavens ruled. That one star was ruling in the heavens and governing things on earth, at that time it was **THE STAR** in the heavens.

III.—Angels.

Take another heavenly aspect of this Gospel: seventeen times "angels" come into this book. Angels are related to the administrative government of God in relation to "heirs of salvation." (Heb. i, 13-14). "An angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it" (Matt. xxviii, 1). One angel in resurrection sovereignty. One angel was quite sufficient for world governments and all hell's force and counsels; Oh! the comfort and assurance this brings; yes, here is seen the rule of the heavens nullifying both hell's might and earth's greatest government, for Rome at that time was the chief world government, so representative of all the governments of the world. It is blessed to know that all sovereignty and authority are in the hands of the Lord Jesus; and angels are an administrative government of God in relation to the "Heirs of Salvation." And in Matthew we have *one* angel in relation to the government of the Lord Jesus in the nations; what strength and power this implies.

In Mark—"And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting . . . arrayed in a white robe"; here we have purity, service in relation to the whole creation on the basis of holiness; an angel in administrative government in the matter of moral character; holiness as to a whole creation.

Luke—"Behold two men stood by them in dazzling apparel . . . why seek ye the Living among the dead?" Two angels, two *men*. Two in the scriptures is the number of witness; testimony in adequate measure to the whole race of men. A full witness and testimony to be borne to the race of mankind concerning the sovereignty and government of the Lord Jesus.

John—"Two angels *sitting* one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." John's gospel has peculiarly the emphasis on Love, "God so loved the world." In love He gave His Son to be the sin-bearer and to carry away the sin of the world. What is there above the LOVE of GOD? These angels are in an attitude of repose in that love of God, for the love of God has triumphed: When you have got a true appreciation of that love of God, then you can sit and are able to rest. It is a

testimony of His love to the world, a reposing in the love of God; and that love as manifested in the sending of His Son and in the raising of Him from the dead. A heavenly intervention in relation to the sovereignty of His love in the nations. The angels are busy in administrative government in relation to the love of God.

All these heavenly elements are related to the Lord Jesus and His church in His sovereignty among the nations; sovereignty into which we have been brought by a living relationship and experience. God's order is never isolated units. He called and sent His disciples forth two by two; two being the testimony to the Church, as a representative number; we have got to recognise "Body" principles and spiritually understand and faithfully observe God's own order; for if you act in independence you take yourself out from under the covering of the Sovereign Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus—"God gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church which is His body" (Eph. i, 22). Throne prayer is a matter of the Church, and it is absolutely necessary as you go out into the nations with the Testimony of the Gospel of the Sovereignty to have the covering of that Throne-prayer in the Body of Christ, if there is to be realised the end of God, the impact of the Sovereignty upon the kingdom of Satan; it has got to be a going forth not as isolated, saved individuals, but in a right spiritual relationship to the Head and members—**ONE BODY**.

In Ezra vii, we have the bringing in of the "House of the Lord," and immediately the link with the heavens; "Whatsoever is commanded by the God of Heaven let it be done exactly for the House of the God of Heaven" (23). It is a marvellous decree of Artaxerxes—"And whosoever will not do the law of thy God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed upon him with all diligence, whether it be unto death or to banishment or to confiscation of his goods or to imprisonment." (26). This is to come upon the man who dares to oppose the building of the House of the Lord. Artaxerxes seems to go to the utmost to hasten and ensure the building of this house for God. Three times it is said, "The God of the Heavens"; sovereignty that cannot be overruled is in operation and related to the building of the House of the Lord, the rule of the heavens is seen here.

In Luke's Gospel you have the same fact of the rule of the Heavens being linked with the House of the Lord—His Church; thus empha-

sis of the Church as the administrative instrument of that sovereignty of the heavens. "The seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name." "And He said unto them . . . behold I have given you authority . . . over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall in any wise hurt you . . ." "In the same hour He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, *Lord of Heaven* and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding and didst reveal them unto babes, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." (Luke x, 17). (Seventy is the number of representation).

And so it is seen to be the "gates of heaven" over against the "gates of hades" and the "counsels of heaven" over against the "counsels of hades": and the House of the Sovereignty over which all the counsels of hell cannot prevail: for the counsels of the Godhead were back in Eternity past unto the securing of that company desiring and determining His will.

The Kingdom of Heaven, or the rule or reign of Heaven, is a sphere in which the sovereignty

of God operates but in which everything not suitable is going to be eliminated, and only that which is according to God will remain: see the parables of the "Dragnet" and the "Tares" (Matt. xiii). The true will be separated from the false and the Lord secures His "called out ones" from the nations of the world; His redeemed ones, His church, the City of God as seen in the Book of Revelation.

"After these things I saw and beheld a great multitude, which no man can number, *out of every nation and tribes and peoples and tongues*, standing before the throne and before the Lamb . . . saying, salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb." (Rev. vii, 9, 10).

"And he carried me away in the 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 . . . clear as crystal." "The bride the wife of the Lamb." (Rev. xx, 9-11).

T. A.-S.

Working in the Scriptures

WE have more than once been asked if we will provide some helpful basis for private study of the Word of God. Amongst ourselves we have found very great value and profit by getting the main ideas of any one section of Scripture and following them through in an exhaustive way. As many are seeking help in this matter, we are herewith giving two papers on John's Gospel. It represents the need for real application, and faithful, persistent devotion to it is well worth while. We shall be glad to help further if friends would like a judgment upon their results and will pay the postage. It would also be a help to us in the matter of guidance for the future if all who take up this study would send us a card saying that they are doing so. Write to Mr. Austin-Sparks, and MARK THE ENVELOPE "BIBLE STUDY."

Assignment No. 1.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN (*Introduction*).

I. Chapter I indicates the contents of the whole book by its words.

There are fourteen such words. What are they? How many times can you find each in the Gospel?

II. In the four appearances of the living creatures of the Cherubim, the character of each of the four Gospels is indicated. Which of these relates to John, and why? See Ezekiel i, 10. Rev. iv, 7.

III. John was the last of the Apostolic writers and his Gospel contains the last revelation and emphasis. In reading this Gospel this fact has a very special significance. What would you suggest is the significance?

IV. When you get past the prologue of Chapter I, the subsequent narrative is based upon the fundamental opposition of (a) two conditions of heart: (b) two sets of people. What are they?

V. The two main divisions of the Gospel are:
1. Christ's revelation of Himself to the world;
2. Christ's revelation of Himself to His disciples.

Can you divide between these as to where the one ends and the other begins?

NOTE: In dealing with No. 1, you will find it specially helpful to have fourteen cross sections to your note-book, and twenty-one down sections. The first for each word and the

second for each chapter, so that you can see at a glance how many occurrences in each chapter.

Assignment No. 2.

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

The great subject of this "Gospel" is
THE GLORIES OF THE SON OF GOD.

- I. What is the Glory which characterises each chapter?
- II. What effect is the apprehension of each Glory meant to have upon the believer?
- III. What word amongst the most important occurs most frequently? What are the implications of this prominence as to the entire "Gospel"?
- IV. Can you arrange the following themes:—
Light. Life. Love.
giving a threefold revelation by the Light, five connections of the Life, and seven workings of Love.
(Christ as the Light, Life, Love).

A MISSIONARY'S TESTIMONY

We insert this testimony, not to make anything of "Honor Oak," but because it emphasises what it means when the Lord Jesus has the fullest place.
—ED.

As a missionary on my first furlough, to whom the Lord has given two months here at the 'Guest House' at the Fellowship Centre for a time of waiting upon Him, there is a deep desire in my heart to bear witness to what the Lord has made this time mean. This testimony has not been asked for but is quite a spontaneous "overflow" in the Lord. David, who wrote Ps. 45, 1, (A.R.V.) would, I am sure, readily understand.

In "the abundance of peace and truth" in the Lord Jesus which God has revealed these past weeks, three verses linked together stand out clearly and sum up my testimony at this time. They are these three: firstly, emphasised to my heart separately but now burned there as one—"and in the midst of the Lamp stands one like unto a Son of Man . . . girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle" (breasts—love; girdle—strength). "I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire." "He showed me the City . . . the City was pure gold, like unto transparent glass.—Rev. i, 13; iii, 18; 21, 10, 18 (A.R.V.)

I praise God for a new, fuller vision of our Lord Jesus, our Sovereign Lord, as the One with

a strong, *strong* love for that which is *wholly* according to God—a new revelation of the object of that love—even that ultimate object—"the city"—"the House of God"—"God's people"—"God's dwelling place." "Pure gold, like unto transparent glass." I do not know how gold can be transparent, but I do know it must take a special kind of gold to represent what God is after—pure gold—yea, *pure* gold—that which is every whit according to God. But "like unto transparent glass" that the glory of the Lord may shine forth, for Christ and only Christ is *WHOLLY* according to God. Praise overflows that this fresh unveiling of the Lord Jesus, this new *value* set upon the Lord in my spirit, and upon that pure gold has given me a new "glorying" in the means to the end—the Cross—the precious Blood of the Lamb in the midst of the Throne. "I counsel thee to buy of Me, gold, refined by fire!" Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." I understand, more fully now, that realizing the worth of his Lord, the worth of that pure gold—no cost was too great and Paul *gloried* that in God's infinite, matchless grace, the way of the cross had been provided.

God never gives a new vision of His Son without a new vision of wondrous grace of God and so He has written right across these verses upon my heart—Ps. cxxxviii, 8—"The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me"—not individual "me," detached "me," but "me" as a member which He has set in the Body as it pleased Him"—as a member related and joined to the other members because joined with them *to the Head*, ONE Spirit—ONE Life. Is it not, "Christ, who is our Life, ONE LIFE?"

So, God willing, I return to Africa after this furlough, with a *new* vision, a *new* impetus, a *new* EVERYTHING, for I return with a *new* REALITY OF WHO THE LORD IS. The Lord, *who* REIGNETH, beholds His inheritance in the nations—May He have more full possession, yea, complete possession of His rights, His inheritance in me, in *all* of His "sent ones" that through us He may take out of the nations a people for His name, and build them up together with us, for a "habitation of God in the Spirit," that He, our Precious Lord, may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied—even according to the Eternal Purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus, our LORD.

I. R.

Christ our Life

(Col. iii. 4.)

ONE of the main objects of the Holy Spirit with the children of God is to get them spiritually and experimentally into Christ as risen and exalted, and into the risen and exalted life of Christ.

The present phase of things is particularly marked by a cutting off from things, men, and movements, with a view to utter attachment to the Lord Jesus Himself. Antichrist will soon be made manifest, and will probably come along the line of a great united world-movement of human improvement and moral and social uplift under the name of "Christianity."

Multitudes will be drawn away after him, and to refuse to be included in *such* a movement will bring a stigma and ostracism upon those who so refuse. The Lord is preparing for Antichrist by seeking to make the Lord Jesus more completely the life of His own than has been their experience.

Work, enterprises, activities, movements, churches, societies, teachings, people, &c., have been and are the life of many. They must have the stimulus of a programme, a scheme, a place to occupy.

Teaching—as such—may bring to confusion and provide no living way through. Work may lead to exhaustion and disappointment. Movements may become marked by merely human features and be spheres of dissension.

Things—all of them—will disappoint sooner or later, but the Lord abideth and never fails. The measure of attachment to the Lord can often be the measure of attachment to some interest, either a person, or persons, of place, or movement, or piece of work, and when these

break down faith in the Lord is shaken, and a dark period of eclipse of faith is passed through.

What we *must* learn supremely is to attach everything to the Lord Himself, and to come to a full appreciation of Him. The Lord must be life for the spirit to make it strong; not interests and merely objective concerns. Otherwise we shall only stand up strongly when there is the appeal of some outward occasion, crisis or emergency.

The Lord must be life for our minds so that truth is not for us either abstract or merely true things, but life and power.

The Lord must be the life of our bodies. Natural weakness or strength is not the criterion. Healing as a "truth" or as something in itself can become legal bondage and a "bugbear." It is the Lord Himself our life, whether to remain cumbered about with infirmities or to be set free—whichever will serve most His glory. It is not so much the natural condition as the transcendence and accomplishment of the Lord.

In the days of terrific pressure which are now upon the Lord's people everywhere; days when the enemy takes less "off-time" than ever; days when it is more perilous than ever for believers to take "off-time," there is only one thing adequate—it is that the Lord should be known in absoluteness as our life—our very life.

The exhortation of Barnabas to the converts at Antioch may be a very timely and salutary word for us at this time: "He exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."—Acts xi. 23.

T. A.-S.

WHITSUN CONFERENCE

HONOR OAK

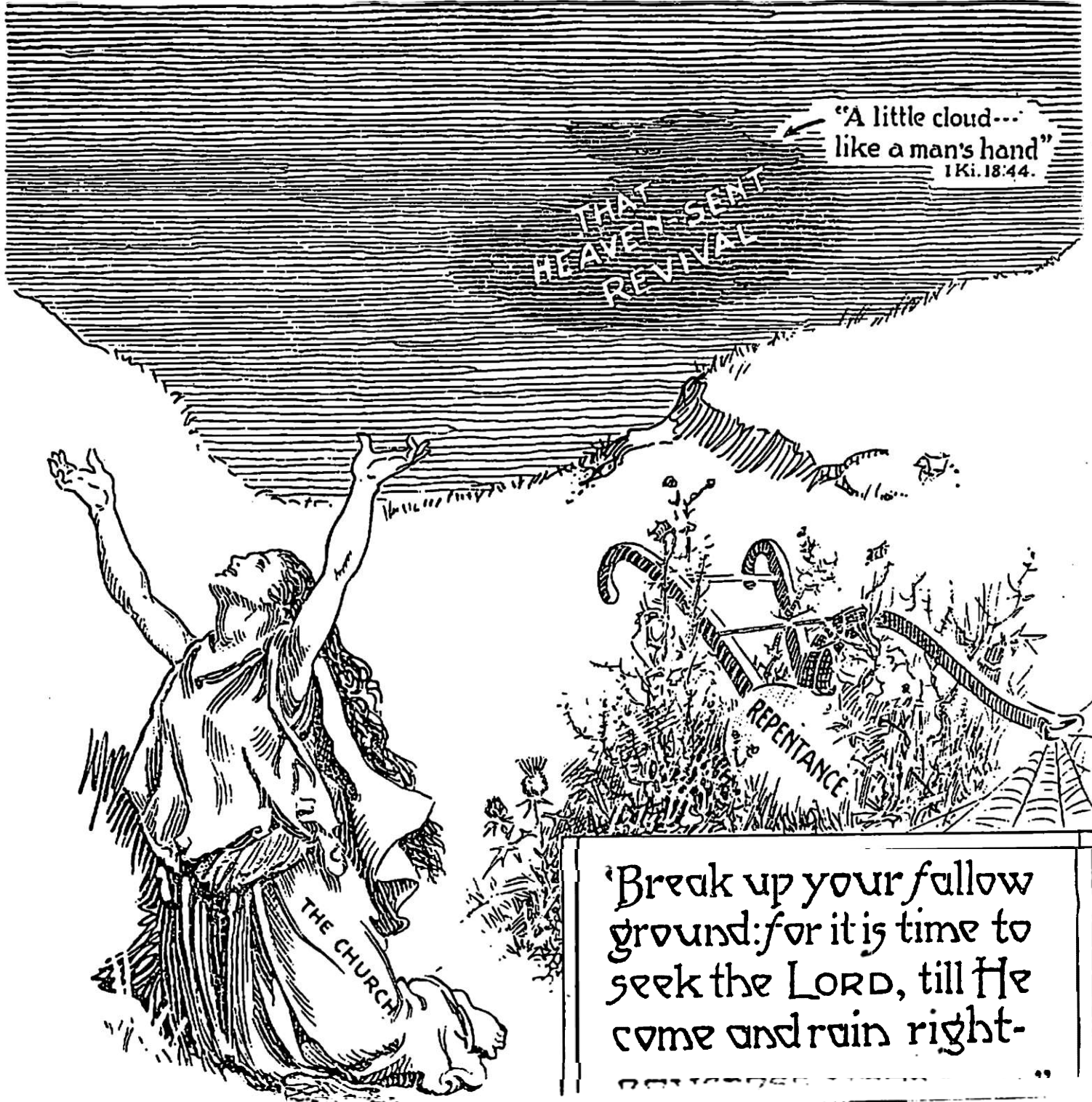
Saturday, Sunday, Monday, May 23, 24, 25.

A Witness and a Testimon

MAY—JUNE, 1931

VOL. 9. No. 3

When the church gets really in earnest about this drought it will cease



'Break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till He come and rain right-

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

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship
SUNDAYS at 10.30 A.M. (Lord's Table), 11.15 A.M., 3 P.M. (Young People), 6.30 P.M.
MONDAYS at 7.30 P.M. TUESDAYS at 8 P.M. (Young People).
WEDNESDAYS at 8 P.M. SATURDAYS at 7.30 P.M.

The Guest House is open to receive guests for the period of the conferences or at other times as the Lord leads.

Telegrams : "Syndesmos, Forest, London."

Telephone : Sydenham 5216.

Cables : "Syndesmos, London."

Editorial communications with regard to this paper should be addressed to Mr. Austin-Sparks.

Forthcoming Ministries (GOD WILLING).

On THURSDAY, JUNE 18, our CARAVAN sets forth for ministry in various parts of the country. Four or five of our brethren will form the party under the leadership of Brother HERBERT JUSTIN, in the Lord. They expect to commence with a week's Tent Meetings at RUFFORTH, near York, on SATURDAY, 20th.

PRAY FOR THEM.

As is known, Mr. SPARKS and Mr. SPEEDY expect to leave for U.S.A. on SATURDAY, JUNE 20.

(See page 76.)

Honor Oak July Conference

on the 4th and 5th.

August Conference,

1st, 2nd and 3rd.

"Witness and Testimony" Literature

By T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

- 'The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.' Price 9d. Postage 1½d.
- 'In Christ.' Price 6d.
- 'The Release of the Lord.' Price 6d.
- 'The Inner Man of the Heart.' Price 3d.
- 'The Watchword of The Son of Man.' 3d.
- 'Vision and Vocation.' Price 2d.
- 'The Prisoner of the Lord.' Price 2d.
- 'The Holy Spirit and The Cross, The Church and The Coming Again of the Lord Jesus.' 2d.
- 'The Cross and the deliverance of the Mind.' Price 2d.
- 'The Candlestick all of Gold.' Price 1d.
- 'Christ our Life.' 6d. per dozen.

Diagrams.

1. The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.
 2. The Cross and our Salvation.
 3. The Attitude of the Crucified Ones Toward Each Other.
 4. The Cross and the New Creation.
 5. The Cross and the New Man.
 6. The Cross and the Promise of the Father.
 7. 'In Christ Jesus.'
 8. The Cross in the Life, Work and Teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ (No. 1),
 9. The Cross in the Life, Work and Teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ (No. 2).
- 1d. each, or 9d. per dozen.

By P. W. FAUNCH.

'Deliverance from Sin.' Price ½d.
Obtainable from the "Witness and Testimony"
Bookroom,
13 Honor Oak Road, London, S.E.23

Report of Slavanka Holiday Conference

It is with a very deep sense of indebtedness to the Lord that we are now beginning to look back upon this Holiday Conference. Every bit of the accommodation was filled and the company was most representative. There were friends present representing Armenia, Africa, Burma, United States, South America, Egypt, Madagascar, Switzerland, France, Poland, Russia, Germany, China, and a number from Ireland, Scotland and this country. As is usual when there are great things in view for the Lord, we very quickly entered into a sense of spiritual conflict, but we have once again lived to see that this was but the withstanding of the enemy, for it has proved to be a time of great spiritual strength, and there have been many secret as well as manifest issues from the Lord's dealings with those gathered. So far as the holiday side of things was concerned, the weather did not favour a great deal of out-of-door life, but this brought us all closer together and maintained us in that spiritual touch which

made the Conference all the more solid. Our hearts are greatly encouraged as we look back to the day when we felt definitely led to have this Conference, and now that it is past, more than our highest expectations have been reached, and any fear by reason of the large responsibility which we may have had, has proved altogether unnecessary. We do thank God for "Slavanka." The atmosphere is full of the presence of the Lord and it is a place well prepared by the life of prayer on the part of those who are in charge of it. After the conclusion of the Conference, while many went their various ways, quite a good company returned to Honor Oak, and the following week-end was almost itself like another Conference. The presence of so many friends from abroad made possible extra gatherings and many of the fruits of the "Slavanka" Conference were gathered in definite form. So again we have to say of our wonderful Lord "HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL."

S E C O N D H O L I D A Y C O N F E R E N C E

BOGNOR REGIS

Saturday, JULY 11 to Saturday, JULY 18.

All particulars from MR. G. PATERSON, 13 Honor Oak Road, Forest Hill, London, S.E.23. Accommodation should be booked as early as possible

The God of Bethel

(Continued)

In our contemplation of the great eternal purpose of God to dwell with men, we have latterly been taking account of what is called in the prophecy of Ezekiel "The Law of the House," or what the Psalmist refers to when he says, "Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever." We have seen the introduction of the house of God with Jacob and noted that from that introduction in Genesis xxviii., to his return to Bethel in chapter xxxv., there had taken place twenty years of discipline in order to make him a fit subject for Bethel, the house of God. In this latter chapter where the Lord commands him to arise and go up to Bethel and *dwell* there, we have seen that he had come to realise that the house of God demands the putting away of everything not in accordance with the absolute holiness and the undivided rights of God; so that he instantly commanded his household to put away the foreign gods that were among them. These represented idolatry, and idolatry is purely and simply worship according to man's thoughts and not according to God's truth. Thus we see that a relationship to the house of God must be upon God's basis and not man's thoughts. God never brings His house down to us, we have to be brought up to it. Very often there elapses a long period between our introduction to the truth of the house of God, and our coming to dwell experimentally and with understanding in it. During that period, as with Jacob, the flesh has to be crippled, a new and spiritual name, which implies a spiritual nature, has to be received. We note that on his way to the house of God it says that a *man* met him and wrestled with him; angels had met him on the way, but it was a *man* that wrestled with him. If we rightly understand the significance of this, it is God in Christ, a man wholly governed by the Spirit who challenges man in the flesh and proves how weak he is at best in the strength of the flesh, and how necessary it is for that flesh to be broken and its strength withered, and how that man until his name, which is his nature, is changed cannot dwell at Bethel. We can never be in the house of God to abide, in the flesh. This can only be as we are in the Spirit. "They that are after the flesh cannot please God."

At the time of our new birth we receive everything in germ. The fulness of God's purpose is all there in truth from the beginning, but it is often not until years afterward that we come to realise what was contained in the germ. So many there are who think that such revelations as the house of God, are extra or different truths from the truth of salvation, but in reality this is that which God had in view from the very beginning, and herein is the necessity for going on unto full growth, or completeness.

Jacob also teaches us that there is a peril of, even after receiving the Spirit, reverting to carnal methods or earthly connections. This is seen in the period between Genesis xxxii. and xxxv. The New Testament is not without examples of this, but it is always fraught with the most perilous elements.

When Jacob eventually reaches Bethel he builds an altar and pours out a drink offering to speak of that which is into God's pleasure and satisfaction. He has now come to delight himself in the Lord and this as the outcome of the Lord's taking pleasure in him though unworthy he had been. By this drink offering he is declaring himself wholly for the Lord. In chapter xxviii., while Jacob received a revelation of the house of God, he was really ahead of his spiritual state; now in chapter xxxv. he has come abreast of the revelation and it is no longer a strenuous obligation, it is a matter of spiritual delight and satisfaction. He has moved from the place where his own interests were mainly in view, to the place where God's interests are supreme. It is the difference between having light and having life.

Second Phase :

The House as a heavenly revelation.

We now pass to a further development of the great truth of the house of God. The scripture is now in the book of Exodus, chapters xxxii., xxxiii. and xl. That which is supremely before us here is not so much the condition of those who are associated with the house of God, as it is the necessity for things being constituted wholly according to the mind of God, as under His most particular direction. Glancing back for a moment to Exodus, chapter xv.

it is important and interesting to note that in the song of Moses and Miriam on the resurrection side of the Red Sea, with the power of Egypt broken, and the enemy overwhelmed in judgment, the object of Israel's deliverance is brought into view thus—"Thou wilt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Jehovah, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established" (verse 17). Thus we see that the house of God is the ultimate object for which the people of God are delivered out of the authority of darkness. So the individual and corporate dwelling place of the Lord is linked with salvation as its very purpose. When we come to chapter xxv., we find that the Lord takes the initiative in this matter, saying "Let them make me a Sanctuary," and in this connection, the whole pattern to the most remote detail is produced by His own mind; man's wisdom or judgment have no place whatever in it. That is a thought which it would be well to carry right through into our present-day conception of the Church, the house of God. It seems clear that there was a lapse of time between the giving of the instructions and the actual carrying of them out. In that period we have the events of chapters xxxii. and xxxiii. in which there is the lapse on the part of the people and the making of the golden calf by Aaron. Here idolatry is introduced once more and, as we have seen, it is not a matter of departure from Jehovah altogether, but the constituting of the worship of God according to man's own ideas. It is bringing God down to a level which is not worthy of Him and which is more the creature than the Creator. Let us remember that this is the nature of idolatry; not that a Supreme God is ruled out but that He is reduced to the ideas of man.

The House of God and the Judgment of Sin.

This led to a very severe course with the people on the part of Moses as we see in the narrative; judgment and destruction followed and Moses took and placed outside of the camp the Tent of meeting; evidently not the one referred to in chapter xxxii, but a temporary one, and it would seem quite clear that he had spiritual understanding as to the meaning of the dwelling place of God, namely, that it is a place altogether separate from sin and darkness and idolatry and has its being upon the very basis of the judgment of sin.

It is a thing of which to take notice, that wherever we have the house of God coming into view, we also always have the forces of evil coming out. It is here in Exodus, the adversary breaks in amongst God's people with idolatry to capture the worship of God for himself, and to frustrate the completing of that habitation of God. It is most clearly seen when we come to the letter to the Ephesians, where the main subject is "the Church which is His Body" and as against this the Principalities and Powers are seen to be in active operation. One of his most successful methods of destroying the true house of God, is that of constituting worship according to man's thoughts instead of according to God's revelation, and the bringing in of the house of God in the book of Exodus as we have noted, particularly relates to things being made according to the pattern as shown in the Mount. To deal with this false thing which has broken in, there needs to be that spiritual priestly energy as displayed by Moses and the sons of Levi in taking the sword, judging this idolatry without regard for sentiment or natural relationship. "The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God" is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow" (Hebrews iv. 12).

We further note that when on the basis of this complete judgment of sin the Tent of meeting was pitched outside of the camp where worship had been constituted according to man's thoughts, then the Lord talked with Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend. Thus fellowship, communion, revelation are bound up with complete separation from all that is of man, even though it be religious. When we come to the New Testament and to the place where the Church comes actually into being, we find a company spiritually separated from the religious order of the day, as it were outside the camp, and there the Lord manifested His presence, constituted them the first members of His spiritual house, and gathered to them a company of the saved who had come under the power of the sword, the Word, piercing, cutting, and leading to repentance. It is in this sense that the Church is the Ecclesia or "called out" company, partaking of the nature of Him Who was "Holy, harmless and separate from sinners."

Thus it is that the "true habitation of God through the Spirit," "The Church which is His Body," "The house of God" is that which

comes to be known by the Believer, not along the line of historic conception, or traditional acceptance, or even doctrinal presentation, but by revelation to the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is essentially a heavenly thing; a spiritual thing. The Apostle Paul had to be caught up into the third heaven to be shown the true nature of the Church, and when seeking to speak of that revelation to saints here on earth, he realised the necessity and prayed earnestly for them that they might be given "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of their hearts being enlightened." The dimensions which he goes on to mention "the breadth and length and

height and depth" are the dimensions of that ultimate dwelling-place of God when the new Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven and it is said "the tabernacle of God is with men." This is Christ in His fulness as corporately manifested; in other words, the Church of the living God. Our need to-day is for a fresh revelation of what the house of God is according to God's mind and not according to man's construction. We have said that, in that which is of God man's judgment and wisdom have no place, everything is by the Holy Spirit.

T. A.-S.

(To be continued.)

The Time in which we Live

A Message as Spoken

Ezra viii.

THE ground upon which we stand is very much more positive at this present time than even the Old Testament saints enjoyed, for we look back to Calvary's triumphant accomplishment. Yet the Old Testament position and condition is also a true picture of our own time and condition spiritually; I am thinking in terms of books and not of verses.

We want to see what the books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther have to say to us. I feel convinced that we are living in a time very truly represented by these books, and in that sense we are living in Bible times, so that these books are very up to date, and have their abiding meaning for our time.

I cannot think the Lord would have given us just a list of books of history about things which happened hundreds of years ago with no real value for us. His word says, " whatsoever things were written afore time were written for our learning " (Rom. xv. 4), so we see God meant them to say something to us.

Spiritual Captivity.

Let us see what these books represent and how they touch our time. There are common factors about these books. Firstly, their one general historic background—the people of God in captivity in Chaldea resultant from a spiritual breakdown.

Without going into what Babylon and Chaldea may mean, we take it as a settled fact that,

when God's testimony breaks down in His people, a state of spiritual captivity ensues, and they are spiritually outside of the place where the testimony of God has its place.

They were in an earth order of things in regard to worship, outwardly ordered by men, but at the back of it all was the hand of Satan as the god of this age; Babylon represents a great deal more on the positive side as to the dominion of a man-constituted religious order, or an earthly order of things, in the realm of worship governed by the god of this age through man; but in the midst of those conditions were those who still stood for the Lord and represented something not compromising with those conditions; they were dissatisfied and inwardly revolting against them.

Heart Burden.

These four books represent that something; and in every case you find the state of the vessel mentioned as being under a very great burden concerning the Lord's testimony, His interests, His Name, and His people for that Name. That is the second common factor.

I am going to stay here awhile, for it is *here* that ministry begins.

On the whole to-day the Lord's full thought and conception is not the general thing among His people. The testimony of the Lord has largely broken down, and the great multitude called by His Name are governed and manipulated and controlled by something that is

religiously of the earth and not of the heavens, of man and not of the Holy Ghost ; and there needs to be seen the impossibility of accepting that state of things.

It is one thing to recognise that and quite another thing to be in relation with the Lord's movement to recover for Himself that which is according to His mind.

One can be occupied all the time with the bad state of things, bemoan it, make people feel miserable, yet never get anywhere. That is not sufficient ; I expect there were plenty in Chaldea who bemoaned things and spoke of "the good old days !" It is quite easy to do that and in a sense be religious malcontents ; but that is not being active in the Lord's recovery movement. The Lord would act in relation to this thing, and He is acting.

Ezra opens with the sovereign activity of God (ch. i. 1) . God acts not only from the outside, not only sovereignly, but there is something that precedes it, that makes possible His activity, that brings in the sovereignty of God.

All those who represent His vessel for dealing with the situation were men who had a great burden about the situation, and they are no use to God in a situation like that unless in the burden of it.

We see Ezra latterly spreading himself out before God in such a way that the people gather round to see him, and when they see his desperate concern over the state of things, they were so tremendously moved that no sooner had he finished praying than they come to him and seek to have things put right. So we see Ezra away in Jerusalem with a great burden for the Lord's testimony.

Nehemiah away in Babylon is seen to have a similar burden. For, having asked Hanani and his friends as to their welfare in Jerusalem, and hearing from them a report that was not good, this so burdened him that his countenance became changed, and he, knowing his life was at stake, went before the king with a sad face (for it was criminal to go before the king with a sad countenance), yet he could not help himself for sorrow of heart over the Lord's interests and testimony, concerning the people called by His Name.

Esther, another chosen vessel unto the Lord, is likewise seen taking her life in her hands for the life of her people, these people, these whose life represents God's interests and testimony in the earth. This is the way God would

have us take on His concern for His interests in the earth.

Daniel is also a man with a burden, praying three times a day, and then for three whole weeks ; and what prayer it is, moving heaven and earth ! He is a man with a burden ; and that is where real ministry begins. God must have a vessel, an instrument brought into such sympathetic fellowship with Him, that the conditions around of breakdown and failure become acute suffering, an agony.

Paul knew something of that "suffering for His Body's sake" ; "filling up that which was lacking of the sufferings of Christ." We must face that ! The thing that is going to count for God is the sharing in His travail.

There is all the romance of Christian work, but that is more glamour ; all the enthusiasm and interest of organised Christian activity—all that ; but it is not what we are before men in this matter, but what we are before God in the secret place, having heart concern for the Lord's testimony. Have you a burden, a passion, is it a heartbreak to you the breakdown in the Lord's testimony in the earth among those upon whom His Name is called ? We shall never get anywhere till in measure His travail is entered into by us. Ministry in its real abiding eternal value will depend upon the measure in which the travail is entered into by us. This is a day for travail ; whether it be a travail for unsaved or for the Lord's people ; every true spiritual activity is born out of travail, and those who have been most used of God in every time have been men and women who had this travail in their soul, in their secret life with God. Have you got it ? Perhaps you say no. Then ask the Lord to bring you into His concern, stretch yourself out before God to be brought into His burden for the time in which you live. That is necessary.

And so all this represents those who carry on their hearts a burden which leads them to a point where *their* interests have become quite secondary, and they take their life in their hand and hold everything in relation to the Lord's own interest and His testimony, willing to let all go for God. This becomes a *heart* burden to be carried all the time, not merely a ministry burden. Oh ! that the Lord would put this burden within us, so that where we are we cannot be slack. This is necessary to any real ministry. Not that we are ever to give the impression of being unhappy. There was a

confidence and faith which created in these servants of God the strange, but very true paradox—"Sorrowing, yet always rejoicing."

Beloved, that will be one of the emancipating factors in any life. The way of deliverance from oneself and from introspection is to get a share in the Lord's burden. If one might speak of their own experience—but for the situation as it is and the crying need and the desperate concern that the need should be met, one could any day be bound up in personal problems. Deliverance from oneself comes along the line of being concerned for the Lord's interests. You *can* become tied up with your own spiritual problems, and the way out is to have the burden of all God's people on your heart. It is that that creates ministry, that means strength, that means praying. It is an emancipating thing to have the Lord's burden. Have you got it, or are you dabbling with things, toying with pebbles on the beach instead of being out in the deep with God in His big thing? Are you just interested, or desperately concerned; just having a nice pleasant time or really carrying God's need in His people on your heart? Are you there at all?

The Lord must have an instrument, a Daniel instrument, whether personal or collective, that moves out towards God for His testimony. He must have a Nehemiah with a heartache over the people because of the breakdown of the testimony. He must have an Ezra who is not for a moment compromising with anything contrary to the mind of God. And the Esther instrument who flings fear to the winds, and goes taking life in hand to besiege the throne for the life of her people, for the deliverance of the people of God from the threat of the enemy. Oh! What those prayers wrought! And, beloved, the burden of the Lord has *got* to come on our heart in like manner if we are to be effective instruments for the Lord in his End-time activities. We have got to be exercised in a very deep way with the interests of God. We must hold back nothing that will count for the Lord and His interests. You would be surprised how the Lord would come through if you gave Him a chance.

The whole thing begins with a recognition of the need and the burden of those things upon our hearts. When we are really in it by the urge of the Holy Spirit, the common features found in these Old Testament instruments will be found *incorrupt in us*; and we shall be found an abandoned people unto

this ONE THING—the Lord's burden and heart concern for His testimony in His people.

Second Factor: The Opposition of the Enemy.

Then when you get into it you find you are in a realm of opposition, and that you are really in a battle. That is another common feature in these books, everyone of them represents a situation of terrific opposition and antagonism, all combining to stop the work. Ezra—"Now our enemies." And you are not far in Esther before you find you are in a realm of conflict. And what about Daniel? The den of lions was for praying!

Now this is a style to be cleared at once. If we are going to stand with God, for that which wholly represents His mind, we have got to meet the most fierce antagonism, conflict and pressure from every quarter; there is going to be no method overlooked by the enemy for frustrating the end in view. Why so much antagonism? Why so much pressure? Each time when something is in view which is to count for God in relation to His End-time Purpose, there it is, you meet it all the time.

I want to know where the Devil gets his information from, he finds out when I have got a message from God that is going to count, and we meet this pressure from within and without when we are in the thing that is counting for God. When it comes you must recognise that it is related to something which is to count for God. It will come through people, and if we blame the people and focus our attention on them we have missed the point; and we begin to fight people, and all the time it is something deeper than that. "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies." (Eph. vi, 12 A.R.V.)

People get cross with one another, and that gets on top of us, and we begin to direct our attention to them, and we get out with them and there is a situation and a mess, and we see afterwards how silly we are in allowing the Devil to swing us off into a human track when it is a spiritual issue. And it has not really been the fault of persons, or just inconsequential happenings, there has been a spiritual issue at stake, and all these other things were used of and brought about by the enemy to occupy us with the lesser, and so blind us to the real issue, thus keeping us out of prayer, and so

standing with the Lord for His rights which were at some point or other being challenged.

It is the realm of unceasing conflict, and we have, it would seem, come into that part of the age when the enemy takes no rest and we find we can take no off-times. *Anything you do must be done deliberately with God, and you must never act out of, or apart from God*; that exposed movement has been watched for by the enemy, and you have to pay for it.

The Fourfold Ministry.

Recognise the fourfold aspect of ministry of these instruments used of God. Daniel is the first to start this thing in Babylon, and it is interesting and significant that the thing was started in prayer. Daniel took up the testimony of God in Babylon in prayer. God reacted through an instrument of prayer. Daniel's outlook is towards Jerusalem: he is praying that God would recover that which He has lost. His concern is for the place of the Name, and he gets through in prayer.

"From the first day that thou didst set thy heart to understand and to humble thyself before God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words sake; but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days" (Daniel x. 12). Through Daniel's praying hell's forces had been stirred to their depths, even to the withstanding of one of the highest archangels of Heaven: "Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me."

Do you notice Esther comes next, and it is as if the Devil said: "Daniel has prayed to get a people out and back to Jerusalem; I am going to make it impossible for them to get back," and so we see him through wicked Haman seeking to wipe out all the Jews, determined to have no remnant to go back.

To-day the Enemy is out to prevent a Remnant getting out to God, by bringing death, pressure from all quarters in such force as to almost paralyse them. God sovereignly overrules and the devices of Haman are brought to naught.

Then Ezra takes up the testimony, and his concern is for the House of God at Jerusalem, and Ezra with the Remnant goes back and builds the House and sets up the Altar.

Nehemiah comes in finally—his concern is for the walls and gates of Jerusalem. He has respect for that marking off in a clear definition of what is all of God and what is not of God. He is zealous for the safeguarding of the testi-

mony of God: see his jealous watch over the Sabbath Day; "I contended...and said...ye do profane the Sabbath Day...I testified against them...if ye do so again I will lay hands on you" (Neh. xiii. 15-21). The Sabbath is that great testimony to the completeness of God's works. The walls speak of the mark where what is not of God ends; there is a distinct bounding, and beyond this things are not of God, they have no place here, we shut them out. The walls represent no mixture, no overlapping, and a clear definition. That is Nehemiah.

God's Roll of Honour.

Now we will turn to Ezra viii. and see what its value is to us.

We find a number of names are mentioned: "The names of them that went up with me from Babylon." Here you have a record of those who did absolutely separate themselves to go through with God; we have Holy Writ here, and it is as if the Holy Ghost is taking the pen and putting down the names of men who took responsibility in the testimony of God, and He is setting down every name of the wholly devoted company who went right through with God; for the Holy Ghost would have made comment, if anyone had stopped on the way. No, these left the comparative ease and comforts of Babylon for a long and difficult journey, fraught with many dangers, and came back to a ruined city.

There is hard work, a certain amount of suffering, opposition and so on, but they are willing to pay the cost and go through; and these are the ones whose names are severally recorded with such care, and their names will stand as long as the Bible stands: they are, "Called, chosen and faithful" wholly for God, whatever the cost.

It is fine that God should put down every name of those men who are going through. Are we going through with God? Or are we counting the cost and drawing out?

And then I notice that the next thing in the chapter is, "None of the sons of Levi were found there" (Ezra viii. 15).

Why was this? The Levites were those who only had an inheritance in God; they had no inheritance in the land (Joshua xiv. 4, 5). To go to a land of desolation in which in any case they had no inheritance does not look very promising and they were getting more in Babylon than they could get there, and so the Levites could not see how they were going

to get their bread and butter ; and they know they had no right to enter into the land realm of things ; and because they had no inheritance in the land but to trust the Lord, they stayed in Babylon. Those who had to come out and have their portion only in God and don't see where " on earth " it is coming from were miserably few, no Levites came out !

