

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

by Gordon Watt

Gordon Watt's theological examination of the threefold aspect of the cross, interpreting Christ's crucifixion and its significance for Christian salvation and redemption.

67 Chapters

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01. Introduction

Introduction

These studies of the Cross of Christ were given as daily messages at the Summer Conference of the Victorious Life Testimony held in July, 1922, at Stony Brook, Long Island, New York. In reporting that conference The Sunday School Times said: "At nine o'clock that first Lord's Day morning the Rev. Gordon Watt, of Scotland, gave the first of his unforgettable series of studies of the Cross of Christ. Each morning of the eight days, and again at the closing service, Mr. Watt brought from the Word of God treasures new and old on the Cross. If one wonders how it were possible to give nine extended addresses to the same audience of Christians and always on the single theme of the Cross, one has yet to gain new blessings from the great central theme of the entire Bible."

Chapter 2

02. Chapter 1: The Threefold Aspect of the Cross

The Threefold Aspect of the Cross

Chapter 1

03. The Aspect of New Birth

The Aspect of New Birth

It is very essential that we should have a right understanding of the cross, of what the Lord Jesus Christ, through His death, has really accomplished; because victory for the daily life depends upon how we enter into the fullest experience of the cross and stand there in and with Christ. So let us just begin at the very beginning. John 3:7 is the first aspect of the cross: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." There is nothing for us unless we have come there. What the Lord calls "the new birth" is just the door into the riches of our inheritance in grace. I trust we have all passed through the door.

What does the new birth mean? It means new life, new life whereby we become the children of God, even as by natural birth we are the children of our parents. Now how is that brought about? John 1:12-13, "But as many as received Him [the Lord Jesus], to them gave He power [or authority] to become the sons [or children] of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood [we are not born Christians], nor of the will of the flesh [we are not the children of God through any self effort], nor of the will of man [a man is not a Christian because some other body says he is a Christian or looks like a Christian or lives like a Christian], but of God." The new birth becomes an actual experience the moment that we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. By that act, on the ground of the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, we receive new life, even the life of God; we pass into a new stage, that of spiritual regeneration, regeneration by the Holy Spirit; and we enter into a new position, that of being the children of God.

Now I dare not and cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity of the new birth, simply because the new birth produces the new creation, and the new creation is God's imperative demand and requirement for new life and for new service.

One of our old Scottish preachers once said, "All mankind hangs either at the girdle of Adam or at the girdle of Christ," and we have to choose. I venture to say that the ordinary church-goer has little or no idea of the meaning of that, and yet it is one of the essential facts of the Word of God. The old head of the race was Adam, and Adam, failed and fell, and the old creation failed in him and fell with him. It is very important to be quite clear about that. I want to quote from a great Bible teacher: "If man never fell, then the Christ of the Gospels lived and taught and died unnecessarily." These are words that ought to be placarded abroad today: "That man is consistent who abandons all, rather than he who, professing still to own allegiance to Christ, denies some parts of the whole." It is a pity that all our liberal theologians could not read these words by G. Campbell Morgan in the introduction to the book of Genesis in his valuable work, *The Analyzed Bible*.

Human nature as in Adam has fallen. It is not incapable, mark you, of reaching high levels of nobility and goodness according to human standards, but finds it an utter impossibility to adjust itself to the requirements of God's holiness. And the fallen nature is the material through which the self life is always manifesting itself. It is on that that Satan is continually working in order to

produce failure and weakness and loss in us, and unless we come to this point, to which the great apostle Paul was brought by the sheer logic of his own intellect and personal experience in the face of sin, we can never be in the position where we can say truthfully, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus ...” (Romans 8:1). That is only possible in its fullest sense for the one who understands what God has done with the old creation.

You and I need not wonder at the attempts on the part of the enemy to banish from books, from many sources, and even from some so-called revisions of the Bible, all mention of the truth of the atonement, because the atonement is the proof of the reality of the fall. And you need not be surprised that he is inciting many men today to cover with ridicule and scorn the fact of the fall, because the fall is the proof of the necessity of the atonement. These two things go together, and here throbs the very heart of the Gospel to a lost and ruined race. The old head of the race failed God, and the old creation failed with the head; but God has a new head, even Christ Jesus, His own Son, and He is getting a new creation. When Christ went to the cross He took the old creation, which was the offspring of the fall, to the cross with Him, just because there was no other way by which God could get His new creation and man could experience deliverance and liberty. The old creation, no matter how commendable it may be from human standpoints—and I grant everything that could be said in its favor—the old creation is under the curse of God, it is under the sentence of death, it has been condemned in Christ, and the only way in which a man can be set free from the curse is to be born over again, re-made in Christ, identified with Christ in His death, for “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law ...” (Galatians 3:13). That is the foundation truth of the Gospel. That is the foundation fact for Christian life and for Christian service. That is the first aspect of the cross.

04. The Aspect of Crucifying our Old Man

The Aspect of Crucifying our Old Man

Now shall we turn to Romans 6:6, which is the second aspect of the Cross: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." That came by a revelation to Paul. It will come to you in the same way. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ." It is very necessary to make this perfectly clear, that God's plan of salvation embraces no scheme for the betterment of the old man. There is only one place for it and that is the cross, the place of death. That is the starting point of the victorious life, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ." Let us just notice this, that our crucifixion with Christ is as complete a one as Christ's crucifixion for us. Just as Christ was crucified for us and for our sins, so we have been crucified with Him. Each one of these works is finished. That is a fact of God, eternal, unalterable, on which our faith is to rest for continuous victory and deliverance. The whole secret of victory in the Christian life is simply understanding our attitude to that fact, and asserting our position in relation to that fact, and then maintaining that attitude in the face of every assault of Satan and every attempt on the part of the old man to reassert its supremacy in our characters and in our lives. Remember it is not sin that dies, it is not self that dies, it is not temptation that dies, it is you who have to die. Their attitude never changes; yours has to.

Now what is your attitude? Romans 6:11 speaks of reckoning: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Faith rests on the fact of God and the act of Christ, and reckons that fact to be true because of the act. What does reckoning mean? Reckoning is always just the attitude of the will—taking the place of death to sin, refusing to yield to sin, setting itself continually after God, standing with set purpose of heart upon the victory which has been won for us by the Lord Jesus Christ, and claiming that victory at every point of the conflict, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." And you conquer your sin, not by struggling, not by fighting with it in your own strength, but by dying to it. You conquer your sin by dying to it. When I say that I do not mean there is no more conflict. You and I never can sit down and say "The fight is over." There is not only a rest of faith to be enjoyed (that is blessedly true), but there is a fight of faith in which we have to be continually engaged, and one of the greatest needs in the Christian life is to recognize the foe as well as the methods of the foe by which he is determined to reach his end. It is not enough to say, "Let us look to the Lord and He will carry us through." That is only one half of the truth. One of the weaknesses of many Christians today is that they are attempting to ignore the foe, to ignore the presence of a tremendous personality of evil in the world, and that is just about as wise as it would be to try and ignore yourself. If you shut your eyes to the existence of the enemy and fail to discern his presence and his power you are putting yourself at as great a disadvantage in spiritual conflict as any general would if he went into a fight without ever making any use of his intelligence department.

If you look to the Lord and do not do what the Bible tells you to do, watch, you cannot pray intelligently; you fail to recognize the movements of the enemy and the methods of the enemy. If you watch these things and do not look to the Lord, then you will get absolutely crushed and depressed by the darkness that is deepening around you and by the awful onrush of the forces of evil. We are required to be alert today to evil in all its various forms, also to its source, to its challenge, to its methods, to its objectives; and you will be wise to give to the enemy just the name that the Bible gives to him. It is this that makes necessary the attitude of constantly acting upon this eternal fact of God, taking your place with Christ in His death and claiming in your own experience the power of that death manifested in the victory won on the cross. It is that which keeps you in touch with Christ today in the conflict. It is that which keeps the eye of your mind clear and enables you to see the path and to understand what God means you to do.

What is the great secret of maintaining this attitude? Romans 8:2, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Only a law can set us free from a law. If Congress passes a law that proves to be unworkable or unjust it has to pass another law in order to set the country free from that law. That is true here: only a law can set you free from a law. And what is law? It is just the steady pressure of a power. In the spiritual conflict there are always two laws at work, the lower law of the self operated on by Satan, by means of which we are dragged down, and the higher law of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ operated on by the Spirit of God, by which He is ever seeking to lift us up and bring us into the place of freedom and deliverance. It is the law, the higher law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, that makes us free from the lower law of sin and death. Victory in the conflict of Christian life is thus. It is not meeting sin in your own strength, it is not crushing down that temper of yours, it is not making a good resolution at this conference and saying, "By God's grace I will never give way again to that thing that has so often brought me low." God's way of victory is not righting in our own strength, it is dying. That is the truth I believe we want to learn. God's way of victory is dying to sin, and God's way is always the best way. God's way is always the surest way to victory. God's way is learning to die to sin and to conquer sin by dying to it, asserting our position of union with Christ in His death, and giving the Holy Spirit the opportunity to bring in the higher law, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. When the late Andrew Murray of South Africa came over to England twenty-seven years ago he met a number of Christian workers in London, and his message to them was simply this: "Two bodies cannot occupy the same place; if one comes in the other goes out. And in the measure in which you go out Christ comes in." That is victory; that is the victorious Christian life. Therefore in the measure in which you yield to the Holy Spirit, the law of the Spirit of life will come into you and drive out the law of sin and death and give you the victory. You conquer by dying.

Let us note this, that the decisive factor in the conflict is inside, it is the will. The decisive factor is the will, a surrendered will to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit can do nothing for you and for me unless He has our cooperation. Frances Ridley Havergal puts it in this way: "There must be full surrender before there can be full blessedness. God admits us by the one into the other." And where there is this surrender then the scheme of the evil one is foiled. But the solemn thing is that where there is not this surrender the plan of the Holy Spirit is spoiled. Therefore let us not pass that over without thinking seriously about it and asking God to make it mean to us all that it does mean, that the decisive factor in every conflict of the life of the Christian is my will. And when we reach the position where we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, there He works into us the

power of the cross and makes us know the truth of victory. That is the second aspect of the cross.

05. The Aspect of Strategic Position

The Aspect of Strategic Position But there is a third aspect. If we are to know the full tide of victory, I am persuaded of this, that we require more and more to recognize that behind all the sin is this great foe to which I have referred, and if we are to win the victory we must occupy the position, the strategic position, which God has revealed to us.

Why was it that Joshua received the command utterly to exterminate the Canaanites and those other nations? You will find it in Deuteronomy 7:1-5 that tremendous command of God that he was utterly to destroy those nations and not allow one of them to live. Why was it? Because it was necessary for the health of the people and for the carrying out of the purposes of God, just as on certain occasions He has had to act in the same way, and sometimes exterminate a people, and just as governments today have sometimes to deprive a man of his liberty and of his life because it is for the good of others, because it is for the carrying out of a wider purpose. When Joshua received this command to exterminate the Canaanites it was because of the foe that was behind them. Their religion was a religion of spiritism. It was saturated with Satanic power, and therefore Joshua was sent to war, not so much with those Canaanites as men as with the awful power that was behind them and that was working all this mischief. If we are to know the fullest victory our attitude must be the same as God's attitude to those powers of evil. At the back of sin, at the back of practically everything that is happening today against God and against righteousness is this awful foe of which Paul speaks in Ephesians 6, with this marvelous army, this disciplined army that he directs: the principalities and powers of evil. Behind the sin which attacks you, behind all this apostasy that is rushing in upon the Church, behind all these methods of other nations that are creating such problems that our statesmen are being completely baffled, and that are bringing about burdens that are breaking men and nations down, stands this implacable foe of God; and you and I can make the cross a barrier in resisting him, in attacking him, in overcoming him.

Now turn to the third aspect of the cross, which is found in Revelation 12:11 "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Read the book of Revelation and you will find it is a record of war between the Lamb and the dragon; and what is prophetically true of the future is spiritually true of the present.

There is the enemy today, more bold, more open, more defiant, more determined than any general, I believe, in the past, has ever had any experience of, and to know that there is an enemy is half the battle. He was no myth to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is no myth in the Bible, and we have no right to leave people in ignorance of Him and His workings today. There are many causes of trouble due directly to Satanic influence, and the very essence of spiritual strategy is to know your enemy, and then to know how to direct the power God gives you upon him at the right spot.

Now here, just in a word, is the full Gospel of grace—deliverance from sin, deliverance from self, from the old man, and deliverance from Satan and all his works. How does that deliverance come? "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb ..." (Revelation 12:11). "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31), said our Lord Jesus on the eve

of Calvary. And when He hung there on the cross, crucified in utter weakness, that weakness became the power of God by which He expelled the devil from his place of sovereignty in the world and stripped his principalities and his authorities of all their power. From that day to this and to the very end Satan is a defeated foe, and the purpose of God is that you and I should be treading him under foot. The truth is that there are many Christians today who are being trodden under his feet; and that is not in God's program for anyone of His children. He is exercising authority in lives today to which he has no right because he is defeated, and the Lord Jesus Christ gives to you and to me the right, the authority, the privilege, to tread him under our feet and to know in experience the fullness of the victory of the cross. For remember the victory of the cross is not confined to our salvation from sin or to our victory over self, it embraces the indisputable fact that the prince of this world has been judged and cast out, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, gives us now the authority to bruise the serpent's head.

How do we overcome him? That is a wonderful word, the word "overcome" in the Greek. If you were in a court of law it means that you win your case. If it is in a conflict it means that you have knocked the weapon out of the hand of your adversary. That is the meaning of it. Here they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.

Satan goes into the presence of God to accuse the believer, and by the blood of the Lamb you win your case at the great court of appeal. Satan attacks you in your person, through your mind, through the circumstances of life, but by the blood of the Lamb you can knock the weapon out of your adversary's hand, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb."

Remember that is the basis of all God's dealings with you and with me, and it has to be the basis of all our opposition to Satanic interference in our lives. The finished work of Christ on Calvary is the weapon by which you and I can fight the good fight of faith with perfect success. And bear in mind that the cross is the only place where Satan admits defeat. It is the one and only place in the universe of God where the great enemy has been conquered. It is the one and only place where you and I can have victory, and therefore we have got to choose to stand there and resist him and claim the victory. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb."

