

**A WITNESS
AND
A TESTIMONY.**

1945

TABLE OF CONTENTS 1945

The Release of the Lord	2, 13, 25, 35
The Cross, the Church and the Conflict	7
He Must Increase	18
From the Wilderness to the Land	20
The Burden of the Valley of Vision	24
"For Love's Sake"	30
The Most Difficult Thing in the World	32
Triumph In Christ	38
The Deliverance of Souls	41
Overcomer Testimony	46, 55
Spiritual Fulness	50
The Lord's Need of a Samuel Instrument	59 ✓
The Word of God + the Testimony of Jesus	61

A bi-monthly ministry by which it is sought to lead the Lord's people into His full thought for them.

"A Witness and Testimony"

Maintained
by the offerings of
those who are helped by it.

JANUARY—FEBRUARY, 1945

NO. I, VOL. 23

Editor's Letter

BELOVED OF GOD,

What a time of faith's testing the saints are in just now! And what a time of Satanic fierceness! What does it all mean? There seem to be only two answers. Either the Lord is preparing for some fresh, and perhaps final, movement to the consummation of His purpose on the earth; which movement requires a state that will guarantee depth, strength, and lastingness, so that real fulness shall mark the ingathering to glory at His appearing; or else this is the end of a phase and the Lord is coming for the ripe fruits. If Revelation xii represents an end-time situation, then there is very much just now that conforms to it. The words there are undoubtedly prophetic, for the "Revelation" was not written as history but as prophecy—in the main, that is, not what was past, but what was, and was to be. The great issue of that chapter is "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down..."

"Salvation" there is "deliverance from every calamity, victory over enemies, recovery from disease, and release from captivity". The kingdom and authority referred to are withstood by the great accuser, and a great warfare in heaven is waged to circumvent the establishment thereof by the emancipation of the elect from the realm of his power. Does not this throw light upon the test of faith and the intense conflict through which the saints are passing? Here is the explanation to long unfulfilled *manifestations* of answer to prayer; the deferred deliverances, the passing of the power of God from the temporal to the spiritual realm in our experience—"the hiding of his power".

The combination of tested faith in relation to things seen, and the intense conflict in the spiritual life, is very true to this issue. As we have cried for "salvation" in one or other of its forms, and have only been conscious of conflict and delay, the accuser has come and raised the ultimate questions of our relationship to God, and of His to us. It is the old issue—"If thou be the Son". So, to cast us down, he accuses and seeks to make us accept a setting aside, a casting off, a having-finished-with-us by God. Triumph over this by the witness against him by the blood of the Lamb, the declaration of our testimony, and the elimination of self-interest and concern—loving not our life unto death, is to result in *his casting down*, and this is the nature and object of the trial and the battle. What an immense issue is bound up with a little word—"if". If...then why? That was Gideon's question. That was presented to Christ.

But, blessed be God, the end is revealed, and the accuser is cast down; the kingdom, power, authority of God and His Christ is seen as come. While we do not want to suggest that a Satan-complex should be developed, we would urge that a looking behind things to his part and place in them will be a great deliverance from the paralysis of the things themselves. Whether we are alive to it or not, "our wrestling is with...spiritual hosts of wickedness", and not until we tackle the spiritual forces behind the things, in the infinite virtue of the blood of the Lamb, shall we stand possessed of the key to the situation. But let us remember the value of the "they". There is need for corporate action; and we should take much more seriously the united prayer against the spiritual forces. So, whatever may be the immediate meaning of the present experience, the need is the same, a people in spiritual strength to bring about Satan's casting down, either in specific positions and situations, or in the final consummate disinheriting of the heavenlies.

The Lord strengthen us with might unto this warfare through as much of this new year as He wills for us to see.

Yours in His life and hope,
T. AUSTIN-SPARKS

The Release of the Lord

"The Release of the Lord" was one of the earliest of our small books, and has been out of print for quite a few years. Many friends have asked for a reprint. In view of the printing difficulties of the present time, we are giving it in as large sections as we can in the "Witness and Testimony". Some revision has been made. Editor.

The Release of the Lord, or, Solving the Missionary Problem.

I am come to scatter fire on the earth; and what is my desire? Oh that it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened [pent up] till it be accomplished." (Luke xii, 49-50, A.R.V.)

Chapter One

The book which is known to us as "The Acts of the Apostles," and sometimes "The Acts of the Holy Spirit," might truly be named

"The Release of Jesus Christ"

Luke introduces it with the observation that he had earlier written the beginnings of the acts and teaching of Jesus; implying that continuation is now his object and purpose. But what a change! The former activities were bounded and limited by time and space, and, at best, covered but a few square miles of Syrian soil. For the most part Omnipresence was in chains, except for a few breakings through of power at a distance. Again, the activities and teaching were almost entirely limited to a people of one nation and tongue. By outward urge, persuasion, and encouragement, He had caused His wishes to be carried out. Then to the dull minds of the spiritually unquickened He gave His spiritual treasures; explanations and reasons being necessary to confidence. Then the necessity was laid upon Him of a very slow disillusionment and unfolding as to what form the end of that phase would take, because of the controlling personal interests, even in the inner circle. Pride, ambition, doubt, malice, self-assertiveness, self-confidence, self-realisation, self-defence, like barbed wires, circled around and wounded Him whenever He sought to move forward. Ever conscious from the beginning that world-dominion was His, as "Heir of all things", yet He had not a place to lay His head, and to be "crucified through weakness" was to be His portion.

What a change! Now He has shaken off all His chains. Time and space no longer have any power over Him. Geography, the material things, Satan, demons, men, nations, thrones, all have been fully stripped off by Him. Now, by an inward dynamic, in spite of every threat and peril, men and women are moving

out in every direction with a passion for the glory of His Name. Now not as an historic figure, "known after the flesh", but by an inward revelation of transcendent magnitude, He is known after the Spirit. Now the once dreaded, unacceptable, offending Cross is all their glory. Now suffering reproach has supplanted pride; selfless, disinterested sacrifice takes the place of ambition; a mighty energising faith—not their own—has destroyed doubt; they lay down their own lives gladly and suffer the loss of all things for that Name.

In one strategic stroke He begins with a multitude representing "every nation under heaven". See how this fire spreads without artificial and forced agencies.

In the year 33 A.D., a few Galilean fishermen were seeking liberty of speech in Jerusalem, and were severely handled as men poor and ignorant.

In the year Paul died, how did the matter stand? There were churches in Jerusalem, Nazareth, Caesarea, in all Syria, Antioch, Ephesus, Galatia, Sardis, Laodicea, in all the towns throughout the west coast of lesser Asia, in Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Rome, Alexandria, in the chief cities of the islands and the mainland of Greece, and the western Roman Colonies.

A Sad Comparison

There are some significant omissions from this record of conquests. We never read of the organising of a missionary campaign.

Such things as deputations, lecturers and lectures, exhibitions, appeals, advertisements, etc., with all their cost and expenditure of time, money, energy, *all to try to get Christians interested in the souls of the unsaved*, are never hinted at. Any reporting of what God had done in the regions beyond was never by way of propaganda or advocacy. Statistics as mental stimulants; pathetic, tragic, sensational stories as emotional stimulants; urge and drive as volitional stimulants, had no place here, so far as we can discern. The thing was *firstly* of the spirit, not of the soul. The endeavour to reverse this order is undoubtedly the reason for a tremendous amount of the weakness and breakdown to-day.

Speaking generally, this whole matter of the world-mission of the Church is on pre-resurrection ground to-day. The Lord is not straitened in Himself, but He is straitened in His people.

On the one hand, there is a need of workers, for almost half the human race is without the knowledge of Christ; and on the other hand workers are ready to go forth, yet there are no means to send them. A third condition, almost more tragic, abounds, that of the spiritual breakdown of many who do go, so that "converts" are not always really and genuinely born from above, with the Spirit of sonship becoming

truly resident within. Demon powers persist in dominion and challenge. A policy of a slow absorption of "Christianity", through education, familiarisation, etc., as a compromise between failure to work upon the basis of genuine regeneration and an honest acknowledgment of the same, with its practical implications, has been adopted. Finally there are the many who return home with lost assurance. Surely all this stands in direct contrast to the spirit and experience of the New Testament. It is not difficult to go on at great length making distinctions between the two standards, that of the New Testament and that largely existing to-day, but the more important thing is to display the secrets of that former glory.

There is very little doubt that a new release of the Lord is necessary if there is to be a fresh expression of the life and work of which we are speaking, as at the beginning. The Lord is now bound and straitened by established and fixed Christian traditions and systems, and He is thereby unable to do what He would. The Holy Spirit is positively hindered by organised Christianity. This is particularly so in Western countries. We do know of something akin to what we have been saying as to original movement in China and India. Our object here is to set forth something of the revealed features of the New Testament work of the Risen Lord in and through His Church, which features must be present when the Lord is free to exercise Himself sovereignly.

We ask, first of all, if there is any phrase which embodies the conception, motive, and dynamic of this spontaneous world-conquest at its beginning?

We think there is such a phrase, and that it is this :

"The Testimony of Jesus"

This accounts for everything, when possessing anyone as it possessed them. Let us look it up.

"Who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ."—Rev. i. 2.

"I...was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus."—Rev. i. 9.

"I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."—Rev. vi. 9.

"And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus."—Rev. xii. 17.

"I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus."—Rev. xix. 10.

"And I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus."—Rev. xx. 4.

"Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you."—I Cor. i. 6.

"They will not receive of thee testimony concerning me."—Acts xxii. 18.

"Our testimony unto you was believed."—2 Thess. i. 10.

"Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord."—2 Tim. i. 8.

"Ye shall be my witnesses."—Acts i. 8. (same word in the Greek as testimony).

"Must one become a witness with us."—Acts i. 22.

"This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we are all witnesses."—Acts ii. 32.

"Raised from the dead ; whereof we are witnesses."—Acts iii. 15.

"Not to all the people, but unto witnesses."—Acts x. 41.

"With great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."—Acts iv. 33.

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony."—Rev. xii. 11.

The New Testament, read in the light of these passages, shows very clearly that the remarkable story which it recounts is that of a testimony. It remains for us to ask what this testimony was. To clear the way for the positive answer we must say something as to what this "testimony" was not.

I. "The Testimony of Jesus" was not a Teaching

There is nothing in the whole story upon which to rest an argument or affirmation that the Apostles went out to the world with "The Teaching of Jesus". They were not propagating new doctrines or a system of truth. The teaching resulted from the acceptance of the testimony, the expounding of its content followed that acceptance and was kept for believers only. It was a result, not a cause. The most they ever did was to substantiate their testimony from the Scriptures, and affirm certain facts concerning the Person of Christ.

II. "The Testimony of Jesus" was not a New Religion

"Christianity" was not set over against or alongside of other religions and made "comparative". It was some time before some of the Apostles themselves realised the implications of their testimony in the matter of their being emancipated from Judaism. Great as the change was, they did not realise they had changed their religion. They found themselves outside, and committed against their own prejudices, and had to do their thinking and discussing after the thing had become a fact in embarrassing experience. (See Peter in the house of Cornelius, and the events of Acts x., xi., xv., etc.).

III. "The Testimony of Jesus" was not a New "Movement"

No plans were laid. There was no policy. Organisation was entirely absent, and any which subsequently had to be admitted was forced upon them by the embarrassment of the very vitality of things, and then it was of the simplest.

A thought-out campaign did not exist. To set up, launch, form, bring into being, or found a new society, sect, "church", community, was not in mind. They did not set out for such, and although their testimony gave distinctiveness to all who believed ; although outsiders labelled them and mis-

interpreted their motive and purpose, the distinguishing feature was life.

What then was "The Testimony of Jesus"? All-inclusively it was the proclamation and affirmation of a fact. That fact was—and is—

The Universal Sovereignty and Lordship of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, established and vindicated by the resurrection from the dead.

This testimony had two sides. The objective and historic fact, of which they had had many infallible proofs, had become demonstrated in the power of that resurrection by the Holy Spirit in "the church, which is his body"—in all its members, in all its activities. That life, which in Him had conquered sin, death, hell and Satan, and carried Him from "The lowest part" to the "far above all heavens", had been implanted in them by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

The testimony of Jesus, then, is that Jesus lives universally triumphant. The Church is intended to be the "Pillar" (or monument) of that truth. It is His resurrection Body, possessed of His risen life and administered by the Holy Ghost, as the repository of that life.

The outcome of the testimony of Jesus is meant to be a life—His life. Not a mode of life, but a vital, infinite force; indestructible, irresistible, incorruptible; a vital force mediated to the dead, wherever there is a readiness and willingness to believe on the Lord Jesus.

It burst the old moulds, "wine-skins" of tradition, worn out systems, man-made orders and forms.

It sets aside even those things which were once raised up and greatly used by God, but which have ceased to be living, and are only past history. Even Judaism ceases to count here. The testimony of Jesus liberates captives, and a word spoken in its power is as an irresistible challenge to "let my people go". Lazarus must come forth when He, "The Resurrection and the Life", commands through His Church. This life, issuing forth from the risen Lord as within "The Body" by the Eternal Spirit, is the compelling power of the world-mission and testimony of Jesus.

There is no precedent in the New Testament for appealing for workers or missionaries. This is at best a sorry alternative or necessity. When the Holy Spirit is really in possession and the life is manifested, then He takes the initiative with regard to all work and workers, saying "Separate me...for the work whereunto I have called them."

Great emphasis is laid in the New Testament upon receiving the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the universally sovereign Lord—"The heir of all things." His mission is world-wide, cosmic. World-vision, world-passion, world-vocation are the inevitable, immediate result of the establishment of His Lordship within. It cannot be otherwise. Then what is the matter that this thing is not spontaneous with so many? Why do not the Lord's people spread the Testimony by simply talking out of a full heart? Is this also the indictment of Acts xix. 2-5?

Is the cost a deterrent by which the Spirit is

quenched? It will cost. To no place did the New Testament witnesses go with the "Testimony" but what the enemy—the dragon—made war. It was up to him to do so, for he stood to be a very great loser. It was the battle for dominion. This was his unwilling compliment, his unintentional congratulation. They represented something, and possessed something which made hell angry and afraid.

The Lord's purpose and method in this age is to bring into resurrection-union with Himself two or three in every place, and "add unto them such as are being saved." It is an accretion of life, not enticement or attraction. Here again the Holy Spirit takes the initiative when a true testimony is borne.

The greatest need of the hour is a revitalising of the Lord's people with His risen life by the Holy Spirit. May they soon see it and come to the place where everything—tradition, system, common acceptances, forms and moulds, prejudices, personal interests, reputation, prestige, compromise, the opinions of others, policy, etc.—will be sacrificed, if needs be, for LIFE, and the true and living Testimony of Jesus. So shall He find His release again and scatter the fire anew.

Chapter Two.

The Starting-place of the Testimony in Every Nation

Thus far our particular emphasis has been upon the nature of "The Testimony of Jesus", which in a word is this, that the great objective and historic fact that Jesus was risen from among the dead and was in the place of supreme sovereignty and glory—which fact had been manifested by many infallible proofs—has also a subjective counterpart within the "witnesses." That same Lord Jesus had become an inward reality by the Holy Spirit, and the nature of the manifestation of that inward fact was a life, "eternal life", resurrection life, life triumphant over death, Divine life in all its energy, spontaneity, might, persistence, holiness, and fruitfulness: the life which the Lord Jesus is in Person (1 John i.2, v. 9-13, 20, R.V.; Acts i.8, 22, ii, 32, 36, iii. 15, iv. 33, v. 30, 32, x. 40-42, xiii. 30, 37; Rom. i. 4, R.V.). The testimony to the Person of Jesus is the power of His life in and through His "members", by the Holy Spirit.

Our further purpose will be to show something more of what this means in experience and service, especially in connection with the age-purpose of a witness to the nations. If comparisons and contrasts are made, and disorders pointed out, it is not in a spirit of criticism, far less of censoriousness; neither is it want of appreciation of, or esteem for, the work being so honestly and sacrificially done. God forbid that any word of ours should bring a blight upon any activity which counts even a little for Him! We have a burden, a sometimes overwhelming burden, and the acuteness is occasioned by both comparative and complete ineffectiveness: to say nothing of the confusion, and so widely existent, manifest miscon-

ception of Divine ends and methods. It is the more immediate, direct, and absolute *spiritual* effectiveness that governs the pursuance of this subject.

Let us again state the all-inclusive basis and background of all true and victorious life and service. *It is the revelation of the Person of Christ Crucified, in the Godhead, and in the throne of absolute sovereignty, and this objective fact becoming by the Holy Spirit a power in the life and a passion in the heart.*

It is the effect of this that lies behind all the great record of conquests in many regions, through many instruments. This goes behind all advocacy of either "foreign" or other missions, and makes such advocacy unnecessary. Not that advocacy has been fruitless, for God has come through it; but its strenuousness and its costliness are the marks of spiritual decline, and are the characteristics of a system which speaks of a bondage in which the Lord is involved. We shall best explain what we mean if we illustrate from history.

Some Notable Examples

We have before us the records of movements and men that have been especially effectual and fruitful in the world-testimony of the Lord Jesus.

Here is the amazing story of those great days of Moravian missions. *In the first twenty years they actually sent out more missionaries than the whole Protestant Church had done in two hundred years.* Of the closed lands entered, the sufferings gladly endured, the range covered, the lives lived and laid down, the grace of God manifested, it stirs wonder and shame to read. Someone has said that "if members of the Protestant churches went out as missionaries in corresponding numbers, there would be a force of 400,000 foreign workers, which is vastly more than the number estimated as necessary to achieve the evangelisation of the world." (J. R. Mott.)

Only for want of space do we reluctantly refrain from giving pages from this tremendous story. But what lay behind it?

In the first place the Cross had been deeply wrought into the very being of this people. Their country was made a field of blood by massacre. They were driven from their homes. The population was reduced by persecution from three million to one million. Indeed it sometimes appeared as if they would be entirely extinguished. Out of this fire of affliction there arose a company purified by the fire, and with another fire burning in their bones. It was the fire of a passionate love for the Lord Jesus. The meetings of these brethren, when later these became possible, breathe the atmosphere of "the upper room." Covenants were made that self in all its forms should be entirely banished—self-will, self-love, self-interest, self-seeking. To be poor in spirit would be their quest, and everyone would give himself to be taught by the Holy Spirit. A prayer-watch was set up which should burn day and night, and in relays an entire twenty-four hours was occupied in seeking the Lord. "To win for the Lamb that was slain the reward of

His sufferings", was their adopted motto. All this is its own argument. Here a deeply inwrought work of the Cross issued in a mighty, personal love for the Lord Jesus. Personal considerations were lost, and no persuasion was necessary. Shall we not say the truth when we say that souls languish by the million in darkness and death, for want of a deep baptism of the Church—a company of saved ones—into the passion and love of God in Christ?

If the China Inland Mission has been a monument to anything as to God's methods, it is supremely such to the living reality of union with Christ. With all his vision and passion for inland China, it is well known that, as he went from place to place addressing gatherings of Christians, in this and other countries, Mr. Hudson Taylor said very little about China, often nothing at all. He poured out his spiritual message to bring the Lord's people to the fuller knowledge of what their union with Him meant. The central and supreme thing in this fellowship with the Lord was *the universal efficacy of prayer.*

Listen to him: "In the study of that Divine Word I learned that to obtain successful workers, not elaborate appeals for help, but earnest prayer to God... and the deepening of the spiritual life of the Church, so that men should be unable to stay at home, were what was needed."

Were we to put the inner history of this work—the original spiritual background—into a few words, we should say that it was occasioned not by organisation, advocacy, propaganda, appeals, or advertisement, but by a man with a deep knowledge of God, born of the Cross being deeply inwrought, bringing a living, spiritual message for the Lord's people as to their fullest life in Him, and the practical outworking of such a life through prayer. Mr. Hudson Taylor was no teacher, in the sense of presenting truth in a systematised form. He was not one of the great Bible teachers in the generally accepted sense of that term. His was a message which immediately led to two issues: the relationship of the believer to the Lord, and then the practical outworking of that in prayer and other forms of service, to bring the Gospel to those who had no chance of receiving it, except by such special endeavour to reach them. Mr. Hudson Taylor's life (and we must therefore think that the history of the mission) turned at a given point upon a deeper realisation of what oneness with the Lord really means. This is revealed in a letter to his sister which is printed in the second volume of his "Life".

How far-reaching and deeply helpful has been the ministry of Dr. Andrew Murray! While here he travelled far and wide in convention ministry, and since his departure his many books have been bread and light to a great multitude. Out of this ministry sprang a strong movement for evangelisation. The South Africa General Mission is mainly, if not entirely, the outcome of Dr. Murray's ministry. But, be it noted, that ministry was to the Lord's people. It had to do with the life in the Spirit, prayer, and holiness. It was not, again, the advocacy of missions or propaganda, but purely spiritual instruction and

inspiration. It was almost exclusively to God's people.

We could add at great length to the evidence, pointing to the influence of such lives, and the power of the movement for "the deepening of spiritual life"; pages from the missionary issues of "Keswick's" great men, and messages in those early days; pages from that monumental "history" of the C.M.S. by Dr. Eugene Stock.

The Basic Reality

The evidence is overwhelming that, from "Pentecost" onward, the basis of the fullest, richest, and most effectual world-testimony of Jesus is "a holiness movement from heaven", a heart-changing, life-revolutionising, whole-being-captivating realisation of Who Jesus is, and What Jesus is; the first as to His Sovereignty in the Throne of Deity, and the second as to His Sovereignty in the life on all points. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with Holiness, Love, Humility, Joy, and a passion for securing unto the "Beloved" the fruit of His travail in every nation. No "spiritual" movement, convention, teaching, is valid without the hall-mark of spontaneous concern for the eternal well-being of others. Far too often intensive movements result in morbid introspection. There is nothing more paralyzing than this. The reaction from it is just as perilous. Enthusiasm, interest, high spirits, "personality", education, enterprise, harnessed to a more or less dated "decision for Christ", are frequently the points of emphasis in this reaction.

The cost to a New Testament convert was too great to permit of anything superficial or merely a matter of romance or enthusiasm. The balance must be of a very real and deep knowledge of the Lord, and an ardent passion for His satisfaction in the nations.

What Pentecost Was

We have failed far too terribly to realise exactly what "Pentecost" really was. The cumulative and external effects have obscured the deeper elements. We have interpreted it in terms of activity, signs, waves of emotion, excitability, and so forth.

Our supreme need is to know just exactly what the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is. All-inclusively it is *the enthronement of the Lord Jesus as absolute Sovereign, without reservation or rival, in the entire life in all its interests and activities*. Within this compass there are numerous specific things, just one or two of which we may point out.

Firstly "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is a baptism into the holiness of the Lord. Pentecost was a holiness movement from heaven. This was the significance of the terrible incident with Ananias and Sapphira. It is a baptism with fire, which must be interpreted primarily, not as zest, but as sanctification. This holiness of the Lord, established by the Holy Spirit, has to be carried into every phase and department of life; spirit, mind, body; relationships, transactions, methods, means. Doubtfulness, questionableness, equivocation, and such-like ele-

ments are a contradiction and an antagonism to the Spirit of holiness. It is unfortunate that it should be necessary even to mention this in the realm of the work of the Lord, but that necessity is laid upon us.

Secondly, the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is a baptism into the love of Christ. This is another element of the "Fire". It need hardly be said that this love is something more and other than 'temperamentality', large-nature, natural warm-heartedness, generosity, sentiment, and nice words. It is love which suffers long, envies not, knows no jealousy, makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is not puffed up, never rejoices in self-vindication when opponents are proved wrong, is always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, never seeks its own ends or interests. This love knows how to be abased, to have its interests crossed, to be set aside, to be outshone, to persist when forsaken; and much more. Only the Holy Spirit can impart and maintain this love.

Thirdly, the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is a baptism into the War of the Ages. Not into a religious playground or sports field, but into the grim, terrific, bloody conflict with "principalities and powers," with "the world rulers....of this darkness", with "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places".

Immediately upon His baptism the Spirit came upon our Lord, and He was, there and then, brought by the act of the Spirit into awful contact with the leader of the opposing hierarchy. So it was with the Church. So it is with every one baptised into Christ. Thank God, the victory has been secured and the issue settled at Calvary; but the fight continues. It will take the mighty energising of the Spirit of the Lord of hosts—"Strengthened with might by his Spirit in (lit. "into") the inner man"—in all the efficacy of the Precious Blood to accomplish the deepest work of God in this age. There will be times when we are not able to work, or preach, or do anything but "stand and withstand". Many are contented while they can be active and do something. This can be a real snare. It is spiritual vitality which counts, not much business. We will break off here for the time being, but will append a paragraph from the story of Uganda which carries its own significance.

A Typical Instance

In the early days of the Church in Uganda, a boy who had been baptized came to Pilkington and told him of his failure to be true to Christ, in the pathetic words, "I sin as much as ever I did". Pilkington was cut to the quick, and the desire for fresh spiritual power was deepened in his heart. Shortly afterwards he went apart on to one of the islands in the Victoria Nyanza, that he might wait upon God and receive fresh power from Him. His prayers were answered, and later he could write to Bishop Tucker, "I want to tell you that we (mission and people) are in the midst of a time of great blessing. God has enabled several of us to see that for a long time past we have been working in our own strength, and that consequently there has been no power in our lives, and very little blessing. We have, however, been brought to

see that the command "be filled with the Spirit" is as much laid upon us as upon the Ephesians, and that power for effectual service is placed at our disposal if we will but appropriate it. I cannot tell you the difference it has made to us in our lives, as well as

in our work. Now we are full of joy, whereas a little while ago (I am speaking of myself in this) the depression was almost unbearable. As for our work, God is now using us, and a wonderful wave of blessing is passing over the land."

The Cross, The Church and the Conflict

No. 3 (continued).

THE CONFLICT

The True Nature of the Church

That makes it necessary to say just a few words here in parenthesis about the true nature of the Church. What is the Church? Well, to begin with, it is the *spiritual relatedness* of the children of God. That is the first, shall I say the lowest, level of the meaning of the Church, the most elementary, the starting point—the spiritual relatedness of all children of God; and it is not necessary for me to take up time to say that all truly born-again children of God have a basic and fundamental oneness, that they share one common life. That we know. But that is where the Church begins. That is what the Church is in its beginnings—a spiritual relatedness, by the possession of all of this one life which is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we must not leave it there. The Church is that, but the Church is something more than that. The Church is the *active functional relatedness* of the children of God. We have said in a previous meditation that it is one thing to possess life in a human body, but it may be quite another thing for that human body to be functioning as a body. It may be, poor thing, lying there alive, and yet for all practical purposes be as good as dead, useless. It is not a functioning thing. The whole of its organism may be upset, its co-ordination of function may be destroyed. And can you think that the Lord looks upon His people with anything of real contentment when He sees that they have life, but as a functioning related Body there is little or nothing? Surely we cannot think that the Lord is satisfied with that? What the Lord would call His Church is not just something that has His life. When He would say, "I will build my church", and speak of "My Church", He would think of His Church as a related and functioning thing, and not just a thing which possesses the gift of His life. In the thought of God, to answer to His thought and purpose, the Church is this active, related, functional oneness of His people.

It is there that all our difficulties and problems arise. Things become, of course, very practical, and it is just there that a lot of people get into a great deal of confusion and mess, because they fail to recognise that to have spiritual fellowship, and to cooperate with what is of the Lord in His people, is one thing, but to be actively associated with what is unscriptural in men's systems is another thing. I

mean this, that some people think that, in order to have fellowship with certain Christians, you have to go into the thing where they are, and become part of it; their systems, their denominations, their religious orders. In order to show that you are in fellowship, you must go in. That is quite another thing from active spiritual fellowship with them as the Lord's children on a spiritual basis.

The point of departure arises here. When anybody says, either in words, inference, or by their attitude, "If you are going to prove your fellowship with me, you have to come in and belong to what I am in, and work with me in that", then that is another question altogether from this one of spiritual relatedness. That is where all the difficulties arise, and that is where the Lord so often has to make His drastic breaks.

The two difficulties are these. In order to get a real living expression of the Church as a functioning related thing, so often the Lord has to break in upon that impingement of systems upon people and cut them clear. He has to. It is unfortunate, it is a pity, but if you put it to the test, you find it is usually that way. The system impinges and becomes something which is distinct from that heavenly, spiritual and universal nature of the Church. It is something which is sectarian, and, being that, is schismatic and divides the Lord's people here on the earth, and the Lord so often has to cut right into that, and to draw His people away from it, and put them on neutral ground where they can live and function, not as something apart from the children of God, but as something which is not a part of something that is unscriptural.

Then the next difficulty is for such people to maintain a purely spiritual position without becoming another sect. That is a very practical difficulty, but it can be done. But it calls for much watchfulness and a constant guardedness against anything, not only in your doctrine, but in your spirit, in your mentality, in your attitude to others, constant vigilance against the coming in of the spirit of that which you are supposed to have left behind. Oh, the difficulties are very real and very practical, but not insuperable.

Life the Answer to Every Problem
It resolves itself mainly into a question of life.

Life is the answer to every problem. Oh, I do feel, beloved, that God's universe is entirely constituted on the biological principle. It is the answer to everything, the explanation of everything, the principle of realisation; the infinite wisdom of God in just resolving everything into one simple proposition and method, and saying, "I will put life into a seed, and I can leave it! I do not begin by forming this flower, making so many petals, shaping them, colouring them, and then building them into one another, and joining them up and fastening them on to a stem, and working like that. That is artificial. I will put life into a seed and leave it, and presently you will have the flower, the perfect flower". That life itself has all that organism, all that organization, all that shaping, all that colour, all that form. The life has it, and if the life is only given a chance, it will produce that, it will be manifested, whether it be by the flower or the tree, or the bird, or the fish or the animal, or the man. Everything is the result of the life which has the peculiar nature of that organism in it, and if once that life can be introduced and given a chance, you will have the organism. That is the biological secret of God in realising His creation.

But the natural creation is only a type of the spiritual. It was only intended to be that. The spiritual is on that principle, and the secret and solution of everything in the spiritual realm is the biological principle. Put the life of God's Son into anyone and give it a chance, let that life be sovereign, let that life have free course, let that life be in lordship, and you can leave it. You need not fret over trying to put members together, and make them look pretty, nice, happy and cheerful. Oh no, the life will do it. God has one key, namely, the sovereign life of His own beloved Son given a chance unhindered. The result will be as sure as day follows night, and this whole matter of the expression of the Church, and the safeguarding of a true expression of the Church, is just a matter of the Lord's life; that life preserved by the working of the Cross all the time against death, its great enemy, and the ground upon which death works, which is the flesh. Let the Cross be kept there over the flesh, the ground of spiritual death, preserving the life, and we need not worry about the technique; that will look after itself. Church technique will look after itself if the Cross is doing its work and the life is having its way; which only means the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus expressed in the power of His Spirit in terms of life.

We shall be a sect, we shall again be resolved into some thing, as apart from other things on this earth amongst the Lord's people, if we get down on to any other level and ground than that of the sovereign headship and life of the Lord Jesus. Get down on to the ground of teaching, on to the ground of spiritual leaders, men, or on to any other ground, and we shall become some *thing*. But maintain that position in relation to the living, exalted Lord Jesus, holding fast the Head, and whatever people may say, the truth remains that there we shall have a living expression of God's thought of the Church, a company of the

Lord's people on the basis of heavenliness, spirituality, universality, in life.

I would like to stay much longer with that, but I trust that sufficient has been said to indicate this tremendous difference. So the Church is that spiritual relatedness in a functioning way, on the basis of the Lordship of Christ in life; the risen Lord in the midst, where nothing of man has a place. It is on that basis that we are to seek fellowship, and if it really comes to the point, we must be prepared to say: "Look here, I will meet you on spiritual ground, the ground of Christ, the ground of our one life, I will co-operate with you in all that is truly spiritual, but if you want me to come into your organization, to become part of your system and join in your institutions, then you put up a barrier, you interfere with fellowship". Now, that is not a denial of the Church, that is not a contradiction of oneness. To take that course is simply to refuse the imposition by anyone of something that is not of the Lord, not scriptural, something that is extra to our spiritual life and fellowship; and where men will do that, there is the interruption. We must remain on the free ground of the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit.

Now, that is very practical; but, beloved, do not forget that bound up with that is the whole question of spiritual fulness. The whole matter of the fulness of Christ is bound up with our being on the ground of His Lordship and of His life, and not on any other artificial ground as made by men. And that raises other practical points. Oh, all the practical points are raised by that.