And is it not the same in the ministry of the Word, when you come out of a system where you are sure of your supply ? It is a test of faith to have a secured position in the world of religion and to come out and have your portion only in God, and nothing in the world ; and not many we find can stand up to that. So we find no Lovite in that record of names.

Giving God a Chance.

The next thing is, Ezra proclaimed a fast (23-30). What does this represent, spiritually ? Just this—the Lord seeing you through ! That is all ; Oh, yes, but it is a test of faith again, for it is a journey of *faith*. Can the Lord see us through, had we better not ask the king ? In other words, have a bazaar or something, make an appeal for help ; make sure of a safe conduct through—that is what it means ; *but* we have taken our stand that we can go through without the resources of the world, we can count on GOD, HE will see us through ; *that* is the testimony, beloved,—GOD SEEING US THROUGH—that is our safe conduct, successful and triumphant conduct. Put in Psalms 121—132 after Ezra viii, 21 ; notice there is a going up in them all the time, and a strong note of trust and victory ; some have thought they were sung on this journey. They express that utter confidence in GOD " As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people." That is something better than all the horsemen and horses of this world. The Lord can see you through. Trust HIM ; don't go down to Egypt or to the King of Babylon for help ; give the Lord a chance for maintaining his own testimony. And so they went on this journey of faith and the Lord vindicated their confidence.

Ezra viii, 23-30. Deals with the deposit ; the holy free-will offering to the Lord ; " Watch ye, and keep them until ye weigh them before the chiefs of the priests and the princes of the father's houses at Jerusalem." (29). It is blessed to regard this as the deposit which the Lord entrusts to us at the beginning. It is that of which the Apostle writes to Timothy—

" Guard the deposit which was committed unto thee." (1 Tim. vi, 20). The Lord has committed to the vessel for His testimony those things which represent the fulness of His salvation. You have the brass, the silver and the gold ; we know what it means, and all this is the deposit, these sacred things of " the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Those great factors of salvation—Righteousness—Redemption—and Sanctification.

Brass: you meet immediately you come within the Court—the Brazen Altar—with all its wonderful meaning of the wholly and fully consecrated body of the Lord Jesus to the will of God, " by which will we are sanctified "—the Whole Burnt Offering which avails for our sanctification (Heb. x, 10). The silver of our Redemption ; and the gold of that conformity to the Divine Image. That is the deposit of the faith. Jude urges the believers to whom he writes that they contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints ; that is the deposit entrusted to us at the beginning and to be handed up complete at the end of the journey. Paul could say at the end of his life, " I have kept the faith," and he handed it back at the end in the House of God complete.

It represents the ministry concerning the House of God, the whole testimony, the full Gospel. The full faith once for all delivered to the saints is entrusted to us ; and it has to be *enshrined within* the House of God, safe guarded on the journey, and at last presented to the Lord without mixture, the clear testimony ; not an iota dropped, but handed back complete.

The Lord give us grace and strength to guard our trust and present it to Him saying, we have lost nothing, we have kept the faith, we have run the race—henceforth there is a crown of righteousness.

All this is very good as Bible truth, but if it only goes that far, I have spoken in vain. I know the difficulty of bringing other people into one's own concern and travail. I believe you have a certain amount of perception as to how things are to-day ; they are terrible spiritually, but there are those reaching out for more of God, and asking where they can find spiritual food.

The Lord would, I believe, do something in our day ; a day of small things ; and He will begin by having an instrument with a burden, with whom there is deposited the full orb of revelation of the Lord Jesus ; and who would step out in faith and trust the Lord ; give the Lord a chance to vindicate himself. May the

Lord constitute us part of such an instrument and move out to others also. Ask the Lord about this matter, and, if it is true, to lay it on your heart and bring you into fellowship with HIMSELF in what He would do to-day.

"The hand of our God was upon us, and HE

delivered us out of the hand of our enemy and the lyer-in-wait by the way . . . and the vessels were weighed out in the House of our God . . . the whole by number and by weight, and all the weight was written at that time." (Ezra viii, 33, 34). T. A.-S.

For Boys and Girls

The Gospel on the Railway (No. 1)

The Parable of the Little Tanker Engine

HAVE you ever talked to a railway engine, boys and girls? I recently had a most interesting chat with one at one of our great London stations. He was a very little engine—a tanker—whom I found standing close up to the buffers with a very long train behind him which was being boarded by a crowd of people on their way to the seaside.

"Little engine," I said, "are you going to push this long train all the way to the seaside?"

"Oh, no," he replied; "that isn't my work. I don't take passengers at all."

"Then you pull goods trains, do you?" I asked.

"No," he answered, "I don't pull those either."

"Do you mean to tell me," I exclaimed, "that you pull neither passengers nor goods? Why, whatever use are you then and what do you do with yourself all day? You're not worth calling an engine at all! Why just look there at that "King Arthur" engine at the front of your train. Now, I call *that* an engine: it could do some *real* work! But as for you, why you could almost be put into the tender of the "King Arthur" and nobody would know you were there. And you haven't even got a name of your own. I consider you are simply not worth taking any notice of. And besides, now I come to look, I see you are not even coupled up to the train. What good do you think you are?"

"Not as much as I should like to be," quietly replied the tanker, "but I have a little piece of work to do which I am sure is of some value, and so I put my whole heart into it and do it with all my might."

"Well, I don't think you are any good at all," I said crossly, and off I went up the platform

to admire the great engine at the front of the train.

There it was, the very picture of strength, with steam up awaiting the signal to go. In a moment it was off. "How quickly it gains speed," I thought to myself, "and with such a load behind it too, and quite a hill to pull up out of the station. That is an engine. It must be fine to be powerful like that and play such an important part. As for that silly little tanker . . ." By this time the rear of the train was drawing near to where I stood, and to my surprise I heard puff, puff, puff, coming from it—and there at the back, pushing with all his might against the buffers of the last coach, was my little despised tanker. When he arrived about level with me he stopped, and the great train, now well under way, went steaming on and disappeared round a curve of the line, not to stop again until it reached its destination two hours later.

"Have you been admiring the 'King Arthur'?" the little tanker asked me, seemingly not at all offended by my former rudeness to him. "It really is a great engine, isn't it? and so good at getting up speed with a heavy load."

"Yes," I said rather confusedly, "but weren't you pushing at the back and helping?"

"Oh, yes. I was adding my little push," he replied. "It may not have been much, but you see that is one of the things for which my master put me here. He knows that the greater engines with their heavy loads would have difficulty in starting up the hill and that my little shoulder behind would make all the difference. Not that I am anything in myself," he added quickly, "but it's the power in me that does the work—you see I am driven by steam just the same as the bigger engines."

"I see," I replied. "I am very sorry I was so rude to you just now. I am afraid I despised you because you were only a little one. But I see you have a very useful part to play. I wonder if the big engine, or the people in the train, knew of your help? They ought to, for some of the credit for that fine start was due to you."

"Oh, I don't worry about that," answered my little friend—and now I was very humbly listening to him for I felt he had much to teach me, and I was rather ashamed of myself. "You see 'I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me.' The other engines get all the credit for what I do, but I don't mind that. I have learnt that that kind of glory quickly passes away, and that the bit of work faithfully done in the place where I have been called to serve carries with it a reward much more worth having, even though those whom I am helping know nothing of it."

"But," I said, "as far as I can see there is nobody to give you any reward, for nobody of any importance knows what you have done. Everyone was thinking of the 'King Arthur' engine and you weren't noticed."

"Ah, that is where you are mistaken," laughed my little engine. "The station-master who appointed me to this little piece of work knows all about it, and 'he that seeth in secret shall reward me openly.' Goodbye, I must run off to another piece of humble service. There are some empty coaches to be pulled into the platform for the next train, and if I don't do my part there won't be any carriages for the people to get into, and then the big engines won't be of any use. So you see that, after all, though I am one of the feeble members of our railway I am very necessary." And with a happy little whistle my small friend steamed off merrily, and I soon saw him pulling hard at a line of empty coaches, preparing the way for the service of other and greater engines than himself.

He left me thinking deeply. I remembered that the Lord Jesus had expressly said "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones," and I realised that there are little ones—perhaps like you who are reading this—who are young in years and small in size, and there

are little ones who are older in years but little in the service to which God has called them, whose only work for Him seems to be to fill a lowly little corner, where nobody sees them and where no credit ever comes their way. Many are placed in such a position for the very purpose of doing what the little tanker did—preparing the way for others whom they would call greater than themselves, and giving a little push behind where no one sees them, and helping others over the difficult, hilly parts of life. The Apostle Paul wrote to such a company of people when he wrote in his Epistle to the Philippians: "I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your *supplication*" (R.V.). That word "*supplication*" of course refers to prayer, and its real meaning implies "getting together under." Isn't that what the little engine did? It got under the load and pushed with all its might. I wonder if there is a missionary away in another land, or perhaps a friend of yours close at hand, who has a heavy load to pull, and is finding the way hard? Suppose you and I put our little prayer engine behind and pushed? "Things seem easier to-day," the missionary might say; "the load doesn't seem so heavy, we are making progress." No—he would not know you and I had helped, and we should get no credit for what had occurred. But would that matter? There would be One Who knew and Who would remember and say "Well done"—the Master who had set us in our humble place just for the very purpose of making the way easier for those in more prominent places. Oh, how many needy ones are pulling loads that are too heavy for them, and longing for a little prayer help behind! Will you be a little tanker? You may be, whoever and wherever you are, if you have received the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart and, because of His Spirit within you, are content with the lowly place and the humble service. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me," He said, "for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

(There are five passages of scripture quoted above. They occur in the following chapters—John v., Matthew vi., Matthew xviii., Phil. i. and Matthew xi. Will you read the chapters through and find the verses?) G. P.

The Article on the Blood

By "N. F. D."

HAVING received several letters and personal enquiries with regard to certain parts of the above-mentioned article, we feel it due to our friends that we give some words of explanation and reassurance.

The comments have, in most instances, been made in a true spirit of fellowship and have been exceedingly kindly, although they have been expressions of fear. Most of those who have spoken or written to us have given expression to the true value of the ministry of this little paper, and their anxiety is that nothing shall be allowed to cast a shadow over this ministry. When we included the article in the last issue, we were aware that there were certain phrases which might lead to misunderstanding, and as we see it now, it would have been better if we had had these put in another way. Perhaps we did not sufficiently take into account the fact that, too often, sentences give colour to the whole and in many cases are allowed to bulk most largely in the minds of readers. We went forward, however, with two things in our mind. Firstly, we felt that there was real general value in the article of which our readers should have the benefit; and we have had expressions of great appreciation and blessing received from this message. Secondly, there is our own personal, close knowledge of our Brother Douty who wrote the article, and we know him to be absolutely true to the Lord Jesus in all the Divine realities of His Person and work, and perhaps we took it for granted, or it did not occur to us but that our readers would know this. We have had a letter from our brother in which he says that a good deal of pressure in preparing that message for the press resulted in his putting some things in a way in which he would not have put them if there had been more time and consideration given to it. He recognises that these modes of expression are unfortunate. One of our correspondents, an aged and greatly honoured member of those known as "Brethren," says that Mr. Douty is clearly devoted to the Lord Jesus, and there does not seem to be any doubt as to the place of honour which he would give Him. We are able to endorse this and to say that it would be the greatest grief to us if anything in any part of our ministry should take from the absolute Deity, sovereignty, and supremacy of Him to Whom we owe our all. Indeed, more and more as the weeks pass, the one emphasis in our hearts is that Christ is all. It is not teaching, experience as such, or any *thing*; it is Himself. His place is paramount.

We are not here taking up the various points in the article, which we are sure we could do with the result that we should find perfect agreement between our Brother Douty and those who are the most utterly devoted to the deepest realities of the Person of Christ according to the Word of God; it is, we are sure, but a matter of clarifying; but we trust that our readers will accept this reassurance that it is our aim to ascribe unto Him, our exalted Lord Jesus, the full glory and honour due to Him as Very Son of God, Who is Very God in the Throne and yet the Man in the Glory.

EDITOR.

The Value of the Blood

Concluded.

The Spirit's Objective.

As soon as God's Son had poured out His soul unto death and had sprinkled the blood within the veil (Lev. xvi, 15-16), the Holy Spirit came forth from Heaven on the day of Pentecost bent on one objective, namely, the vindication of Calvary. He came to justify the outpouring and to compensate the Outpourer. For nineteen centuries He has been engaged in this Divine work. He is here to-day in the interests of the Lord Jesus. He is constantly heading for

that hour when the Lamb that was slain shall receive the reward of His sufferings. He is pressing on to that glorious moment when Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

The Method.

In what way does the Holy Spirit fulfil His objective? How does He vindicate the blood? By embodying its meaning in the Church of God. To the degree in which the saints have incorpora-

ted into them the significance of Calvary, the pouring out of the blood is justified. This embodiment appears to be indicated in the cup of which the Lord said, "Drink ye all of it." By that drinking the blood would be assimilated by them, become inwrought in them. The sprinkling is objective in its significance; the drinking subjective. It suggests the inwardness of Calvary. The full value of the blood an inner reality so that the derision of the scoffers at Pentecost is profound truth: "These men are full of now wine."

When the Church does thus embody the meaning of Calvary, it will be the Divinely desired instrument of testimony to the world. The Holy Spirit desires to testify worldward the unspeakable worth of the precious blood, but He will not bear that testimony directly. He convicts the world by means of the Church (John, xvi, 7-8). The Church is the instrument of His witness. Thus the power of the Church's testimony is regulated by the degree in which it has entered into the significance of the Cross. It is not just a world-wide mechanical heralding of the Gospel that God is after; He wants a living witness, that the message may be not in word only but also in power, and that can be only by a spiritual embodiment of the value of the blood.

Its Means.

In order to bring this embodiment about, the Holy Spirit must open the eyes of the saints to that value. His primary activity, therefore, is spiritual illumination. Through the instrumentality of the written and spoken Word this illumination is provided. Thereby He aims to bring us into the full-orbed view of the Cross. He is desirous that we should miss no aspect of its meaning. Only as the Church is clear in its revelation can it realize in experience, and thus embody in its life, the power of the blood.

It is this which Satan resists. He is dead set against spiritual illumination with reference to the blood. He is supremely opposed to the unveiling of its value to the Body of Christ. He is strenuously resisting the Holy Spirit as to the enlightenment of the saints. The Holy Spirit and Satan are consequently engaged in a tremendous conflict, and it rages round the matter of the blood. To the degree in which we are identified with the Holy Spirit in His objective we are going to be involved in His conflict. If the Holy Spirit aims to enlighten, the devil aims to darken. This darkening is widespread. The Church in general is afflicted with awful

blindness over this subject. To know the truth is to be free, to be ignorant of the truth is to be bound. The spiritual bondage of the saints is due to the fact that Satan has hidden from them the value of the precious blood. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"; "Where there is no vision the people perish."

Because the saints do not know the efficacy of the blood with reference to guilt, the devil has them occupied with endeavouring to make themselves acceptable to the Divine court. The blood of Christ is designed to cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the Living God. How many dear Christians are trying to make suro of Heaven by their own efforts just because they do not know the blood sprinkled for them has already achieved this. The blood means grace.

Again how many of the Lord's people have no higher conception of their relation to God than that of servants, when the blood has made us sons. To be a servant is to be in bondage; to be a son is to be in glorious liberty. This was the point with the Galatians. Made sons through the blood they were foolishly living like slaves. In Luke xv the elder brother had no sense of sonship. He could get no higher than, "Lo, these many years do I serve Thee." Fellowship transcends service, but it does not supplant service. It elevates and energises it.

Then, too, blinded by the enemy we do not see that we are set in the presence of God. How often we feel distant and believe the feeling, but it is not so. We think we must do something to get near when all the while we are near. The exhortations to draw near considered properly simply mean a definite appropriation of our perpetual nearness. Moses was told to put the shoes from off his feet, not to get on holy ground, but because he was there. Underneath are, always are, the Everlasting Arms. Your life is hid with Christ in God. "Thou wilt . . . plant them in . . . the Sanctuary."

In like manner the power of the blood with reference to the enemy. We are in a position of advantage regarding him. We are far aloft above him through the blood. In the Person of our representative we have poured out our self-will and thereby we have cut from under him all the ground he ever had. O that we might understand our ascendancy over him. As is often said, "It is not fighting for victory but in victory."

Finally due to ignorance many of the saints are seeking for the Holy Spirit Who always is the seal upon the blood of sprinkling. We are seeking for Divine fulness and Divine power and behold they already are ours by the gift of the Spirit.

Thus the devil blinds the saints to the value of the blood of Christ. In this way he gets them engaged in trying to achieve by themselves that which the blood has already achieved for them. This means living and working on a false plane. It gets us nowhere. All that results is exhaustion, uncertainty and deception. In this way the devil has us tied up. We are busy with our own affairs and not free to serve the living God. We are diverted from the Divine purpose into some personal interest, and because it is a spiritual interest it seems so good. What a tragedy.

The Present Need.

What, then, is the primary need of the hour? Is it not the spiritual enlightenment of the Church with reference to the value of the blood, which is constantly speaking tremendous things for us within the veil? (Hob. xii, 24). That enlightenment can come only by way of effectual prayer. By means of prayer in the Holy Spirit a way is made through the ranks of spiritual darkness that will let the Divine light come through to the children of God. Mere circulation of the truth will never effect it. The Divine order is "We will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." First, prayer, then the Word. Our responsibility, therefore, is two-fold. It is a responsibility of intercession and it is a responsibility of utterance. Intercession to prepare the way, utterance as the final means of blessing.

Spiritual Preparation.

But before we can fulfil so solemn a ministry, we need deep and thorough-going preparation. We cannot fulfil our part in this crisis time except in this way. If we are going to be "workers together with God" to such a mighty end, we shall have to repudiate everything that is not in strict harmony with the blood. Whatever is not in accord with it will have to go. Any reservation is fatal. There must be absolute intolerance of even the least divergence from the will of God.

But devotion in itself is not sufficient. There must be knowledge. We must know what the blood stands for, but it must be a spiritual

knowledge. Not just a correct mental conception, but an inward Divine illumination. The risen Lord Himself must open our eyes to that which is written regarding His sufferings. In this way our heart will burn within us. Blessed removal from cold dogmatics!

But even this spiritual revelation is not enough. There must be the definite laying hold of the values revealed. We must appropriate the benefits of Calvary which the Spirit unveils. We must plant the foot of our faith down firmly upon the land God has given us. We must stand fast in the security of Christ's justification, in the vitality of His Immortal Life; in the sense of His risen Sonship; in the fixedness of His great nearness to God. We must claim the advantage of His ascendancy over the powers of darkness, and rely upon His own fulness in us by the Holy Spirit.

Thus shall we, by Divine grace, be prepared for this ministry of prayer and utterance, with reference to the whole Church. And thus, also, in fellowship with our fellow-members shall we be enabled to testify to the world without, for which Christ died, that through His Name, by the pouring out of His blood, there is granted them likewise, by faith, access to the same grace wherein we stand and wherein we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

N. F. D.

Acknowledgments

APART from local gifts, the following sums have been received towards the expenses of this paper between April 1 and May 31. Their receipt is gratefully acknowledged:—

Paris, 2s. 6d.; Bordeaux, 1s. 7d.; Millbrook, N.Y., 6s. 2d.; Coxsachie, N.Y., £1; Yonkers, N.Y., £1; Edinburgh, 3s.; Paisley, 2s. 6d.; Glasgow, 5s. and 5s.; Belfast, 1s., 5s., and £2 2s.; Cork, 10s.; Barry, 2s. 6d.; Blackpool, 1s.; Birmingham, 10s.; Billericay, 2s. 6d.; Dunston-on-Lyno, 8s.; Eastbourne, £1; Harrogate, 2s.; Hayling Island, 10s.; Honfield, 5s.; High Wycombe, 3s.; Liverpool, 2s. and 2s.; Newcastle, 3s. 6d.; North Shields, 1s. 3d.; Southampton, 3s.; Bermondsey, 2s. 6d. and 5s.; Harlesdon, 10s.; Mildmay Road, N., 5s.; Norbury, 2s.; Plumstead, 5s.; S. Woodford, 2s. 6d.; Stamford Hill, 2s. 6d.; Wandsworth, 5s.—Total, £11 19s.

The Recovery of Spiritual Power

One of a series of Conference Messages: as Spoken.

I BELIEVE, Beloved of God, that it is the Lord's mind that in these days of our gathering together, we should be concerned with the matter of the recovery of power. That seems to be the way in which He has been leading my own heart in relation to this time.

The recovery of power. Of course, that immediately implies the loss of power; and I think there would be very little difficulty in persuading you to believe that there has been a considerable loss of power amongst the Lord's people, and that we are very greatly in need of a recovery of power. Taking that then for granted, we proceed in the assumption that it is so, and if this is the Lord's leading, then it does surely indicate that the Lord sees a need in His people with regard to spiritual power.

The Three Primary Factors.

I want you again to come back to familiar chapters in the letter to the Romans. Chapters 7, 8 and 6, for in these chapters we have three primary things in relation to spiritual power. The close of chapter 7 gives us the first, out of which everything else comes. Verse 24—"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." In that last clause we have Christ set forth as the Object by whom, through whom, there is the emergence from all that this chapter contains. Chapter 7 of the Roman letter, as we know, is a very morbid chapter; a chapter full of failure, full of weakness, full of disappointment, full of heart-break, full of problems, full of contradictions, and that chapter certainly is not a revelation of spiritual power—anything but that. How then are we to emerge from such a condition of paralysis, morbidness, defeat, failure, collapse and contradiction? The answer is given at the end—"Through Jesus Christ our Lord." What I am anxious for you to see is that He is presented as the Object, if I may say it, also as *an* Object. You see the explanation of the weakness of chapter 7 is that the object all the way through is "I." That is the trouble. The object in view is "I." You know how this chapter is

simply full of the personal pronoun "I," and what there is always before the one who is represented as "I"; and there is no deliverance until that object gives place to the Lord Jesus. There is no power, but all weakness while "I" is in view, and not the Lord Jesus. Now that is a very simple statement I know, and yet upon this fact and this truth there hangs everything for the Believer in the way of emancipation from defeat and failure and spiritual weakness.

The Paralysis of Self-occupation.

ALL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IS WEAKNESS. Now if you forget everything else, write that down—all self-consciousness is weakness. Self-analysis, self-scrutiny, self-investigation, self-occupation of any kind whatsoever is self-consciousness, and self-consciousness of every form and kind is weakness, weakness, and it is in that respect and connection that the subjective side of truth is a very perilous thing.

You know what I mean by the subjective side of truth. We speak much about what Christ has done *for* in being made good *in* us; the inwardness of the work of the Lord Jesus by His Cross; the Cross applied within; the inwardness of identification with Christ in death, burial and resurrection and all that follows. Now that is all true, all necessary, all vital, and not one bit of it must be sacrificed, missed or lost. At the same time it is just in that connection that the Believer comes into touch with the greatest peril of his or her life. There is a great peril always associated with the greatest blessing. When you are touching something of very great value, you have not far to look for something which is of very great danger. The higher you get spiritually the more perilous your position becomes from another standpoint, and it is here in the matter of the subjective side of truth that we meet that peril which, if it overtakes us, will work in us the most terrible bondage, defeat and spoliation of everything. I want to try and explain what I mean by that. If you can grasp this word, beloved, you will find it an emancipating word as the Holy Spirit brings it home to your heart. You see, when the truth is applied subjectively,

so often we relate it to ourselves, and ourselves to it as some *thing* apart instead of *Someone*. For instance, we have thought and said a good deal about the tripartite nature of man. We have spoken much about spirit, soul and body, and especially about soul and spirit, spirit and soul and we have dwelt much upon that. The mental grasp of this by many of the Lord's children has brought them into confusion, and they do not know where they are, and all the time they are afraid of themselves, they are afraid to open their lips lest it might be "soulish," they are afraid to do anything lest it might be "soulisli"—all the time looking within to see if it is soul or spirit—trying to read themselves.

They get a phraseology about their spirit all the time, "they have it in their spirit," and it brings death and weakness. It is perfectly true that it holds up activity very often; real activity; so that as I have said, very often prayer is not forthcoming because people are afraid to pray lest they should not pray in their spirit. Many are afraid to take part in many of the active aspects of the spiritual life lest it should be other than in their spirits, or out from their spirit, and, do you see what has happened? Their spirit has taken the dominion, they have their spirit always dangled before their eyes, and asking questions about it, trying to analyse it and get to know it and understand it. It is the inward ego. It is the "I." May be the spiritual "I" that is in view all the time, and that being their governing, dominating obsession, is a weakening, enslaving thing. It is a subjectivity which is generally introspective, producing self-consciousness that makes you afraid to do anything, and all self-consciousness be it spiritual or not, is weakness. Now beloved, we have got to be delivered from our spiritual selves, from occupation with our spiritual selves. What is the way of deliverance from all these contradictions that arise, and there are many, in this realm. Often the people who are always talking about "having it in their spirit" do the most outrageous things—things that are a sheer contradiction of the Word of God—that violate the Word of God, very often because they have "got it in their spirit." Forgive my emphasis.*

We must know the way of recovery of spiritual power. What I am feeling more and more is just this: that a large amount of spiritual knowledge, spiritual teaching, spiritual instruction, is not the secret of power at all. That is not power. In this realm of spiritual things teaching and instruction and doctrine, and light as such are not the secret of power at all. You find this terrible contradiction that so many who have a large amount of light, and a great measure of teaching and instruction are sometimes the chief offenders, and sometimes they bring death, sometimes they are a sand-bag, they are an arrest, they bring in weakness, and it may be that with a very great deal of light, knowledge, truth, there is still the upper hand of the enemy with impunity. You know what I mean. The enemy can be laughing all the time at our knowledge of truth and making a mess everywhere, while we are so well versed in all the doctrine of the Bible. (I am discriminating between mental knowledge and spiritual knowledge, dealing with the latter in the next message). Power is the thing that meets the enemy in his challenge. We want to know the secret of power. Am I not right that very often with all our wonderful teaching, we have not got power? There is not sufficient power to bring to an end the activities of the adversary, and to bring about the works of God. Why is it? Maybe because we are occupied with the spiritual ego, the spiritual "I." That may be the object all the time. Wrapped up in our spiritual selves. The way of deliverance and the way of power is to have the Lord Jesus as the Object, but subjectively objective. Not out there, but in here. Himself, not I. Not you, HIM. Subjectively objective. It is the "knowing the Lord," not knowing ourselves. Having the Lord and knowing the Lord inwardly. Not knowing our spirit and being occupied with our spirit, but the Lord. There has got to be an inward detachment from ourselves and an attachment to the Lord. You may not be able to feel that. I know its conclusion—it seems drastic but it is very real—a thing of the greatest value and, of course, only those who have come into this problem, perplexity, can appreciate it to the full, but I do want you to recognise whether

*It is a very important thing to know the difference between the Natural (GK Soulical or ~~Human~~) and the Spiritual, but our spirit is not the object of Government or really the seat of knowledge, it is only the vehicle or instrument of the Holy Spirit within. Our spirit may be affected by the

Natural influences and suffer deviations like the compass, thereby showing that even a renewed spirit is not infallible. The Lord will never allow infallibility to be a part of us, and a life of utter dependence and faith is the only way of being led aright.

you can feel all that I am saying from experience or not, I do want you to recognise that the Object with whom we are to be occupied all the time is the Lord Jesus Christ inwardly. Apart from that you have only spiritualised psychology—you have only developed in a new form the spirit, the natural spirit of man, and tried to bring him into a spiritual realm. The natural man who is not born again has a spirit just as much as we have. Every man is spirit, soul and body, and you can have all the features of the natural spirit developed and becoming the governing laws of your spiritual mind with the result that you have only swung over your own spirit into a spiritual realm occupied with yourself, listening to the voice of your spirit, and you are gravely in danger of getting false leadings.

It is the spirit of man which is linked to the whole spirit world, and the natural spirit linked to the fallen spirit world, and if you are going to concentrate upon developing your own spirit you are going to expose your spirit to false light, false guidance, and death may still remain when you have developed your spirit to a large degree and made it exceedingly sensitive to all psychical influence; but death still remains and bondage is still there, and there is still weakness, not *true* spirituality. What has happened? You have simply developed yourself—one part of your own being, your spirit, and made it the law of your life. While our spirit must be inwardly renewed by the Holy Spirit, our spirit must not be the law of our life.

Not "I" but Christ.

IT IS THE LORD JESUS WHO IS TO BE THE LAW OF OUR LIFE. He is to be the Object with Whom we are occupied. Having said all that mysterious stuff, to many of you, let me say this, that if the Lord is concerned with the recovery of spiritual power in and amongst His people, He must bring them back to the Lord Jesus in a new way. He must bring them back from things, as things; doctrine as doctrine; from anything that has to do with the spiritual life as a thing in itself. He must bring them back to the Lord Jesus, and there is no way of recovering spiritual power until we have come to the place where the Lord Jesus is everything; where He is LORD, where He is Master, where the government is upon His shoulders, where He is our very life: and if this is true, then can we not discern the movement of the Lord to-day? In the day of weakness, a day when there is

disappointment in the matter of spiritual power because of weakness: a time when the Church is a sorry spectacle in the matter of spiritual power. There must be this characteristic feature, that He is bringing His Son into pre-eminence in the hearts of His own where things are ceasing to satisfy. Teaching, movements, fellowships, all bearing the marks of disappointment. The Lord does not let them become the dominating thing in the life of His children—He will allow disaster to overtake things upon which our hearts have been set and which have become the object of our strength. He allows those things to break down, to disappoint us; allows other people to disappoint us, opens our eyes to see how disappointing everything is, until we wonder if there is anything at all that is really satisfactory, really according to God; whether there is anything that really does come up to the standard. The Lord is working very much in that way to-day, beloved. Disappointment with things, with people, with fellowships, with Christian movements, with Churches—everywhere there is weakness. It is an age of spiritual weakness.

How will the Lord meet such a time? By bringing His own Son, the Lord Jesus, into pre-eminence and prominence, and making HIM the object. That is how it was in the beginning; how it has always been in the days of power amongst the Lord's people. The secret of power has been that the Lord has been the supreme and all-governing Object of His people's life. Not the things of the Lord, but the Lord Himself. The Ark represented the presentation of the Lord, and when it was at the centre and occupied the place of devotion and honour of the Lord's people, they went forward in strength so that waters were cleft by the mighty power of God as the Ark went in first, and upon that Ark all eyes were set. At the beginning of the Christian era it was the Lord Jesus Who was the one in view; engrossing enrapturing; not fellowships or movements, but the Lord Himself. That was the day of power, and we have to come back there. It has got to be so in the individual life and the corporate life. The Lord is the centre of the life, governing. The Lord in the centre of His people individually and collectively. Not places, teaching, teachers, or fellowships, but the Lord, and then you have recovered power. This simple statement goes a long way—and the cry of a man in despair "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me . . ."

has its answer in hope and assurance—"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is a very practical thing for you to take to those who are so introspective that they are tied in and bound with grave clothes. If anyone here is occupied with their own spiritual position, turning your eyes inward, feeling all too much condemnation—beloved, your deliverance is not along the line of having questions answered or someone trying to convince you that it is alright, and that you need not trouble; nor is it a matter of further light and teaching, but changing the "I" for Christ, or Christ for the "I," and putting the Lord Jesus as the subjective Objective of your life instead of the "I." Christ in you is alone the hope of glory, the way out. You meet so many of the Lord's children to-day with whom you cannot speak for half a minute before they have begun to pour out a terrible story about themselves, their spiritual difficulties, problems, and you do what you can to help them, and they profess to have been helped, but the next time you meet them you get the same thing again. You meet them after months, or years, and at the end of it all you get the same old story. Their only deliverance is that Jesus Christ our Lord becomes the Object of their hearts within as their hope. They must become attached to Him and detached from themselves, even spiritually. A new appreciation of the Lord Jesus—that is the way of deliverance. You will find you get up against situations where you are impotent to help the Lord's people until you have cut clean into their obsession with themselves. The Lord Jesus is to become the Object of your faith inwardly, He will deliver. He is the gate of the arena, around which you have been going so long with that corpse.

The Law of the Spirit of Life.

I am going to venture to say a very brief word about the second thing. Chapter viii, 2. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." If No. 1 is Christ as the Object, No. 2 is the Spirit as the power. "Made me free." You see the Holy Spirit always works in relation to an Object. He must have that Object and that Object is the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit never works in relation to our self-occupation. Always in relation to the Lord Jesus. So Christ is the way. The Holy Spirit is the energy to take it, to go through. Power comes by freedom. "Made me free." The Spirit of life.

The Spirit's law of life or the law of the Spirit of life. "The Spirit of life made me free." Of course you want to go on to Chapter viii, 11. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you." That is the Spirit of life you see, in you. In you: in relation to the living Christ as the Object. Christ lives now the other side of the grave, death, sin, bondage to sin, over there on resurrection ground. The living Christ lives in you and the Spirit works in relation to Him to bring you through to where Christ is, making you free just as He made Christ free. The Lord Jesus went down unto death, to which he surrendered Himself, and broke that law, and the Holy Spirit has put the Lord Jesus over there on the ground of emancipation and victory. You have the Lord Jesus on resurrection ground as the object of your faith and of your occupation, and then the Spirit that raised up Jesus and put Him there, in you, works towards that object and puts you where Christ is. We have to honour the Holy Spirit and give Him His place. The place that the Holy Spirit claims to have is the place of honouring the Lord Jesus and not honouring himself, and we have to recognise that the Holy Spirit in us must be honoured in his work of honouring the Lord Jesus. So many people put the Holy Spirit in a place by himself and thereby do despite to the Spirit. It is perfectly wrong. We must recognise that his Object is the Lord Jesus and all his activities are in relation to the Lord Jesus, and an issue which simply reaches the end of making the Holy Spirit everything is a false impression of the present work of the Holy Spirit. The end of all the Holy Spirit's activities is to make the Lord Jesus glorious.

Spirituality is not cultivating our spirit but it is the Holy Spirit gaining the ascendancy in us over ourselves. Spirituality is not the cultivating of our spirit, watching over it to see how it is growing, pulling it up and putting it in again as it were to see how it is growing. Some people think the height of spirituality is always giving attention to their own spirit. The Lord deliver us. The real mark of spirituality is that we are coming to a larger enjoyment of the Lord Jesus, where He is having a larger place; and that is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the power. The Holy Spirit is the power, but his power is always directed towards bringing the Lord Jesus into the place

of living reality and of fulness in our hearts as different from that false spirituality which is constantly bringing ourselves spiritually more into view. There is a lot more to be said about that, but—the third thing, chapter vi, 5-6.

The Cross, the Instrument.

The Cross. What you have here is the third primary thing in relation to spiritual power—the Cross. The Cross in this sense; the Lord Jesus has died, He was crucified and buried. He died unto sin once for all. We died in Him, but the Lord Jesus having died, having become dead, has changed things in this way, that whereas for the moment in His yielding to death through weakness which He had accepted, death had dominion over Him for a moment—He allowed death to have dominion over Him for a moment, but He, by the Eternal Spirit broke the power of death's dominion, arose from the dead, and took death captive, and instead of death having dominion Christ had dominion over death. The last revelation—how wonderful—“And have the keys of death and hades”—the *authority* of death and hades. “I am He that liveth: I became dead but behold, I am alive for evermore.” “I am alive unto the ages of the ages, and have the authority of death and hades.” What have we? Death is in the Hands of Christ! Death is in the Hands of Christ, and the Eternal Spirit, through Whom Christ was raised from the dead, brought back from among the dead, given the power and authority over death. Death is in the Hands of Christ, in the Hands of the Holy Spirit. Now here is the wonder, beauty, glory of this thing, that sovereignly the Holy Spirit is using death against the flesh, whereas death originally was used against Him.

Let me make that plain. What is the ground of death in the natural man? Flesh. Death has its authority, power, ascendancy by reason of the flesh. It must have flesh. The flesh has been taken by the Lord Jesus and death has been destroyed by Him, and overcome, and He has taken the power of death and now sovereignly in the Believer the Lord Jesus is using death against the flesh. That is Romans vi. Death is being used by the Holy Spirit against the flesh. You know it. When a Believer touches flesh what happens? There is a consciousness of death at once. The result:—oh, to escape that thing—to turn from it! There is a revulsion when you have touched “flesh.” Your first thought is to get out of

this. You run to the Lord—“I have been moving in flesh.” The Holy Spirit has used death to work against flesh to deliver you.

Paul speaks about his bodily weakness—“Death worketh in us,” but it is not the authority of death. Death is in the Hands of another authority to be used to work life. What is it? The working of the death of Christ in himself. The Life of the Lord Jesus is made manifest in this body because the death of the Lord Jesus is working there. A contradiction but wonderfully true. A conqueror simply wipes out—a more than conqueror uses his enemy to his own ends! He has taken death and the Holy Spirit is using death to teach us not to touch flesh. The Law of the Spirit of life has made me free from the law of sin and death. The moment we touch flesh we know it badly, and we turn from it. We should never have learned if the Lord had not used death to teach us. The Lord sovereignly using death now in His Hands. Using death in order to make life more manifest. The Lord is using the enemy wonderfully in this age. If only we could get this right into our hearts. We are encountering death everywhere. All the authority has been in the Hands of the Lord Jesus since He arose from the dead, and the very impact of death is intended to be the occasion of the manifestation of the life. It is not intended that we should be swallowed up of death, but that death should be swallowed up of life to display what the Lord Jesus has done. We know we learn to shun death because we know by experience that we should never shun the flesh if we did not get our instruction by the Holy Spirit's use of death. More than conquerors; the enemy reserved for the present use of the Lord to teach Saints how to live triumphantly. We must learn that in and by His Cross the Lord Jesus did conquer death and make death His prisoner, that He conquered flesh, He put away the old man and is using the very power of death, that evil communications corrupt good manners, we must not touch the old man, we must walk after the Spirit of life.

So often we think that the Cross is to annihilate us, to wipe us out. It is really an emphasis of life. The message of the Cross ought to produce life. It produces death in a great many people. Suffocation, putting you down so that you are afraid to move. It ought to be life by the Cross because we have died, we reckon ourselves dead, therefore we

live. "I have been crucified—therefore I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me and that which I now live. . . ." "Now live!" The Cross is the way of power. The working of the death of the Lord Jesus is intended to show us that flesh is paralysis, weakness, impotence; but the Cross has cut us off it, from all weakness, and defeat, which is in the flesh, and the Holy Spirit is using the Cross now to make us know that we are not to live in the flesh. With all the

difficulty of seeing these things, may the Lord show us what they mean, bring them home to us, and help us to see the real life side of things—the power side of things. He, the Lord Jesus, as risen, being wrought in us by the Holy Spirit because we have accepted and appropriated by faith the fact that we died and now we live unto and in Christ, and Christ triumphant lives in us.

T. A.-S.

The Increase of God

I Cor. iii. Heb. v II—vi 3.

"We desire each one of you to show the same diligence unto the *fulness of hope*. . . . that ye be not sluggish, but. . . . through faith and patience inherit the promises."

"Walk worthily of the Lord. . . . increasing in the knowledge of God."—Col. i. 10.

"Holding fast the Head from whom all the body being supplied. . . . increaseth with the increase of God."—Col. ii. 19.

"The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another."—1 Thess. iii. 12).

"We exhort you brethren that ye abound more and more."—1 Thess. iv. 10.

"Speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into HIM, who is the Head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."—Eph. iv. 15, 16, A.R.V.

THE Lord's thought for His children is *fulness*; and in connection with all the works of God there is always the thought of *fulness*; that which the Lord desires for His children is *fulness*, *increase*, *abundance*, *growth*, *development*. When the Lord was on earth, He met the need found in the multitudes of people with an *abundance* and *fulness*, although having very little naturally with which to meet it. We see His thought is *abundance*—"and they all ate and were filled and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces twelve baskets full." (Matt. xiv, 20).

His utterances likewise are full of this thought, "Give and it shall be given you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over," Luke vi, 38. There is *fulness* and *abundance*.

If we but realised the possibilities of the Holy Spirit resident within us in correspondence to the energy that He energiseth in us, how different things would be; "Having the eyes of your heart enlightened that ye may know . . . what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to that '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 heavens far above all." (Eph. i, 18-21. A.R.V.).