Precious blood, by this we conquer in the fiercest fight, Sin and Satan overcoming by its might.

Then John goes on to tell us something more, that they overcame him by the word of their testimony. That is a great deal more than getting up in a meeting and saying, "Twenty years ago I was saved." Testimony here means cooperating with the Holy Spirit in His judgment upon Satan. And what is His judgment upon Satan? That he has been defeated and that he has no right to any life. Testimony here means entering into partnership with the Holy Spirit to have that fact carried out in actual experience.

How is it to be made effective? You have got to go back to Romans 6:6, and you have got to learn, and I have got to learn, to stand upon that death of Christ and ask the Holy Spirit to make it all that it means, to make it a fact in our experience every moment and every moment. There has to be the perpetual attitude of reckoning myself dead to this and that sin as Satan attacks me every day. Then there has to be the perpetual aggressiveness of the Spirit against him and all his works.

You take your sin, the sin you know is your besetting sin, the thing you sometimes call just a failing, an infirmity. Perhaps you have never yet come to call it a sin. The sooner you begin to give

it its right name the better. Take your sin and stand on the death of Jesus Christ against that sin and claim the victory that there is in Calvary for you when joined to the living Christ. Close by faith every avenue into your being against that sin and other sins.

Take your environment, take your home, take your business, with all its duties and tests and trials and irritations, take the circumstances of life; learn to stand there in death union with Christ, and then, by faith through that cross, claim the victory against every foreign power that is seeking to disturb the atmosphere of your home or that is seeking to cripple you or lame you and hinder you in business or through circumstances. That is making Christ Lord of your surroundings. That is entering into cooperation with the Holy Spirit for the deliverance of your life and your home and everything else. Take your work for Christ, take the meetings, the services: learn to stand in them on the death of Christ and claim that through the blood of the Lamb you will get victory over everything by which Satan would seek to hinder you in that service, in that meeting.

We want to take up this aggressive attitude of spirit in opposition to the evil one and bear our testimony to the fact that he is defeated and therefore he has no right here, and he has no right in that work, and he has no right in that home and in that life. Therefore, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can turn upon him and bid him go. Remember the words of God, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them" (Deuteronomy 33:27). In this conflict you will find that there are two things you have constantly to do. You have constantly to come back to 1 John 1:7 and get the cleansing of the blood through faith, and healing for the wounds. Then you have to come back again and again to Romans 6:6, and in the face of every attack of the enemy take up this attitude of death, it is the only bed rock position for the victorious Christian life. Stand in this spirit, and then trust the Holy Spirit to make it real to you. And lastly, John says, "They loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:11). That is simply the call to you and to me for the fullest surrender of will and of life in order to give us the fullest measure of victory. Make this surrender each day, at each point of the conflict. Just as the Holy Spirit shows you what God asks, then obey and give God all and He will give you all, and you will overcome and share in His mighty victory.

06. Prayer

Prayer

O God, our Father, we do praise and magnify thy holy name that thou hast given us such a Savior and such a wonderful salvation in Jesus Christ. There is not one who is not conscious of his need of that salvation and of knowing that victory. There is not one of us, forgiven by thy grace, redeemed by thy power, who has not a constant battle to fight with the old creation in its continuous assertion of supremacy, and we praise thee for the way of victory. Teach us how to walk in it, how to put it into practice, how to experience it. Our Father, there are some things that are very difficult for us to comprehend with our minds. May we put ourselves into the hands of the Holy Spirit that He may lead us into the experience, and then we shall know the victory. There is not one of us who is not becoming increasingly conscious of the tremendous personality of evil that is guiding the world, that is inciting the world, that is keeping the world in a condition of unrest and that is working such havoc in the lives of people today. Wilt thou teach us how to win the victory over him as he attacks us.

O God, our hearts leap out to thee in faith and in praise when we have read these words, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." What has been true of others can be true of us. May there be nothing in our lives to hinder the Holy Spirit from leading us in these days into the fullest experience of the life that thou dost bid us live. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

07. Chapter 2: Our Indebtedness to the Cross

Our Indebtedness to the Cross

Chapter 2

We saw, in the threefold aspect of the cross, that the death of the Lord Jesus redeems us from sin and brings us back to the Father; that it deals with the old Adam nature in each one of us, which is the source of our weakness and trouble, and just as we, by faith on the authority of God's Word, take up the position of death in and through Christ to every form of self life and maintain that attitude hour by hour, we live the life of continuous deliverance and victory. We saw also that the cross is the great weapon which the Lord puts into our hands to defeat the devil and to resist the pressure of the forces of evil, and to scatter the powers of darkness, to deliver souls and to keep our own feet from falling.

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Revelation 1:5)—this tells us of our indebtedness to the cross, what we owe to the death of the Son of God. I am going to turn to a number of familiar passages which will show us that the roots of all our blessings through time and eternity are in the cross, in that atoning sacrifice of the Son of God on Calvary, the fullness and the wonderfulness of which grow the greater and the clearer as we stand in spirit before the cross and seek the enlightening grace of the Holy Spirit to understand its meaning and to enter into its experience.

08. The Cross Marks the Purpose of Christ's Coming

The Cross Marks the Purpose of Christ's Coming

First, the cross marks the purpose of the coming of Christ (1 Timothy 1:15), "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." I would state that first fact of our indebtedness to the cross simply to remind you that it is an echo of the Savior's declaration when He was on earth, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45); but that is a fact that requires today to be constantly repeated and emphasized in the hearing of men and women, that the Lord Jesus Christ came to die—not to live, not to teach, not to work miracles—he came to die. It was the purpose of His birth and the purpose of His life to die, because He came to deal with sin.

I do think that those of us who are preachers and teachers should in these days, when the cross is being slighted and minimized and hidden from the people, take every opportunity that God gives us of thrusting the cross into the vision of the people, as Paul thrust it into the vision of the Roman and the Jew and the Greek whenever he stood before them. The purpose of the coming of Christ was Calvary.

09. The Cross Pledges Christ's Return

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Secondly, the cross is the pledge of the return of Christ and the reunion of loved ones who have gone before. In 1 Thessalonians 4:14-16, we read these words, they are very important: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout" Our faith in the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the cause of our expectation of His coming. A friend of mine was speaking about the coming of the Lord to a prominent minister in one of the great cities of England, and the minister said, "My dear fellow, it is a beautiful, poetic dream." But you cannot dismiss such a thing as the coming of the Lord that occupies such a place in the Word of God, in an airy fashion like that. The argument of the apostle Paul is simply this, if the one coming of the Lord was a deed planned in the love of God and carried out by the power of God, the other coming of the Lord cannot be a dream only—the one hangs by the other, the one is the cause of the other, the one is the ground of the other. The first coming of our Lord and its purpose is the ground of our hope that the second coming of the Lord will be a fact, and that its purpose will be realized. To the denial of the personal coming of the Lord Jesus Christ the answer is the cross. You must do away with the cross if you are going to call the coming of the Lord a mere poetic dream (I fancy of a few). The cross is the pledge of the return of Christ.

10. The Cross is the Secret of Life

The Cross is the Secret of Life

Thirdly, and this is what I want to emphasize most of all, the cross is the secret of life, and it has got a double secret for you and me. First, it is the secret of our own personal life (Galatians 2:20), "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is the secret of one's own personal life. The I is the representative of the self life, which has been the cause of all the enmity in the human heart towards God, and the source of all the weakness of human service for God ever since the fall, and that I has to be dealt with by the cross.

You will note what the apostle says, it is not self-crucifixion that the cross works by, but co-crucifixion. We are crucified with Christ, and that is a fact of God on which our faith is to rest for continuous deliverance and victory. Christ's cross is my cross. I want to get into the very heart of that and know what it means, for I believe that is the secret of personal life for the Christian—Christ's cross is my cross. I consent to share Christ's cross. I consent to share death with Christ through the cross to everything which is opposed to the Father's will, that everything of the Father's purpose may be accomplished. When I take up that attitude I find the I dispossessed and Christ living in me. That does not make me a machine; it makes me a new creature, with my own temperament and disposition and personality, but with a new source for my life, a new spring for my being, out of which flows the life of Christ, and then others see—not me, but Christ living in me. A gentleman was walking down one of the streets of our city, Glasgow, when he saw a crowd at a shop door. Curiosity took him there, to find a man inside the shop selling a beautiful picture. He was describing the merits of the picture to the people before him, pointing them to this corner and to that corner and showing them this, that, and the other thing, and all the time he was speaking of the picture he was never seen, he was behind the picture, and only the picture in its beauty was visible to the people. That is the way to witness for Christ; that is the mark of the crucified life, the life that has entered into the secret of life, it is crucified with Christ. Christ crucified is revealed by it. That is the way to witness for Christ, "Christ liveth in me," Christ seen through me—I crucified.

I want to read a few words from a Scottish theologian, Denney. I found them in the church vestry of a friend of mine, and if I may venture humbly to say it, I think they are words that everyone of us preachers and teachers ought to have continually before us for the service to which God has called us: "No man can bear witness to Christ and to himself at the same time. No man can give at once the impression that he himself is clever and Christ mighty to save." That is the secret of life. That is the mark of the man or the woman who has entered into the great secret of the cross in relation to his or her personal life. The old saints were very fond of mottoes and symbols. One of their favorite symbols was a picture of the face of Christ with a lighted candle before it, and the motto: "May I waste so I show the face of Christ." "I am crucified, Christ liveth in me."

Let me carry you on to the second secret. The cross is the secret of life for others in service. Read two verses in 2 Corinthians 4:11-12 : "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus'

sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.” Life for others only as death works in us. It is that which makes work tell, and which makes preaching fruitful.

One of the first principles of God regarding service seems to be to work into you and me the truth which He needs us to proclaim to others. Paul knew that. It began in the street called Straight with him, it deepened and developed in the solitudes of Arabia, and Paul went forth knowing a fellowship with Christ in His death that perhaps few have ever known, but that you and I would need to know in these days if our work is to prove fruitful for God and for others. “Death worketh in us, but life in you” (2 Corinthians 4:12).

I was once speaking with an Egyptian Christian student, and he told me this, that when the priests of the Coptic Church in Egypt are ordaining a man to the priesthood they recite over him the prayers that they recite over the dead, inferring that he is dead to everything of the world and alive only to God. That is exactly what Paul speaks of here, death in us, life for others.

You know the substitutionary power of the cross. You may have apprehended your death position in Christ so that you are getting victory over the forms of the self life, but you and I need to enter into a fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, into a conformity with Christ in His death, which brings into us the spirit of the cross, the spirit of Calvary. Death requires to be wrought in us in a real death fellowship which will produce life that ministers to others.

Paul strikes here the keynote of such a life, “Always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake.” The Greek word means “handed over,” always handed over, as the Lord Jesus Christ was handed over, as the Lord handed over Himself; always handed over to death for Jesus’ sake. You will notice that it is we who live who are to be handed over. It is the corn of wheat that has to die, but death means the gate of life, the gate that leads into a richer, fuller, abundant life. As death knocks at the door of that corn of wheat in the ground it breaks open the hard shell and there comes out of it what we see above the ground. Just in the same way as the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, touches in us everything that is against God, everything that belongs to the old creation, which is the material on which Satan is ever working, so that work of the cross breaks open the hard shell of our nature and character and gives an outlet for the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Death working in us, life works in others. Are you and I willing for this? Are we willing to let the Holy Spirit hand us over to death? Do you know it is as true of me as it is of Christ, “No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself” (John 10:18)? And the question is today whether you and I will exercise the power that we have. Are we willing to be handed over to death, whatever that may mean for us, in order that there may be life flowing out of us for others and for Him who gave Himself for us?

What will it mean? What will it mean, if we allow the work of the cross to be wrought out in our characters? It may mean for us that we have to be willing to be set aside, slighted, put in the background, when others are being put forward; willing to be misjudged while others are praised; willing to get no credit in our work while others are getting much credit. For some it might mean to be willing to go to a place in the foreign field or in some land that is being shunned by others; willing to tread a path that means sacrifice; willing to receive treatment that is unpleasant, but receiving it in a Calvary spirit. It may mean no longer asking God to deliver from hard circumstances, but asking Him to make those hard circumstances the instrument, through the

cross, that will break open the hard shell of your nature and let the light of Christ flow out.

It may mean, it must mean, loving everyone with a love that is like the love of Christ and dealing with infinite patience and tenderness with every member of the Body of Christ; that the Body of Christ may grow strong and ready for the coming of the Lord.

There is only one way in which you and I can win souls for Christ; there is only one way in which you and I may have a fruitful service; it is the way of sacrifice. That is the only way in which the life of Christ can be made manifest and flow out of us to others.

I believe this age is rapidly closing up, and God needs men and women filled with such a spirit as that, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of the cross, and the spirit of martyrs. Are we willing? Will God find us ready and faithful and obedient? What will be the result if we are willing? Life for others, perhaps revival in the Church, the ingathering of the heathen, the gaining again for many of that which they have lost—the vision of the present Christ, the receiving on the part of many of the assurance of things that are essential; and above all, glory to Him who was handed over to death for you and for me.

O beloved men and women, to make others see Him and know Him, and believe in Him and love Him, and follow Him and go after Him, even though it means for you and for me travail of soul and death to self—“so then death worketh in us, but life in you” (2 Corinthians 4:12). That is the secret of service for others, and the cross holds the secret. But oh, how are we to be handed over? Not one of us can do it, but will you turn to Hebrews 9:14 : “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God”? The same power by which Christ handed Himself over to the cross is the power by which you and I can hand ourselves over, that life may be for others.

Oh, thank God for it. The only thing that God needs is a willing heart; that you and I should be willing to tread the path, to choose the life that He has pictured for us in His Word. And then, when we are willing, the Holy Ghost does what we cannot do, He takes us and hands over us and everything in us that is against God, to the cross, and the moment that He hands that over to the cross, the door opens and the life of Christ finds an outlet, the pitcher gets broken and the light is seen, the light shines out.