The Church and the Opposing Forces of Evil

The Church, we are saying, is a thing which functions in relatedness. Well, conflict is mainly connected with this Lordship of Jesus Christ, and the Lordship of Jesus Christ is bound up mainly with the Church: so that the conflict is to be dealt with by the Church. You see, the opposing forces of evil are to be met by the Church. "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it", said our Lord (Matt. xvi. 18), as though the Church were the main objective of the powers of evil. It is the Church and the gates of Hades. Well now, those powers of evil have to be met by the Church in representation. And here let me warn you to be very careful of single-handed assault upon the powers of evil. If you do, you will find yourself unable to meet them; and that is saying a thing very imperfectly. You will find that you will be mightily knocked about. Be very careful of making personal, single-handed, individual assaults upon the powers of evil. This is a Church matter. The Church may be represented by just two or three. The corporate principle is essential. That does not mean that you are not personally to resist the Devil, that you are not personally to stand, and withstand, but if you are going to make assault upon strongholds of the Evil One, you will need to stand on Church ground for that: for the Lord has made this a Church matter, a corporate matter, that is to say; and doubtless you have

proved it. Some situations can never be touched single-handed; you have to call in co-operation. Well, the Lord holds us to that. If you have professed to have seen the Church, the Body of Christ, if you have given any testimony to it, the Lord will hold you to it; you will not get through a situation single-handed. He will make you come to the Church about it, and your whole life will simply be tied up until you make a Church matter of it. The Lord is very jealous over His Church. Satan can make an awful mess of a life, if that life moves out to meet spiritual antagonism without the Church.

Do lay to heart what is being said, for it may touch you at many points. It is very true. Do you really know Church life? You understand, when I speak about Church life, I am not talking about what men call "the Church". I am talking about the spiritual relatedness of the Lord's children, the inter-dependence of the members of Christ. They do depend upon one another, and the Lord has ordered it that it shall be so, and in the main issues the Lord will hold us to that. We can go out to our work and be withstood effectually by the enemy, if we do not recognise this law of God, that the Church has to move with us and we with the Church. There has to be a corporate life in this matter. If you did but realise and recognise it, dear friends, you would see that this is the explanation of so much frustration. Go back to Ezra and recall how they put the altar in its place, and laid the foundation of the house of the Lord. They got no further than that, before the adversaries came on the scene. And what did they do? Well, they did all sorts of things; but it is all summed up in one word, they set themselves to frustrate the work. Frustrate! Oh, this terrible sense of frustration! Are you conscious of that? Frustration! No word suits the situation better than that. You make a move, you are brought to a standstill. You move again, and again you are brought to a standstill. There is no getting through. It is frustration, frustration in all directions. I am glad that word is there.

Well, the people fell for a time under that frustration, and were held up for a number of years. But the Lord did not accept that, and God reacted to that. "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel...and Joshua" (Hag. i. 21), through the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah, and the Lord said, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit." (Zech. iv. 6). The frustration of the Evil One is countered by the Holy Spirit through the Church. The Church is the instrument of the Holy Spirit's work against the enemy. Oh, may the Lord give us a new sense of the tremendous importance of the functioning reality of the Church!

We are speaking of what the Church is. It is something more than an entity just possessing life. It is a functioning relatedness of the children of God, and its function on the one hand is to counter this tremendous challenge to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and if there is a new rising up of this corporate activity, co-operation, amongst the people of God, this frustration of the enemy can be dealt with. We

are not going to sit down under this frustration of the enemy, but we must be stirred up in our spirits. My name is not Zerubbabel and not Joshua, but humbly may the Lord be pleased to have the same effect upon you through this word as their word had upon the people of their day, to stir up corporate action against frustration, and to say, We will not accept this frustration of the enemy!

The Wiles of the Devil

Now let us go on. The conflict is always intended to counter the true meaning of the Cross and the true nature of the Church, because they both involve the Lordship of Christ. How is it done? Well, there is a lot of light for us in the Scriptures on this. Paul sums it all up in one word—"the wiles of the Devil" (Eph. vi. 11). Both Nehemiah and Ezra will give us a good insight into the wiles of the Devil. The first movement, as you notice in Ezra iv, was along the line of attempted paralyzing through mixture. The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity were building, and they drew near, and said, "Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him..." Let us build! One of the most subtle forms of Satanic activity against the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ is mixture, bringing in elements that profess and pretend to be in true alliance with the purpose, but which in nature are not, but are a contradiction. The enemy is always trying to bring about that state of mixture through alliances with things which are different in their nature. Oh, let this word search us! Has the Cross really done its work in us, has it been so planted in us that we can say we are not just outwardly associated with a thing, but that deep down in our very being we have a burden about this House of God? What is your relationship to this matter? Really, beloved, is there in you an ache over the state of the House of God? These adversaries—and, with all that they said and professed, they are still adversaries—came and said, We seek your God, we do sacrifice to your God, let us build with you! Are you quite sure that your association is not merely outward, objective, something with which you have a certain amount of agreement? Are you quite sure that you have gone into this thing and this thing into you, and that deep down in your being there is a real concern and travail about this house? These adversaries had no such concern: they were not really burdened and troubled about the state of the house, as is soon seen. Frustrated along this line, they will seek to frustrate the building of this house. The Lord must have the pure essence of a real burden concerning the spiritual life of His people. It must be in us, a real concern. It must be true, genuine, our very life, not something from which we can resign and go away, because we meet with some unpleasantnesses, some difficulties, some things that go against our personal interest. Oh, John rightly names those people—"They went out from us, but they were not of us" (1 John ii. 19). You cannot go out from something that is your very being.

(concluded on front page)

continued from back page)

We may have had thoughts about retiring and giving up, but when it comes to the issue, that which we have perhaps called an 'it', from which we were going to withdraw, that and ourselves were so much one we could not divide between them. The thing is wrought into us in the very fires of God. Are you sure it is like that? The enemy cannot do much with that, but he is always trying to get a conglomeration of people, some really burdened, and others who, however much they think it so, and protest that they serve the same God and offer sacrifices to Him, have but taken something on, and have no real concern deep down in their being. They have but joined themselves to something into which the Holy Spirit has not planted them.

Alliance! And when they failed in that, their subterfuge was exposed. Then they turned, with threats and terrorizing, and moved out to spread a false report and misrepresent these people, saying they were building this temple with the intention of revolting. As to Nehemiah and the building of the wall, the false report was, He intends to make a name for himself, to get a following, to be something himself! False reports, misrepresentation, the Devil's work of opposition; and they brought tremendous pressure against this thing. A little thing comes out in Haggai about it, which I think is significant. You remember as Haggai opens his prophecies, out of which there came the reviving of the building of the temple, he says, "This people say, It is not the time for us to come, the time for the Lord's house to be built." But they had made a start: they had put the altar in its place and they had laid the foundation. They have changed their mind. They have come to another conclusion. "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." Why? They

had met opposition severe and terrible, opposition from the adversaries, and the adversary had not only opposed from without, but he had got inside and made a suggestion, and his inward suggestion was this: You see all these difficulties, these adversaries, these troubles, these persecutions, these misrepresentations; they mean that the Lord does not want you to do it, this means the Lord's time has not come; if the Lord's time had come, the thing would go through without any difficulty! Has it ever been so? Tell me the time when the Lord did a great thing and it went through without opposition. You have difficulty in finding a time in history when hell has not risen up, when God has set Himself to do a new thing. Satan says, The opposition means the Lord's time is not yet come, the Lord is not with you in it; if He were, He would carry you through swimmingly! It never has been like that. But you see how Satan gets inside and gives a false implication to difficulties, and says, If the Lord were with you, you would have no difficulties; the Lord would simply carry you through without any trouble at all! No, not at all; that is the work of the enemy, to hinder by any and every means he can, because of the tremendous issue that is involved.

Now, ask the Lord to show you what it means, to make this word to have real issues in your own lives, to get what He really has set His heart upon. And do not forget the enemy will seek to frustrate. I think he has been at it in this Conference, by the spirit of death, of blinding, of paralyzing. Oh, ask the Lord to stir up your spirit to resist this. Say, If the Lord is seeking to do something, then I resist all paralysis of mind and spirit, all deadness, and I stand for the Lord's purpose to come clear!

T.A.S.

The Way of Fruitfulness

Of all plans for assuring success, the most certain is Christ's own—becoming a corn of wheat, and falling into the ground and dying.

Acknowledgments.—We acknowledge with gratitude the following gifts, other than local, towards the maintenance of this paper received during the months of October and November, 1944:

Anon., 12s. 6d.; Argentine, £2; Ashtead, 10s.; Aylsham, 7s.; Baily, 10s.; Birkenhead, 2s. 6d.; Birmingham, 5s. and 2s. 6d.; Bradford, 2s. and 5s.; Braintree, 5s.; Brechin, £1 and 10s.; Burley-in-Wharfedale, 10s.; Buxhall, 5s. and 5s.; Canterbury, 6s.; Codsall, 5s.; Congleton, 4s.; Coonoor India, 5s. and 5s.; Crawley, 5s.; Croydon, 3s. 6d.; Damanhur, Egypt, £1; Ditchling, 14s. 9d.; Doncaster, 5s.; Dunstable, 2s. 6d.; Dunedin, N.Z., £2; Durham, 5s.; Edinburgh, 10s., 10s. and £1; Enfield, 5s.; Erith, 14s. 6d.; Falmouth, 3s.; Gateshead, 5s.; Glasgow, 10s. and £1; Gloucester, 5s.; Grimsby, 2s. 6d.; Hadleigh, 3s.; Hatch End, £1; Hemryock, 15s.; Hendon, 2s. 6d.; Hertford, 5s.; Higham Ferrers, 5s. 8d.; Hull, 6s.; Ilford, 8s.; Inverness, 3s.; Ivybridge, 5s.; Kenton, 10s.; Kingsbury, £1; Kirkcaldy, 2s.; Limavady, 2s. 6d.; London, S.E.4, 2s. 6d.;

London, S.E.20, 19s.; London, S.E.22, 3s.; London, N.W.3, 13s.; London, N.W.9, 3s.; Loughborough, 4s. 6d.; Matlock, 10s.; Meerut, India, 10s.; Montrose, £1; Parkstone, 5s.; Paston, 5s.; Plymouth, 5s.; Port Shepstone, Natal, 5s.; Portsoy, 15s.; Rajpur, India, 10s.; Rathgar, 5s.; Rathmines, 5s.; Rhondda, 5s.; St. Agnes, 1s.; St. Albans, 4s.; St. Austell, 14s.; Sedbergh, 5s.; Sherman Station, Maine, £1; Southbourne, £1; Stirling, 5s.; Stoke-on-Trent, 2s. 6d.; Stonebroom, 10s. 6d.; Swalecliffe, £1; Swansea, 16s. 6d. and 7s. 10d.; Taunton, 10s.; Theydon Bois, 2s. 6d.; Tunbridge Wells, 6s.; Vancouver, B.C., 17s. 6d.; Wallington, 2s. 6d.; Walsall, 10s.; Welling, 2s. 6d.; Wellingborough, 2s. 6d.; West Bridgford, 4s.; West Wickham, 5s.; Willesden, £1 1s.; Wilmslow, 10s.; Worthing, £3; Yonkers, N.Y., 9s. 11d. Total £45 19s. 8d.

Birmingham, Ala., \$4.00; New York, N.Y., \$2.50; Plainfield, N.J., \$1.00; Schenectady, N.Y., \$2.00; Winchester, Mass., \$1.00. Total, \$10.50.

A bi-monthly ministry by which it is sought to lead the Lord's people into His full thought for them.

"A Witness and Testimony"

Maintained
by the offerings of
those who are helped by it.

MARCH—APRIL, 1945

No. 2, VOL. 23

The Release of the Lord

(Continued)

Chapter Three.

The Great Governing Concepts of the New Testament.

That enlargement through straitening is an abiding law of the Kingdom of the Heavens in this age is a well-known truth. Its implications are various and its instances are numerous. One of its too-oft-unrecognised implications is that *efforts* at enlargement in a really spiritual realm only result in an artificial inflation, with all the weakness, unsatisfactoriness, and instability of all that is not spiritually real. True development is not the work of man; of his ingenuity, acumen, efficiency, resource, drive, cleverness, or enthusiasm. The very law of which we are speaking has its strength and vindication in the fact that God begins at zero. When, humanly speaking, there has remained no hope, and it has been fully recognised that only God could do the necessary thing, it has often been proved that that was just the situation that He had been taking pains to bring about. "He hangeth the world upon nothing," is an abiding principle from the standpoint of the natural man. It is always a salutary thing for the Lord's servants to pass their eye over the Scriptures and review the zeros of man and the intervention of God at that point. Such a survey must ever lead to a recognition that God is speaking in all ages in the terms of the Cross, and that there, all-inclusively, and for ever, has been established the Divine law that the "flesh profiteth nothing"; that the "natural" (Greek: *soulical*) man "cannot" in the things of God; that the first Adam species and race has been wound up and finished. That is the comprehensive "first Adam" zero, and at that point an entirely new order is instituted, and this is one in which God is personally resident and dominant by His Spirit. Henceforth for all Divine purposes the indispensable condition is a

new creation, a "Last Adam," Personally and corporately.

"Full of the Holy Ghost and Faith"

It is here that we centre the whole emphasis of these messages. Again may we plead that none will think us merely critical, disparaging, far less censorious. Surely it is a justifiable inquiry to make as to whether the above qualification is the one supreme consideration in all choices and appointments in the service of God.

In our missionary boards and directorates what has been the basis of membership? Has it been missionary interest on the part of Christian men, plus business ability, financial resource, circle of influence, a name that obtains confidence? In our church councils, committees, has it been by popular vote governed by any one or more of human considerations? In our methods has it been thought that an efficient organisation, machinery, plant, "interest," would secure the end?

Or has it honestly and truly been that, all other things given a secondary place, the Lord needs first of all such as, being full of the Holy Ghost and faith, know above all things what "prayer and fasting" mean? When in the primitive and free method of the first days the Spirit said "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," it is a blessed thing to realise that it was not said to such as were living in comparative ease and comfort, or whose occasional or second business it was to attend to these things, but to such as "ministering to the Lord and fasting" were experimentally sharing the great spiritual cost which would fall to those who would be sent forth. It is so easy to issue instructions,

give orders, make plans, manipulate lives, pass decisions, when these do not immediately involve those who do so in the spiritual cost and anguish and conflict. We think that no one ought ever to be in such a position who has not gone just as far in the cost and sacrifice, and who is not just as fully abandoned with all that he has as those who go forth "for the sake of the Name." The Lord's ways are equal, and any inequality is unrighteousness, and ties the hands of blessing. The Holy Spirit is free to take the initiative only in so far as the holy constituents of that Name are the foundation of the purpose, policy, methods, means, motives and lives of such as are associated with holy things. This is abundantly established in all the Scriptures. Sometimes this Divine principle is demonstrated by the reaction to its violation in the breaking forth of judgment; sometimes in reverses and defeats; sometimes in stagnation and arrest; sometimes in the abortion and miscarriage of labours.

Thus we arrive at a point where we have to re-discover or re-establish the great governing concepts of New Testament evangelism. These may be set down as THE CROSS, THE BLOOD, THE NAME, THE CHURCH, THE ANOINTING.

The Power of the Name.

"What 'the Name' meant to the Church at Pentecost is clearly visible in the record of the Acts of the Apostles. The Lord had said to them, as almost His last words ere passing from their view into the heavens: 'It is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached IN HIS NAME unto all the nations' (Luke xxiv. 46, 47, R.V.)—showing Calvary, resurrection, repentance, remission—all linked and bound up in the preaching in His Name.

Peter on the Day of Pentecost, in his first words to men under conviction of sin, said: 'Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you **IN THE NAME**,' (Acts ii. 38). To the lame man at the Temple gate he said: '**IN THE NAME** of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk' (Acts iii. 6). The power of the Name he emphasised again to the crowd who ran together to see the miracle, for he said it was 'faith in **HIS NAME**' (v. 16) which had brought about this mighty work. '**IN THE NAME**' of Him 'whom ye crucified' but 'whom God raised'—he told the high priest—did the man stand before them whole' (1) 'Crucified,' (2) 'raised,' (3) 'the Name'; here it is again—Calvary and Resurrection, linked with the power of the Name. 'Speak no more **IN THIS NAME**,' said the council, but in vain. The faith of the Church in the 'all power' of the living Lord at the back of His Name, grew so that **WITH PREVAILING FAITH, THEY PLEADED** in the face of the opposition of the rulers of this world, that 'signs and wonders' might be done 'through the **NAME** of... Jesus' (Acts iv. 30).

"We straitly charged you not to teach in this **NAME**,' said the high priest; and 'they beat them

and charged them not to speak in the **NAME** of Jesus,' but they only rejoiced that they had been 'deemed worthy to suffer disgrace on behalf of the **NAME**' (Acts v. 28, 42—*Hymouth*). The first stripes had fallen upon martyr souls ready to suffer for the **NAME**: for the Name stood for the Person behind it—the risen, ascended Lord.

Again, as we trace on in the Acts, we find Philip 'preaching good tidings concerning the Kingdom' and the all-powerful **NAME** (Acts viii. 12), and gladly all who believed were 'baptized into the **NAME**' (v. 16). We find Saul the persecutor changed into Paul the disciple, and the Lord saying of him that he was chosen to bear the **NAME** before the Gentiles, and even kings, and to suffer for the **NAME** (Acts ix. 15); we soon read of him 'preaching boldly in the **NAME**' (v. 29).

All this, and much more, shows how the early Church wielded the Name of Jesus (1) in prayer to God, (2) over Satan's power, and (3) in preaching the Gospel of the Cross.

But *what is the reason of the power of the Name?* Why should it be so mighty in (1) *heaven*—i.e., in prayer; (2) *over hell*—i.e., *over the power of Satan*; (3) *over men*—i.e., *in proclamation of the Message?* The Apostle lifts the veil in his letter to the Philipians, where he says that the Father gave the Son this all prevailing Name on the ground of Calvary!

"BECOMING OBEDIENT EVEN UNTO DEATH, YEA, THE DEATH OF THE CROSS. WHEREFORE ALSO GOD HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, AND GAVE UNTO HIM THE NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME; THAT IN THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW" (Phil. ii. 8-10. R.V.).

Then comes again the threefold power of the Name in (1) heaven, (2) on earth, and (3) the world below (see Phil. ii. 10. R. V. marg.).

The Name therefore represents, not only the living Lord on the throne, but **CALVARY**—in His victory over sin and over Satan. It was because He was obedient unto death—even the death of the Cross—carrying through to the bitter end the only way of victory for fallen man over sin and Satan, that God gave Him the 'Name'.

Jehovah-Jesus He was named at His birth as potential Saviour-Victor, but He had to carry it through in stern reality. He had to reach the final point of the death on the Cross ere the birth-name could become surcharged with all the force and power of His finished work; and God gave Him the Name in which eventually every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

'Authority' through the Name of the One Who has all authority in heaven and upon earth is for every servant of God, and authority in three spheres of service seems clearly set forth in the Scriptures, i.e. :—

Authority in prayer (Matt. xviii. 19, 20).

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them

of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together IN MY NAME, there am I in the midst of them.'

" 'Whatsoever ye shall ask IN MY NAME, that will I do...ask Me anything IN MY NAME, that will I do' " (John xiv. 13, 14).

It seems clear also from other words spoken by the Lord that the authority of prayer 'in His Name' was connected with the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. He spoke again and again of 'That Day' and all that it would mean to them. 'In that Day,' He said, 'ye shall ask me no question.' (John xvi. 23, R. V. marg.), for they would understand in experience what He was now telling them. The Holy Spirit would so reveal to them their union with the Son, that, one with Him (John xiv. 20; John xv. 7-16) prayer would be to the Father in His Name, and be the same as Christ Himself asking, and God Himself giving in response to the 'Name' of His Son.

When the Holy Ghost had come, 'In that Day' (a) *They would ask 'In the Name.'* 'In that day ye shall ask in My Name' (John xvi. 26). (b) *They would ask of the Father in the Name—*' Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my Name' (John xvi. 23).

" 'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name,' the Lord adds, showing that this 'asking the Father' in the 'Name' of the Son—because united to Him in one life—depended upon the work of the Holy Ghost in them and through them, when He would come at Pentecost. Until then—when the Calvary scene would be over, and the work of redemption accomplished; when the Resurrection triumph over sin and Satan had come to pass—they could not know the authority of prayer to the Father 'in the Name.'

" If we briefly glance at these same disciples after the day had fully come, we shall quickly see the fulfilment of the Master's words. The most concrete example will be found in Acts iv. 29-31, when the assembled company prayed to the Father asking that 'signs and wonders may be done THROUGH THE NAME of thy holy Servant Jesus,' and the response from God was immediate and clear: by the Spirit in them they had asked of the Father 'In the Name', and the Father had glorified the Son. They had *authority through the Name.*

Authority over the forces of evil (Luke x. 17).—' Lord, even the demons are subject to us IN THY NAME' (R.V. marg.), said the seventy, and this authority was not withdrawn when the Lord ascended to heaven, but confirmed, as possible to all who believe, by some of the last words of the Risen Lord, for He said, 'Making use of My authority they shall expel demons' (Mark xvi. 17—*Weymouth*). This again was proved as true for the Church of Christ, when, after Pentecost, Philip, 'the evangelist,' went down to Samaria, and, whilst he was *proclaiming* Christ, 'with a cry, foul spirits came out of many' (Acts viii. 4-8—*Weymouth*), showing that the authority of the ascended Lord was as truly behind the proclamation of His Name as in the days when He walked the earth.

Again, in the history of Paul—not one of the 'Twelve' who had personally known and heard the Lord's commission of authority, save as from the Risen One who met him on the way to Damascus—we have a specific instance of the authority of the Name in the story of the girl possessed by a SPIRIT OF DIVINATION—just what spiritualism to-day means in its actual truth. This lying spirit, crying aloud the *truth* in every word it spoke, could not deceive the Apostle, who, speaking direct to the spirit, said, 'I command you IN THE NAME of Jesus Christ to come out of her' (Acts xvi. 16-18—*Weymouth*) and the spirit had to submit and obey.

This authority is possible only as the outcome of authority in prayer. The power of the NAME must be proved on high ere the soul can dare to wield it over the dark denizens of the pit. Then, as the outcome of knowledge of authority in both these spheres, *i.e.*, (1) with God in prayer, and (2) over the unseen forces of evil in the air, comes—Authority in preaching to men (Acts x. 43).—'Through HIS NAME every one that believeth on (into) him shall receive remission of sins.' It was the authority of the NAME, and the Living One behind the NAME, that made the proclamation of remission of sins through Him to carry power to all who heard. In the house of Cornelius the Holy Spirit fell on all who were listening to the message, bearing witness to the proclamation in the Name.

'*Authority!*' It is written of Christ, 'He taught them as having *authority*, and not as the scribes' (Mark i. 22). 'Opinions!' Nay, *men* have 'opinions,' 'views,' 'theories'! But an ambassador sent from God with His message has *authority*—the authority of the unseen but living Lord who stands behind His Name."

J. P. L.

The Meaning of the Name

" Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9-11).

See also John iii. 18; v. 43; xiv. 14; xv. 16; xvi. 23, 26.

So far we have seen the *fact* that the Name was a governing concept in the first powerful days of the Church's life and testimony. To recover something of that power it is necessary to understand what that name meant and implied. Two preliminary matters must be remembered.

Firstly, in the New Testament times, action and experience usually preceded explanation. The doctrine or teaching was given to explain what had already happened. In the creation of the world-order there was light before the sun; evidently nebulous light. The sun had a subsequent place. In the New Creation there may be a certain kind and measure of light, illumination, "opening of eyes", but unto

fuller and growing understanding life is essential. John's Gospel makes perfectly clear that the order is "the light of life". The first half of the Gospel has wholly to do with life; the second with light. So in Acts it is mainly life; energy, activity, experience. In the Epistles it is light; revelation, explanation, teaching. In Acts they wrought by the Name. In the Epistles they taught the content of the Name.

Secondly; we must remember that with the Acts the Holy Spirit is in full charge of things, and is acting in accordance with His own secret and full knowledge of the meaning of things. It is not just an act, an event, a happening; it has a very full meaning behind it. The meaning is the full content of what Christ is as risen, exalted, and glorified.

The Name bears that significance, and nothing less than that. Phil. ii. 9-11 says implicitly that the Name was given on the ground of all that Jesus did by His emptying, humiliation, obedience, and death. It was not the name Jesus that was given Him, but to Jesus (the name of the One Who was found in fashion as a man) the Name above every name was given. Peter said of this Jesus that "He is Lord of all". That One, bearing that Name, is vested with pre-eminent Lordship, and in (not at) *that* Name every knee shall bow. But we must go further and deeper.

The Name is the Nature

There were certain things which lay behind the missing and losing of authority, and dominion on the part of the first Adam and his race. These were the things which the "Last Adam" came to recover and establish, so that in Him and His race the lost dominion might be secured eternally, with no more fear of loss. In the Name this dominion resides, but it is because the Divine essentials of dominion have been perfected and established in heaven. These dominion-factors are as follow.

(1) The Power of Holiness

It was an unholy thing that took place when Adam entered into complicity with Satan. The *great* sin of the Bible is idolatry; and idolatry is always referred to by the Prophets as fornication. Spiritual fornication is consorting with Satan, and thereby being unfaithful to God. ("Thy maker is thy husband" Isa. liv. 5). Faithfulness to God is the supreme virtue. On this all Old Testament saints were severely tested.

But no one ever had such a testing as did the Lord Jesus. This testing was carried to the final degree. By offers, promises, bribes, prizes; by afflictions, sufferings, anguish; by appeals of friends, by unfaithfulness of disciples, by misunderstanding and reproach; by loneliness and death. Being made sin for us, even His Divine Father had to forsake Him for an eternal moment. Thus heaven, earth, and hell were all involved in this fiery trial of His faithfulness to God. The question as to whether He would—on any consideration—bow down to Satan and let in the unclean thing of complicity lay behind His whole life and experience and explains everything. But He triumphed, and yielded not an iota! So Satan was

worsted and defeated by that holiness, and He reigns and exercises authority in virtue of triumphant holiness. The Holy Spirit has come as the Spirit of that Lord Jesus—the Spirit of holiness, and the power of the Name is the virtue of the Name; the supremacy of holiness. Now, dear friends, we shall never know the primitive power of the Name until we know the indwelling power of the Spirit of holiness. That explains the incident of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts v. Chapters three and four are a story of the power of the Name. Chapter five is a denial of its nature and there it is not *for* but *against* those concerned; it is sinning or lying against the Holy Ghost.

There is a terrible need for this Holy Spirit holiness in the Church to-day. We are concerned over the matter of spiritual power and authority, and we rightly conclude that this defect could be remedied if there were a greater fulness of the Holy Spirit. But do we realise that He is the Spirit of Holiness, and that power is along that line? It is not power (as an outward thing) and then holiness; but the reverse; holiness and power. There are many things about which the Lord's people will have to have some real heart-searching in this matter, and I intend to be very frank. It is so possible to mean well, love the Lord, want to be very real and earnest for Him, and to be much occupied in "Christian Service", and yet to be all unconsciously guilty of very serious offence and grief to the Holy Spirit. For instance, as the Spirit of holiness He is the Spirit of Truth.

While allowances may be made for the imperfections of the Lord's most saintly people, and it will always be dangerous to think of any of His servants as infallible; yet, too often judgments are formed and acted upon through fear, prejudice, misapprehension, or jealousy, which have not a modicum of truth in them. Open hearted and disinterested inquiry would prove that these attitudes are totally unjustified, and that they are causing much loss to the Lord's interests. This creates a problem and a question, for it is so often quite godly people, and sometimes responsible leaders, who are so affected. The question is: Where is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth in these people? Where is His witness to the truth and against the error?

When this sort of thing prevails amongst those who occupy positions by which they can open or close doors to what is of God, and when it is a "refuge of lies"—though not deliberate, where is the Holy Spirit in them, and how can He commit Himself? This is only one example of the kind of thing that may be suspending the mighty operation of the Spirit. The Name is holy, and it cannot function to the Church's good if the nature of it is denied. There may be many other forms of unholiness, but the principle of spiritual power is the same. James speaks of "that holy name which was called upon you" (James ii. 7).

(2) The Power of Humility

"He humbled himself".

The stain and unholiness in this universe was the

result of pride. Of Lucifer it is written "Till pride was found in thee". "Thou saidst, I will be equal with the Most High" (Isa. xiv. 14). The poison of that sinful pride was bitten into Adam and his race when he accepted Satan's serpent-like suggestion that he would "be as God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. iii. 5). All that resulted from that pride in lost dominion had to be undone by the moral principle which is its opposite. "He humbled himself, taking the form of a bond-slave". "He counted it not something to be grasped to be on equality with God". He chose the path of dependence from the cradle to the grave. He would allow nothing whatever that would minister to pride. He sought no place or name for Himself. He saw through human praises and Satanic prizes. For His triumph He sought no advantages among men or of this world. "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away" (Acts viii. 33). But His humility was of the moral quality that baffled and defeated the devil and the world. "My kingdom is not of this world", He said (John xviii. 36). In this humility and dependence upon God He cast out "the prince of this world", and was crowned in a much higher Kingdom. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of *that* Christ. "The fruit of the Spirit is...meekness" (Gal. v. 23). The power of the Name must wait upon the removal of all that in which men boast, and upon which *they* count for influence, power, authority.

What a mistake it is to advertise the achievements, titles, and status of men as the basis of making an appeal and obtaining success for the cause of the One Who "made himself of no reputation"!

(3) Life in His Name

"That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life in his name" (John xx.31).

The ultimate consequence of Adam's sin was death for himself and his race. First spiritual death, which was immediate. ("In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die" Gen. ii. 17), and then physical death. There is a sense in which, in dealing with life, we are touching the very heart and root of all things, for it is by life that man is to come to the realisation of his Divinely appointed destiny. We can truly say that the biological is the key to all things. In Genesis we begin with the Tree of Life, and in Revelation it is *the* feature of the consummation of all things. Thus history is bounded by the life. All the Divine prescribings in the old economy were related to life. "That he die not" (referring to the physical as a type of the spiritual). The Lord Jesus, taking it for granted that in the Divine meaning of life man by nature does not possess it, said that the express purpose of His coming was this, "I am come that they might have life" (John x. 10).

This particular life, which John says is alone in the Son and can only be had by having the Son (1 John v. 12), is the key to all things. It has the essential qualities of immortality because it is incorruptible. It is the basis of the operation of the Holy Spirit in all His work as "The Spirit of Life". It is the dynamic

of physical transfiguration at last when this body of humiliation and corruption shall be made like unto His body of glory. This life man has never yet possessed outside of Christ. His first death was the severance of his spirit from God. His second death will be the full meaning of that in hopelessness. While the first remains by itself there is hope; for Christ the Life is offered. But in the second death that hope is withdrawn.

Well, Satan's great object has ever been to defeat the great end of that Divine life, the "reigning in life" of a people in organic union with Him Who is the Life. Death is his great power and object. This power and work of Satan Christ came to destroy, and to "destroy him that had the power (the hold) of death" (Heb. ii. 14). He "tasted death for (in the behalf of) every man". In the power of His incorruptible life He nullified the power of death. "It was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts ii. 24). His resurrection is the inclusive testimony of His death destroying death. His exaltation is the enthronement of life triumphant over death in Him. The Holy Spirit has come in all the virtue of that. The Name is the embodiment of that victorious and all-potent life—"Life in his name". But more on this in our next chapter.

So we could go on, for there are other things in the Name, not the least of which is the victory of love; but we have said enough to indicate that it is a nature implied, and not just a magic charm invoked.

In this connection we must say a word on the meaning of

Prayer and Meeting in the Name

We know that the Lord Jesus, when here on earth, made prayer in His Name prospective. "In that day ye shall ask in my name" (John xvi. 26). We also know that He spoke of "two or three gathered in (into) my name" (Matt. xviii. 20). That prospectiveness had in it the fact that only then—after the Cross—would the Church rest fully and finally upon the values of the Name, because only then would the work have been accomplished by which the Name would be established in final authority. While He was here He was operating upon the basis of His Father's Name. "I am come in my Father's name" (John v. 43). But He would later have the position to operate in His own Name. Thus prayer is not just a matter of taking a label "In the name of Jesus" and tying it on to requests; but effectual prayer is a matter of standing and living in the values and moral qualities of that Name. "Let every one that names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity" (II Tim. ii. 19). "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me" (Psa. lxxvi. 18). What is true of prayer is also true of realising the Lord's presence in gathering. "Two or three" is the nucleus of the Church. The Church is the habitation of the Lord. The Church exists only upon the Name of the Lord. But the Name is the nature, and the nature is the power.

(to be continued)

He Must Increase

"He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3. 30).

The increase of Christ is irresistible. He *must* increase. John the Baptist's reply to his disciples who were aggrieved at their master's waning popularity reveals a glorious, divine necessity, which may be contested but can never be thwarted. John could not prevent it, even if he had so wished. None can prevent it: He *must* increase.

A Glorious Fact.

This is an assurance which needs to be recovered in our day. It is not a mere dogma, but the fruit of the Spirit's revelation as to the true nature of the Person of Christ. John's knowledge of the Lord Jesus was something more than that of human acquaintance, for in spite of the close association between his family and the family of Jesus he twice declared, "I knew Him not" (John 1. 31 & 33), meaning, doubtless, that he had not hitherto realized the spiritual implications of Who the Lord is. Then, by revelation from the Father, he was shown that Jesus of Nazareth is "The Lamb of God", God's Son, the Anointed and the Anointer with the Holy Spirit. Such an inward illumination was revolutionary; it swept away all doubts and questions, and produced a deep conviction that this One must increase. And in this his joy was fulfilled.