"I was made a minister according to that gift of the grace of God which was given unto me, *according to the working [energising] of His power*. (Eph. iii, 7). "The Lord Jesus who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory according to the working [energising] whereby He is able even to subject all things unto HIMSELF" (Phil. iii, 21). "I labour also striving according to His working who worketh in me in power" (Col. i, 29, A.R.V.).

"There are diversities of workings [energising] but God who worketh [energiseth] all things in all . . . but all these [energiseth] the one and the same Spirit dividing to each one severally as He will" (1 Cor., xii, 6-11).

"It is God who energiseth in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (Phil. ii, 13).

The Lord's thought is to add, to give *increase*, to bring into *fulness*.

But there is a side of responsibility where we are concerned, and we need to ask whether the measure of power working in us has to do with ourselves; as to how much we limit those powers, *energising*, working in us? The Holy

Spirit in the power of the Lord Jesus is capable of realising "far above all that we can ask or think," but so often we limit the work by getting in His way. There is a tremendous stress in the New Testament to our *going on to the fulness*; i Cor., iii, and Heb. v lay special emphasis on our responsibility to go on.

The Golden Measuring Rod

The measuring rod of God has been set up in the midst of His people, and everything is brought to that golden measuring rod set up in the House of God. To the last detail all that has part in the House of God is brought to that rod—the measure of Christ, and tested by it as to whether it is meet for the Divine requirement.

The measuring rod is the Lord Jesus HIMSELF, HE is the fulness of God, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," (Col. ii, 9) and everything has to be brought to measure in the Lord Jesus (Col. ii, 12—"In HIM ye are made full.") to be seen whether it comes short; Lest any of you should seem to come short" (Heb. iv, 1). "Lest any man falleth short of the grace of God." (Heb. xiii, 15). "Wherefore, having the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto full growth." (Heb. vi, 1) A.R.V.

God has a very full standard of completeness in the Lord Jesus in relation to spiritual life, and truly for the child of God there should be no other kind of life, but all the life a spiritual life, where everything is brought by God's Holy Spirit to God's measurement in Christ. Are you coming short of God's measurement in Christ for your business life? If there is anything crooked in your business life the Holy Spirit will bring the straightness of the Lord Jesus against that thing. Also with the home life both personally and unitedly, everything is brought by the Holy Spirit to God's degree and standard in Christ Jesus and tested by HIM. and it is made manifest if there is crookedness, and where there is a falling-short of God's requirement you get conditions which make for unhappiness.

Likewise our secret prayer life, and reading of the Word of God; all must come to the measuring rod of God. Everything in the House of God, *i.e.*, the Lord's people, is brought by the Holy Spirit to God's measurement in Christ, to be tested whether all is according to

Christ. The ministry of the Word should be to the straightening out of all to the straightness of Christ. Sometimes it is a cutting off, if we have gone beyond the measure of Christ. We are not so much in peril of doing this, but rather of falling short and not coming up to the "stature of the fulness of Christ." The Holy Spirit's operations with us are according to the standard of God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spirituality

Let us look at some of the things which relate to the increase of God. Firstly, and in some sense all inclusively, it is a matter of spirituality.

"Whom having not yet seen ye love, in whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (i Peter, 1, 8). "He endured as seeing Him who is invisible." (Heb. xi, 27). "Enduring as seeing." This is a measure of spirituality. With us faith is still largely measured by sight, and the Lord is seeking to bring us to the place where we are spiritual; the natural side of things does influence us so much, and the Lord is trying to cut in between this approving and apprehending by the senses.

Paul could not speak to the Corinthian believers but as to carnal; yet this first letter to the Corinthian Church is largely occupied with "spirituals"; "Now concerning spirituals, brethren," (I Cor. xii, 1). And yet this declaration "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual" (1 Cor. iii, 1). Now what has happened? These Corinthian believers were tremendously interested in the spirituals, yet they were not spiritual, not really growing, and to have these things on the gift side does not always represent maturity. Interested in these spiritual gifts and probably possessors of the manifestation side of things as the spirituals, yet not spiritual.

Love, the Law of Increase

What are some of the laws of real spiritual increase? LOVE, 1 Cor., xiii. If I have all gifts, and have not love, I am nothing, I am not spiritual. In the opening passages read note how "increase" is linked with "love." What was the reason of the Thessalonian believers' quick growth? Look at the testimony they bore. Paul found he had no need to speak of them, for wherever he went they were known. "From you hath sounded forth the

word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Acaia, but in every place your faith Godward is gone forth, so that we need not to speak anything." (1 Thess. i, 8). What was the secret of their increase? The letters to the Thessalonians are often thought to be the elementary letters, but the order in which God has sovereignly arranged the letters of Paul, represents far greater facts than mere chronological order. Romans begins with justification by faith; Thessalonians ends with the coming of the Lord, and with the coming of the Lord you have got to have maturity. And Thessalonians represents coming to maturity in a very rapid way, a coming to an "End Time" place—the holding the word in much affliction (1 Thess. i, 6).

The key to the Thessalonian position is LOVE; yes, spiritual increase is by love. Along that way is growth and maturity. You can have all the gifts and be very immature. Spiritual increase is not by *knowing* all these things, the way of growth is not by faith's power externally manifested, but more by inward endurance. Do you want to know the way of the increase of God? It is by LOVE.

What the Lord needs is an open pure spirit towards HIMSELF, and love toward ALL saints, the Lord will bring into His greater fulness where there is a genuine love one to the other—IN HIM. The sure way of being locked up and limited is to have a closed heart to any of the Lord's children. LOVE is the way to spiritual increase. The Ephesian letter in which there is the fullest unveiling of heavenly truth in the deepest teaching concerning the Church, the Body of Christ, there is from start to finish the golden thread of LOVE running all through, this is significant when you consider what the letter contains.

I Cor. xiii is the great chapter on love, and is put over beside all the "gifts." Love is the real spirituality *that is spirituality*. Love is the most difficult and the greatest of all the gifts. "Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own affections." (II Cor. vi, 12). You are so narrow, so limited, like a closed hedge, pent up, cramped! "Our heart is enlarged, ye are not straitened in us."

The measure of our spiritual life is no greater than our heart; the knowledge that is in the head is not the measure of spirituality, the way for your release, emancipation, increase, abundance is the way of the heart. Spirituality is

not mental agreement on things stated in the Word, it is the melting of one heart to another—to all saints. The devil has locked up a number of the Lord's children as in a padded room of their own limitations; frozen their love by something between them and other children of God. The way out is by increase of love; and we shall remain locked up until we are there!

In the book of Leviticus where the offering to the Lord is introduced, we read "If any man of you bring an offering to the Lord"; then there follows the nature of the sacrifice, what it is to be and what it is to be like, and "he shall offer it of his own voluntary will." In Leviticus it is voluntary, "If any man," "of his own voluntary will." In Numbers the offering is obligatory and dealing with another aspect of truth. In Leviticus it is a matter of the heart, a voluntary matter, a coming into the presence of the Lord in fellowship; it is the heart going out to the Lord, and wanting something for the Lord, that the Lord should have something. That is fellowship, that is worship. Then notice the character of the offering to be given, it must be that which *wholly* speaks of the Lord, it must represent the Lord Jesus. Leviticus opens with the heart going out voluntarily to God, that HE shall have something, and what He shall have is His own satisfaction and be wholly according to Christ. Spiritually this is seen to be a matter of love to the Lord, the desire to have all things according to Him.

True spirituality is the measure of love of God shed abroad in the heart, all the spirituals rest upon and have their rise out of *Love*. Not power, or knowledge, or different gifts, these are not the first things, the first thing is love. *That* leads to the increase of God. There are other things that lead to increase but love is first and basic to all other. Any threat to fellowship among the Lord's people is the way of arrest in growth.

"That He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man . . . 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, to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled into all the fulness of God." (Eph. iii, 16-19).

T. A. S.

Congo.

ON Monday, June 1. we bade "Godspeed" to our Sister, Miss Forel, who, having been with us for about eleven months, has set out on the first stages via her home in Switzerland for the Belgian Congo. We would ask all our friends to take our Sister upon their hearts in prayer.

Switzerland and Germany.

ON Friday, June 19. our Sister, Miss Hilda Gerster, who also has been with us for some time, left us for Germany and Switzerland, where the Lord has opened to her a "great and effectual door." Our Sister has fulfilled a valuable ministry in translating 'The Release of the Lord,' and the 'Centrality of the Cross' in German.

Pray very much for her.

The Purchased Possession

(Eph. i, 14).

THE "purchased possession" is all that Christ has acquired the right to by His death. He is the One who bought the field for the treasure that was in it (Matt. 13, 44). He tasted death for everything (see Heb. 2, 10, N.T.). He has a threefold right to everything

in heaven and earth; they are His because He made all things; they are His because He is Heir of all things; and they are also His because He purchased all things by His blood. He has not yet taken possession of the inheritance; He will not do this until all the co-heirs are gathered out of the world and His church is completed; then He will redeem with power that which He has bought with blood. Every adversary that could challenge His right to the inheritance will be overthrown, and all things will be manifestly under His feet. (Psalms viii. 5—9; 1 Cor. xv. 2; Heb. ii. 7, 8; Eph. i. 22).

We who have been sealed by the Holy Ghost are the co-heirs who are to share this vast inheritance of glory with Him, and until the time comes for Him to take it up we have been sealed by the Spirit which dwells within us.

The Spirit is also to us the "earnest" of the inheritance—that is, He is the pledge to us that we are to enter into it all. Our bodies, which are now subject to suffering and death, are part of the purchased possession; they already belong to the Lord and He has taken possession of them by His Spirit, but they await redemption by power, as being part of this groaning creation. This is clearly stated in Romans viii, 23, where we are told that we are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption, of our bodies.

Convention Engagements of Mr. Sparks and Mr. Speedy. in U.S.A.

June 27-28. Darby. Philadelphia.
 „ 29-30. Swarthmore, Pa.
 July 1-5. Hephzibah Heights.
 „ 7-12. Ditto
 „ 13-16. Grand Rapids, Mich.
 „ 17-20. Erieside.

July 21-20. Hephzibah Heights and Boston.
 „ 31-Aug. 4. Montrose.
 August 5-9. Glenside and Philadelphia.
 „ 10-12. Baltimore.
 „ 13-15. New York (?)
 „ 16-20. Hephzibah Heights.

A Witness and a Testimon

JULY—AUG., 1931

VOL. 9. No. 4

Where the graft enters
the vine, there it stays

See also
Rom. 11:24.



He was wounded
for our
transgression

THE
BELIEVER

The Vine -
Christ Jesus

"If we have been planted (lit. "grown") together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Rom. 6:5.

The Honor Oak Christian Fellowship Centre,

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

Meetings for Spiritual Edification, the Proclamation of the Gospel, Prayer and Fellowship
 SUNDAYS at 10.30 A.M. (Lord's Table), 11.15 A.M., 3 P.M. (Young People), 6.30 P.M.
 MONDAYS at 7.30 P.M. TUESDAYS at 8 P.M. (Young People).
 WEDNESDAYS at 8 P.M. SATURDAYS at 7.30 P.M.

The Guest House is open to receive guests for the period of the conferences or at other times as the Lord leads.

Telegrams : "Syndesmos, Forest, London."

Telephone : Sydenham 5216.

Cables : "Syndesmos, London."

Editorial communications with regard to this paper should be addressed to Mr. Austin-Sparks.

(Continued from page 100.)

mighty principle, and when these things come in the Lord goes out.

Paul in every other way represented the rule of the heavens ministerially. He had become the embodiment of the principle of the heavens so far as nations were concerned. Nations no longer existed for him as such—that out of all nations should be formed the one Body, so his ministry was a heavenly one—a ministry from the heavens. It is a tremendous mark of his transcendency, of what is heavenly, that his universal writings come out of such circumstances as the prison, chains, Roman Court, and yet the most common expression of those days was "in the heavenlies." He was ministering universally while naturally in limitation. He had said, "henceforth know we no man after the flesh." "Though the more I love the less I be loved." This man has transcended the things which are of man. The love he had poured out for the Corinthians, and yet in that letter Paul quotes things that were said about him—about his personal appearance—by them. Paul was above earthly feelings—the heavens ruled. Get outside of that which is petty and small and into the universal. We see a real example of sonship in the man who wrote so much about it. Read Romans viii. and the Epistle to the Galatians and see how sonship means absolute emancipation and freedom from all earthly limitations of man—his mind, his thought, his judgments, his attitudes, his appraisements. He has been set free by the Son, and whom the Son makes free is free indeed.

The new man is being renewed after the image of Him who created him. The image is universally embracing. Look at the Lord Jesus. See the universality of His birth, His baptism, His death. The celebration of the

Lord's death has been made largely a matter of a ceremonial ordinance. But there is one Body eternally conceived of God gathered out of all nations and gathered into the universality of eternity. God meant that the gathering around His table be clothed with what is of heaven and should be a living testimony. There is all the difference in the world between a ceremony and having a celebration of a living thing. The heavens do rule. The Lord wants to recover the spiritual meaning of these things.

T. A.-S.

"Witness and Testimony" Literature

By T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

- 'The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.' Price 9d. Postage 1½d.
- 'In Christ.' Price 6d.
- 'The Release of the Lord.' Price 6d.
- 'The Inner Man of the Heart.' Price 3d.
- 'The Watchword of The Son of Man.' 3d.
- 'Vision and Vocation.' Price 2d.
- 'The Prisoner of the Lord.' Price 2d.
- 'The Holy Spirit and The Cross, The Church and The Coming Again of the Lord Jesus.' 2d.
- 'The Cross and the deliverance of the Mind.' Price 2d.
- 'The Candlestick all of Gold.' Price 1d.
- 'Christ our Life.' 6d. per dozen.

Diagrams.

1. The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.
2. The Cross and our Salvation.
3. The Attitude of the Crucified Ones Toward Each Other.
4. The Cross and the New Creation.
5. The Cross and the New Man.
6. The Cross and the Promise of the Father
1d. each, or 9d. per dozen.

Retrospect

Bognor Conference.

As in former years, the Lord made it abundantly clear that He delights to gather with His children when they come together with set purpose of heart to give Him His place even in the midst of their holiday enjoyments. Bognor this year again proved to be an occasion not only of very real happiness but of eternal significance for those who gathered there from July 11th to 18th. The Lord filled to the utmost capacity the accommodation at our disposal, the total number present being nearly 50. The nature of the issues at stake was betokened in advance by the very great sense of conflict preceding the Conference, and only a very real going out in utter dependence upon the Lord, not only for the Word that was to be given but also for bodily life itself, and a continual stand in the victory of the Blood of Jesus throughout the whole week, enabled the ministry to be carried through by those whom we believed the Lord had all along chosen for that purpose. The gatherings in the earlier days of the Conference were devoted mainly to the ministry of the Word in which very many practical issues of importance in the lives of all young people were touched. In the later gatherings of the week the Lord called more for expression in prayer and testimony on the part of those gathered, and it was a matter of deep thankfulness to God to note the evidence of new liberty into which so many present had come. As in previous Conferences, one of the most valuable activities of the Holy Spirit found expression in the dealing with personal problems, and during the week not a few of those present found the answers to questions upon which they had suffered spiritual arrest until that time. Let us unite in asking the Lord that all who thus found a new freedom may stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free.

It is an ever precious testimony to the *sufficiency of the Lord Himself* that in these Holiday Conferences, when so much time is devoted to spiritual ministry and the gathering together around the Word, one characteristic of every Conference is *joyfulness*. This year provided no exception, despite the fact that the conditions outdoors were depressing in the

extreme. We thank God that happiness and holiness not only may, but should, go together, and we believe that this fact found a fresh expression in the hearts of all those who had the privilege of attending the Bognor Conference this year.

Caravan.

Five of our brethren set out from Honor Oak on June 18th with a motor caravan, their first objective being Rufforth, near York. Ministry was fulfilled there throughout the following week and then a further period was spent at Menston, near Leeds. In both places much sowing of the Word was done by open-air gatherings, tract distribution and house to house visitation as well as in indoor meetings, and several of the neighbouring villages were visited and testimony borne in them. The Word was also proclaimed in York. There were not lacking evidences that the Lord was at work, and our brethren had the joy of knowing that souls had been born from above as the fruit of their labours. Not the least valuable part of such a period of ministry is the education of the workers themselves in spiritual discipline, and our brethren have borne their testimony to the very great blessing that they themselves have received along this line—precious fruit that will yet yield more in the days to come when, if the Lord wills and tarrys, these brethren will go forth into wider spheres of activity at His bidding. How much there is of practical spiritual knowledge that can only be acquired in the school of hard experience! And how truly the death that holds men in its grip can only be adequately appreciated as an actual, personal, intelligent, God-hating power, as the Lord's servants go forth seeking the deliverance of bound souls! Such servants have need to-day to know the weapons of their warfare—the Word, the Blood and the Name of Jesus—which are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

The party returned in time to join the Bognor Conference on July 11th. Many eyes must have read the messages on the caravan as it travelled through the country:—

“IN CHRIST...NO CONDEMNATION.”

“IN CHRIST...A NEW CREATION.”

"God hath made....JESUS....Crucified both
LORD and CHRIST."

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found."

We count upon the Word of God to carry its own message to the hearts of those who read.

Since Bognor our brethren with the van have been engaged in ministry at Deal, and principally at Mill Hill, a mining colony adjoining the town. A concentrated effort by prayer, visitation and open-air work has been made, and although the visible results so far are not large, we believe that substantial progress has been made, and particularly amongst the children souls have been won to the Lord. Our brethren have gone forth with a message of no uncertain sound—they are preaching a Living Christ, who was crucified, raised from the dead, and is coming again as LORD of all, and we have no doubt at all that the Lord has been using, and will yet use, to His glory in not a few hearts the faithful ministry that has been fulfilled through them. There will yet be a reaping from so much devoted sowing. The work has been severely tested along the lines of discouragement, indifference on the part of the people—often more difficult to face than opposition—and some sickness amongst our brethren, but we rejoice that the ministry persists in strength. Much open-air work has also been carried on in Deal itself, and we believe for fruit from this also.

As we write, our brethren are continuing, and we shall value prayer for them, that the Lord may give them to complete the work for which He took them to Deal, and then guide them on their way for the remaining weeks of the summer season.

America.

Our two brethren, Mr. Sparks and Mr. Speedy, left this country on June 20th for the U.S.A., having in prospect a period of ministry in that country until the end of August. Ministry was fulfilled at Darby, Swarthmore, Hephzibah Heights (two Conferences), and Grand Rapids. The conditions of extreme heat that prevailed throughout made for very real difficulty on the natural level, but the Lord gave enablement and strengthened for a living ministry on every occasion. Mr. Sparks was all the time suffering very much physical pressure, apart altogether from the added strain of the prevailing local conditions; and when at Erieside on July 18th, after his third message in that Conference was compelled to

relinquish further ministry, and rest. A grave development in his physical condition ensued, and he was very seriously ill for some days. By the goodness of God he was restored sufficiently to make the journey back to this country, arriving home with Mr. Speedy on August 18th. Our brother's condition has been an exceedingly critical one and we are profoundly thankful to God Who has spared and restored him to us. He is slowly regaining strength, but unless the Lord does a special work of quickening in him, it does not appear that he will be sufficiently well to undertake active ministry for some time to come. We shall greatly value the prayers of all who read this that our brother may be strengthened and restored to his ministry as soon as it may please the Lord.

Our friends will understand, in the light of the above, the delay in the publication of this issue of the WITNESS AND TESTIMONY, and also the omission of certain articles due to be continued from former issues. Mr. Sparks will complete those in due course as the Lord may give him strength and opportunity.

The Lord gave our brother Speedy a very precious ministry while there, and it is probable that he will return to the States at an early date to continue.

We should like to extend our very warm gratitude to the many friends in America who showed such great kindness to our brother Sparks in his time of sickness. G. P.

Acknowledgments

APART from local gifts, the following sums were received between June 1st and July 31st towards the expenses of this paper. We desire to express our gratitude to God and to His servants who remitted the contributions:—

New York, 8s., 14s., and 5s.; Foochow, China, 5s.; Sauvois, France, 8s.; Dublin, 5s.; Boyle, I.F.S., £1; Edinburgh, 6d. and 2s. 7½.; Duffus, Elgin, 3s.; Cardiff, 2s.; Blackpool, 1s.; Bourne-mouth, 2s.; Burnham, Bucks., 2s. 6d.; Birmingham, 10s.; Cardington, 2s. 6d.; Derby, £1; Dou, 3s. 6d.; Eastbourne, 10s. and £1; Horne Bay, 6s.; Jarrow, 2s. 6d.; Loughton, 7s. 6d.; Liverpool, £1; New Barnot, 2s. 6d.; Newcastle-on-Tyne, 10s. 6d. and 2s. 6d.; Parkstone, 10s.; Stafford, 2s. 6d.; Turbridge Wells, 3s. and 2s. 6d.; Weymouth, 5s.; Woking, 3s.; Wolverhampton, 5s.; Willesden Green, 3s.; Upper Norwood, 5s.; Cranston Road, S.E.23, 2s. 6d.—Total, £11 17s. 7½d

“That Which is Born of the Spirit”

“The Image of His Son”

Message as Spoken

READING.—Philippians iii. 1-21 ; Romans viii. 29 ; 1 John iii. 2 ; Galatians iv. 19 ; Philippians iii. 12, 20.

I HAVE it on my heart, beloved, that these days before us we shall in the will of God, be occupied with “That which is born of the Spirit,” or “The New Creation in Christ Jesus”; and this morning, for a little while, we want to set the object in its place, or in His place, and see exactly what it is toward which the Lord is moving; what we might call the pattern in the heavens. We are familiar with that phrase, we know to what it relates in the Old Testament, and I think by now we know that that pattern in the heavens, according to which all things were made in relation to the tabernacle of old, was but a revelation of Jesus Christ, and that tabernacle was the Lord Jesus in His many-sidedness, right to the very last detail; an expression of the mind of God. We know that in the letter to the Hebrews that is taken up again, but there this difference is made that, whereas in the Old Testament it was a pattern of things in the heavens, here it is the very things themselves, and you are introduced to the very things by the first words of that letter, “God who in old times spake unto the Fathers in divers portions and divers manners, hath in the end of those times spoken in His Son,” and the whole theme of the letter to the Hebrews is the Lord Jesus Christ as the consummation of the whole of the Old Testament revelation. He in Person gathering up consummately all that God had before spoken, and thus not being a part, or parts but being the whole; not being a shadow or a type, but being the very thing itself. So truly, the Lord Jesus is the pattern and the reality toward which God is working; and we want now, immediately, to get that Object into its, or His place, because until that is so we shall be held to something less; we shall have an inadequate objective and dynamic for our lives here on earth. You recognise how true that was in the case of the Apostle himself. You remember that in Acts ix. he suddenly was met on the Damascus Road

by the Lord in Glory. To his own consternation and amazement he discovered that that light above the brightness of the sun was Jesus of Nazareth, now exalted to the Right Hand of the majesty on high, now glorified. That was Paul’s first view of the Lord Jesus so far as we know. It was Christ in the glory. Philippians iii. is the practical consequence of that. That is “Things which were gain to me those I counted loss, yea, and I do count them but stuff to be flung to the dogs, that I might be found in Him.” Tremendous statements—to gain Christ. The Lord Jesus is given to the sinner on the ground of repentance and faith; given, but Paul had come to a position where he saw that that which had been given had now got to be gained. Two realms of things, equally true. There was a gain of Christ far beyond the gift of Christ. Gift of Christ unto salvation; gain of Christ unto glorification in the fullest Witness.—That which is born of the Spirit. sense. Philippians iii. is the practical outworking of Acts ix.

So many honestly think that all that matters is that you should be saved and if you are saved you are done for ever and you can get on with saving others. It is important to be saved, but the Word of the Lord makes it quite clear that to be saved from hell, saved from sin, to be saved from judgment, is only the beginning of things and that you may have that and miss the very great purpose for which you were saved. So that out of twenty-seven books of the New Testament twenty-one are given up to leading believers into the fullness of Christ. A striking fact. There is this little parabolic element in the truth that we have just noted about Paul seeing Christ on the Damascus Road, when he saw the Lord Jesus in glory; in that moment he lost his natural sight and was blind and they led him by the hand into the City.

Beloved, that is a very good thing. Probably it meant much infirmity to Paul for the rest of his life; we have traces that eye trouble followed him right through. But, spiritually, that is a very good thing, that we should get such

a vision of the Lord Jesus in glory as to lose our natural sight. To have no eyes from that moment onward for anything but Him. To lose our eyes for things of the world, of the earth, for all that is less than Himself, and that you should gain spiritual vision which far transcends all the vision of the natural man, and those who have had a little bit of the revelation of the Christ glorified know how true this is, that they have no taste for anything else, that He fills their vision, and it is true that "things of earth have grown strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace." We need to get the object fixed then immediately. Christ in glory, and Christ in glory as the pattern man according to God's heart. That brings in another factor that while He is there as Very God in the Godhead, and having all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him in bodily form, and while He occupies that place with the Name of Jehovah upon Him, it is equally true that He is there as man. He is the Man in the glory. He is the glorified man, He is the first born of many brethren. God has taken a man into the glory, and He has there consummated in the very person of the Lord Jesus man according to His own heart. We see what was God's thought before ever man was created and before the world was; when He contemplated bringing man into being He had a thought, a conception, a mind for that Being and that mind is revealed in the Lord Jesus when you see Him in the glory. That is man according to the original thought and intention of God, and the Lord Jesus is there as the pattern man according to God's heart, and unto that pattern God is working in and with all those who have come into His Hands for His pattern. It is a tremendous thing, and were the scripture not here to prove it, it is far too big a thing for a man to dare to say. Here it is "whom He foreknew, them He foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son." That is a positive statement; and then literally "we shall be like Him for we shall see Him"—not as He was but—"as He is." Not conformity to Jesus of Nazareth as on earth, it is conformity to Jesus in the glory glorified with the Father, as He is. God has glorified Jesus Christ and we are called into His eternal glory. What a prospect! And we who do groan in these bodies, and who know the burden of their weakness and infirmity, and who know so much of the awful havoc that sin and the curse has brought into the physical life of the creation,

what a prospect for us when we read Philippians iii. 21: "Who shall change, or fashion anew, the body of our humiliation that it might be conformed unto the body of His glory," not the body of His humiliation, the body of His glory—something to dwell upon with joyful anticipation if you know anything about groaning in the body. The body is only a part of this great work. God begins inside now and is going to finish outside later on. Blessed be His Name. In getting down to this thing more closely, we have to see that the Lord Jesus in His history from the Jordan to the Glory is the history of every believer. The Jordan for Him, His life here on earth, His death and burial and resurrection, His being received up into Glory and being anointed with the Holy Spirit, has a counterpart in the history of every Child of God on one side.

I am not now dealing with the great work which He did in the matter of atonement, in His great redemptive activity when He stood as our substitute and took upon Him our sin, bore it in His own body on the tree, coming under all the billows of God's wrath and coming into the full depths of judgment on our behalf. I am not speaking about that, that is a thing which we do not enter or share in; blessed be God! It is not necessary for us to enter into that at all now. We need not know judgment. There is no condemnation. He has taken that side for us, but there is another side, a representative side where His history is the history of every child of God. That, of course, opens up a very wide sphere which can only be very lightly touched upon in these moments, and we are coming, I think, in these coming days to see the content of that, breaking it up into its fragments. One merely intimates it here, that there has to be a beginning where the entire will of man as man has to be cut off and set aside, and the will of God has to take its place absolutely, and be established and enthroned as the governing law of man's life.

That was what happened at Jordan in the case of the Lord Jesus. At that moment, though having a sinless will, He had nevertheless a man's will, the will of the human, and that as something apart from, something in itself detached from the will of God, and that man's will, the will of the human, the natural will which He possessed was, although sinless, set aside for the will of God at Jordan and there from that moment for him there was the one governing thing of all life in word, and

thought, and deed, in goings and in comings, in acting or in refusing to act, speaking or refusing to speak, going or refusing to go, in the timing of things which He did, now or not now ; and you will call to mind that on every one of these things you have examples of the acts of the Lord Jesus. In all it was a matter of "not My will but Thy will," and Jordan represented Calvary for Him in the matter of repudiation of the natural will of man and the establishment of the will of God ; that He should henceforth not live unto Himself. And so He stepped out and was challenged immediately beyond Jordan on that very question. Challenged upon that matter as to whether He would act out from Himself ; upon the most plausible basis that a man could act upon. You know the enemy very rarely puts it up to you to do a thing which he tells you is sin, but he usually tells you to do a thing on very good ground for doing it. He came to the Lord Jesus about bread and said, in fact, necessity knows no law, necessity requires it, it is necessary to do it, it is absolutely essential. If you have been brought to that position at any time you know how difficult it is. *What* necessity? An earthly interest or a heavenly interest?

That is the question. We have always to look to see if there is any higher necessity than an earthly one and we never discover until we have raised the question as to whether earthly interests are the necessity. If you take an earthly necessity as an argument you become earthbound and get the thing horizontally—it seems to be necessary that I do this. The Lord may see it in another way. Get a heavenly necessity along *that* line. The enemy said necessity knows no law ; but there is a law not of this earth, a law of heaven. So the Lord Jesus refused to act out from Himself, but always out from God. That was Jordan, and there has to be that crisis when once and for all in every detail of the life it is not going to be a government by the earth, a government by things here, a government by human reason, arguments, necessities, a government by anything that is less than the will of God, to which there is true abandonment. Christ's life from Jordan always was the outworking of that law.

We have to go into that more fully. But those three-and-a-half years from Jordan also have their counterpart in the life of every child of God because there you see a life of absolute dependence upon God for everything, accepted by Him, a voluntary thing but nevertheless

very very real ; absolute dependence upon God, and because of that He is revealing what man is here upon earth according to the mind of God. A man who is God-governed and led in a God-consciousness every moment of his life, that is the earthly life of man according to the mind of God. The Lord Jesus reveals that man who walks here on the earth under the government and control of the Holy Spirit, to Whom he brings everything to get His authority ; to get the mind of God.

As to Calvary ; we do know from much that was subsequently written by the Holy Spirit, especially through one apostle, that Calvary is to have its counterpart in the life of every believer and in a very deep way, and while something to be accepted once and for all, it is to have an abiding meaning for every day. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in the dying body." That is Calvary on both sides. Then being received up ; We have much to say in these coming days about the heavenly life of the believer, but there is the necessity for us to be received up now and come into everything of this from above. The next thing is this—there are a lot of people who stumble on this thing ; that the Holy Spirit has come with the pattern, as it were, in His eye ; He has seen the Lord Jesus in glory, He has seen the Man in the glory according to God's heart, perfected. The Holy Spirit knows that pattern through and through, every detail, and He has come, and if we are truly born-from-above-children-of-God, He is in us and now, what the Holy Spirit is here to do is to work that pattern inwardly that we might be conformed to the image of God's Son. The point where so many people stumble is that they are trying to imitate an objective conception of Jesus ; they get some objective idea of this wonderful Man, this beautiful life with loving acts and kindly words, and they have Him objectively, and try to imitate that life outside of themselves. Very noble, very good, but altogether inadequate. The imitation of Christ is not that. It is not a matter of outward activities, in the first instance. The Apostle puts us perfectly right on that in Galatians i. 16, "To reveal His Son *in* me." Beloved, you are not to go out to proclaim to men that they have to imitate Jesus Christ. There is a standard which God has which no man—apart from the mighty energies of the Holy Ghost—can attain unto. The standard of Christ cannot be reached in any

energy of ours. Imitation is a poor thing. What we need is a new conception, a new operation inside. The Holy Spirit is here to make this inward, and blessed be God for that Gift—the Gift of the Holy Spirit. It is a great thing to know that a very member of the Godhead has come and taken up residence in every child of God, not to make them Gods in themselves, but to conform them to the image of His Son. Not to bring into them Deity, and to transfer to them Deity, but to make them like unto the man in the glory, and the effect is that the Christ in the glory is also now the Christ within, the hope of glory. That is our hope, and we have no other hope of glory other than that He is already inward. This whole thing is gathered up in all the energies and possibilities and capacities of the Holy Spirit; gathered up and resident within, and if we let the Lord have His way He will do His work.

Having said that much, I just want to say perhaps in closing this which is a preliminary of what we have before us in the coming days, that this great dominating objective of God, to have all the sons coming to glory conformed to the image of His Son, is the explanation of all the Lord's dealings with us here; all the conditions of our lives which He has allowed to remain; all the strange experiences through which we go; all the deep trials which form part of our life; everything in the providence and in the sovereignty of God where we are concerned has its explanation in the light of the thing which God has in view, and unless you recognise that, beloved, you have not got the dynamic to carry you through, you have not got a sufficient motive for going on. Take the matter of service, ministry, the work of the Lord unto which we are called. Anyone who is really in spiritual ministry, really in spiritual work for the Lord, knows how difficult it is, how hard, intensely hard, growingly hard it is. It is fraught with difficulties of almost every kind and one thing so real in this is the activity of the enemy apart from and beyond what men do themselves of themselves (if ever men do any thing of themselves. I am not quite sure that they do).

Apart from what you might call the ordinary difficulties of life, and the work of the Lord, there are these extra difficulties where the enemy seems to have so much hold, and this whole situation of service would seem so often to say that the enemy is so strong, that the Lord has great difficulty in getting His work done. Do

you believe that the Lord *has* great difficulty in getting His work done because of the enemy? This is something to face. There it is—the devil has a lot of liberty and seems to have a lot of power, and he makes great difficulties which constitute for the Lord's servant a very hard and strenuous time. That is true, isn't it? It seems that the Lord is up against something that He can hardly cope with, that the Lord is face to face with a situation that is full of almost insuperable difficulties. That is NOT the argument at all. Why has the Lord left the enemy here and given him such liberty, such a degree of power? Why does He allow our steps all the time to be met by these difficulties? Why is it that in the way of the Lord's will you meet something which brings you to a standstill? Why, if God is God on the throne, and the Holy Ghost is infinitely strong and mighty?—This is the problem for so many people. The explanation is this. Not on the side of the enemy at all, not on the side of the Lord; the explanation is in us. The Lord is seeking a conformity to the image of His Son, and every difficulty and trial and obstruction and activity of the devil, is to draw us out to God and develop the features of the Lord Jesus in us. Spiritual ascendancy, faith, the mighty faith of the Son of God. The features of Jesus Christ. The love of the Spirit. All these features of Christ have got to be fully developed in us. So the Lord thinks it worth while to let the enemy carry on and allow us to have difficulties, sorrows and sufferings, even while we are living in an absolutely sovereign mighty Lord.

It is to bring out the features of Christ, and until you have got that you have not got the power to go through. If you begin to say the Lord is not with us, not able to meet this, or the power of God is not manifested, you have a lesser object and you begin to circle round yourself, not Christ in the Glory to Whom the Holy Spirit is trying to bring you into conformity. It is necessary to get your objective and see what the Lord is seeking to do with His children and how he does it. You cannot conform anyone literally to the image of another in any other way than by bringing them through experimentally. The thing is not done by teaching, doctrine, or by being preached at: you have got to go through it, and the whole fabric of our being has got to be reconstructed according to Christ. On the one side there has to be a breaking down of all that is otherwise in order, that there might be a constituting of that

which is of the Lord Jesus. The Lord give us our object, that is what I am after this morning ; to see the Lord Jesus. Don't you become spiritually introspective and get yourself as the object in view. No! Don't you have *your* spirit always before your eyes, and analysing it. We have been saying lately that if we become occupied with ourselves, that is self-conscious, and self-consciousness is weakness. Self-consciousness in every form is weakness. We want to be occupied with the Lord Jesus.

O that there might be for us a vision of the man in the glory. Christ glorified—and that we could see that because God has got Him there, having taken him through Hell, through death

and the grave, and through all the judgment of God—God has got Him there—that is a triumph, and He is the first of a large number who are going to be there with Him. He is going to get us there. We are in Christ in the heavenlies, but we have to approximate to where we already are ; we have to get to the place where we already are ! He has got His Son in the glory and that is His supreme and His all-inclusive triumph. It includes our triumph, His triumph for us. So may the Lord lead us on from place to place in the train of His triumph to celebrate His victory over the enemies of Christ. T. A.-S.

(To be continued.)

The Recovery of Spiritual Power

One of a series of Conference Messages : as Spoken.

Readings : — Judges 2-7,23 and 3-1,31. Ephesians 1-17. II Corinthians 4-4,6,7.

BELOVED, I feel that the Lord has a very important thing to say to us at this time in connection with this great matter of the recovery of spiritual power. It is a word which, given utterance by the Holy Ghost, and enablement to spiritually apprehend it, I am sure is going to mean a very great deal for the Lord. It has to do with the matter of spiritual knowledge. Remember, we are occupied with the matter of spiritual power, and unto spiritual power, spiritual knowledge is a tremendous thing. If you will quickly reflect upon the passages we have read, you will see that that is the thing that is in all of them. Go back to the passages of Judges, remembering that the book of Judges represents universal weakness, complete failure and impotence, absolute inability to deal with the forces of evil ; and as we have read, one of the things, the basic things to that condition was that a generation which had experimental knowledge of the activities of God had passed away, and another generation which knew not experimentally the works of God took its place. You do not conclude from this reading that this generation knew nothing of the works of God ; it would be impossible for them to be in the succession of that generation without knowing, as a matter of history, what had taken place in the experience of their fathers, but the conclusion is that they knew nothing of it experimentally. That is, they were not in living touch with it,

not spiritually a part of it. They knew all about it, but they knew not the Lord or His mighty works as present things in their experience. The spiritual reality of that history had not been carried on into their history, and that led to the condition as presented in this book of Judges.

When you come to the passage in Ephesians you remember that you are in the heavenlies, and that the issue of the Ephesian letter, the grand climax is the making effectual in the believers at the end, of what was true in the case of Christ at the beginning. God raised Him up and set Him in the heavenlies at His own Right Hand, far above all rule and authority, principality and power. That is true in the case of the Lord Jesus, and He is there. All that lies between that in the first chapter and the great climax of chapter six is intended to bring Saints to that position experimentally, where their wrestling against principalities and powers is made effectual as was Christ's. That is the issue of the Ephesian letter, that we also in the heavenlies in Christ, in contact with the spiritual hosts of wickedness, know something also of that ascendancy over them in Christ. Now then, in relation to Christ's position and our approximation to that, you find that one of the first things is spiritual knowledge. "The eyes of your heart being enlightened that ye may know." Ye may know. "The Father of Glory may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. His Son"

—spiritual knowledge. When you come to the Corinthian passage which we read, you notice a tremendous thing said there, "That the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God and not of ourselves." What is the exceeding greatness of the power? It is said to be the treasure which we have in earthen vessels. "God hath shined into our hearts to give the knowledge . . ." It is a revelation of Jesus Christ. That is spiritual knowledge. It is the Lord, of course. But not the Lord as outside of our understanding, outside of our knowledge. The Lord as revealed. The Lord. All that He is and all that He has may still be detached from us and therefore ineffective. The link between us and the exceeding greatness of the power that is in Christ is the link of spiritual revelation. That is it. That you may know . . . The thing that brings all that Christ is into practical operation in us and through us is a revelation of Him. Now we are told here, that against that (not against what Christ is—that is a hopeless undertaking for the enemy. He has enough good sense not to attack that. Not against all that the Lord Jesus is at the Right Hand of the Majesty on High; not against that) against that revelation coming into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, the whole power of the enemy is set. "The god of this age hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest . . ." Lost that should be revealed to us by the Holy Ghost, and in us by the Holy Ghost; because the enemy knows that once a person, or people, have a spirit of revelation in their own hearts of the Lord Jesus, his ground is lost and his power is weakened. Well, that becomes a practical matter when God shines into our hearts, when it is a matter of spiritual revelation and spiritual knowledge, and so one comes back to say this thing of such importance, that a great secret of spiritual power is spiritual knowledge. This is where we are helpless.