11. The Cross Enables the Gift of the Holy Spirit

The Cross Enables the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Fourth, the cross makes possible the gift of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 3:13-14), "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The cross makes possible the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit is based upon the work of Christ in His atoning sacrifice. Calvary and Pentecost are inseparable. Calvary always sends a man on to Pentecost; Pentecost is always sending a man back to Calvary. The man who stops at Calvary arrests the plan of God. That is to say, if a man is satisfied with forgiveness of his sins and wants nothing more, he has an arrested life and the plan of God has come to a stop; but the man who stays at Pentecost and does not continually go back to Calvary is defeating the purpose of God. Calvary and Pentecost are always working into each other's hands. You never can know the power of Pentecost unless the power of the cross is working in you.

One of the saintliest men on the Keswick platform in the olden days was Charles Fox, and Charles Fox used to say, "The risen life somehow or other always gravitates back to the cross." That is a great truth for us to learn. It just means this, that the finished work of Christ on the cross is the basis on which the Holy Spirit operates to bring to fruition the great purpose of God.

I know that the believer is filled with the Spirit when he first receives Him, but only to the extent of his power to receive, and his capacity at that moment is small, very small. It can only be enlarged as he apprehends the great fact of the death of Christ and yields himself to the Spirit of God for the purpose of that death to be worked out in him.

Near my last church in Scotland was a little village, a favorite summer resort that jutted out into an arm of the North Sea, and the action of the sea was continually silting up the sand at the mouth of the river, preventing the river from doing its work. Therefore the government had to be continually dredging the channel so as to let the river flow. There are things in your lives and in mine that only the cross can deal with, and if the cross is not allowed to deal with those things and touch them with death, why then the channel of our lives is continually getting silted up with these things and blocked. Therefore it is that the Holy Spirit desires to use the cross in order to deepen the channel of our lives and so have the opportunity of filling us with His fullness.

Calvary and Pentecost are inseparable and they are indispensable for the preaching of the Gospel. Calvary creates the preacher and the teacher, and Pentecost equips the preacher and the teacher. Book learning will never make us preachers or teachers, although book learning has its place and a very great place; but there is one theological seminary into which we must go, and from which we must graduate if we are to be preachers and teachers of the Gospel. It is sometimes called Arabia, and Arabia means for you some place where you come face to face with the need in your life and fight it out in the presence of God. If you will do that you will learn what

Paul learned in his Arabia, you will learn the meaning of the cross, and you will learn much about the purpose and the power of the Holy Ghost, for Calvary and Pentecost are inseparable.

We may stand in pulpits and we may teach classes, and we may organize Christian work, and people may praise us, and we may have outward success, but if we do not know Calvary and we do not know Pentecost except in a superficial manner, those people we speak to and teach will never have cause to glorify God in us, and see God mighty in and through us as they saw in the apostle Paul.

12. The Cross Brings Victory

The Cross Brings Victory

Let me say another thing, a fifth fact. The cross is the source of all victory, and there is a fivefold victory for the Christian to win. First, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," victory over death (1 Corinthians 15:57). Second, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me," victory over self (Galatians 2:20). Third, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," victory over the flesh (Galatians 5:24). Fourth, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world," victory over the world (Galatians 6:14). Fifth, "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it," victory over Satan (Colossians 2:15). And Satan can be defeated on no ground except that of Calvary. There on the cross the Lord Jesus Christ bruised the serpent's head and broke the serpent's power, and today we stand facing a conquered foe. Do not let us forget it. The cross embraces all these things, and gives to you and to me a full and complete victory.

I do not think we should ever speak of the tragedy of the cross. There was no tragedy on the cross; that was below the cross, among the people who only saw in the Son of God someone whom they wanted to put to death. Do not, I pray you, ever speak of the pathos of Christ's death. There was no pathos in it, there was victory, glory. It was the climax of His life. It was that for which He had come. He came to go to the cross, and the devil, by every possible means in his power, tried to keep Him from the cross. If the devil can keep the cross from you and you from the cross, if he can prevent the cross from working out its purpose in you and in me, if he can make us shirk the cross, he has done his work, he needs to do nothing more. He can let us be as active as we like and as devotional as we like, and as religious as we please, but if he can keep the cross out of our lives he has done his work. He tried to do it with Christ, but Christ went to the cross and bruised the serpent's head, and on the ground of the victory won there you and I can win victory here.

13. The Cross Obligates Holiness

The Cross Obligates Holiness The sixth fact is this:the cross creates the obligation for holiness(1 Peter 1:15), “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.” You will find that the command in that verse is grounded upon the message in the eighteenth verse (1 Peter 1:18-19): “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ ...”—because Christ died, therefore we belong to Him and we are bound in honor to work out the plan of redemption, if we stand upon the redemption position; but nothing can set us apart for God, nothing can make us holy, except as the cross is working in us, because the cross alone can keep the hindrances to holiness in the place of death.

14. The Cross Instills Christian Zeal

The Cross Instills Christian Zeal

Seventh, the cross becomes the spring of Christian zeal (Titus 2:14), "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." It becomes the spring of Christian zeal. The mark of the crucified life is zeal for good works. I think there is never an idle place in the sphere of the cross-filled and cross-governed life. You will note what Paul says leads up to zeal; first, redemption, then the readjustment of the life of the redeemed. The aim of the death of Christ is to create the Spirit of Christ in service, "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). It lays this urge upon us to live henceforth unto Him, zealous of good works. But let me just say this one word of caution, zeal is not hot-headedness, it is hot-heartedness. True zeal always acts intelligently and wisely under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Will you let me say this to you very humbly? In your service aim at depth.

Oh, the weakness of so much of our evangelical work today is its superficiality. We clamor for results, we strain our eyes to catch some sign, and when we get the results we become contented with results, with what we see. The Church judges men today by results, and what we are needing to do is to aim at depth and leave results to God. Oh, let us keep in touch with the cross and hand over our zeal, our natural impulsiveness and our desire to see results, to the cross, in order that we may have only the zeal which is born out of death and is created in us and through us by the Holy Spirit. Zeal is not hotheadedness, it is hot-heartedness.

I think Peter would say to you and to me today, "Add to your zeal knowledge, and to knowledge commonsense, and to commonsense right judgment, and to right judgment patience and consideration for others," and all that grace creates especially for you and for me (2 Peter 1:5-7). At your leisure read 2 Corinthians 6:1-10, and see the character of the worker under the power of the cross.

15. The Cross Grants Assurance

The Cross Grants Assurance My last point, the eighth, is this:the cross gives us the assurance of immortality(1 Thessalonians 5:10), “who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” So the cross finds us where we are by nature and places us where we shall be by grace. The cross begins life and the cross takes us into the life that is forever.

I close with words that are not mine, words that were written by one of the old mystic poets whose poems were so full of the teaching of the cross:

There, as knit into the body Every joint and limb, We, His ransomed, His beloved, We are one with Him.

All in marvelous completeness Added to the Lord, There to be His crown of glory, His supreme reward.

Wondrous prize of our high calling!

Speed we on to this, Past the cities of the angels Farther into bliss. On into the depths eternal Of the love and song, Where in God the Father’s glory Christ has waited long.

There to find that none beside Him God’s delight can be, Not beside Him, nay, but in Him, O beloved, are we.

16. Prayer

Prayer Our Father, we beseech Thee, whatever has been Thy word to us, that no one seed of that word may pass from our memories or be taken away by the Wicked One. May nothing be forgotten that in Thy purpose we should remember. Let Thy word do its wondrous work in each one of us, that so this may be the result of our redemption here, "Death working in us," death to everything that is against Thee, "Life for others" life for the Church and glory for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Now unto Him that loved us, and loosed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, be glory and dominion forever, Amen.

17. Chapter 3: The Message of the Cross in the Old Testament

The Message of the Cross in the Old Testament

Chapter 3

There seems to be today a disposition on the part of many to emphasize the New Testament to the neglect of the Old Testament, and almost to cut out the Old Testament as having no practical bearing on the life of the present. In the British Navy every rope has in it a red cord, and let that rope be cut as it may be, and be found where it may be, the little red cord proclaims it to be the property of the British Navy. God has a scarlet thread that runs from Genesis to Revelation uniting those sixty-six books in one perfect whole and preventing any separation between the Old and the New Testaments, and that thread is the sacrifice of His Son on the tree.

Take anyone of those sixty-six books and you will not fail to find the message of the cross, and that scarlet thread not only proves the divine authority of the book, but it shows the necessity for these two books, these two testaments for the elucidation and the interpretation the one of the other. The more you read the Bible the more you will see that the great central truth of it is Calvary. It is the foundation of God's plan for the redemption of the universe. It is the ground of all God's purpose with His Church. It is the cause of all God's blessings to mankind. As an illustration of the message of the cross in the Old Testament, I confine myself to the writings of Moses, and we shall find in the Pentateuch the story of the cross in embryo. All that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ means, and that takes in practically the whole teaching of the New Testament, is foreshadowed in these first five books of the Bible. Of course there is a gradual unfolding of the meaning and power of the death of Christ through History, the Psalms, and Prophecy until He appears who is crucified for our sins. Paul carries the revelation a step further and shows us in Ephesians 1:10 that the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ over the universe is the deliberate purpose of God, and in Colossians 1:20 that Christ on the cross is the point of reconciliation between God and those who have been separated from Him by sin; and so the revelation is carried on until finally, in Revelation 22:2 we see the family of the man who in the dawn of the world's history was driven from the garden gathered again around the tree of life, and the leaves of it are for the healing of the nations. In the Pentateuch we have the cross in germ. It was the thought in God's mind before the foundations of the world were laid, in order to answer the challenge of Satan and to meet the urgent need of His creatures for redemption; therefore the cross and what it stands for is an Old Testament as well as a New Testament doctrine, and you cannot read the roll-call of the heroes of the Christian faith in Hebrews 11 without seeing that it was the power of the cross to be, the power of the Lamb to come, which made them what they were, giants of faith and giants of patience.

18. The Cross in Genesis

The Cross in Genesis

Let us look at the first book, Genesis. What is the truth that shines out in the book of Genesis? It is just this, in a few words, God at the back of men and things; and the keynote of Genesis 45:8, and four words in that verse, "Not you ... but God."

You can take the life of any saint mentioned in this book, and opposite his faith and his faithfulness, his strength and his obedience, write down as the secret of it all these words, "Not you, but God." This book explains exactly what Calvary proclaims, the mighty working of God in the world through men and for men and all towards redemption. As the source of all His dealings with the world, hidden in itself, and yet apparent in its results, there stands the cross, and we see in the foreshadowing of the cross the power of the coming, eternal Son of God. The ark of Noah is just the symbol of the cross which saves. Noah in the ark is just the type of the New Testament believer in Christ. Abraham, called out to follow God, is just the picture of the believer who, in any age, takes up the cross to live a pilgrim life in dependence upon God. The offering of Isaac on Mount Moriah is a foreshadowing not only of the atoning Savior but of the inspiration which the cross can give to men to lead a life of complete sacrifice at the command of God. When Joseph stood before his brethren with the memories of wrongs committed, of injustices meted out, and yet with his heart full of forgiveness, what have you but the Old Testament revelation of the believer indwelt by the Spirit of God, and the Old Testament prediction of the power of the Holy Spirit to create in a man an atmosphere of love, and to keep in the place of death every desire for retaliation and revenge? And that is just the message of the cross in the New Testament.

So, broadly speaking, the whole message of Genesis may just be said to be this: it is the message of sacrifice which procures salvation, and forgiveness, and acceptance, and forms in man the character of Christ; and that is just the message of the New Testament cross (Galatians 2:20) "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"

19. The Cross in Exodus

The Cross in Exodus

Let us turn to the book of Exodus. What is the message of Exodus? We say it is redemption, that it is God delivering His oppressed people by the blood of the Lamb and leading them out of bondage. The keynote of Exodus we usually take as Exodus 12:13, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you," but I think that the book of Exodus carries us much farther than that. It has a much deeper message than that. It calls, as in the case of Moses, for a full surrender of life to God to carry out the will of God, and it shows what God will do for and through the man who holds nothing back from Him. I scarcely need to remind you that that is one of the clearest and most continuous messages of the cross. The verse that to my mind seems to be the larger message of Exodus, you will find in Exodus 25:8, "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell in the midst of it." The blood which redeems us from sin points us on to the desire of God to dwell in the midst of us, and so you will find that a large part of this book is taken up with the tabernacle, every part of which speaks to you of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and of the practical outcome in the Christian life of that sacrifice. The teaching of the New Testament is this: the cross not only saves us from sin, but it claims for God what it does save from sin. We belong to God as His temple. The believer is God's sanctuary, to be built according to the pattern showed unto us in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in that sanctuary God is always seeking fellowship. Have you made a sanctuary for God in your being? Are you careful, in these days, to build the sanctuary of your life according to the pattern shown to you in Christ Jesus? God is desirous of having fellowship with you and with me. For this reason you will never know a real exodus from the bondage of sin except as that fellowship with God becomes real and full. And further, only as the heart becomes the temple of God through the Holy Spirit can the life of anyone of us be furnished with the gifts as the tabernacle of old was furnished, so that the fellowship becomes a source of power and of blessing.

O beloved friends, the great purpose of the Holy Spirit is to keep the temple clean for God, to work into those characters of ours the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to make redemption not a mere escape from the bondage of sin, but a means of creating such closeness of fellowship between God and man that more and more God will be able to possess man, and man more and more will become like God. That God is hungry for the fellowship of His people is the proof of the tabernacle in the book of Exodus, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

You will notice that the meeting place for the fellowship which God is longing for he describes in Exodus 25:21-22, "And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet [by appointment, it means] with thee." Have you made an appointment to meet with God today? "There will I meet [by appointment] with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat." That was the meeting place in the old dispensation. What is the point of fellowship in this dispensation? It is the cross of Christ. It is there God and man meet. There God's heart is open towards man. There

man's heart is yielded to God. "My need and Thy great fullness meet, and I have all in Thee." That is the message of Exodus.

20. The Cross in Leviticus

The Cross in Leviticus

Let us turn to Leviticus, and see that in Leviticus 1:1 God is in the tabernacle and is speaking to the people from the place of indwelling. Now what is the message of Leviticus? The key verse is usually taken to be Leviticus 19:2, “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.” Now join with that Leviticus 26:12, “And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.”