Many things happened at Pentecost, not the least of them being that the disciples received a similar revelation as to the true Person of Christ. From that moment their lives became radiant with a sure conviction that always and in all things Christ must triumph. Previously they had harboured doubts about Him, questioning the wisdom of some of His actions, and wondering if, after all, He would not end in disastrous failure. There is nothing more paralyzing to spiritual life than a secret misgiving about the Lord. When we can face every situation with the certainty that it will ultimately prove an occasion of greater glory to Christ; when in the darkest day we can still affirm that "He must increase"; then our lives will be gloriously radiant.

He must increase. It is most heartening to read the Acts in the light of this assertion. How often was the testimony of the Lord threatened! From the very beginning Satanic attacks, through the rulers, through Saul, through Herod, through pagans and through Jews, sought to diminish or to extinguish the Church of Christ. But the outcome of every one of these attacks was enlargement for the Church and more glory for the Lord. When the dust and din of conflict had cleared away it was seen that Christ had triumphed. Sometimes the trouble arose within the Church, but even so the outcome was invariably that Christ increased. The deceit of Ananias and Sapphira was a sad and shameful episode, but its upshot was great fear upon the people, great glory to the Lord, "and believers were the more added to the Lord..."

(Acts 5. 14). The murmuring complaints spoken of in Acts 6. 1 were far from glorifying to God, but out of them, and of the choice of deacons, emerged Stephen, whose brief ministry certainly brought a great increase of Christ. We are bound to deplore the "sharp contention" which arose between Barnabas and Paul, with its consequent division (Acts 15. 39), but even then the divine decree "He must increase" still obtained, overruling even this to spiritual increase, not least in Mark himself. And finally we see the sovereign power of God turning the very faults and mistakes of His servant Paul to the greater glory of Christ. It is difficult to defend all the apostle's actions in his strange visit to Jerusalem, described in Acts 21. Did Paul err? Did he mistake his own inclinations for the guidance of the Spirit? Perhaps he did, but John the Baptist's imperative still held good, and God saw to it that the ultimate result was great gain to Christ and to His Church. He *must* increase.

A Matter for Faith

John, however, was not just a spectator of Christ's increase; his faith made a vital contribution to it. No spiritual truth, however glorious, has real value for us until we exert faith in relation to it. What is the great lack in the Church of today? Is it not of a virile faith which insists that "He must increase"? We have observed the operations of God's sovereignty through the period covered by the Acts, turning every vicissitude into an occasion for the glory of Christ. In spite of opposition, in spite of Satan, and in spite of His faulty people, Christ increased. Let us notice, though, that this was not achieved without human instruments. Somewhere behind the scenes, as it were, faith and prayer were exerted to make it possible. God did it, but He did it in response to active and aggressive faith.

The very first addition to Christ was a direct result of the Baptist's faith. John's Gospel sheds new light on the calling of the apostles, showing us that the first two were originally John the Baptist's disciples. It was his faithful setting forth of Christ as the Lamb of God which brought this increase to the apostolic band, "The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus" (John 1. 37). The Baptist's attitude was a positive one, and his whole life was given to ensuring that Christ indeed must increase. "From the days of John the Baptist", said the Lord Jesus later, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence..." (Matthew 11. 12). Surely in this John is an example to us all that it is not sufficient passively to expect Christ's increase: we must be violent in faith to ensure it. One of the outstanding needs of this end-time is that the Spirit which was in John may be found again in the earth, to seek Christ's fulness in an energy of faith.

Here is a safe objective for our prayers. At times we have told the Lord that He *must* do a thing, or that something or other *must* happen, but we have

had no response. We have probably asked amiss. When we take the ground of John 3. 30, however, we can in all reverence be insistent with God. We may not dictate the means, but we can confidently claim the end, even the increase of Christ in all things. There need be no lack of boldness in faith's declaration that "He must increase".

A Costly Attitude

This is a costly attitude. The latter part of the verse expresses the condition of the increase, and its effect upon the speaker. "He must increase" said John, "but I must decrease". That, of course, was dispensationally true. John the Baptist represented the end of the old order, while a new order was brought in by Jesus Christ. As the new took shape and grew it was inevitable that the old should fade away. John had to stand aside to make way for Christ, and such was the grace of God in him that he stated that in this his joy was fulfilled. The dispensational fact is also a spiritual principle: the old must pass away if the new is to progress towards fulness. We must decrease if Christ is to increase.

John's words are easy to repeat, but his experience is a very difficult one to endure. His first testimony to the Lamb of God entailed the loss of two of his disciples—perhaps the best two! The very success of his mission in drawing attention to Christ signified that the crowds abandoned him in order to flock to Jesus. This John was able to accept, although his disciples resented it keenly. The time came, however, when even John was surprised and grieved to discover how deeply this same principle operated. Alone in prison, abandoned by the people and apparently forgotten by the Lord, he sent his disciples to question the Master as to the meaning of it all. The reply was that Christ was certainly increasing, a fact which ought to explain the eclipse of John. "Go your way

and tell John the things which ye do hear and see..." (Matthew 11. 4-6). Blessed, indeed, are they who are not offended with the Lord when His increase means their effacement.

This is no appeal for romantic renunciations. John did not perform some act of "decreasing" in order that Christ might be glorified. At times we are given such opportunities, and if we truly love the Lord we will embrace them, for there is a certain sense of heroism which sustains us, even while we suffer. It is so very much harder to accept the displacing of ourselves which is consequent upon a new increase of Christ. Note the order of our verse. John pursued a positive course, he made it his business to seek the aggrandisement of His Lord, and then he found that as a consequence he steadily lost his own place as among men. Not that he had ever sought a place for himself. From the first he had been utterly unselfish in his wholehearted devotion to God, but his ministry had given him a notable place in the public estimation. He might easily have grasped at that place, ostensibly to serve the best interests of the Lord, as many have done since. In that case the sad confession would have to be, "He cannot increase, for I am not willing to decrease". Let our own hearts answer as to the possibility of such a tragedy in our own case.

None of us like to be displaced. It is vain to pretend that we enjoy "decreasing" in the eyes of others. How then, can we bear to pursue this painful course? Our only way is to keep our eyes on God's objective, even the increase of His dear Son. Let that be our goal and then we, too, may find our fulness of joy in its realization, even though it be at our own expense. May the last days of this dispensation witness a new preparation for the Coming of the Lord by a people who follow John the Baptist in seeking the increase of Christ, even by their own diminution. H. F.

Acknowledgments.—We acknowledge with gratitude the following gifts, other than local, towards the maintenance of this paper received during the months of December, 1944 and January, 1945:

Acle, 5s.; Arundel, 5s.; Atworth, 10s.; Bangalore, S. India, £1; Bath, 6s., 2s. 6d. and 10s.; Bebington, 7s.; Belfast, 5s., 5s., and 10s.; Berkeley, Cal., £6 3s. 6d.; Bishop Auckland, 3s. 6d. and 5s.; Bradford, 5s. and 10s.; Brechin, 9s. and 15s.; Bridgend, 10s.; Brighton, 5s. and 2s. 6d.; Briggsley, 5s.; Bristol, £1; Bromley, 8s. and 6s.; Brynmawr, £1 10s.; Burnham, 10s.; Cairo, 10s.; Capel Bangor, 1s. 6d.; Carnforth, 5s.; Carshalton, 5s.; Chaddesley Corbett, 2s. 6d.; Chatteris, 10s.; Clarks Beach, Newfoundland, 10s.; Clevedon, 10s.; Compton Dando, 4s. 8d.; Congleton, 2s.; Craigavad, £2; Dartford, £2; Dublin, £1 and 3s.; Ealing, 3s. 6d.; Eastbourne, 5s.; Edinburgh, 1s. 11d., 6s., 5s., £1, 10s. and 5s.; £2; Epsom, 10s.; Falmouth, 2s. 6d., 2s. 6d. and 2s. 6d.; Ferryhill, 5s.; Flushing, N.Y., £3; Glasgow, 5s., 5s., 2s. 6d., £1, 10s., £1, 10s.; Gourcock, 10s. and 5s.; Haileybury, 5s.; Hawick, £1; Haywards Heath, 10s. and £1; Hazel Grove, £1; Heathfield, 15s. and 5s.; Hendon, 2s. 6d.; Hexham, 2s. 6d. and 2s. 6d.; Hounslow, 5s.; Hove, 5s.; Ilford, 5s.; Inverness, 2s. 5d.; Kirkcudbright, 15s.; Kirkintilloch, 5s.;

Larbert, £3; Leicester, 10s. and 2s. 6d.; Leigh-on-Sea, 5s.; Leiston, 5s.; Liverpool, 10s.; London, E.12, £1; London, N.11, £1; London, N.14, 5s.; London, S.E.12, £1; London, S.E.15, 2s. 6d.; London, S.E.23, 8s. 6d.; London, S.E.24, £1; London, S.E.25, £1 15s.; London, S.W.18, 5s.; London, W.12, 5s.; Loughton, 2s. 6d.; Louisville, Ky, £5; Luton, 14s. 6d.; Manchester, £1 3s.; Newcastle, £2 15s. 3d.; New Mills, £1; Newport, 5s.; Northampton, 5s.; North Walsham, £1; Oldham, 7s.; Pudsey, 2s. 6d.; Reading, 5s., and 6s.; St. Agnes, 1s.; St. Helen's Auckland, 2s. 6d.; Salto, Uruguay, 10s.; Sawbridgeworth, 5s.; Seattle, Wash., 5s.; Shaftesbury, £1; Sheffield, £1; Sheringham, 8s.; Slough, 10s.; Small Dolc, 10s.; Southampton, 5s.; Stanmore, 10s.; Surbiton, 5s.; Swansea, 5s.; Tankerton, 10s.; Taunton, 10s.; Theydon Bois, 2s. 6d. and 2s. 6d.; Tunbridge Wells, 4s. 6d. and 10s.; Tyrley, £1; Tyseley, £1; Waddon, 10s. 2d.; Wallington, 10s.; Wandsworth, £1; Whitley Bay, 2s. 6d.; Whitstable, 10s.; Woking, 5s.; Wolverhampton, 10s. and 10s.; Woodford Green, 10s.; Worthing, 3s., 5s., £1 and £2; Yetholm, £1; York, 5s. Total, £90 3s. 11d.
Lowell, Mich., \$12.00; Minneapolis, Minn., \$1.00; Montclair, N.J., \$11.50; Salem, Oregon, \$5.00; Stelton, N.J., \$2.00. Total, \$31.50.

Now Available. "THE SERVANT OF THE LORD."

By T.A.S. Price Eightpence. Plus Postage.

From the Wilderness to the Land

No. 4.

A Decisive Step of Faith

READING : Acts iii. 1-21.

This is the first recorded miracle in the history of the Church, and parabolically it embodies a good deal of what we have been considering in the hours of this Conference, and I am going to take it in that parabolic form as an illustration of some of these matters.

We begin at the end, that is, so far as this man is concerned, with what God is aiming at, what God is after, what the result of the work of God in a life is. The man leaps up, stands upon his feet, praises and glorifies God, and goes in and goes on with the people of God. That is very simple, but it represents a work that God would do and which needs to be done in the case of so many. What the Lord wants in the case of all of us is to have us on our feet, standing upright, praising and glorifying Him, and going in and going on with His people ; a very different story and a very different situation from what was ; no longer a liability but an asset, no longer one to be carried every day, but one who now is at least taking his or her own weight, and going on by the inward momentum of the Spirit and power of God. That is what the Lord wants with us all.

It immediately resolves itself into a challenge, an interrogation. We have each one now to ask ourselves quite honestly and frankly, In relation to the things of the Lord, am I a liability or an asset ? Am I counting, or am I having to be accounted for ? Am I a positive factor, or am I negative ? Am I amongst those who have to be carried all the time, needing to be borne up, borne along and put where I am, or am I going on in the Lord on my own feet, on top of my infirmities ? Am I a responsible one, or otherwise ? Well, we must each one answer that question before the Lord now, and see what the Lord would have, what the Lord would bring about. He would have us all in the place or condition of this man as we see him at the end, leaping up, standing on his feet, praising and glorifying God, going on and going in ; and more than that as we shall see presently : but that is a good beginning. Are we there ?

The Hindrance to Entering In

Well now, we must go back and take the man up at the point where we first find him. He is carried and laid at the Beautiful Gate every day. There are those who are going in ; but he does not go in, and he cannot go in. " So we see that they could not enter in..." (Heb. iii. 19)—that has been one of our notes in the Conference. They could not enter in. The man could not enter in. Let that gateway to the house of God beyond represent in our parable that life of rest in the Lord, that entering-in life, that life of attaining unto God's purpose. " And we see that they could not enter in." This man could not enter in : but why could he not ? Was it the gate that kept

him out ? No. Even if the gate had been closed, that was not the inevitable hindrance : and it was a big gate. I understand that it took ten men to open the Beautiful Gate, so massive was it. But even so, if it had been closed, that was not the obstacle.

Let that gate in the story and in the parable as we are regarding it, represent the law, that bond of Judaism which says, Thou shalt not, or, Thou shalt, that forbidding of the law. But that is not the obstacle now. Christ was made under the law, to fulfil the law and put it out of the way. The law is no longer an obstacle.

" Free from the law, O happy condition !
Jesus has died, and *there* is remission.
Cursed by the law, and bruised by the fall,
Christ has redeemed us once for all."

The law is no hindrance now.

But was it the man's infirmities that kept him out ? Let his infirmities, all wrapped into one, represent his sins. Was it his sins and his imperfections, his faults, that hindered that entering into rest ? Again no. Our sins, our weaknesses, our imperfections, our temperamental and constitutional difficulties, all the infirmities of our fallen natures, these are not the hindrances. The Lord Jesus has dealt with all sin and all sins, and all our weaknesses and infirmities He has borne. All that is dealt with. They are not the hindrance. Oh, you are saying, it is this sin and that sin that keeps me out, or it is that weakness, this imperfection ; it is the way I am made, my temperament, my constitution, my make-up ; I am so different from others ; and all this is the thing that binds me in infirmity so that I cannot ! If you are saying that, whether as one who has never known Christ or whether as a child of God still needing to know the entering-in life, it is a great mistake to put it down to sins or infirmities and say that it is these things in our nature that keep us out. No, no ! That would be to deny the Cross of the Lord Jesus. That would, in its outworking and in its logic, make God very unjust ; because it would work out like this, that people who had better temperaments would stand a better chance of getting in, and people who had a worse make-up would be at the end of the queue. God is not like that. We are not nearer or farther from Him because we are better or worse in our natures. Not at all !

Entering In By Faith

What was it that kept the man out ? " We see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." Faith destroys the mightiest gates of brass, faith removes the mountains of sin and human weakness and failure. The easily besetting sin which has to be laid aside is this sin of unbelief, and it was at that very citadel

that the Holy Ghost, through these servants of God, directed His blow. Infirmity in itself was nothing, the gates were nothing, closed or open, but the man's attitude and response of heart to a challenge from God was everything. He could have reacted antagonistically or cynically, or with utter carelessness, and stayed where he was. But there is some response, some reaction, which we must interpret as the quickening of faith in his heart: and you know and I know perfectly well that we shall stay where we are, go on in our infirm, helpless state of spiritual liability, until we come to this point where we exercise, deliberately and definitely, faith in the Lord Jesus. Everything waits for that. That is elementary, I know, but I am deliberately being elementary to-night. We may have a mixed company, and the word will, I think, touch everyone, sinner and saint, at every point.

We have to come to that response of faith, and then mighty gates, whatever those gates may be in our lives, keeping us out, no longer constitute a hindrance. Infirmities in ourselves, defects and weaknesses, faults and failings, sins and depravities and everything, from inheritance to what we have brought on ourselves, nothing is enough to obstruct our way when once we have come to this point of a deliberate and positive trust in the Lord Jesus. "We see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." But the positive is that you can enter in by faith.

Concentration Upon A Definite Issue

But then something else was necessary with this man; not in addition to his faith but as a part of it, as heading up to it. Peter and John were going up to the temple and this man saw them coming. I do not know what his look was like, his gesture. We can only imagine, a sort of wonderfully pathetic glancing hither and thither. And Peter looked on him, and said, Look on us. There must have been some reason for that. And he fastened his eyes upon them, of course expecting to receive an alms. But the effect was that they got what they needed and wanted as a necessary factor in this man's deliverance. Look on us: and he fastened his eyes upon them.

What, in parabolic meaning, does that stand for? It means this: you and I, if we are in any condition like this, needing to be put on our feet, needing to be made a factor that counts, needing to be delivered from this infirm state spiritually, from this state of being a liability; if we are in any need like that, we shall never get anywhere until we have concentrated upon a definite issue. He was expecting to receive an alms. What are you after? Do you want pity, sympathy, to be made a fuss of? Do you want that which is, after all, only going to leave you where you were? Are you looking to be nursed, coddled? Is that what you are after, an alms? Do you really want to get out of that position? Do you mean business? Is it nice to be one of those who are always being carried and nursed, and secretly, down in the deceptive heart, do you really like it, and want to be ministered to? Your infirm condition, you like being there because

it draws attention to you, brings you into the sympathetic area. Oh, these hearts of ours, how they play with spiritual things for their own gratification!

He expected to receive an alms. But Peter and John are saying, Look here, we are going to face this issue right out: look on us! We are going to concentrate in this matter. The moment has come for this sort of thing either to end or to be indefinitely confirmed!

May I say to you, dear friends, if you are anywhere in this realm at all, you will never get anywhere until you have come with both eyes to look this thing straight in the face, and say, It is going on no longer; I am going to have this thing settled, I am going to bring this thing to a head; God helping me, it is going to be finished. I am going to play with this no longer, I am going to minister to this no longer, I am going to allow this to cripple me no longer, I am going to allow this to make me a liability no longer; to-night I look this thing in the face, God helping me, and it is going to be settled: so far as I am concerned, not another day shall pass until I have had this thing out to a conclusion with God!

Look on us! That is only saying the same thing as we are occupied with in this conference, and which in Hebrews is put this way "Give diligence to enter in" (Heb. iv. 11). We must deal with that want of downrightness with God which allows things to drag on and to rob God of that glory which ought to be there, and that testimony which is to follow. We are now getting to it. Look on us!

I need not say more. God help us if we are there, weakened, put out, not counting, God help us to focus upon this for a swift issue and to play no longer with a state like that for our own pleasure, to get sympathy or anything like that. Not an alms: no, it is not an alms we need; it is a deliverance we need; not a ministry to our infirmity, but a deliverance from it.

Look on us! And he fastened his eyes upon them, and Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none—and after all, that is not what you want—such as I have, give I thee." There is something infinitely more than the treasure of this world. Supposing we had it all and still had our infirmity, what have we? "Such as I have, give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up."

The Object of Faith

That is the object of faith. It is not that we have somehow to conjure up something called faith. It is the object of faith that is vital, and that is what we have been saying throughout this Conference, and as the letter to the Hebrews so forcibly sets forth, even Jesus Christ, Who He is, what He is, the place He occupies, and His capacity. It is all in Him. The focal point of faith is Jesus Christ, and the value, the virtue, the power of faith is derived from its object, it is not in itself. It is not until you get the right object of faith that faith is a potent thing. You can have all sorts of imitation faiths and they do not affect the work of God in a spiritual way. You can have a psychological faith, but it does not affect your

(concluded on front page)

continued from back page)

Christian life. You can have a Christian Science faith, and it may do something for your physical life, inasmuch as the mind and the physical are related, but it does not make you a spiritual factor in the house of God. To become a positive spiritual factor in the house of God means that there has to come a vital link between your spirit and Jesus Christ, a living union by faith with Jesus Christ, and it is that taking hold on Him in faith that provides the channel, the vehicle, through which the energy of God comes. The energy of God, the Holy Ghost, comes along the line of Jesus Christ as the object: not something that we call faith, which may, after all, be something that we have worked up to make ourselves believe. Oh no, what matters is the object of faith, the Lord Himself. God works on the ground of His Son, and you and I apprehend His Son, Jesus Christ, by faith. The Holy Ghost seals that, everything is related to that.

The Outcome of Entering In

"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk"; and he leapt. Simple in its terms, but very, very drastic and very utter in its action. Immediately the man in himself knew the glory of God. He, leaping up, praised and glorified God. He had got it in his own heart, in his own soul. He knew he was changed, he was in the good of God's rest.

Yes, and then he went in and went on with the Lord's people. The corporate element comes in. Hebrews will speak about Christ as a Son over God's house, "whose house are we" (Heb. iii. 6); and so on. The house has come into view and he is going with them into the house. He is going to be something in the house with the servants of God, he is going to be part of that corporate body and a factor in it.

A Mighty Uprising of the Devil

Now you will see how he is a factor, for two things arise. Follow through to the next chapter and you will see. First of all he is the occasion of a mighty uprising of the Devil; and that is something! Oh, a great storm arises because of what has happened with this man. Things become tremendously disturbed in the spiritual realm; and that is how it will be, and that is how it ought to be. We do not speak glibly or lightly, but the fact is that you and I ought to be factors of disturbance in the kingdom of Satan, and if we are really in the good of a living spiritual experience, that is, if we are really on our feet as accountable and responsible people of God, not having to be borne and carried and nursed and ministered to in our infirmities, but now on our feet, going in and going on, then the enemy recognizes that here is something to be taken account of, and for such there is always a disturbance.

It was so over Lazarus. When he was raised from the dead, you know what a furore there was, how the rulers at once set to work to destroy the Lord Jesus because of Lazarus, because by reason of him many

believed. So it is. I wonder whether you and I really do represent a disturbance in the underworld, or whether the enemy can go on without feeling a bit disturbed so far as we are concerned. Every time something like this happened in the New Testament, you very soon find a big reaction from the enemy. You see, when the Lord Jesus comes in in larger measure, it means less measure for the enemy, less scope, less territory for him. He is squeezed out. Are you squeezing the enemy out? Am I squeezing the enemy out? Am I narrowing his province? Do we count in this way? Well, that is one thing that arose.

A Living Testimony

The other thing was this, this man was a testimony which was the answer to every argument. Seeing the man there in the midst whole, they had to shut their mouths. There was no argument. It is all argument; it is doctrine, theory, teaching, interpretation of truth; but a living witness—you cannot argue against that. Your mouth is shut when you have a living person standing there right in the good of things: Are we closing the mouths of people? We shall not do it by the truth that we hold, teach, interpret, but we can do it by what we are, by being in possession of the goods. Are we that? Are you that? Are you going to be that? a real answer to every argument so that people say, Well, look here, it is not the teaching they have taken on, the associations they have made: no, no, look at them; you know what they were, you know how little they counted, you know what cripples they were spiritually, you know what liabilities they were, you know how much they were without rest: but look now; they have the goods, they are in the good of things, they are counting, they mean something, and they are in rest, they are in joy, they are in satisfaction, they themselves are changed! What can you say to that? You cannot say anything to that if you are going to be honest.

Oh, dear friends, we are not to go out to try and pass over some teaching, some truth, to people. That will never convince. You and I are to be here as those who in themselves convince others because we embody His rest, we embody His peace, we embody His strength, and we count for something; we are responsible people, we are positive factors, we are assets, the Lord is getting something by reason of us. That is how it must be. Is it like that? All this can be if we will go the way of this man, and say, Yes, this has gone on long enough and it has to end, and to end, so far as my giving diligence is concerned, at once, and I do most truly by the grace of God take a deliberate and definite faith attitude toward the Lord Jesus for my complete deliverance and the setting of me upon my feet for His glory, for His praise! I think there will be an issue, and I think it will be—he, leaping up, stood upon his feet, praising, and glorifying God. May it be so with everyone of us.

T.A.-S.

A bi-monthly ministry by which it is sought to lead the Lord's people into His full thought for them.

"A Witness and Testimony"

Maintained
by the offerings of
those who are helped by it.

MAY—JUNE, 1945

NO. 3, VOL. 23

The Release of the Lord

(Continued)

Chapter Four.

The Power of the Blood

Genesis iii. 15 Revelation xii. 9-11.

"And the Lord God said unto the serpent...I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head—"

"...the old serpent...and they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death."

The Testimony of Jesus, first mentioned in the Scriptures by the Lord Himself in the above words (Genesis iii. 15), is all gathered up in that one clause "He shall bruise thy head." The two things combine in that clause: "He" the Person, and "shall bruise thy head," the work; and that with a certain special significance: "thy head" which is thy dominion, thy government, thy sovereignty, thy crown. Then we have the Cross introduced immediately as the scene and centre of the establishing, fully and finally, in Him of this Testimony, the central element of the Cross being the Blood of the Lord Jesus. The Blood! That is the central factor in the Testimony of Jesus. The Blood of the Lord Jesus. I want to remind you of the inclusiveness of the Blood of the Lord Jesus, that in the first place it has to do with sin. It is immediately related in that passage in Genesis to what had taken place and to what had entered into the world. Sin, and sin in all its aspects; sin as transgression, overstepping the mark; sin as lawlessness, revolt against God; sin as shortcoming, coming short of the glory of God: sin in every form in every way. The Blood of the Lord Jesus has to do with sin, in the meeting of it, and the destroying of it, and ultimately in the wiping of it from the universe. The Blood of Jesus Christ is directed against sin.

The Blood, in the second place, is related to the consequences immediately following upon sin, and upon the race becoming what it did when sin entered. That is death. Death! "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "Wherefore" says the Spirit through Paul, "as by one man sin entered into the world...so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," and death is the universal and immediate consequence upon sin, and the sentence concerning the race. Death in all its range and depth; death in every realm—spirit, soul, and body. The Blood testifies concerning death and has a work to do in that realm.

Then in the third place, the Blood of Jesus Christ not only deals with the consequence and the fruit, but with the cause and the root, and Satan himself is involved in this mighty issue in the Blood of Jesus Christ. He is taken up in the Testimony of Jesus, and he is taken up in two capacities:—

Firstly, he is taken up as "the prince of this world," "The prince of this world cometh," "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

Secondly, as Satan, as "him that had the power of death, that is the devil." It is not the death only but him that had the power of death, and the word "power" there is neither the familiar word "dunamis," force, or "exousia" authority, it is the other word, "kratos," which means "to hold". The thing in view here is the grip of death, the grip of the one who holds death in his hands; the one who has the hold of death; and in that connection the Blood speaks concerning him, that through death—and the Lord Jesus getting for a moment into the hold of death, into the grip of death—He should destroy him that had

the hold of death, that is the Devil. So the Blood deals with him in both those capacities. That is the Testimony of Jesus as in the Blood of the Lord Jesus.

The Issue is that of Life and Death.

Now we see that the main issue in the Testimony of Jesus, in, and through, and by His Blood, is the issue of life and death, or death and life. That is the main issue. Oh, do follow me closely, you will see in a moment some of the great content of this thing. The main issue in the Testimony of Jesus, as by the Blood of Jesus, is the issue of LIFE AND DEATH. If the Lord's people recognised that enough, they would have their ground set and fixed, and they would know exactly what their business is in the world, and they would have a full explanation of all that which they meet in the spiritual realm when they become related to the Testimony of Jesus. IT IS THE ISSUE OF LIFE AND DEATH. It is not merely the issue of sin and sanctification, it is not only the issue of an old man and a new man; but in all that, and over all that and around all that, is the far bigger issue, the issue of life and death. And until this main issue is settled the whole question of sin and the bringing in of the new man, the new race, remains unresolved. The new creation, and the escape of men and women from the power of Satan unto God, all that could never be. You will be held up until you recognise the main issue. Where does the whole question of sanctification begin? Where does the whole question of a new creation begin? Where does the whole question of the emancipation of souls from the grip of Satan begin? It begins at the place where the power of death is met, the power of *death*, and, beloved, it is not sins with which you and I are contending, and it is not merely with the old creation that you and I are contending. We can be locked up, bound, tied by the absorption and the increasing obsession of our old man and never get anywhere. We can be locked up, and tied hand and foot, with all kinds of truth and teaching about sanctification; the question of sins or sin specifically, and get nowhere because we are not recognising the main issue. The main issue is death, the power of death, and we have to come to that central issue of the Blood of the Lord Jesus, the question of life and death. That is the Lord at its heart. Unless the Lord had settled that issue once and for all in His Blood in the Cross, then all other matters would have entirely failed, there would have been no complete Gospel. Then that being the Cross and the content of the Cross, we see what the Testimony of Jesus is in essence. It is the Testimony to life, making possible a new creation, and when it is really recognised what that Testimony is at its centre, what the issue of it is, that it is a Testimony concerning life which is brought into being upon the basis of death being destroyed, death having its power broken, and him that had the power of death being nullified; when that Testimony comes into being, and is recognised; when anyone enters into that Testimony and makes that his testimony, what happens? Immediately, the murderer is brought out.

The Murderer comes out.

HE COMES OUT. THE MURDERER COMES OUT, he who, as the Lord Himself said, was "a murderer from the beginning" and always has acted in that capacity towards any who were called into the Testimony of Jesus, whether in the Old Testament or in the New.

Abel was the first to take up the Testimony in history. What was Abel's testimony? The Blood! Whether Abel understood all the content of that symbolic thing or not is not our concern for the moment, but God understood what it meant, He had established it, it was His way through all history. That fragment in the Hebrew Letter has governed all sacrifice in the mind of God "without shedding of blood is no remission." The Blood was the key from the first movement of sin in this world in the mind of God, and Abel himself stepped into that Testimony of the Blood with all its significance concerning sin, death, the race, and him that had the power of death, and immediately the murderer came out and Abel was murdered—not by Cain, *but through* Cain, and so it has always been! Always!

When later Abram set up his altar, divided his sacrifice, the conflict commenced. You read it in the 15th of Genesis; the vultures descending, the beating off until the sun went down, and then the horror of great darkness, and then the coming through of the Lord. What is it linked with? It is linked with the emancipation of a people from bondage by the Blood of the Lamb.

The Lord gives him the revelation of His method in the earth. What was that for? To get a people who should be *in* the nations *apart from* the nations, for the Testimony of Jehovah. Israel was to be God's corporate testimony in the earth, amongst the nations, and be constituted and sustained upon a principle of blood, the shed Blood. And when the Lord would come forth to reveal the nature of the Testimony in the earth as corporate in His people, Abram meets the impact of the horror of great darkness and there is set up in the very atmosphere a state of conflict.

It is carried on in the case of Moses himself; in the conflict in Egypt, and in the continual conflict through his life.

This is the explanation of the attack upon Elijah, when he had erected his altar, when he had stood for the maintenance of the Testimony of the Lord in Israel. When he stood on Carmel for that Testimony by his altar, and that Testimony had been established and vindicated against the false prophets; nay, against all that produced the false prophets and their system, the power behind; THEN JEZEBEL THREATENS HIS LIFE. Because he is standing for the Testimony in Israel, the best and most suited instrument to Satan, Jezebel, is taken up and his life is threatened.

Satan anticipated Moses by the slaughter of all the innocents to get *one*, as he anticipated Calvary in the case of the Lord Jesus by the slaughter of the innocents to get *one*.

This is the key to all those murderous attempts in

the Old Testament upon individuals and the companies of the Lord's people. It is the explanation of the Book of Esther, when Haman would have all the Jews massacred. Why? Because they were God's instruments in the earth. The Devil is against the Testimony in that people, they are the target because they are the testimony. Stand in this true testimony of the Lord Jesus, *in the power of the Holy Ghost*, not in the theory of the thing; stand in it truly and, as sure as anything is certain, the murderer comes out, and that is the explanation of all your experience in the work of God, and in your own personal life, in body, mind and spirit. I am saying one of the most tremendous and solemn and yet one of the truest things when I say this. It is true, beloved, right to its very heart.

The Cross, the Testimony, the Body.

Now there is one other thing I want you to notice—the third element. You have got the Cross, and then you have got the Testimony, and then you have got the "Body." When Abel took up the Testimony of the Blood he took up the **WHOLE** Testimony. I do not know whether that conveys very much to you. He took up the **WHOLE** Testimony. The whole testimony was gathered up in that one man who was the only representative of that testimony, therefore the whole testimony lighted upon him and he became responsible for the whole testimony. That is why he was murdered. He met the full consequence of that testimony, not a fragment, not a part. Let me say it again—**HE TOOK UP THE WHOLE TESTIMONY IN HIMSELF**. Now remember that the Body is one. I am using the word "body" as a New Testament term. "The church, which is his body." "We are all baptized by one Spirit into one body," "as the body is one," "The body is one," "the Spirit is one." "By one Spirit into one body." The Holy Spirit is one as the body is one. The Testimony is one. "One Lord, one faith." The Testimony is one. Now, beloved, get the significance of that. It is the Testimony of the one Holy Spirit in one Body and it is one Testimony. It is not so many fragments either of the Testimony, or of the Spirit, or of the Body. It is one, and it is so much one that if an individual enters into it or takes it up he becomes responsible for the whole. Do you grasp that?