I am helpless ministering, speaking. This is where everybody is helpless who wants to minister in these things. Giving a mental assent to things said, and recognising mentally, assenting that it is the truth, does not imply that you have got it all. We can nod our heads until they ache and still be as impotent in this matter as a child could be. That is the helplessness of the thing. You cannot get over it by talking. It has got to happen, it has got to take place. When that takes place there is something set up for God that is mighty. It is

a long journey sometimes from the knowledge of the truth, as truth in words, in systems, in the Bible, in our heads, to the making of that living, mighty, effectual as a very part of our being. Sometimes it is a very painful journey: it is never a journey taken without a good deal of suffering and a good deal of cost. This revelation, in order that it may get through, is withstood by the god of this age. He does not withstand our having truth in a formal way, intellectually, but he does withstand our having revelation by the Holy Ghost, and sometimes he just turns the point just there where the thing said is assented to, and we agree with it, and in our agreement with it we think we have it and we know that now, instead of our going away with it and saying "Now Lord this has to become very life." There has to be deep exercise on the ground of every bit that is given to us from the Lord. Not that we have had an address or message and it is all very beautiful, wonderful. You know just how far that is might, power, how deep that thing has gone, whether it is in the mind or the very being. It has got to be wrought into the very fibre of the being. Until that is done it is powerless truth; it is not realised truth, effectual truth, not revelation, therefore it is powerless. Again, the proof of the value of anything is in its potency over against the forces of evil, and it is no use taking formulas from the Word of God and trying to apply them in a general way indiscriminately and quote scripture. You cannot take something out of the Word of God just as a doctor may take something out of the pharmacopoeia and try and apply it to any case which has certain symptoms and see how it works. It does not work. You have got to prove this thing out in a very real way. It has got to become a living thing and by the Holy Ghost to touch the specific need to produce results. That comes out of life.

Many of you will possibly be, in the will of God, going out into spheres of service for the Lord. You will be going out with a considerable amount of knowledge of the Scriptures and of the various doctrines contained in the Scripture. Going out, perhaps, with a great deal of truth, what you might call "light." Oh, I do want to urge upon you, I want to warn you, I feel the Lord wants to say this to you—that that is not good enough. You are going to be worsted if that is all—you are going to be beaten and flawed. You are! The one thing, beloved, that is going to do the work is that that is in

you by revelation of the Holy Ghost born out of a very deep exercise with God, the result of a secret history with God in the depths of your being where perhaps through travail, anguish and much suffering that thing has become your very life: has saved your life, has become the very foundation of your eternal hope. That is the only thing that is going to meet the situation. There is plenty of teaching in the world to-day. Plenty of truth going about, but oh, without judging or criticising, may we not go so far as to say that a very great amount of it is not doing the work, is not registering the impact of the Throne of God upon spiritual situations, and this concerns you and it concerns me. You get out a little more, and the more you get out into this ministry the more heart-sick you will become of your own teaching, of meetings, of conventions; wearied of speaking, talking. Your one groan and cry will be: oh, that the Word shall get through and do something—smashing and breaking! There must be something done by the Word. The thing has to come home to the consciences of the people.

That has ever been the true effect of the Word of God in the Spirit; not merely information to the mind, but the smiting of the conscience, and unless the conscience is smitten the word will fail, and that never happens until the word goes forth in the power of the Spirit; and the vessel, though in itself of clay, must have that thing within, not as something without. I am afraid that you are going before men suggesting the atmosphere of the study rather than the atmosphere of the Holiest of all. The impression made upon them and the apprehension of what you are saying is—"this man has been studying his Bible, reading a good many books on the Bible, has a technical knowledge of the Scriptures," etc. It is no good. It does not do the work. Suffer the emphasis. I am desperately in earnest about this thing. Though it is the truth, it is not revelation, that is in life, in the power of God. Do not neglect the study of the Word, but remember that is only a means of the Holy Ghost, and if you think that to come out with a wonderfully arranged and got up address will do the work, it will fail. It is not revelation. It has got to come through by the Holy Spirit in an inward illumination and, beloved, that does not come as you sit down with your Bible and say "now revelation." That comes through terrific exercises, troubles, deep waters—you must go through things—when you are brought in yourself to despair—

then the thing becomes life and you begin to understand the Lord. You know that the people, the generation through which God did things was the generation who experimentally knew the Divine power, and the generation in utter weakness, though possessing all that history, is the generation which does not know the Lord experimentally. The generation that went through things, through the Jordan, through the knife, and through whom the knife went at Gilgal—that generation knew, and God did mighty things with that generation at the beginning. A generation which knew not the Lord is the book of Judges. I am certain of this, we are not going to be able to carry on unless on the ground of an inwrought revelation of the Lord Jesus. There is more in that than appears in the words. We are going through experiences where, if we do not know the Lord in a real, living way we shall have times which will seem to prove that God is not what He says He is; seem to prove that Christianity, the Christian life, is all a mockery. It is true. You can have experiences which seem to prove that the Christian life is anything but what it is said to be. Prayer! Well, prayer is not answered. What you feel you have a right to expect of the Lord you do not get. You will have experiences that, unless you know the Lord, you will not go through, for it seems that everything in the faith has broken down. It is not a question of externals, but how much in your own heart you know the Lord. A little bit of true revelation, spiritual knowledge, will go much further than a whole mountain of truth mentally apprehended. I say this is where everybody is helpless to speak of these things. It is a thing you cannot convey to anybody, it is spiritual knowledge. But you can point it out—you can say "This is a thing about which we must go to the Lord." Take this whole question to the Lord, and for us it must never be that we have heard so many things in the Word of God, but we must go back to the Lord: "Now Lord, I believe it, I agree with it, but I know that between that and that thing becoming a mighty operative force working through me out to the forces of darkness there may be a gap." So to-day we find this situation, that many people have a lot of the truth and very little of the power of it. Not only is the power lacking, but there are terrible contradictions in the life running alongside a lot of truth. It is a matter of our secret history with God. What goes on inwardly, things deep

down in our being back of our public life. Oh, the snare of public life. The snare of public life is this, that in the service of the Lord we have got to have something to say. We will get it, get something to say; go and prepare something, study something, write something, put something together, and say this is the message of the Lord. It is nothing of the kind. It is something we have got up for the occasion because it is expected of us. It has got to be a message for the time and woe betide the man who speaks for God who has not been given the message for the time. We have got to get to the place where we refuse to speak unless God Himself has spoken in us for the occasion. This needs courage, but it means emancipation. That is power. That is the word. If really we see the meaning of this we have got a key to spiritual power. For myself, you will allow this personal word—I am not speaking about something I am getting up for this Conference. There are plenty of other brethren to speak if the Lord does not give me the message, and I assure you that I refuse to speak at a gathering where the Lord has not given me a message for that gathering. You do believe that what I am saying to you is a matter of life and death to me? This is born out of experience. Yes, out of some depth of experience, so deep that if the Lord had not brought us through we would never have got through. One of the most precious things is the question of revelation. Not extra to the Word of God, but what is the mind of the Lord back of the Word of God.

This matter of spiritual knowledge is a tremendous factor in the matter of spiritual ministry and power. I believe that it is that which will account for very much of what the Lord is doing in secret; and let me say again, that in this present time, in this present age, the greatest works of God, almost entirely, are hidden works, a secret thing. The devil's constant attempt through this ago has been to draw out Christianity and make it a popular movement, a public thing, attach it to the State or in some way get the mixed multitudes in it; drag it out and make a public thing of it. It is not in this age that the Church will be displayed to God's glory. That is hidden and only the spiritual forces see that. They see it. In the ages to come the Church will become a public body attached to the "State" The Heavenly State! It is a hidden work now, the inwardness of things. Thus you get to Gideon—the vessel of clay, and

the light inside. 2 Cor. iv., 7. The vessel of clay, and in that is the power by which the forces of the enemy are driven off, by the secret thing they carry in the vessel. That is it. That is the power that meets the enemy. Something you have inside. This can be manifested when we are broken. God has shined into our hearts. I do urge upon you that you have much in secret with the Lord. Take the messages of the Lord. Take things that are said, to which you give full mental assent; and do not think that because your mind responds to it that you have it. The test is whether it is working. Whether the enemy knows about it. That is the test. It is a tremendous thing, this question of spiritual knowledge, whether it is on the outside or on the inside. That is the question. Is your spiritual knowledge on the outside? Do forgive me pressing this. I am just afraid of this place. I am tremendously afraid because it is a place where there is a lot of teaching. People who frequent this place, who may have been in this place from the beginning, may have got all the teaching, and yet they are still on the outside of things. They are not counting as vital factors. It is ten times worse to be there than to be without the teaching at all. The very teaching may be your snare. Is it inside with you? Is it all counting? Is it serving the Lord's purpose to drive the enemy out? What is the effect of it? What account does the enemy take of it? What is the meaning of the terrific conflict through which we come before there is going to be a ministry of revelation? It seems as if hell withstands, and utterance is stifled—what is the meaning if the devil is not afraid of something? And, beloved, he has got to be made afraid of every child of God. Not because of themselves but because of what is in them by the Holy Ghost. Not what is on them, not what they assent to mentally, but what they know. The very power of the Holy Spirit is IN THEM.

Three hundred are better than thirty-two thousand if the three hundred have got the vessel and got the treasure of the exceeding greatness of the power. I think it is a tremendously impressive thing to note that when you come to Gideon there is a big emphasis upon the magnitude of the enemy. The Holy Spirit does not hide the magnitude of the enemy when He has got what He wants to meet it: So the Holy Spirit causes it to be written: "The Midianites and the Amalekites, and all

the children of the East like locusts for number."

The Holy Spirit leads you into the magnitude of the enemy, but what is that—when the exceeding greatness of the power is with those three hundred men? They went out into the dark with earthen vessels and a lamp as the strategic instrument of victory; for remember swords were not drawn—a havoc of the sword was not wrought until the enemy was already in confusion and defeat. It was the light that did the business, and the cry of faith. They had got the thing inside. Well now, the Lord give

it to us within. Not that we shall be always studying our own spirit, taking about what we have in our spirit, but let us move in a certain knowledge of the Lord. It is not the vessel, it is the Lord. It is the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ in our hearts: and this is the gospel of the glory of Christ. The fact that He is in glory with all that it contains and implies is the Gospel. The Gospel of the Glory of Christ shines into our hearts. This is the power. May the Lord make this more than words to us for His Name's Sake.

T. A.-S.

For Boys and Girls

The Gospel on the Railway (No. 2)

The Parable of the Express Engine

IN our last story we were telling of the humble little tank engine that was so happy in helping other engines, even though they received all the credit and he received none. You will remember that a part of his work was that of helping the big engines by pushing the heavy trains up the hill.

As I stood upon the platform after my little tanker friend had run off to his other work, another train arrived pulled by one of the great engines. It had come a long journey and as the passengers (especially the boys!) walked off the platform they looked admiringly at the engine that had made such a splendid run. It truly was a fine engine and I felt as I looked at it that it was fit only to be used for the great express trains—to use it to run an ordinary local would seem like an insult to it!

I walked away again to the other end of the train and presently another fine engine like the first one came and was coupled to the train, ready to pull it away on its next journey to the seaside. The passengers boarded the train and presently it was off. The engine in front pulled finely and quickly speed was gained. But I was so surprised to find, as the rear of the train reached me, that there was the first big engine, not coupled to the train but pushing with all its might at the back—just as the little tanker had done before. It stopped near me and the train went on out of sight.

"I say," I exclaimed to the engine, "do you mean to tell me that you lower yourself to do

the same work as that little tanker over there? Aren't you one of the great express engines?"

"Yes, I am," replied the engine, "but what difference does that make?"

"Well," I said, "think of the dignity of your position. You will be despised if you descend to such common work as this. Why, all the boys in England know you as one of the great engines of the Southern Railway. It would never do if they learned that you did ordinary jobs like a tanker."

"I see," replied the engine, "but what would have happened if I had not done so? Did you notice the length of the train which has just gone out? Don't you suppose some help was needed in getting it up this hill? And who would have helped if I had not? You see, I was the only engine at the back of the train; and if I had failed nobody else could have taken my place."

"No," that's true enough," I said, "but really, aren't you rather put out at having to do it?"

"Not a bit," replied the engine, "you see there are others besides myself to be considered—there is the Company to whom I belong, and there are all the passengers who were in that train, eager to get to the seaside. Besides, greater ones than I, who had a right to a far higher name and place than myself, have humbled themselves far more than this in order to render help to others."

"Ah, you are quite right," I said. "I remember that it is written in God's Word concerning the Lord Jesus that though He was 'in the form of God' He 'thought it not a thing to be grasped to be equal with God but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and...humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross' (Phil. ii. 6-8)."

"That sounds very interesting," said the engine. "Why did He do that? And did He lose in the end by lowering Himself to such an extent?"

"Indeed He did not," I replied, "for it goes on to say that because He thus humbled Himself 'God hath highly exalted Him and given Him the Name that is above every name.' And by humbling Himself as He did He has made a way whereby He may bring many sons to glory with Himself."

"Then the way of service is the way of denying yourself, and putting aside your own dignity and rights even though you are not compelled to do so?"

"Yes," I answered, "the Lord Jesus Himself taught so, and that is what He Himself did."

"And that is what you have seen me do this afternoon," said the engine. "We all work on that basis on our railway. It would be impossible for us to carry on otherwise. Just you imagine the confusion there would be if each of us engines decided what work we would do and if we refused to do certain work to which the station master appointed us. Why, we should never get our work done—and how the good name of our Company would suffer! Just look, for example, at that great 'Lord Nelson' engine over there in that siding. It has stood patiently there for quite a long time doing nothing."

"Yes, I have noticed it," I replied. "I have been wondering why it has not been doing any work. Perhaps it is out of condition?"

"Oh, no, it is in perfect condition and fit for work, but it has orders to stand by there, to be ready for a certain piece of work presently, and so it is waiting patiently until the time comes."

"But if I were a big strong engine I should want to be tearing along through the country with a long line of carriages behind me," I said.

"Not if you had learnt what we engines have," replied my wise friend. "We have learnt that the only way of fruitful service for any of us, and the only way by which we can all work together in perfect harmony, is by absolute obedience on the part of each one of us to the master to whom we belong. And he is so capable that everything goes perfectly when he has his way. By the way, to whom do you belong?"

"My Master," I replied, "is the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Then learn these lessons from me to-day," said the engine: "The first rule of your service must be utter devotion to Him as Master, saying in all things 'Not my will but Thine be done'—and then doing His will instantly, utterly and joyfully."

"The second is this: that as your Master laid down His life for you, so you must lay down your life for others."

"But . . ." I began.

"No, there is no 'but'" broke in the engine, "Your Master's Own words are final. He Himself said, I believe, 'If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it.' (Matt. xvi. 24-25). Am I right?"

"Yes," I replied, "I remember those words well, and many others like them. It seems to me as if the way to greatest blessing and fruitfulness is to choose always the will of the Lord Jesus Christ instead of my own, and to say in everything, 'Not I, but Christ.'"

"Exactly," replied the engine. "The way of the Cross. Goodbye."

And off he steamed from the humble little service which he had willingly performed at the rear of the long train which he had helped up the hill, and was coupled on at the head of a great West of England express—a fitting honour for one who had humbled himself to the lowest place.

G. P.

The Flesh Profiteth Nothing

A Conference Message

Readings : Isaiah xxx. 1-21 ; xxxi. 1-3.

John vi. 63

It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. We want to see the meaning of the word "flesh." First of all, of course, it denotes *the material of which our bodies consist* and is so used in such a passage as Luke xxiv, 39, where the risen Lord says : "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have !"

Thence it takes a wider implication—the *outward form of human nature* ; and therefore *human nature in its embodiment*. So is it used in Heb. ii. 17, "I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh" *i.e.*, upon all Mankind. Rom. i. 3, "Jesus Christ our Lord was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." ii Cor. iv. 10, 11 "the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." John i. 13, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Rom. viii. 3, "God sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." In all these and many other occurrences in the New Testament the word implies *human nature in its embodiment*.

The Son of God Himself entered into an experience according to the flesh. He became a partaker of human nature, and became embodied incarnate as Jesus. He took not on Him the nature of Angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.

The gracious purpose of God, as he sovereignly overrules the sufferings of His saints, is that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in its moral spiritual beauty and reality now in us ; in the whole of our human nature being transfigured, conformed into His likeness.

Our flesh, the outward embodiment of our human nature is frail, fragile, mortal ; and yet in it the life of Jesus is to be seen. Our flesh is sinful, *i.e.*, our human nature. We as men are sinful. God's Son was sent forth in the likeness of sinful flesh for our utter redemption.

He did not take on Him sinful nature.

Always he was sinless, but He was made like His brethren in the flesh ; He became very man among men in order that, for men, He might put away sin and open the way to God. He became a partaker of human nature in order that

we might be made partakers of the divine nature. He partook of flesh and blood because we, who are the children God has given Him, are flesh and blood ; so He became incarnate. He came into flesh, but He came as the life-giving Spirit, He came as the Beginning of a new creation.

In this wider, more metaphorical sense the flesh is frequently set in antithesis to the Spirit in such a passage as Romans viii. 3-8. In several of these verses Dr. Weymouth renders the word "*our lower nature*" ; but a lower nature suggests the possession of a higher nature ; and men as such are not presented to us in Scripture as having two natures, they are one nature, *viz.*, human nature embodied ; they do not possess in themselves a higher nature—they are *flesh* and the Son of God says that the flesh profiteth nothing. "*Lower nature*" limits the scope of the Word which Scripture applies to man as man, not to a more part of him.

In the Old Testament, as well as in the New, the contrast is made between flesh and spirit. In the prophecy of Isaiah, referred to in our readings, Israel is rebuked for looking for help from Egypt instead of from God : and the Egyptians represent men, not God ; and their horses, flesh, and not spirit. The word which the Lord, through His prophet, pronounces on the people of Israel is that, instead of trusting absolutely and only the Lord they were trusting in human nature. Trusting, leaning on the flesh instead of on the Lord, the Spirit.

So that "*flesh*" means man, *humanity as such* ; not a certain part of man. And this is the purport of the word which our Lord uses when he says, "The flesh profiteth nothing" : *i.e.*, it is unprofitable.

"Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your share, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. The prophet sees the beasts of burden wearily transporting Israel's riches down to Egypt, "to a people that shall not profit them." They spent their money for nothing : the flesh is like that—unprofitable.

Now the flesh, that is

Human Nature, is not altogether an ugly thing.

It is capable of being very beautiful, highly refined. It can be very highly polished, cultured, educated. Unregenerate human nature can be very pleasing, kind, courteous, gentle, lovely, lovable and loving, but, listen! the Lord Jesus Christ says: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, **the flesh profiteth nothing.**" The Apostle gives the reason in Romans viii. 6-8. He tells us that the mind of the flesh, what the Authorised Version calls "the carnal mind," is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God; there is in it a working of lawlessness, something in it that is against God, it is contra-God, it is anti-God; it is not subject; does not yield itself in obedience and humility and worship; **it cannot please God.**

"They that are in the flesh."—What does that mean? Not simply those that are in the body; because there are many people on earth in the body who are pleasing God. The implication is that those, who are simply naturally human, in their human nature, who have not yet received that new divine holy life of God, imparted by the Holy Spirit at regeneration, **cannot please God, are not able to please God.** It does not say they do not want to, nor that they do not try; but that they are not able! However beautiful, sincere, highly polished, religious, philanthropic—this is a terrific word the Lord speaks—**the flesh profiteth nothing.**

Let me emphasise again: the flesh here does not refer merely to the grosser things that we all want to be rid of, the grosser expressions of self-indulgences. No! the word *flesh* as we see it in the New Testament means human nature embodied; and it is unprofitable. Therefore anything of it that comes intruding itself into the work of God is unprofitable; it mars, it hinders. The carnal mind is at enmity against God. Even in our would-be spiritual service there might creep in that which is of our own human nature, that which is of the carnal mind, and it does not, cannot please God.

Something else—Romans viii. 6. **The mind of the flesh is death**—death dealing! It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The activity of the flesh in spiritual service is death and some of us know it. We have struck it in our own ministry; when for some reason or other we have been betrayed into drawing upon that which is our own human nature, drawing upon our own resources and bringing them into the service of God, we have struck death; and other folk who have got discernment have known it. You found the

messenger of the Lord carried on and God had been speaking, breaking into your spirit, and the word had come cutting, sharp, and all of a sudden the sense of God speaking all goes away and you have missed something. What has happened is this—the pure stream of life communicated by the Holy Spirit through the Word has been checked by the mixture of something that was in the carnal or fleshly mind. Similarly in the Christian's walk; if he minds—has in mind, contemplates and purposes, that which has its source in human nature merely and not in God, he misses the life and light of God. He finds himself, not in the life and peace which are his birthright and which mark the minding of the Spirit, but in spiritual deadness, with dulness of heart and sometimes darkness of spirit.

The Word of God is full of illustrations of that principle. Right at the beginning you remember there were two brothers and they were going to worship God; the one kept sheep, and the other tilled the ground. Abel, the one who kept sheep, he came the way of the Spirit, the way of obedience to God. Somehow, at some time, God had spoken a word concerning worship and shown it was necessary that blood be shed; and Abel, hearing the word of the Lord, faith had come into his heart, and by faith he offered a sacrifice which was acceptable. Cain did the best he could, brought the best of the fruit of the garden and spent time and labour doubtless, and he came and offered this to God. He came the natural way, did what he thought, and what happened? God did not accept it. How much there is that passes for Christian service, ministry, work in the world to-day like that—working according to what we feel is a necessity, or according to an ideal, a picture of our own mind!—How many organisations there are in the world to-day that are simply organisations! And what amount of money and effort and sacrifice is being put in to bolster these things up and keep these things running; yet they are profiting nothing; but people are attached to them for sentimental reasons, and they stick to them with all the tenacity of their souls, and try to get them going, and yet they are profiting nothing.

God has a way

of making life and service profitable by bringing in His own life and His Own power, by the Holy Spirit. He quickeneth. He can give life and make ministry fruitful, the preaching of Christ attractive, service profitable. It is the Spirit that quickeneth.

In order that you and I may experience that fulness of life and power it is of necessity we come to agreement with God in this matter, accepting His judgment upon our nature.

There is a reason why the flesh is unprofitable to God, and is dead. It is because at its source and spring in Adam it became tainted and defiled by sin which alienated it from the life of God. There came a day when Adam thus died, in the day of his offence he died to God and became alive to sin: this was before he had a single child. Consequently, every child of his has been born dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the life of God.

This is the reason why the Lord Jesus said to that refined and educated gentleman, the very teacher of Israel: "Ye must be born again"—be begotten from above. For, said He, that which is begotten of flesh is flesh, and that which is begotten of the spirit is spirit. You see you cannot evolve spirit out of flesh; you cannot educate and cultivate flesh into spirit: there is an unfathomable gulf betwixt them, separating human nature embodied in flesh and blood from the Kingdom of God, separating man from his Maker. It was to bridge this impassable gulf that the Lord Jesus Christ came out from God into human flesh, to be the Living Way out from the one into the other. He identified Himself with our nature, and as man for us men, in a body that represented us, He went to the Cross and He died. He stripped from Himself and put off this body of the flesh in that representative act of His dying for us. When He died He put away sin, that is one aspect of His redeeming death, He offered Himself without spot to God—but there is this other aspect. He stripped from Himself that which represented this flesh of ours which is corrupt in God's sight, even as He stripped from Himself principalities and powers. (Col. ii. 10-15).

The dying of the Lord Jesus was not simply a losing of His life, but a mighty, universal, eternal act of God, by which the all-inclusive representative MAN put off the whole of that flesh whose mind is enmity against God, in order that those who come to Him in faith may put on a new man, may become a new creation in Christ Jesus. Here there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision—they are things that belong to the flesh, to human nature. In Christ only one thing profits, that is a new creation. Well, you see that that is not the human nature imitating the Lord Jesus. We

were reminded of that this morning. To be a Christian is not to be trying to live like Jesus of Nazareth, although to be a Christian will mean that we shall live like Jesus of Nazareth; but you cannot be a Christian and live the Christian life until you have become a new creature. Creation is God's act. In that new creation there is not room for the old. The flesh must come to an end. We were reminded this morning that the purpose of God in our wonderful redemption is, in the ultimate, that these bodies are glorified; so it does not mean doing away with the body. The body will be changed but the flesh as a system, as human nature, as that nature that we receive from Adam energised by the life of the soul in the blood, which is corrupt, that must be laid down, exchanged; and the place of exchange is the place called Calvary.

This is not new to any one of us here; but the question is this, beloved friends, To what extent have you and I experimentally entered into this new creation, this new creation in Christ? To what extent have we with purpose of heart, and considered decision and judgment, wholly given our consent, agreement to God, concerning His castigation of the flesh? To what extent have we yielded up that old nature, with all its beauty as well as all its ugliness? Are we prepared to let go?—God knows how to make that letting go of ours effective. To what extent are we willing to relinquish those resources, those possibilities, found in our own natural creation and to become new creatures in Christ. Surely, according to your faith shall it be unto you.

To believe really means to be persuaded. To believe God, to be persuaded by God brings us into that trust which is obedience, or into that obedience which is trust. But how many say they believe, in that they give assent to the Word of God, they acknowledge its truth, but mistake their mental assent to the "judicial" truth for the reality of the experience. That is the tragedy of many in this generation among professing Christian people in Evangelical, and would-be spiritual, circles. What percentage of the Lord's people these days are living in the fool's paradise of mistaking their mental assent to Divine truth for the thing itself? Beloved, the demons believe—and shudder! Faith without works is dead. Faith that is only a mental assent to God's truth is of the flesh, and it profits nothing.

There is that word in II Cor. v. 14, "We thus

judge that if one died for all then all died." God's judgment was upon all at Calvary. **One died on behalf of all.** His death was a representative death for all, in order that they which now live should live not unto themselves but unto Him. **Live unto Him!** Not merely serve Him, do things for Him. It does not say that they should do work for Him, that they should recognise Him and do things for Him on one day out of seven and, for the rest, do the best they can for themselves. It says—that they should live unto Him: which means that the whole activity of the soul in its life stream moves towards HIM.

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea though we have known Christ after the flesh—according to a mental conception and imagination and fancy—yet now henceforth know we Him no more. The Apostle got to know Jesus Christ as Lord in the glory that day on the Damascus road. The glory of Jesus Christ in the throne of God came crashing into his soul and spirit and broke him; and Saul of Tarsus became a new man. The whole of his life system was revolutionised, his contacts and conceptions of men, his family, his religious convictions and traditions, above all

his view of himself, were all broken and re-adjusted; so that he spoke out of the depths of an experience when he said, if any man be in Christ he is a new creation.

This man had become impregnated with a new divine life. God's Holy Spirit had come into him to slay and bring to death that flesh principle, the Adam life which energised his heart and mind to enmity against Christ. He has now been brought, baptised, into Christ; the One in Whom God Himself meets humanity. He now knows what the Saviour promised—"In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you"—**Ye shall know it.**

That is the relationship with God in Christ which the new creation means. Old things have passed away; behold all things have become new, and all things are of God." All things!

May the Lord bring every one of us into such real heart searching and willing renunciation of every trust in ourselves in any shape and form, into such true trust in Himself, that by the Holy Ghost He may be able to manifest the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh; that here and now we may know our union with our Risen Lord as Head of the new creation. P. W. F.

Regeneration

Believing is receiving.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."—John i. 12, 13.

From this portion of scripture it is quite clear that receiving Him (*i.e.*, the Lord Jesus) and believing into His Name, are one and the same thing. To make this the more obvious let us read it like this "As many as received Him, even to them that believe into His Name, to them gave He power to become the children of God." Then as we read on, we see that to become children of God, is to be "born of God," or more literally to be "born out from God."

Confining ourselves to the scriptures before us, regeneration is being born out from God by believing into or receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour.

Believing is not a mere mental assent.

For our further consideration let us take the

clause "born out from God." It has been already pointed out that to be born out from God is to believe into or receive the Lord Jesus Christ. But it must be remembered that believing into is something deeper and quite different from a mere mental assent to the facts of the Gospel. This is illustrated for us in John ii. 22-25. "When Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in His Name when they saw the miracles (signs) which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them." "Many believed in His Name...but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them." Here the Holy Spirit in recording this is clearly implying that Salvation is not a thing, but a person; it is Christ Himself. That being so, these people who saw the signs, though believing in a certain sense, were not saved, for Jesus did not commit Himself unto them.

Believing is a committal.

The two words used in the passage quoted above, "believed" and "commit" come from

one word in the original. So that a saving faith involves a committal of ourselves to the Lord. That immediately presents a challenge to the will, and necessitates an utter and entire abandonment to the claims of Christ. Whilst that is the demand of love in regeneration on the human side, it has a glorious climax on the Divine side. The immediate issue of such a surrender is that the Lord Jesus commits Himself to dwell in the yielded heart. "The mystery which hath been hidden from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest . . . which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory."—Col. i. 26, 27,

It is not Christianity but Christ.

This ought to search our hearts and cause us to enquire whether after all Christ is a living reality *within* us. "Examine yourselves," says the apostle, "whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves; know ye not your own selves that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. xiii. 5).

The Lord did not commit Himself unto those who saw His signs because "He knew all men, and needed not that any should bear witness concerning a man." He knew the individual heart and saw that their faith was based upon what they saw outwardly.

How many there are to-day whose faith goes no deeper than that. Their faith is a question of outward observances. They have got the outward and visible signs, but they lack the great inward and spiritual reality, which is Christ Himself. It amounts to a profession without possession. To the extent of assenting to doctrine or carrying out of certain religious forms, they believe. Yet of such the Holy Spirit would say "but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, for He knew all men."

Out of the many who thus believed on that occasion in Jerusalem, it would seem as if the Lord did not get as much as one soul truly for Himself. Such was not the case, for in the original there were no chapters, so we read on into chapter iii. of the Gospel. "But there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, the same came to Jesus." The Lord secured "one fish" for Himself and that an unlikely one too. We don't know what the proportion was, but it was very small, one out of many, "because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. vii. 14).

Not Judaism, but Jesus.

Nicodemus, being a Pharisee and a ruler of

the Jews, would have been at the Feast, and gone through all the ritual and ceremony, but he was not satisfied. Yes, and he was one of those who beholding the signs which Jesus did, believed, but yet there was a heart longing, so he "*came to Jesus* by night, and said unto Him, "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God, for no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with Him." This courteous address seems to have come to an abrupt end. The Lord anticipated his heart need and broke in with "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see. . . ." In effect the Lord said "Nicodemus, though you are a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, and know so much about the things of God, you are blind." In verse 5 the Lord went on to say "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter. . . ." In effect He said "Nicodemus, even if you could see, you could not enter, though you have been through all the form and ceremony of the things of God." One word sums up what the Lord was teaching this seeker, and that word is *cannot*—"cannot see," "cannot enter." This is developed in 1 Cor. ii. 14 (R.V.), "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

God's Verdict.

The natural man, or man by nature, cannot, he is impotent where the things of God are concerned. This perplexed Nicodemus, and so he began to reason and ask questions. "How can a man be born when he is old?" "Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

How true this is to life, when the Lord speaks, man begins to reason and question. Though the word of God affirms that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" man seeks to be something. He sets his reason against God's verdict, and sets about to establish a righteousness of his own. Yet the fact remains that the natural man cannot do a thing to please God. (This applies as much in the matter of service as it does in the matter of salvation.) Here the Apostle's word to the Ephesians comes in "not of works, lest any men should boast" (Eph. ii. 9).

Two kinds of life.

Though Nicodemus was a religious man, he thought all the time on the natural plane of

'ife, and could see nothing beyond it. He was thinking in terms of a little child being born into this world. In his perplexity the Lord very graciously began to explain "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." In effect what He said was "that which is born of the flesh is one kind of life, and that which is born of the Spirit quite another kind of life. Nicodemus, you are flesh, and that is on the natural plane of life, and you must be brought up on to a spiritual plane." Telling a Pharisee he was not spiritual astonished his already perplexed mind, but the Lord said "Marvel not—do not be surprised—that I said unto you, ye must be born again."

"Ye must be born again."

We have before noted how the Lord said to His enquirer "except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God," and later, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God," but now He says "*Ye must be born again.*" There is a change from the singular to the plural. This is a universal need and a Divine necessity.

It is a *universal need* because the natural man cannot see nor enter the Kingdom, "for all have sinned and are coming short of the glory of God." The flesh cannot please God and he that soweth to his flesh shall of his flesh reap corruption, for the old man is corrupt.

And it is a *Divine necessity* because "the scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Gal. iii. 22), and "in Christ there is a new creation" (2 Cor. v. 17). The old man, the flesh, man by nature, is joined to Adam, and in Adam all died. But the new creation is in Christ, so that all in Him are made alive. By birth we entered the old creation, and by new birth or regeneration we enter the new creation. The governing principle in the old creation is the law of sin, whilst that which governs in the new creation is the Spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus. The one is energised by the spirit which is now working in the children of disobedience, that is "the prince of the power of the air," "the God of this world," or Satan himself. In the new creation all things are out from God (2 Cor. v.), and under the Headship of Jesus Christ (Eph. i. 22).

Relationship is a question of life.

In the physical realm no medicine can cure a dead man, and no law of evolution can make him less dead. What a corpse needs is a new life. Carrying that over into the spiritual

realm, the old man is corrupt and dead in trespasses and in sins. Therefore he is without hope, whether he be rich or poor, religious or irreligious, good or bad, moral or immoral, for there is no difference. The universal need and Divine necessity is *life*. Not natural life but spiritual life. It is another life than that which we possess naturally. In the original language of the New Testament a distinction is marked between natural and spiritual life by the use of different words.

Relationship with God is always on a basis of life and not an assent to a creed nor an attachment to a church. As we have relationship with our human parents by partaking of their very life, so we have relationship with God by being born from above, and possessing eternal life. It is a life union with Christ as members of His Body of which He is the Head.

It is a miracle.

"How?" was Nicodemus' question.

How are we to get from the natural plane of life to the spiritual, from death to life, from the old creation to the new, from Satan to God?

The answer is, it is a miracle which we cannot understand, but we can by faith experience it, by putting all in His Hands, and taking Him by faith. "As the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." It is just as impossible for a natural man to become a spiritual man, as it is for a plant to become an animal. To be born out from God is an Act of the Holy Ghost by which we are joined to the Lord One Spirit. This union is on a basis of life through identification with Christ in death, burial and resurrection.

The Church.

Seeing the true meaning of regeneration it is not difficult to understand what "the Church which is His Body" is, in the mind of the Lord. The New Testament significance of the word "Church" is "the called out" and not an earthly organisation which people join. Then those called out from among the nations form the Body of Christ on the ground of resurrection life, over which He is the Sovereign Head.

The object the Lord has in view in the regeneration of the individual is the building of "the Church which is His Body, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23) "in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into an Holy Temple in the Lord" (Eph. ii. 21, R.V.).

H. F. J.

The Rule of the Heavens

“The Heavens do Rule.” Dan. iv. 26.

No. I.

Daniel iv. 26 ; Romans i. 20 ; Heb. ix. 11, 23, 26.

IT was the rule of the Heavens which Nebuchadnezzar had to come to recognise, the thing to which the Lord brought him in a very severe and drastic way and He said, “Thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.” And it is into the content of the meaning of that great Divine statement that I feel the Lord would lead us at this time. I am more conscious than ever that in order that we may come to a spiritual understanding of this, we need the Holy Spirit to give us very especial enablement. We are speaking of things that will not be understood or grasped only by the Holy Spirit’s very definite enablement. We are going right back to those spiritual principles upon which God has hung everything with reference to Himself—the Heavens ruling.

And the significance of that statement is just this, that, while you may have presented in the Bible a system of things pertaining unto God, with many phases and aspects, many details, many forms of expression, those are not the things. They are only representations of heavenly, Divine, spiritual laws and principles. The earthly things are made after the pattern of things in the heavens, and the earthly things and the natural world for the most part are not the realities. They are only reflections and representations of reality which is heavenly and spiritual. That is why we passed on to Hebrews where that is stated. There was a tabernacle, but it was not *the* tabernacle. And all that was related to the tabernacle was but a representation, a system of sensory expressions given to a great, heavenly system, and it was the embodiment of spiritual laws and spiritual principles. And the type was destined to pass to make room for the realities.

Here is this fact. There is a heavenly system which is entirely spiritual, which cannot for one moment be apprehended by the natural senses, but God has illustrated it by types and figures and various means, never intending that men should take hold of and perpetuate that

which is only a type, but that they should come to recognise that, lying behind all that, there is a spiritual system which God wants them to enter into. We know this in a sense, but we do not recognise it adequately, and because we do not know this adequately Christendom is astray. It has laid hold on representations and made them realities, and so made the earthly thing an end, and failed to see the spiritual principles lying behind everything.

If you are only occupied with the *thing*, you will find sooner or later that that leads you nowhere. It cannot carry you through, and it simply becomes an end in itself. But immediately you get the spiritual principle back of that and are delivered from the mere thing in itself, then you get right through into what is altogether beyond limit. And God is governing by those spiritual laws. It is the heavenly system that is ordering everything. It is what lies behind in the unseen with God that is final, ultimate.

That being the case, we are able to understand why everything that relates to what is utterly of God demands spiritual revelation. It must and can only be revealed by the Holy Spirit, and that means that there must be a spiritual state on the part of the individual. They must be spiritual beings in the truest sense of their nature. That is the statement of Paul with which we are so familiar. He says, that the natural man (the soulical man) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them ; they are foolishness unto him. “But he that is spiritual judgeth [discerneth] all things.”

Everything to the natural man which relates utterly to God is a mystery and can only be apprehended by spiritual revelation on the ground of the man himself having become a spiritual being. It is here you see that mere cleverness is already ruled out. It does not stand here. Intellectual development and power, as such, is set aside. Scholarship, as such, has nothing to do with the things of the Spirit. The natural man cannot come in here, good or bad. Human efficiency cannot come into this realm. The natural man will

count on the things of nature, and so God must rule him out. The proud cannot enter into the things of the Spirit. And yet we do very often come before men as if we knew something. We have here on the earth certain advantages and abilities and we display them before men. That is just the terrible danger of the present system which makes something of man and puts man in a certain place and gives him a position of power over crowds of people.

God beholdest the proud afar off, and when you want the real essence of spiritual blessing you have to come to the one who has been broken and shaken and ground to powder and who in himself is absolutely nothing. And then God begins to pour of Himself through that one and He has got what He wants. What God wants is spiritual people in this deepest sense, wholly spiritual, that He might give revelation and show that the heavens do rule.

Again, this represents the great necessity for everyone who is coming into the things of God essentially: What is the essence of what is from God? That they should come into it from above. You can come to things on the horizontal—through a certain amount of college preparation or other preparation for it, and you can enter into something here on the earth which is called the “ministry,” or you can enter into Bible teaching on the horizontal. You may know it and you may be able to cite it. You are in all the doctrines of the Scripture. You come into it this way because you have “taken it up.” You can come into the church that way. You call it “joining the church,” and when you come in that way, you are not in it at all. You are in a false position entirely. The only way to come into the things which are especially of God is that you have come in in the Spirit and by the Spirit, and by way of revelation.

Then the “ministry” is no longer a matter of churches and pulpits and congregations, etc. The ministry is not governed by anything outward. It is that God has given you a revelation and you have a fire burning in your bones. You have a message from God for the hour in which you live. The heavens are ruling. You may come into the Word of God by cleverly mentally apprehending it, but the Holy Spirit has something back of the Scripture. It is not a wonderful presentation of the Bible to people. When that is over they say, “That was a clever address”; but is there a mighty

change? The dynamic impact of God upon their inmost being—what about that? What does it do with reference to their conformity to the image of God’s Son?

You come into a ministry from above, not horizontally. No servant of God fulfils the full measure of the Divine purpose except as he comes into it from above. And that represents something in the nature of a terrific upheaval in one’s life when you come in that way. This is why imitation is so fruitless. The imitation of Christ is cold, there is no dynamic in it. It is very beautiful and mystical but it does not change the very sub-strata of your being and conform you to the image of His Son. You cannot put things into Scriptural mould and have life. Everything that is of God has got to be wrought out by the Holy Spirit.

There is a great need to-day that there should be the rule of the Heavens. But the Holy Spirit has got to do it, and we have got to come to recognise the fact that what we see in organised Christianity is not it. The spiritual people of God are more and more feeling separated from the old system of Christianity and churches and ecclesiastical systems. People are recognising a deep dissatisfaction with what has held the ground so long, and there is a cry for spiritual reality. Many sermons are clever and full of mental ability, but they are starvation to the spirit. There is all the activity, but it is not spiritual life, and I believe the Lord is going to show us the nature of the thing that is in the heavens. The thing that man has brought down on to the earth and taken up and perpetuated is only at best a poor imitation of things in the heavens, but in a very large realm it is a caricature of heavenly things.