Leviticus claims the closest connection between God and His redeemed and delivered people. But what is God? “I am holy,” God says, and therefore He requires a holy people. The offerings mentioned in the first seven chapters of this book speak of the perfection of relationship which existed between God and His divine Son, and the perfection of relationship which He insists shall exist between Himself and His human sons.

In Leviticus 11:45 you will get the link between Leviticus and Exodus, “For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.” It shows that the aim of God with His people was not the mere deliverance of them from the taskmasters of Egypt, but it was that they might become holy so that He should be able to walk among them and be their God and call them His people. The aim of divine deliverance from sin is holiness of life.

All the teaching of the New Testament proves that if God is to be at the back of things, of men, as Genesis shows, is to indwell the believer as Exodus reveals, life must be impregnated and guided by the Spirit of holiness, and therefore the call of Leviticus, just as it is the call of the cross, is for a people separated unto God, separated from everything that can displease Him and hinder the outworking of His purpose (2 Corinthians 6:16). “What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God” And Leviticus reveals this to us, that there are two factors in that great work of separation—the blood and the oil.

Now the distinct command of God in Exodus 30:32 is, “Upon man’s flesh shall it [the oil] not be poured.” In Leviticus 8:23 we see on whom the oil was to be poured, upon the one on whose hand and foot and ear the blood had come. What is the teaching of the New Testament? It is very important to notice this. The Holy Spirit never separates to God the flesh, He never separates to God the old man, He never separates to God the uncrucified soul. It is only when the flesh, the old man, has gone to the cross, and the attitude of death on our part to the forms and demands of the self life is taken up and maintained, that the Holy Spirit can fill and possess and sanctify the believer. That is the message of the cross in Romans 6:6, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” The point of contact for the Holy Spirit is the cross, and if you and I ever get away from the cross we get away from the Holy Spirit.

21. The Cross in Numbers

The Cross in Numbers

Now let us turn to Numbers. What is the teaching of the book of Numbers? Many people say it is a dry book, but the message of Numbers is just the most practical meaning of the cross, and it is this, that the life which has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and is indwelt by God, called into fellowship with God, can never be an idle life. As you read this book of Numbers you will see that there were three things which God required of His people in those days: first, activity; second, arrangement; third, aggressiveness. And the key verse of Numbers, we may take as Numbers 1:54, "And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did they." At the source of all life of Israel, God's demand was for explicit obedience, and God's expectation was that, that obedience would be granted. If there is any virtue which the cross requires for the full outworking of the purpose of redemption on the part of the believer, it is obedience. The Calvary chapter of this book (and you will find that each one of these books contain Calvary chapters—Genesis 3, Exodus 12, Leviticus 16 and Numbers 21), shows us that disobedience is absolutely fatal.

Let us look for a moment at those three things that God required of His people, and see how they link us on to the New Testament teaching. The first thing He required was activity. It is scarcely necessary to say that that is bound up with a living Christianity. A dead faith is always a do nothing faith; but the Christian life is full of potency, force, passion, enthusiasm for Christ, and therefore for the needs of the world. These are some of the powers which drive on Christian life in service, and at the back of each one of them, as its inspiration, is the sacrifice of the Lamb of God who went to the cross.

Then, will you take the second thing God required of His people, which was arrangement? One of the chief facts of the book of Numbers is the importance and value of details for their march, their work, their worship. Think of the practical teaching of the cross in the New Testament. Take for instance, 1 Corinthians 12, and you will see that the same close attention is insisted upon by the cross in all the details of Christian life and work. God leaves nothing to chance. Each one of us is called to take his right place and do his or her bit of work, and the only way in which the Body of Christ can be developed and made strong and fit for her purpose is by each member of the Body of Christ falling into the right place and doing the God-revealed bit of work. I want to say this, especially to those who are in Christian service: your attention or inattention to details in your work will make or mar your work. It will either solve your difficulties or increase them. Remember, everything counts in the service of God, because everything means something. And the cross puts this demand upon every child of God in regard to service, that we shall be honest and honorable even in the smallest bit of work that we have to do. I want to emphasize that. The demand of the cross is that we shall be honorable and honest and straight in every bit of work that we are asked to do, although it be just the most trivial bit of service that has to be done. It has its place in God's work, and every bit of God's work requires to be rightly accomplished.

Now take the other thing that God required of the Jew and of Israel in those days, and you will find aggressiveness. Look at Number 1 and see how it opens with the call to battle. There is a sentence that rings through that chapter, I think thirteen times, “Able to go forth to war,” “Able to go forth to war.” What is the message of the cross? It is a call to arms, and never did that call sound more loudly in the ears of God’s people than it sounds today. For we are in the fight today as perhaps we have never before been.

I was preaching in one of the most interesting of mission halls in New York, the Jerry McAuley Mission, and I picked up a magazine, when I was sitting on the platform, and, turning over a leaf, I caught these words: “The war of Satan against God.” I said to myself, “That man knows something, whoever he is. He has the right idea of the situation.” For that is the truth of the situation today, we are in a fight. Are you all in the fight? I find there are a great many Christian people who do not know there is a fight on, and they are taking it easy, and the call of the cross is a call to arms for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read the Epistle to the Ephesians, and what do you see? It is an epistle of warfare that leads to victory and rest. We are, together with the believers in the Epistle to the Ephesians, seated with Christ in heavenly places. What is that? A challenge to Satan that he will not shirk. The whole purpose of the devil is to get you down from that pinnacle, not positionally, of course, but practically, and when he gets you down from that position he will defeat you.

We are seated in heavenly places, and so Paul goes on to describe, in Ephesians 6, the great conflict into which every Christian is summoned. And what do you find? That the cross is not only that which calls you to fight, but is the ground on which you stand in order to fight. Do not let us forget that. The only way in which we can fight the devil today is by the cross, and as you stand at the cross, and as you claim the victory of Calvary against him and all his works and wiles you will find that Calvary spells Victory.

Here in Numbers the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed, in Numbers 24:17, as the scepter who shall rise out of Israel and shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Seth, and in the New Testament you have Him revealed as the Victor, and the victory won by Him on the cross makes sure the victory won here.

There are two things in this book of Numbers which speak of Calvary. There is Numbers 6, where, in the separation of the Nazarite, we see the condition of life to which the cross calls as essential for true Christian life and service. Then in Numbers 16 you have the sin of Korah, and in that we need to be very wide awake, today, because it is at work. What is it? What was the sin of Korah? The intrusion into the office of the priesthood of an unholy man and unholy fire—counterfeit holiness and counterfeit power.

Today the air is vibrating with the doctrines of demons and the spirits of evil are at work everywhere, and only by the cross can you meet them, and only by the cross can you find out the truth about these doctrines. I beseech you, test every writing of man today by the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the touchstone. You will see it in its true light. You will come to know this and thank God for it that the cross is your instrument of defense against the wiles of the devil and your instrument of offence against the powers of darkness.

22. The Cross in Deuteronomy

The Cross in Deuteronomy

We come to Deuteronomy, and what is the message of Deuteronomy? Deuteronomy 30:19 says (and there is one word in it that sums up the whole book), “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” The message of Deuteronomy is that word “choose.” That is the great word of the book, “choose,” with all its forms.

Moses has been telling the people of Israel of God's choice of them and all that it means, and then, as he comes to the end of his witness to the faithfulness and love of God, his message to his people is, “Now you choose. Two paths are open to you, and it is your will that has to decide.” In the Christian life and work the teaching of the Holy Spirit is that the great decisive factor in the conflict is our will. You can see how that is emphasized in the New Testament. How often you come across something like this: “Yield yourself unto God. Present your body unto God. Glorify God in your body and in your spirit,” all showing that these are the actions of your will, deliberately faced and deliberately done. Your will and mine are only safe when they are in cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

Now will you notice this: When God asks the surrender of our will it does not mean that we drop our will. Dropping one's will always engenders passivity, passivity of mind, passivity of spirit, passivity of will; and that is one of the great perils of these days. The dropping of the will is the essential condition for Satanic working. Passivity of the will, the mind, the spirit is an essential condition for Satanic working. If a man is to go in for spiritism today he simply drops everything and becomes an empty machine into which the spirits of evil rush and take possession of him. Satan with all his marvelous ingenuity gets alongside, and is getting alongside, of Christian people today and playing upon their very desire to be true to God, and he is saying to them, “You know if you are to reach that life of holiness you must drop your will.” The result of dropping the will is that Christians are becoming afflicted with the awful disease of passivity, and you find it everywhere.

People come to my wife and to myself and say, “You know that is just how we are. We do not seem to be able to pray, we do not seem to be able to do anything today. We are being driven up into a corner, being hedged around, and there is nothing in us.” There is nothing more perilous in these awful days than getting into this condition of passivity of mind and will and spirit. Satan requires the absolute consent and surrender of a man's will in order to do his work. Notice that God requires the same thing: the absolute surrender of your will and life, but not to become passive, instead to become active. That is where the difference comes in. Satan causes their passivity, God demands activity of your will, activity of your spirit, activity of your life in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. When our Lord Jesus Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane He was completely master of His own will, so that He was able to say, “Thy will be done.” He put His will alongside of the Father's will, and entered into cooperation with His Father for the purpose of carrying out those great divine tasks. And cooperation with the Holy Spirit always entails

watchfulness, perfect obedience, prayerfulness, and the use of all God-provided means.

I do pray you to remember this, that the Holy Spirit always makes us intelligent. He never makes us foolish or fanciful. He never leads us to take false steps. He never carries us into the region of fiction. That is what the devil is doing today with multitudes of people, but the Holy Spirit always works along the line of intelligence. The thing He wants to do with Christian people today is to make them sane and well balanced.

I do not need to tell you that that is one of the things we are requiring to look for very much, that we keep well balanced in relation to truth and in relation to everything else. The Holy Spirit does that. And how are we to cooperate? How is this cooperation brought about? Just as the Holy Spirit works in the purpose of the cross to our lives. He never works apart from the cross. What does the cross do? It is meant to touch with death every force in you and me which is evil and natural, that belongs to the old nature and that is constantly at work asserting its supremacy over the supremacy of Jesus Christ, and therefore hindering the Holy Spirit from doing His work. That is why Calvary always sends us to Pentecost, and Pentecost always sends us back to Calvary.

We never can get away from the cross. The moment you get away from the cross your feet are on slippery places, and as the Holy Spirit works in the death purpose of the cross He works in, as well, the life purpose. And so we reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God.

23. Summary

Summary

Now here is the message of the Pentateuch in a few sentences: Genesis, God at the back of everything working up to full redemption. Exodus, God delivering from sin—not as the final jail, but to call the delivered ones to surrender, that they may do His work and that He may tabernacle among them. Leviticus, God revealing the awfulness of sin and calling for a separated people. Numbers, God requiring on the part of His people constant activity, arrangement, and aggressiveness. Deuteronomy, God emphasizing the power of the human will in life and service in cooperation with the Spirit of God.

Now that is the message of the cross in the New Testament, God in everything; God in us seeking us for Himself absolutely, calling us into a real conflict and a real conquest, with the intelligent use of our powers and the cooperation of our wills with the Holy Spirit, to reach out to the utmost ends of the earth and do our best for Him.

These things do not happen by accident. These things are not in the Word of God by accident. They are there to show you and me this: that the God in the Gospels is the God of the Pentateuch, the same God. A man cannot get rid of the Pentateuch any more than he can get rid of the Gospels. The cross fills the one book as it fills the other. The cross is revealed in the one Testament as it is revealed in the other. Moses saw the day of Christ afar off and was glad, and he was willing to bear the reproach of Christ rather than go after the riches of Egypt. And Christ looked back to the day of Moses and stamped His writings with His divine authority.

Right through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation runs the scarlet thread of the cross, proving that the book has come from God, and that the message of the whole book is one—Christ Savior, Lord, and Coming King; proving as well that the cross is the foundation of God's plan for the work of redemption. It is the power by which God redeems the universe, brings men back to Himself, develops in them a Christ-like character, meets the needs of their spirit, soul and body, and it is the power by which, at last, He will seat His Son upon the throne of the universe.

You and I need not be surprised at Satan's persistent desire to get rid of the Pentateuch and to get rid of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. I expect to see much more vicious attacks upon the citadel of Christian faith, Jesus Christ's person and work, than we have yet seen. But the man who will stand by the cross and let the purpose of the cross be wrought out in him will stand the storm and find his faith resting on a foundation which will never move from under him.

Go to the deeps of God's promise; And know of His wonderful might;

Whatever would be a true blessing, For Jesus' sake comes as thy right.

Go to the deeps of God's promise; And claim whatsoever ye will; The Blessing of God will not fail thee, His word He will surely fulfill."

24. Prayer

Prayer

O God, wilt Thou continue Thy blessing with us, and may we be such a separated people that it will be possible for Thee to walk among us and call us Thy people. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

25. Chapter 4: The Gospels

The Gospels

Chapter 4 A study of the Gospels will help us to understand the divine view of the cross, and it will be seen what the cross is in the eye of God, what place it has in the plan of God, what mighty purpose God has to work through it in the lives of His people.

26. The Purpose of Christ's Coming

The Purpose of Christ's Coming

First of all, I would ask you to think of the witness of the Holy Spirit to the purpose of the coming of Christ. I have many passages to ask you to note, which perhaps you will look at in your leisure hours. Before our Lord's birth, through the angels, you have the witness of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20-21). "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him [Joseph] in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." Also (Luke 1:30-33), "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." That was the fulfillment of the promise given hundreds of years before, you will remember, to David in 2 Samuel 7:16-19. Gabriel confirmed the promise given to David, to Mary, with regard to the coming of Christ.