Responsible for the Whole Testimony.

Oh! that is a tremendous thing; responsible for the whole Testimony. There is absolutely nothing local or partial about the Testimony of Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, or the Body of Christ; nothing local, nothing partial. It is not the Body of Christ here, and the Body of Christ in China, India, and so on, it is one Body. **ONE!** It is not the Holy Ghost here and the Holy Ghost there, it is one Spirit. It is not the Testimony here, and the Testimony there, it is one Testimony, the Testimony of Jesus. There may be degrees of apprehension, but in essence and finality the Testimony is one Testimony; nothing local, nothing partial, nothing personal. Any one who

takes up the Testimony of Jesus in the Holy Ghost takes up the whole Testimony. Then if there is nothing partial, nothing fragmentary, nothing local, nothing detached, in the life of those who are in the Testimony of Jesus, your *whole* life is involved. Your business and domestic life is involved. Every fragment of your life is involved, every department of your life; you have entered into the Testimony of Jesus. And that is why the Holy Spirit lays so much stress on this domestic and business background of the Church, strangely in what are called the Church epistles. In a specific sense those Letters which deal with the Body of Christ have a specific emphasis laid upon domestic and business relationships—husbands and wives, children, and servants. It is as though the Holy Spirit would say to all those believers "You are advancing in the Testimony of Jesus into the conflict, going into the battle, **WATCH YOUR REAR**". Your rear is your business, your home; it is involved. Is it not there that, when you get out on to what you call spiritual service the enemy comes in—in your home, your business? He comes in, "and", says the Spirit, in effect, "the Testimony of Jesus is not something only in the assembly, but in your home, your business." It is all one, there is nothing fragmentary here. And what is the nature of the conflict ultimately? It is death, the power of death. You know I am not merely talking about passing from this world, though the enemy as a murderer is trying that upon the Lord's people, and that explains a great deal. Oh, that we knew more of the power of the Blood in this realm—death in the physical realm to be met by the power of the Blood! When the Testimony is at stake really, the Lord does come in. You see what one is getting at, that the Body is one, the Testimony is one, the Spirit is one, and whoever enters into this thing must enter into it with every bit of his relationship. It is all involved. Try to take your home out of this in any respect and see how the enemy will smash you there. The Testimony has to be there, beloved, you cannot isolate your home from the Testimony of Jesus. Try to leave your business out, and say "Yes, while our Christianity is all right in the Church, in business it is another thing." You cannot do that, you will be smashed, if that is not covered. The enemy will break you in your business; put you completely out of action through your business, if your business is not brought directly into line with the Testimony of the Lord Jesus. Everything is involved. **EVERYTHING**, and it is the issue of life and death.

Well then, it is the death attack that we meet. The death attack upon the Lord's work. May it not be true that, even after we have taken up (so to speak) the Testimony of Jesus in the Blood, with what is—whether we have recognised it specially or not—in the mind of God the ultimate issue, life and death, death or life, our Testimony has broken down there, in the matter of the power of the Blood over the power of death, and that arrests, deadlocks, paralysis, and all such things have come upon the work of God because we have not stood upon this central factor of the Blood against the destruction of death. May it

not be that we have had our eyes diverted upon second causes, asking if this is it or that is it. There may have been many things, but pre-eminently it was the Testimony that the enemy was opposing and he has belched forth the breath of death, and we have met that. Is it that? Certainly that is true in the history of God's Word. After all it is to throw us right back upon the transcendent virtue and efficacy of that Blood against him that had the power of death. That is the Testimony.

The Testimony of life triumphant over death, of Christ, the Life, triumphant over Satan, the murderer.

Now we take up the whole thing when we take up a part, because there is no part. You are in it or you are out of it, you cannot have just a bit of it. Immediately you become, by faith, and in the Holy Spirit, really, vitally, related to the Testimony of Jesus, you are in that great issue, that supreme issue of the Blood, the conflict between life and death, death and life. You are in it, and in that realm there is only one thing, only one thing, and that is

The Warring Faith of the Son of God.

There can be no passivity in that realm, there can be no generalities there. You cannot afford to take recreation in that realm. The prayer has to be fighting prayer, and, oh! there is need for a revival of fighting prayer; to cease saying prayers, praying prayers, taking these jaunts in prayer all over the place; but to come right to the mighty issues and battle through in the Name of the Lord. There needs to come more real fighting prayer into the Lord's people. Ask the Lord to give you the warring faith of the Son of God in prayer. It means, beloved, that there must be a very strong stand taken in that faith, and a refusal to be diverted by circumstances and appearances. Is the Testimony such to you that, if it were taken away, you would have nothing left, you would go with it; or is it something you have taken on, that you can change as you change your clothes; or is it all that you have, and you will be stripped of everything if that Testimony of the Lord Jesus is taken from you, and you will have nothing left to stand up in? We come back to the question of all the arguments that the Devil would put up, and when we have pursued every argument and traced every circumstance to its logical conclusion, we have to say, "if I have to leave this ground, I have no other ground, nothing else." But this must be ultimate, and then you are in, and when you are in, your position must be one of fighting faith, that stands; that says in the words of Luther, "Here I am, I can do no other, God help me." That is ultimate. When you are in like that you are in a thing which relates you to the Lord's people and all their interests are your interests, because the Testimony is one. We are so related to the one Body in the one Spirit, in the one Testimony, that if we fail, the ends of the earth will suffer. If the ends of the earth are needing reinforcement we ought to stand that they should have it; it is one Testimony by one Spirit.

In this one Testimony of Jesus there is a mighty corporate ministry in virtue of the Blood of the Lord Jesus. There are assaults made upon those who represent His interests; assaults upon spirit, mind, body: assaults upon the work and the situations. A true "Body" consciousness in the Holy Spirit coupled with an adequate appreciation of the virtue and power of the Blood means—or should mean—a mightily effectual ministration of life to those who are so assailed as we pray. What a lot this would do toward solving the missionary problem!

Chapter Five.

The Church and Missions.

"Apostles...for the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11-12).

In the New Testament we can find nothing which corresponds to the later and more modern Missionary Society. Then the Church was an organism which, by the very nature of its life-energy, was reproductive. For it is an essential and inherent characteristic of life that it reproduces. That which does not reproduce is an end in itself. But there is all the difference between reproduction by life and multiplication by imitation, as in either mass production or serial production! The Lord's intention was that everything should be Church-wise, not society, organisation, or "mission"-wise. The reason for this we shall see presently.

The Church declined, and for many years it almost ceased to be a worldwide reproductive organism. Only in very limited ways and in remote quarters did any reproductive vitality function. (See Mr. Broadbent's "Pilgrim Church"). Then there came the missionary renaissance, and because the Church was both out of order and out of position, the Lord blessed and used the secondary means of "Missions". He has indeed used and blessed this means, and through it has brought home to the Church its responsibility. But, while we would attribute everything to this means that should be recognised, and it is not a little, we are bound to recognise that it has severe limitations and is responsible—in the long run—for much that defeats its own ends. It is now an open question whether there is any future in such countries as India, China, etc. for the professional missionary and *organised* missions. The days for taking in something systematised from another country may well be numbered. Indeed, we know positively that there is a movement in such lands to eject and exclude professional missionary work and workers. The day is coming—if it has not already dawned—when it will be just by means of people living as *people—living* people—with a passion for Christ among these nations that reproduction will take place spiritually. That in itself will be but a return to the original position.

But we were speaking of the Church. It began in Jerusalem, and while its representative members went and deliberately preached in other places, certain

features have to be observed. The scattering of believers (mainly by means of persecution—a Divine providence) paved the way for the reproduction of the Church in what has been called "The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church" (Roland Allen). It was the expulsion of life, not the conceiving of a "plan", "movement", "enterprise", etc. Neither was it a missionary committee in the Church; or Council, Board, etc. apart from the local church. As the churches multiplied, so they in turn each became a *direct* evangelising instrument, so that Paul could speak of those who were with him thus—"Whether any enquire of...our brethren, they are the apostles of the churches" (II Cor. viii. 23). There is no denying the fact that where there has been the closest approximation to this original basis there has been, and is, the widest expansion, and the best taught and spiritually strongest churches.*

The fact is that, while, because of the Church's failure, God owned and used a secondary means, He has never abandoned His original and primary thought, and with that thought He has irrevocably and inseparably bound up spiritual fulness. All other and lesser ways must stop short, and after reaching a certain point find that limitation—spiritually—characterises the work and its results. Many other things may also indicate that all is not well. We can, perhaps, best explain all this by looking at the reason why Churchwise is God's primary and ultimate way.

Everyone will agree that, in the intention of God, everything appertains to His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. "It was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell" (Col. i. 19). "God hath summed up all things in Christ" (Eph. i. 10). "That in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Col. i. 18), etc., etc. When God's end is reached Christ will be all in all, and "fill all things".

But while Christ retains His own personal and individual identity, He has bound up with Himself in organic oneness His Church, which is "His Body". As the personality is hidden within the physical body, and gives that body its true character, its distinctive character, and the personality of the being is its mystic but real value, so Christ is linked with and the

* We know of some instances of this. One is the case of an assembly of believers in a city in the Far East. From that one church—constituted truly on the principles of "Body" life, over two hundred have gone forth in apostolic ministry, and some four hundred churches have been brought into being. The whole of this is the spiritual work of the church; not a committee or missionary department. The spiritual quality of these churches is the envy and attraction of all others.

very reality of the Church. This Church-Body was "chosen in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4). It is "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (I Pet. i. 2). For *it* He gave Himself (Eph. v. 25-26). God purchased it with His own Blood (Acts xx. 28). It is "the fulness (completion) of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23).

We are thus made to see that all God's interests in His Son are Body-wise, and therefore of a corporate nature. He sent Saul of Tarsus into Damascus to get the answer to his enquiry through the Church. Later He ratified his apostleship and sent him to it in and by the Church. The laying on of hands in both instances was an act of identification with the Body, firstly in union, and secondly in ministry. Nothing in those days was personal, independent, or separate from the Church. Everything was on Body ground. This eliminated personal authority as such. This ever and always found the Holy Spirit ready to judge, direct and empower. Elders were only representative members of the Body. They were not officials or ecclesiastics. Theirs was a spiritual function, for which they had to be "full of the Holy Ghost". This "Body" consciousness was a great reality and meant a very great deal in every situation. In serious crises, physical, circumstantial, spiritual, and temporal, it meant that need was registered in the Church and prayer was made. Those concerned acknowledged that the crises were triumphantly negotiated and passed because of the co-operation of the Church. Evangelisation was not just the salvation of so many individuals or the establishment of so many churches. It was the increase of the measure in which Christ was—and is—present in this world. It was "the building up of the Body of Christ"—"The completion of Him". It is because things have been—and are—things in themselves, evangelisation, "soul-winning" "church"-building, teaching, etc. that so much limitation exists, and after so many centuries the world is so little touched and Christians are so unsatisfactory. *We are convinced that a new heavenly apprehension of the Church as the Body of Christ, with what that implies and demands, in the revelation and power of the Holy Spirit, is absolutely essential to the solution of the growingly felt need in the spiritual life of Christians.*

The missionary problem, and many another problem, can only be so solved, but it can and will be solved thus.

(For more on this matter see "The Divine Reactions" and "The Stewardship of the Mystery" by the same author).

g p 35

"Men may misjudge thy aim,
Think they have cause to blame, say thou art wrong.
Christ is the judge—not they; fear not, be strong!
Be brave, and dare to stand alone against the foe:
Thy Saviour stood alone for thee long, long ago.
Be not a coward in the fight, look up, be strong!
The morn of victory is near—the day of song".

“For Love’s Sake”

Epistle of Paul to Philemon.

Special importance is always attached to Paul's prison epistles. This little personal note is one of them, and has been preserved by the Holy Spirit because it contains a valuable message for us all. It is a kind of parable, setting forth the true meaning and worth of love. It shows us how to love, and, better still, how we are loved. Nothing could be more timely. Faith faces constant and intense assaults, and can only be sustained by love. It is, therefore, vitally important for us to be reminded of how greatly we are loved. This is the message of the letter to Philemon.

I. A LOVE BORN OF SUFFERING.

The bearer, Onesimus, is presented as one who is greatly loved; “that is my very heart” writes the apostle. Now Paul had large numbers of converts, and doubtless he loved them all. Why, then, did he speak in such emphatic terms of his tender affection for this one? Why was Onesimus so precious? The answer seems to lie in the circumstances of his conversion—“whom I have begotten in my bonds” (v. 10). Others were begotten through Paul's preaching, through his labours, through his journeyings: this one was begotten in his bonds. His new birth was a direct outcome of deep and bitter anguish. There is a peculiar preciousness associated with the fruit of suffering. Love is strongest and most tender when it has borne pain and sorrow on behalf of its object.

Centuries before Christ, near Bethlehem, a boy was born in circumstances of grief and pain. After great suffering his mother gave him birth, but at the cost of her own life; and with her dying breath she pronounced his name—Benoni—“Son of My Sorrow”. The father, however, changed the name to Benjamin—“Son of My Right Hand”, for the very suffering and loss associated with his birth made the boy most precious. Jacob's youngest son was the fruit of deep sorrow, and consequently he was always specially beloved of his father. So it is with every true believer. Christ gave us new birth by His bitter sufferings on the Cross. He will therefore always regard us with peculiar love. Each one of us is the Beloved of the Lord; on the one hand: “Son of His Sorrow”, and on the other hand His Benjamin.

In the course of his journey from Rome to Colossae Onesimus might often have felt discouraged or apprehensive. A fresh reference to the letter which he carried would, however, completely reassure him. The one who sent him regarded him with more than a passing affection; his was the burning intensity of love which had been kindled in the fires of affliction. We, too, in life's dusty journey have more than a letter; we have a whole Book which assures us that in Christ we are loved with Calvary love.

II. LOVE PAYS THE DEBT.

One of Onesimus's chief problems was how to

repay his debt to Philemon. He had greatly wronged his master in running away from him, and it is generally considered likely that he had actually robbed Philemon. So he was doubly guilty. Paul states the case very mildly when he writes: “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought” (v. 1). There is little doubt about it: Onesimus owed his master far more than he could ever repay. Love is very just; it does not ignore or depreciate the indebtedness, but it undertakes to pay all. What a comfort it must have been to Onesimus to read and re-read those words: “...put that to my account: I, Paul, write it with mine own hand; I will repay it”.

But if Onesimus's debt was great who can measure the enormous debt the sinner owes to God? How grievously have we wronged God, cheating Him of what was rightly His, and misappropriating it for our own selfish use. “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought...” There is no “if” in our case. Every sincere penitent is aware of the great debt of his sin against God, a debt which he cannot begin to repay. Let him hear the gracious words of the Lover of his soul: “Put that to My account”. This is the very heart of the Gospel. Christ has paid sin's debt in full. It is a pierced Hand which writes our pardon: “I will repay it”. What a tragedy it would have been if Onesimus influenced by a false shame, had delayed his return until he himself had wherewithal to discharge his debt! He never would have returned. Nor shall we if we postpone our return to God until we have a ground of righteousness in ourselves. Saint and sinner alike must turn for comfort to the Cross, and hear anew the Saviour say: “Put that to My account”. “He bear all our sins in His own Body on the tree.”

III. LOVE'S WELCOME.

“Receive him as myself” (v. 17). It is not difficult to imagine the kind of reception Onesimus could expect from the man whom he had so greatly wronged. There is a knock at the door. A servant brings word as to the new arrival. It is Onesimus. Philemon would hardly be human if he did not feel a hot resentment at the presence of the miserable wastrel who had done him so much injury. If, however, as a Christian he sought to be patient; if he set aside all thoughts of revenge or punishment; even if he refrained from reproaches, how cold and restrained would the meeting be. Philemon would feel little pleasure at the transgressor's return. But suppose the servant had announced not Onesimus but Paul the apostle! What a warmth of welcome there would be! How the house would resound with the joyful news that the beloved Paul had come! What embraces, what congratulations, what glad rejoicings there would be! “Well”, says Paul, “that is how you are to welcome him”. “Receive him as myself”.

Whether or not Philemon was able to obey the apostle's injunction we do not know. But we do know that this is God's manner of receiving us. Not

as we are, in all our shame, but as if we were Christ, sweeping triumphantly through the everlasting doors of glory. Not in our own name, but in His dear Son, Jesus Christ. We are "accepted in the Beloved". Here is the glory of Redemption. So sublime is the reconciliation made between God and man, that He does not receive us in our natural state, but in the perfect righteousness of Christ. "Receive him" says the Lord Jesus, "not as an undeserving sinner, but as Myself, the well-beloved Son"; and we are assured that God does receive us thus, if we come "in the Name of the Lord Jesus".

IV. LOVE'S TRANSFORMING POWER.

It would be very natural if Philemon had questioned the wisdom of such a cordial reception. Supposing he showered his favours upon Onesimus, only to find that the latter again proved a worthless ingrate. Having once been so badly disillusioned how could he ever trust Onesimus again? "Onesimus" means "helpful" or "useful" but he had belied his name. Paul's letter is designed to deal with this very matter. "He was aforetime unprofitable to thee, but now..." The apostle gives his own word of assurance that a radical change has taken place. On behalf of Onesimus he gives a solemn promise that now name and nature will be in accord, for Onesimus's new birth by the Spirit of God meant that he became a different man. "now (he) is profitable to thee, and to me" (v. 11).

Nowadays most people claim to be Christians, but alas, that honourable name is so often contradicted by the life. To be a Christian means more than to be kind, or devout, or upright; it means to be a Christ-like man, Christ's man. And redeeming love guarantees this fruit in the life of the believer. "If any man is in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Cor. v. 17). God's love is not a mere emotion, but a transforming power. Are we a contradiction to our name?

If so we need a fresh experience of the love of Christ. "Aforetime unprofitable!" God knows we were. "But NOW profitable..." This must be true if we are Christ's. "But thanks be to God, that, whereas we were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart..." (Rom. vi. 17). Philemon had more than the penitent's avowal that he would henceforth be true to his name. He had the authoritative guarantee of the beloved intercessor. In the same way Christ undertakes to make us worthy of the noble name of Christian, not by our own strivings but by the inward energy of His new life.

V. THE LOVED ONE IMMINENT.

Onesimus had a tremendous incentive to make good in that Paul himself might be expected to arrive on the scene at any moment. "Prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you."

When the first flush of enthusiasm had passed—as pass it must—the humdrum monotony of daily life would provide many temptations to relapse into his old ways. Against that temptation, however, he had the promise of Paul's imminent coming. Perhaps Paul wasn't so far away after all; perhaps he was journeying to Colossae; perhaps he was very near; perhaps he would arrive today. We have exactly the same incentive. Does Christ seem so far away, and faithfulness of little importance? Perhaps He is much nearer than we think. Perhaps today! Ah, what a day that last one before His Coming would be, if only we knew its date! Every day is to be such a day. Divine love is no abstract theory: it is a Living Person, and that Person is near at hand. What modest satisfaction to Onesimus if Paul's unexpected arrival found him indeed living up to his name. So, too, may the Lord be able to say to us: "Well done, good and faithful servant..." Everything is "For love's sake." H.F.

Acknowledgments.—We acknowledge with gratitude the following gifts, other than local, towards the maintenance of this paper from February 1st to March 28th, 1945:—

Anon., £5; Arbroath, 2s. 6d.; Ballyboughal, 5s.; Ballymena, £1 10s.; Barlestone, 2s.; Barry, £1; Bexley Heath, 2s. 6d.; Birmingham, 10s.; Birmingham, Ala., 10s. and £4 17s.; Birtley, 2s. 6d.; Blackrock, 10s.; Bradford, 10s.; Brentwood, 10s.; Brighton, £1; Bristol, 2s. 6d.; Bromley, 10s. 6d.; Caversham, 10s.; Chester £1; Coniston, 5s.; Corvallis, Oregon, 12s. 4d.; Crich, 10s.; Dublin, £1 2s., 5s. and 5s.; Dundee, 2s. 6d.; Eastbourne, 15s.; East Croydon, 3s.; Egremont, 10s.; Enfield, 6s.; Galt, Ont., 8s. 11d.; Glasgow, £1 and £1; Grand Forks, N. Dak., 14s. 10d.; Great Malvern, 5s.; Hadleigh, 3s. 6d.; Harrogate, £2; Hartington, £1; Heathfield, 5s.; Hereford, 2s. 6d.; Hipckley, £5; Ilfracombe, 1s.; Inverness, 4s. 6d.; Kenton, 5s.; Kirkintilloch, 3s.; Leatherhead, 10s.; London, E.7, 10s.; London, N.2, £6; London, N.13, 4s.; London, N.16, 5s.; London, N.W.10, 5s.; London, S.E.23, 10s.; London, S.E.23, 12s.; London, S.W.1, 2s. 6d.; London, W.12, 3s.; Long Beach, Cal., £1 4s. 8d.; Louisville, Ky., 18s.; Madras City, 10s.; Malvern, 10s.; Manchester, £1; Monkseaton, 4s.;

Montrose, £1; Morpeth, 5s.; Murten, Swit., 11s. 5d. and 11s. 5d.; Neuchatel, Swit., 1#s.; Newcastle-in-Rosendale, 10s.; Newcastle-on-Tyne, £1; Nottingham, 12s. 6d.; Oxford, 10s. 6d.; Parkstone, 10s.; Pembroke, 2s. 6d.; Pentrecourt, 10s.; Peterboro', Ont., 5s.; Phibsborough, 10s.; Preston, 10s.; Purton, 3s. 6d.; Rufforth, 2s. 6d. and £1 1s.; St. Leonard's-on-Sea, 5s.; Sawbridgeworth, 5s.; Seattle, Wash., 10s.; Smethwick, 5s.; Southsea, 5s.; South Shields, 5s.; Southwick, 5s.; Tanerdy, 5s.; Taylor's Hill, 3s.; Toronto, 10s.; Treherbert, 3s.; Upper Gornal, 10s.; Wallasey, 10s.; Wallington, 5s.; Wallsend, 1s.; West Southbourne, £1; Wolverhampton, 2s. 6d.; Worthing, 2s. and 10s.; Zurich, Swit., £1 14s. 3d.

Money Orders received: U.S.A. 5856, £2 9s. 5d.; U.S.A. 18584, 10s.; U.S.A. 12942, £1 4s. 8d.; U.S.A. 4393, £1 4s. 8d.; U.S.A. 262805, £2 9s. 4d.; U.S.A. 5914, £2 9s. 4d. Total, £77 9s. 3d.

Nova Scotia, \$2.00; Montreal, \$2.00. Total, \$4.00.

Boston, Mass., \$7.50; Brookline, Mass., \$1.00; Hastings, Minn., \$1.00; Oak Park, Ill., \$1.00; Placerville, Cal., \$1.00; Salem, Va., \$5.00. Total, \$16.50.

The Most Difficult Thing in the World

READING: Heb. iv. 1-13; xi. 5-6.

I am going to speak for a little while on the most difficult thing in the world, that is, faith. So far as the Lord's people are concerned, it can be truly said that the whole of their life in every aspect—salvation in its first step and every subsequent step, spiritual growth, spiritual sustenance, spiritual victory, spiritual work and service, fellowship with the Lord and ultimate glory is all resolved into one thing and that one thing is faith. Faith is the key to everything in our relationship to the Lord. It is all just a question of faith—not faith as something in itself, but faith in God. That is something which has to be faced and as far as possible at any point, settled; but it is not a thing which is settled once and for all. There has to be a settlement made again and again on this point. We are really continually confronted with this question; in the presence of new situations and trials and perplexities and seeming contradictions, am I going to believe God or not, am I going to repose faith in Him or not, am I going to trust the Lord or not? That is true all the way along, and it always will be so. And sometimes those testings are very, very acute and severe. A brother wrote to me this week, one who has been greatly used of the Lord in other lands as well as in this one, who knows the Lord, and has a very real walk with the Lord, and he just put this in his letter. "It sometimes seems as though the Lord is a thousand miles away and has no interest whatever in me. It sometimes seems as though He has just cut me off". You may think that is very extreme, but some of you will not. You know quite well that such experiences are true to the life of a child of God. I was saying that this is something that has to be faced. That is the life to which we are called. The Lord has not covered it, has not veiled it, hidden it from us. We are called unto a life of faith, and we had better face it; and then we must, as far as possible, if we are going to get through, settle it, for I repeat there is no step or stage or aspect of the life of the child of God from first to last, from the beginning to the end, that is not a matter of faith. Well, that is a fact, and let us be quite honest about it, and quite frank with ourselves. That is the situation. It will help to a very large extent if we have looked this thing straight in the face and not shelved it, not tried to evade it, but accepted it.

A Key to Faith

But we want to get inside of this matter of faith, and here in this letter to the Hebrews which is, as you know, from start to finish, a letter on the matter of faith, we have amongst others one very helpful clue and key to faith. It is in this fourth chapter. You may not think that it really is a matter of faith for it does not seem to lie on the face of it, but when you examine it, you find that that is the thing that it is touching—this strange, somewhat technical language—"For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even

to the dividing of soul and spirit". You will notice that that statement begins with a 'for', and that 'for' links you with Israel in the wilderness failing to enter into rest. It is said that they had the Gospel preached to them, but the word spoken did not profit, not being mixed or united by *faith*. It did not profit, not being united by *faith*. Then there follows, "I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest". They could not enter in because of unbelief. Then more about the rest and their failure to enter in, and then—"For the word of God divides between soul and spirit". This is the key to faith, or a key to faith. What is it? It is the conquest of the soul, and that is said to explain the whole of the wilderness failure and the subsequent not entering into the rest.

You know what soul is. I am not going to stay with soul and spirit very much. We know in this matter that the soul is the self-conscious life. By our souls we are conscious of ourselves and other people and all that world of things here. Spirit is just the God-conscious life. By our spirit we are conscious of God Who is Spirit, and all that realm. Self-conscious and God-conscious life, and because those two things were not defined, put apart and recognised in their difference, but allowed to overlap and bring about a state of confusion, they did not enter in. They failed because of unbelief. Well, what does that amount to? The self-conscious life predominated, and the God-conscious life did not predominate, was made subject and subservient. In other words, for them, everything was a matter of how self was affected by the situation and by the prospect. You find them again and again full of enthusiasm, full of zeal, full of what looked like real interest in the things of the Lord. Oh yes, they were going on, they were full of apparently real devotion to the Lord. But that was when the situation was pleasing them and when the prospect was presented so that it brought a great sense of possibilities for them, prospects for them, and their gratification. Oh, this is fine, this is good; tell us more about this wonderful land to which we are going, keep telling us about all its glorious, wonders, and resources; go on, we are most interested in this, we are in for that! But it was all soul, self-conscious self-interest, self-gratification. And when there arose some situation, either present or in relation to that prospect which made it a matter of denying, sacrificing self, letting go self-interests, and having to face up to a very difficult situation which was going to be very costly to them, they were not so interested; their zeal went, and unbelief rose up; it was there and it rose up. They were not so concerned about this thing now, it was not now for them. What was it for? It was for the Lord *only* first, and their interests were entirely eclipsed. They would only come into their inheritance when the Lord got His. The Lord first; "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33), and that putting first often meant a letting go of everything personal.

Does not that get right to the heart of this thing? What is disappointment to us? Can we always say that disappointment which we think is disappointment with the Lord and over His things is because we did so much want the Lord to have what He wanted irrespective of our interests at all; we were prepared to let everything go, we were not mixed up in this thing somehow? In the Lord getting what He wants, we see ourselves figuring in some way. It has to be a very sharp instrument that gets in between those two things and defines them because they are so mixed up. Is it not true that faith wavers, weakens and oft-times goes right down and under when in the way of the Lord's interests *ourselves* are entirely shut out?

What is the key to faith then? The key to faith is this dividing of soul and spirit, or, in other words, it is the complete abnegation of self-interests—not in the Buddhist sense of annihilation, but in the sense of God's interests becoming positive and predominant. That is where the battle of faith rages; it rages upon that ground always. If we were so utterly—and not one of us really is—if we were so utterly consumed for the Lord's interests alone that no other interest in our lives had any precedence or power to govern us, we would be in victory all the time. It is this completely disinterested concern for what the Lord wants that is the key to faith. If Israel in the wilderness had taken this attitude—Well, this is a very difficult experience, but the Lord is after something, the Lord wants something, and He evidently knows that that is the best way to get it; all right, I am with Him, I may lose everything, I may suffer the loss of all things, but it is what the Lord wants that matters. The Lord wants us in that land; well, if it means everything, to be there for the Lord's pleasure, that is the thing that matters—if that had been their attitude, do you think they would have journeyed forty years in the wilderness round and round, do you think at the border of the land they would have been turned back to perish in the wilderness? You can see in the consummation, that next generation which did go in, went in on this matter of faith only. The whole story is based upon faith.

There is the faith of Rahab the harlot; her faith was the key to the land—Jericho. Then there was the faith of going round six days in silence and on the seventh the shout of faith, without drawing a sword or turning a hand to do anything but go round—ridiculous! It is all such utter faith. They went up and possessed on that basis. That generation did enter in because of faith, whereas the generation before did not enter in because of unbelief. But this generation went up because Joshua and Caleb had said, If the Lord delight in us, He will bring us in (Num. xiv. 8). That is the matter—it is the delight of the Lord, perfectly disinterested concern for what the Lord wants, and that is one of the most difficult things in life, to get this self out of the way.

The Result of Faith

(a) Rest

So, just finally, a little word on the result of faith.

First of all, of course, it is rest. We are not now thinking of some future rest, some future land, whatever our hymn writers have to say about it. You read again this fourth chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, and you see "We who have believed do enter into that rest". Some of us have already entered in, says the Apostle. God defines a day—it is not the future—and some of us do enter in. This rest is not a time period, it is a state, and the Apostle says here so clearly that entering into rest is simply a matter of entering into a settled faith in God. You know quite well that however doctrinal and technical this may seem, it is very true. We can prove it almost any day of our lives. When we get to the place where we put ourselves and what we would like on one side and accept the Lord's will—not just resignedly saying Well, if that is what the Lord wants, I capitulate; if I could have it otherwise, I would, but this is evidently what the Lord wants: but if with all our heart we accept it and enter into this with the Lord to co-operate with Him, when we come there, rest enters into our souls, our souls come to rest, on all sorts of things, small and great.

(b) Power with God

Then victory comes because faith is power. If the Word of God is strong and clear about one thing, it is about this. Oh, faith is power. First of all, it is power with God. What is more powerful with God than to be well-pleasing to Him, and that is why I read about Enoch. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God". That is all centred in, and made to rest upon, faith. "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him". Surely that is our ambition above all—to be well-pleasing unto Him. How?—to believe Him, to trust Him, to repose faith in Him, to be well-pleasing unto Him. It is power with God. We can consider that along the other line, that our weakness with the Lord is always found in our reservation, our question, our doubt, our uncertainty. That is our weakness with God, and the Lord waits.

(c) Power over Satan

It is victory over the Devil because, if there is one thing that is the playground of the Devil, it is unbelief, and if there is one thing that the Devil is always seeking to promote and maintain, it is unfaith. The hallmark of the Devil's work from the Garden to the end is unbelief, doubt of God, to question about God and God's ways and God's motives. That is where the Devil is coming all the time—with an 'if'. If this and if that. If God were what He says He is, then this would not be. You know the thousands of 'ifs' and 'buts' of the Devil. The only power of victory over the Devil is faith in God. We can use the language of victory and power over Satan and it counts for nothing. We must have a new position of power over the enemy. The key is faith; it may be

(concluded on front page)

continued from back page)

faith in the Blood, or in the Name, or in the Lord, but it is faith.

(d) Power over the World

It is power over the world. "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (I John v. 4). The world in this sense is that whole system and order and atmosphere and attitude of things which must have been seen and the present. What is the mark of the world? It must see, it must have *now*. Anything that is unseen and not present is utterly outside of the mentality of the world, and we know how much of the world there is in our nature; and the battle is there. Faith overcomes that world that is in our own natures and around us. "The things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II. Cor. iv. 18). Faith has to do with those things.

We could talk for many hours on the matter of

faith. Please do not think I am laying down the law to you. God knows the battle in all of our hearts on this matter and how true we know this to be in our own experience. We simply talk to one another solemnly. We shall always have to fall down before Him and say, Lord, increase our faith! There will be many times when we shall say, Lord, I have not faith for that, I have not faith to face this, to accept this. It is a matter of a new dealing with the Lord on this question of faith. There is the fact, it has to be faced, to be settled, to be resolved again and again. Everything depends upon it—the victory in every realm, going on with the Lord, getting through to what God has purposed. It is all this matter of faith in God, and thereby being well-pleasing unto Him. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Heb. xi. 6). Lord, increase our faith!

T.A.-S.

"The Burden of the Valley of Vision"

READING: Isaiah xxii. 1.

The word "burden" here just does mean a load or weight, as much as a man can carry. Thus the Prophets felt what the Lord had shown them to be something that weighed heavily upon them and often overwhelmed them.