Man has taken hold of heavenly things and brought them down to earth and made them earthly things. That is where things all went wrong at the beginning. At the first, things were of the Spirit. The people gathered in their homes or anywhere. It was not the place. It was not the ministry. It was the Lord, and they were circled around Him. But then the day came when they said, “We must have public buildings,” and then the architecture became a factor, and so things developed, and they became something on the earth for men to take note of. They wanted men to be attracted, and that was the first step in one of the greatest perils that has overtaken the

church. For prestige, recognition, the world to be attracted, there the result that you get the mixed multitudes in the Church. If you can attach some big names to it, you can attract the people, and one of the devil's greatest measures has been popularising the church. The pre-ominent thing is lost, that the church and Christ is a mystery to the natural man and that it is no use to expect the natural man to appreciate it. The church is essentially a spiritual thing according to the mind of God. What really governs everything is God's conception of things, not ours, and if we are going on with the Lord there is going to be a whole system of change and we are going more and more to view things from the heavenly standpoint. You have got to get into the heavenly system to get heavenly results.

The Meaning of "Heavens."

In speaking of the "rule of the heavens" the word "heavens" is uppermost in our thought and we want to understand something of the symbolic meaning of the heavens in the Scripture. The first thing represented by the heavens in Scripture is universality. If you will trace through you will always find they represent universality—the all-pervading, all-encompassing, all-including universality of the heavens. They bound everything. Everything that there is is inside the heavens—no matter what planet you visit the heavens will be outside. It is a universal principle in the very thought of the heavens. It is there that you begin to understand the spiritual order.

That universality is bound up with the Lord Jesus and the Lord Jesus is bound up with it. He is the heavenly One, the heavenly Man, the heavenly Lord. How constantly was He re-emphasising that fact on earth—"I came out from heaven"—"ye are of the earth, I am from heaven," and the use of the word "heaven" or "heavens" by His lips is full of tremendous significance because He is the representative One of all that pertains unto God. This principle represents that which pertains unto God as absolutely universal.

The first chapter of Colossians reveals the wondrous universality of the Lord Jesus sweeping back to the times of eternity, bringing Him on to the time of creation—"by Him were all things created" and "of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things"—sweeping the ages in His Person and leading you on to the timelessness of eternity. The Person of our Lord Jesus revealed in that one chapter

is absolutely universal—all ages, all realms; and Ephesians sees Him as *above* all heavens. The universality of the Lord Jesus Christ is the thought and purpose and intent of God the Father. He, then, is the inclusive representation of all that is of God, and whenever you come into what is of God spiritually you immediately come into what is absolutely universal.

Of course, here is the explanation of the Cross of our Lord Jesus and the crucifixion of the old man and all that is related thereto. The explanation is just this, that that cross represents the bringing to an end, or winding up of what is less than God intended. For things were pulled down to a lower level than God intended. There came in divisions, alienation, circumscribing of man and of things, limiting God and His purpose for man in the world, and the Cross represents the undoing of all that. The resurrection speaks of emancipation into the limitless—into the universal. In the Person of our Lord Jesus it meant He was no longer being bound to those few miles of Syrian soil, time was no longer a factor nor was geography a factor, distance did not come in. The resurrection represents universality because it brings you into spiritual realities—delivered from the flesh and brought into the spirit, delivered from what is of man and brought into what is of God. We may not be caught up in the body like Philip, but there is a universality about our new-creation life and about our ministry. We have lost every form of limitation. Though we may be at this place to-night we are not bound thereby—we can touch every corner of the earth by prayer. We are now set free and brought into the kingdom of heaven's emancipation on resurrection ground. Under the anointing of the Spirit we are brought into the universality of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the explanation of the Cross.

Here the whole question of sonship comes into view. Sonship is always related to the resurrection. In the case of the Lord Jesus He was especially designated the Son of God on the ground of resurrection. This does not mean He was not the Son of God before. Sonship comes in on that ground. This is typified in the Jordan—the Father's voice attested Him the Son on typical resurrection ground. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee"—bound up with the work of the Cross.

What is sonship? It is absolutely universal. If you take up Colossians i. you will see that sonship is timeless. It is related to resurrection, for resurrection is coming out into the timeless and the coming in of timeless life—life that is the life of the ages. That is resurrection life and with it comes sonship which is timeless. You will notice in Ephesians you are taken back before times eternal by way of the Cross and shown that before this world was God had us in view. Romans says the same, and with the revelation of the eternal mind and thought and purpose of God it seems we were there in His thought before the world was. We were chosen of Him—"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." We have been raised together with Him, "and you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." In connection with that the eternity of sonship comes into view—foreknowledge and predestination. Sonship is not merely eternal, it is universal—not merely a thing of this earth but in the heavens. We are now partakers of the spirit of sonship, "Abba Father."

Notice the universality of the birth of our Lord—every universal element enters into His birth. You have the heavens coming in there.

When you come into sonship you come back into the place where God intended man to be originally at the centre of His universe with everything gathered around Him. He was determined in the purpose of God to have dominion over the works of his hands. That will be the end when that one new man—"the church which is His body" is perfected—glorified. All things governed through the church, and everyone who comes into sonship comes into sonship universally. It is a wonderful thing to be made a son—much more than having sins forgiven and being saved from hell. There should be an adequate background to our preaching vocation. Saving from hell is only the first minor step in the great eternal sweep of God's purposes concerning man. Sonship embraces eternity—all ages. "Heirs of God and joint heirs with Lord Christ." Sonship is timeless and universal because sonship is spiritual.

There is nothing merely local in the heavens and the things which belong to the heavenly spiritual system. Everything here according to God has a universal connection according to the thought of God and we must see the universality of everything that is of God.

Paul is a great example. He was peculiarly related to the heavens. When on the road to Damascus the heavens opened and he heard the voice of the Lord. Later he again had a heavenly revelation; then again he was caught up into the third heaven, and how much he has to say about the heavenlies! He was a wonderful example of emancipation from the limitations of earth.

Take him nationally. If this were the only thing it would be a miracle of miracles. Here is that rabid Jew and Judaizer—and there is no more radical a fundamentalist on earth to-day. See what he will do for Jewish tradition and interest. He stands at nothing and flings to the wind every fine sensibility. He had received authority to cast into prison all who were of this way, men or women, there is no fine feeling—he is an utter radical. Here is a young man whose face has been seen to look up into heavenly glory and from his lips were heard the words, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God," but Saul of Tarsus crushed down all that because of his Jewish blood. He was a man like that, but see him afterward an apostle to the Gentiles. See him withstanding Peter because he went in to eat and drink with the Gentiles, but when the Jews were come down he withdrew himself—"I withstood him to the face..." This is the man who will write about the church. It is a heavenly revelation, nothing less, that will change a man like this. It was he who later wrote "where there can be neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female..." where nothing that is of earth has any place. Yet to-day there are spiritual people still on that low level—there has been no loss of earthly distinctions, no vision of one Body. You and I are not Britishers and other nationalities—we are citizens of heaven and you are not knowing me after the flesh but after the spirit. If there is that then there is one spirit—sonship. We find our common ground there. Unity of the Spirit is oneness of the Spirit—that is universality—the heavens are ruling. From God's standpoint they do rule.

This is what brought the Corinthians so much trouble, "every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas," making a choice of men whom they preferred. Because they were circling around men Paul wrote, "I cannot write unto you as unto spiritual but unto carnal." This is a working in of a
(Concluded on page 78)

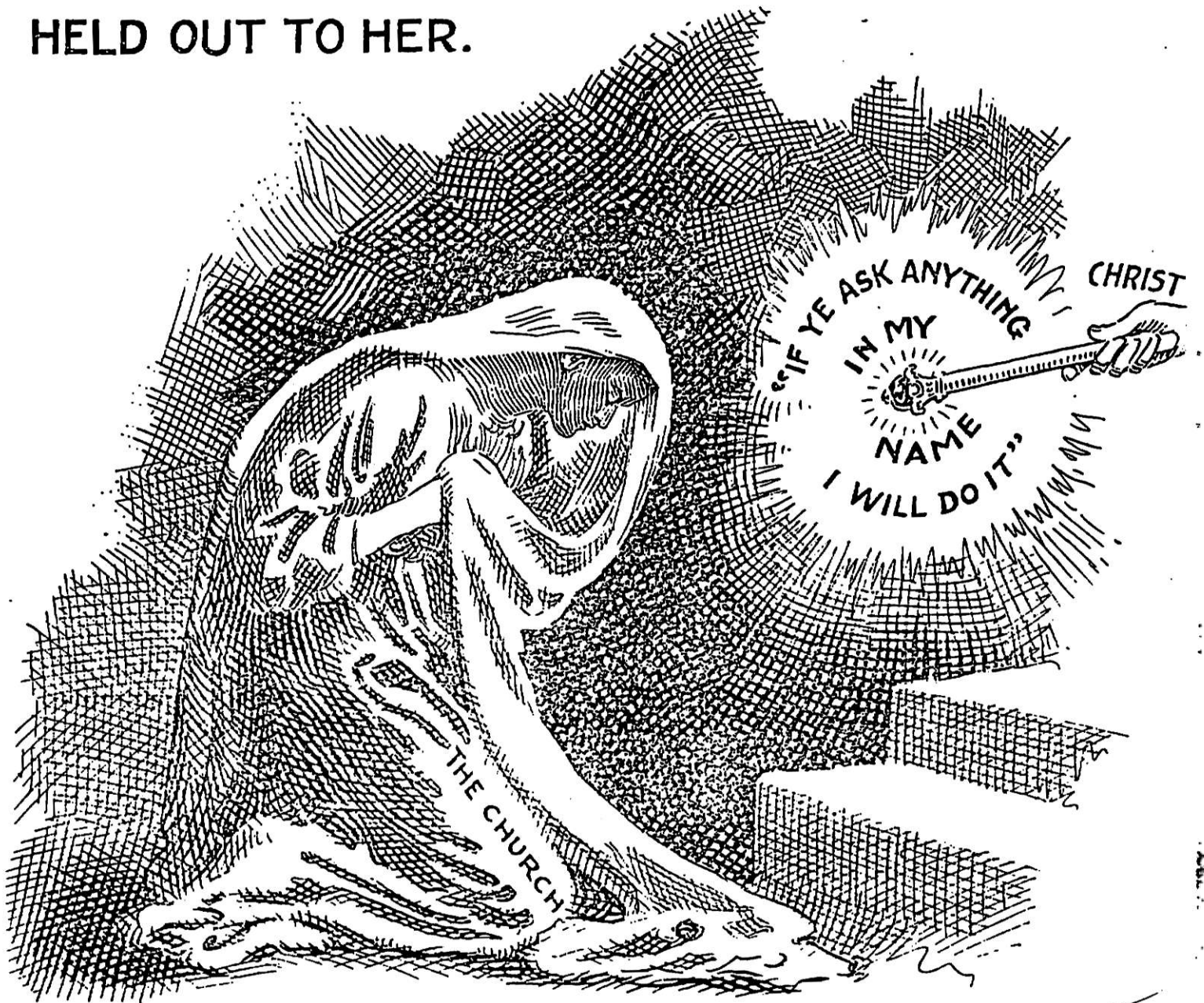
A

Witness and a Testimon

SEPT-OCT., 1931

VOL. 9. No. 5

THE SCEPTRE IS ALWAYS
HELD OUT TO HER.



THE PLACE
OF
MISSION

"A Witness and A Testimony"

EDITORIAL

The 'Witness and Testimony.'

WE have often had enquiries as to the title of this paper. Apparently the two words, "Witness" and "Testimony," convey the same idea to many minds, and the title seems to them to be but a repetition of the same thing. At the time when from being but the magazine of a local church it moved out into its world-wide ministry—a ministry which has continuously grown and is widening with every issue, so that there are very few nations into which the paper does not go—we asked the Lord for a title which would rightly represent the position to which He had brought us. This title came to us very clearly, and we believe from Him.

In Psalm lxvi. 16 we have these words, "I will declare what He hath done for my soul." There are two sides to this. One is the one who is speaking, as personally representing something done by the Lord. The other is the telling forth, or the message which he gives. One is the Witness himself, the other is the testimony given out. It is in this sense that our title is what it is. The Lord has done something, and is doing something in us, constituting us a witness on experimental ground. Out of His dealings with us there grows the message which we have, and so the "Testimony." It is always important to remember that for a message to be vital and effective it must be wrought out and kept closely in touch with the living person or persons who give it. This is not something done and finished with, but something ever deepening and expanding. For a message to be kept in life the messenger must be kept in the path of living experience in relation to the message.

MINISTRIES FROM AMONG US.

Mr. Gresham Speedy.

Our brother Speedy has returned to the United States and will be fulfilling ministry there for a time as the Lord leads.

The marriage of our brother with Miss Irene Rezac looms on the near horizon. Miss Rezac

has served the Lord in Africa for several years, and after their marriage the chief object in view is the going together to that country as the Lord shall direct and open the way.

Friends in U.S.A. who desire to get into touch with them concerning ministry may do so at—Hephzibah House, 51 West 75th Street, New York.

Back from Germany, etc.

We are greatly rejoiced to receive back our sisters, Miss Gerster and Mrs. Norman after their months of ministry in France, Switzerland, Germany, etc. They have had remarkable experiences, and have been led into touch with many hungry and devoted children of God. We are caused to feel that the Lord's people everywhere have much cause to pray earnestly for their brothers and sisters in Christ in these countries. Our sister, Miss Gerster, was laid very low, and it seemed at times as though she might pass to be with the Lord, but He came in and has brought her back to us. This we trust means that she has yet ministry to fulfil. She has been enabled to translate into German two of our books, 'The Centrality of the Cross,' and 'The Release of the Lord.' These have been beautifully printed and are now in circulation.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Foster.

It will be known by many of our readers that our brother and sister Foster were in Amazonia in connection with the World-wide Evangelisation Crusade. They will also know that that work has become divided and a new society has been organised. Our brother and sister had already decided that they could not return to the field under the old society before the new one came into being. They had been coming more and more to see that the New Testament way was the going forth as from an assembly of God's people with that assembly standing behind them in prayer and spiritual co-operation. Hence they found themselves unable to join the new organisation. This, of course, has led to some misunderstanding and has meant the loss of friends and support. However, the Lord has made it possible for them to go forward, and they expect to sail to their new field Colombia, South America, the first week in November.

This makes it necessary for us to offer a word of explanation as to where we stand in this matter of workers going out. Let it be said with emphasis in the first place that we are

not a society or organisation. So far as Honor Oak is concerned we are but a company of the Lord's people standing in and for the testimony to the absolute sovereignty and supremacy of the Lord Jesus as Very God; the complete and full meaning of the Cross as the place and instrument of His universal triumph over Satan, sin, self, and the world; and the oneness of the Church which is His Body, irrespective of nationality or denominationality, so long as there has been that baptism by One Spirit into one Body.

This testimony we are concerned to have carried into all the nations in the Lord's way. We look to Him to open the doors and lead out the messengers. We do not take sole financial responsibility for these, but act as stewards and a channel of whatever the Lord may send for their needs in answer to prayer. We believe that if we enter really deeply enough into the tremendous spiritual responsibility of fellow members as a living part of us being thus in the dark places of the earth, we shall not fail in the matter of concern for temporal needs.

Spain.

In all probability before the next issue of this paper our Sister Miss Sinclair will have left us to join our brother and sister Elder in Spain. She is not becoming a member of the mission to which our friends belong, but is to be associated with them, the mission taking no responsibility.

This is a very critical time for the Spanish nation in their spiritual history particularly, and it is a very strategic hour for the Gospel in Spain. Will our friends pray very much for these servants of the Lord in the day of new opportunity and great responsibility.

Canada.

We are constantly being rejoiced by news received directly and indirectly of the blessing attending the ministry of our sister, Miss Clark. Since her departure several months ago she has visited many places from Toronto to Vancouver and has been brought into touch with dear hungry people of God who have found enrichment and uplift in the message which the Lord has given her. As the result of this ministry we are being exercised before the Lord as to meeting the appeal for more such to go over.

Truly the Lord does seem anxious to meet His own children at this time, and we believe

that it relates very definitely to their preparation for His coming.

Mr. and Mrs. David Davies.

The Lord has been greatly blessing the ministry of our brother and sister, David Davies as they have been working for some months past in the Surrey villages in connection with the Caravan Mission: They have quite a number of missions ahead. Pray for them.

Edinburgh.

On Tuesday, October 20, the monthly gatherings in Edinburgh were resumed. Very good companies were at both meetings and there was a blessed sense of the Lord's presence. Mr. Sparks and Mr. Paterson were there for the ministry, and the messages were given in a real sense of life and liberty. If the Lord wills these gatherings will be held on the third Tuesday in every month in the Gartshore Hall, George Street, at 3 and 8 o'clock.

Honor Oak Conferences

December 5th and 6th.

MOTTO for 1932 now in hand.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully record the receipt of the following gifts towards the expenses of this paper between August 1 and September 30 (exclusive of local offerings):—

Hong Kong, 5s. 4d.; Birmingham, U.S.A., 4s. 6d.; Chattanooga, U.S.A., £2 0s. 9d.; Delhi, New York, 16s. 5d.; East Newmarket, Maryland, 4s.; Grand Rapids, 4s. 6d. and £1 4s. 11d.; Michigan, 3s. 7d.; Philadelphia, 8s. 3d. and 4s.; Belfast, £1 10s.; Dundee, 2s.; Edinburgh, 1s.; Glasgow, 10s. and 10s.; Bournemouth, 1s.; Deal, 5s.; Eastbourne, £1; Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6d.; Guernsey, C.I., 5d., 2s., 2s. 6d., and 2s. 6d.; Lewisham, 5s.; Leigh-on-Sea, 10s.; Leicester, 2s.; Manchester, 2s. 6d.; Plumstead, 6s.; Swindon, 2s. 6d.; St. Annes-on-Sea, £10; S. Kensington, 2s. 2d.; Taubridge Wells, 5s.; Weymouth, 5s.; Wolverhampton, 5s.; Anon., 4s. — Total, £22 16s. 4d.

“Because of the Blood of the Lamb”

A Message as Spoken

READING.—Zechariah iii. 1-10; Revelation xii. 1-12.

“And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

ONE clause of that verse sums up everything else and is sufficient—“because of the blood of the Lamb.”

The Travail for the Man-Child. ---

Now first of all, beloved, I want to gather several things together which I believe represent the significance of that statement, that to which that statement belongs. I am one of those who believe (I do not ask you to believe it because I believe it, but I do ask you to go to the Lord with open hearts about it) that this man-child of this chapter represents a company of the Lord's people at the end-time who stand in a peculiar way in the fulness of the virtue and power of the blood of the Lord Jesus; and, as we have often said, we believe that it is that people, that company, the man-child, that God is seeking to secure for Himself at this time in a special way; the thing upon which, in the midst of other things, He is peculiarly, particularly concerned to bring into being. It is a company called into a peculiar relationship to the Lord Himself for the fulfillment of a priestly ministry in relation to the universal kingdom of our God and His Christ—and I use the word “universal” there with care—not just an earthly aspect of that kingdom, but also the heavenly aspect. We must understand that there are two sides to the kingdom; there is the earthly side and there is the heavenly side. There will be those who are in the earthly side who will not be in the heavenly side, but there will not be any in the heavenly side who are not in the earthly side. Get the heavenly side and you get both. This particular company, the man-child company is, in the purpose of God, to be brought into relation to Him for the fulfillment of a priestly ministry in relation to the universal kingdom of our God and His Christ. A priestly ministry, in relation to the kingdom and the throne, the sovereignty universally of the Lord Jesus: an administrative instrument in heaven, to

rule with Him from the heavens; the whole range of His dominion.

Let us call to mind an Old Testament illustration of this in the person of Samuel. You will remember that Samuel was impossible of realisation along the ordinary line of nature, but his mother Hannah entered into a spiritual travail concerning him. While in that spiritual travail, while before the Lord in strong crying and tears for this man-child the other wives of her husband laughed at her, sneered at her, looked down upon her. They had children she had none, she was despised; and then by a special intervention and act of God that spiritual travail was answered and Samuel was born. Born, on the one hand, out of travail in her soul, on the other hand, born out of a direct act of God in His Divine intervention where man was helpless and nature was impotent. When Samuel was born and weaned he was presented to the Temple, and you read that “Samuel ministered before the Lord, being clothed in a linen ephod,” the priest's garment. You see the stages; he—you might say from birth, from infancy, without a lapse of years—immediately came into a priestly office. He was designed for that, brought into being for that. The travail was unto that. We have noticed that it says of Hannah that she weaned the child. Speaking of Sarah and Isaac it says that “when the child was weaned”—taking its course. Hannah did it as quickly as she could, it did not take its course, she did it to get him into this thing—the priestly ministry—as soon as he could be got there. So that his very life from its beginning was marked by this priestly ministry and it was in relation to the throne and the kingdom—Samuel was the King-anointer, Samuel brought in the great King. His priestly ministry was in relation to the kingdom. He was the embodiment of that great phrase “Kingdom and priests unto God.”

Here is your type, a man-child. We have often said that women in the Bible represent spiritual principles, and Hannah represents the spiritual law of travail unto the specific purpose of God, and when you come to Revelation xii. you have a woman and into her there enters a spirit of travail, a spirit of travail comes in, as I believe, unto the bringing forth of this specific

company, this remnant company, the man-child born out of that spirit of travail, that crying out spirit, that anguish. Against that the adversary is set, deadly set. Zech. iii. which we have read introduces these principles again in another historic setting. Joshua the high priest is in person the embodiment of the priestly ministry of all Israel, that to be a Kingdom and Priests unto God, and the high priest simply gathers up the whole priestly nation in his person, and Joshua is there seen as the figure-head of the priesthood in relation to the kingdom. The priesthood, the priestly ministry, the priestly vocation and calling is in a sorry state in Zechariah's day. You see Joshua clothed in filthy garments. That is the condition of things, and Satan—the adversary—standing at his right hand to be his adversary. The right hand is the place of power, and Satan is in the place of power because of the filthy garments, and accusing him before God. We will come on to that again in a few minutes—Satan in the place of power as an accuser of that which is meant to fulfil this priestly ministry in relation to the kingdom. Bringing these things together you are getting the background of spiritual principles, and you are seeing exactly what is in view in this chapter in Revelation. "And they overcame Him because of the blood of the Lamb."

The Power of the Blood is primarily in its Incorruptibility.

What is the ground of victory? What is the basis of that ultimate triumph? By what means will God get His end? It says here "Because of the blood of the Lamb." That first of all, and I believe more than anything else, relates to the nature of the blood of the Lord Jesus. I mean the absolute sinlessness of the Lord Jesus in His essential life, in His essential nature. His absolute sinlessness. That His nature was altogether devoid of the slightest suspicion of corruption of sin, of defilement. ~~That is its strength, that is its power, that is its victory.~~ That is its strength, that is its power, that is its victory. Before you can understand the working of the blood of the Lord Jesus you have got to understand the absolute immunity from any suggestion of sin in the nature of the Lord Jesus. Sin was not found in Him. He was the "Lamb without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," and although He was born of a virgin, of a woman who was a member of Adam's race, by the direct activity and operation of the Holy Spirit there was a complete

cutting in between Mary as a member of Adam's race and the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, so that He inherited none of the sin of Adam's race by His birth. It is important to see that. Born of a member of Adam's race and yet inheriting none of its sin in His nature, by a cutting in of the Holy Ghost so that it could be said of Him as of no other being ever in this universe, "That Holy thing." Essentially in very substance, holy, and His blood representing His nature, His life is without corruption, without sin, without taint of any kind, absolutely sinless and, therefore, Satan had no power over Him. "The prince of this world cometh to me and hath nothing in Me." Therefore He can cast out the Prince of this World, and can make a show of him openly triumphing over him in His Cross. He can vanquish Satan, He can meet sin and deal with it in the mastery of it because it has no ground in Him of crippling and weakening. See Joshua in his place of weakness, a place of impotence, a place where he is not functioning in his holy calling, in a place of defeat, and the Adversary in the place of power, at his right hand to be his adversary. He cannot help himself because of his filthy garments, and before Joshua can ever be established in the place of power and given ascendancy and Satan as the accuser is cast down, these filthy garments have to be removed. In principle and effect the blood has to ~~take effect~~ ^{take effect}. The blood, the precious sinless blood, has to come in and deal with sin, the power and ground of satanic activity—the means of accusation on the part of the adversary. Before that can be destroyed the blood has to be operative.

The "Overcomer" stands on the Ground of the Perfections of Christ, and meets the "Accuser" by Faith's Appropriation thereof.

What is the meaning of the blood being applied? It is that which is the absolute sinlessness of the Lord Jesus being the ground upon which we stand. That gives us authority, gives us power. The essential perfection of Christ as being the ground of our confidence, our faith, our trust and our testimony. If we stand in ourselves we are defeated. There are no perfections in us, there is nothing in us whatever that can bring Satan to naught and deliver us from his accusations and position of power over us. But when we stand in Christ, in all the perfection of His nature, of His Being, the absolute sinlessness of Christ represented in that

incorruptible blood there is deliverance. And so that blood poured out becomes active, operative, in motion, and it is a great thing to have the perfections of the Lord in motion for us on our behalf, flowing, active to meet all the accusations of the enemy. The accuser of the brethren is cast down which accused them day and night before God? Why? Because they are not standing now on the ground of their own imperfection and sinfulness and weakness and faultiness, but they are now standing on the ground of His absolute perfection, and bearing testimony thereto. "The word of their testimony." "They overcame because of the blood." It is a question of a ground of absolute holiness, absolute holiness not in ourselves but in Him, and our appropriating by faith and apprehending by faith of all that the Lord Jesus is in His essential Being as the spotless Lamb of God for us to God, from God to us. We can never reiterate that note too often. That is the ground of victory. Give the enemy one little bit of old Adam, the flesh, the self, of sin, and he immediately takes the place of power and immediately brings under accusation and begins to weaken both life and ministry. You know this is true; if you do not you will find it out. But stand continuously in the efficacy of that blood, stand continuously in your receiving by faith of all that the Lord Jesus is made unto you from God, clear up everything concerning which the Holy Spirit speaks in conviction, clear it up in virtue of that blood, and the enemy is ruled out, he is not in the place of power.

Satanic Tyranny through Self-occupation broken by a right Apprehension of the Blood.

Oh! If the Lord's people could get this in their hearts. There are so many of the Lord's people to-day over whom Satan is lording it; lording it along the line of accusation, bringing them under a sense of condemnation and judgment, robbing them of their peace, of their assurance, rest, hope; and you will find these people are everlastingly talking about their own short-comings, their sinfulness, for ever circling round themselves, all that they are that they would not be, all that they are not that they would be. Their deliverance from Satan is that they should have a fresh apprehension of the absolute satisfaction of the Father in His Son on their behalf, and that they find their standing before the Father in acceptance. That is the way of deliverance, the way of the Adversary's casting out. This is the way of

overcoming him as the accuser. Yes, the ground of the blood is sufficient for this full-orbed, many-sided all round victory. "They overcame because of the blood of the Lamb," and the first and supreme factor in the virtue of that blood in all these directions is its untainted sinlessness, the nature of the Lord Jesus. There has never been another who was such. Oh I am so glad that it was God that came in Christ, God that came in Christ. Can you charge God with sin? Can you lay sin to God's charge, to God's account? It was God in Christ, the absolutely and altogether holy One in Whom there was no sin, came in in incarnation, and in virtue of that Divine nature in its perfection, Satan in his authority is defeated—on that ground. Blessed be God, we can receive by faith the virtue of that precious blood. That is, the perfection of the Lord Jesus can be put to our account. That is grace—the wonder of the Gospel. If we were to begin to analyse ourselves and take stock of ourselves, that would be a terrible business, a wretched business, and it would be endless—think of it beloved, with all that we know of ourselves, all that God knows about us—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins . . ."

When all that is a fact you and I can stand ~~to~~ in the presence of God as sinlessly perfect, not in ourselves, but in Christ, as having absolute sinless perfection put to our account for God. Understand I am not confusing things, I am not saying that any of us ever becomes sinlessly perfect in ourselves here, but those perfections of the Lord Jesus are put to our account before God to satisfy His requirements, to provide the ground where Satan has no longer authority. The defeat of Satan and the victory of the saints is not their effort, their straining, their groaning, or anything they can do; it is the measure of their faith's appropriation of the absolute perfection of Christ for them as a living, working thing of God on their behalf. It is a great thing, to be in Christ Jesus.

The Blood represents Total Separation to God.

The second thing bound up with the first as to the meaning of the blood is absolute separation unto God. A voluntary thing. Wholly, utterly separated and abandoned to God. There was not at any point in his being a deviation. He was whole. He was one. You cannot find mixture. You never find wool and cotton in His spiritual garments. You never find those

things forbidden in the Old Testament as typical of contradictions and deviations and things which did not harmonise. He was one, mind and heart and will, without the slightest reservation, and wholly for God. That was His nature, that has its very seat in His blood. His blood represents that. A life which is sinless and wholly and utterly given over to God without the slightest deviation in thought or desire, inclination, will. The blood speaks of that beloved, absolute separation unto God. Go back to the Old Testament for illustration. Get into the book of Joshua chapter iii, and you have the people coming to Gilgal where the Lord ordered through Joshua the complete circumcising of Israel. All the males that had come out of Egypt were circumcised at Gilgal and the Lord's word was this: "This day (when it was done) hath the Lord rolled away the reproach of Egypt, therefore the name of that place was called Gilgal, which is "rolling." "The Lord hath rolled away the reproach of Egypt"—on the day of the circumcising, in the day of that symbolic act in the shedding and encircling of the precious blood—the whole body of the flesh cut off—so Paul explains it in Col. ii. "The circumcision of Christ which is the putting away of the whole body of the flesh." The reproach of Egypt rolled away when that happens. What is "the reproach of Egypt"? What is the meaning of that? I wonder if you have noticed the persistent following of Egypt on the heels of Israel all the days of the wilderness. I do not mean literally, I mean spiritually. They were constantly looking back to Egypt. "Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt that we should perish in the wilderness." Even when they came to the Mount and Moses went up into the Mount and Aaron made that calf and they danced to the calf and worshipped it, it was Egypt brought out in representation. What is it that Stephen tells us about it—I think he sums it all up in one word in Acts vii, 39 ". . . and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt." They turned back in their hearts to Egypt.

You see their hearts were in Egypt, and it was because their hearts were more than half in Egypt all the time that you have that story of the forty years, and it is a sorry story. Up and down, one day for the Lord and the next day against Him. One day brighter, and the next day murmuring and complaining again. What a story it is. Whenever you read the account of it it seems that the bright patches are almost

overlooked and the dark thing is kept in view. It comes into the New Testament. Paul writes to the Corinthians about it—"Their carcasses fell in the wilderness." He writes to the Hebrews reminding them of the day of provocation in the wilderness when "your fathers tempted me . . ." ; always coming back to this wretched failure. Why? Because their hearts were not wholly out of Egypt; because they had not recognised sufficiently and apprehended adequately the meaning of that precious blood of the Lamb that was slain. It was not until they came into the land, through the Jordan—which is what Christ has done for them in His Cross—to Gilgal, the place of circumcision where the thing is made real in them—that which was "for" is now made "in"—not until they reach the place of cutting—that Cross entering into their flesh "the cutting off of the whole body of the flesh" symbolically, that the reproach of Egypt is rolled away. What is the reproach of Egypt? I think it is the prophet Zephaniah who says, "I have heard the reproach of Moab and of the children of Ammon . . ."—what are they doing? They are looking down upon the Lord's people, despising them because of their weakness, because they are not getting through to where they set out to get, because from their standpoint, as they judge things, the whole thing is a fiasco—"You left Egypt to get to Canaan and you have been forty years at it." Weakness, failure of realisation, helplessness and the enemy in the place of strength! Reproach because they had not recognised that the blood in all its meaning meant fundamentally an utter cutting off from Egypt, whole hearted and complete abandonment to God, standing over on God's side with God, not standing over on this side questioning God, but on God's side with Him. When you get there, in the full meaning of the Cross, a total cutting off from Egypt, a total cutting off from the fleshly will, the fleshly mind, the fleshly heart, and you are with God wholly, then there is victory, but until you get there Satan is in the place of power, but when you get there the reproach of Egypt is rolled away, you come into the land in the place of authority and go from strength to strength—ascendancy. It is so clear in the Old Testament illustration. That is Revelation xii. 11 in principle. "They overcame because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death; wherefore, rejoice ye heavens, . . ."

The Paralysis of a Divided Heart.

Now beloved, the trouble with a good many of us has been this divided heart. We are not sure, absolutely sure about the Lord, about our own position, about the testimony that we are perhaps standing for and talking about; not sure about it, have secret questionings. It does not matter what we say in public and to others about it, God knows the secret of our hearts, how absolutely we are true in secret with Him over this matter; and there is no way of victory, ascendancy, no way ultimately through to the realisation of that Divine end; a people to fulfil a priestly ministry in the universal sovereignty and kingdom of our God and His Christ, until on the ground of an absolute undividedness of heart for God in the matter of His testimony. The challenge to our hearts is, are we utterly in or are we only a bit in, half in, three quarters in? Is there some lurking fascination of Egypt? How had Egypt fascinated and held part of their hearts in the wilderness? Out here everything is uncertain, we never know one day from another whether we are going to have our food. At least in Egypt there was certainty, we did know what our programme was, we did have certain knowledge that things would be pretty substantial, we were sure while we had our work we got our food. Out here you have got to depend upon God, that is a precarious business—is it? God is more certain than Egypt. There are those Christians who feel that this walk of faith is such an uncertain thing. You do not know what the Lord is going to bring you into next, what is going to happen to you. In the world at least you have solid ground under your feet. This flesh wants a basis of evidence for itself; solid earth. This heavenly life—you never know—ah! but do you know the Heavenly ONE!

Let me ask you—do you believe, beloved, that when you get to the glory having committed yourself to God, having been consecrated to the Lord, having an understanding with the Lord and being obedient to Him up to all the light He has given you, do you believe that when you get to the Glory you will be able to say to the Lord, “You let me be deceived, my life has been a mess. I have gone wrong”—is that possible? I do not believe it. I believe that whatever the accuser may try to bring upon us, and whatever others may say about us, if before God in the secret we are honest with Him, cut off by the precious blood from our

own will, our own way, our own schemes, our life interests, putting our trust in Him and following the light that He gives, I believe that when we get there beloved, we will not have been deceived, but we shall have to say, “Lord, you were good to our trust and You led us by a right way that we might come to a city of habitation.” The Lord will accept a charge on His honour when we are cut off from ourselves and all personal and worldly interests, and wholly for Him.

Losing the Crown.

Egypt for some is the ground of our bondage, our defeat, even though we may be the Lord's children, may be blood-bought, may have come out on redemption ground, yet we may be defeated because of an inadequate apprehension of the meaning of that precious blood. I believe that there will be many who will lose that thing that God has in view as a special vocation in His heavenly kingdom, because they are not wholly devoted to God now. I do not believe that we will be brought into that willy-nilly. If you want the world, even as a believer, want a little bit of it—well have it at this cost—the thing for which God has pre-eminently called you, the heavenly kingdom in a marvelous vocation—lose that. Paul was after that. Paul strained every nerve, spiritually, for that; left the things which were behind for that, to be preserved unto His heavenly kingdom. There are many Christians who will lose that because they do not go all the way with the Lord. Not lose their salvation, but that specific vocation in glory and honour; they will lose it because they did not recognise and honour the full virtue of the blood in the totality of their consecration and abandonment to the Lord. Yes, in that sense they will be left behind. But those who go through, overcome in trial, are they that overcome because of the blood of the Lamb in this second meaning, the absolute abandonment of the Lord Jesus to the will of His Father even unto death; standing in the virtue of His consecration, and making our consecration, by His grace, as utter as was His. We shall never have to let go what He let go in His obedience to the will of God. We have not got it to let go, but beloved, what the Lord is looking for is a people who are with Him completely, with undivided heart, and that is the ground of our victory and of Satan's defeat.

Now I think I must close there for the present. Oh let it be seen that the blood of

the Lamb in its absolute perfection of holiness and sinlessness is representing His Being, His substance, His essence, His nature and His complete surrender, capitulation to the will of His Father, is a ground to stand on. Something to be appropriated by faith and held on to. More, it is something to be taken up as a weapon against the enemy.

The Blood is a Weapon to be Wielded.

The dragon is the adversary. We are up against the devourer. All truly spiritual people know that to-day, some more than others, perhaps. If he can swallow us up, he will. I believe he is out to strike us with death if he can, to strike our bodies with death, to strike our souls with death. Let me say this word to those who are more intimately associated with things, that the more you come to stand in relation to the Lord concerning the heavenly kingdom and that priestly ministry in the heavenly kingdom in relation to the throne, the more you will be aware of the immediate proximity of the dragon and him who would strike with death, strike your mind with death, strike these bodies with death. That will explain a lot for some of you. The nearer you get to the vocation of the man-child the closer you come to the dragon, the more you will be conscious of the encompassing and encircling of death and you will cry to get out of it, and say, "this is not life, it is death." Are you going to accept it? It is death, but where is the virtue of the blood? Do you refuse it on the ground of that mighty shed blood? "They overcame because of the blood," and we are not going to accept death because of that Blood. Perhaps some might misunderstand that. We are not saying that we are not going to the grave if the Lord tarrys long enough; but that is not accepting death. We can die and go to the grave in the physical sense but that can be victory, not defeat, triumph! We do not accept death. There it is. You may know it spiritually, you know it mentally, you know it round you and playing upon you when you come into close touch with that ultimate end of God in the testimony of Jesus Christ. Look after that explanation; hold on to it. It calls for standing up beloved against the adversary, the engulfer, the swallower-up. Blessed be God, there is going to be a greater swallower-up than that. Death is going to be swallowed up. There is one who

wants to swallow-up if he can. Against the dragon, against the adversary, against the accuser, against the deceiver, the blood is adequate, sufficient, but it is a positive active appropriation of that blood and standing on it. Taking it up as an active instrument. Oh! to get a company like that here and now who know and appropriate the power of the blood. Not in the flesh, but as emptied of self, and in all humility, nothingness, weakness standing in HIS virtue, the power of His blood, and standing up and using that mighty weapon against the operation of death now, all round, to get through to that end which God has. That is what is needed now, a people like that.

May the Lord bring this home to your heart, that this may not be an address but an appeal, an urge of the Spirit of Christ—bring you into that thing actively by prayer. Remember your ground, remember your weapon, remember that all the emptying of self, the weakening, the bringing down, the chastening, the discipline, is to bring us to an effective place. Pride has no standing here. Self-sufficiency has no standing here. Self-strength comes not into this, but the precious blood.

Weakness is not helplessness. Helplessness on our part is not despair. No, it is the open way for the mighty efficacy of the blood to come into operation.

T. A-S.

"Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind either by country or speech or customs. They neither inhabit cities of their own, nor use a different language, nor practise a manner of life which is out of the common.....But while inhabiting cities, Greek or foreign, as the lot of each determines, and following the customs of the country both in regard to dress and food and life in general, they shew themselves to be possessed of a citizenship which is all their own, and the nature of it is a paradox. They dwell in their native lands, but as sojourners; they share all things as citizens and endure all things as strangers; every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign country to them.....They are in the flesh; but do not live after the flesh; they pass their time on earth, but they live their lives as citizens in heaven."—From Epistle to Diognetus, Second Century A.D.

For Boys and Girls

The Gospel in the Farmyard (No. 12)

Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment.

“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.”—John vii. 37.

I SUPPOSE most boys and girls are familiar with what are called “sock” lambs. They are lambs who have no mothers to look after them and the shepherd is compelled to care for them himself, feeding them with cow’s milk out of a bottle. The little lambs are, of course, rather scared of the shepherd at first, but their hunger overcomes their fear, and when they find that he supplies them with the milk they so much need they quickly lose all sense of alarm and run to him whenever he appears. And not only so, but they evidently think that everyone who comes near to them is going to feed them, for they run to every comer and bleat expectantly. When I was at our farm last spring there were several “sock” lambs shut up within wire fencing in the orchard. No sooner did they hear my voice—even before they could see me—than they ran in my direction and, when I appeared, tried to climb over the fence to come to me. They even allowed me to bend down and pick them up in my arms, although I was a complete stranger to them, and all the while their eyes and mouths seemed to be saying “Have you any food for us?”

Danger!