Second, the witness of the Holy Spirit before His birth through Zacharias (Luke 1:67). "And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying," "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:76-79). That is the prophecy of Zacharias through the Holy Spirit, regarding the birth of the Lord Jesus. I want you to notice in passing the beauty of the words which the Holy Spirit uses, "The dayspring from on high." The Greek word means "rising of light," the dawn, and the word dayspring is found only here and in Job 38:12, where, in the Hebrew, it also means to dawn. It means to be up early at the task; it means therefore, earnestly, passionately, with strong earnestness for the accomplishment of a purpose. That was true of the Lord Jesus Christ, the dayspring, the One who has been up early at the task. Now what is the task? "The dayspring from on high hath visited us." The Greek word for that means to inspect and then to relieve. The Holy Spirit never uses a wrong word or an unnecessary word, but always just the word which most clearly expresses the divine purpose. And here is the witness of the Holy Spirit to the coming of one who would be up early at His work, and His work was to inspect God's people, inspect the human race, and then relieve them. And is this not the meaning of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Third, at His birth, through the angels (Luke 2:10-11). "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

Fourth, through the Baptist (John 1:29; John 1:34; John 1:36). “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” “And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.” “And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!”

Fifth, at the resurrection, through the young man at the tomb (Mark 16:6). “And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him.”

Sixth, at the ascension, through the two men sent especially from heaven (Acts 1:11), where they called the attention of the wondering disciples to the fact that this same Jesus, the One whom they had known, the One whom they had seen with the marks of the cross upon Him, would “so come.” So that is the witness of the Holy Spirit to the purpose of the coming of Christ.

27. Christ's View of His Mission

Christ's View of His Mission

Second, I want you to notice Christ's own vision of His mission. The cross sheds light upon that in the very words of Christ. Here are a number of passages: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13). "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40); "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matthew 16:21); "And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised again ..." (Matthew 17:22-23); "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise again" (Matthew 20:17-19); "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified" (Matthew 26:2); "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10); "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up ..." (John 3:14-21); "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself ..." (John 10:18).

All these words from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ were simply the fulfillment of prophecy. I want you to turn for an illustration to Psalms 22, written by David, and David expresses here some tremendous grief of his own life, and you cannot read without hearing the sob of a broken heart, David's broken heart, sobbing out the great grief through which he was passing. But in sobbing out the grief for his own experience, he was sobbing out prophetically the deeper grief of the greater heart that also was to break, and as our Lord hung upon that cross He began this sob: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me [left me destitute]?" (Matthew 27:46).

I want you to notice Psalms 22:6 where He says, "I am a worm." The literal meaning of the word is maggot, "I am a maggot, and no man: a reproach of men, and despised of the people." It was that maggot that had to be killed in order to give the scarlet color with which the curtains of the tabernacle were dyed. Our Lord is likening Himself, in His hour of death, to that, and there in His death our sins have been dealt with. The Lord had to die in order to make it possible for us to be washed whiter than snow, just as that maggot had to die in order that those curtains of the tabernacle that were to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ should receive the color that was there. All these things the cross speaks of in the Gospels are just a fulfillment of those Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself.

You will notice this as you read these passages, that in Christ's own thought He did not come to found a new religious order, although His disciples are called "Christ ones," "Christians." He did not come as a propagandist with a new ethical code, although the world's highest and best ethics

have their foundation in the principles laid down by the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ came as a Savior from sin. He came to die. His only purpose in taking on the likeness of human flesh, of human nature, was that He might die, and through His death bring about the great purpose that God the Father had in His heart in relation to the world. And that death has effected a victory which cannot be limited. The work of Christ on the cross has brought about the experience of a marvelous victory which can have no limits put to it.

Think of it for a moment. It means victory for God in the vindication of His character, victory for Himself in the great act of self-abasement and self-surrender; victory for the human race in the fullest possible redemption; victory for the earth in the cleansing of it and in the deliverance of it from the curse pronounced on it at the fall; victory for the animal creation in its perfect freedom from brutal passions; victory for the heavens in the clearing out of all the hosts of evil spirits and the sending of them into the abyss; victory over Satan in the dislodgment of him from heaven, in the dislodgment of him from the heavenly places where he is today; in the dislodgment of him from the earth hereafter; in the dislodgment of him from the abyss into the lake of fire; and victory for the whole universe of God when the dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ shall stretch from shore to shore. And that is only a very small view of the victory of Calvary. We shall never know, until we enter into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and have all eternity to understand it, the fullness of the meaning of the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Calvary means Victory, and that is the message we want to send throughout the world today; it is the message of deliverance and the message of hope and the message of power for the Church of God. If she will only enter into the meaning of the cross and appropriate all the cross has done for her in that perfect finished work, Calvary spells Victory. So the teaching of Christ and the Holy Spirit through the Gospels is that the cross is to be the supreme force in life for holiness—not only for salvation, but for holiness, and the supreme power for us over everything that is evil.

28. Christ's Meaning of the Cross

Christ's Meaning of the Cross

Third, what does Christ mean by the cross? What is Christ's own witness in the Gospels to the cross? As you study the Gospels you will find at least a fivefold witness that the Lord Jesus Christ gives to you and to me with regard to His death on the cross. The very first thing that He emphasizes is that it is the secret of all fruitful living. "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:38-39); "Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:24-25). The word "life" there, in the Greek, is just the word that we translate today into "psychic." We use it so much these days, psychic or psychical, it is just the natural life. This is the difference between all these false cults of the world today and the message of the Lord Jesus Christ, that they all have to develop the psychic, they are all putting emphasis upon the natural life in man, the natural thing in man, and there is a sort of deification today of this human element in man. But the message of the Lord Jesus Christ is not to develop the psychic, but to send it to the cross. That is the only pathway of safety for you and for me, "Whosoever will save his life, whosoever will develop the psychic or the natural in him [and that is what spiritism and all those things are doing], shall lose it" (Mark 8:35). That means it will come to ruin, and he will find it goes from him and he does not get out of it what God means him to get. "Whosoever will lose his life [whosoever will let these things that are merely human and natural, and that can be worked on by the devil; whosoever will let these things go to the cross, keep the cross between himself and those things] for my sake shall find it." That means he will discover the place and the purpose and the power of the natural, and he will get out of the natural all that God means him to get.

Let us remember that fruit never comes through the development of the natural in us, but through the development of the spiritual, through the supremacy of the Holy Spirit in life. The source of fruit in the believer's life is Christ, living in him. When I say that the fruit never comes through the natural I do not mean that God does not use our natural gifts, our minds, our faculties, but fruit never comes through fleshly energy, never comes through soulish power, it never comes through the natural becoming supreme over the spiritual. Fruit is only the result of the Lord Jesus Christ living in you and me, working in you and in me, and putting His power through us, our minds, our gifts, our faculties and everything else.

Therefore, in John 12:24; John 12:32, and you have these gifts by the Lord Jesus Christ, "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die," there is the natural, "it abideth alone," it brings forth nothing for God, nothing for men, "but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

There is the secret of a fruitful life for you and for me. It is the cross at work in our natures, our characters, doing in us, and for us, and through us, what is done in, and for, and through that grain of wheat as it lies in the grave of the ground. Christ was the first grain of wheat to fall into the ground and die, and out of His death has come everything that we know today of Christian life, Christian faith, Christian power, Christian influence, Christian hope. He says, "Follow me. If anyone will be my disciple let him take up the cross, let him lose His life, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24).

It is so possible for us to have redeemed lives, with which perhaps little or no fault could be found, and in which little or no fruit can be discovered, simply because there is no death to that which God cannot use—no death to that which Satan is always trying to use. It is possible to save your life and get nothing out of it. It is only as we go in the steps of the Savior that there can go out from us in disposition and service the life that reveals Christ and the life that reproduces the Christ life in all its wondrous power to bear fruit for God and for men.

What does it mean? I wonder if I can make it simple enough. You remember how it is said that Christ poured out His soul unto death. He took His natural life and He laid it down in death. Now the soul is the seat of our senses, is the seat of our personality, the seat of our self-life. That is the source of all the mischief and all the weakness in our lives and in our selves. Think of the forms in which that self-life appears even among Christian people, in pride, in temper, in pettiness, in quickness to take offense, in misjudgment of others, misinterpretation of the words of others, self-love, self-pity, self-preservation, and so on. Oh, the forms are innumerable in which the self-life can appear. The Lord Jesus Christ says that whenever anyone of those forms appears we are not to develop them, but to say, "That is for the cross. That must go to the cross. That goes to the cross. I die to that, I take the position of death to that." May the blessed Holy Spirit make the victory of Calvary real to you, and the moment that you take up that attitude in your heart and your will you are opening the door for the Holy Spirit to come in with the life of Christ and Romans 8:2 becomes a perfect reality and a blessed experience to you: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). The moment you take up that attitude of saying, "That is for the cross. I am not going to let self-love get the better of me; I am not going to let temper get the better of me. It goes to the cross, I die to it, I put the cross between that and me, and I ask the Holy Spirit to make the power of the cross real in my experience"—the moment we take up that attitude the Holy Spirit finds the open door into our lives with the life of Christ which produces fruit, and the corn of wheat dies, and the fruit comes for God. That attitude will mean for you and for me just what the death of the Lord Jesus Christ meant for Him. What was that? "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore" (Revelation 1:18). Before He went to the cross He said, "I lay down my life. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." He took it again in resurrection power, and that is the result of your taking up this position of death to sin, it is resurrection life and power.

Paul, in Php 3:10, declared this to be his ambition—that he might know Christ more and more in the power of His resurrection. So as you definitely and deliberately, cost what it may, send the forms of the self-life to the cross you come to know the resurrection of Christ; dying to sin, you are alive unto God.

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). Dying is the gate of life, it is the pathway of power, it is the secret of victory, it is the source of heart rest, it is the secret of all that can make life what God means it to be and what God wants it to be. That is the witness of Christ to the cross. It is the secret of a fruitful life for God and for men.

Take the second thing, which he tells us that the cross binds together. The Lord tells us that the cross binds together forces for the deliverance of souls. Turn to one passage, Matthew 17:20-21, which is a very important passage. In answer to the question of the disciples, Why could not we cast out these demons? “Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:20-21). Our Lord reveals there a threefold power that He means us to use in order to bind the forces of evil and deliver souls from these forces. There is first of all faith, which is the link with the power; there is prayer, which puts the power into action, and then there is what he calls fasting. Now what is fasting for the Christian? It is far more than abstinence from food and drink. For the Christian, the principle underlying fasting is not physical, but spiritual, of that I am quite sure.

You remember that God appointed one great fast for His people, the Day of Atonement, which numbers among them inferred to mean abstinence from food; but God distinctly said, “It is a day for afflicting your souls because of sin.” That Day of Atonement was for taking away everything that had been separating them from God in their worship and in their life. Other fasts were added in time of distress and religious zeal, and they added fasts themselves until, in Christ’s day, the Pharisee could say with tremendous pride, “I fast twice a week,” and brought down upon him the rebuke of Christ for hypocrisy. The idea of fasting is shutting out something, and for the Christian it is just what Paul emphasizes when he bids the Christian give up lawful things that are not expedient, things that are not spiritual, things that become material for Satan to work on; things the possession of which plays into the hands of evil powers; something, perhaps, that keeps you from fellowship with God; something, perhaps, quite lawful, that yet blunts your appetite for the Word of God or for prayer; something, perhaps, of a trifling nature, that takes the time which ought to be devoted to things of a serious nature; something, perhaps, that creates an atmosphere around your life that robs your life of power just at the crucial moment.

Paul says these things have to be given up, we have to fast from them, we have to shut our eyes to them. But it goes very much deeper than that. It means the giving of one’s self, by a definite act of yieldedness, to God. Fasting in a Christian sense is the principle of the renunciation of self as the master force in your life, and the crowning of the Lord Jesus Christ in its place. You close your life against yourself and open your life to God, and then you maintain that attitude of surrender day by day.

Here comes in the work of this threefold force. Prayer becomes the central force for the deliverance of men and women from sin and from powers of evil; for prayer, remember, is more than devotion, is more than communion, is more than mere intercession; prayer is the mightiest weapon that God puts into your hands to smite the power of evil on the ground of victory at Calvary. Therefore prayer becomes more of a work than a word when you come to understand the

meaning of it. Prayer is doing business for God in the spiritual realm. Therefore the apostle Paul says, "we wrestle not with flesh and blood" (Ephesians 6:12). How much time we waste wrestling with flesh and blood, trying to get a man to see a truth from our point of view, trying to argue a man around to our opinion of what belief means, of what something else spiritual means. Paul says, "Wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with those spirit forces of evil that are behind flesh and blood." That is what prayer means, I believe, more than anything else; for we are in a fight, and do not let anyone forget it, a fight that is growing hotter and hotter as the end approaches, and you need to know how to use the weapon of prayer on the ground of the victory of Calvary, if you are going to stand against the forces of darkness that are all round about you and that are driving in upon Christian churches and Christian lives in the most terrible way. Prayer becomes the central force for the deliverance of souls. Faith links us on, faith links the prayer on to that power, and then the fasting, or the cross, is what breaks all the hindrances to that power manifesting itself in service.

Let me put it in this way, fasting takes you to Romans 6:6, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," and makes death union with Christ a fact, and then faith takes you to Romans 8:2, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," and makes life union through the Holy Spirit a fact; and prayer becomes the force for deliverance on the ground of Calvary, in cooperation with the Spirit of God.

Third, Christ says the cross marks out the path of the true servant, "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:27-28); "But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of. And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" (Mark 10:38); "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50); "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:26); "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day" (Luke 24:46). I just want you to remember Luke 9:51, "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." That is the path of the true servant. It is not the path of self-pleasing and self-interest, it is not the path that others say is the path for you. Never take a path that others say you ought to take. Only the cross can mark out the path of service for you, and the cross marks out the path of service towards Jerusalem.

What does that mean? God's chosen path for you in which you are to do His will, even though it means Jerusalem. And Jerusalem for Christ meant loneliness, forsakenness, sacrifice. I want to quote to you a passage from a letter which I was reading the other day with great pleasure, by David Livingstone. New letters have been printed which were written to his brother Charles. When his wife and family left for England on April 23, 1852, this is what he wrote: "My heart is very sore. I shall never see my children again. They will grow out of my knowledge and will all forget me; but I grudge Him nothing who died for me. My tears flow, but He knows that my heart grudges Him nothing of all that I have."

Now do you see it in a practical form? David Livingstone was the corn of wheat. Do you see it? A corn of wheat, and what fruit has come out of that corn of wheat! He trod the path of a true servant and trod it in a spirit of sacrifice. What the cross is calling for today is lives full of devotion, full of

sacrifice, reckless souls is the call of Christ today, reckless souls—not reckless in the flesh, that is no good—but reckless because of union with Christ, reckless in sacrifice, reckless in devotion. The fourth thing I can only mention. The cross gives victory over the powers of evil: “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils” (Luke 11:21-22); “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Luke 10:19); “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John 12:31).