The prophetic function is brought into operation at a time when things are not well with the people and work of God, when declension has set in; when things have lost their distinctive Divine character; when there is a falling short or an accretion of features which were never intended by God. The Prophet in principle is one who represents—in himself and his vision—God's reaction to either a dangerous tendency or a positive deviation. He stands on God's full ground and the trend breaks on him. That which constitutes this prophetic function is spiritual perception, discernment, and insight. The Prophet *sees*, and he sees what others are not seeing. It is *vision*, and this vision is not just of an enterprise, a "work", a venture; it is a *state*, a condition. It is not for the work as such that he is concerned, but for the spiritual state that dishonours and grieves the Lord.

This faculty of spiritual discernment makes the Prophet a very lonely man, and brings upon him all the charges of being singular, extreme, idealistic, unbalanced, spiritually proud, and even schismatic. He makes many enemies for himself. Sometimes he is not vindicated until after he has left the earthly scene of his testimony. Nevertheless, the Prophet is the instrument of keeping the Lord's full thought alive, and of maintaining vision without which the people are doomed to disintegration.

While it has so often been an individual with whom

the Lord has deposited His fuller thought and made His prophetic vessel, it has also very frequently been a company of His people in which He has been more utterly represented. Such companies are seen scattered down the ages. They were the Lord's reactionary vessels. Such, surely, are the "Overcomers" of every "end-time". The mass of Christians may be too taken up with the externals and accepted ways of Christianity; too spiritually satisfied with the lesser; too bound by tradition and fettered by the established order. The Lord cannot do His full thing with them because He does not put His new wine into old wine-skins; the skins would burst and the life be wasted—not conserved to definite purpose. He finds Himself limited by an order which—while it may have been right at a certain time and for a certain period to carry His testimony up to a certain point—yet now remains as the fixed bound, and for want of an essential adjustableness His fuller purposes are impossible of realisation. So it was with Judaism, so it has become with Christianity, and so it is with many an instrumentality which has been greatly used by Him. There is no finality with us here, and it is dangerous to the Lord's interest to conclude that, because the Lord led and gave a pattern at a certain time, that was full and final and must remain. Every bit of new revelation will call for adjustment, but revelation waits for such a sense of need as to—at least—make for willingness to adjust.

The Lord needs that which really does represent His fullest possible thought, and not those who are just doing a good work. But it costs; and this is the "burden of the valley of vision".

A bi-monthly ministry by which it is sought to lead the Lord's people into His full thought for them.

"A Witness and

Testimony"

Maintained
by the offerings of
those who are helped by it.

JULY—AUGUST, 1945

NO. 4, VOL. 23

The Release of the Lord

(Concluded)

Revival or Reformation

In the light of all that has been said and implied in these chapters, the question arises as to whether the greater need of our time is revival or reformation. There is very much prayer being made, and appeal being pressed for revival. It is said and believed that if there should take place a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the people of God, all our difficulties would be overcome, our defects and deficiencies made good, our mistakes transcended, and so on. Reference is made to such events in past times and the inferences or conclusions drawn. We would be far from denying the truth of this as to the actual period of its duration, but we do feel that a too superficial deduction or conclusion results in a delaying or staying of what God is really seeking. What have been called revivals have really—in the Divine intention, and in their very essence—been reformations. The high tides of spiritual life have invariably had the effect of making ridiculous many of the things of which the Church was proud; making puerile many things formerly considered essential; ruling out many things prevailing, and generally upsetting the accepted and established system of things. Barriers have gone down; secondary things have been removed from primary place. Indeed the whole standard of estimates has been changed and turned about. This is not only true with regard to great "revival" times, but also true when the Lord's people of all connections and complexions have met on purely spiritual ground, as at great conventions.

Now, the point is this. If the Spirit of God so either ignores or transcends so much that marks the Christian system, and makes it as though it counts so little, (and the Holy Spirit never compromises on what is vital and really of God), does it not mean that He calls for a reconsideration of very much that obtains?

There are several ways of putting this. For instance The nearer the earth and its temporal life Christendom has got, the more and greater have such things as ritual had a place. Ritual, Rites, Vestments, Ceremonial, Formality, and such like externals have always been the marks of low and poor spiritual conditions, and the measure of importance given to them is always an index to spiritual measure. On the other hand, a deep, strong, pure spiritual state has always been marked by simplicity and an absence of the above. History proves this beyond a doubt, and tides of the Spirit are outstanding evidence of it. The days of the Church's greatest spiritual power and impact were days when ecclesiastical forms, architecture and ritual were nil, and the Lord Himself was everything.

Then again, although many such things lie in the background, it is fully recognised and accepted that, in conventions for fuller spiritual life, they *must* be left behind and for the time being regarded as though they were not. Someone has said what a pity it is that such times and conditions should only last for a week or thereabouts and then there should be a coming down to return to all the earthly distinctions! Yes, and that may very well be the point of all that we are trying to say. One thing is patent; it is that in such times the Holy Spirit does not revive and stimulate these religious *things*, He very largely negatives them. Does it not, then, become necessary for us to see and take note of the effect of a Holy Spirit movement, and by His works does not the Lord call for some adjustment in this matter?

To put that another way. What will the Lord revive? What will the Lord take note of? We have instances of revival in Israel in the days of Josiah and Hezekiah. The occasion of the revival was a bringing fully into view of Christ crucified (the Passover). The effect of revival was the smashing of the empty and false religious ritual and its objects. But it was super-

ficial; it did not go deep enough, and when they returned to the old level these things were found to be still in their hearts. The correspondence may not be perfect, but there are true parallels. We have referred to ritual and such things, but this is not all. What is true in that matter is just as true in respect of sects and "church" divisions with very much of what characterises them and each one. Here we want to be quite fair and just, and presently we shall say more in this connection.

Our present point is that we have very much evidence borne by the Spirit of God in true spiritual movements that He has weighed this whole matter as it now exists and has written it off as, not only unimportant, but definitely obstructive and limiting. If, when the Lord's people are in a tide of the Spirit, some leader or speaker is unfortunate enough as to bring in something that belongs essentially to his particular church order or system or procedure, something akin to a pang, a shudder, or a shadow is registered in spiritual people, and everyone refers to it as a pity, a mistake, or a serious bit of bad taste. Often the level of the meeting is lowered by such, and it is not easy to recover. The fact is that the Spirit is grieved. We can reason both ways. To get away from the lesser things we need a mighty visitation of the Spirit of God; this, and this only, will do it. Most people agree to this, and we have heard very much said along this line. What has always perplexed us is that, while things of this kind have been so repeatedly and strongly stated, the implication seems never to have registered itself with sufficient strength as to result in practical adjustments. So, on the other hand, if we seriously faced the things which the Spirit of God has again and again ruled out when He has had His way, would not the way be opened for a more *permanent* high level of spiritual life, fulness, and effectiveness?

That brings us back to our original question. Is not reformation an essential part of revival? Does not the Lord call for certain drastic adjustments before He can "open the windows of heaven"? (Mal. iii. 10). Are we able to agree that what is needed is not so much a "visitation" of God in a passing wave of revival, but a reformation which will make possible a new level of life for—at least—a long time to come?

Is there need for a new reformation now?

If so, what is the nature of that reformation? Perhaps the best way to answer the first question would be to deal with the second. To do this we must look at the situation as it is in Christianity. By "Christianity" we do not mean just Christendom in general, but evangelical Christianity. Three things have come to characterise it, in the main:

- i. A system of Doctrines.
- ii. Denominational, Sectarian, and Missions Divisions.
- iii. Forms of Work.

I. A System of Doctrines

Evangelical Christianity has very largely become resolved into a crystallised and set system of doctrines.

Those doctrines are the Deity of Christ; His Atoning Death; His Bodily Resurrection; His Ascension and Exaltation; and—with some variations as to time and manner—His Personal Return; The Person of the Holy Spirit; The Inspiration and Absolute Authority of the Bible; etc.

Let us hasten to say, lest anyone should jump to conclusions, read no further, and go away to misrepresent us, that we are *not* implying or calling for a necessary reform in the essential doctrines of the Church as above. These things are rightly and truly basic and governing, and must be maintained in purity and fulness. But when we have said all that could and should be said for them, we are far from having solved the problem of the Church's spiritual life and power. Orthodoxy and "soundness" never was the sign of spiritual life. Indeed "Fundamentalism" as such can be as cold, hard, cruel, bitter, dead, and ugly as the Inquisition, and it often is so. Its weapons are often completely carnal, and it does not hesitate to resort to physical force. This may be its extreme form, but even where these truths are held without these particular features, there is more often than otherwise a rigid legalism resulting in hardness, suspicion, prejudice, and exclusiveness of spirit. Many divisions have followed—not the faithful stand for the truth—but some enforcing of some aspect of a particular truth—hair-splitting. When we say this, we are far from forgetting the costly battles for truth in the Church's history, and how often the situation has been saved by faithful men in this respect. Our point here is another one. The Doctrines of Christianity have become something in themselves, and because this is so a host of unhappy, unholy, and unnecessary elements have gained a strong place in Christianity. It is so easy to gain your point and lose the real spiritual value. We are fully alive to the Devil's age-long work to destroy the Truth and to sow false doctrine, and we are wholly with faithful witness to the essentials of the Faith. Reform in doctrine is not our point at present, but reform in the *place* or relationship of doctrine. Be patient and follow through. We have a great and vital object in view. Christianity is not necessarily or inevitably established when the sum of its doctrines or tenets is enunciated and assented to. Here 'the letter may kill' rather than make alive. There is that which is not apart from the truths, but much more than they. Without that other and more, the very truths themselves may lack their right meaning. To that other we shall come presently.

II. Christian Divisions

We have said that Evangelical Christianity has become a system of Denominations, Sects, and Sectional Organisations. In fairness and righteousness, we must remember that many of these had an honourable beginning. As to Denominations, in not a few cases it was a conscientious stand for some particular doctrine, doctrines, or form of expression, costing very heavily, that brought these into being. And so with many other institutions, movements, missions, and organisations; some divergence from the truth,

or some failure in the responsibility, obligation, and purpose to which Christianity is committed resulted in the rising up of these specific and varied activities. It is no small history of devotion, heroism, sacrifice and service. The story can fill a library. We take nothing from it. That is not our object. What we are saying is that many of these things have now become so largely something in themselves, and are often *ends* in themselves. It is the *thing* with which so many are bound up; and here again all the unhappy elements, rivalries, jealousies, competitions, suspicions, etc. have their occasion. The effect of much of this is to make organised Christianity the enemy of Christianity, and a menace to the real work of the Spirit of God.

III. Forms of Work

A peril is discernible very early in the Church's life. It was in the nature of—on the one side—a giving pre-eminence to one side or direction of Christian interest; and, of course, on the other side, suspicion or reservation where this pre-eminence was not recognised. For instance, there was a strong Jewish strain in the Church and the tendency—at least—was to give pre-eminence to preaching the Gospel to the Jews. When the Gentiles came increasingly into the picture, these reservations and suspicions became almost acute, even between Apostles. The Holy Spirit, Who fortunately had a large enough place and way then, was able to negotiate this dangerous passage and resolve it into a unity. But the tendency has persisted, and with the lowering and lessening of spiritual life, the peril has passed into an actuality, and an established one at that. Evangelisation of the unsaved has become something in itself, and often ends with itself. There is often no vision beyond this. If there are Christians who are not *exclusively* or *primarily* engaged in evangelistic work they are often regarded with suspicion and reservation, or even worse. Frequently the Evangelist has no room for or interest in what is beyond the work of saving souls. On the other hand, it is so easy for concern with the spiritual life of believers and the building up of saints to overshadow the Evangel and destroy the "passion for souls". There is no end to the specific and particular activities of bodies of Christians. So the "teachers" and the "Deeper spiritual life" ministries may have reservations as to the evangelistic, with the result that much loss is sustained both ways, and the Church is rendered unbalanced and much weaker than it ought to be, and could be. We have not gone into these matters beyond an indicating of them, but fuller thought must lead to an honest admission that these things are so, and being so they represent a divergence somewhere.

So we are able to get to our second question, and free ourselves from the muddy stream of the things which are wrong, and move out into the clear waters of God's true and full thought.

What is the Nature of the Needed Reformation ?

In a sentence, it is all that which is bound up with a new and dominating conception of God's purpose, object, and method. When we ask what that is, the answer is

A MAN !

There is a chapter in the history of Israel which almost perfectly fits this consideration, and that chapter might well have a double title.

"Make us a king like unto all the nations",

or

"God hath found him a man"

1 Sam. viii. 5.

1 Samuel xiii. 14.

The fuller statement of the latter in Acts xiii. 22 is "I have found David...a man after my heart, who shall do all my will". The innermost nature of these contrasting choices may be stated thus. Saul was man's choice; i.e. the choice of *God's people* in a day of spiritual declension. The idea of a king was not in itself wrong, for it had been provided for by God Himself (Deut. xvii. 14-15). The wrong was in the principle of "like the nations" resultant from a lost immediacy of walk with God. "Like the nations" may mean a host of things in its system and outworkings, but it just means doing God's things in the same way as the world does its things. Imitating the world in the realm of God's Church. The King must answer to all the requirements of *man*. All that this means could be opened out and shown to be just exactly what has so largely come to be the order which obtains in Christianity today. Saul had many things to commend him, and God sovereignly went as far as He could to bless and co-operate with what was right. But, by His full knowledge of things, the Lord always had a big reservation, and foresaw spiritual disaster. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, God looketh on the heart", was a statement which related to the crisis of this history, and it fairly sums up the *governing* standard of so very much in Christianity. "Man looketh on the outward". How things appear and appeal: how things impress and carry weight: how things attract and secure support: how things imply success and obtain influence. In this direction there is room for all the publicity, commercialism, competition, vainglory, display, and much more with which we have become familiar in Christian work. It is sad to see how many things the Church *must have* when its spiritual life is low. And it is very joyous to note how little is necessary and how many things are absent when spiritual life is high.

But, from the negative, to the positive. "God has sought him a man". This goes far beyond David the son of Jesse. We cannot give space to considering all that the eye of God saw in David which made him the man after His heart. All that we will say is that God had been watching the hidden life of this young man and had taken full account of motive and standard of values.

We pass on to the full significance of the word—"A man after his heart". We are taken by the full revelation in the Scriptures right back into the Divine counsels before times eternal. There we are allowed to see the resolve that this universe should ultimately be centred in and governed by a Man. But not just officially, as by selection, choice, appointment arbitrarily. The determination was governed by

character, type, nature. It would be a certain kind of man. He would embody all the Divine features, manifest them, and determine all values by that standard alone. That Man would eventually have "all things" gathered into and summed up in Himself on the basis of His nature. He would also "fill all things" in the same way. Thus, not by an institution, organisation, movement, scheme, would God reach His end, but by an organic being. The next step in the Divine counsels was "Let us make man in our own image and after our likeness". This, in principle, corresponds to what we have said above. So Adam was created, "a figure of him that was to come" (Rom. v. 14). Then, soon commenced the history which showed departure from the way to that "One Man"; yet still a long line of men who, by their walk with God, each embodied and represented some feature which would eventually be found collectively and in perfection in the One.

At length the One was brought forth of Whom it was possible for God to say "In whom I am well pleased". Uniquely, as of no other, in nature and in measure, this was One after God's heart. Subjected to every trial and test to which heaven and hell could subject a being; and tested as to faith in God as no other has ever been tested; while being "made sin for us", and being "made a curse for us". He had to be forsaken of God for "a small moment"—which must have seemed like eternity—He triumphed, and came out with "Father"! "Father, into thy hand I commit my spirit". Oh, marvellous triumph of faith! Have you ever had a little sense of God being afar off, and having no interest in you? Has your consciousness of His presence ever passed under a cloud? Do you not know what a test of faith in His love and faithfulness that is? Does not the Evil One at such times hasten to accuse God to you; to malign God; to give all manner of interpretations to the experience, all with a view to destroying your faith? Intensify ten thousand fold as though *nothing* must be left to destroy faith, for more hangs upon this Case than ever hung upon one, and then you can see what Christ went through, and how great was His triumph.

"Wherefore God highly exalted him". That "Man" has been exalted at the right hand of God and constituted the Representative "Man". God has His "Man", the end of His works, and human destiny is—for good or ill—bound up with Him—the "Beginning and the End", the "Beginning of the creation of God". One of the supreme necessities of the Church is to either recover or have given a new and mighty realisation of the significance of Christ in God's universe. Everything hangs upon our apprehension of Him.

Note. From what we have said earlier no one will think that we are setting aside the Deity of Christ. And in what we are about to say, let no one think that we mean that the Church will share His Deity.

But when we have said this we have not said all. The fuller and further revelation of Scripture shows that in those same Eternal Divine Counsels the fulness and completeness of that Man was to be realised

in a corporate way, so that eventually God's universe would be centred in a "One New Man"; universal and countless, yet one and individual in the sense that He would indwell all, and He is one and *indivisible*. This corporate entity called "His Body" was "fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of his (God's) son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). This sets forth God's object, and shows His method. The Divine object is *not* an institution, a religion, a dogma, a fraternity, an organisation, a system of doctrines, a set of works and activities. It is a spiritual man, an organic spiritual body.

Now, to resolve into one issue all that has been stated and indicated, what does it amount to? Just this; that if Christ in His personal significance and in His corporate expression were really dominantly and overwhelmingly present to the eye and heart of the Church, on the one hand numerous things which now limit, hinder, retard, weaken, and defeat the Church would fall away and just cease to have any place of government; and on the other hand there would be the effects—if not the event—of "Pentecost", i.e. life, power, victory, fulness, and great joy with real fruitfulness. What we need—we repeat—is not the transient event of "Pentecost", but the abiding effects; not only revival but reformation.

Yes, the enemy would get busy again, and all the slander, misrepresentation, maligning, distortion, "evil report", etc. would be his means of trying to destroy the testimony. But "the gates of hades" would not prevail. Whenever and wherever, by a new revealing of Himself, His purpose and method, the Lord has secured those who have moved out on to the ground of Christ *only* and in fulness, they have always had to meet a great and painful cost. Usually it has been their own brethren in Christ who have exacted it. Fake charges of "forming a new sect"; "seeking a name for themselves"; "dividing the people of God"; becoming "extreme"; "thinking they only are right", etc. have been levelled at them, and they have been "cast out". The truth is that—in many cases—they have only taken the ground which everybody knows is the ground of spiritual fulness; where questions of "church connection" and orders, etc. are never raised; where such things as joining something, or conforming to a *special* teaching or practice are never mentioned, but "Christ is all and in all"; and the one concern has been that He should have what is His ground and way of continuous increase.

How difficult it is for organised Christianity to believe that anything very much of real value can go on without machinery, publicity, and all the framework of organised work! May it not be well to pause and consider whether God's mightiest and most fruitful works in nature and in grace are not done hiddenly, quietly, unobtrusively, and—in many cases—done before anyone knows about it? What of the resurrection of nature every Spring-time? The law of God's highest work is the biological, the law of life; it is organic.

T.A.S.

Triumph in Christ

READING: Judges xiv. 5-14; Phil. iv. 10-13.

"I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me".

"In him that strengtheneth me, I am able for anything" (Moffatt).

Moffatt's translation is probably a more helpful rendering "I am able for anything". Let us dwell on the 'I' for a moment—not that it is emphatic in this verse, but it ought to be emphatic in our approach to it. There are a lot of strange and sometimes foolish things said about Paul the theologian who came in to put his mark on Christianity, silly things, though they come from so-called wise men. If one thing is clearer than another about Paul, it is that the outstanding feature of the man is not the impress he made upon Christianity, but the impress Christianity made on him. It was not so much what Paul did for Christ as what Christ did for Paul. And this is something that He did for him; He made him master of every situation in which he found himself, gave him not an easy life, a happy life, from the human point of view, but a triumphant life. *I* can do all things. Well, can I? We are not going to talk about the Apostle Paul, we are going to talk about ourselves. We might have a nice little dissertation in an objective way about the wonderful things that were true of the Apostle Paul and go home glad to have heard it and appreciative of it, thinking what a wonderful life that was, the life of the Apostle Paul. But our verse says *I*. That is you and me. It rather stems the flow of oratory. It is easy to talk about the Apostle Paul, but what about me? It brings us up sharply to practical and personal realities, and that is what this verse means, that is how the Apostle meant it.

Here is something personal, something practical in my life. Is it true? Can we repeat this? *I* am triumphant every day and in every circumstance; *I* am triumphant in Christ. I do not think we can say that; I am sorry but I have to be frank and say that *I* cannot, but *I* ought to, it is possible. *I*. We talk a lot about corporate life, and there are some senses in which we cannot talk too much about it, but it does not say *we*. It says *I* in this particular case. It is not that the Church in general or any particular church in specific terms and locality as a whole and a mass in general is triumphant, that is true of course, but it is only true in the real sense as every single member can say '*I*'; I have learned the secret, I have found strength in Christ. Of course, I may be a person of great temperamental disadvantages—I probably am; I may be a person of many circumstantial difficulties, quite likely; I may be in an altogether peculiar state and in an altogether unusual need—maybe; you cannot get round the verse like that. "I can do all things". Whoever we are, whatever our circumstances, there is a triumph in Christ for us. I do not want to go on to say any more until we are really quite sure and definite about that—it is about us, the Lord is speaking, about me. Do make the matter as personal as you can. I remember when

I was quite a young Christian going to a meeting where we had a very searching word. When I got outside, a friend said to me, I was thinking about you in the meeting. As a matter of fact, I was thinking about him! But I came to the conclusion early in my Christian life that it was better to think about myself. Do not think about somebody else. *I* ought to be on top where I am. Not that *I* ought to be somewhere else, it does not say that. Not that *I* ought to be doing something else. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me".

After all, Samson did not have a very easy moment when that young lion roared on him. I take it it was not a cub, it was a real lion, a strong lion, a young lion, and it roared on him. A lesser man than Samson would have given up the visit or taken another road; and that is the story again and again. How we evade the issue, we get round it somehow. Samson did not, he went straight on. The Apostle Paul found the way of the Spirit was straight on, right into it, into circumstances that did not look as if they could be the Lord's choice for His servant. Well, they were, not because there was anything good in them. There is nothing good in being hungry, everything bad. But it was a situation which was calculated to give Paul a new experience of how sufficient Christ is, and that is a very wonderful experience.

"I am able for anything". What a claim! You notice this rendering avoids the verb 'to do', which is very right because it is not actually in the verse. This is not, as the context reveals, the worker talking now, the servant of the Lord, the Apostle who is affirming what he can do for Christ in the power of the Spirit. That is perfectly true, but it is not what Paul was talking about; it was not what he was doing. It was that life proved for him, as for us all, a very strange and a very hard experience. He was buffeted, he was bruised, he was oppressed, he was tried by all kinds of strange experiences and difficult circumstances. The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune—it comes to us all, and he realised that these things were going to quench his testimony, and since he tells us that he learned by experience, I suppose it was sad experience, in them he failed the Lord, like so many of us. He could preach a fine sermon in the power of the Spirit. He could not stand a little slight from some unkind brother in Christ; he could do mighty journeys and accomplish great things for the Lord, but when he found things not going according to his expectations and he came into disappointing and disheartening circumstances, he went down under them as so many of us do so often.

Learning by Experience

Well now, the testimony to a risen and a glorious and a victorious Christ is not found in that His children have a triumphant passage with no lions in the way, but it is that they have victory over the lion. In circumstances, as Paul says, of abundance and of

want, materially, yes, and in many other ways, in all those circumstances, he found the answer was not in the circumstances, but in himself. The defeat, if and when he was defeated, was not because of things and other people; it was himself. He was defeated inside him, and the victory, when victory came, was not in the sweeping away of all the problems and marvellous answers from God that made everything smooth and easy; it was in a new uprising of spiritual grace in his own heart that made him a match for anything that he had to face. I have learned that, he says. How did he learn? I say this for my own encouragement and yours—I am sure that, since he uses this expression of learning, he learned by failure, and you have only to read Romans vii to find that that was so, even with regard to the matter of sin. He had learned by failure, circumstances found him out, and they do, and in that failure, so unexpected—for he had begun his Christian life with a verse like this, even though not written, it is the kind of verse we love as young Christians—"I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me"—that sounds like young Paul, I expect that is how he did talk till he found that he could not, found how lamentably he failed, found that it was not in him, found that he was making that affirmation because he expected the Lord to do things that He did not do, and circumstances arose that he could not believe were the will of God. Can you believe the will of God should be that a faithful, devoted servant of His should not have enough to eat? That is a simple practical application, but it is the one that Paul uses himself, and I have no doubt his first reaction was, This cannot be the will of God! I will pray the Lord to send something. What a state of strain, trying to get the outward circumstances changed by prayer. Sometimes the Lord does change them by prayer, but we try to get the Lord to make things easy for us on the outside. The Apostle came to this realisation—there is grace in Christ to give me joy even in this trial; if I will accept this from the Lord, I can triumph in it. And he did, and he learned, and that is what we are doing. We are learning by our failures and by our victories, learning the secret. If I begin to talk about failures, some will feel, That is me all right, I am a failure, and they will take it on and go home and feel, What a failure, I cannot say that verse. Learn by your failures, by all means, but have you never had victory in Christ? Why, of course you have! Have you never had the experience, in your own utter weakness and sense of inability to master some particular temptation, trial, have you never had the experience of saying, Well, Lord, I just count on you to take me through, and you have found to your joy the Lord has taken you through? You never thought you could, but He has taken you through. Learn from your experience, take encouragement from it. Do not take all the discouragement, take encouragement as well. You have learned. Oh, the trouble with so many of us is that we go through our lessons, but we do not learn our lessons. We have the experiences, but they do not leave the mark of them behind. If we have learned any measure of triumph in Christ, that is to encourage

us to go on in faith, to believe that there is a life, there is a way of triumph.

To-morrow, what does to-morrow mean to you, what does the week that is coming mean to some of you? I will tell you what it means—either you are going to be defeated or you are going to triumph, and to triumph, not by getting out of the awkward or difficult phase of life that faces you, but by going into it and facing this young lion that roars on you, and, in the Name of the Lord, tearing it to pieces. What a triumph that will be! If that happens, you will come to the Lord's Table next Lord's Day with a new note of praise in your heart. There is need enough for that in the Church to-day, the praise of those who have proved the Lord sufficient. You think, if there were some way out of this particular course, if the thing I had expected, prayed for, seen and believed to be the will of God, if that could come, what a week I would have! No, you would not, or if you would, it would be evading the lion, not real triumph. It may be for some abundance; the Lord bless you if you are going to have an abundant week. It may be hunger; my dear brother or sister, the Lord bless you in you hunger, but whichever it is, there is the same source of grace in Christ to turn this matter into victory, triumph.

Here we come to true spiritual triumph as expressed by Samson. "Out of the eater came forth food". Samson did not only slay the lion; he, as it were, fed on the lion. Out of that very thing that had threatened to devour him he had a good meal and he had something to give to other people, and it was sweet. "Out of the strong came forth sweetness". What an experience! This is Phil. iv. This is the Apostle Paul illustrated by this simple story, and that is what the Lord means your lion to do for you—not devour you, not only that you should face it and overcome it in the Name of the Lord, but that out of the eater there should be food for your spirit, sweetness for your heart, and a blessing to give to others. I can do that, it can happen to me.

The Way of Faith

Of course, it was not only by experience that the Apostle said this. It was faith, for you notice the sweeping statement—"I can do all things". Obviously there were things ahead of Paul that he did not know of, and his long experience would have taught him that, whatever happened, it would be bound to be the unexpected. He could not say, I can see the rest of my life and know the Lord sufficiently. No; in the unknown future, in the unexpected assaults and bitter trials, whatever they may be, I do not know the way, but I know the Lord enough to know that, whatever they are, He can carry me through. And that is how we have to take our verse this morning. We have to say it in faith. If we cannot say retrospectively that it has been our experience, we can say, looking toward the future, by the grace of God, I am able for anything through Him that strengtheneth me. And that 'anything' will more likely be a little thing than a big one more likely a small trial than a great one, but whatever it is, there is grace sufficient in Christ.

Christ Within


"Through him that strengtheneth me". Here is the secret. Sometimes that has been put into very clumsy English and described as 'instrengthening'. It may be clumsy, but it is helpful, for that is exactly what the Apostle said. Through him that strengtheneth me inwardly'. This is the true nature of the Christian life. Is Christ enough for any situation? Why, of course He is! Where you are or will be tomorrow, would the Lord Jesus be triumphant there? Of course He would! Well, the secret and wonder of the Christian life is the Lord Jesus *in* you, in me. "Through him that strengtheneth me inwardly", deep down.

Of course, Samson does not illustrate this, but he does in another way show what it means. Samson was the only man who knew the secret. Even his own father and mother did not know. The Philistines, who speak of ordinary people of the world, did not know, it was a riddle to them. They racked their brain for seven days and never found the answer, and never would, but for the unhappy side of the story. This is a secret experience, it is a deep hidden one. Every child of God knows it, but it is a mystery to the natural mind for it is not physical strength, it is not moral courage, it is not strength of will or purpose or character. It is deeper down than that. This is the true nature of the age in which we live. The Spirit may be given in power upon a man as it was upon Samson for some service, and that may be necessary and wonderful and we wish there was more of it, but the true nature of the dispensation is this, that God has put the power of His Spirit in a deep inward way in every heart in order that the triumph of Christ might be demonstrated in daily affairs, in ordinary circumstances, in trials and problems in order that, though not delivered from them, although we do not find an easy way out of them, in the midst of them we are able to triumph in Christ. That is the age of the Spirit and that is the truest testimony to Christ deep down, ye deeper down than you and I think, strength in a very hidden part of our being, and the reason why that strength very often does not operate is not our weakness, but another strength in us somewhere nearer the surface. That inner hidden life does not get a chance because there is some other strength that meets it on the way. The strength of our reasoning; if the Apostle Paul had sat down to reason what might be the will of God, as so often we do, thinking about it going round it, why was he hungry, why had this happened, thinking of people and circumstances and things, the strength of his own reasoning would have

quenched the power of the Spirit. It is not only weak people, it is not only our weaknesses that hinder this manifestation of the indwelling power; it is our strengths, and weak people are often the strongest, strong in reasoning, strong in feeling. We feel something, we feel inadequate, and because we feel inadequate, we fail. We say, We are so weak! It is not so much the weakness, it is that strength of feeling in you that is holding down the power of the Lord. You are being governed by your emotions, by your sense either of strength or weakness, ability or inability. All that whole realm of feeling is a strength that is not the strength of the Spirit deeper down than feeling. Through Him that instrengtheneth me in the inner man of my heart. Strength of pride, strength of so many other features of our complex being—how they spoil the Lord's victory in our lives. We may stand on our dignity, we may know that we are right and we may think the other person is wrong, but all the time that situation, in that matter, is marked by black defeat when it ought to be marked by glorious triumph, and we blame them and this and the other, but the real truth is that we are not giving the Lord a chance. They may be wrong, we may be right. Put that all on one side. Say this—Through Him Who makes me strong inwardly, I am able for anything. What a different world it would be, what a different Christian world it would be, if the saints of God were giving the Lord Jesus the chance to manifest His life in them. That is what it comes to—His life ministered inwardly by the power of the Holy Spirit, making us, not different in circumstances from others, but different in the way we face circumstances: not less tried, but more triumphant in trial. "Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness".

I sometimes feel ashamed to speak because I know some of the Lord's people have trials far beyond what comes to me. I feel it is cheap and easy to say, Trust the Lord and triumph. I can but hand on the Lord's word to you and ask you to take it from Him. The Apostle Paul had to come back to this that circumstances, whatever they were, were in the Lord's hands, and when he got there the Lord gave him victory in them, and in some cases perhaps, brought him out of them. Maybe that is the way for you, bitter and hard though it may be. "Thou hast showed thy people hard things" said the Psalmist, but, in the very next verse "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee". Let us lift up the banner, Christ sufficient and triumphant. Let us have some honey to pass on to other people in His Name.

H.F.

The Deliverance of Souls 

I

An Exodus Accomplished

READING: Luke ix. 27-36; II Pet. i. 16-18; John xviii. 33-37; Col. i. 13.

"There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God."

"My kingdom is not of this world".

"... who delivered us out of the authority of

darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love".

"Behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem".

It is not fresh knowledge to you that that word translated 'decease' in the Revised Version, elsewhere 'departure' or 'death' is really the word 'exodus'—"spake of his exodus which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem". So the Cross is spoken of here as an exodus, which is simply a way or a going out, and the word itself, of course, immediately carries us back to a book which goes by that name, and records the going out of the people of Israel from Egypt. What the exodus was to Israel, the Cross was to the Lord Jesus and is for us—a way and a going out, but a going out through a definitely prescribed door, and that door the door of death. That was the only way out for Israel—through the door of death. It was the only way out for the Lord Jesus, and it is the only way out for us.