Now this was all very nice and friendly, but supposing I had been a cruel person seeking to steal the lambs, or to do them harm—how easily they would have fallen victims to me! They evidently did not distinguish between their true shepherd and a stranger, nor recognise any difference between his voice and mine. How unlike the sheep spoken of by the Lord Jesus in John x. ! He says there, concerning the true shepherd, that “the sheep follow him for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.” It would be good if every boy and girl were like those sheep, knowing only the voice of the true shepherd, the Lord Jesus. For there are so many voices that call to-day, and boys and girls

need to know the difference between the true and the false. Do you know that the world has a voice, and that sin has a voice? They have very loud ones and yet sometimes call in such gentle tones that you would think they were the truest voices and the safest to follow. And they are always inviting boys and girls to come to them—to taste and see how good are the things which they can offer. And it is very sad to know that a very great many little lambs have mistaken these voices for those of the true shepherd and have run to them, only to find themselves caught in the grip of that which has not been holy and true to God. It is not enough that the one who calls *looks* good and harmless. Even Satan himself is often transformed into an angel of light, and with evil in his heart invites—sometimes even through the lips of our friends—to things which look so fair on the outside, but which have the poison of sin within. The pleasures and amusements of this world, the “trying” of things which we are not sure are pure, the occasional dropping of the good things which we have been taught to do, these are some of the suggestions that come to our ears, often seeming so right and reasonable, but they are voices of strangers and not of the true shepherd.

Safety and Certainty.

What, then, shall we do with them? There is but one thing—the very opposite of that which the “sock” lambs did—run from them with all our might! And where are we to run? There is but one safe place—to the True Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a precious fact that is true for every boy and girl, though it was not true for our “sock” lambs, that the True Shepherd is *always* at hand, and we may always enter into safety by Him. I wonder if you know Him, and, if you do, whether you are learning to recognise His voice as distinct from the other voices around you? Do you know His whisper in your heart? It is a still small voice—you recognise it as you listen quietly to Him, and you can train yourself to do so by regular

times of waiting on Him. Do you read His Word by which He talks to you? Do you kneel quietly day by day and talk with Him? The boys and girls who do these things and then obey fully and instantly all that they believe to be His word to them, are they who learn to know His voice and to walk in safety with Him. And the more you know His voice, the more easily will you recognise the voice of the stranger.

An Unsatisfying Meal.

Our "sock" lambs were doubly foolish—they not only mistook me for the real shepherd, but they mistook my finger for the bottle out of which they were accustomed to feed! As I put my hand down to them, one after another caught my finger in its mouth and sucked away at it as hard as possible, hoping, I suppose, to draw milk from it. And they did not easily give up—I grew tired before they did, and withdrew my finger from them. You and I can see how foolish the lambs were, for we know that there was no milk in my finger. But we very often make the same mistake and try to get nourishment out of that which can never give it. Those who know could tell us at once that there is nothing to be gained by many things we attempt—but often we do not heed their advice and do not learn our lesson until like the lambs we have tried and tried in vain. Nobody ever yet found true nourishment, that satisfied and sustained him, in the things that this world offers. Many have tried hard to find it in pursuing pleasures, others business, others learning—but however much these things may seem to supply our need in certain directions and for a certain time, there always remains deep down in the heart a need which they can never satisfy—God Himself is the only

answer to it. All other things are like the finger that can furnish nothing, but how long some try before they realise this! Heart hunger is the result of God's own seeking of us, causing our hearts to realise their need; and He has provided in the Lord Jesus Christ all that is necessary for our full satisfaction. Listen to the Lord's own familiar words: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John vi. 35). Could anything be more satisfying than this? Nowhere else in all the world can bread and water of this kind be found but in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Have you found it?

Enjoyment.

If you have, take care that you eat and drink regularly, day by day, and don't make the mistake of forsaking the "bottle" for a "finger." Be sure that your heart is taken up with the Lord Jesus *Himself* and not merely with the things which are associated with Him. It is good to love the place to which we go to hear about Him, and the people who tell us of Him, and the work that perhaps we are doing in His Name, but these must not take *His* place in our hearts and thoughts, or we shall find we are trying to live upon a "finger" and obtain no nourishment. Love them, but love Him more. Think of them, but think far more of Him. Get all the help you can from them, but remember always that none can help you if He withholds His help. He has said: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have not life in yourselves. . . . For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed" (John vi. 53 and 55).

I wonder what you are living on?

G. P.

Deliverance from Self

DELIVERANCE from sin is not the only fruit borne from Calvary in the experience of the redeemed. Sin is not the only tyrant. The salvation of God's grace is from every domination into that despotism of Christ which is the only true liberty.

The Lord's ideal is not realised even in a life which is merely free from actual sin. There is a yet more insidious usurper in the City of

Mansoul and that is Self. From all sides, even among those who know something—and very greatly—of God's grace and cleansing, is heard the complaint that the greatest enemy still remains—that interfering defiler, Self. How many have said: "But when you think that you have surrendered all and that the old man has been consigned to the cross, he has a nasty way of somehow getting down again." The

tragedy is that this humiliating confession is too often made with a strain of jocularly about it which betrays the sad shallowness of the spiritual life, the too easy acceptance of imperfections, a tendency to presume upon the grace of God and a scarcely disguised though unconfessed unbelief in the purpose and power of God to perfect His saints.

The fact is that many of us have had our eyes so much on the low level experience surrounding us that there has been an eclipse of Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily and in whom we too are filled full; Who, from God, is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. The Lord's ideal is realised only in our being conformed unto the image of His Son (Rom. viii. 29). His Son led a life not only free from sin but utterly selfless. It is not only that Jesus Christ was unselfish, but that He did always those things which pleased Him Who sent Him. And this, not by compulsion, in passivity or lack of a will of His own, but by active choice. "I came," said He, "not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent me." His prayer in Gethsemane contained the never-to-be-forgotten words, "Not my will, but Thine be done." These statements evidence the fact that Jesus of Nazareth, the Man Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son of God had a will of His own which He renounced, and yielded up to do His Father's will. That involved the offering of His body once—by which offering we are sanctified. But the sacrifice on Calvary was just the climax and consummation of His whole life—a life "crucified," devoted to God without a moment's reserve.

On that last night He spent with His disciples He showed them an expression of the utter humility of His soul when He washed their feet and set them an example that they should do AS HE HAD DONE.

John never forgot that night in the upper room, his writings are full of its echoes. It was he who said "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17).

And Peter never forgot that night. He said "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps."

Paul was not there but, from the glory he received the revelation of Christ crucified,

and he writes "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; Who...emptied Himself...humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Deliverance from sin is the fruit of Calvary and there, too, is to be found deliverance from Self, there at the cross, but only there!

There are many beloved children of God zealous for Him and for His word and work and glory who yet do not really believe that in this life such an experience is to be expected. They stop short at the objective contemplation of, and belief and trust in, the Saviour's redeeming work and merit. They rejoice in the atoning sacrificial death of the Lord Christ, the Lamb of God *for us*; but resent and reject the equally scriptural doctrine of the implication that that objective redeeming process needs to become subjectively experimental if all the divine purpose in it is to be actualised. In that model Christian, the apostle Paul, it was positively an experience. They hear such a passage read as Romans vi. or Gal. ii. 19-20, Col. ii. 10-13, 20, iii. 1-4, and, because it is indisputably Holy Scripture, they believe it; but they say of it, that is true of every believer "positionally" or "judicially," that is true "in Christ"; but they have no faith for a present practical manifestation of the judicial standing in a positive experimental state here and now. To such, if any read these pages, would we make a loving appeal in the Name of our Lord. That appeal is for a yet simpler faith in the word written, a yet fuller and deeper trust in the Almighty Redeemer, an abandonment of the very heart and will to Him Whose Spirit is dwelling within to work in them that which Christ wrought for them, so that Calvary in its separating, delivering power is established as a spiritual principle, an abiding working factor in the whole activity of the soul.

There are other children of God in whom this principle is being wrought, but they do not yet understand the nature of the experiences through which their Lord is bringing them. The knowledge of this would be to them the very key and clue to much that has puzzled them. They have not understood why so often, although their heart has been set on doing the Lord's will and seeing His glory, the way has seemed so perplexing and dark: why, instead of the Divine blessing attending their efforts bringing manifest fruit in prosperity, there has been disappointment, and

seeming failure. Loss of material resources so necessary for maintaining support of the Lord's work, ill-health or personal bereavement, or other crippling, paralysing disaster has seemed to belie the promise and the claim that the Lord taketh pleasure in the prosperity of His people. Service, ministry, work, instead of manifestly developing, is sometimes diminished and limited. Yet such was the experience of the Apostles of the first century, and along such lines, such a way of the Cross, have the saints of God been led in all ages, sharing experimentally, if not always intelligently and voluntarily, something of the sufferings of Christ; and passing through that sanctifying process of tribulation and chastening in which the redeemed human soul is ground into the fine flour of likeness to the meek and humble and sinless life of the God-man, Jesus, the Captain of their salvation.

How much of unsuspected pride and self-interest and self-seeking there was in much of that ministry—so prized and now so diminished! How much of actual but unrecognised self-satisfaction in the sacrifice of giving the money that is now cut off! When natural abilities are cancelled and consecrated talents lost, it becomes possible to discern something of the place they usurped in that glorying of the soul, which should have been in the Lord Jesus and in Him alone.

How deeply, subtly hidden from the consciousness lies that self-soil in which is rooted the bindweed of pride, entwining and strangling the true fruit of the Spirit! How self-love and self-pity, like the worm at the root, smite the frail gourd of our love and sympathy which we had congratulated ourselves upon as being Christian and of the Spirit, but which withers when its object fails or disappoints us!

Conformity to Christ—and this is the predestined purpose of God for every redeemed life—involves a purging of the soul from its own self, the powerful separation, discrimination, between soul and spirit in that which we think to be our spiritual life and service.

In the fourth chapter of his second letter to the Corinthian Church the Apostle Paul opens the door into the secrets of his own ministry or, shall we say? to the ministry of Christ through him. Verse 2 gives its true nature, not as being the correct enunciation merely of scripture truths, but as the manifestation in the apostle's life of the truth, *i.e.*, the reality. His message is incarnate in the man. Once

again, in a sense, the word became flesh. His own identification in actual experience with the cross of Christ is expressed in verses 10 to 12: "Always bearing about in the body the dying (*nekrosis*, the putting to death, *i.e.*, the process) of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of JESUS might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." Words could scarcely more plainly emphasise the fact that it is the very life of Jesus which is to be seen here and now in the actual walking-about man, in our body, in our mortal flesh.

Here is something deep, real, experimental, practical, manifest; something more than a firm faith in the objective fact that Christ died for me, something more than a judicial standing before God. It is something manifest to the conscience of other people! For this there must be a displacement of SELF in the enthronement of Christ by His indwelling Spirit in the very personality itself.

The Old Testament furnishes examples of this same principle working in the preparation and perfecting of the Lord's servants. The principle of the cross is eternal in the activities of God with redeemed men; it can be traced in Abraham and Joseph, in Job and David and Jeremiah, and outstandingly, in Moses.

At forty years of age Moses had come to the conclusion that he was the Lord's man to lead the Children of Israel out of Egypt, he had made the great renunciation of the possibilities at Pharaoh's court; refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. But, with all his noble self-denial and renunciation, there was that in Moses which must be ground down and out. His own first attempt for the deliverance of his people ended in his fleeing from Egypt an outlaw with blood-stained hands. Then for another forty years he minds sheep in the wilderness until the heats and enthusiasms and rash assertiveness in the strength of Moses are all quenched; and when the Lord does break into his life He finds him a man inert, broken, dead. Almost forcibly He has to compel him to his task. Moses' greatness as the mediator of the Old Covenant is not in his wonderful administrative ability or gifts of generalship, or as a law maker, but as a man meek, more than any on earth, a man utterly obedient to his God, an intercessor like

whom Jehovah said He would raise up the Prophet from among his brethren—a man like Christ. Moses went through experiences in which his soul was subject to what we might call the spiritual process of the Cross and which eventually brought him as a man into wonderful conformity of heart and spirit with the Christ of Whom he is so wonderfully a type.

It is conformity unto the image of His Son as the crucified Christ which is God's purpose in you and me.

In the sin-bearing atoning work of the cross we can never, nor need never, share. That work of our Blessed Lord is alone and superlative. But into the personal relative character of the Christ of Calvary we are to enter, and such entrance means deliverance from self.

Briefly stated this character supremely displayed on the cross has three relations.

1. **To God**—As Son of God, by His cross, our Lord devoted Himself utterly to do His Father's will even to the laying down of His very life.

2. **To Man**.—As Son of Man His compassion for a lost world poured out His soul. The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Herein is love!

3. **As the expression of His own gracious character**.—As the Incarnate God He personified and eternally expressed the humility of the God of glory in condescending thus to suffer and to submit Himself to such unspeakable indignities.

Devotion to God, love and compassion to undeserving sinners, Divine humility, in each of which self has no place at all, these characterise the spirit of the Christ Whose cross expressed them. If, seeing these to be the objects in us of the Divine discipline, we set our hearts and wills in trustful surrender of obedience to the Blessed Redeemer Himself, humbling ourselves in all things under the mighty hand of God, His Spirit will lead us into all the living reality of them.

P. W. F.

The Measure of Christ

(A Message as Spoken)

Psalm cxxii-cxxiv.

"Christ in you the hope of glory." (Col. i. 27). Read this verse carefully, fragment by fragment, to get the full import of its wonderful truth: "GOD was pleased to make known—what is the riches of the glory—of this mystery, which is, CHRIST IN YOU." The riches of the glory, *Christ in you*.

"Know ye not as to your own selves, that Christ Jesus is in you?" (ii Cor. xiii. 5). That interrogation of the Apostle is not without point, "KNOW YE NOT?" as to *your own selves*, know ye not that Christ is in you? Don't you know this wonderful thing?

"My little children of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. iv. 19). "Till Christ be formed in you"; this is a step on, a going on.

"Whom HE foreknew, HE also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His son" (Rom viii. 29). Marvellous words, no man would dare to say this, they are here by revelation of the Holy Spirit.

"Unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. . .

till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 7, 13, A.R.V.). "The measure. . . of the fulness of Christ."

WE want immediately to focus everything in and upon the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is HE who is in view. What we have before us these days is not teaching or truth, that is, to be possessed with more knowledge of truth; it is not service, but it is the LORD Himself.

The object of the Father from first to last is that the Son, the Lord Jesus shall fill all things, and all things shall be filled with Christ. The value of everything in the eyes of GOD is according to the measure of the manifestation of Christ in it. And it is from that standpoint God determines the value of the thing. How much of the Lord Jesus is manifested through that, and that determines the value from God's standpoint.

If we got focussed there, it would make a great difference, much would have to go because other than manifesting the Lord Jesus. We must

Understand that the Father has set the Lord Jesus before His eyes, and the Father's eyes are full of only one object, that is the Beloved, His Son; and in the eyes of God the value of everything is determined by the measure in which His Son is manifested and glorified, that is His end and that is His object.

Spiritual service, vision, vocation, glorification have no existence apart from Christ; they are not things as things, and cannot be had except in the PERSON of the Lord Jesus.

To many salvation is as a thing. It is detached and made something of by itself, to be given by itself, and for the good of those who receive it. Sanctification is wrapped up in another parcel. So often we think of salvation, sanctification in relation to the persons in view, and so *some thing* for them, but it is CHRIST Himself who IS salvation, HE is sanctification, and HE within as this.

It is the same with service and vocation, often seen only in regard to the persons themselves. "Saved to serve" is only part of the truth, and is a dangerous slogan, for the motive is the service itself and not the Lord. You are so driven with the service that HE is left out. We have detached the thing from the Person, and we find we are gripped and wrapped in the claims of "service" and it becomes the drive of service and in the end breaks us. And again, when service becomes hard and difficult, we say we will give it up, we will resign, thus showing we have separated service from the Person, and have been occupied day in and day out with it, the work, and not with the Lord Himself.

And so with Glorification; yes, this stirs us, we love to sing hymns about our glorification, but God means it to begin now and it must begin now. What is glorification? It is the full manifestation of Jesus Christ in us. God regards salvation, sanctification, vocation, service, glorification, as related to his Son, and of no value apart from HIM; HE IS salvation, HE IS sanctification.

Salvation, sanctification are often held up to people as things to be received for their good; the object being for them to benefit from *some thing* received; as salvation for salvation's sake. God has not saved one soul for salvation's sake. God is not after salvation as an end in itself, but for the sake of the SAVIOUR, for the glory of His Son. It is not salvation that is in view, but the Saviour. If people are only rejoicing in salvation as something received for their own benefit, the Saviour will be eclipsed by the thing

salvation. Is not this the cause of arrest and hold up?

The worker has to be brought, by seeing no deep fulness of result to his work, to the place where he cries out, "I can do nothing." So he comes to see salvation, and that to save another soul is utterly beyond him, and is the work of God, and so come to see God's object in salvation, which is the glory of His Son. Salvation is not *something*, it is the mighty incoming of a *Person*; "He that hath the SON hath life" (i John v. 11). "To as many as received HIM" (John i. 12).

This is also true in the matter of sanctification and service. Any service that is not fulfilled on the ground of the indwelling Christ as the Worker cannot effect the purpose of God, for only the Lord Jesus by His Spirit can do the work of God. Yes, called to be a servant in a service you can never fulfil. Service is to call the Lord Jesus into view, and any service that does not do that is not the service of the Holy Spirit, but man's service which does not fulfil God's ends, and it will be tested by the fire and proved valueless.

Christianity is not a doctrine, not truth as truth, but the knowledge of a PERSON; it is knowing the LORD JESUS. You cannot be educated into a Christian. Christianity is the knowledge within of a Person, knowing HIM as dwelling within us.

God has singled out a Person and gathered into that Person all the Divine perfections, everything is inseparably bound up with His Son, HE has put all the fulness of Eternity and the Universe into that Person and bound up all the fulness in Him; not a fragment can be had apart from Him; that which is to characterise the New Creation is in Him. The predestined End of God is a full presentation of the fulness of Christ: "The Church His Body, the fulness of HIM that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23).

Every corner of the Universe speaking audibly of Jesus Christ; so that we shall not be able to go into a place or touch a life without finding an expression of the Lord Jesus.

"Christ in you the hope of glory"—this is heaven. You walk in the presence of the Lord Jesus. Think of the whole Universe like that; a universal expression of His Son in fulness. That is the end God has in view, that Christ shall fill all things, that is what God's end is, a looking into everything and finding it *full of Christ*. All is made for Him, and in the New Creation all will speak of His presence and show forth some characteristic of Him. Oh! the

joy even now when you touch a life and find immediately that life is full of the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus is the fulness of that life, what a benediction it is.

God has singled out a Person and set Him forth to be seen of all—the MAN CHRIST JESUS.

You can't go outside of A to Z in the realm of literature, you box the compass of language between A and Z; likewise Christ Jesus is FIRST and LAST of God's New Creation, and all that is in between, you cannot get outside of that. We must never think of anything as outside of Christ, HE is Salvation, HE is Sanctification, HE is Redemption, Justification, Peace, Wisdom, Love, Heaven. "Know ye not as to your own selves that Christ is in you," *this CHRIST*—in you! Do you see the possibilities and the tremendousness of this? The whole potentialities of that Universe in every child of God!

God is going to transform His Universe not from without but from within; How? by putting Jesus Christ within the believer by His Holy Spirit, and thence a two-fold activity—being conformed to Him by His Spirit, and He being formed in the believer; thus he is going to make His New Creation.

"Christ IN YOU the hope of glory" (Col. i. 27). "God hath given us eternal life and this life is in His Son, and he that hath the Son hath life" (i John v. 11, 12).

"If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9).

"The Lord Jesus who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 21) A.R.V.

"Put on the New Man which is being renewed unto knowledge, after the image of Him that created him, where there cannot be Greek and Jew . . . but Christ is all and in all" (Col. iii. 10) A.R.V.

"The church which is His body, the fulness of HIM that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23).

The Christian life is not by effort, and not by struggle; not merely trying to put into practice certain maxims, or trying to attain to a certain measure; but from beginning to end and all together a matter of knowing the Lord Jesus *within*. Of course this implies responso to Him, and a continual yieldedness to His working by His Spirit within, and so

co-operating with Him in His purpose of conformity to the image of His Son.

We have all grown since we were born. How did we grow? Not by sitting down and considering we ought to increase our stature, not by determining to grow so much to-day and a bit more to-morrow; not by painful efforts to increase our dimensions and so on; but we "just grewed!"—like Topsy. But while we "just grewed" we had to respond to the laws of growth. So in the spiritual realm, we have got to recognise the laws of growth, and where those are not responded to, or are violated, there can be no growth, but there is arrest, weakness and loss.

Why is spiritual growth so slow in some and so gloriously quick in others? Because some kick and question, or argue with God, go round and round the point asking, does it mean this? Must I do this? Is it necessary? Can I, may I do this? And so on. Yet these very people are loudest in *saying* they want only the will of God, but their very affirmation often shows a struggle is going on, and their growth is fraught with a good deal of friction.

While others in a beautiful sincerity and purity of spirit are immediately letting go to the Lord, so HE is able to lead them on, without waste of time in controversy with the will of God; and there is no weakness through there not being an utter abandonment and whole-hearted obedience and surrender to that will. There is a passion for the Lord HIMSELF, and for Him to have His full way at whatever cost.

It all depends on our appreciation of the Lord Jesus. When we get a true value of Him, and see all that He is for us to the Father, and as by faith we appropriate HIM, we quietly grow—"Beholding HIM are changed [transformed from within] into the same image, from glory to glory" (ii Cor. iii. 18).

The difficulty to growth is the regarding things as apart from the PERSON, the Lord Jesus. We would never walk round the Scripture, as we sometimes do, debating whether we would or would not if we had a full appreciation of Him, and our passion was for Him to get the fullest glory possible; we should instantly yield if it meant Christ was going to get more glory.

Is not the difficulty often in regarding aspects of the Christian life as something in themselves?

The Lord Jesus adequately appreciated gets

rid of all the strain of spiritual growth. Christ is most glorified where Christ is most in the heart. Growth is bound up with the Beloved One; and growth is by being occupied with HIM; by giving the Lord Jesus His place in everything; HE the first and HE all and in all. It is all a matter of the measure of Christ, we MUST see that *everything* is bound up with the Lord Jesus Himself.

Everything is a matter of knowing the

Lord in our hearts, then the Lord has got a clear way in us and through us.

Got focussed on Him and see everything is HIMSELF.

The Gospel of God is that we are saved to be conformed to the image of His Son. "A coming to the fulness of the measure of Christ, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13).
T. A.-S.

The Rule of the Heavens

No. 2.—Universality of the Heavens. (*Continued*).

THE end which God has in view is the universal sovereignty of the Lord Jesus, but not only as a Person but as representing a heavenly system. The Lord Jesus has been manifested not only as a Person. He *has* been revealed as a Person, but not only so but also as a heavenly system. If the tabernacle of old was in its entirety a representation of the Lord Jesus then it is a comprehensive system. If the temple of old was a typical representation of the Lord Jesus, and if you see Him in everything to do with the temple, then the temple was a system. And so these figures point to a system represented by the Lord Jesus, and it is going to be that system which universally prevails when God has reconstructed all things *according to Christ*, and we must recognise that that is what God is doing.

"According to Christ" is the standard. It is the measurement, it is the character of everything that is in the mind of God. God's new creation, then, is that which is constructed wholly according to Christ. So it is a system bound up in a person and is to be entered into by all who are Christ's so that eventually the "Body" will reveal Christ as a spiritual system in the whole universe.

If the Lord Jesus has then become representative of God's heavenly system, we have to see everything in Christ as universal in its principle and law to be established by God, and we have got to come into the fulness of Christ. To do this is not just to enter into a kind of circle of fulness. It is that we have to come into the fulness of every detail as God sees it in the Lord Jesus. He wants to bring us into the fulness of the heavenly-meaning of every detail of the Lord Jesus.

The Universality of the New Birth.

We have spoken about the birth of the Lord Jesus and its universality. We saw that it was not just an event called the "Incarnation." It was that, but it was not just that. When we are born of the Spirit, when we in a spiritual sense come down from above because we have been born from above (although there is a great difference between our new birth and the birth of the Lord Jesus), it is the result of the Holy Spirit, and the new birth makes us heavenly in our origin and in our nativity. When we by the same Holy Spirit are born of the Spirit, we immediately partake of the universality of the Lord Jesus Himself.

Our sonship is a universal thing and when the sons of God are manifested it will be unto the whole creation. The creation cannot get there until God has got His purpose, and that is the manifestation of the sons of God. The whole creation is bound up with it. It is a tremendous thing—this new birth. It is being made far too common. If we only saw the range of this thing, heaven is in it, and hell is touched by it, for it will eventually be the Church, the Body of Christ, by which Satan will be deposed from the heavens.

When there is a genuine new birth, when really the Spirit of sonship comes in, that is the beginning of a history of terrific conflict between heaven and hell in that spirit. The unborn ones cannot know that conflict. Those in the flesh do not believe in a personal devil, but that is its own indictment and carries with it a very great significance. The object of hell is to destroy what is begotten of God, for, when spiritual maturity comes in hell has lost its

power. So in the early days the enemy would seek to destroy that which is of God.

There is a Satanic consciousness back of this world system, and it recognises that if what is of God comes in and gets the upper hand, that system is going out. And the natural man in the religious world hates what is of the Spirit of God. You bring purely spiritual, heavenly things into the religious world as it is to-day, with all its assumed reverence, with all its outward forms, and you set up a conflict at once. The natural man who has come in there is sporting himself in the limelight, where he is in evidence, and the natural man will not have a purely spiritual thing, he will fight it. That is what happened in the life of the Lord Jesus. It was the religious world that withstood him most. There is all the difference of two worlds between religion and true spirituality.

How important is the recognition of the range and content and fulness of all this. We have got to come into the fulness of every detail of the Lord Jesus and the meaning of the new birth. It is not enough to say, "I am born again." The Lord wants to bring us to see what the new birth is, its essence, its reality. I am quite sure that most of the trouble, the weakness, the defeat of Christianity is to be explained along the line of Christians not having recognised the meaning of Christianity.

It would be impossible for anyone to have an adequate conception of the new birth and continue one bit in the world. The "worldly Christian" is a contradiction in terms. It is a difference of being of the earth and being of the heavens. You could not possibly have any voluntary, happy oneness of spirit with anything that is in this world system whatever and have any real conception of the new birth experimentally. And yet, see what you have to-day—Christians who do not see any contradiction in being saved and in having half their life in the world, taken up with the things of the world. It is a contradiction in the very essence of the new being, and until you get some conception of the new birth you will not get that which is wholly according to God. The enemy has through this world system still got a hold over what is supposed to represent God and makes it a denial, and he is holding this up and saying, "That is what is supposed to be of the Lord."

But it only wants the eyes to be opened to see the nature of the new birth. It has in it the power of heaven to shatter this whole world system. The new birth has the power to

destroy it, and it will be destroyed in the manifestation of the sons of God because it will be Christ manifested in His church. So you see what we need is that the Lord shall open our eyes to these fundamental, foundational things such as the new birth.

I do not want to be critical, but I am consumed with this zeal that the Lord shall have that which is according to His mind. There has come about a thing which is an exceedingly perilous thing, and that is the mass movement of "decisions for Christ" by organised methods. When you preach the gospel in a popular style and bring in illustrations, stories and accounts you bring in that which is calculated to stir the emotions, and then you ask for some kind of action, and you sweep a multitude in like that, and they, from that time, call themselves saved people, and half an hour after they know no more of the real nature of the new birth than they did before. They can go on and never know the nature of the new birth and yet they say that there was a time when they became a Christian. I do not say that some of them are not born again, but on the whole it is a dangerous line because you are getting people to take the name of Christ who do not know what the new birth is. They have been persuaded into doing it, and we must understand that the new birth is not the birth of the soul at all. It is the birth of the spirit. It is a matter of rebirth from above which is God's act. The most that man can do is to take an attitude. The only step we can take is to face one way or the other. The expression of our willingness is to face that way, but the whole thing is in God's hands. It is not for any one of us to say when we will take any step in relation to God. If God puts now at our disposal saving faith, or anything else by which to appropriate anything which is in Christ, we postpone that with eternal risks. We have got to face up with what God puts there at the time He puts it there, and we have no assurance that we will be able to take that step at any other time. It is the work of the Holy Spirit alone, and we must put to people very, very clearly the real meaning of the new birth, and it is vast in its nature. It is a great thing to be saved.

The Universality of Christ's Baptism.

We pass from Bethlehem to Jordan, the next outstanding thing in the life of the Lord Jesus, and see the universal implicates and content of His baptism. You first of all have John the

Baptist. He has had an archangel in relation to his birth. The Holy Spirit was involved, for he was to be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his birth. John the Baptist officially represented and gathered up in himself all the prophets of the Old Testament. "There hath not arisen a greater prophet than John." The Lord Jesus, said "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," and then John the Baptist introduced the Lord Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." "The Lamb of God," "Behold the Lamb of God." Millions and millions of lambs had been sacrificed but not one of all those was ever accepted of itself by God—only in the light of One Lamb. He gathered all the lambs ever slain into His own Person. The backward sweep is tremendous.

It is at Jordan. "God's Lamb which beareth away the sin of the world." It is the universal sin brought upon Him. Then, with all that resting upon Him, with these final words with which he met the reticence of John, "It thus becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," "all the sin of the world," "all righteousness" bound up in His act. What a tremendous thing this baptism was. It fulfilled all the law and the prophets. It dealt with the sin of the whole world. It settled forever the question of all righteousness. What a baptism! Was there ever a baptism like that? Yes, yours, if entering into the meaning of that one, if it was a true one. *Not your bearing away the sin of the world*, but entering into the good of His baptism. With those words He went down into Jordan and was raised. Death, universal, has been expressed, universal judgment received, resurrection life, the universal law of the new creation by resurrection. All that involved, not only the past, but all that is to be.

Then heaven opened. The heavens came in again, and then hell broke in. For the temptation was a part of the baptism. It was not a thing in itself. "Then was Jesus led of the Spirit into the wilderness." This baptism has touched all the past and all the future. How was all righteousness fulfilled typically in the baptism of the Lord Jesus. It is simply this—that God has as His irreducible minimum sinless perfection and God has never accepted anything that is not sinlessly perfect. Can you find it in this old creation? How then is it to be fulfilled? The old creation must perish under judgment and there must be a new

creation which is created of God. And so in Jordan He passed out typically and rose again. There was no sin in Him, but universal sin was laid upon Him. The whole question of righteousness has been settled in the death and burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Paul has been used by God to interpret baptism as this (Romans vi.: Col. ii. 12), the putting away of the whole body of the flesh. It is not a theory of sinless perfection *for us* now, but there is that for us which is sinlessly perfect. But that is not us in ourselves. We still carry about a very sinful nature to which we have to reckon ourselves dead. There has something come in from above which makes it possible for us to repudiate that and live as though we were dead to it.

I ask you, is that what baptism has meant to you? It is not good enough that you should take this matter on simply because it is a command in the Word, or that the Lord Jesus did it and you simply think you ought to do it. The only adequate basis is that we see the heavenly meaning. If the thing has been entered into just as a form, or because it is a command, it has not meant very much, but when it has been entered into with any spiritual understanding there has been a breaking out of the devil to oppose it. It is not a form or ordinance, but a mighty testimony that brings in the vast realm of spiritual powers.

In like manner we follow through to the Transfiguration, to the Cross, into the prayer life of the Lord Jesus, His resurrection, Pentecost, and His coming again, and we see that in all there is universality. It is not something that happens but something back of which there is a depth of heavenly meaning to be opened up by the Holy Spirit.

Maturity by Spiritual Apprehension a Secret of Power.

When we get our eyes open to it, we have got the wealth of Christ, and that is what I believe the enemy hates—spiritual maturity. If he can stop your going on and prevent your taking the next step that God has presented to you, he has curtailed all the heavenly intention of God in you and through you. He has an idea of what is involved in every act of obedience of God's children. He would keep you back from making the decision for the Lord and accepting the operation of His Spirit. He will say, "Do not take that step now." He would cause you

to confer with man and so confuse you and stop your going on with the Lord. Every act of obedience to the Lord leads on to universality.

So the urge is to go on. Look at such a man as Paul. He let all things go and counted all his earlier gains as mere rubbish, and still he is saying, "Brethren, I count not myself already to have attained I press on that I may know Him." What does this imply.

Paul says that there was something vast bound up with his revelation of the Lord and his going on with the Lord which might be missed—not his salvation, but something in his salvation. May the Lord bring upon our hearts something of the force and weight of all this which is bound up with the person of the Lord Jesus as representing God's heavenly system, and urge us to go on to full growth.

Sovereignty

We now pass to the second main significance of the "Heavens," which is sovereignty or transcendence or ascendancy. It does not require a very profound study of the Scriptures to arrive very clearly at that conclusion that the heavens symbolically represent the universality of things spiritually, and then that they represent sovereignty—that which governs or rules.

Beginning at Genesis we know that God put great lights in the heavens to govern day and night—the heavens rule in that sense, and throughout Scripture that principle is carried on in the symbols and types—heavenly bodies and heavenly orders. We know quite well that the visible universe is governed by the orders of the heavens. We know that our ocean tides and our ocean courses and everything on this earth is governed by heavenly bodies. We should not be here to-day if there were no sun in the heavens. Man has found some of his greatest inventions along the line of appropriating that which the sun gives forth. The stars guide—the heavens do rule.

This is a representation of spiritual things which govern in relation to all that is of God, so that sovereignty comes in and with sovereignty seen as of the heavens you have ascendancy. "As the heavens are higher than the earth. . . ." "When I consider Thy heavens the work of Thy hands," there is ascendancy, elevation, transcendence—that which is above all. These are spiritual principles and it is in the realm of these spiritual realities that we are dwelling just now.

When you come to the realities themselves, away from types and representations, the position to which you are brought by this fact that the heavens do rule is that you have become possessed of spiritual secrets—spiritual

revelation. When God has revealed to you the inner side of things spiritual you have been placed in a position of spiritual ascendancy and authority. You have been lifted right above everything and you are in a position of authority, of government, of sovereignty.

Now our way has been to gather up everything in the Person of the Lord Jesus. He represents this whole heavenly system and we have seen that everything related to Him bears out these spiritual principles. Taking this principle of sovereignty and ascendancy you find the heavens so very much in evidence as ruling sovereignly in connection with His representative Person and vocation.

It is interesting and not without considerable significance that the Gospel is introduced with what is in the heavens governing man and governing things. I refer to the beginning of Matthew. Of course, you know I am referring to the star. The Gospel is introduced by what is seen in the heavens and that has taken charge of men to guide their course and the course governed by the heavens brings them to Christ. That is the principle in relation to everyone who is brought to the Lord Jesus by the Gospel or who is brought into the Gospel "concerning His Son." It is heaven's action, heaven's initiative, and we shall never come fully into the Gospel "concerning His Son" until we have come to some apprehension and appreciation of the rule of the heavens.

I mean that the man who used that very phrase "concerning His Son" came to the Son by that which was in heaven, and he was brought into experimental knowledge of the Lord Jesus. The most astonishing thing ever a man has seen—He who was considered to be a Nazarene impostor suddenly revealed as the Son of God bringing this one down on his face

and the first word uttered by him, "Lord....." The heavens do rule. We never come into the fulness of the Gospel until we see the heavenly side of the Gospel. Until then we only see Him as Saviour and not a Prince, God's order is "Prince and Saviour." Many people see Him as Saviour and accept Him as such and perhaps many years afterward come to see Him as Lord, then surrendering fully to Him. That is out of order and in the meantime you have lost so much that God intended. We need to put it God's way—first the Prince, that is, the Lord Jesus exalted and enthroned above everything in our lives, and having Him as Saviour included in that. Those who accept Christ only for salvation's sake only get part of the Gospel.

Paul came into the Gospel by first of all seeing Jesus Christ as Lord. He saw what was in heaven and came to the Saviour by way of the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, and that is the way into full salvation. At the beginning the Gospel is symbolically represented in the star—that which was seen in the heavens as ruling and controlling the course of men bringing them to the Saviour. That is very simple but represents a very important principle and law to be carried right through. The close of Matthew strikes the very same note, but with all the development that has come in between. "All authority has been given unto Me in the heavens and the earth, you therefore go." That which is seen in the heavens governing in the beginning has now developed until you come to the blessed position of seeing that all political divisions of this earth are under the sovereign rulership of Jesus Christ. "All authority given unto me in the heavens and in the earth" and the government of this world, though unseen, is in the hands of the Lord Jesus. There is a sovereignty back of it which will issue in His being King of Kings and Lord of Lords one day.

The Gospel comes in with Matthew as the Gospel of sovereignty, and there are various symbols of the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus in this book. You find the very word "heavens" occurs no less than seventy-five times in Matthew, and angels abound in this Gospel, for we meet with them no fewer than seventeen times. Another factor which always speaks of transcendency, elevation, ascendancy, sovereignty, is the reference to mountains, which occurs fourteen times in Matthew, and a study of these mountains will show them as coming

in in some governing capacity. In some way the Lord is bringing home the fact of His government—His control. You finish the book in a mountain.

Luke is the Gospel of grace and Luke finishes up in Jerusalem. That is grace—grace to those who have rejected the Lord Jesus. Matthew sets Jerusalem aside and goes to the mountain in Galilee. Sovereignty is no longer vested in Jerusalem, but is now vested in the Lord Jesus. "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and in earth"—that principle is running all the way through—transcendancy, elevation, ascendancy, sovereignty all vested in the Person of the Lord Jesus.

Now, then, Matthew begins with the principle that it is what is seen in heaven that governs, and ends with all authority vested in the Person of the Lord Jesus, and in between, the instrument of administration is introduced. It is most significant that the Church comes into Matthew. In chapter xvi. we read, "on this rock will I build My Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Sovereignty is related to the Church, so that the instrument of administration and this sovereignty of the heavens in the Person of the Lord Jesus are so bound up that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against them. Then the Lord begins to speak about the authority of the Church—"whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in the heavens and whatsoever shall be loosed on earth shall be loosed in the heavens." This is the authority of Christ in the Church.

When you come to grasp mentally some truth about the Lord Jesus it is one thing, but when you come by revelation of the Holy Spirit experimentally into the things of Christ you come into a strong position of ascendancy—of being above all government. There is all the difference between taking a truth, sound, orthodox and Scriptural as it is, and giving it out as truth, and having had revealed in your heart the inner meaning of that truth and giving it out. Take two men: one takes something of the Word of God and gives it as a message. No fault can be found in it, it is sound doctrine, but there is something missing. Another man takes exactly the same truth and gives forth the message and as he gives it forth you are conscious of life—something that reaches you. One message was just as true as the other, but one was speaking out of the Bible as a Book, and the other out of revelation

of the Scripture given to his heart by the Holy Spirit. The latter had not sat down and prepared a sermon that was sound, but had gone with the Word of God on his knees and waited before the Lord until truth had been revealed to his heart from an open heaven.

There are plenty of fine preachers but they are not feeding, not building up, not nourishing and satisfying: not channels of life, there is no sense of the heavens coming in. It is the heavens that do rule and you have got to see what is in the heavens. You will remember Ezekiel being taken by an angel around the temple in Jerusalem with a measuring reed, and it has just got to be like that if we are to have a ministry like that. How can we show what is according to God until we have had it shown to us? There must be that counterpart where the Holy Spirit shows us things according to God by revelation. Not something extra to Scripture by way of revelation, but what is in the Scripture that we cannot see until the Holy Spirit opens it up—taking us around and showing us just as the angel showed Ezekiel. That is what the Holy Spirit has come for, because the temple is only a type of Christ, and it is the Spirit revealing Christ, “shall take of mine and show it unto you”—“He shall lead you into all truth.” It is the revelation of things according to God’s mind that brings you into the place of spiritual authority and ascendancy.

We need to ask the Lord to reveal to us what it means to be in the heavenlies. Not a place we are to come to, but a position we have come to and have not realised it—not to make us officious, but to give spiritual and moral ascendancy. The Lord makes others to take account of that. It is a strong position to be in, to be in the place of revelation of things according to God.

In this present hour the sovereignty and authority of Jesus Christ is not political on this earth—not manifest among men—“My kingdom is not of this world,” but His sovereignty is a spiritual sovereignty. He is secretly governing and there is a mighty impact.

To come into the heavenlies means you are to have a spiritual and moral ascendancy. What is the way out with God? Out of difficulty, out of suffering? It is the way through. Here you are in the midst of some suffering, difficulty, adversity. You cry to the Lord to deliver you and the Lord does not do it. Then you get into all kinds of mental fogs.