I warn you today that the powers of evil are out in full force. Do not shut your eyes to the tremendous developments of evil that are going on in the spiritual realm. These forces of evil are at work in the most subtle, cunning, and insidious way. You will find them in all the cults of the world, these religious cults, and only as you learn to watch, and only as you learn to walk in obedience to the Holy Spirit, only as you let Him work in you the purpose of the cross, are you safe from the powers of evil and the wiles of the devil by which he is deceiving and deluding multitudes.

Turn to Luke 10:19 and read it, and ask God the Holy Spirit to make you know what it means, for Christ has given His children authority to tread upon all the power of the enemy today and stand in victory. There is nothing adverse that you cannot have under your feet, because it is already under His feet.

One word more, the fifth thing that the Lord shows us in the Gospels. The cross opens the way to the indwelling of Christ. “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in Him” (John 6:56); “Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19-20); compare with Galatians 2:20, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

“He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him” (John 6:56). There is a natural union when Christ and I become one, Christ in me and I in Christ. What is the flesh that we are to eat? It is not the flesh of the dead Christ, not the flesh that was nailed to the cross; it is the flesh of the risen Son of God. That is to say this, our worship is not with a dead Christ, and our union is not with a dead Christ. Our fellowship and our union are with the living Son of God. Let that sink into your minds and it will make you understand the blessedness.

Let me come closer to Thee, Jesus;

Oh, closer day by day!

Let me lean harder on Thee, Jesus, Yes, harder all the way. In all my heart and will, O Jesus, Be altogether King!

Make me a loyal subject, Jesus, To Thee in everything.

29. Prayer

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we pray Thee, by Thy power, to guard every word that has been uttered in the Spirit. Guard these words in our minds that they may not be taken out of our minds, that Thy Word may do in each one of us all that Thou meanest it to do for the strengthening of our lives to real service and fruitfulness in service, to the glory of Thy name. Amen.

30. Chapter 5: The Cross in the Epistles

The Cross in the Epistles

Chapter 5

We turn to the Cross in the Epistles. As an illustration of the teaching of the cross in the epistles I would turn your attention to the First Epistle of Peter. In 1 Peter 5:12 you will get the reason for writing the epistle: "By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand." The Jewish Christians were living in difficult days. Persecution made it very easy to yield to the temptation to fall away, and the apostle therefore speaks to his readers here of their standing ground in the true grace of God and exhorts them to stand fast.

Peter's purpose in writing this epistle is to bring to our knowledge this fact: that in the Old Testament and in the New Testament alike the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ are the center of the world's history.

If you will turn to 1 Peter 1 you will find three things there asserted by the apostle. In 1 Peter 1:10-11 ("Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"), that the sufferings of Christ were the substance of prophecy; in 1 Peter 1:12 ("Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into"), that they were the theme of the Gospel, and also in that verse the study of the angels. The substance of the Old Testament prophecy is the death of Christ, the sufferings of Christ (1 Peter 1:10-11); then in the next verse (1 Peter 1:12) you find it is the theme of the Gospel and the study of the angels.

You will note that where Paul speaks of the death or the cross of Christ, Peter always speaks of the sufferings. Seven times, I think, in his epistle, he refers to this word "suffering." He tells us in 1 Peter 5:1 verse that he was a witness of the sufferings of his Master; and the fact of them, and the thought of them, and the meaning of them was so deeply impressed upon the mind of the apostle Peter that he fills his epistle with the story of those sufferings and their practical outcome; and you cannot read this epistle without seeing that he wishes to convince his readers that the Christian life can only be viewed rightly as light from the cross streams upon it, and can only be lived perfectly as the sufferings of Christ are having an effective result in spirit and mind and will.

It is very interesting to note the ideas suggested to the mind of the apostle as a practical outcome of the death of Christ. You will find that each one is introduced by the word "that," "Christ suffered that" such and such a thing should happen (1 Peter 2:2; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 4:13).

31. Our Faith and Hope

Our Faith and Hope

If you will just keep that in your minds and follow through this epistle, you will see how much light there is streaming from the cross upon the Christian life. First of all, light upon our faith and hope, “Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God” (1 Peter 1:21). There is the object of our faith and hope, it is God.

There are three steps, you will notice, to the throne; in 1 Peter 1:18-19 (“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”), the redemption of Christ; in 1 Peter 1:20 (“Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you”) the foreordination of God, and in the twentieth verse also the manifestation by Jesus Christ. Faith and hope reach God by the way of the sacrifice of the cross, that sacrifice that was thought out in the mind of God, and planned by God before ever the foundations of the earth were laid, and then personally exhibited in all its richness and fullness in the life of the Son of God. So Calvary shows us the eternal source of faith and hope and their immovable anchorage. The source of our faith is not in ourselves. The source of our hope can never be in our circumstances, but the source of our faith and hope is God Himself. That faith is tried, Peter tells you in the sixth verse, by manifold temptations, or testings. There never has been a time in the history of the Christian Church that believers have not been tested in regard to their faith. The testings of faith are necessary to prove the genuineness and the value of that faith.

I was preaching one summer in the month of June, in one of the loveliest parts of Scotland, in the North, in the region where the gorse and the broom bloom. In the month of June they are at their loveliest, and you see the hillside covered with great patches of gold and green. Never have I seen the gorse and broom so luxuriant and so plentiful. I was speaking to a lady about it one day and she said, “Do you know the reason why the bushes are so large and magnificent this year? They were all severely burned last year.” So it was out of this furnace of fire that they came with their richness and their beauty. And it is just out of the furnace that our faith and our hope come to be of real value both to the object and to the owner. Faith has to be tested.

You will notice also (thirdly) that the hope which is ours is a living hope. It springs into birth through the sufferings of Christ, and gains its immortal, quenchless power in the resurrection of Christ, and it has a practical influence, “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). That living hope always leads to holiness, and the measure in which we sanctify the Lord in our hearts gives us the proof of the reality of that hope.

32. The Plan of Service

The Plan of Service

Second, light upon the plan of service, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). The first part of that ninth verse is explained by 1 Peter 2:10. Let us read the first half of verse nine and then the tenth verse: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ... which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” You can see that the mercy of God in Christ is what changes our whole character, and through that mercy have we become what is spoken of in the former part of the ninth verse, a chosen generation, that we should show forth the praise or the excellencies of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Notice the word “that ye should show forth.” It is a very emphatic word. It is found, I think, nowhere else in the Greek in the New Testament. It means this, to proclaim to those who stand without what you have learned within. You remember that the Greeks had two words to describe the temple. There was one word which they used for the whole precincts of the temple, the tabernacle and the courts where the people gathered, but they had a special word which they used of the Holy of Holies, and that place was where only the priests could enter. The idea in Peter’s mind is this: God’s plan for the priests—and I use the word in the Scriptural sense, which is the only proper sense in which to use it, that every believer is a priest—is not that he should stay inside the Holy of Holies always, just simply enjoying what he hears and what he sees, but that he is to go outside to the people who are without and tell to them what he has learned and what he has seen in the sacred place.

Salvation, which is ours by the mercy of God through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, is not a selfish prerogative, but it is a sacred privilege to be used in all its meaning and power in a true service which reaches the world in its darkness and its despair. Never let us forget that the world takes its idea of God from those who claim to be of the family of God. Therefore we have been saved by grace and filled with the Spirit of God to be the mirrors of God, to be the reflectors of the Lord Jesus Christ, of His life.

I think our salvation is faulty if we ever forget that. The world hears of Jesus (it never heard so much of Jesus as it is hearing today), but it sees you and me. What does it see? We have been redeemed in order that we might show forth, that we might go outside and tell to the people the excellencies, the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is it seeing in you and in me? Does it see that we are the chosen people of God and that God has not made a wrong choice of us? Does it see that we are a royal priesthood, that there is something royal in us, royal in our bearing, royal in our disposition, that there is a strain of royalty in our character? Does it see in us a holy nature, and that our holiness is practical? Does it see that we are the peculiar people of God? Not odd people, but people who have been bought by Him, for Him, separated unto Him, set apart for His

service? This is what they ought to see. To accomplish this great thing is the purpose of the cross, and that is the light the cross throws upon the plan of service for each one of us, that God gives us nothing for ourselves, it is only for others; and it is only as we pass it on to others that we know the value of it for ourselves.

33. The Pathway of Life

The Pathway of Life

Third, there is light on the pathway of life, "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:21-23).

We have a marvelous passage here, the most wonderful event in human history is revealed here as regulating the commonplaces of our daily lives. Note that the sufferings and the example of Christ are united and they never can be separated. You cannot lift up Christ as Savior without emphasizing the place that He has a right to fill in human life, and the influence that He means to exert in human service. On the other hand you err, and greatly err, if you try to put any difference between Christ as a Redeemer and Christ as an Exemplar and set them up as if they could be set up in rivalry one to the other. If you want to know the example of Christ you must begin at the cross with Him. If you want to know the practical experience of the cross then you must follow Him as your example, "If any man will be my disciple let him take up his cross and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24 interpretation). And what God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Christ is my example only in the measure in which He is my Savior. The two offices of Christ are like the two sides of a coin. They are both distinct, and yet perfectly related the one to the other. So here God shows us the steps of the Lord Jesus Christ which He took with bleeding feet right up to the cross, and He says, "Follow Me." There is light on the pathway of life. Shall we look at those steps? The first was, "He did no sin." In the midst of all the ill treatment to which He was subjected He never sinned. Second, He did no guile. There was no crookedness in Him, there were no false motives in His service, there was no compromising in His spirit, there was absolute straightness in every thought and word and act on the part of the Lord Jesus. Follow Him.

Third, there was no retaliation, when He was reviled He did not revile. The Lord never paid back His enemies in their own coin.

Fourth, there was no self-vindication. When He suffered He did not threaten, He did not stand in His own defense. Again and again when He was attacked by His enemies, it is written in the Word of God, "He answered them nothing" (Matthew 27:12, Mark 15:3, Luke 23:9).

Whenever the honor of His Father was touched words sprang to His lips, but whenever anything concerned Himself He was silent. There was no self-vindication in the Lord's life.

Here you have Christian ethics upon a grand scale. And they have all had their birth at Calvary. I sometimes hear ministers in my own country (perhaps they are not very distinguished for their spirituality) say, "Oh, yes, I believe in an ethical revival," and who does not? Where was there ever a revival in the history of the Christian Church that did not produce an ethical revival, a revival that was not ethical? A revival that does not lift the morals of the people is no revival from God. In that wonderful Welsh revival in 1905, of which I saw a little, one of the features of it was that debts

were paid, and people believed in revival. Family quarrels were made up, family relationships were changed; there was a wonderful ethical revival in Wales. But what was the cause of it? Calvary—the preaching of Calvary.

We had a little bit of a revival in 1921 in Scotland, confined largely to the fisher-folk, and one of the results was that in many places the fishermen brought their pipes and their cigarettes and their tobacco pouches and their playing cards out of their homes and out of their pockets and made a heap of them and had a great bonfire. Is this not a real ethical revival? The public houses were practically empty and the drink sellers were saying, “The trade is gone.” That was an ethical revival, but what was the root of it? The sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. There can be no ethical revival without a spiritual revival. A Christian ethic or a religious ethic without the Christian dynamic of the cross is simply something that is cold and self-righteous without any power or any influence. True ethics are the result of the sufferings of Christ.

Notice the fifth step of the Lord, the perfect trust in the righteousness of God, “He committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously” (1 Peter 2:23). Do you notice that that was the grand revenge He took upon His enemies? He committed Himself to His Father, and it became His constant habit.

There is light on the pathway of life just in ordinary, commonplace, practical ways for you and for me. Do not ever say the teaching of the cross is not practical. There is no other teaching that is so practical. Every other teaching receives its practical power from the cross. There is light upon the pathway of life to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, and the example of Christ is the normal life of the Christian. If only we could get that into our minds. It is not for conventions, it is for you and for me when we go back to the home, and back to the office, and to the school, and if we have it only at conventions we are not following in the steps of the Lord. The example of Christ is the normal life for the Christian, and, beloved brother and sister, it is the only safe road for you to travel. To be guided by the spirit of the cross is the only way in which you can carry out the full purpose of God through life. Is that picture of Christ being anything like realized in you and in me? What is going to get the world today is not printing a theology but living a theology. The world stands today with a sad, sick heart at the controversies that are going on between the modernists and the fundamentalists, sick of it all, heart-sore in its awful, despairing need, and what is going to help that little bit of the world through which you pass is not so much putting a tract in its hand as living that tract just where you are. It is not the printed theology that the world cares anything for, it is the living theology, it is a Christian being the Word of God, revealing through a sanctified life the knowledge of God for which the world's heart is yearning in agony, the knowledge that God is sufficient through Jesus Christ to meet every need, to solve every problem, to face every test, to conquer every sin.

34. Aim of Life

Aim of Life

Coming to the fourth point, the cross shows us light upon the aim of life, “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness ...” (1 Peter 2:24). That is the aim of life revealed by the cross, and the cross, remember, makes a tremendous demand upon us. The purpose of the cross is not mere salvation from hell, mere forgiveness of sin; the cross makes this tremendous demand upon us for righteousness, and not righteousness in any limited sense, but righteousness towards God, righteousness towards the world, righteousness towards the people of God. That is the aim that is set before us by the cross, and we are exhorted to seek after that and to reach that, to have a life that has an eye on God, that has a heart breaking with love for the perishing, and a hand that grasps a brother’s hand. “That we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.”

Righteousness is not righteousness if it can leave out anyone who is in the plan of grace. Righteousness is not righteousness if it does not embrace all for whom God cares; and our aim, if we are to be true to this motto, “Not I, but Christ,”—must be the full plan of God revealed in His Word.

We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to make effective in life what grace has brought to us; and grace works through faith and love unto downright goodness, righteousness in details, righteousness in the hidden things as well as in the public things. That is the practical demand of the cross, and that is the expectation of Him who suffered, that we should live to righteousness. That is the aim, now how is it to be done?