But that can be put in another way. The door of death *was* and *is* the way *out*! The Apostle, in the passage in Col. i. 13 completes it and says it is also the way in. "...who delivered us out of the authority of darkness, and translated us *into* the kingdom of the Son of his love". And in that connection, the presence of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration is particularly significant, for Moses and Elijah were two men in the Old Testament who knew, one, the way out and the other, the way in; the exodus and the translation, and they were there to speak with Him about this; that His death was the way out, but it was also the way in. It was an escape from one scene and condition, and a translation into another.

But we must give due heed to another word here—"the exodus that he was about to *accomplish* at Jerusalem". Another word for that is 'achieve'. It was not just a going out, that the door was opened and He went through; not at all. It was an achievement, an accomplishment; and, if we want some little idea of what that meant, look at the exodus of Israel again and see whether it was an accomplishment. Did they just walk out through a door that was opened? Not at all. There was an immense amount to be accomplished achieved, to get them out through that door.

And the type is only a very faint shadow of what the Cross of the Lord Jesus meant in the matter of something to be accomplished, a way out to be accomplished, achieved, a mighty work to be done. "Who *delivered*..."—it is upon the meaning of that word that we are going to dwell, I think, quite a lot. The deliverance of souls. "...who delivered us out of the authority of darkness". That is the one side. The other side—"and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love",—but that will await some further consideration.

Satan's Rights Destroyed

"Who delivered". What a tremendous amount there is in that word, what a history! We shall see that eighty years of the life of Moses were taken up by

God with the formation of one who could deliver; deliverance is such a tremendous thing. "Who delivered us out of the *authority*"—the word 'power' is in our version, but it is that word which means authority or right, and here it has a double meaning. It refers to the person. You notice that it is translated in the plural in Eph. vi. 12—"Our wrestling is... against the principalities, against the powers..."—the same word, 'authorities'. These are personal things. They are entities in a certain position. The authority of darkness is firstly a person, of whom Pharaoh is but a faint type.

And then the authority is that power which is wielded and exercised by one in a position to exercise it, who has the right to exercise it in his own realm, and whose very strength is in his right; from whom you cannot be delivered just in the direct way of snatching from his grasp, but you have to undo his right to hold, you have to take from him all ground of jurisdiction, to bring him to judgment and judge him clean out of court, so that he has not any more ground to stand upon, he has no case left. 'Hath delivered us from the very case that the devil has against us'—that is a tremendous thing, that he has no more case against us. He will forever be seeking to have a case against us, to find some ground on which he can bring up a case against us. Hence he is called "the accuser of the brethren" (Rev. xii. 10), but he has had his case spoiled, his ground destroyed, his rights nullified, and in this way we are delivered out of the authority of darkness. The Cross of the Lord Jesus is that kind of exodus, that escape, that way out, that glorious achievement.

You see, this word 'authority' carries with it the idea of rights, and that great battle in Egypt, headed up to the Passover and consummated at the Red Sea, was all a question of rights. In the Passover, the rights of Pharaoh were wound up. If we understand the meaning of the virtue of the blood of the lamb, the dying of that lamb, the identification by faith of every believer with that lamb in death, and the appropriation by faith of the blood of the lamb, then we understand the meaning of Pharaoh's rights being wound up. From that moment, he had no rights over them, and they began their exodus. He sought to re-assert his rights and he met the authority of superior rights and his hosts were destroyed in the Red Sea. He had no ground to stand upon, morally, spiritually and literally; his ground was gone.

All *that* is gathered into the Cross of the Lord Jesus. The work of the Lord Jesus in His Cross is all gathered into the Passover; and then, as He leads His people out through the offering of Himself, the shedding of His Blood, Satan's rights over them have been destroyed and they have a position which means that, while Satan will be active afterward, he is only active against himself while they maintain their position in faith; he is only bringing upon himself his own destruction while we hold to the ground that the Blood of the Lord Jesus has provided. That mighty Passover can turn back upon Satan for his own undoing.

Deliverance from the Authority of Darkness

You notice that the book which goes by this name—Exodus—begins with the names of the sons of Israel, the names of the elect race, and then out of Egypt God calls His son collectively as one son, the sons in the son. He leads them out—and what a rich fulness of meaning that gives to a little statement with which we are so familiar in John's Gospel—"He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out" (John x. 3). The names all mentioned, the chosen ones; He leadeth them out, He makes the exodus for His own sheep.

It says this, that those who were in Judaism, as it was in the days when our Lord was here on earth, were in something which had become bound up with the kingdoms of this world from which they had to be delivered by the death of the Lord Jesus—and it was a very religious thing. We are getting very near to the heart of things. Our deliverance from the authority of darkness may have to be wrought, not only in our separation from this world as we think of it, it may have to be wrought in a religious sense to get a people out into a heavenly place, even from Christianity as a religion of this world, something which has become bound up with this world and its kingdom. This deliverance of the Cross is an utter thing—that is what we are getting at.

Complete Separation from Satan's Kingdom

The Lord was very explicit about Israel's exodus. He wrought and wrought for His rights, so completely, that He would not compromise to the degree of a hoof. "There shall not a hoof be left behind" (Ex. x. 26). He was working for *His* rights over other rights, *His* authority, and He would not allow a fragment to remain outside of His own realm. That means that the Kingdom of the Son of His love is a Kingdom which claims all, which represents all, which means the most perfect separation from the kingdom, whatever its form and nature, over which Satan has rights and therefore power. God is not going to give His power, His glory, to any little fragment which lies within the domain of the prince of this world. The secret of spiritual power, of spiritual life, of spiritual fulness, of spiritual effectiveness, the secret of reaching God's full end, is found in the utterness of the dominion of the Lord Jesus, in His having His rights in the life. Until, in type, that was established in the case of Israel, they were a floundering people. They, although out literally from Egypt, were not out spiritually, and were weak, impersistent, unreliable, ineffective, inwardly divided. They were not really out in an inward way. God could not commit Himself to them until they were established on the other side of Jordan. Then He could; He commenced to commit Himself at Jericho, and went on.

Israel was chosen, in the sovereignty of God, to be the instrument and vessel of blessing to all nations of the earth. God intended to reach all through Israel. In them, Abraham's seed, all nations of the earth were intended to be blessed. There is a sense, of course, in which that has been fulfilled, inasmuch as Jesus Christ

of the seed of Abraham has been the blessing to all nations, but Israel *as a nation* was called to be a blessing and a channel of Divine blessing to all peoples, and Israel failed. The Church has come in according to the word of the Lord Jesus—"The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. xxi. 43). And Peter says about the Church—"an elect race...a holy nation" (I Pet. ii. 9), to take the place of Israel with the same object—that the Church might be the channel of Divine blessing to all peoples.

Now, why is it that there is so much ineffectiveness, so much lack of power, so much defeat—that is, absence of victory; so much that does not count for God about us. Let us ask ourselves in all honesty whether it may not be that, as yet, we do not know in a living way, the meaning of the Cross as it is here set forth. The Cross represents that accomplishment of an utter going out from a realm where Satan has rights and therefore has power to spoil. In Egypt, Pharaoh had rights. He was king of Egypt, that was his domain, he had a right to do what he would. These people are in my domain, then they come under my rule and I can do as I like, as I will! So he oppressed, he weakened, he limited, he afflicted. And yet they are the elect, called sons of God, called sons of God even when they are there. We are sons of God by calling. But what a terrible thing to think of sons of God in a state of defeat like this, all because they are in a realm where there are rights by which they are bound. While they stay in that realm, and, mark you again, while there remains one hoof in that realm—they might have all gone out, flocks and herds and everything of their possessions might have gone out, and then just one hoof of one bullock left in Egypt—the whole thing would have been under arrest. The Lord's attitude was, I want that last hoof before I move! That is a very literal interpretation, but that is the Lord's attitude.

It means this, that our vocation cannot be fulfilled, the calling with which we are called, the power of God, cannot be realised while one fragment remains in the territory where Satan has rights. We must get on to the ground, into the realm, where all those rights are destroyed and he has no authority at all; and God has secured that realm, that position, by the Cross of the Lord Jesus, and if you and I will only come into line with the meaning of the Cross in its fulness, we have come into the way of power, fruitfulness, effectiveness.

I was asking the question, why it is that the Church is so ineffective? which is only saying, why is it that so many Christians are so spiritually weak and unfruitful and ineffective? Somewhere there is a link with the world; outwardly or inwardly, there is a link with the world—that is, the kingdom of darkness, the authority of darkness. I am not talking about our being here on the earth and having to work here in this world. You know the difference between being *in* it and *of* it, between being here and having heart relationships, voluntary relationships, choices, interests, desires, ambitions and so on; to be a part of this world in
(concluded on front page)

continued from back page)

its acceptance, its recognition, and many other things. The way out and the way in is the way of death and that death, while it is all-inclusive in His own—for He has comprehended all that it means—He says for us it is a crisis and then a daily thing. "Take up his cross daily" (Luke ix. 23), which means, I die daily to the call of this world, to the call of that kingdom where Satan has rights and authority, a call to my heart to be something here-in this world as in itself. Oh, how subtly Satan uses that with many, seeking to argue that the realisation of an ambition would give even greater opportunity for the Lord. That is very nice to the flesh. The Cross has to be brought to all those subtle arguments of the angel of light; and while I would not say to anybody, Be careless, be slipshod, be second-rate in what you are and what you are doing on this earth,—never let your Christianity make you less than the best amongst men and women and the most efficient in your job; at the same time, examine your motive, your object, your ambition. Examine your hearts in the light of the Cross, and see whether it is self-gratification, self-glory, or any form of self as the goal that is influencing the argument. It is a deep heart matter, this matter of the Cross *daily*, dying to much, perhaps, that the flesh would like, dying to the cravings of this natural life, and oh, they are so strong! It is so difficult to let this self go altogether and be nothing as amongst men.

When we come to think of the deliverer of souls, we shall find that Moses and Christ started in this world with no place of acceptance. Moses came into the world and found that the door was shut to him in this world and he had to be hidden three months. His life was a prey from his birth. And Christ came into this world on exactly the same conditions. Herod's edict was at work and there was no place for Him, and it is very difficult to take up a life which is like that from the very inception. What you are as the Lord's, what you represent, you as a child of God, as a Christian man or woman, you are not wanted. If you

will only just compromise a bit, you will be accepted. If only you will hide it a bit, nothing will be said, the way will be open for you. But if you are going to stand on that ground of Christ, then the door is shut to you, you are not wanted. This is what it means that the Cross stands there right at the beginning of this life. You remember Exodus xii—"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months...they shall take to them every man a lamb". The beginning was with death, death to self, as to this kingdom.

Well now, we know that this is very practical in its application, and it does work out like this, that, inasmuch as there is anything that belongs to that realm in ourselves, inasmuch as it is here and we are actuated by it, influenced by it, governed in any way by it, spiritual weakness, spiritual defeat, spiritual paralysis, unfruitfulness is the result. Somewhere there is a bridge, a link, a connection with the realm the Lord cannot have, His rights are not ceded. Out of the *authority*, not only the realm, but the *right* of Satan, into the Kingdom of the Son of His love.

You notice the Mount of Transfiguration. "There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 27). Then eight days afterward—a significant number, resurrection, new ground, the old world gone, the Son of Man glorified—eight days afterward He taketh Peter, John and James up into the mountain, a heavenly position, and prayed. There came a voice out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him". Peter, recounting it in his letter, says, "He received from the Father honour and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount" (II Pet. i. 17-18). "Into the kingdom of the Son of his love". "In whom I am well pleased". That very Kingdom of the Lord's pleasure, the Lord's delight, lies on the other side of the exodus. T.A.S.

Acknowledgments.—We acknowledge with gratitude the following gifts (other than local) received between March 29th and May 31st, 1945:—

Abinger Common, 4s.; Anon., 10s. and 10s.; Ashford, 5s.; Balaka, £1; Barnsley, 4s.; Belfast, 2s. 6d.; Bethnal Green, 2s.; Bexleyheath, £1; Birmingham, 10s. and 10s.; Bradford, 10s.; Brechin, £5 and £5; Brighton 5s. and 10s.; Bromley, 3s. 6d.; Bushmills, 7s.; Cardiff, 10s.; Cbeshani, 4s. 6d.; Chirk, 3s. 6d.; Coggeshall, 5s.; Congleton, 10s.; Coonoor, 5s.; Craven Arms, 1s. 6d.; Crowborough, £1 and £1; Cumberland Mills, Maine, 15s.; Dannevirke, N.Z., 5s. Dohnavur, £5; Dublin, £1, 10s., 9s. and £2; Dunoon, 10s.; Edinburgh, £1, 10s., 5s. and £1; Epsom, 10s.; Glasgow, 10s., 10s., 7s. 6d., 3s., £2 3s. and £1; Halifax, 1s. 3d.; Heathfield, 5s.; Ilfracombe, 1s.; Ipswich, 3s. 6d.; Larbert, 10s.; Largs, 5s.; Leyland, £2; Lincoln, 10s.; Little Madeley, 10s.; Llanelly, 2s.; London, S.E.5, 2s. 6d.; London, S.E.5, 10s.; London, S.E.6, 7s. 6d.; London, S.E.15, 4s.; London, S.E.23, 10s.; London, S.W.11, 5s.; London, S.W.15, 1s. 3d.; London, N.6, £1; London, N.W.1, 5s.; London, N.W.2,

5s.; London, £1; Long Beach, Cal., £2 9s. 4d.; Nairn, £1; Neath, 3s.; Neuchatel, 5s. 6d.; N. Berwick, 3s. 6d.; N. Sydney, 10s.; N. Wembley, 5s.; Old Hill, 2s. 6d.; Overton, 5s.; Parkstone, 10s.; Peckham, 10s.; Penygroes, 2s. 6d.; Perth, W.A., £1; Reading, £3; St. Annes, 10s.; St. Ives, 1s.; St. Keverne, 5s.; St. Michel de Chabrilanoux, France, £4; Sandown, 10s.; Sandwich, 6s.; Southbourne, 10s.; Stanmore, 5s.; Surbiton Hill, £1; Swalecliffe, 10s.; Switzerland, £4; Syerston, 2s. 6d.; Theydon Bois, 2s. 6d.; Tonbridge, 2s. 6d.; Totten, 6s. 6d.; Travancore, £1; Tunbridge Wells, 4s.; Wallington, 8s.; Wallsend-on-Tyne, 10s.; Wembley, 10s.; Wendover, 2s. 6d.; West Medford, 14s. 10d.; West Wickham, 10s. and 15s.; Worthing, 2s. 6d.; Yonkers, N.Y., £1.

Money Orders received: U.S.A. 98815, £1 4s. 8d.; U.S.A. 164537, 9s. 10d.; U.S.A. 68217, £1; U.S.A. 98816, £1 4s. 8d. Total. £80 11s. 4d.

Birmingham, Ala., \$1.00; Jackson, Miss., \$2.00; Jennings, Fla., \$1.00; New York, \$5.00; Pasadena, Cal., \$2.00; Schen., \$1.00; F.E. Africa, \$5.00. Total, \$17.00.

A bi-monthly ministry by which it is sought to lead the Lord's people into His full thought for them.

"A Witness and a Testimony"

Maintained
by the offerings of
those who are helped by it.

SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER, 1945

NO. 5, VOL. 23

Editor's Letter

BELOVED OF GOD,

I write these lines in the midst of the "peace celebrations", and negotiations, although it may be some weeks before many of you receive this copy of the paper. Everything is too near for full realisation at the moment, but, although we know this world too well to have illusions about her tranquil future, we do breathe a true prayer of gratitude for any cessation of major wars, and space free from the intense strain of these years. The great spiritual adversary has not failed to use the conditions of these years in a particular way to engulf those and that which belong to the Lord. In every way and means it has been no easy thing to continue the Lord's work in outward ways. But—and this is the main point of this letter—a great story is being unfolded of His work in hidden and inward ways. Our motto for this year has been concerning His faithfulness, and how it is coming to light! From the hushed countries of the years we are now getting letters—France Holland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, etc., and even Japan; and all telling of that faithfulness through indescribable suffering. Very few of our beloved friends have passed away through war conditions, and they all tell of His wonderful grace. This story will grow greatly, we are confident. It is indeed a joy to be in touch again, and we eagerly look for the day—may it be soon—when we can meet again. We prayerfully look for such changes as will make travelling possible and an enlargement of our printed ministry. It is just wonderful how this latter has been maintained through the war years. 1944 was a record year in our entire history for literature sent out on demand, and the first six months of 1945 have seen a considerable increase on the whole of that year. The Lord is able to maintain what He wants, no matter what the conditions.

And what does He want? We have no question or doubt about that. It is writ large throughout His Word and emphasised with unmistakable force at the end. The Lord wants, *and must have*, a people living in the good of the greater fullnesses of Christ! For the sake of all the rest, His own who lag behind or walk afar off, and for the world, He *must* have a heart and core of those who, with eyes of heart enlightened, and with willingness to pay the price, will stand for His *full* satisfaction, and "Overcome because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony, and love not their own lives, even unto death". This has been the object and purpose of this ministry throughout its years, but we are being increasingly pressed up into it. The new series of messages beginning with this issue is the fruit of this pressure. If there is one thing true more than another with us it is that we have never been allowed to fall into a merely doctrinal ministry; a ministry of retailing truths and ideas. Ministry and living experience have been kept very strictly, severely, and deeply in oneness. If it had not been so we could not possibly have gone on, for the cost has been too great for just the propagating of ideas. There is nothing that we want to keep going; nothing that we want to see successful. Everything can go, and we pray that it will, immediately the Lord has no commensurate use for it. We have ever tried to make one thing clear; it is that we are not seeking to set up something, and to influence people to leave other things and adhere to it. The suggestion that this is our object is the devil's way of trying to prejudice a ministry which people the world over and *in all connections* of Christian activity are constantly saying is meeting their deepest spiritual need. We have but one object, that is to know Christ in the fullest possible measure, and that for His Body's sake, which is the Church. We leave all practical questions as the issues of a revelation of Christ in believers, quite content that such a revelation will settle all such questions if they are obedient to the heavenly vision. It is Christ Who settles

all other matters. Many will act on other and lesser grounds, misapprehending our ministry, and will therefore bring the ministry into disrepute. Some will act on true spiritual dealings of the Lord with them, and will suffer reproach from the disobedient and those bound by "the tradition of the elders".

We may have big reservations as to the rightness of the Christian system as it is now, and feel that it most definitely limits the Lord and His people, but, we know that the true Church is greater and above its earthly outwardnesses, and it is that heavenly Church that we try to see through all the other: it is wherever Christ is and in whomsoever He dwells. So our ground is the universality of Christ in all who are born of His Spirit. This is a positive position and attitude, and not a negative or passive one. So often we are confronted—and sometimes affronted—with what Christians are here and with the earthly aspects of their Christian system that it calls for a real effort to get through to Christ in them, and then the measure is small—but the effort *must* be made, for only so can there be a hope of increase: the consciousness of our own limitation and need of constant growth and adjustment makes for patient forbearance and understanding. There can be no pedestalled "I have attained" when we are still on the Potter's wheel, and we shall not be off it until we "awake in His likeness".

Pray for this ministry, dear friends, it is truly needed, and there are many children of God all over the world who are yearning for spiritual food unto fuller life. Stand in your place with the exalted Christ, and claim His full rights for Him, and withstanding the enemy's great efforts at frustration.

With greetings and love in our Lord,

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS

Overcomer Testimony

READING: Isa. i. 9; Rom. ix. 27, 29; xi. 2-5, 26; Isa. viii. 17/18.

After long and very deep exercise of heart and weighing things solemnly before the Lord, I am led quite strongly to the conclusion that His message for us at this time, and not for us only, but for His whole Church, is concerning Overcomer Testimony. The definition will wait upon all that we have to say; I do not stay to try to explain that in any preliminary word. You will notice that I leave out the article and just say "Overcomer Testimony", not something new in itself perhaps to any of us, but I believe in the intention of God, new in emphasis. We begin by reminding ourselves of the fact of overcomers throughout the whole history recorded in the Scriptures, the fact of Overcomers in Divine history.

The Fact of Overcomers

Overcomers date from the very first spiritual declension. Abel marked that development and was the first Overcomer, and Overcomers are found at every point of spiritual climax; when things had proceeded and their whole tendency or actual course was a departure from the essential mind of God. When that course reached a climax, at that point you find Overcomers. Enoch marked such a climatic point, and he not only historically signified something which stood against the general spiritual course, but was in himself prophetic of this whole course and consummation; prophetic that throughout history God would have that which was quite different from things in general spiritually, and a positive counter thereto. The little reference to Enoch, as you know, comes right there in the midst of the monotonous recounting of men's deaths and burials. The whole course is just broken into, suddenly, strikingly, with

the simple statement before the old course is resumed—"And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. v. 24). Then you revert to death and burial. Noah and his family were the embodiment of the principle of overcomers. Joseph again took up that principle, one of a whole patriarchal family. The spiritual level had become very low, a period of spiritual paralysis had been introduced and was about to run four hundred years. Right into that situation, Joseph stood as something different, distinguished. In himself and in his testimony and in his experience, he embodied very much of that which goes to make the Overcomer. It is not our intention to stay with all those details. Every one of the Overcomer features in all these people would occupy an hour. That is not our business. Joshua and Caleb form a link in this chain when death is rampant, active, running its course to wipe out the whole generation of the Lord's people because of spiritual failure. Joshua and Caleb maintained God's original position and are maintained by God against the course of things, and are brought through into the full inheritance. Elijah undoubtedly occupied that position and fulfilled that capacity of the Overcomer in his day. Indeed, we may say of all or most of the prophets. Daniel stands out amongst them. The seven thousand who bowed not the knee to Baal were the Overcomers of their day, and the hundred prophets hidden by Obadiah in two companies of fifty. Ezra, Nehemiah and the Remnant—they stand in this succession, until we come to the end of the Old Testament to find what is almost like a Remnant of the remnant in Malachi when even the Remnant has declined. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one with another" (Malachi iii. 16—Overcomers of the end.

We move into the New Testament and are immediately in the presence of Overcomers—Anna and Simeon in themselves, and then they spoke to all those who looked for the Redemption of Jerusalem. But they were a distinguished people, they were waiting for the Lord. In the Gospels, this is exactly what is happening. The Lord Jesus made no national appeal, and certainly no political appeal. He gathered out a nucleus—if you like—as to things as they were then, a remnant, for those who came into living association with Him; the twelve, the one hundred and twenty were something different spiritually from the religious life, and the best religious life, of their day, and they proved to be Overcomers indeed.

Then we pass to the end of the New Testament, and we know that sevenfold repetition of the very phrase in the second and third chapters of the Revelation—"to him that overcometh". And what is represented by the seven seems to be gathered up into one in Chapter xii and has now become a corporate expression or representation of Overcomers in a Man-child concerning whom it is said—"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death".

Very rapidly, that is a survey of the *fact* of Overcomers, and from that survey we are able to see that such are definitely recognised by God. They are taken account of by God Himself and to such He makes special promises. They are of account to Him in a special way. That is expressed in the words concerning the little company in Malachi's time—"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day that I do make, even a peculiar treasure". Now, perhaps all that needed little emphasis and perhaps hardly needed to have been said. Nevertheless, we must have our foundation of Scripture for all that we have to say.

The Nature of Overcomers i. Negatively

So we pass from the fact of the Overcomers to the nature and function of Overcomers, and firstly just a word negatively, what Overcomers are not. They do not stand related to anything partial. I do want you to take very careful note of this. It is most important that we are clear as to what it is we have in view. I repeat therefore that Overcomers do not stand related to anything partial. They are not the sponsors and champions of particular doctrines and interpretations, and such things. With them, it is not a matter of certain conceptions of truth and practices in relation thereto, although from time to time a specific emphasis has been necessary because at certain points particular weakness and failure has arisen. Nevertheless, in the thought of God it is the whole counsel of God which He was seeking to restore and not some part of it. Overcomers, if they are according to God's mind, are not people individually or collectively who simply underline certain truths and keep to that. Therefore they cannot be a separate and distinctive movement marked by just particular and specific teaching and

separated from all others for that reason. They cannot be joined, you cannot join the Overcomer band. You cannot argue, discuss, reason out Overcomer truth and adopt it or reject it. You cannot have a Round Table for considering this thing, and then deciding what you are going to do with it. All such conceptions, mentalities and activities are ruled out. It cannot be taken up, for it is not an "it" as something apart from all God's thought. It is the very embodiment of *all* God's thought. We have heard a certain interpretation given to a fragment which is repeated in those early chapters of Revelation. "If any man", and "to him that overcometh" and the explanation, the interpretation, is that at the end things are no longer corporate but just individual, and the suggestion or implication of that interpretation is that all that is in Ephesians is cancelled out by Revelation, that all the teaching on the corporate nature and expression of the Body of Christ is now suspended and it has become resolved into a personal and individual matter. "If any man," and "to him". Dear friends, I have always found very great difficulty in believing that any one part of God's Word rules out another part, and especially such parts as Ephesians; and while, as you shall see in a moment, there is an element of truth in that interpretation, unless it is safeguarded, it is very dangerous and misleading. Anything that is misleading is very dangerous.

Rather should not the interpretation be this that while the corporate remains, we can only be in the corporate by a personal revelation. An Overcomer is one who has a *personal* history with God in these matters. What I have just been saying is that it is not a thing that you can take up, that you can have meetings about and you can discuss and argue and decide upon in a collective way, so that you get the resolution of the meeting as to what is going to happen and what course you are going to take. That is not so. It comes down to this—it is something between the individual and God. It is a very immediately personal thing of what God has been doing and is doing in the life, in the spirit, in the being of those concerned. Anything corporate must come out of that. Of course, that has always been the law of the Church. But here at the end in order to get back to a full and adequate corporate testimony, the individual has got to have a very living history with God as to what God is really after, has got to know that he or she, no matter what is happening to all the rest, he or she is under the hand of God and God is doing something. That is the bedrock of Overcomer testimony, and if what I have already said is not wrong, that Rev. xii is the sum of Rev. ii and iii in its spiritual essence, the corporate is found in Rev. xii in a Man-child. A Man-child is born which is spoken of firstly as a single entity and then referred to as "they". It is many in one; it is the corporate, but it is the sum total of all those individuals who have overcome, the "any man"s, the "to him"s now brought into a final collective expression. What I am trying to emphasize is this, that the essence of Overcomer

testimony is that God has done something very definitely and very specifically, something much more than a general operation in the heart in relation to something which is very near to His own heart, and which the whole body even of Christians will not be prepared to accept and follow after. Well, that is the negative side—what it is not.

ii, Positively

(a) Life and Spirituality

Let us come to the positive side. We begin from the circumference. God has His own very great thoughts and intentions as to His creation. Oh, I do pray God that I may not fail in this one thing that is in my heart, that Overcomer testimony is not some little thing, some little hole-in-the-corner thing, some little departmental thing—(I mean the testimony). People may be small, as we shall see later, but the Testimony is great. God has His own very great thoughts and intentions as to His creation. They are far, far too great for our comprehension at any one time. We can only grow unto them and into them. We have not the constitution to bear the full unveiling of the thoughts of God; we should just go to pieces, crack under the strain, we could not stand it. It is always true,—“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John xvi. 12). Have you never, even in the poor, limited, fragmentary revelation that has come to you by some means had to say, Stop! I cannot go any further, I have enough to occupy me for some time to come. Think of all the vast range and significance of Divine thoughts and intentions. At no one time can we comprehend them all. Moreover, it will take a vast multitude, a countless number, to grow into those thoughts. The most that anyone could ever comprehend will be a mere fragment, an atom. It will require that great multitude which no man can number to comprehend and express the thoughts and intentions of God.

And let us at once say that these thoughts of God are not just ideas and abstract mental effusions. They are all embodied and expressed in a living Person, His Son, God Himself incarnate. God's thoughts have been brought to us in that way. We must remember that, while the Lord Jesus had an individual consciousness, He also had a race consciousness. While He, in His own mind, was a Person, an individual Person, He was in Himself also a vast corporate company, He was the nucleus of a great multitude. That is why you can never come into the Lord Jesus and be an individual. If you are in Christ you are only a part of something very vast, and all these great, these vast thoughts and intentions of God are all centred in His Son, embodied in Him, and eventually, so great is He, so vast is He as the sum of all God's thoughts and intentions, that He will fill all things. That, of course, at once puts a great strain upon even our brains, and I hope it is not just going to be brain work. Vital union with Christ and vital union in Him is essential to the comprehending of these thoughts of God. The way

of such knowledge is the way of life, and the way of life is positive corporate union with the Lord Jesus. The way of God's teaching is not the way of the class room. The way of God's teaching is the way of practical handling of us and bringing about situations in which we have to know Christ in some new way, which knowledge alone can save us from despair, which knowledge alone can deliver us, which knowledge is absolutely vital and essential to our existence. It becomes a crisis like that, so that the true spiritual life is one of a series of crises which are ends and new beginnings; the end of something inadequate, the beginning of some new discovery of Christ, some new knowledge of Him. It is practical, vital knowledge, taught by and through experience. That is the way of comprehending God, His thoughts and intentions, and it is the only way. It is the only way to that position where there will be an issue in triumph. The situation is sooner or later going to be one of defeat or victory, and utter defeat or utter victory. It is going to be right through and right out, or it is going to be the other way. That is the issue for the Overcomer, that is the issue for the Church, and it will only be those who, in this way of experience, under the hand of God, have come to know the Lord, to know Christ inwardly, who will go right through and right out. That is the revelation of the Overcomer, the Man-child, in Rev. xii. It is knowledge of Christ in life and growth, and that on the principle of the Body, organic and corporate, and again that by reason of deathless life. Oh, listen! Deathless life in which there is no old age or senility. I say that because many of us are very conscious of the latter. We know that old age is creeping towards us and we are very much aware of senility overtaking, that is, growing limitations in mental powers, concentration and application and mental endurance and in other ways; which means that naturally we are not going to learn a great deal more in that way, we are not going to comprehend very much more. We are going to reach our limit and then perhaps decline naturally. But what I am saying now is this, that there is that in us which in extreme old age can still be comprehending the vast, and going far beyond the capacity of nature. Spiritual knowledge is so different, spiritual apprehension is so different from natural. The capacity of Divine life knows nothing of decay, of corruption, of limitation, of coming to an end or declining. It is possible and it ought to be the experience of every true child of God that even in old age they bear fruit; in this sense, that there is that which still is fresh and still in growth when natural powers are declining. Therefore I say this knowledge of Christ on the principle of life knows nothing of old age and senility; it goes on. Do not surrender to nature; that is, do not surrender your Christianity to nature; do not surrender to nature your birth-right, which is eternal life; and do not think of eternal life as only that you are going to survive after this scene. Remember, it is a quality of life with all God's potentialities in it, all the potentialities of reaching the vastness of

those Divine thoughts in Christ. Later, if the Lord wills, I may have something more to say about that, but I just leave it there, and for the present hasten to round it off.

We were saying that these are not just abstract ideas, this is positive, practical, experimental knowledge, the result of the free action of Divine life in us, the mystery and wonder, the marvel of Divine life within which knows no limitations. Thus, fulness is governed by two things. Firstly by life and spirituality. Those two are one, one is but the definition of the other. Life and spirituality; it is spiritual life, it is a spiritual state which that life produces. It is related entirely to all spiritual things, related to association with God, union with God, knowledge of God. That life makes the link and defines the nature of spirituality. Fulness is based upon that. If any of us live on the basis of nature, in the measure in which we do that, we are unspiritual and miss God. If, for instance, you are just trying to get round and get over the immensities of God's thoughts by reason, projecting your head into that realm and trying to comprehend with natural reason, you will not only do yourself harm and bring yourself to despair, but you will miss the way entirely. This requires the renewed, re-born spirit indwelt and taught by the Holy Spirit. You people who call yourselves thinking people, your reaction is; Where does human reason come in? Is it not a Divine gift? Yes; but it is an after instrument. You do not begin with it. You have to have it in order to communicate with other people who are on the same level, rational people. To be able to say to others what God has shown to you requires your brain, but you never get that revelation by means of your brain. You will undo yourself if you try, and you will miss the way. So it is on any other line of the natural, we will miss the way. How often we have been brought to the point where in despair we have said, I give it up, I cannot see, I cannot understand! and we have fallen down before the Lord and said, I have extended myself to the last fraction to try and understand and apprehend; now I give it up unless you show and reveal it to me. In the very simplest way, with the greatest of ease, light just begins to filter through, and you do not know exactly when it happened, but you are able to say, I see now! That is the nature of spiritual knowledge. It is always like that, it will ever be like that. It is life, it is spirituality. It is that you are in living union with God, and not as merely a fact but a process, you are continually living in union with God.