Why doesn’t the Lord deliver you out? Because He is trying to train you to rule and your way of deliverance is by your spirit taking ascendancy over it. You say, “Lord, I take government over this thing to make it serve your end and I refuse to be under it in spirit.” When you have taken that position you have come out of it—God comes in. We want to be delivered from our troubles and the Lord wants us to take ascendancy over them in Him.

That is what Paul did. His thorn in the flesh was just as painful to him in some senses but he was on top of it—it was serving him and he was not a prey to it. That is the rule of the heavens. It works—I have proved it again and again. The trouble is that sometimes we are so silly and foolish and blindly go on. We yield to it or the enemy blinds us concerning it and then it suddenly breaks upon us that we should not be under it and say, “In His Name I take ascendancy over this thing”—we come out by the heavens.

The Lord would show us first of all that the heavens do rule and then bring us into that elevated place with Himself spiritually and governmentally, where the gates of Hell shall not prevail against us, and lead on to the great position where all authority on earth and in heaven is in His hands.

The purpose of God now is the securing of an administrative instrument and the training of that instrument to govern. People wonder why the Lord does not wipe the devil out of the universe, why He does not stop suffering and affliction, for the Word tells us that our Lord Jesus was “manifested to destroy the works of the devil.” All this has been permitted in order to bring the Church individually and corporately to the place of spiritual ascendancy over trial. God intended to put us into some higher position and that is our rightful position in Christ where the heavens do rule. You are only down and out and under when your spirit is under. God would have us take ascendancy over conditions that are. Revelation is bound up with this very thing. It is wonderful how you go dragging on, hardly holding your ground and then suddenly the Lord gives you a flash—why don’t you take your position in Christ?

The great fact is that sovereignty is in the heavenly position and heavenly position is secured for us now in the Lord Jesus for “we have been made to sit in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” Sovereignty, government, as-

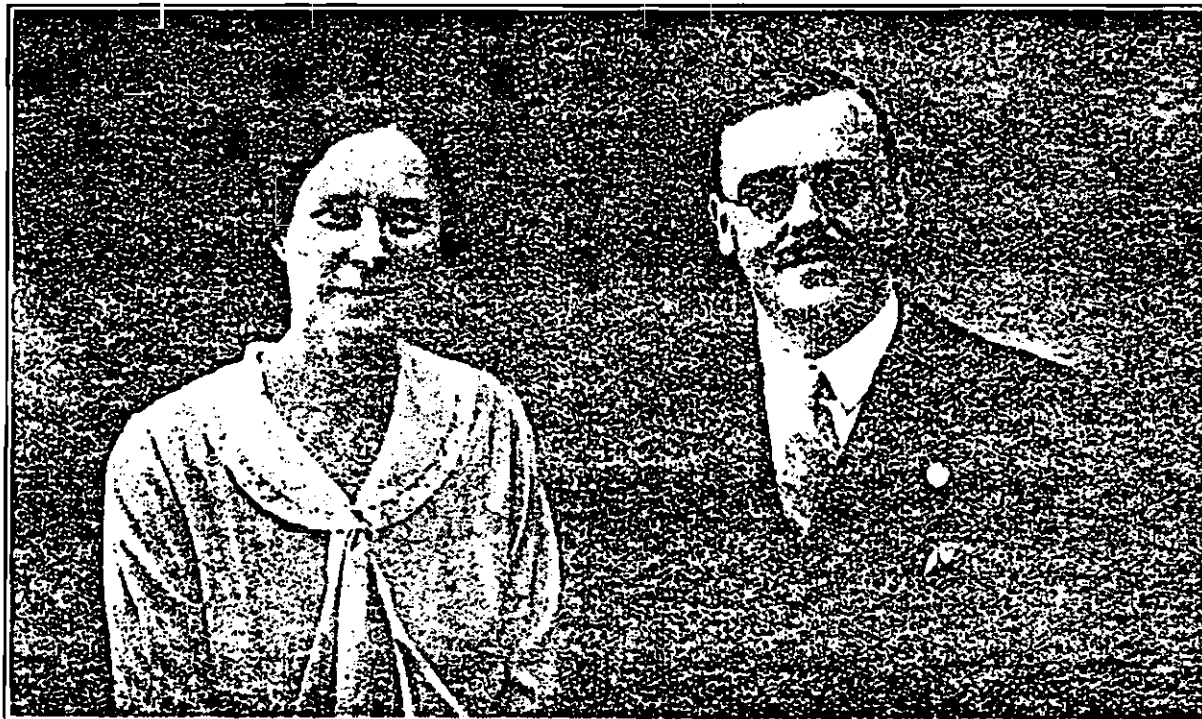
condency, elevation—all in our Lord Jesus and in that position we should be governors over things—spiritual governors. Not the volume of voice or the phraseology, not the clenching of the fist. It is your spirit being in a position where you can perhaps very quietly and deeply but strongly in your spirit say, "No, I refuse that in the Name of the Sovereign Lord." We weaken the forces of darkness by a quiet definite position in Christ. Not a mental thing but spiritual, because the heavens represent that which is spiritual.

I was impressed by reading the seventh chapter of Ezra which is the chapter of the mandate. The king had given Ezra a mandate and the enemies sought to frustrate the work, but he came in on the ground of his mandate

and the words which the king used three times about the carrying out of the work at Jerusalem were "the God of heaven." Because of the God of heaven Ezra had his mandate and anybody who tried to prevent the accomplishment of that work was met accordingly. When you have a mandate from the God of heaven God will see that your commission is fulfilled—your enemies will not prevail against you. If you are put out of one place God will open other doors. It is a great thing to be a minister of the God of heaven. A committee, or board or synod may turn you out of every church on earth but they cannot turn you out of the Church of heaven, for the heavens do rule.

T. A.-S.

PRAY FOR



MR. AND MRS. HARRY FOSTER.
Sailing for Colombia, South America, November 7, 1931.

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

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

SUNDAYS at 10.30 A.M. (Lord's Table), 11.15 A.M., 3 P.M. (Young People), 6.30 P.M.

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

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

The Guest House is open to receive guests for the period of the conferences or at other times as the Lord leads.

Telegrams: "Syndesmos, Forest, London."

Telephone: Sydenham 5216.

Cables: "Syndesmos, London."

Editorial communications with regard to this paper should be addressed to Mr. Austin-Sparks.

"Witness and Testimony" Literature

By T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.

'The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.' Price 9d. Postage 1½d.

'In Christ.' Price 6d.

'The Release of the Lord.' Price 6d.

'The Inner Man of the Heart.' Price 3d.

'The Watchword of The Son of Man.' 3d.

'Vision and Vocation.' Price 2d.

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

'The Holy Spirit and The Cross, The Church and The Coming Again of the Lord Jesus.' 2d.

'The Cross and the deliverance of the Mind.' Price 2d.

'The Candlestick all of Gold.' Price 1d.

'Christ our Life.' 6d. per dozen.

Diagrams.

1. The Centrality and Universality of the Cross.

2. The Cross and our Salvation.

3. The Attitude of the Crucified Ones Toward Each Other.

4. The Cross and the New Creation.

5. The Cross and the New Man.

6. The Cross and the Promise of the Father

7. 'In Christ Jesus.'

8. The Cross in the Life, Work and Teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ (No. 1),

9. The Cross in the Life, Work and Teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ (No. 2).

1d. each, or 9d. per dozen.

By P. W. FAUNCH.

'Deliverance from Sin.' Price ½d.

NEW BOOKS

The Divine Reactions

Price 6d.

IN THE PRESS

The Gospel in the Farmyard

Messages for Boys and Girls.

By G. PATERSON.

(Illustrated). Price 1s. 6d.

Ready in December.

THE MOTTO

for 1932

IS NOW IN HAND

Price - - - 2d.

A Witness and a Testimony

NOV.—DEC., 1931

VOL. 9. No. 6

Unto us a
child
is born

HIS HUMANITY

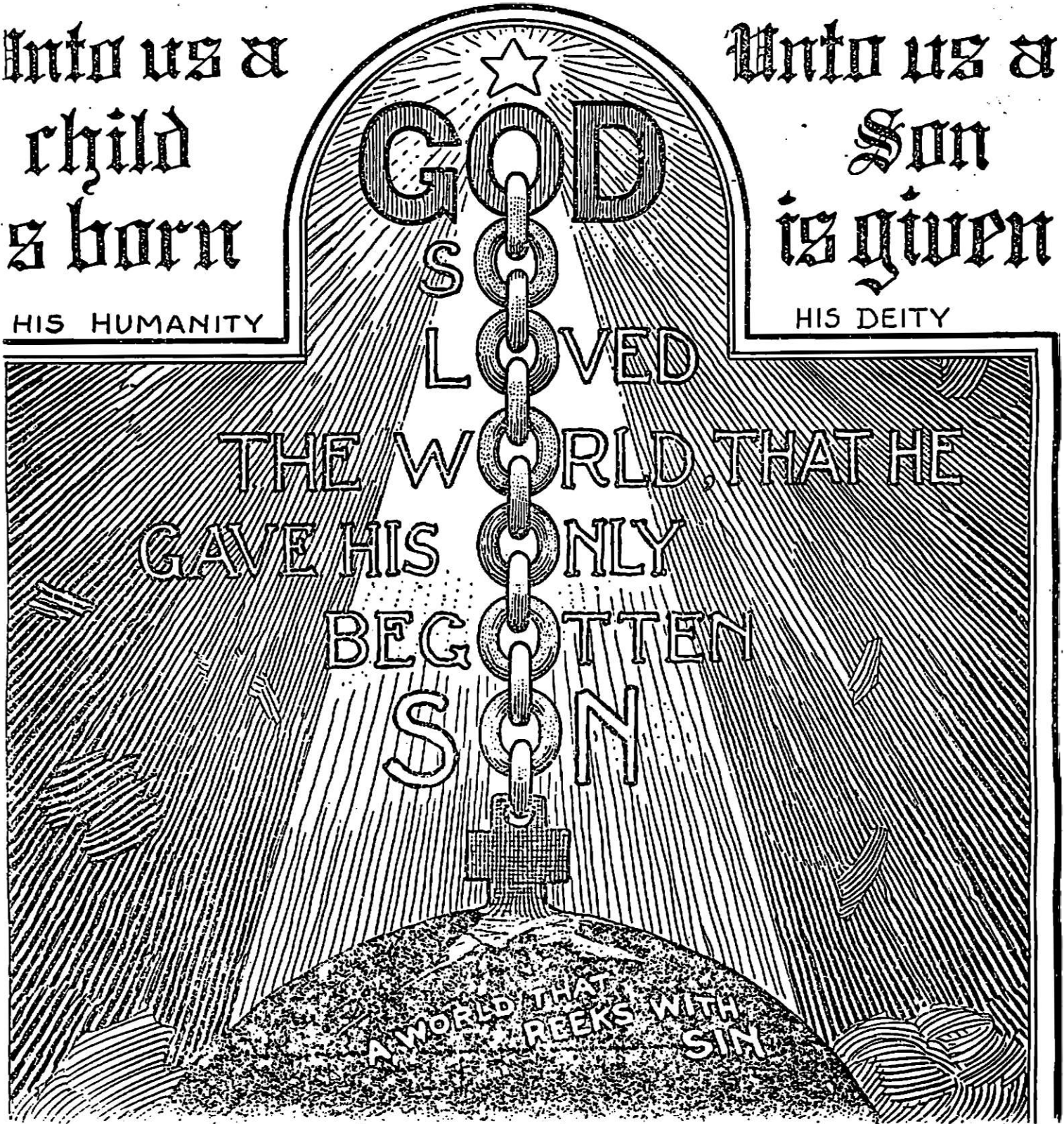
Unto us a
Son
is given

HIS DEITY

GOD
S
LOVED

THE WORLD, THAT HE
GAVE HIS ONLY
BEGOTTEN
SON

A WORLD THAT
REEKS WITH
SIN



“A Witness and A Testimony”

EDITORIAL

The December Conference.

THE special gatherings on this occasion have been featured by very blessed tokens of life and strength. The numbers present were larger than for some months: the accommodation both in residence and hall was taxed to its utmost limit. The theme with which we were occupied was ‘The Trumpet of Testimony,’ with the tenth chapter of Numbers as our foundation. The Lord gave both new emphasis and new light upon what the assembly is as governed by the Holy Spirit through the full testimony of the truth and of the need of priestly fellowship with Himself for the maintenance of that order and testimony. It was good that the closing conference of the year should have been marked by both this clear note and this strength and fulness spiritually and numerically.

Miss Sinclair and Spain.

As we announced in our last issue, our sister Miss Sinclair is on the eve of her departure for Spain, to enter into spiritual co-operation with Mr. and Mrs. Eldor. She leaves on December 12, which means that she will be at her destination by the time this issue is in our readers’ hands. Pray very much for her. We shall give news from time to time.

Mr. and Mrs Gresham Speedy.

Our brother Speedy and sister Irene Rezac were married in New York on November 11. They have it in their hearts to return to England at an early date with the hope of going on to Africa in the Will of God as soon as He directs and opens the way.

Edinburgh.

The monthly gatherings in Edinburgh are proving to be times of blessing and under the Lord’s seal. These are held on the third Tuesday in each month in the Gartshore Hall, George Street, at 3 and 8 o’clock. Any friends who desire local information or WITNESS AND TESTIMONY literature locally can obtain this from Miss J. Murray, 5 St. Andrew Square.

Mr. and Mrs Foster.

Letters just to hand from our brother and sister posted at Barbados tell of a very rough

voyage. Indeed, our brother says that at one time it was “serious.” The wireless apparatus was blown away, and it was feared that more than one other ship had been wrecked in the same waters. The Lord had given an opportunity on the voyage for a service in the saloon, and there were several on board who were being exercised in relation to their salvation.

Honor Oak Extension of Premises.

In view of the overcrowding of our hall at Conference times and our need also of a small hall for prayer gatherings, etc., we have decided to add a wing to the present hall. This when open will provide for the extra accommodation for conferences, and when shut off by its folding doors will make a very useful self-contained place of gathering for other meetings.

New Scottish Centre.

By a course of Divine leading and wonderful provision we have become possessed of a beautiful and most useful property at Kilcreggan on the Firth of Clyde.

We shall not give the history of this development here, but shall probably include it in a little separate brochure to be issued later. When that account is given we are sure that our friends will rejoice to see the Lord’s hand in this matter very much as the hand of Him “Who only doeth wondrous things.”

We are not able to give the date of opening up there, but below we give a list of conferences and dates which—if the Lord tarries and wills—we feel to be contemplated in 1932. It is probable that the work will be opened up before these conferences begin, but a fair amount of preparation has to be made.

We should like, however—in anticipating the little brochure—to let our friends know that both the property and all its furnishings and equipment have been provided by some of the Lord’s servants without any appeal for funds or drawing upon any funds in hand. We will send the full story and outline of anticipated work there to our readers when it is ready. In the mean time, pray that all may be kept strongly in the Lord’s hands.

Conferences in 1932.

If the Lord tarries and wills the following is the contemplated list of Conferences for the coming year.

Will friends take special note that the old order of Conferences at Honor Oak at the first weekend in each month will not obtain after January.

Honor Oak

- Jan. 2-3 General Conference.
 „ 4-7. Intensive Conference for Workers
 at 11, 3, and 7.30 o'clock.
 Feb. 20-21.
 Mar. 25-28. Easter Conference.
 May 14-16. Whitsun Conference.
 July 2-9. Holiday Conference at Slavanka.
 July 31—Aug. 2.
 Oct. 1-2.

Scottish Conferences.

- May 21-24.
 June 18-25.
 July 16-23.
 Aug. 5-12.
 Sept. 3-12.

Acknowledgments

THE following (apart from local) gifts towards the expenses of this paper have been received between October 1st and November 30th. We gratefully acknowledge receipt:—

Jerusalem, £1 9s.; Bulawayo, S. Africa, £1; Dien'efit, Franco, 6s. 2d.; Belfast, 5s. and 3s.; Clontarf, I.F.S., 2s. 6d.; Glasgow, 5s.; Dunoon, 5s.; Edinburgh, 10s., 2s., and 4s. 8d.; Kirkeudbright, 2s. 6d.; Loith, 2s. 6d.; Acle, Norfolk, 2s.; Blackpool, 3s. and 2s. 6d.; Birmingham, 10s.; Burnham, Bucks., 5s.; Carlisle, 5s.; Cliftonville, 4d.; Derby, 2s. 4d.; Eastbourn, £1; East Sheen, 2s. 6d.; Forest Gate, 1s.; Finchloy, 5s.; Frinton, 4s. 6d.; Falmouth, 10d.; Heaton, 10s.; Littlehampton, 2s. 6d.; Loigh-on-Sea, 5s.; Leeds, 10s. 6d.; Liverpool, 10s. and 10s.; Plumstead, 5s.; Purley, 2s.; Southampton, 6s.; Stoke Newington, 2s.; Swindon, 5s.; Swanloy Junction, 3s. 6d.; Tunbridge Wells, 2s. 6d.; Wembley, 2s.; Wolverhampton, 3d.—Total, £11 17s. 7d.

Christ—All in All

Colossians i. 18. iii. 2.

THERE has been a great deal done in recent days to bring the greater magnitudes of the universe within the intelligence of the ordinary man and woman. Literally hundreds of thousands of books by such scientists as Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington have been sold, in which the vaster and profounder matters of scientific inquiry and study have been resolved into something like a popular treatise. This means that not a few people are interested in the explanation of the universe, of creation, man, history, and the course of this earth in particular. It may seem egotistical—especially when having read these works we still find ourselves left more or less in the air by their writers, who fail to bring us to any definite and settled conclusion—but we believe that we have the positive and final answer to the inquiry. For us there is one—only one—but one definite and conclusive explanation of the universe, and that explanation is a person—the Lord Jesus Christ, and all that is eternally related to Him. However much else we read and study we shall never get the explanation of the universe in whole or in part until we come to see the place of the Lord Jesus in the eternal appointment of God. The simple but all embracing words, above “Christ is all and in all” sum up the whole matter from eternity through all stages

of time unto eternity. It is this which we desire to show or present in these pages.

Firstly, then,

“Christ is all and in all” is the explanation of the creation itself.

Of course, you know that this very letter (Col.), the first chapter, makes that statement. It tells us that “*In Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers, all things were created in Him and for Him, and He is before all things and in Him all things hold together.*” That is a comprehensive statement, and it clearly shows that Christ being all and in all is the explanation of the whole creation. Why were all things created? Why did God through Him bring the universe into being? Why does this great universal system exist and continue? What is the explanation of the world? The answer is that Christ may be all and in all. The intention in the heart of God in bringing this whole universe into existence was that ultimately the whole creation should display the glory and supremacy of His own Son, Jesus Christ, and this one little fragment, “and in Him all things hold together” says quite patently and clearly that, but for the Lord Jesus Christ, the whole universe would disintegrate, fall apart: it would be without its uniting factor. It would

cease to have reason for being maintained as a complete and concrete whole; its holding together, its failure to disintegrate and break up, to fall apart and fall to pieces is understood by this, God has determined that the Lord Jesus shall be the centre, the governing centre of all this whole system, this whole universe, and He—God's Son—explains the creation, and but for Him there never would have been a creation. Take Him out, and creation loses its purpose and its object, and need not go on any longer. "Christ is all and in all," was the thought, the ruling thought in the mind of God in the creation of the universe. That may leave you cold in measure, it may not get you very far but I venture to think that what I am now going to say will get you a little further and warm you up, for the prospect is this that when God has things as He determined in eternity past to have them—and He is going to have them so—every atom of this whole universe will display the glory of Jesus Christ. You will not be able to look at anything or anyone without seeing Christ glorified. Wonderful! A blessed prospect that! It is a happy day when so many of us, the Lord's children are together for hours on end, if it might be, days on end, when we are occupied with the Lord and we have one mutual interest and we are all taken up with Him. When we have a time like that and go back into the world, what a different atmosphere! How chilled we feel! It is a lovely thing to see the Lord in His children and be shut up to the Lord like that; but even then it is only in part. But the eternal day is coming when there will be no going back into the world on a Monday morning, when it will be teaching nothing else but the Lord Jesus and the whole universe will be full of Him, Christ all and in all! That is God's end. That is what He has determined. All for Him: all displaying the Lord Jesus. We see much that is not the Lord Jesus in one another now: the day is coming when you will see nothing but the Lord Jesus in me and I will see nothing but the Lord Jesus in you. "Conformed to the image of His Son." That, shining out and displayed. Christ all in all. God has determined, and what God has determined, He will have. This, then, is the explanation of the creation, that Christ may be all in all and among all have the pre-eminence.

In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul has a very remarkable statement in this connection:

"For the earnest expectation of the creation

waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him Who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."—(viii 19:).

Note what this really says and implies. The creation is possessed by an earnest expectation. This expectation is like a groaning in travail, and that of a hope. (Not the dissolution of the universe, of which certain scientists say so much.) Nevertheless the hope and the groaning thereunto are deliberately put under a reign of vanity—all in vain—unto a fixed time and goal. That end is in two parts. One the revealing of the sons of God. The other—linked therewith—the deliverance of the creation from the enslavement to corruption.

All this is taken back to eternity past and linked with the Lord Jesus as "The Son":

"For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

In this former passage there is a definite statement and a clear implication. The statement is that the creation was subjected to vanity and its state is the bondage of corruption. The implication clearly is that there was a definite time when, because of its corruption, the whole creation was made subject to vanity and its groanings and travailings rendered abortive. It is in that connection that there is given room for the whole range and nature of the Satanic interference with the creation by which its ultimate Divine purpose was challenged and designed to be frustrated, bringing in corruption. So universal was that corruption that a sentence of vanity was pronounced upon the "whole creation."

The effect of this was and is that the creation can never realise the object of its being on any other ground than that of holiness and Divine likeness. Here there comes in also the whole range of the "Redemption that is in Christ Jesus": the universal work which He accomplished by His Cross in the destruction of the work of the Devil and the Devil himself, potentially, with all the sin and corruption-destroying power of His sinless nature and life, the efficacy of His incorruptible blood, and the providing of a justification and sanctification for all who believe, these by regeneration

becoming "a new creation in Christ Jesus." (II Corinth., v. 17).

By this means alone can the creation be delivered, but when these sons of God are manifested—their number complete—and all who have refused this salvation dismissed from God's realm, then shall the creation be delivered and its original intention be realised, Christ being all and in all.

II. The explanation of Man.

Then, in the next place, as a central part of the creation, man. What is the explanation of man? How much is being written on the explanation of man, the history of man from the jelly fish onwards. Man. What is the explanation of Adam as the first man? There is one little passage of scripture which answers that. "Adam was a type of Him Who was to come," that is, Christ. A type of Him that was to come. That is the explanation of man. The explanation of man is this, that God intended that every man occupying this world should be conformed to the image of His Son Jesus Christ. Multitudes will miss it, but there will be multitudes such as no man can number out of every tribe and kindred and nation and tongue who will realise it. What a high calling! What a different conception of man that is; what a thing to be missed! And yet there are many who say complainingly that if they had had their way they would never have come into this world; if it had been left with them they would never have chosen to be born. There have been those who, in an hour of eclipse like Job, of whom we read, he cried, "Oh that I had been covered in my birth" and curse the day that they saw the light. Ah, but something has gone wrong there; that is not how the Lord meant it to be, and however we may have blue days when we wonder whether really it is worth while after all, let us come back to God's thought in our very being. It is our tremendous privilege, the highest honour that could ever have been conferred upon us from the Divine standpoint, that we should have been born. We do not always feel like that, that is not how we always speak, but we are constantly compelled to bring ourselves back to God's point of view about this, and when we come back to God's point of view to be conformed to the image of His Son, a universe peopled with such as are conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ, to form for Him a universal expression, display, manifestation of Christ glorified with the Glory

of the Father, that is a privilege, an honour, something to be born for. That is the explanation of man. We can just touch these matters, so many of them, lightly, and pass on.

III. The Explanation of Redemption.

Further this word, "Christ is all and in all" is the explanation of redemption. Things of course went wrong. God's purpose was interfered with—it could never be finally thwarted, but there was another who did determine that so far as it was in his power, that universal display of Jesus Christ should never be that "all-in-allness" of the Lord Jesus should never be! There was one who desired to have that for himself, that he should be universal lord of heaven and earth, and that interference for a time has made a great deal of difference. It has interfered with man and made man other than God intended him to be. It has spoiled the image, but redemption—redemption, in other words the Cross of the Lord Jesus. What is the explanation of the Cross? What is the explanation firstly and on the one side, of all that atonement, that redemptive work of the Lord Jesus in dealing with sin and having universal sin laid upon Him and being made a curse for us, in our place: and then on the other hand as the complement of that, as the other half of that, the explanation of that Cross being wrought in the believer so that the believer becomes united with Him in the likeness of His death and burial as a spiritual experience; all that application of Calvary which is so painful, so terrible to pass through—yes, the disintegrating of the old man, the breaking up of the body of the flesh, the cutting off, that inward knowledge of the power of the Cross—terrible to the flesh. What is the explanation? Beloved, the explanation is that Christ may be all in all. Why are we broken? To make room for the Lord Jesus. Why are we brought down to the dust by the Holy Spirit as He works Calvary's death into us? In order that the Lord Jesus may take the place that we have occupied in the flesh. We get wrong sometimes about this application of the Cross. The enemy is always at our elbow to insinuate and suggest the cruelty of God, the unkindness of God to smash us, to humiliate us, to bring us to nothing and to say there is no end to this thing, and to get us down.

Beloved, the Cross was intended only to make the Lord Jesus all and in all for us, and I ask you, many of you who know something of this, is it not true that because of the way that the Lord has dealt with you, in which the Lord has

applied the Cross, the way in which the Lord has planted you into that death and burial, you know the Lord Jesus in a way in which you never knew Him before, and it is by that way He has become endeared to you a hundred, a thousand-fold, and it is by that means He has become what He is to you. The "All and in all-ness" of the Lord Jesus is by the way of the Cross. We know quite well that our chief enemy is ourselves, our flesh. This flesh gives us no rest, no peace, no satisfaction; we have no joy in it. It obsesses, engrosses, constantly struts across our path to rob us of the very joy of living. "This cruel self O how it strives"—what is to be done with it? Why—in the Cross and by the Cross we are delivered from ourselves, not only from our sins, but from ourselves, and delivered from ourselves we are delivered into Christ and Christ becomes far more than we. It is a painful process, but it is a blessed issue, and those amongst you who may have had the greatest agony along this line I believe would testify that what it has brought to you of the knowledge and riches of the Lord Jesus is worth far more than your having escaped that suffering, and has made it all worth while. And the work of the Lord for us, and the work of the Lord in us by Calvary is only intended in the Divine thought to make room for the Lord Jesus. The large altar of the Tabernacle, and the Temple, was a *large* altar; it was a very big altar. You could get all the other things of the whole Tabernacle inside of the large altar. Yes, the altar has got to be a big one, there has to be a big place for Christ Crucified. He is to fill all things and He is to be the fulness of all things, and there is going to be no room for us in the end. Does that strike you with dismay? Surely not. Do we not say with glistening eyes, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in His likeness." What is that? "I" no more, "Christ" all. Yes! So the Cross, the work of redemption through that Cross has for its explanation just this, that Christ may be all and in all, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. This, then, is the explanation of our experiences, why the Lord deals with us as He does, why believers go through experiences that they do go through, why they go through things that no one else is called upon to go through; why sometimes they almost envy unbelievers the easy time that so many of them have.

This explains the Lord's dealings with Israel in the wilderness. That even after being

delivered from Egypt's bondage and tyranny there was heart-break and agony, and now out in the wilderness, still they hark back to Egypt. Why this chastening? It is the work the Lord is doing in them that He may be everything in them. If He cuts off their natural supplies, it is only to show what their heavenly supplies are. If He cuts off their natural power it is that they may come to know the power of the heavens. Whatever He may take them out of and land them into is that He might take them out of themselves and be all in all. This is the explanation of our difficulties. The Lord knows how best to deal with each one of us and He does not use standardised methods. He deals with you in one way and with me in another. He knows how to lead us into experiences which are most calculated to lead us to where the Lord is all in all.

IV. This is the explanation further, of Christian growth.

What is spiritual growth? What is spiritual maturity? What is it to go on in the Lord? Oh, we have got mixed ideas about this, I fear. Many think that spiritual maturity is a more comprehensive knowledge of Christian doctrine; a larger grasp of scriptural truth; a wider expanse of the knowledge of the *things* of God and many such things are recorded as marks of growth, development, spiritual maturity. Beloved, it is nothing of the kind. The hall-mark of true spiritual development and maturity is this, that we have grown so much less and the Lord Jesus has grown so much more. That is the mark of maturity. The mature soul is one who is small in his or her own eyes, but in whose eyes the Lord Jesus is so great. That is growth. We may know a very great deal, have a wonderful grasp of doctrine, of teaching, of truth, even of the scriptures, and yet be very small spiritually, very immature, very childish—there is all the difference between being childish and child-like—but real spiritual growth is just this, I decrease, He increases. It is the Lord Jesus becoming more. You can test it by that.

Then again this word is

V. The explanation of all service.

What is Christian service according to the mind of God? It is not having a very full programme of Christian activities; it is not that necessarily. It is not that we are always busy in what we call "things of the Lord." It is not the measure and amount of our activity and business, not the degree of our perspiration

and enthusiasm in the kingdom of God. It is not our schemes, our enterprises for the Lord. Beloved, the test of all service is this, its motive, its motive. Is the motive from start to finish that in all things He may have the preeminence, that Christ may be all in all? You know the temptations and the fascination of Christian service; the fascination of being busy, being occupied with many things, having your programme, schemes, enterprises, being in it and always at it. There is a peril there, and that peril has caught multitudes of the Lord's servants. It is that it has brought them into prominence, it has made the work theirs, it is their work; it is their interests and they are the more pleased the more they govern the thing and run the thing. No, there is a difference between going the round of the clock in Christian service as the mere enjoyment of activity and the fascination of it and all the advantages and facilities it provides for ourselves, our flesh and its gratification; there is a great difference between that and this "Christ all and in all." Sometimes that thing is achieved by our being put out of action; and that is the test, as to whether we are quite satisfied to be altogether put out of work if only the Lord can be more glorified by our being out. If only He can come into His own, it does not matter a scrap whether we are seen or heard. It is somewhere, in the grace of God, to get when you are quite content to be put up in a corner, taken no notice of, not to be seen, if thereby the Lord Jesus can come into His own more speedily and fully. Somehow we have got caught up into this thing and think the Lord Jesus can only come into His own if we are the instrument. The rivalry, platform rivalries, pulpit rivalries, sensitiveness because one is put before another, because one's address is given more attention than another, the favourable remarks all given in one direction, etc., etc. I know all about it. After all, what were you after? Winning your audience, or winning your sermon, or winning your Lord? A great difference. Sometimes the Lord Jesus gets more out of our bad times than we think, and sometimes we have our good times, and He has not got the most. Therein the necessity for our being set aside, kept weak and humble, that He might have the preeminence. The explanation of service according to God's thought is just this—what are you doing it for? Do you want to be in the work, to take up the work, to be busy? Or is it utterly and only if by any means He may come

into His own? That God's end may be realised, and if that means that He can be all and in all by our death as well as by our life, we come to the place where we can say "That Christ may be magnified in this mortal body whether by life or by death"? That is the explanation of service from God's standpoint.

Of course, this is the explanation of many other things. It is

VI. the explanation of the whole of the Old Testament.

We will not tarry to see how this is so, but just indicate and pass on. What is the Old Testament? It is all gathered up in great representations of Jesus Christ. Take the two main ones. The Tabernacle and the Temple. Those are comprehensive representations of the Lord Jesus both in His Person and in His work, and these occupy, as such, the central place in the life of a chosen people, and their life is bound up with them. The two are one, and while that people, that elect people, are in right relationship to that central Object, the tabernacle or temple, while they give it its place of honour and reverence and maintain it in its place of highest holiness, while they are true to its spirit, and its laws, and its testimony, though they are amongst all the peoples of the earth least capable, naturally, of looking after their interests, they are the supreme people of the earth. There is not a nation or a people of all the people in the earth able to stand before them. They have never been trained in the art of war. They have no long history behind them of arms and strategy in that realm. They are in themselves a defenceless people and yet they take the ascendancy over, not only individual nations greater and mightier than themselves, but over a combination of nations, and though all unite against them, while true to that central object they are supreme—that central object is a representation of the Lord Jesus in all His Person and work. The spiritual interpretation of it is, when the Lord Jesus has His place there is supremacy, absolute supremacy when He in all things has the pre-eminence in and through and by His people. Christ is all and in all, and when that is true there are no forces capable of withstanding Him. The secret of absolute supremacy and sovereignty is the Lord Jesus having His place in the lives and in the hearts, in all the affairs and relationships of His own people, and the gates of hades cannot prevail then.

It is

VII. The explanation of the New Testament,

and the New Testament brings in little companies, small among the peoples of the earth, despised, cast out, hardly allowed to speak without being bitterly molested, and eventually bringing upon them the organised wrath and hatred of the nations of this world until all the resources of a great iron empire are exploited, utilised, put into operation to make the remembrance of these humble, despised people to cease, and to blot them out from history. The story is just this, that the Empires have broken, the world powers have ceased to be. We go round the world now looking at the relics and ruins of these great Empires, but where is that people of the Way of the despised Nazarene? A great multitude that no man can number—heaven is full of them, and here on earth there are tens of thousands who know and love the Lord Jesus, who are of this Way. The explanation is that God determined that His Son should be all, and in all things have the pre-eminence. Come into living relationship with God's Son, and men and hell may do what they will. God will reach His end and such a people will be triumphant and be on top.

One word more. This is

VIII. The explanation of the Church.

What is the Church? God's thought is not Christianity; it is not Churches as organised centres of Christianity. Not the propaganda of Christian teaching and enterprise. God's thought is to have a people in the earth in whom, and in the midst of whom Christ is all and in all. That is the Church. We have got to revise our ideas. The Church begins and the Church ends in the thought of God with this thing, the place of absolute supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ; and what God is always after is to get together those of His people who will most fully realise that thought of His and be unto Him the satisfaction of His own eternal desire, the Lord Jesus in all things having the pre-eminence and being all in all. No passes by the great institution called the Church and He is with those who in themselves are of a humble and contrite heart and tremble at His word, and with whom the Lord Jesus is the one and only Object of worship and adoration, whose hearts are just going up to Him. That satisfies the heart of God. That, for Him, is the answer to His eternal quest. You notice the text says that. Look at it again, Col. iii. 11. "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, free, but Christ is all and in all." Where

they have "put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." Look closely into that and you will find this is the corporate Man, the Church, the Body of Christ which is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all—to quote from another part—the Church is "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," and there, in that corporate man, there cannot be Greek and Jew. Note the order. It does not say where Greek and Jew come together in blessed fellowship. No, you have not got all nationalities in the Church: you have got rid of all nationalities and you have now one spiritual new creation, new man, where there cannot be Greek, Jew, Bondman, freeman; where all earthly distinctions have gone, finished for ever—*one now man*. The right arm is not a Jew and the left arm a Greek! No, they have gone out; one new man, and there in that Church, where it is not a lovely combination where Anglicans, Wesleyans, Baptists, Congregationalists and all the rest come together and sink their differences for the time being, this is not the Church; the Church is where these things do not exist, not where they are just covered up for the time being, but where they do not exist; *no Body one Spirit*. The Church is this, Christ is all and in all. Get that, and you have the Church. Call anything else the Church and let it be without that and it is a contradiction. Test it by that.

If it is true that the Christian life according to the thought and mind of God is just this, "Christ all and in all" are you a true Christian? Am I a true Christian? For we have seen that by the Cross we went out to make room for the Lord Jesus. Now, if we profess to have come by way of Calvary to the Lord, the implication is that we have gone out by that Cross that Christ may be all in all. What about this. I want a little bit of the world, I still cling to this thing and that thing outside the Lord. I cling to that voluntarily because—well, if the truth were known, the Lord Jesus has not wholly satisfied, and I have to make up—there has to be a make-weight—and a worldly Christian is a contradiction in title. To have a little bit of something outside Christ is to deny Calvary and to stand right in opposition to the eternal intention of God concerning Christ. Will you take that responsibility? God determined this from all eternity concerning His son, and we profess to belong to the Lord Jesus and yet it is not true that He is all and in all. There is

something wrong, there is a denial, a contradiction. We are opposed to God's thought God's purpose. Is it true that He is all and in all? He will do that if we will go all the way. Oh those subtle suggestions that are ever being whispered in our ears, that if we give up this and that we are going to lose, and life is going to be less rich than it is, and might be; that we are going to be narrowed down until we have nothing left. It is a lie! That is the thing that is countering God's great thought for us. God's thought for us is that one no less than His Son, Jesus Christ, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in bodily form, that no less than that one should be our fulness. All the fulness of God in Christ for us. You never attain that by rejecting Him. Life must be much less than it need if you are not going all the way with the Lord, and what obtains in the matter of our consecration to the Lord, our entire and complete abandonment to Him in our life and our complete cut with all that is not of the Lord, obtains in the realm of service. This flesh loves to sport itself in Christian work, and tells us, if we are going to be dependent upon the Lord we are going to have an anxious time. But a life of dependance upon God can be a life of continual romance. It is there that we make discoveries which are a constant wonder.

You may be nearly dead one minute and in five minutes the Lord gives you something to do and you would be very much alive, dependant upon Him for every breath you breathe, but you come to know the Lord. Then after that experience you are just as helpless and dead again for a bit, and you remember that the Lord did something: the Lord does it again, and so life becomes a romance, and no one would ever think you were hanging on to the Lord for your very breath. It is a very blessed thing to know the Lord is doing it and you know that you could not do it at all; it is humanly, naturally, impossible, but the Lord is doing it! Blessed! Follow on, beloved in the matter of the Church. Apply the test. For us—I am not speaking judgingly, censoriously, I do not intend to be discriminating in a wrong sense, but let me be faithful—for us, our fellowship must be where the Lord Jesus is most honoured. Our fellowship must be where God gets His own most fully, where Christ is all and in all: for us that must be the Church. We must not be tied by traditions, by things which make the claim and take the name. Where the Lord is most honoured, that is where our hearts must

be; where everything else is made subservient to this one thing, Jesus Christ all in all. That is the Church and that must be the place where for us is the gravitating of our hearts. The place where God is going to register His testimony and through which He is going to bring the impact of that testimony upon others must be the place where the Lord Jesus is most honoured, and you may take it that where there are hungry ones you will not be at a loss for an opportunity of ministry if you are fully in accord with God's purpose concerning His Son.

Everything Living.

Remember that everything in relation to the Christian life is experimental; it is experimental. Everything in relation to the Lord Jesus, is essentially experimental. It is not doctrinal. This is not a matter of creed. It is not that we accept certain statements of doctrine or creed, and that brings us into relationship to the Lord Jesus. It never does. We are not made Christians by the acceptance of doctrinal statements or orthodox creeds, or things about the Lord Jesus. We are not made Christians that way and the Church is not constituted on that ground at all, though it stands for certain things. Experience has to be wrought in the life and you have to become a part of it and it has to become a part of you. It is not sufficient to believe that Christ died on the Cross. That has got to come down here into our lives and become an experience, a mighty working, operating force and factor in our beings. The Church is not set up on a basis of doctrinal statements. You cannot gather people together and say this is perfectly sound, we will constitute our Church upon that basis. You cannot do it. The Church is that in which the truth has been wrought, in which it has been made experimental. Creeds cannot hold you together, when hell rises to split you. No, the most ultra-fundamental creed has not succeeded in holding people together. The unity of the Spirit is a thing wrought, inwrought. Unless that is so there is nothing that can stand against the divisive, schismatic spirits that are abroad. Everything must be experimental, not doctrinal, not credal. Now that is where you get to God's thing. It is one thing to sing hymns about Christ being all in all, to look at it as an objective thing and say, "this is it;" but it is another thing to be brought experimentally to that place. There are many to-day who will say "yes, that is right, Christ all and in all," and tomorrow morning, you touch them upon

some silly little thing where their preferences are involved and you find that Christ is not all in all. We have to come to it through experience. May the Lord give us grace for that. But to-night the final appeal I make to you is that we all here in this place should come anew for the enthronement of the Lord Jesus as supreme Lord in our hearts, in every part of our life, in all our relationships; that if there is anything we have been holding back we should

let go, if we have had any reserves, we should break now. That if we have been half-and-half, or a little bit outside, from now this should be no more, but that He should be all and in all; from this time that should be our understanding, our undertaking with the Lord. Will you do it? Ask the Lord to break even every tender tie that is in the way of Him being all in all—yes, are you prepared for that? The Lord give you grace. T. A-S.