Peter shows you that it is through the cross working in us the purpose of God. Notice that the cross is always at the back of every demand which God makes upon us, as the source of our power to meet that demand and respond to it. The cross always deals with that which hinders righteousness—sin. Here you have a revelation of it from Peter, “That we, being dead to sin” (1 Peter 2:24). Now Peter is following simply in the steps of Paul, and Peter and Paul follow simply in the steps of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). This is just Peter’s way of expressing “That we, being dead to every hindrance to righteousness, may live the righteous life.” “We, being dead,” the whole secret of victory in life which commends the Redeemer, and reveals righteousness lies in this; our attitude to sin determines our position for life. “Dead to sin,” that is the work of the cross. There is nothing you and I can do. That is the message of the cross, “Be dead to sin.” There is a word in the Greek found nowhere else. It literally means to be missing, missing, missing, “Dead to sin,” to be in a position to sin spiritually that a man is in literally to the Post Office, at times, when the Post Office has to write and say, “He has gone and left no address.” That is just the meaning of it, to be missing. It is just this, that when the old master, Sin, comes and knocks at the door of your heart, he finds no response because you are missing, you are dead, and there is a new master in you and a new power exercising its mighty thrall upon you,

so that the old thralldom of sin has been broken, "That you, being dead to sin, may live unto righteousness." That is the blessed fruit of the death of Christ. As you take up this position in the face of sin, that there is no response to you because there is a new power in you, then you live unto righteousness and you achieve the aim of redemption; and the union with Christ produces that, that is the true aim of life. Is it our aim? Perhaps some of my younger brothers and sisters are often tempted to have as their aim this, to get on, and that is quite legitimate; but how are you getting on? Perhaps the temptation is to say, "I want to make my way in the world." That is perfectly right, but is it the way of righteousness? Sometimes the aim is to get wealthy. Well, that is all right too, because it is a good thing to have lots of money, I am quite sure, but is it God's wealth you are after, or is it wealth for God that you are after? Or it may be the aim is to make a name in your business, in your profession. That is quite right too, quite legitimate, but is it a name for righteousness? Low aims are a crime. "If ye then be risen with Christ, aim after those things which belong to the throne." See that you do not aim at the things that belong to the grave.

35. The End of Life

The End of Life

Fifth point, light on the ultimate end of life, you still find in 1 Peter 3:18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God," the one and only Master of life. That is the final cause of the redemptive work of Christ through the cross, to bring us to God. The old creation left God in Eden, and ever since God has been seeking for a new creation. Now He has a new head, and the head is in heaven beside Himself, and He is building up, building up, building up the new creation. And when the Lord appears and gathers His Body to Himself, then this will be literally true, we shall be back to God and God shall get back to Himself what has always been His. The great desire of His heart, the ultimate end of life is that man and God should be together.

36. The Purpose of Life

The Purpose of Life The sixth point is light on the great purpose of life, “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (1 Peter 4:1-2). There is the great purpose of life, and Peter says, “Arm yourselves,”—or equip yourselves—“with the same mind,” that is, with the same conception of the purpose of life. The word “arm” in the Greek comes from a word which means a tool which was used in offensive warfare. Peter tells you what the warfare is here, sin manifested through the lusts of the flesh, “For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men.” “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit lusteth against the flesh” (Galatians 5:17), so the flesh is unceasing, and Satan will never stop his efforts to break you and me down through the flesh. That need not be something gross. He will never stop his efforts to break you and me down somehow or other through the flesh. It may be by the flesh getting into Christian service, service being done in fleshly energy instead of in the power of the Spirit. Therefore the apostle bids us equip ourselves with a weapon by which we can defeat the devil and win the day.

Notice what that weapon is. It is just a right conception of the purpose for which you have been redeemed. What is that? To do the will of God. Oh, that sums up the whole Christian life, to do the will of God. You cannot obey two wills at the same time. You cannot yield to two opposing forces. If you do the will of God then you are not captured by the will of the flesh; but bear in mind this, the flesh will only yield to the cross; not to all the resolutions you may make at a conference, not to any self-effort, not to any attempted self-crucifixion, only to co-crucifixion, crucified together with Christ. It is not by putting yourself to death, or trying to put yourself to death, but by taking, by faith and surrender, your place of union with Christ in His death. That is the blessed barrier of safety between you and all the attractions of the flesh, and that makes the way open to do the will of God.

What is life for? Just what it was for Christ. What was it for Christ? “I came down from heaven to do the will of Him that sent me” (John 6:38), and all through life He did it, in childhood, in His ministry, in the shadow of the garden, in the awful shame of the judgment hall, in the darkness of the cross, from the beginning to end the impelling, constraining motive of the Lord Jesus Christ was His Father’s will. He was so really the master of His will by complete surrender of His spirit to His Father that He could take that will of His and put it deliberately and definitely, consistently and persistently, on the side of His Father, and He won the fight through yieldedness. And the same must be true of us. The cross shows that to do the will of God is to make the most of life.

37. Light beyond the Present

Light beyond the Present The seventh point is, the cross gives us light beyond the present: “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings: that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Peter 4:13), light beyond the present. And so you see how the cross on the green hill links the today of time with the tomorrow of eternity. The cross proves that to be partaker of the sufferings of Christ insures partnership with Him in the glory. The cross tells us that the present is not all, that it is not the greatest. It lifts our eyes to the horizons of time and shows us that they are beginning to glow with a glory that will never wane, and as it lifts our eyes it tells us that the best is yet to be. No life can ever lose that links itself with Christ through the cross; and therefore the call of the cross as it is illustrated in the epistles by Peter is essentially practical. It is to make Christ pre-eminent in us, and a pre-eminent Christ makes pre-eminent Christians. My life, my love, I give to Thee, Thou Lamb of God, who died for me O may I ever faithful be, My Savior and my God!

O Thou, who died on Calvary, To save my soul and make me free, I consecrate my life to Thee, My Savior and my God!

38. Chapter 6: The Cross in the Revelation

The Cross in the Revelation

Chapter 6

I shall not attempt an exposition of the Revelation; that is not my purpose. What I have wished to do was to try to show the place which the cross has in the Word of God and to suggest lines of study which may be helpful and joyous and profitable. As we have seen something of the cross in the Old Testament, and in the Gospels and the Epistles, I think the Holy Spirit would seek to make us see the place of the cross in this last book of the Bible.

It is the book of the future, as each of us knows. There are two lines running through, of brightness and blackness, of conflict and conquest, of the consummation of grace in glory and the consummation of sin in judgment; but the glory prevails. The book begins with a vision of the ascended Lord, the ascended victor, and ends with the vision of the redeemed state, and in between those two visions you have war and victory. In the first few chapters of the book you hear the ringing call of the ascended, conquering Lord to His Church to overcome. Then there is heard the clash of arms and the story of Satanic assault, and finally the Hallelujah Chorus of the victors around the Lamb in eternal fellowship. The center of the book is the Lamb, the keynote of the book is the Lamb. You will find that description given of our Lord at least twenty-eight times in the book, and in the rest of the New Testament only four times. It is the book of the Lamb. It is a great and necessary thing for us to have our eyes fixed on the Lamb and to see Him where He is. While we cannot but be conscious of the presence of the enemy and the powers of darkness around us, while we cannot but become increasingly conscious of those things as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of spiritual things, we want to learn to look at them all from the throne and see that behind everything that is happening in the world today the Holy Spirit, without any break, without any failure, is leading on the purpose of God the Father to full and final triumph.

I think it is a very necessary and helpful exercise for Christians today to read again and again this book of the Revelation. There is much in it that is difficult to understand and explain, but the general plan and object of it are quite clear. It is the book of the future, and being that, it throws light back upon the pathway of earth and it shows us the extraordinary, close connection between the cross and the lives of redeemed ones. As we read this book and see what the life is to be in the future when sin is done away with and Christ is all in all, the book shows what life here and now can be for each one of us; and the secret and the source of that life, from beginning to end, is the cross, the Lamb in His atoning sacrifice on the tree.

I would give my message a poetic title, calling it, "Gleams of Glory from Calvary." And as you read through this book you will see the glory gleams flashing out upon you on every side. What life is to be in that wonderful future before us life can be today through the power of the cross. That is the message, in short, of this book of Revelation, so far as you and I are concerned. The life that is eternal begins here, so just let us look repeatedly at this book and see what that life is and what is

the glory that shines from the cross upon it.

39. The Message of Forgiveness

The Message of Forgiveness

First, turn to Revelation 1:5-6 and read the text that we have already read more than once: “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be our glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” Read it as we have it in the Revised Version, “Unto Him that loved us and loosed us from our sins, be glory.” See the glory of the delivered life, “unto Him who loved us and loosed us.” The first message of the cross is forgiveness; but never let us forget that forgiveness means freedom for the forgiven one. Forgiveness without freedom would leave us in a position that would rob the forgiveness of its sweetness and of its reality. But in the New Testament God’s word for forgiveness always means deliverance from the power which has made the forgiveness necessary. The glory of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is the fullness of the victory which He has won on Calvary, and the completeness, the perfection of the salvation which He has wrought out for us here in everyday life.

There is an inscription in an old English abbey which perfectly describes the delivered life:

I am on the cross for thee, Thou who sinnest, cease from sin.

Cease; I pardon;

Fight; I help;

Conquer; I crown.

Now that is the life that is free, that is the description of the life that is free. It is a life that knows pardon for sin, that ceases to love its sin, that, in cooperation with the Spirit of God, through the victory of the cross, fights the sin and never gives in; and that, conquering, receives a crown, the glory of the freed life.

40. The Glory of the Changed Sphere

The Glory of the Changed Sphere

Let us turn to Revelation 5:9 : “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” This exactly follows after the first, it is the glory of a changed sphere. This new song is the result of a new experience. John is speaking to us here of the actual condition, I take it, of the Church, when she shall be translated. She is to be taken out of the natural into the heavenlies, into the realm where the heavenly is to be forever supreme. Is not that the experience today of all who come to the cross and meet the Lord Jesus Christ in grace? We become new creatures in Christ Jesus, we enter into a new sphere, and while the earthly surroundings are unchanged, there is something of the heavenly that has come into us, there has been implanted in us the life principle of a new nature which has on it the mark of the spiritual life and the nature of God Himself. Because redemption, the redemption of God through the Lord Jesus Christ, always implies that we become partakers of the divine nature. The sphere outwardly is not changed. That is coming, because the heart’s true home is the throne where God is, but the inward change has already begun, thank God. Redemption through the cross does not make the old nature better, it introduces a new nature, belonging to a higher order of beings, and a changed sphere is just the life that is born of the Spirit in contradistinction to the life that is born of the flesh. And when that life comes to the birth the natural thing is to have a new song, even praise unto our God.

41. The Cleansing of Character

The Cleansing of Character

Third, look at Revelation 7:14 : “And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

You will find that every step leads on to another, and here you have the glory of a cleansed character. That is the necessary result of a delivered life and a new sphere, a cleansed character. Oh, the wondrous work of the cross! It not only frees us from: the old sin and the old man; it not only brings us into a new sphere, where we have a new principle within us, and a new spring for our lives, but, as a necessary result, it deals with the character in order to set the character right.

O beloved, God’s redemption in Christ goes to the depths. There is no place for superficiality in God’s redemption. The cross means death to superficialities, the cross claims death in our lives, the working of the Spirit of God right into the very depths of our beings.

What is character but just the source of everything that relates to us; and we are what our characters are. We are just what our characters are. A character is God’s workshop where divine creations take form, and they go out bearing His mark upon them to witness to the world of His skill and of His power. In my first church in Scotland I had, as one of my members, the head of a great engineering firm. A friend of mine once said of that engineering firm, “We never question their prices. Their name is a guarantee of their work.” I thought it was a magnificent testimony to him. Is His mark on us so clear that the people of the world are compelled to say of us that we are true and accept us as genuine? The glory of a cleansed character is what the cross is to give us. No wonder, as you read this book, that you see this; that before the throne there is to be given the eternal evidence of the value of character as that in which the power of the Lord, of the Lamb, has been in operation to render that character so pure that it can stand in the presence of God. The glory of the cross today is its power to transform our lives. The glory of the cross in eternity will be seen in those translated to the throne, giving forever the proof of the cleansing grace of the blood of the Lamb. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

42. Glory of Perfect Victory

Glory of Perfect Victory

Notice what leads us on from a cleansed character, in Revelation 12:11 : “They overcame him (that is, the accuser mentioned in Revelation 12:10) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Now there comes the glory of the perfect victory. Our lives would lack some of their richest experience if victory were not possible, such a victory as is spoken of here. In the gathering of the heavenly ones around the throne there will be seen the full extent of that victory won on the cross, and, thank God, we can know that victory here, and we can know it in growing measure just as we yield our lives in an act of clear surrender to Him for a life of real honest witnessing and service.

There is nothing within the circle of our lives that may not be within the range of that perfect victory. There is no weakness, no sin, no failure, no flaw in our characters through which the accuser can harass us that cannot be brought under the power of this precious blood, so that that blood defeats him and checks him and overcomes him and drives him off the field. I do not believe there is one single thing affecting our lives in relation to God and His service where we may not know absolute, complete victory, provided the cross is having liberty in our lives to work out its purpose. As soon as the Lord Jesus Christ is in the place of supremacy and we are in Him, then logically, through infinite grace, we too are where we can reign. Therefore, defeat must mean slackness on our part. That slackness is almost always found either in our witness or in our surrender.

What is the witness that is so necessary and so powerful? What is the testimony that John speaks here? “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” What is that? Much more than merely being able to say, “I was saved twenty years ago.” Much more than being able to say, “At Stony Brook, in 1922, I entered into the real fullness of blessing.” It is a testimony against the enemy. It means recognizing the enemy and then joining the Holy Spirit in His judgment upon the enemy.