(b) Corporeality

And secondly, corporeality. We have earlier said that it will take the vast multitude, the countless host, to really comprehend and express the greatness of God's thoughts and intentions. The measure of our spiritual growth will be very largely the measure of our fellowship with those who are growing. The Lord never just lays down laws in order to set up a system of laws. His laws are always the embodiment

of His own thoughts, His laws are principles. It is a tremendous thing to be able to put your finger upon principles. Very often when precedent is not in existence, principle comes in with the power of law. You may not have a precedent for something, but there is a principle, and the principle is the precedent. Do you understand what I mean? You get the principle of a thing and you have the key to it all, and God is moving on principle, and anything that He says is not something just said to have things in a certain legal order, but because they are the embodiment of some great spiritual principle, because God is Spirit and everything that comes from God is spirit. When God says, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" (Heb. x. 25), He does not mean, Keep your meetings going. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together... and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching". What day? The day of fulness, the day of consummation. Unto that you have to grow, and growth is corporate. You know quite well, if the Body is more than a metaphor—and it is—that if you detach a member from the rest it will not grow any more. It is a simple law of corporate life. It depends entirely for its own increase upon its vital relationship to the rest, and otherwise any development of it will be entirely artificial. You might perhaps sever a member or organ from the body and give it some artificial stimulant and get some kind of growth, but it would be artificial because it is not governed by all the other governing functions of the body. The Body is no mere metaphor. It is a Divine thought embodying Divine principles and spiritual realities. This is why I said at the beginning—and I am keeping very closer to the matter of Overcomers—that this is not something that you can join, take up, discuss. This is not something of special truths, the Church for instance, the Body of Christ. No, it is not, doctrine just as truth. Overcomers are not those who are standing for truths, in that sense. This thing is the embodiment of spiritual laws without which, and without the observance of which, and the operation of which, these great ends and thoughts of God cannot be reached. The teaching of the Church which is His Body will not get us anywhere as teaching. We might well have meetings and circles and classes to discuss that, but that is not it. It is the spiritual reality of this, and you can only come into this organically. That demands the corporate, relatedness, the fellowship. So ultimately, you will find that the principle of the Overcomer works out like this—"Then *they* that feared the Lord..."; "and *they* overcame..." It begins with us individually and ends with us corporately.

I think I had better finish there for the present. We have only just got a little way into this matter of the nature of Overcomers. There are other very important things to note. Do not forget that God is after something which will be, as far as possible now in time, and then afterward, the embodiment of His full thoughts, not partial thoughts, not partial truths, not specific things, but the whole. If you look at

Overcomers, they represent a greatness, a wholeness, a comprehensiveness. It is the others who have lost; they are the greater company but they have the lesser measure. The Overcomers are the smaller company but the greater measure, and that is what God is after, and it is that testimony to the greatest, fullest measure of God in Christ that God is seeking

to have in a vessel; the greatest measure of Himself in Christ revealed in and through a vessel, call it a remnant if you like, call it Overcomers, what you like. It is the peculiar treasure and it is peculiarly a treasure of God because in it He finds a way for the larger measure of Himself.

T. A-S.

(To be continued).

Spiritual Fullness

READING: I Cor. ii. 14-15; iii. 1-3; xii. 1-8, 31; xiii. 1-3, 13; xiv. 1; Eph. i. 15-19; Col. i. 3-6, 9-10; ii. 1-2.

I am increasingly convinced that, in these end days, the Lord is seeking to bring a people into fulness. As one has moved about among the Lord's people, one has been increasingly impressed with the little apprehension that there is that God's wish and will is that His people should come to fulness of stature, both individually and corporately. In spite of all that we have heard about the ruin of the Church, we cannot accept the position where we say, Well, everything has gone to pieces and it is of no use, we have got to be content with just simple elementary things! You cannot read the Word, the record of God's dealings with His people in olden times, without seeing that God always sought to recover His people to His full thought and purpose, whenever they went astray, and no matter how much so.

Let me remind you of a very familiar fact by way of illustration in passing, that when that small remnant of Israel came out of Babylon and were gathered into the land, as they stood in the street before the Water Gate and Ezra mounted that pulpit of wood and read to them in the open air, he read the whole law of

Moses and he brought them back to the full thought of God for His people; and that is always God's way.

What Spirituality Is

Now, we shall first start at the beginning. That is why I went back to I Cor. ii. "He that is spiritual." Spirituality is the basis of everything. God must have spiritual life in His people as the dominant thing, as the governing thing, if He is to bring them to any measure of fulness, either in the knowledge of the Divine will or in the outworking of the Divine will. I want to be very simple and to start at least in a very simple way, and to ask the question, What is it to be spiritual? What does God mean by this phrase, "He that is spiritual."

Well, of course, it is very easy to answer from Scripture that a spiritual man is a man who walks in the Spirit, who lives in the Spirit; but what does that mean, what are the marks of spirituality? How can we, if we turn our eyes inward for a moment, how can we test ourselves as to whether we are spiritual?

As I was thinking of that, I recalled something I saw in a hall where I was. The first thing that attracted me when I entered that hall was a poster on one of the walls.

THREE CLASSES OF MEN

	<i>Natural</i>	<i>Carnal</i>	<i>Spiritual</i>
Christ	Has no Place.	Has a place.	Has <i>the</i> place.
The Holy Spirit	Does not possess.	Possesses but grieves	Is filled with, and obeys.
Lordship	Self-controlled entirely	A dual control	Christ-controlled
Personality	The body rules	The soul rules	The spirit rules
Illustrated by	Israel in Egypt	Israel in the wilderness	Israel in the land

I think that is very simple and very helpful.

We know the difference between the natural man and the carnal man. The natural man is the unconverted, unregenerated man. He is helpless and hopeless until changed. Our interest is in the difference between the carnal and spiritual Christian. I just want to emphasize two or three points there before passing on that we may test ourselves.

The carnal man gives Christ a place but not the supreme place. Christ has not come to fulness, Christ does not have His settled residence in his heart by faith. Christ does not possess him at the very centre of his being and rule and govern from there. That is the spiritual man. When a man is truly spiritual, Christ is everything, Christ takes up His residence right at the very core of his being by faith. Christ is all in all, and the outstanding mark of a truly spiritual man is that Christ is all in all.

And as to the Holy Spirit—the carnal man possesses the Holy Spirit but continually grieves Him by walking in the flesh. The Holy Spirit, though present, is unable to operate, whereas the spiritual man is filled with and governed by the Holy Spirit.

Now by those simple thoughts we can test ourselves. What is Christ to us? He is everything to God, God has no purpose outside His Son, everything is centred in His Son, and the more spiritual we become, the more we are like God in that respect. Everything for us is found in our Lord Jesus, everything in Christ. And as to the Holy Spirit, we come to depend more and more and more upon Him, He becomes everything to us, that is to say as to power for holy living and power in service. The Holy Spirit fills us, He governs, directs and controls. We learn what it is to walk in the Spirit, our spirits indwelt and energized con-

tinually by the Holy Spirit, the governing factor in life. We learn that our life has to be lived in the Spirit. That is translated for us into terms of actual practice day by day by walking in the Spirit.

Well now, we start there and everything springs out of that. Unless that foundation work has been done or is being done, there is no hope and no prospect of our coming to the fulness of either knowledge or life that God desires.

The Sovereignty of the Spirit

We pass over to the later chapters of I Corinthians, because there the Apostle is dealing with spiritual manifestations, he is showing us what spiritual things are, and I just want to take out of those chapters thoughts which express what true spiritual life consists in. If one may attempt to put into a phrase I Cor. xii—xiv, I think this would express it—the sovereignty of the Spirit leading to the basic and abiding spiritual elements. We read a few verses from I Cor. xii where the great note is the sovereignty of the Spirit. I wonder whether we really have recognized that, and are recognizing it in practice, both in respect of our individual lives and also of our life, our corporate life, as a people of God together. The Holy Spirit is sovereign. He divides to each man severally as *He* will. It is not a question of our likes or dislikes, our preferences, our choices. All those things have to be ruled out absolutely. We must recognize the sovereignty of the Spirit, and the Spirit often takes up the most unlikely persons, people that we should have thought to be quite impossible, and the way of the Spirit is a continual surprise, but He is sovereign and His sovereignty has to be recognized. The sovereignty of the Spirit leading to the abiding, basic spiritual verities.

What are they? "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." Three foundation things which mark the spiritual man—faith, hope, love.

(a) Faith

First of all, faith. The writer to the Hebrews in the eleventh chapter, that great faith chapter, makes this basic assertion. "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." Without faith, nothing for God. That does not mean without faith in Christ for salvation, although that is included, but apart from the principle of faith, nothing comes through for God, nothing is well-pleasing unto Him. Faith is the operative and the underlying element in everything that comes through for God. You need only read Hebrews xi to see that statement amply justified. Everything that is recorded there has come through on the principle of faith. "By faith Abraham..." "By faith Moses..." By faith everybody and everything all the way down the chapter. That did not mean that there was just simply a sort of underlying faith in God and these things followed. Faith is never merely general.

Faith is specific and faith has to be in operation in relation to the matter at issue. Faith has to be in exercise before the thing can come through, and the more you study the Word and read the lives of God's people of ancient times, the more clearly you see that faith was the basis of everything.

Now, what is faith? "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." I like Darby's translation—"Faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." When you take a thing from God by faith, before you actually receive it you are so satisfied that God has given it to you that you have had it in spirit, and if you are wise you praise Him for it, yet you have nothing that you can see. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, it is the reception from God of things in spirit which have not come to you in concrete evidence. It is the inward and heart satisfying evidence of things not seen, and the man who is walking by faith and having transactions with God on the basis of faith, is walking in a perfect confidence in God concerning things. If you challenged him, he could not show you anything, but he knows he has them from God. The outward evidence comes after. It is along that principle that things are wrought for God.

"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Do you think he went with uncertainty, with faltering step? He had an inward assurance which made his walk a confident one. He went out, outwardly not knowing, inwardly at rest. Faith is not simply an intellectual belief, it is not the acceptance of a creed, the acceptance of certain statements of doctrine. We never really exercise faith save as we commit ourselves to the full implications of the thing that we believe. That is where so many of us break down. We hear things and we say, I believe this! but we do not get through, they do not become living and actual and vital and concrete to us because we do not exercise faith in God in relation to those things. So our growth is slow because faith is not put into exercise in relation to the thing God has said. We do not receive it by faith and thank Him for it and wait for Him to make it manifest in actual concrete experience. Well, the spiritual man is the man who walks by faith and has learned what faith is. The walk of faith is a calm and confident going forward in the will of God by reason of an inward assurance, and, as I have already said, faith is always that full committal of the whole being to all the implications of the thing believed. That is the first of these fundamental spiritual elements that mark the spiritual man. He is a man who walks by faith, lives a life of faith, having continual transactions with God on the basis of faith and bringing things through.

(b) Hope

"Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three." There is one great verse in the New Testament about hope. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace

in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost " (Rom. xv. 13). Look at the context, see what the hope of God is. It means that our hope is set upon the point where God's hope is placed and we come into fellowship with Him in His hope, in His hope in relation to the Kingdom, His hope in relation to His Son. Instead of having a multitude of earthly aims and ambitions and hopes and desires, all these fade out and our heart is set and our hope is set perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto us at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, (I Pet. i. 13). This spiritual man is a man whose eyes are lifted, and who is walking in the light of a great hope, a great, consuming, passionate hope fixed in the coming of the Lord Jesus, and all the things that will eventuate; a great delivering thing is hope.

(c) Love

Love, which is the greatest of all, we can sum up in a single phrase. Love is the Divine nature in manifestation, for God is love, essentially love, and as we become more and more spiritual, the love of God will be more and more shed abroad in our hearts and manifested through us.

Now, would it not be a great thing if we had a company of the Lord's people in every one of whom without exception these three great spiritual elements were manifested continually; a people who walked by faith, a people who lived on the basis of faith, whose hearts were calm and confident and quiet under all circumstances because they knew God, they believed God, they were having continual transactions with God; though they might be poor in this world's good, rich because God had given to them in response to their faith and was giving them things continually, not for themselves, but for His glory. And a people who walked in the light of the hope continually, the glory shining upon their pathway and their faces set toward the morning. And a people in whom the love of God was supremely manifested, the Divine nature in expression? Should we not be satisfied?

And yet, if you read the above Scriptures with real spiritual insight, you already have observed that these were but foundation things and that it was just because the Apostle Paul found these things in the saints at Ephesus and Colosse that he gave himself to prayer for them; because these spiritual elements wrought into them and manifested by them made all the fulness of God's purpose possible: and Paul is found actually in a travail of prayer for these very people. He says, We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have toward all the saints, because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, and because we have heard of these things, we are praying for you; these things having been wrought in you fundamentally and basically, making the fulness possible, opening a way to the fulness, and we are praying for you. (Col. i. 3-5). Yes, it was the faith and the hope and the love which he found in these saints that drove Paul to his knees. Paul in his Roman prison, Paul chained to a soldier, Paul with his active life of missionary service and endeavour cut off,

gave himself to prayer which was a veritable travail and conflict that these saints in whom faith and hope and love were found in manifestation should come to the fulness of knowledge, or realisation, of apprehension of Divine purpose, that they might come to apprehend what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled unto all the fulness of God.

Thank God for faith, for without faith it is impossible to please Him. Thank God for the hope, thank God for the love, because these things open the way to fulness, to all God's whole will and purpose for His people.

Paul's Prayer for Spiritual People

Now I just want to remind you of some of the great notes of the Apostle's praying for these people. Do bear in mind and keep ever before you this fact that we have seen from the Word, that the entering into these things can only be as we are spiritual and as these spiritual elements are found in us. These are the elements of the spiritual life.

(a) Fulness of Light

First of all we read a verse or two from Ephesians i. What was it that Paul was praying for these Ephesian Christians? He was praying that they might have fulness of light. "For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and which ye shew toward all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation" (that is, the taking away of a veil, the uncovering of these great realities to our being)" having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know..." Fulness of light, the knowledge of the Divine will; full light as to the heavenly nature and calling of the Church as the fulness of Christ. If you read the whole paragraph, you find there is no stop in it. It is one great, ever-expanding, ever-enlarging statement which issues in this finally—Christ on the universal Throne and the Church as united with Him there and His fulness; the Church the fulness of Christ. No one can know what that means save by Divine revelation. All natural blindness has to be removed and there has to be a very real inshining into our hearts if that is to be anything more to us than a mere statement, mere words. Once our eyes have been opened, our hearts enlightened, and we see something of the tremendous meaning of that word that the Church, the Body of Christ, is His fulness as at God's right hand, far above all principality and power and dominion; once the light has shined into our hearts and we have really seen that by revelation of the Holy Spirit, everything is changed for us, we are changed, for it is a revelation of Divine purpose that goes back to eternity and goes on to eternity. We are thinking the deepest thoughts of God and seeing something of the most marvellous purpose which is unveiled in all the Scripture of truth.

Paul is praying, he is using his knees and is praying with earnestness. This is no light prayer. Paul is at grips with the spiritual situation and he is praying unto tremendous issues, and he is praying for the saints that they might have fulness of light in relation to the nature and calling of the Church.

(b) "Filled Unto All the Fulness of God"

Then you come over to his prayer in Eph. iii. 14. "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 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 Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." That word 'dwell' is a word which means in the original, have His settled residence, Christ may take up His home, may come to abide in your hearts by faith. "to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." An inward strengthening by His Spirit, Christ indwelling, having taken up His home in your heart, and then an apprehension of the Divine purpose as it stretches out into the ages to come, for that is where we come. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever", or, as the margin renders it, all the generations of the ages of the ages. You are in the eternal realm, you are seeing the far-flung purpose of God for the Church. The Church is to be the instrument of the bringing of glory unto Him throughout all the coming ages and it is in that realm you are moving.

What an incongruity, a great far-flung glorious purpose like that and being prayed through in Paul's tired body in Rome as he is chained to a soldier. It meant travail. He sees the importance of it and not only the importance of the purpose but the importance of the saints realising the purpose and coming alongside into co-operation with God in the outworking of the purpose. Paul is not satisfied that the saints should possess the simple and fundamental things only. These things make the rest possible and so he gives himself to prayer in relation to this great fulness.

(c) Full Knowledge of His Will

Then we come over to Colossians. There is the same background. Here is the prayer for the Colossian saints. "We...make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (i. 9-10). It is continual increase, it is never standing still, it is always going on. It is like climbing in a hilly district. A height lies before you; you scale the height only to discover there are further heights beyond, which were hidden from you. It is always like

that. Paul is praying here that the saints may always be going on, always be gaining higher ground, always seeing more far-flung distances, always getting an expanding knowledge of the will and purpose of God until they breathe the air of the heights as the air of heaven and are in fellowship with God in relation to his far-flung and eternal purpose. It is the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Yes, and it is desperate business with this man. That is the point I want to get home to my own heart as well as yours, that this is important, this is not an optional thing. It does really matter to God that He has a people who are able to come into the greater fulnesses, a spiritual people, a people who, having learnt what true spirituality is, can go on to the full knowledge and apprehension of His spiritual purpose in relation to His Son and all that is bound up with Him in the great inheritance of the universe.

(d) Knowledge of Christ, the Mystery of God

Finally and in closing, Col. ii. Here Paul actually declares that his prayer life is a travail and a desperate conflict. You can understand the travail, but why the desperate conflict? Well, because the enemy is out to defeat the purpose of God and if God secures through the prayers of His apostle a people who really can walk with God in these greater fulnesses of apprehension of the Divine purpose and in their outworking, he knows his end is sure, he knows his day is short, and so he is out to defeat it, and Paul, if he is really going to prevail with God on behalf of His people, has to meet the enemy, and the prayer travail becomes a conflict, a mighty striving against spiritual foes; and what is it that he is after, what is it that he is making request for? Why this conflict, this travail of spirit? That they may come to know the mystery of God—Christ. I wish I could tell you what that meant. I cannot even tell you what it means to me, although it means a great deal. It means a great deal more to me than it did twelve months ago. Shut up almost entirely, the Lord has been opening things to me, showing me things deep down in my heart, and I cannot read that verse without a sense of awe coming upon my spirit to-day. "To know the mystery of God, Christ." Do you know Christ as the mystery of God? Ask the Lord to show you what it means, that is the way. Any words that I could use in an attempted exposition would be poverty-stricken. It is one of the greatest phrases in the whole New Testament. Never think of 'Christ' as a personal name, it is a title. He is the Anointed, the One upon Whom the anointing rests in fulness in relation to all Divine purpose, and His Person, the Person of Christ, is a great mystery. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27). That is a great statement, but here is a greater. "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father", and there is no qualifying clause there, no qualifying clause about revealing. He is the mystery of God, the secret. Oh, when we get Home and we see Who He is and the glory of Christ, the glory of the Person of

(concluded on front page)

Christ bursts upon our astonished vision, then we shall worship, then we shall realise, then we shall say, Oh, what we missed all those years, we knew so little! We shall worship when at last we know.

Paul is praying, in agony, in conflict, for the people of God in whom faith and hope and love have already been wrought as basic verities, that they may come now to know, by revelation of the Holy Spirit, the mystery of God—Christ. Even a little bit of light concerning the mystery of God in the Person of Christ breaking upon your heart causes you to say that He is the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, He is all and in all. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee" (Psa. lxxiii. 25). If Paul in his Roman prison was constrained to pray for the people of God thus, should not these great things find a bigger place in

our prayer life, first of all perhaps for ourselves that we might see, then for one another, that our brethren in Christ with whom we are associated might see, and then for the people of God who are so blind, speaking generally and broadly, so blind, so content with what they call the simple things, the elementary things, who do not desire to go on to perfection. Oh, beloved, let us give ourselves to prayer. Let us study Paul's great prayers and God grant that something of the passion, the travail, that was in his spirit, might come through into our spirits and we might really pray the purpose of God through for His people, and pray His people into the purpose of God, that God may have on earth in the end-time people who are in the good of His word, His universal Christ and the Church, and who are increasing in the knowledge of God continually.

S.A.

Acknowledgments.—We acknowledge with gratitude the following gifts, other than local, towards the maintenance of this paper from June 1st to July 31st, 1945:

Anon, £2; Alfreton, 5s.; Belfast, £1; Biggar, 10s.; Birmingham, £1; Blackpool, 10s. and 10s.; Bournemouth, 10s.; Bradford, £1; Brighton, 6s.; Bristol, 4s.; Brockley, 5s.; Bromley, 2s. 6d.; Carmarthen, £1 and 5s.; Chester, £2 10s.; Christchurch, N.Z., 5s.; Congleton, 5s.; Coonoor, 2s. 6d.; Crawley, 2s. 6d. and 4s.; Crumlin, Co. Antrim, 5s.; Dartford, 4s.; Doncaster, 5s.; Dublin, 5s.; Dunkirk, Kent, 5s. 6d.; Ebbw Vale, 5s. 6d.; Epsom, £5; Gidea Park, 3s.; Glasgow, £1, 10s., and 2s. 6d.; Gloucester, 3s.; Golders Green, 10s. 6d.; Grimsby, 5s.; Hauxton, 10s.; Hemyock, £1; Hereford, 3s.; Heronsgate, 10s.; Hornsey, 2s. 6d.; Ilfracombe, 1s.; Lancs, 7s. 6d.; Leicester, 2s. 6d.; Llanelly, 2s. 6d.; London, S.E.23, £1 10s.; Londonderry, 6s.; Mansfield, £1; Matlock, 10s.; New Miels, £1; Pasadena, Cal.,

12s. 4d. and 4s. 11d.; Peterboro', Ont., £1; Richmond, 5s.; San Jose, Cal., £1 4s. 8d.; Sheffield, 10s.; Smethwick, £1 1s.; Southbourne, 10s. and £2; South Shields, 5s.; Stockport, 10s.; Sunbury-on-Thames, 5s.; Sutton, 2s. 6d. and 6s.; Swansea, 10s.; Tavistock, 2s.; Theydon Bois, 2s. 6d.; Timperley, 10s.; Tipton, 12s. 6d.; Wakefield, £2; Wallington, 10s.; Wellingborough, 5s.; Whitstable, 10s.; Yardly Gobion, 10s. Money Orders received: 8217, Victoria, £1 3s.; 72522817, Canada, 4s. 6d.; 4426, U.S.A., £1; 125280, U.S.A., 4s. 11d.; 67886, U.S.A., £2 9s. 5d. Total, £48 15s. 9d.

Ala., U.S.A., \$5; Anaheim, Cal., \$2; Cincinnati, Ohio, \$1; Dearborn, Mich., \$1; Eastod, Mass., \$2; Grand Rapids, Mich., \$1; Kansas, \$5; Kiokiek, Iowa, \$5; Lancaster, Cal., \$1; Nashville, Tenn., \$1 and \$1; New Jersey, \$10; St. Paul, Minn., \$3; San Francisco, \$3; Willows, Cal., \$5; Winthrop, Mass., \$1. Total, \$47.

NOW AVAILABLE.

"THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS"

By T.A.-S. Price Tenpence.

"THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE"

By W.N. Price Threepence.

"THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST"

By T.A.-S. Price Tenpence.

A bi-monthly ministry by which it is sought to lead the Lord's people into His full thought for them.

"A Witness and

Testimony"

Maintained
by the offerings of
those who are helped by it.

NOVEMBER—DECEMBER, 1945

NO. 6, VOL. 23

Overcomer Testimony

II

The Nature and Function of Overcomers: continued
READING: Isa. i. 9; Rom. ix. 27, 29; xi. 2-5, 26;
Isa. viii. 17-18.

"To him that overcometh..." (Rev. ii. 7, etc).

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony" (Rev. xii. 11).

Our message is concerning Overcomer Testimony. We first of all passed our eye over the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation with a view to taking account of the fact of Overcomers in Scripture, then we spent much time on the nature and function of overcomers; we spoke of it in the first place negatively, what Overcomers are not—they do not stand related to anything partial; Overcomer Testimony embraces the whole counsel of God. Coming to this matter positively, we sought to see that God has vast, immense thoughts and intentions concerning His creation, far too great for our comprehension at any given time, far too great for any one or any small company of the Lord's people to comprehend even in eternity. It will take a vast multitude which no man can number to grow into the fulness of God's thoughts and purposes, and it will take the ages of the ages to express those thoughts in that great multitude. They are not just abstract ideas, but they have been embodied in His Son, and to know the thoughts and the purposes of God is a matter of vital union with the Lord Jesus; to come under the hand of the Holy Spirit to be dealt with and to be taken through experience after experience in which it is absolutely necessary to our very life to make some new discovery of Christ. It is knowledge of Christ in life, in growth, on the principle of the Body, the principle of organic life, development by life. We said finally that fulness—and it is that for which Overcomers exist—is governed by two things. First, life and spirituality: Divine life constituting

us spiritual people with spiritual minds, spiritual understanding, spiritual conceptions. Secondly, relatedness—fulness rests upon relatedness; there is no such thing as individual fulness in the thought of God, fulness is corporate, making necessary spiritual, vital, organic relationship between the Lord's people.

We proceed from that point. We just say in going on that the nature of Overcomers is that of those who are firstly in the freedom, power, freshness and progress of resurrection life. That will interpret the messages to the seven churches for you at once; that will explain Overcomers in all ages; those who are in the freedom, the power, the freshness, the progressiveness of resurrection life; for resurrection is emancipation, it is liberation. Resurrection is power, even "the exceeding greatness of his power... according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead" (Eph. i. 19-20). Resurrection is freshness, it is a new beginning, it is a begetting again unto a living hope (I Pet. i. 3). And resurrection is not something once for all; it is the beginning of an eternal expansion, continuous enlargement. That is the power of His resurrection, that is the life which is the inheritance and the birthright of the Lord's people; and Overcomers are to be the embodiment of that.

Secondly, Overcomers are, therefore, those who are held together by life. I think it wants but a very casual glance at spiritual history to see that Overcomer Testimony has been defeated by the disintegration of the Lord's people; their separations, their breakings up, their schisms, their divisions. It is all Satan's way of countering the testimony of Jesus. Overcomers are not those who go in for Christian unity and try to find some basis upon which they can be all agreed and stick to it as long as they can. No, it is something deeper than that; it is inwrought in the power of an indestructible life, held together by life, so that the final emergence of an Overcomer

company is one, a Man-child called 'they'. "She was delivered of a son, a man child"; "and they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb"—passing almost immediately from the singular to the plural about the same object; an organic whole.

Features of the Overcomer

Now let us get nearer to this thing. Come to the actual word; in the Old Testament you will have recognized that very largely the Overcomers are called a Remnant. We have read some passages in which that word appears. "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant" (Isa. i. 9); "Though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them shall return" (Isa. x. 22). That is the Old Testament name, especially in the latter part of the Old Testament, for Overcomers. The New Testament word is Overcomers. Let us get back to this Old Testament word, because it is tremendously enlightening. I make no claims to be a Hebrew scholar, but a lexicon and a concordance are very useful things, and the Hebrew concordance is very enlightening on this word. There are at least five words employed for this general idea, but every word has its own aspect of an Overcomer. I want to give you just the sense of the five words.

i. Triumph over Corruption of Death

Firstly, there is the word for remnant which is in the sense of that which has escaped corruption, something which lives in spite of death; that which has escaped the corruption of death, and lives in spite of death. You hardly need go further to get your idea of Overcomer. Is not that the very thing with which the book of the Revelation is introduced, and is not that introduction to the book of the Revelation the basis of the Divine appeal and challenge? "I am he that liveth; I became dead, but behold, I am alive unto the ages of the ages and have the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. i. 18). And at the beginning of the Church's history when it as a whole was in the Overcomer position, the great proclamation by the witness concerning the Lord Jesus and His crucifixion, death and burial, was this—a quotation from the Old Testament—"It was not possible that he should be holden of death. For David said concerning him...Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption" (Acts ii. 24-27). Therefore God raised Him from the dead. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades"; "and have the keys of death and Hades", complete mastery of death. "Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption", "He whom God raised up saw no corruption" (Acts xiii. 37) is the Apostle's testimony. And here is this Old Testament word used by the Holy Spirit for a Remnant which just simply means that escape from corruption, living in spite of death. The Adversary's great effort all the way through is to corrupt the people of God, and in bringing them into spiritual death to bring them to corruption spiritually, to disintegrate them by spiritual death, somehow; to reverse the testimony

of Jesus in His Body, the Church, to contradict the great primal fact that death and corruption have been vanquished by Him fully and finally; first, spiritually in its principle, and finally physically in its out-working. The story of the book of the Revelation in its beginnings is of death and corruption in the churches. You have no need that I even mention those words, those statements, indicating death and corruption in the churches; and right into the midst of that the Lord says—"He that overcometh..." An Overcomer is one who escapes corruption and lives even though death is all around. It is a living people in the presence of spiritual death which is working amongst the Lord's people—I am not talking about the world—spiritual death, decline, break up, disintegration; yes, and corruption, mixture, false elements are abroad amongst Christians, and in the midst of it all the Lord is seeking that body, that company, which has escaped the corruption and lives triumphant over death. So much for the first of these five words.

ii. Freedom from Slavery

There is another word which just means that which has escaped from slavery and is breathing free air. That is a fine picture, a fine portrait for Overcomers—that which has escaped from slavery and is breathing free air. I dare not stay to interpret that. Some of us, even in our Christian lives and histories, know what it is to escape from slavery. Oh, the old bondage of the Christian system and order, expectation and demand, all the old rota and legality!—to be free of it all! Not only to be raised with Christ, but to have the grave-clothes taken off and to be breathing the free air of the spiritually emancipated! That is what this word calls a remnant, and that is not something extra to Christianity. It is exactly what you find at the beginning with the Church. The Lord had cried in the midst of a burdened, tyrannised, religious nation—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. xi. 28-30). What is the old yoke, the old burden, which has harassed and worn these people so that they are weary to death, drawing out His compassionate appeal—"Come unto me, and I will give you rest"? It is the old yoke and burden of legalistic religion, 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not': 'you must' and 'you must not'—the whole system built up like that, a great burden. "They bind heavy burdens." He said "and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders: but they themselves will not move them with their finger" (Matt. xxiii. 4). And this word for remnant means such as have escaped slavery and are breathing the free air. You find them in the beginning of the book of the Acts. Overcomers are those who go back to the beginning in experience. They do not take up something further which is deeper teaching, fuller light. It is the primal freshness and fulness of Christ that Overcomers

represent—unfortunately, in contrast to the general situation.

iii. The Retaining of Excellence

And the next word for remnant is that which is sometimes translated 'residue', in the sense of those who retain excellence in spite of deterioration. It very aptly describes Overcomers. Deterioration is almost universal; that does not need arguing, everyone will agree, it is not necessary to make out a case. There are very few people who, in their most honest hearts, are not very much concerned about the spiritual state of things. Overcomers are those who retain excellence over against deterioration. That is what the Lord wants and, because the Lord wants it, it is possible, and because He both wants it and makes it possible, if we will come the Lord's way, we can know it. This excellence, again, is not something added to Christianity. It was said of Israel that they were a chosen race—"Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may shew forth *the excellencies* of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Pet. ii. 9), and the Overcomers are those who are fulfilling the original purpose of their calling—to show forth the excellence; retaining excellence to-day, when the general impression is anything but that of His excellencies.

iv. The Finding of Refuge

The next word is that which is best translated, I think, into our English word with which we have become sadly familiar in recent days—a refugee; the essence of this word is that. It means one who has left a region of desolation and found refuge from desolation—a fine thought for Overcomers. It is possible to know spiritual desolation even amongst the people of God, to know desolation of heart even in the Christian Church. So many write to us and speak to us—"The place where I attend is a desolation, there is no food, there is no life, it is all barren and dead; what are we to do?" And that is a Christian church, so called; a Christian circle. Yes, we say it quietly because we do not gloat over that; it is the opposite of that that is in our thought. We have to take note of facts, and these are facts, that there is spiritual desolation to-day in Christendom and often even in evangelical circles; starvation and death, and the Overcomer, the remnant, are those who have left that region of desolation spiritually and have found food, come into life, into wealth, into spiritual affluence, who have found the realm of heart satisfaction. That is how it was at the beginning.

v. Survival

Then, finally, there is the word for remnant which just means survivor and survival. The picture is that of one who has squeezed through a narrow opening into liberty, and who is alone left, but being alone left, is living and free, a survivor. We know all too much of the tragedy of that word in these days. The ships that have gone down, the lifeboats packed, one

after another dying from exposure and starvation, and one left at last and rescued, a survivor perhaps of a whole ship or at least of a boat-load, having, so to speak, squeezed through the narrow opening between life and death, alone but living and free. It may take a little while to recover from the suffering; but the realization,—I am alive, they are all dead and I am alive and I am out, I have escaped, they have all perished! is a tremendous thing to such an individual; to be one who has squeezed through that narrow gate and is alive; of course it is a great responsibility, but all that is crowded into a single Hebrew word for remnant. I am not saying that any one of these words fully describes the Overcomer, but put them all together and you get the Overcomer. The final thing is—Out, survived, living and free! It is unto that that the Lord has called us, to realize something of the narrow escape we have had, what a thing it is to be alive in the Lord. How many there are who do not know the life that we are enjoying. In this world we are survivors, living and free, and that, tragically enough, amongst many Christians who have been engulfed. We are defining the nature of Overcomers, and that is what it is.