For Boys and Girls

The Gospel in the Farmyard (No. 13)

Why Worry.

“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”—Deut. xxxiii. 25.

I EXPECT you have all seen little chicks or ducks only a day or two old, but you may not have seen goslings—that is, baby geese. While not exactly like the ducklings or little chicks, in this respect they are just the same—they are little balls of fluff with no proper feathers upon them, but as soft and downy as could be. If you picked one up you would be almost afraid of crushing it to pieces in your hand.

An Anxious Hunt.

On our farm in the summer a kind old hen was given five goose's eggs to hatch out, and in due course the five babies arrived. The farmer's wife, of course, fed them, and all went well the first day or two. On the next day, however, at feeding time, the goslings were nowhere to be found, although the mother hen was safely in her coop, and there was no sign of any enemy having come to carry the babies off. Search was made high and low, in the orchard and field near to the place where their home was, but without success. For quite a long time the hunt went on, until other duties called the farmer and his wife away. Later on they began again, hunting further and further away from the spot where the home was, until at quite a considerable distance away, in another part of the farm, the culprits were discovered—there they were, floating in an exhausted condition upon a pond, feebly trying now and again to climb up the steep sides of the pond, but unable to do so.

A Disastrous Adventure.

It was evident what had happened—their hearts had drawn them away from the place of safety towards the place where the water was, and in they had plunged. I expect they had enjoyed the new experience for a little while until the cold water began to chill their little bodies, unprotected, as yet, by the feathers that would have grown later on, and then they had tried to leave the water—but could not owing to the steepness of the sides of the pond: and the cold water all the time continued to chill them more and more until, with the cold and their efforts to escape, they grow exhausted. I do not know how long they had remained there but on discovering them the farmer of course quickly pulled them out and carried them tenderly to the mother hen. She clucked delightedly as she received them back and nestled them under her wings very lovingly. But not all her love and care could undo the mischief that had been caused—the next morning four of the five were dead, and the one survivor looked very sorry for himself. What a mournful note there was in the poor mother's cluck now! And the tragic story is not yet complete—within a few hours the last of the five died also. A whole family lost who might have lived and grown into fine fat geese!

What Might have been.

Now you will know that geese have webbed feet, for God has given them a nature which makes them quite at home upon the water. There was, therefore, nothing strange in their wanting to go upon the pond and from that

point of view we cannot blame our goslings. But do you see what their mistake was? They went before they were ready to go and before they had received the strength to endure the trial of the cold water. What a different story I should have had to tell you if they had waited until their feathers had grown! They would then have gone triumphantly and joyfully through the experience which, by being met too soon, overcame and destroyed them.

A Moment-by-Moment Trust.

I wonder if you have ever gone through a trial before God's time for you to do so had arrived? I expect you have done as most other people have—looked ahead to to-morrow or into next week, and wondered however you were going to get through some difficulty that you saw ahead, and you began to worry about it, and perhaps made yourself quite ill over it. And perhaps you have prayed for the difficulty to be removed because you dared not go through it, and it has seemed as if God was not hearing you, for the trouble remained, and you were not feeling any more able to endure it than before. Oh what bad times we have all had along these lines! Many of our worst troubles have been those which never happened; and those that did happen have so often been less terrible than we expected, or we have been more able to endure them than we expected we should be. Do you see what the secret is? It is this—that God gives us strength for everything that He calls us to do or to endure, and He gives it to us *when we need it*. The Lord Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us *this day* our *daily* bread; and you will remember how the children of Israel in the wilderness were given manna for each day, and they could not obtain to-morrow's supplies until to-morrow came. It is one of God's rules to meet our needs as they arise and He nowhere promises to meet them for us beforehand. Thus He encourages us to live a life of faith depending on Him day by day and moment by moment, and being confident always that if we are truly trusting Him *every* need of ours will be met—and never too late!—according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus—(Phil. iv. 19).

A Glorious Promise.

But to go into a trial or to take any step before *His* time is always to meet with unnecessary trouble. God would have made the goslings ready for the water if they had

waited for Him but they foolishly went in their own time and not His—and what a sad story followed! You and I in the course of our lives will probably have to go through many difficult experiences—it is even said in God's word that it is our privilege not only to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but also to suffer for His sake (Phil. i. 29). What shall we do? Begin now to wonder how we shall go through and to worry lest we are not able? No—that would be to go into the water before our feathers have grown! Just walk obediently and quietly with our Lord day by day, allowing Him to add to us the strength that can only come as we get to know Him better and His Holy Spirit works in our hearts, and let Him lead us into the trials as He sees fit. And then do you think He will allow us to be tried too severely? Never, for He has given us this precious promise in His word—"He will not suffer you to be tempted (or tested) above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape *that ye may be able to bear it.*" (1 Cor. x. 13). You notice that He does not promise necessarily to take away the trial, but He does promise that we shall be able to bear it.

A Wonderful Companion.

And the secret of it all is that His own presence shall save us, for He has said, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee" (Isaiah xliii. 2). The next time you find yourself facing difficulty will you remember the Lord Jesus Who was Himself made perfect through sufferings and Who would say to you "In order that you, too, may be made more like myself, come with me into this trial. Count on my grace to carry you through and know that I am with you all the time and you shall not be tested above that which you are able to bear." Surely the answer of every wise heart will be, "Yes, Lord—I will keep my hand in Thine and my eyes upon Thee rather than upon the trial; and I know Thou wilt take me through; Thy grace will be sufficient for me."

Let us then thank Him for His wonderful grace toward us, which we may prove whenever we are willing to trust Him. But let me remind you again that to plunge into the water before His time will always lead to needless suffering. "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."—(Matt. vi. 34 R.V.). G. P.

Unanimity

A Conference Message

BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!..... for thore the Lord commanded the blessing even life for evermore.—Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 3.

Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me that they may be one, as we are.....That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.....And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.—John xvii. 11, 21, 22.

UNITY, "one-ness," among His own is not only the longing desire of the heart of the Lord, but is also the condition among them requisite for the *bestowal* of the divine blessing of life that is eternal; as also it is the indisputable and convincing evidence to the world of the love of God in the sending of His Son. It is the divine hall mark of the reality of the gospel preached. "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.....that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me." "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

There is a spiritual one-ness or unity into which believers are brought by reason of their individual union with the Lord. They are in Christ, a new creation. They have all been baptised in one spirit into one body in Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for all are one in CHRIST JESUS.

This spiritual unity in Christ, which transcends the differences between us in our natural conditions, may be apprehended and appreciated as a principle, and recognised in a general kind of way on conference platforms, in movements for the promulgation of some particular testimony or aspect of truth, in interdenominational missions and free churches. The general principle may find very real expression within limited range by the careful exclusion from view of all other than the particular tenets which form the agreed basis of the purpose or teaching for which the company has come together. Within such a range very

blessed unity of spirit and fellowship may be enjoyed for a time; and yet the deep practical intimate oneness to which the Lord would bring us, and which existed in the early Church, may be missing.

Indeed such intimate unity of which the New Testament speaks is so rare and so hidden, that the Church of to-day, generally speaking, neither expects it, desires it, nor believes in it.

There are so many contradictions, there have been so many failures, when some attempt has been made, that most of us have come to the conclusion that, while the ideal is very beautiful, it is quite impossible of achievement in this life; and so we must just be content with recognising the principle and seeking to avoid further divisions; but it is of no use seeking its attainment.

Yet surely the Lord is not content with this! His word makes that plain. He would bring the spiritual heavenly unity of the Church with Himself in the Holy Spirit into that very intimate personal experience and practice which is plainly essential for the perfect realisation of that corporate and individual life of spiritual power which He desires for His people.

Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to *dwell together* in unity—not only to meet together in unity, but to dwell together, it is there the Lord commanded the blessing.

This characteristic is evidenced in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

Prior to and in preparation for the wonderful outpouring of the Divine Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples with the women, and Mary the Lord's mother and His brethren, all continued (the word means *to continue unremittingly* or *constantly*) with one accord (*like-mindedly*) in prayer and supplication. And when at last the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord (*like-mindedly*) in the same place. This likeness, one-ness of *mind* is the essence of the word "with one accord," and it is that which seems to be the great condition to the mighty movement of the Spirit in and through the Church—unanimity.

In Acts, chapter four, when Peter and John

returned to their own company, who were evidently together, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord (*like-mindedly*). There was an unanimous cry and appeal to God. They all saw the same thing, they all said the same thing. There were no cross currents, no differences of opinion or judgment in that prayer meeting. As one mind, as one man, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said.....And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

If the local companies of God's people could have such an experience to-day they too would speak the word of God with boldness!

But notice in the verses which follow, that the multitude who behaved were *of one heart*, and *of one soul*. They shared their very life in so deep a reality that they shared their material things as well. This wonderful and holy "commonwealth" was only a temporary arrangement—practically, it would not be permanent—but it was an outward, convincing and unrestrained manifestation of the very real deep unity into which, in the One Spirit, they had been brought in Christ.

The following chapter again emphasizes their "togetherness" in verses 12 to 14. They were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And, notice, *of the rest durst no man join himself unto them....*but, believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes....! The powerful presence of the Holy Spirit preserved the fellowship from unsuitable and unworthy adherents, but also drew into their midst the true believers in the Lord.

Is there any hint in the Word of God that the divine purpose in the Church and the divine power in the Holy Spirit should undergo such change as to make impossible the realisation of such a company in the twentieth century? Do we well to content ourselves with anything less than the revealed standard and order of God for His own people?

Years after that first establishment in the earth of "a candlestick all of gold" the Apostle to the Gentiles writes to his Roman brethren the prayer of his spirit; now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded (*literally*, to have in mind the same thing) that ye may with one mind (here the word again is that of Acts i. and ii., *likemindedly*, i.e., unanimously), and one mouth glorify God

(Rom. xv. 5, 6). Again in chapter xii. he says, "Be of the same mind one toward another." In 1 Corinthians i. 10 he beseeches his brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. The reference here is not to vocabulary! The saying the same thing is not merely using the same words; it is *telling* the same thing, being of the same mind and judgment; not voicing various opinions but *telling the same thing* though, may be, using different phrases.

There is a false conception of unity which amounts to a compromise of truth (perhaps because of a lack of revelation as to the truth) by calling convictions, opinions; and saying, "Well, you are welcome to your opinion and I'll hold to mine."

Again and again, not only in the Roman and Corinthian Epistles but later when he writes to Philippi, the Apostle's urge is for the practice of oneness of spirit, of heart, of soul, of mind, of love, of mouth. Stand fast, he cries, in one spirit, with the soul striving together with the faith of the gospel. Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord (*literally*, being joined in soul) of one mind.

There is no room here for the free development of personal opinions, preferences or fanciful interpretations and imaginations along individualistic lines. There is a body of revealed truth embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed from Him by the Holy Spirit alone, and enshrined in the scriptures of truth, for this and with this there is to be a *striving together* for faith and utterance.

All this calls for a very deep and very real self-abnegation, a very deep humbling of subconscious or unsuspected pride of heart and opinion and self-assertiveness. Here, and perhaps here alone, is the proof positive of the effectiveness and extent of the being crucified with Christ which is the condition to true spiritual life and power.

For a company of individuals to come together and be in very truth, of one spirit, one heart, one soul, one mind, one mouth, speaking the same great one thing, means a deep heart surrender of each one to the Lord; accepting, taking up the Cross, denying self, laying down the soul-life with its self opinion and aggressive self-assertion. All this—not

only in that essential first act of definite crisis surrender to God, but continually, day by day—must be the steadily maintained attitude and purpose of will on the part of each one. For if there is one in a company, all else of whom are thus likeminded, who holds to his own opinion and will and way, there is a jar, a block, a holding which limits spiritual life and power and liberty, hardening the spiritual “atmosphere,” checking and chilling that flow of love in which the body of Christ is built up.

What disastrous wreckage in church meetings and sessions and vestries have grieved the Holy Spirit of God, and rent and wounded the Church of God and disgraced the Name of the Lord Jesus!

But let it not be supposed that such melting and merging of the individuals into an unanimous body demands or implies in any degree the dropping of those faculties of judgment and initiative given us by God in our creation and renewed and sanctified in our regeneration. There is no annulling of the personality; but where there has been a true yielding to the Lord of each individual or a company who, wholeheartedly, are devoted to knowing and doing the Lord's will, there will be brought about a wonderful unanimity of judgment and faith in together waiting upon the Lord.

To this end there needs to be on the part of each individual:

1. A complete surrender to the Lord as

indwelling for His working within both to will and to do. The general all-inclusive yielding to the death of the Cross of all the old Adam life.

2. A steadily maintained purpose of obedience to the word of the Lord.

3. A corresponding denying of *self*.

4. A resting in the Lord, which draws upon His love communicated by the Holy Ghost, for patience to wait for one another until unanimity is reached.

All this is just that true humility, meekness, which is the characteristic of that “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.”

There was no clash of opinion or of will between the Lord Jesus Christ and His Father in heaven. They were one. His prayer for us is that we may be one even as He and His Father are one. This and this alone is the manifestation of the unity of the Spirit which we are to endeavour to keep. This means power! This means the will of God being done on earth! This means the utter defeat of Satan! Against this he is set and brings to bear the full weight of his experience and resource and subtilty, and for this we ought to give ourselves in prayer and submissive obedience to God—“till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

P. W. F.

SPECIAL NOTICE

It will be a great help if any friends not wishing to have the ‘Witness and Testimony’ in the future will advise us to that effect—also if we could be made aware of any change of address of readers.

“This Ministry”

2 Cor. 4: 1-7

THE first verso contains the little clause upon which everything in this letter hangs, “Therefore, seeing we have *this ministry*.” “This ministry.”—We recognise that this letter is being written to the believers at Corinth, and one of the features of this letter, and the letters of Paul in general, is the way in which he unites those to whom he writes with himself, and himself with them, and makes it one matter. He is not saying, “Therefore, seeing *I* have this ministry.” He is saying, *we* have this ministry, and if we just look back and on we will see how he brings them into oneness with himself. It is one of his great principles. It is basic to what the apostle is seeking to do, because these Corinthians had challenged him very seriously and raised many questions about him, some disputing his apostleship, and he has met with a good deal of suspicion and doubt and opposition. He is a man in the presence of people in the church who do not like him, and who do not want him, and who would rule him out and would prefer others to him, and he has to meet a difficulty like that. The difficulty that many ministers have had to meet. How are you going to meet people in the church who really do not like you, and do not want you, and are saying all kinds of things about you that are unworthy? An expression of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit is that He unites Himself to them and involves them in his own position and involves himself in theirs and deals with it as a common thing. Paul comes right down to them and speaks to them as though they were all facing common difficulties.

And so he says, “*We* have this ministry.” Why I mention this is that we shall all recognise that we have this ministry. This does not belong to a certain set called “ministers” or “missionaries” in any official sense. It is the ministry of every child of God. It has its intensified forms in those who are separated unto the gospel in a special way, but we all have it. We are not thinking of “ministry” as some detached and hodge-around thing belonging to a certain class of people, but it is the whole house of God and the whole body of Christ. It is the ministry of every member, and everyone of us

in the ministry, and therefore these words apply to you in a very definite way. *We* have this ministry.

Here you have ministry revealed according to the mind of God. It is tremendously important to recognise how the ministry and the minister are one. That is one of the foundations here in this letter. You cannot separate them. The ministry will never be more than the minister, and the minister, in what he is, makes the ministry. And so this letter, which has to deal so much with this ministry is so very full of what is autobiography. It is the inner life of the servant of the Lord. The inner spiritual history of God’s servant is here, and he does not hesitate to bring out the personal, inner, spiritual history of his on this very principle that the ministry is, after all, only the expression of what the man is in his inner spiritual history—what the Lord’s servant is with the Lord himself. The ministry and the minister are interwoven, and the ministry is the outworking of what has taken place in secret with the Lord on the part of the Lord’s servant.

That gets us altogether out of a professional realm and takes us out of the realm where we speak of “taking up” Christian work, or “going into the ministry.” There is nothing in the New Testament that would suggest a mechanical entering into what is called the Lord’s work. You cannot take it up. You cannot enter into it. It is the spontaneous expression of your own inner history with God. And, after all, the ministry is largely a question of personality. But that wants safeguarding. What is personality? I am speaking of it in the higher, spiritual sense. Personality is character formed in secret with God. If you can get the inside out of that, you have gone a long way in understanding the “ministry.” It is the expression amongst men of what has taken place apart from men, where men have not seen and do not know, where they are unable to trace what is happening. The deep, inner, secret history where the Lord alone knows what is taking place. And sometimes the individual himself does not know what is happening.

God has got him into a realm beyond his own depths and certainly where no one else understands him, and it is there that spiritual personality is being formed. And then eventually, out from those deep dealings of God with him, in the hidden place he comes out with a message, and it is not something he has arranged and prepared and put down on paper. It is the expression of something that God has done in him, not only shown to him, but done in him, for the showing follows the doing. He shows the meaning of what He has done, and that makes the message.

Presently, when you have gone through, God begins to interpret what He has been doing and you come out with a testimony. The Lord Jesus Himself had this experience. We pointed out the other day that when he came out and publicly stood before heaven and men and hell, two things happened. On the one hand the Father said, "Thou art My Beloved Son." On the other hand, "This is My Beloved Son," calling the attention of men to Him as approved of God. These two things were the result of thirty years secret history with God. It was not that He had taken up that ministry and got a kind of Divine ordination. He had been living before God and in secret with God a long time. Possibly one of the reasons why there is the break at the age of twelve years is that the Lord Jesus has really had some conception of His life work—"Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?" He is repudiating Joseph there and then, and He is linking Himself to His Father, so that really, as a lad, He had the conception of His heavenly relationship. And, just think, that growing into young manhood He can only believe that during a stretch of years He was all the time living in view of a day which seemed never to come, when He would enter into His life work, and He had to live through the time of seeming spiritual inaction, of not reaching His real life work, not going into His work, but living His life before God well pleasing to God, so that when at length the day came and He was able to discern, He came forth with the words, "The time is fulfilled." If, during this time before, there had been that which was not pleasing to the Father, the heavens would not have been opened. Personality and character developed in the secret place with God. His brethren did not believe on Him, His mother did not talk about it, so that He simply had to live in secret with God.

That is a basic principle of ministry. It is a tragic thing to take a young man or a young woman and give them a short time in a Bible school and push them out into the full responsibility of God's work. They have not got the deep history wrought out in secret with God which makes them able to meet the full force of the Satanic opposition. They will either have to go to pieces or compromise and come down to a lower level. There is no loss of time in keeping back. God would take us through the depths. We think that everything is seeming to be delayed, but presently we shall know. Something is happening to make us able ministers of the New Covenant. It is not collegiate preparation, it is not training in the schools; it is a secret history with God.

Paul was over twelve months in the church in Antioch, but the saints are taking account. Saul knows from God what his life work is, and I wonder if he chafed during that time. But he stayed there, and in the secret he was approving himself before God, and when the Holy Spirit says to the elders "Separate me Saul" there is no question in their minds that this man had proved himself. No, they are ready to immediately act because God has in that stretch of time called their attention to this man and made them take account of him. And so they know and when the Lord's time comes they do it. They laid their hands upon them and let them go.

And so this ministry is not the professional ministry not according to the system of our day. But this ministry comes out of a secret history with God and this ministry demands that and it cannot be effective beyond the measure of what has been wrought in the secret place with God. Do not break away from God to get into your ministry.

This servant's character has been formed. Christ is interwoven with his ministry. "Paul a servant of God through the will of God." The second feature of this ministry is "through the will of God." The way in which Paul starts his letters will give you a key to what he is going to say. He is here establishing at once the authority of his ministry. It is "through the will of God." He is going to tell you what ministry by God's appointment is. And only ministry that has this back of it has the authority of God upon it. It is a tremendous thing to get the Divine seal. How did we get into the Lord's service? Did we become suddenly interested in Christian work and take it up?

How did we get in? How is it we have stayed in? Are we here because we know it is the will of God?

This ministry must have the authority of God in it, and the authority of God is the attestation from heaven which comes in your own heart when God has seen in you the development in secret of what He was seeking to realise. You will never get the Divine ordination until you have been "approved unto God." It must be when His hands are laid on through an open heaven. And so we cannot be too strong in our emphasis upon the necessity and the importance of a secret life with God back of all ministry. It was so with the Lord; it was so with Paul, it has been so with everyone who has had this ministry. He gave some apostles; and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers." The gift will suffer and become purely professional unless the secret spiritual history is maintained in full strength. One of the perils of Christian activity is that you get so busy you neglect the secret history. You lose the background and presently you begin to discover you have not that which meets the demand. You are losing grip and power and you are on the high way to a breakdown. It is the loss of the secret place and the secret history with God, and one of the things that any servant of God has to do is to refuse that measure of activity which goes beyond the possibility of keeping an adequate secret history with God. We have to settle this, difficult as it is. Here is a call for ministry; we are not to accept it simply because it is an opening to do some good. We must go to the Lord in secret. We must never be called out because it is an opportunity for doing good. The enemy would keep us tremendously busy. One of the perils in these days is to be always active in the outside things, and your time with God becoming less and less. This ministry is founded on a deep life with God in secret.

God must be able to keep us constantly checked up in secret. We must go back to God and have those quiet times where the Lord can constantly say to us, "You remember so and so. That was not right. You will have to correct that." Perhaps we have said something wrong or failed to say something we should have said. God never passes it over, and if we gave God the quiet time He would bring up those things and we would be reminded of them. But if we ride on over those things, in the end the Lord will leave us to plunge on. It is what a man is

before God, and not what he is before men.

"This ministry." What is this ministry? It is the only ministry that God approves. Preaching the gospel is not the first thing in this ministry. "Seeing it is God that said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness' who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ shined into our hearts. What surrounds this? The chapter before takes us back to Exodus xxiv. Moses had been with the Lord. He wist not that his face did shine, but people saw it and could not look upon it. And he was, after all, only reading the law. It was legalism, it was the law of death.

But here is the law of life in Christ. The God, Whoso glory was on the face of Moses, then under a veil, has shined without a veil into our hearts. There is no veil over the face of Jesus Christ, and the unveiled face of Jesus Christ is revealed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. "God hath shined into our hearts." What for? For the same purpose as with Moses—to make known the mind of God to others. How do others come to know the mind of God? By the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ being manifested out from our inner lives. From that, others are able to see the Lord. That we have an inner radiant knowledge of God. "Christ in you the hope of glory." God hath shined in and made us, not merely in what we say, but in what we are, an expression of Christ as the revelation of God. That is the ministry.

If that was applied to all ministry to-day, I wonder how much would survive. How much ministry to-day is the coming out of what is known of the glory of God in the heart. That is what we must have—a secret history with God. If all our ministry were like that, how more would be accomplished for God.

"We have this treasure (this unveiling of the Lord Jesus in our hearts) in vessels of fragile clay." He keeps us from taking any of the glory to ourselves, from being anything men would take account of, "that the excellent greatness of the power might be of God and not out from ourselves." What a reflection of the revelation of Jesus Christ! The excellent greatness of the power of God revealed in our hearts! Do you pray for power in your ministry? Get the excellent greatness of the power of Jesus Christ in your heart and you cannot get greater power.

Therefore, you see why the devil is out to

blind the mind. For, once the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ gets through, his rule is at an end. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ which is going to scatter the enemy. When He shall be revealed, the enemy's day is over. And the exceeding greatness of the power in this ministry is that we may have the inshining of God revealing His glory in the face of Jesus Christ in our hearts. It may not be platform ministry. It is the Lord's ministry we are in, and there is to be an expression of the power of God in every bit of it.

The ministry is the showing forth of Jesus Christ. "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me, that I might proclaim *Him* among the nations." It was the inshining of Jesus Christ that made Paul a missionary. It is setting forth Christ. That is this ministry, and we should make it our prayer that what we know of the ministry for us will be a showing forth of Jesus Christ. It is the glory of the Father, and nothing can stand before it. In order that it might be so, the vessel should be such that it shall not take any glory away from Him. He will keep it weak so that everything will be to His glory. We must recognise the nature of the ministry before which principalities and powers cannot stand. It is not what we say. It is the measure in which the Lord Jesus Christ is mediated as the glory of God that counts.

The Ministry is the ministry of Christ and it is constituted solely upon the basis of what Christ is within us. That is the examination for the ministry. That is the certificate of the ministry. Paul tells them literally, "Ye are our epistles, read and known of all men,"—you are our certificate of the ministry. By which he means that they are the result of what the Lord Jesus has been in us. The real credentials of the ministry is what the Lord Jesus is in our hearts. Seeing that it is Christ within that constitutes the ministry; that it is the ministration of Jesus Christ, we are able to take this extra step and see that Christ revealed within represents a position to which we have come. It represents that we have come to a large place. It means that we have come over Jordan.

You are familiar with the difference in the inheritance under Moses and under Joshua, and you will remember that under Moses there were two and a half tribes who obtained their inheritance on the other side of Jordan. Moses permitted them to do it although it was not God's first will. Under Moses He gave them an

inheritance on the other side of Jordan, but all the rest had their inheritance over Jordan in the land and for them it was a question of fulness. For the others, it was partial and their inheritance was possessed without their getting into the land by the way of Jordan. And yet Moses gave this command that they should see their brethren over Jordan, so they had a kind of relationship to those who went over Jordan but it was not an experimental one. It was a formal one. It was not a subjective one, it was an objective one. So that the meaning of Jordan for them was objective and not subjective.

Jordan, as we have heard, represents all the work of the Lord Jesus in His Cross—all that was bound up in the death and burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. You can have it objectively and have an inheritance, but, if you have it subjectively, you have a far greater inheritance. The two and a half tribes had the objective benefits only—that which Christ *did* for them. The others went over and had what Christ had done for them and also what Christ *did in* them. It is not the something outward only that we rejoice in. The others went over in an inward way and they had the full inheritance of the land. It is always best to have the Jordan, with all it means, between you and your enemies. That is the Old Testament illustration for this.

In the New Testament the letter to the Romans illustrates this again. Romans vii. is the two and a half tribes position. One day you may feel safe, but the next day you do not feel a bit safe. The thing is not settled within. You rejoice in what the Lord has done for you, but you are so conscious that you need something more than that. You need it all to be done in you. But when you go through into Chapter viii. you have got right into the land, and Chapter viii. leads you on to Ephesians and Colossians, and you find you are in the full inheritance, right in the land, your full inheritance in Christ.

And it is there that you come to have your full ministry. This particular ministry of which we are speaking is founded upon, first of all, that you are right over Jordan and Christ in His fulness is your possession, for Colossians is Christ in fulness and that fulness in us—"Christ in you the hope of glory." So that what 2 Corinthians 3 and 4 represent is that you have come to the place where Christ is all. In 1st Corinthians it is not Christ all. It is men and

things—Paul, Apollos, gifts. Paul was labouring in the first letter to bring them to Christ. Now the work has been done, and 2nd Corinthians brings in Christ in His fulness, and then you get the ministry of Christ in effect. Of course, when you get this revelation of Jesus Christ within, you get an addition and spiritually it represents the principle of God adding and so the Corinthians have come to an advanced position. You cannot fail to notice the change. The first letter leaves you in distress about this people, but the second letter sees a tremendous change. They have come on, and now the Apostle is able, right at the beginning, to talk about “God Who said light shall shine in darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

The ministry according to God has power, like Joshua, to drive out the enemy and they have to flee. The ministry which is like that, which scatters the enemy, is based entirely upon the measure in which Christ is inwardly full in us. If only we could get back to this basis of ministry! The ministry of Jesus Christ is nothing more nor less than the revelation of Jesus Christ in the heart of the child of God, and you are going to minister more or less effectively according to the measure of what Christ is in you inwardly. God cannot go beyond that. All the other ministry we talk about does not come within the Divine thought. It makes the ministry a very simple thing, but a very searching thing. It is not qualification as speakers. It is not any scholastic equipment. Thank God for anything that may be helpful, but if you begin to count on that you are making a mistake. It is not that we are able to speak. It is not that we have academic gifts or equipment, but it is just what the Lord Jesus is in us and to us, being shown through us. You may be the poorest speaker, but Christ can shine out, and the impact of Jesus Christ within your life can be such that the enemy begins to stir up. “Jesus I know,”—that is the ministry—where the forces of evil are forced to take account of the presence of Christ before you speak, where others around you are conscious that there is something here that makes it difficult for them to sin without knowing that they are sinning. Some may sin and not know they are sinning until Christ comes on the scene in one of His servants, and then they are smitten. It is the presence of Christ. “God hath shined into our hearts.”

We may preach all the sermons that ever men could preach and it will accomplish nothing if Christ is not the registration of our presence. It is Christ-consciousness produced through the man and the woman in whom He reigns. It is the measure of the inheritance.

And the ministry is open to all. “We have this ministry,” and we have this treasure in a vessel of fragile clay. Why does God choose vessels like that? Why is it that if He gets a highly polished vessel in itself, He has to bring such a vessel to be very little in its own eyes. Paul, with all his advantages, is brought to the place where all these things are rubbish. Why a vessel broken? To make room for the Lord Jesus. To give Him all the place. The measure of *Christ* is the measure of the ministry, not the measure of the vessel. And, although it costs, I think we are prepared to be broken if only Christ is commensurately revealed.

And, of course, when we get into ministry like that, we expect certain things. We get the full impact of the devil. “We are pressed on every side.” The ministry of Christ brings you immediately into direct contact with the forces of the devil, but in those conditions the ministry is vindicated because, under pressure, persecution, trial, you are not destroyed; you are not left behind. “That the life also of Jesus may be manifested.” Here is a fragile vessel. In itself you would not give anything for it. In itself it is a very poor thing, and yet hell has been let loose upon that fragile thing and hell has been defeated. What is the secret of that? It is Christ in the vessel, the life whereby Jesus conquered death, in a vessel like that. That is the ministry. That the Lord Jesus Who has conquered death, in a vessel is simply proving hell impotent. That is when the Lord has His full place. We have this ministry, and as we have received this ministry, we faint not. “Though our outward man does perish, our inward man is being renewed day by day.” “And our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen.” What the Lord wants to do is to make a large place for Christ in us.

T. A-S.

“Three Marks of Sonship”

THERE is no tragedy in the world greater than that of arrested growth. With what earnest care do parents watch young children and mark their development day by day both in physique and mental powers; and what sorrow of heart is caused when in either realm this does not proceed normally. The best advice is sought and everything that love and skill can do to trace and remove the cause and so promote that happy increase in stature which is the rightful inheritance of child life is most earnestly pursued.

It is only in the spiritual realm that arrested growth is looked upon without serious concern. In every Christian community there are those who, born into the family of God, remain babes “Such as have need of milk and not of strong meat” (Heb. v. 12.). “And I brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it neither yet now are ye able.” (1 Cor. iii. 1-2).

How earnestly Paul, the great Apostle, laboured for the full development of his children. “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” (Gal. iv. 19) Listen to his words as rendered by Dr. Way. “Ah my children, my own little ones! You for whom I am now enduring second travail pangs and shall endure until Messiah’s likeness be formed within you. Oh that I might now be with you and might speak in a different strain from this! I am full of despairing perplexity for you.”

If Paul felt this, what of our blessed Lord Himself, the captain of our salvation, Who was made perfect through sufferings in order that He might bring many sons to glory. That is the goal, the end, the purpose, “Sons in Glory.” We only come into sonship in experience as there is growth, development, likeness—as “Christ is formed in us.”

It would be a healthy Bible-study for all young believers if they obtained a Greek Concordance and went through the New Testament, marking in their Bibles the correct rendering of the various original words translated “children” and “sons” in the Authorised Version. A list of these words follows with

their significance as indicated in Young’s ‘Analytical Concordance’ :—

<i>Greek word.</i>	<i>Significance.</i>
Brephos	Babe, newly-born or un-born.
Nêpios	Babe, without full power of speech.
Teknion	Little or young child.
Teknon.	One born, a child.
Paidion	A little or young lad.
Pais	A lad, boy, servant.
Paidarion	A very little lad, or boy.
Huios	Son.
Huiiothesia	Placing as a son.

For our present purpose we need only concern ourselves with two of these viz. :—“Teknon,” children, a word signifying birth or relationship, and “Huios” or son, used to denote likeness, growth, development.

One or two instances of the transposition of these words will suffice for purposes of illustration :—

John i. 12-13. “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (*Gr.* ‘Exousia,’—authority or privilege) to become the sons (*Gr.* “Teknon”—children) of God, even to them that believe in His Name: which were BORN not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Gal. iii. 26. “For ye are all the children (*Gr.* ‘Huios’—sons) of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” The Revised Version renders the word correctly thus, “For ye are all the ‘sons’ of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”

In the first passage “Teknon” obviously relates to relationship—“... Which were born” into the family of God. In the second passage “Huios” relates not to relationship but to likeness, growth, development, as will be seen if we read on :—“For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ.” Thus we have position “in Christ” linked with the thought of growth and development in the likeness of Christ. For as many as have been baptised into Christ—position: have put on Christ—likeness, development, character. Conybeare will help to the understanding of this. “For you are all the sons of God, by your faith in Christ Jesus; yea, whosoever among you have been baptised into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ.”

The fact that "Huios" speaks of likeness or growth is fully demonstrated by reference to two scriptures where it is used as a term of reprobation:—

Matthew xxiii. 15. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him twofold more the 'Huios,'—son of hell than yourselves." Acts xiii. 10. "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou 'Huios'—son of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

The Pauline Epistles again and again strike this note of growth, likeness, development. How urgently the Apostle prays for the saints that they may go on unto perfection.

Look, for instance, at Col. 2 1-3 R.V. "For I would have you know how greatly I strive for you, and for them at Laodicea . . . that their hearts may be comforted, they, being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ, in Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden."

A work of grace in the hearts of a company of believers always drove the Apostle to his knees, with earnest prayer for fuller knowledge and growth. In Col. 1 we read:—

"We give thanks to God . . . praying always for you since we heard of your faith . . . and love . . . For this cause we also, since the day we heard it do not cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge (*Gr.* Epignôsis = full knowledge) of God."

Again, Ephesians iii. 14-19. "For this cause I bow my knee unto the Father . . . that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory . . . that ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

The Three Marks.

Here, then, is an urgent call to the more mature people of God to pray travailingly for those who have not come to maturity, to plead

earnestly for those whose growth is arrested, who are not going on unto the fulness of apprehension.

There are three blessed marks of sonship, of growth, and maturity, brought before us in the New Testament, the first negative and the other two positive in character. These three marks are found in all who advance from childhood unto sonship, from infancy to full growth.

The First Mark.

The first mark is "*Separation from evil.*" This scarcely needs stressing, for, as we become in any measure like our glorious Lord, as Christ is formed in us, there must of necessity be the experimental outworking of the Cross in cutting us off from everything which is associated with the kingdom of darkness. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel (an unbeliever, R.V.) . . . Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. *Wherefore* come out from among them and *be ye separate* saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughter., saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vi. 14 to vii 1).

This is a word of great significance for us in these days of apostasy. Evil is multiplying on every hand, and we are called to maintain an absolute and utter separation from it. "Touch not the unclean thing."

As Christ is formed in us by the work of the Spirit of God we come to recognise many things which we thought to be good, as evil, things which we conceived to be of God, as not of God. It is a question of discernment in the Holy Ghost. This makes it quite impossible for one to determine the pathway of another. It is a matter of individual enlightenment. As the Holy Spirit illumines our hearts and we discern the difference between the new creation and the old so we have to draw the line of demarcation, step over and be separate. This call of God to a life of separation increases in urgency in our hearts, and we continually have to be cutting off things we once held dear because we

see they are not consistent with Sonship, they hinder our growth into the likeness of Christ, they hinder the purpose of God. We are called to Sonship. It is the predetermination of God, and praise His Holy Name, He will not be content till His end is achieved and we are like our Blessed Lord.

Does not this explain many of God's dealings with us? He sees so much more of the flesh in us than we are able to discern, and is taking infinite pains to bring it to death and liberate in its stead His own abundant life. Every manifestation of the flesh, every self-directed activity, is to Him an abomination. Christ is His delight, and Christ, in the believer, His objective. Hence He takes us through strange, perplexing, bewildering experiences, puts His Hand of arrest on much that we value, and calls to surrender, to separation in ever increasing measure, until Christ becomes all and in all and we can say with Paul, "To me, to live is Christ."

The Second Mark.

The second mark is found in Romans viii. 14. "As many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Show me a man who is *led* by the Spirit of God, and I will show you a man in whom the sonship is. Now the practical question comes, are we willing to be *led* by the Spirit of God? The fact is we don't like being led. We like to choose our own path, we like to see our way. The picture of a blind man being led across a street doesn't appeal to us as a parable of spiritual experience. But a mark of sonship is a willingness to be led, to surrender those human choices, those human directions, that confident walk, that marking out of one's own path, that energy of the flesh which determines that we will achieve certain things. We must come to the position of the man who says, "Lord, I cannot see the way. I do not know where Thou art leading. I do not know what all this means, but I am content to be led like a little child. Take my hand and lead me."

"So on I go, not knowing,
I would not if I might:
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light,
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
than go alone by sight.

"Where He may lead, I'll follow,
My trust in Him repose,
And every hour, in perfect peace
I'll sing—He knows. He knows."

The supreme illustration of this mark of sonship is the Lord Jesus Himself. He was led by the Holy Spirit in every action of His life. When He came up out of the baptismal waters "He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil." Mark tells us He was "driven." The urge of the Holy Spirit was upon Him and He went willingly. The experience of the unique Son must also be that of those who by reason of their union with Him are also sons. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." It is an infallible mark of sonship. As the experience becomes ours the peace of God which passes understanding garrisons heart and mind.

It is a life of blessed contentment to be led by the Holy Spirit, to know that He is in control. He knows the goal, He knows the way and we hand everything over to Him. We go often blindly, but *led*, and so Christ is formed in us and the purposes of God are achieved. Such a life is fruitful beyond compare. It may not be crowded with activity. There will come a ceasing from all self-direction, a trusting in the Lord with *all* our heart, a definite refusal to be guided by our own understanding (intelligence), a bringing of all our ways to God and, in consequence, a God-directed path. The Lord says of such an one, "I will direct (make straight) his ways . . . He shall build my city." (Isaiah xlv. 13).

The Third Mark.

The third mark of sonship is found in an impassioned cry of the spirit which perhaps we have not adequately recognised in Rom. viii. 15, and Gal. iv. 6. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

The Holy Spirit uses words with scrupulous care. He does not indicate that we "say" but "cry" Abba, Father. It is a word with passion in it, with desire and affection. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and 'cried' If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink," etc.

The spirit of sonship is the spirit that cries out to the living God and calls Him Father, Father. Abba is but the Aramaic word for "Father," so we have the word in two languages "Father, Father." Repetition is always a mark of emphasis. We have thus a word which expresses relationship, but it is the relationship of the "son," one who has come to maturity and whose soul goes out to God in worship and

desire and passion. It is not a man's own spirit only which thus cries, for the Apostle tells us in Gal. iv. 6, "Because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying Abba, Father."

So we have come to this state of heart, this likeness, Christ formed in us, the Spirit of His Son in us thus crying. It is a blessed thing to be brought into such fellowship with God, to recognise God in this sense, so that our human spirit is indwelt and energised by the Spirit of His Son and goes out to God in a cry of affection. God is our horizon, God is our centre and circumference. God is our Father and in a spirit of worship and desire we cry, "Father, Father."

We may well ask our hearts whether these three marks of sonship are found in us. Are we walking, firstly, in a pathway increasingly

marked by separation from evil, cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, and spirit, especially religious flesh and spirits, that are not the Holy Spirit; though their activities bear a specious resemblance to the work of the Holy Ghost. Are we perfecting holiness in the fear of God? Secondly is our pathway a God-directed one, are we led by the Spirit of God, day by day, in things great and small, or are we still in large measure "leaning to our own understanding"?

As the first and second marks of sonship are found in us we shall arrive at the third in a great fulness of blessing. We shall know His Name, and put our trust in Him. Our hearts will be in tune with the Infinite One and in a spirit of reverent and holy worship we shall cry, "Father, Father."

S. A.

Special Conferences for Christian Workers

January 4 — 7 (Following immediately upon the General Conference)

February 22 — 24 (Following immediately upon the General Conference)

Each day at 11, 3 and 7-30 o'clock

Friends desiring to come for the whole period or have meals during any one day or more should communicate with us as soon as possible