Overcomers for Signs and for Wonders

Now let us pass on quite quickly for a few minutes. There came a point at which God broke with the nation, Israel, as a whole, and gave Himself up to the Remnant. We have read those words in Isa. viii—"Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are *for signs and for wonders* in Israel". "I and the children whom God hath given me". First of all, see what that meant in the case of Israel and Isaiah the prophet. It meant that God had brought into being that little family, that little domestic circle, in such a way, and had preserved and maintained and succoured in such a way as to serve Him in this capacity of putting them right in the midst of Israel, to be firstly, for signs; that is, to signify something, to imply and indicate something about God and God's thought and mind concerning His people. There is a very great mistake being made just now of taking the Hebrew prophets and using them to the nation, the British nation and the nations. It is a mistake. You cannot put the British nation or any other nation in the place of Israel. The nation is the Lord's people, the holy nation, and it is to the holy nation that the prophets have their message and ministry, and it is through the holy nation that the nations are to be fed. Here the Lord broke with the whole nation, Israel, and gave Himself up to the Remnant, and that Remnant was to be like Isaiah and the children whom God had given him for signs, to signify in their own being, in their own constitution, in the way in which the Lord had brought them into being and had dealt with them, how the Lord was related to them, to signify what His thought was to all His people. That is the function of a remnant. "And for wonders in Israel", and, dear friends, you cannot have the background of wonders without being put into the position where it wants a wonder to bring

you out on top so that you say, It is a wonder I am alive, it is a wonder that I survived, that I got through, that I am where I am to-day; only God could have done it! And that is what the Remnant is for—to show what a wonderful God He is in our experience. That is not something extra, that is basic. "The exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead". The greatest wonder of all is the resurrection of Christ; and the maintaining of a people in resurrection life in a world like this and in the midst of the awful forces of evil which are set for their undoing and setting aside. In life—yes, in life, not in existence but in life, and the maintaining of life in any measure of fulness and victory is a wonder. The Lord wants to get hold of a people who will serve Him in this capacity as signs, signifying His mind in their own being, their own history, an example of what the Lord wants for all His people.

But do not forget, the writer of the letter to the Hebrews lays hold of that fragment in Isa. viii and he brings it in in the second chapter. "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same". The quotation comes right in in that connection. "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me". "Both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying...Behold, I and the children which God hath given me". That is a basic and original idea, that union with Christ basically and subsequently, not at an advanced point, but union with Christ is supposed to have this very element and nature. "I and the children whom God hath given me are for signs and for wonders". Our very union with Christ is supposed to be a wonder and a signification right at its beginning. To recover that is the work of Overcomers. We are on the function now. You see, the Remnant and Overcomers have as their function to be God's vantage ground in a day of widespread spiritual declension and failure, to be vantage points, that upon which God can act and say, not, This is my *idea* for you, but, Here is my thought *positively expressed*, here is the thing that I am after! That is the function of Overcomers, to be to God like that. "I and the children whom God hath given me are for signs and for wonders". Here is the thing, God is saying. Look at this, look at Isaiah and his children, look at Christ and His own as God wills them to be and you have what I am after, what my mind is! The remnant is for that, God's vantage ground in a day of declension to show the thing to others.

The Overcomer Remnant in Relation to the Whole

That is not all, by a long way. May I just say this one more word before I conclude this part. There is an allusion in the original statement and in its citation

in Romans. "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah". There is an allusion there. The allusion is to Abraham, and it brings right into view that scene, that marvellous scene, of Abraham challenging and arguing with and persuading God, and God lending Himself to the challenge and listening to the argument and yielding to the persuasion. If there are fifty righteous, will you not destroy? And the Lord says, If I can find fifty righteous, I will spare the place for their sakes. He cannot find fifty righteous, and Abraham gradually reduces it and God yields to him every time. If I can find ten righteous, will you spare the cities? Yes, if you find ten. And he went and you may be sure he scoured the cities thoroughly to find ten righteous people. He had to come back and say, I cannot find any. God says, If only you could have found a remnant, I would have saved the whole. That is the argument of Isaiah and of Paul, and that is why I brought together those two passages: "Even now there is a remnant." "Therefore shall all Israel be saved": the vocational aspect of being an Overcomer. It is not just for ourselves to get the extra glory and blessing. It is related to the service of God, serving God and serving Him in respect of all His people. Now, that is something that wants enlarging upon. I can see now something in those words—"And his servants shall serve him and they shall see his face" (Rev. xxii. 3-4). Is that everybody? No. God's thought concerning His Church is that it should be gathered out of the nations, slowly but surely formed into a bride worthy of giving to His Son as a gift, without spot or blemish or any such thing; given to Christ as His bride to be for Him the instrument, the agency of filling and fulfilling the coming Kingdom throughout the ages. That is God's thought about the Church. Can we say that that is being realised in any commensurate way? No, but God holds to His thought and He seeks an inner company whom we are calling a remnant or an Overcomer company to stand for Him in this service, to be a link between Him and His full thought in His people, and to be that instrument for the realisation of His full thought, to serve Him, to see His face. What is that?—to be to His Son the agency of filling the Kingdom and fulfilling the Kingdom in the days to come. That is tremendous service. It is unto that that the Overcomers are called. If you want to be in the work of the Lord, if you want to be the Lord's servants, it is not given to a special class called ministers and missionaries. It is to a whole company, to every one who overcomes. "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne" (Rev. iii. 21); "will I give to eat of the tree of life" (Rev. ii. 7). These are all things symbolic of that full thought of God concerning His Church, gathered up and expressed firstly in Overcomers. T.A.S.

(To be continued).

NOW AVAILABLE

"STRIVING IN PRAYER."

Price Twopence.

The Lord's Need of a Samuel Instrument

READING: I Sam. ii. 11-12, 17-18, 21-22; iii. 1-4.

Well, they were bad days. The book of Judges which leads on into this book, and the little glimpse that we have of the state of affairs as this book opens, make no question of the fact that they were bad days for the Lord and for His interests; but thank God, the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and though Eli and all that he represented was in such a pitiable state, the Lord called Samuel. There is an obvious contrast in the above passages between that which was the ordinary, the recognized representative of God's interests on the earth, and this new thing which had come into being at the birth of the child Samuel. What a contrast! Well, whether or not things are as bad for the Lord's interests to-day as they were then, they are certainly pretty bad. The lamp of God may not have gone out yet, but it is very nearly out in many places. Thank the Lord He has got an answer; His answer is Samuel.

The Marks of Samuel

i. He was Alive

What a contrast there is between all that Eli represented and this child Samuel. It is the contrast between life and mere form. We have been studying the High Priestly garments and have been impressed by the detail of the form. Of course, in the purpose of God, it was not meant to be merely a form, but to represent living aspects of a living Christ. But what trappings there were, and what outward form of things, all orthodox, all Scriptural, all in an outward way according to God, associated with Eli and the position that he held. And yet it could be said of him, as much later it was said to Sardis, "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead". It was all correct according to Divine prescription, it was orthodox, but it was dead. Now Samuel seems to be rather unorthodox. His appearance on the scene was unusual; it was a gracious answer to prayer from God's side. But Samuel was not a priest at all, and, so far as this record goes, he does not seem to have been a Levite, for his father is described as being descended from an Ephraimite. If you search with a concordance, you will find genealogy which suggests that actually Samuel had come of a Levitical family, but, after all, the Lord has a purpose in the very records of His Word, and I Samuel does not open by mentioning anything connected with the Levitical family, but rather gives another impression—and that is all-important. Samuel was what he was in virtue, not of position, of form, of status, but of life. When Samuel came on to the scene, something had been born and born from God, and therein he stood in direct contrast and challenge to the whole order which was represented by Eli—an order actually, of course, condemned because of its corruptness, but that corruptness is but a logical outcome of everything which has assumed a mere form and official position instead of being what it is in virtue of its

life. Samuel really was a nobody. Why he wore this linen ephod we do not know. I can find no mention that the Levites wore them; it was a priestly garment. Later on, of course, David was clothed in one, but the whole emphasis, as I see it, of this new speaking of God and this appearance of a Divine answer to a desperately bad situation, the whole importance of Samuel, is not in any status or position that he held or had been given, but simply in this most simple and yet comprehensive fact—he was alive. That is always God's answer and that is the tremendous contrast that comes up when God's interests are at stake. Orthodoxy, tradition, form, outward appearance, recognition, status, stand on one side, and on the other side is a nobody, but he is alive. God took up things in an altogether new way to open up a series of events which should bring amazing transformations among His people, and finally culminate in the glories of Solomon's kingdom. He took all up by ignoring, sweeping aside, taking no notice or account of that which mattered so much to men, and just producing a Samuel, a nobody; but he lived, and he lived for God, and he lived by God.

Now whatever the state of affairs to-day may be, there is no question as to the reality of that contrast, and we have to make up our minds where the Lord is, what the Lord is interested in and what represents the Lord's answer to a desperate situation. On the one hand there is the form. You will have your own particular knowledge of some particular form; I do not propose to specify any; but there is the form—if you like, the Scriptural form—but is it a dead form? If it is, then it is in the Lord's way. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that Eli and what he represented in his day not only failed to stand for the Lord, but got in the Lord's way. There is only one thing you can say to Eli's credit—that when Samuel appeared, he did give place to Samuel and that is something more than can be said very often for the orthodox, official thing that stands for God. But it is the contrast that we want to be impressed with. It comes right down to us. We are not going to talk about other people. The challenge all the time is to us as a people. The challenge is— is it form, is it outward, is it in phraseology, Scriptural phraseology? Is it only that or is it living? If it is anything else than living, it is in the Lord's way. It may be detailed, elaborate, as was Eli's office, but it is in the Lord's way. Samuel may be very simple, very undeveloped, but he was alive. That is the point that mattered—he was alive, and the only thing that can answer God's need in our day is a people who are alive. Of course, it comes down to us as individuals, for what is true of the whole is true of every individual, and what a challenge this is to everyone of us. Is our position a formal one or is it by virtue of an inward life? It is a question that those of us who occupy a more prominent place have to ask ourselves very seriously and continually.

Eli had been a babe at one time, Eli had been a lad like Samuel, but he had grown old, and the holy office and indeed the people of God were represented by that man who was alive and yet he was not, a dead and alive condition. It is possible with us. Every aspect of our Christian life and service has to be measured by this standard. Is it merely outward, is it formal, or is it life?

Years ago I was in close contact with certain missionary circles. There used to be folk who offered to become missionaries. Some of them were having difficult times at home or in their business, and some were frank enough to say it. Of others it was obvious that their position was—If only I could get out of that home or that business, if only I could be a missionary, be in the Lord's work, I would be useful and prove the Lord. They were always rejected, for if the basis of their service was life, then they would prove life in their home, they would triumph in life in their business. That is just an illustration of how it touches us, this question of how much is formal and how much is life.

Well, the Lord's interests are bound up with that in which there is life; and moreover, where there is life, the Lord will make a way for it. Some of us may have felt from time to time we had a ministry, we had visions, we had expectations and there was no way. Dear friends, there is always a way for life. Samuel was a nobody, but Samuel was alive and Samuel came into great prominence and great fruitfulness in virtue of his life; not of influence, not of outward place, not of position, not of status, not of recognition, but of life. The Lord will make a way for you and for His own interests if you pay first attention to a maintenance and an increase of a life relationship with Him.

ii. He was Growing

There is an aspect of this which needs mentioning, because it is so emphasized in the case of Samuel. Samuel, we are told again and again, was a growing man. Eli, on the other hand, was absolutely set. Poor old man, he was so set, his bones were so rigid, that when he toppled over he broke his neck. That was a tragedy, but it is symptomatic of a spiritual condition. He was blind, he could not see anything new. He had not been born blind, he had seen the light and he knew what he had seen, but he had reached a place where he could not see anything fresh—this static, stagnant condition which was so much of a hindrance to the Lord and so sad. Now, if you read about Samuel, the boy is growing. Every few verses you read that Samuel grew. It tells a homely little story of the new robes his mother made for him year by year; he was always growing out of his clothes. That is how we ought to be spiritually. That is what matters to the Lord—that there should be growth. It does not matter how young Samuel is now, as long as he is growing. It does not matter how small you may feel, the Lord does not mind so long as you are growing. It does not matter how old and great we may be; if we have stopped growing

there is a spiritual tragedy there. How important is this matter of growth.

Growth, of course, is an intensely personal thing. You will notice the Lord did not deal personally with Eli. He had to send people to him, He had to send a prophet, He had to speak to him through Samuel; the Lord did not speak directly to Eli. Now Samuel, for all his youth, had this experience of a personal knowledge of the Lord. Growth is intensely a matter of a personal knowledge of the Lord.

There is the contrast then, with this sad, rigid state—and how easily we get into it! We do not have to be ninety-eight to be as Eli was. How easily we get set; we cannot see anything new. We are set, we are not supple, we cannot respond to the ways of the Lord. That means inevitably that our knowledge of the Lord is lacking in a vital personal element, for surely spiritual growth means that all the time the Lord is so dealing with us personally that we are responding, this way, that way; so different from what we had expected, so different from what has been in the past, but it is a living way, a way of growth; and of course, growth spiritually is a very practical matter. It is not growth merely in understanding about truth; it is all so practical. It is not necessarily a sign of growth to be talking more about the greatness of Christ. An increased apprehension of the greatness of Christ will bring an increased humility into our lives, and that is growth. Otherwise it is merely a matter of words. It is not enough that we feel we are understanding more of the corporate life of the people of God and the theories of the Church. Are we practising fellowship more? That, and not our understanding, is the measure of our growth. The Lord knows how much we are growing when we practise what we understand. Of course, we all practise fellowship when it suits us. Some folk are very glad to have fellowship when it corroborates what they think the Lord's will is; when it confirms them, that is lovely fellowship. When it is contrary to their own personal thoughts, they fall back again on their individual position with the Lord. They have not grown, they are stagnant, not seeing anything new, whereas the Lord's interests are bound up with those who are growing. They may be small, simple, but they are growing, they are responsive, ready to see new things, able to hear the voice of the Lord, spiritually supple. For lack of that the Lord's interests suffered grievously until Samuel arrived on the scene, because everything was fixed and rigid. We need to let the Lord search our hearts individually and as a people. The Lord's interests are with those who are growing.

iii. He Had a Future

And of course, very simply but inclusively, Samuel represents the future. Eli had no future, he had a past; and his house, they had a past; and I suppose he lived in the past. Samuel had no past, but he had a future. It is a trite remark to say that the interests of the Lord are with the younger generation but it is

spiritually true that the Lord's interests lie with those whose eyes are on the future rather than on the past. That, I believe, is one of the great contrasts in evangelical circles to-day. There is an Eli element rooted in the past, growing hoary with antiquity and it has no value for the Lord. There must come a Samuel, whether young in years or not. The Lord root us up out of all our living in the past and looking back to the past. The future is the Lord's and ours with Him, and the future will present something which, while it will work on the principles of the past, will be new, unexpected. Are we ready? A poor old man like Eli, of course, was not. God forbid that we should get to such a rigid position that we are rooted in a way that gives the Lord no real opportunity. There is a great deal, I am afraid, in evangelical circles like that: much to thank the Lord for in the past—and we do thank Him. But if anything is going to be really pressed home to the reaching of Divine issues, there has to come a Samuel element more concerned with the future than the past, with eyes on the purpose of God and a heart and a willingness to leave behind everything that is behind. Everything was new to Samuel and everything was new from Samuel's day onward. It opened

out in new, unexpected ways, but they were living ways. It is true the people prematurely demanded a king, and the sad story of Saul arose; but there was to be a king, there was a way, and Samuel was the Lord's instrument for reaching that way. The challenge comes to us—the form, the set position, the being rooted in the past, or the spontaneous way, a new release of Divine life under the government of the Spirit to press forward to the Divine goal?

iv. He Was an Answer to Prayer

One last word about Samuel. Samuel did not just happen, Samuel was not just born. Samuel means "Asked of God". Someone prayed about Samuel, prayer with tears, with great longing and desire, and out of a deep desire Samuel was born. Is it not time in the history of the Christian Church that a new Samuel was born? I am sure we all say it is. Well, we have been praying; let us press on, let us pray with more concern, and let us seek by the Lord's grace that we shall not only pray but be found in the mainstream of His activities. Eli in his place, decrepit and asleep, the lamp of God nearly gone out; but the Lord called Samuel and everything changed. May it be so again. H.F.

"The Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus"

READING: Rev. i. 1-2, 9; vi. 9; xii. 17. xix. 10. xx. 4, I Thess. ii. 13, Gal. i. 16, Eph. iii. 3, 5-6, 10-11.

As a text from which all the other Scriptures may well follow, we might take the ninth verse of Revelation i. "I John...was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus".

I do not know how familiar all of us are with the book of the Revelation, but I think most of us probably know it well enough to be conscious of a tremendous climax. If Genesis is the book of beginnings, certainly the book of Revelation seems to be the book of ends. Everything heads up, and the atmosphere of things beginning to head up is a tense atmosphere. There is an end-time atmosphere the moment we come into this book. I do not know whether it is imagination, but I think it must be a very enlarged imagination, for all of us have it, that we are in tense days to-day; we are conscious of heading-up days, days upon which great issues hang, and all round us there is the plea and the enquiry for some kind of solution or way through. Leaving for the moment the world and its tangle of problems, and coming closer in amongst the people of God, that same enquiry is found. What is really the answer to things to-day? Many answers are given. The answer of some might be more evangelism; what we need is to get out and preach the Gospel, to be more zealous for the souls around us. Well, we do not say

anything against that. Praise the Lord for all the real concern for souls and all the true preaching of the Gospel; but is that really the answer to the day in which we live? Have you noticed what happens when people try to do that? A lot of it seems to bounce off again, there is something hard there, it does not seem to go right through. Others say that what we need to-day is a revival. Press the matter of what you mean by a revival, and it is a little bit indefinite, but very often it means a recovery of the kind of thing that used to happen, a flood of spiritual life where no end of people are saved and there is blessing. Well, we all want blessing, so we shall all rejoice if there is a revival.

But come to the Word of God itself and its answer to a dark and desperate day. What do we find? I believe we find a very simple twofold expression of God's counter to a desperate day, God's counter to the days in which we live, and if we go through the book of the Revelation, we find repeated references to this strange matter of which we have read together. Will you look at it and see what it is?

"The word of God *and* the testimony of Jesus". Practically without exception, those two phrases are together. Not just the testimony of Jesus or just the Word of God, but all this tremendous battle is over what is called 'the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus'. There is evidently something very potent behind this double expression because it is connected with such potent matters. It has involved a servant

of God in a whole situation, he finds himself in a place because of it; and there are those who have laid down their lives for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. It has cost them their life, and that is the accompaniment of this thing right through. It is always accompanied by cost, the cost of life. "I saw them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God".

The Word of God

Let us try and get a little closer to this matter. Whatever can be the meaning of the Word of God if it involves some in these drastic situations? What does it mean? Before we discuss what it does mean, it is well that we admit that it means a great deal more than we think. It does not mean just the Bible; it does mean the Bible, but it means something a great deal more. We need a new and adequate conception of the Word of God, and I am going to put it in a sentence. The Word of God is the revealed mind of God. Through this wonderful Book of God, His mind has been made known, but let us remember that the purpose of this Book and its preservation through the centuries was that it might be a vehicle for communicating God's thoughts, a means whereby what God thinks and sees should get out. It is not just a text-book. It is something that can be the vehicle of revelation; it can be, and it may not be. It may be an utterly dead book, but the Word of God that is here spoken of is the mind of God, the thoughts of God revealed.

God's One Thought is Christ

And what is God's thought? We so easily think of the Word of God as a collection of disjointed thoughts, teachings, ideas, patterns, a thousand things. But the Word of God is primarily a revelation of God's one thought, and God's one thought is His Son. This Book, from beginning to end, is about the Son of God. That is its central matter, and God's mind is one mind—and that is, that His Son should be seen as He sees Him. Therefore the Word of God relates to the purpose of God, the will of God. You remember the word in Isaiah lv—"My word...that goeth forth out of my mouth...shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please". God's word is unto the accomplishing of His full end. God is not just doing a lot of little things, He is doing one thing. He is moving from beginning to end in one direction, He has one thing in view, and that mighty thing is what is in view in this book, and we shall be saved from chasing down little side alleys if we once see what God is after. And that brings us to the explanation of the Apostle Paul.

What is the explanation of that life that simply blazed its course through to a glorious end? It was this, that one day he saw the point, he saw what God was after and it was quite enough for him. He had lost all interest in everything else from that moment. Everything went out, and God's central thought came in—His Son. "Neither did I receive it (the Gospel which was preached by me) from man,

neither was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ". I saw what God is after in His Son. "It pleased God...to reveal his Son in me that I might preach"—sermons? Not at all—"that I might preach Him among the nations". What is preaching? Preaching is the presenting of something for good or ill. It is saying, That is it! Some will say, You are right; that is faith. Others will say, I do not agree; and they go away. Proclamation is not argument but presentation. "That I might present him". Wherever he went, Christ came into view. Some saw the Lord and they followed Him. New Testament preaching is like that. "A multitude were added to the Lord"; not added to a thing, but to the Lord. They did not believe theories or doctrines; they believed on a Person, they saw Him. The purpose of God is Christ.

And I want to say this—Christ first of all inclusively; and then Christ exclusively. What do we mean by Christ inclusively? We mean God's intention as we find it in His Word, that ultimately everything must be Christ, everything is to be according to Christ. "...unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ" (Eph. i. 10). In that circle of Christ is all God's purpose. "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation" (II Cor. v. 17)—he is in the new creation, he is in the circle of God's purpose. God is set upon Christ only.

What does Christ exclusively mean? It means that everything that is not Christ goes out, "the old things are passed away" (II Cor. v. 17).

(a) Christ Personal

That brings us to the twofold revelation of Christ that we find given to us through the Apostle Paul. Of course, they are not really two, they are parts of one, but our minds do not take things in very easily. The first is Christ personal; the Lord Jesus, the Person. When Paul saw the Lord, everything else in his universe went out of the picture, and pre-eminently what went out was himself. Before that, he and this Person were, as it were, on equal terms, but when he really met Him, he himself went down. We cannot co-exist with Christ. If Christ comes in, we go out. I know there is a sense in which it only happens experimentally in a gradual way. But gradual as the experience may be, in God's thought it is an utter thing. He only wants Christ, and when we stand up and say, Can't I...? that 'I' dies on our lips. He says, No, I do not want anybody but My Son! Do you remember when Moses said, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory", the Lord said to him very gently, "Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live". Do you see how exclusive He is? When, even in those typical days, the glory of the Lord filled the house, even Moses could not enter in. God has only one Man. Now that is just a glimpse of the Person Who is God's Son. He is God's standard, His righteous one. He is everything that wholly satisfies God. Are we going to struggle to be like Him? Try and see how you get on. Some of us have had a good try; and when we

get to the end of our tether, we say it cannot be done' and then we are glad that the Cross was the end of our struggling. When we think we are pretty good, we do not want the Cross. When we are sick to death of ourselves, we say, I am so glad you have finished with me. We have no one but the Lord left. When we have said that first word of faith—'It is Christ now'—the Holy Spirit says, concerning something in our life, That is not Christ. The battle begins then over details, but if our heart has been won, we do not waste time over crises. If it is going to mean more of the Lord, we must go through with it. I wish we were quicker at getting through these crises. Perhaps the Lord has said, I want you where you are: and you are wearing yourself out wondering how to get out of that place. One sentence of Miss Amy Carmichael's helps a good many of us—"In acceptance lieth peace". Let go, do not fight the Lord. What is happening? God is getting Christ in, getting us out. The Word of God is not a text-book, it is a revelation of a Person.

(b) Christ Corporate

And then it is a revelation more mighty still of the glorified Lord as the Head of His Body, the Church. As Paul gazed at this tremendous Person, he saw that all other persons as individuals had been ruled out by the Cross, he saw the Head of a new creation and in Him a multitude. We are in Him, raised with Him, seated with Him. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). I used to think that meant 'wholesale'. It means literally in the Greek what it says—'in bodily form'. The fulness of God requires a Body with many members. Even a head is not a body, it requires all the members; and Paul says there is a mystery which God kept locked up throughout the ages but now He has let it out, and that is that Christ and the Church are one Body. He is the Head of a living organism; all livingly joined to Him are members of His Body. When we truly believe, we believe *into* Christ—that is the Greek word used by John over and over again: "He that believeth on me" (John vi. 35); he that

(To be continued)

Acknowledgments.—We acknowledge with gratitude the following gifts (other than local) received between August 1st and September 30th, 1945:

Abergavenny, 5s.; Alabama, £1 4s. 8d.; Auckland, N.Z., 7s. 6d.; Axminster, 5s.; Barnsley, 5s.; Belfast, £2; Buenos Aires, 10s. and 5s.; Carshalton, 3s. 6d.; Christchurch, N.Z., £2, 7s. 6d., £1, and 5s.; Clapham, 5s.; Cleveland, Ohio, £1 3s. 9d.; Deal, 10s.; Dublin, 2s. 6d. and 10s.; Egypt, £1; Glasgow, £1; Goudhurst, 5s.; Grimshy, £2; Halifax, 2s. 6d.; Heathfield, 5s.; Hoyland, £1 14s.; Hull, 6s. 4d.; India, £1; Inverness, 5s.; Kidsgrove, 10s.; Kingsbury, £1 and 2s. 6d.; Leith, 14s.; London, N.W.10, 5s. and £1 1s.; Long Beach, Cal., £2 9s. 4d.; New Jersey, £5; New Zealand, 3s.; Pangbourne, 10s.; Peterboro', Ont., £1; Putney, 2s. 6d.; Queenstown, S. Africa, 5s.; Rayleigh, 2s. 6d.; Rochford, 10s.; Ruffurth, 10s.; Seattle, 4s. 11d.; Switzerland, £2; Tuxport, £1; Tennessee, £1; Tipton, 5s.; Torquay, 4s.; Walsall, £1 2s. 6d.; Woburn, Mass., 4s. 11d. Money Orders received: U.S.A., 12952, 14s. 10d.; U.S.A., 8674, £2 9s. 4d.; U.S.A., 2394, 9s. 10d.; U.S.A., 202165, 14s. 10d.; U.S.A., 630, £1 4s. 4d.; U.S.A., 4057, £1; Canada, 701-

"believeth on the Son" (John iii, 16); believe into, believe on. The word is 'into', and if you go into a thing you are in that thing. If you go into a room, you are in the room. The Lord wants us out of ourselves and into Him. I am glad the other person I used to live in has been buried. I am in Christ, "to me to live is Christ". As we individually accept God's ground for us, which is Christ, and thank Him that the Cross has ruled out that whole other realm of Adam's life, we come on to resurrection ground, and we find that other saints are also on that ground, that we are one in Him. There is a lot of talk today about Christian unity; people try to tie themselves together. It cannot be done. We have to die; and when Christ is our life, it is one life. If we will not get out of the picture, we shall just be separate units. I may put up a banner and say "All one in Christ", but we may not be one at all. The proof of oneness is that I let go my personal views and so do you, and we have no views but Christ. There is no unity but unity through the Cross. We have all got to be dealt with, and the more we are dealt with, the more in Him we shall find we are. That is the Church, it is the corporate life in Christ. That is God's mind. God has revealed His mind which is centrally His Son.

All these things must come to each of us by revelation. We can get books on Ephesians, but that does not give us revelation, and we shall never get revelation of what the Church means until we know something of an earlier revelation, and that is the Cross—death with Him and the new life in Him; and then the Lord will lead on to the fact that our new life is one life together. Those of you who have known a little taste of saying Yes to the Lord about painful things, have you not found that almost immediately you feel the need of more fellowship than before? You find yourself drawn to others who feel the same, in whom the same sort of thing has been going on. Most do not understand what you are going through, they think you are strange. Never mind. As we go through with the Lord we begin to know what real fellowship is.

15116, 8s. 11d.; Canada, 716-65006, 13s. 5d.; Canada, 791 66971, 1s. 8d.; Switzerland, 3074, 11s. 5d. Total, £48 2s. Brooklyn, \$2; Des Moines, \$10; Los Angeles, \$5 and \$2; Paraguay, \$2; Pasadena, \$1; Roseau, \$1; Winchester, \$4. Total, \$27.
Havelock, Ont., \$2; Vancouver, \$1. Total, \$3.

Motto for 1946

Hanging size : 3d. (postage 1d.)
3s. 2d. a dozen. Post free.
Greeting Cards : 2d. (postage 1d.)
2s. 2d. a dozen. Post free.

Editor's Letter

BELOVED OF GOD,

With this issue of the "Witness and Testimony" we close another year of its ministry. And *what* a year it has been in world affairs! All time to come will date a reshaping of the disposition of nations from this year. And yet, as we write, new and significant things of far-reaching consequence are in ferment. We are not joining the company of those whose prophesyings and prophetic interpretations have had to be subjected to such drastic revision in the years immediately behind us, but we are pretty safe in saying that very big strides have been made, and are *now* being made in the direction of an *all-inclusive* issue in—not only earthly—but—super-earthly realms.

What a great amount of Scripture hitherto of obscure and limited meaning to us has—in a brief time—become more than full of meaning and understanding. With one discovery alone, a whole system of accepted and established (?) ideas and acceptances has been shattered. A well-known servant of God in America says that, in a brief space of time, after reading the statement about the atomic bomb, many of his major ideas were destroyed. He made a public pronouncement that "never have I had to change my ways of thinking so much as I have in the last few hours. In many respects I am a man with entirely new sets of ideas". He then proceeded to give some of the tremendous changes in his outlook. This is from one who holds a front-rank position in the Evangelical life of the United States, and beyond, and has been a foremost speaker at the great Keswick Convention in England. Now, why am I writing like this in such a paper as this? Just for this reason. From time to time, right through the ages, those who have stood in quite a definite relationship to the things of God have either been seduced, or have drifted, or have for some reason come to fixed and systematised positions as to the ways, works, and purposes of God, which fixed ideas have come to limit Him, bind them, and result in going round in a circle instead of on a direct course of ever-enlarging and clarifying spiritual fulness and newness.

This propensity for fixedness and finality in conceptions has threatened the people of God many times with a fatal impasse. Indeed, Israel's captivity and eventual disintegration among the nations, with all the agony of centuries, very largely rests upon their fixed idea of being so right as God's elect. This same peril threatened to frustrate the real spiritual way and purpose of God with Christ's own disciples. Because of Jewish ideas interpreted by their natural minds they had prejudices and preconceptions which menaced their spiritual lives and constantly came into conflict with Christ's mind and way. Paul's life and ministry was continually opposed by this element, and he himself in his pre-conversion days, is a supreme example of its danger.

So it has been through the ages since, and is one of the greatest hindrances to the quicker realisation of the thought and purpose of the Lord in our own times. The fact is that God must not move or do anything which does not conform to the accepted and recognised order of traditional evangelical Christianity. Anything that is outside of a prescribed circle of what has been done and how it has been done for generations is suspect and boycotted. The official bodies of organised evangelical Christianity are the final court of appeal. One of the strong factors in the ministry that this paper has sought to fulfil through these many years has been that, while there are those foundational facts which are in their essence unalterable and unchanging, there is always, in everything that comes from God, a wealth and fulness of meaning and value which is commensurate with its infinite Source and Fountainhead, and that the Spirit of Truth can continually make us know that God's meaning infinitely transcends our apprehension. We must therefore never box the compass of truth or interpretation, and fix our methods and framework of doctrine or work in a way that makes it impossible for the Lord to show us that, although a certain way of outworking was all right for the time being, it was only relatively so, and fuller light means further adjustments. All this, not because the Lord is developing or changing, but because *we* can only move and change by life, organically, as we grow in understanding. That this is so is proved by much Scripture, and Ephesians i. 17-20 is the great stand-by in this matter; a word written to believers of no immature degree.

We venture to say that a time has begun when the old and fixed positions of traditional Christianity are losing their hold on—not only the Christian public in general—but many sincere seekers for reality, and that great numbers of young people are looking for something not to be found in many of the churches, and what they are looking for is the real and true life of God!

The question which confronts us all is this; can the Lord lead us on into His fulness in Christ without continually bumping up against something in our own carry-over of—not fixed truth, but—our fixed limit of its meaning; or something in our fixedness of position in any direction or connection? Stedfastness, unmovableness, faithfulness, etc. are to be to the Lord, and to the foundation realities of the faith, and also in the purpose for which and to which He has called us in life and service; but adjustableness is an essential to growth and increase in light and fulness. At the same time, we cannot change and move on only as there is a basic work of the Cross by which the strength of nature—even as it impinges upon Divine things—is set aside. The Lord find us such as have only one object, and that truly at any cost. "That I may know him".

I do thank you dear friends for all the many letters of appreciation which have come from so many parts. Pray for this little paper; firstly for its preservation and maintenance in spiritual strength, and then for an increase of paper and improvement in quality; for I often blush for its smallness and poverty due to the severe wartime austerity in these matters in this country.

With greetings and love in our Lord,

Yours for His glory,

T. AUSTIN-SPARKS.