What is the Holy Spirit’s judgment upon Satan? That he is defeated. Therefore, giving our testimony is taking up this position that is ours in Christ, and standing there in opposition to this great enemy with all the forces which are ours through the cross, and through the Holy Spirit, and using the powers which God has given us to resist him and to overcome him. Remember he is defeated. You do not need to defeat him; he is defeated, he was defeated at Calvary. Never fail to remind him of it. Give your testimony against his works, give your testimony as to his defeat, and as to the certainty, to your certainty, that he cannot triumph. Then, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ you can command him to go. That power is yours only in the measure in which you love not your lives unto the death. That power to bear testimony against the enemy and to bring the victory of Calvary into actual operation in your own experience depends upon the reality of your own surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ so that He is having full possession of you and you are not holding back anything.

There is the glory of perfect victory that can be yours every hour, every day, right on until the Lord comes. “They overcame him (the accuser) by the blood of the Lamb,” and he will never stand against the blood, he will never stand against the cross. “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” that he is defeated, and therefore has no right to interfere with you. “And they loved not their lives unto the death.”

43. The Glory of Consecration

The Glory of Consecration

Pass on to Revelation 14:4, the middle clause of that verse, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Now, if the Lord has won for you and for me a perfect victory, look what He is expecting of us and what He has a right to claim (Revelation 14:5), the glory of unreserved consecration. "They follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." There is nothing which proves the meaning of the cross more clearly than such a consecration as that. There is nothing which sheds a brighter glory on the redeeming sacrifice of the Lamb than that. There is nothing which gives to us greater strength and purer joy, and fuller power for holy living than such an unreserved and unhesitating following of the Lamb as is spoken of in that verse. And does He not call for that because of His need of us as witnesses in the world? Has He not a right to ask that from us because of His surrender at Calvary? Does the world see you and me in such a consecration as that? Do you ever stand still during the day and ask this question of yourself, "What am I known as among the angels around the throne?" "These follow the Lamb." John saw them from the viewpoint of the throne, as they were on earth, and this is the testimony of heaven to them when they were on earth, "They followed the Lamb whithersoever He went" (Revelation 14:4).

What are we known as among the angels in heaven? Do they look down upon us and say, "These are following the Lamb whithersoever He goes"? Our consecration is a test and a proof of our discipleship.

44. The Glory of Service

The Glory of Service

Let us turn to Revelation 17:14, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords and King of Kings!" Now notice this next sentence, "And they that are with Him [they that follow Him whithersoever He goes] are called, and chosen, and faithful." There is the sixth flash of glory from the cross, the glory of serviceableness, the glory of being serviceable. Calvary alone can effect that.

Natural gifts are a wonderful possession and they effect many results, but divine grace always lifts service on to a higher level; and you will notice it is only the message of the cross that can call us out of darkness and out of death. It is only as we are yielded to the spirit of that matchless sacrifice on Calvary that there can be produced in us joyous souls. It is only the power of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, working in us, that can make us faithful in these perilous days. Our serviceableness is measured by the depth of the Calvary spirit within us. Our ability to be used by God is measured by the depth of the spirit of Calvary within us, and it is that spirit which makes the life radiant for God.

45. The Glory of Fellowship

The Glory of Fellowship

Look at Revelation 19:9 : “And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” There is the seventh gleam of glory, it is the glory of fellowship. There we have the record of the eternal fellowship, the unending marriage banquet of the Lamb at which the redeemed will one day sit. And what have you there but the picture of what personal fellowship with Christ can be.

1 Corinthians 1:9 says, “Called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” That is the normal experience of the child of God. That is not something for people especially gifted, especially holy. That is the privilege of every child of God. We are redeemed for that. The cross has made that possible. The cross calls us into that fellowship. The cross makes us fit for it, and just as the purpose of the cross is effected in our daily lives can that fellowship grow full and real and useful. Do not let us forget that fellowship with Christ is not a selfish thing. Fellowship with Christ means getting into sympathy with Christ in His outlook upon the world. Are we there? “Love so amazing, so divine”—what are we going to say? I do not like the word “demands.” I like the word “shall have.” It is true that it demands all, but can we say “shall have”?—“shall have my life, my soul, my all!” Do not let us seek or speak of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, unless He who died that death for our redemption is seeing in and through us to the uttermost ends of the earth the travail of His soul. That is fellowship with Christ.

46. Glory of True Government

Glory of True Government

Now we come to the last, Revelation 22:1 : “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” There is the eighth gleam of glory, it is the glory of a true government.

Christ is not yet on His throne (Revelation 3:21). He is seated on His Father’s throne, and they are quite distinct. In Revelation 5:6 He is not yet on the throne, He is standing in the midst of the throne. In Revelation 7:10, it is God who is on the throne. Then we come to Revelation 20:11, and we see the Lord Jesus Christ, at last, on the throne, a throne of judgment. That brings an end to sin and to rebellion. Then in Revelation 22:1 we see one throne, the throne of God and of the Lamb. The Father and the Son are united again on one throne, because the work for which the Father gave His Son, and the work for which the Son left His Father and shed His blood, is done.

Now the Holy Spirit, the pure river of life, is proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb to heal the nations by means of the leaves of the tree of life, to give to them perfect government, to give to them what no man or men are big enough today to give to the world, stability of government, righteousness of government, peace, and everything else for which the world is longing. When that day of true, perfect government comes, you will see that earthly things, material things, are of no further use. “They need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light” (Revelation 22:5), and in the endless eternity you and I and all that marvelous company of the redeemed ones will begin to understand something of the meaning of the cross and the value of the death of the Son of God. We shall begin to see something of the glory of that wonderful sacrifice, and in that glory we shall live our lives, for we shall reign forever and ever. The secret of all this wonderful life that is pictured for us in this book, thrown back upon us from the light of eternity, is this: taking, and keeping by the power of the Holy Spirit, our place of death union with Christ. Some may not understand the meaning of that, but if we ask the Holy Spirit to lead us into the meaning of it He will do it. It is something we can understand only by experience. When we yield to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to make the death of Christ in its fullest purpose known to us, He will lead us into it. That is the secret of life. It is taking our place with Christ on the cross to everything that is opposing the Father’s will, and maintaining that attitude of death as these things come into our lives. That death position in and through Christ is the position from which we draw strength and victory and life.

I do trust that through these very imperfect, feeble messages, some at least have seen the place which the cross has in the Bible, in the eye of God, in the plan of God, and if you have caught something of a vision of Calvary, go to your Church, and to your home, and to your business, and to your Sunday-school class, and as never before lift up the standard of the cross, and focus the eye of people today on the cross. It is necessary to everything, it is the source of all power.

You never can get away from the cross. If you are going to live the victorious life, if you are going to know the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus, you never can get away from the cross. Hereafter you will never want to get away from it, for "The Lamb is all the glory in Emmanuel's Land."

47. Prayer

Prayer

O God, may there be nothing in us to hinder the glory of the cross from flashing in upon our hearts and lives. O help us, by Thy grace, so to yield to the Holy Spirit that He will be able to work into us all the purpose and all the death of Christ; that nothing in us may hinder the glory flashing out upon this poor world, this world that is rushing about in its madness and despair, crying, "Where is thy balm?"

Out of our broken lives, out of our lives broken up by the Holy Spirit, may the glory flash, that some poor darkened, wandering, despairing, hungry soul roundabout us may see the glory and may see that it is the glory of the Lamb who died for him.

Continue thy presence with us, and bless us and guard us, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

48. Chapter 7: The Mold of the Cross

The Mold of the Cross

Chapter 7 The subject I want to discuss in this message is, "The Molding Power of the Cross," and I shall begin at Php 3:10, the last clause of that verse, which I shall quote from the translation by Conybeare, "Sharing the likeness of His death." Our Lord Jesus Christ has just one mold for producing Christian character, and that is the cross. You and I cannot reach our goal except in the way in which He reached His goal, and the cross is the mold through which He puts each one who is to represent Him here and who is to reign with Him hereafter. For the cross is the only place where we get rid of dead things that hinder us and hinder Him, and the place where we enter into a deep and an ever deeper conformity with Him, sharing in the likeness of His death, having His image impressed upon our character. When I use the word "mold" let there be no mistake. I do not mean that each one of us becomes the facsimile of every other one. There is this which differentiates the mold of the cross from every earthly mold, that while the cross is the only mold which He uses, it has no stereotyped pattern. Our Lord never trespasses against the law of personality. Just as you will not find two members of the same family exactly alike, or two blades of grass in the same plot similar, so in the new creation the cross does not produce a monotony of spiritual character, which would make the world an intolerable place in which to live, but a variety of natures, each bearing its own mark of individuality, and all of them together revealing the marvelous manifoldness of the divine mind and the divine spirit.

49. The Mold of Dying Daily

The Mold of Dying Daily

How the mold of the cross works is this: God has taken the old creation and He has condemned it in Christ, and He is now at work on a new creation. There is no place in the plan of God for the betterment of the old creation. He does not bring about some kind of transformation of the old man so as to produce some kind of resemblance to Christ in Christian character and conduct. There is only one place for the old creation, and that is the cross. But it is not enough for us to say it is there crucified with Christ. Crucifixion was a lingering death, and while we stand once and for all upon the fact of God, which is eternal and unchangeable, that when our Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross He took more than our sins with Him; He took our old man and dealt with the source of all our sin, and dealt with it satisfactorily; while we stand on that fact, there has to be the daily working out of the victory which Christ has won for us; there has to be the daily dying to this old self. The Holy Spirit has to work into us the death of the Lord Jesus Christ in all its wonderful power and purpose.

In 1 Corinthians 15:31 the apostle says, "I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily;" and 2 Corinthians 4:11, "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." There has to be the daily dying, the daily working out in our own lives of the victory won for us on Calvary.

I was walking with a friend in the grounds around his house, and I noticed a very notable tree, a laburnum tree. It is very beautiful, with long, drooping branches covered with a yellow bloom. In Germany it is called the Golden Rain, and it is just like that, like cascades of golden rain.

What attracted me to the tree was that I saw on some of the branches pink blooms. I found that the previous owner had been very much interested in tree culture and he had grafted on to this laburnum tree a pink laburnum, and here and there all over the tree you saw the pink among the yellow. When I looked more closely I found that on some of the branches that had been bearing pink blooms the yellow was again beginning to appear, and I found out that the tree had been neglected, it had not been pruned, nothing had been done to it for some time, and the old nature was beginning to reassert itself. The old yellow bloom was beginning to push out the pink bloom and to reassert itself in those branches that had been grafted in.

Take it as an illustration of the fact that the Holy Spirit has to be continually at work in our lives, with the cross, because the old habits, the old disposition, the old man is continually reasserting or attempting to reassert its supremacy, and the only way in which the new creation can hold its crown and bring our lives to victory is by our allowing the Holy Spirit to work the purpose of the cross into us day by day, so that in the face of every manifestation of the old life we learn to die daily, to hand ourselves over to the Holy Spirit for the working of the cross to be wrought in us.

Therefore Romans 6:3 ("Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?") shows the necessity of entering into an ever deeper union with the Lord

Jesus Christ if those things are to be dealt with and kept under. Just as that is so we begin to understand what the apostle means here when he says, "We share in the likeness of His death."

50. The Mold of Suffering

The Mold of Suffering As the Holy Spirit works out the power of the cross in each member of the Body of Christ, the real life of Christ is imparted to the Body and to each member of the Body, the very life that is in the heart and nature of Christ, at this moment, in heaven, and it is that which creates the spirit of revival; it is that life which convicts sinners; it is that which the Holy Spirit uses in order to bring about the conditions in which He can create revival, when the life of the Head is imparted to the members of the Body and is manifested through the members in the daily life and the daily act.

Therefore there is a co-passion with Christ into which you and I must enter if we are to know the full power of the cross to mold us into the likeness of His character. At the conversion of Saul that co-passion was revealed to him. We read in Acts 9:15-16 : “But the Lord said unto him [Ananias], Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” That was revealed to him at his conversion, and that became the great aim of his life. He accepted it as such (Colossians 1:23 b,24), “Whereof I Paul am made a minister; who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake, which is the church.” Notice how Paul rejoiced in that co-passion. He never shrank from the cross; he never shirked the consequences of witness; he never refused to face the full claim of the cross.

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9, “And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” And so, as the great apostle entered himself into the meaning of the mold of the cross, he proclaimed that as the great necessity for the development of Christian character and the building up of the Body of Christ, for the accomplishment of the purpose of God on earth, and for making certain the life of victory.

In Php 1:29-30 he shows us this, that this co-passion of the members of the Body with Christ is the essential feature of their relationship with Him, “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake; having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.” There the Holy Spirit, through Paul, makes very clear the connection between this co-passion and blessing. In 2 Corinthians 1:5-6, we are told, “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.”

Partaking with Christ in the sufferings of the cross is the way into the partnership with Christ in everything that He has to give us. So let me try to put the mold of the cross into something of a practical form. Every time we die to sin, every time we die to the temptation of temper, or to the sin

of the irritating word, or to the tendency to worry, or to the meanness and the trickery and the unrighteousness and the corruption of the old nature, every time we die to the spirit of retaliation or to the desire for self-vindication, or to what seems to us a perfectly legitimate self-defense, every time we follow in the steps of the Lord Jesus Christ and allow what is against us to take us deeper down into the death union with Him; every time we enter deliberately into this co-passion with Christ and allow what has caused failure in our lives to make more real to us the necessity and meaning of His death; every time we act in that way we are putting ourselves into the mold of the cross, and we are giving the Holy Spirit the opportunity to impress the character, the image of the Lord Jesus Christ upon our character. And it is that that is going to get to the conscience and heart of the world. The Christian who is going to do God's work today in the world must be a cross-molded Christian.

51. The Mold of Fellowship

The Mold of Fellowship To make the mold effective I do not forget this—the constant fellowship that Christ has with us. Let us read Hebrews 2:18, “For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Let us never forget this. If we do not fail to enter into the co-passion, Christ will never fail in compassion. “Being tested, He is able to succor them that are tested.” He will never let us go alone; and whether He keeps you in America or takes you to China or to the uttermost ends of the earth, He will never let you go alone. The way is too rough for you and me to be allowed to go alone, and oh, the compassion of the living Christ for the members of His Body! Through the mold of the cross He is always going by His own Holy Spirit, and every time you and I go into that mold and allow the Holy Spirit to work into us the pattern of His character we are filling up, like Paul, the sufferings of Christ, making the joy of the Lord more real and more full.

I beg you to remember that that is what we are called to (1 Corinthians 1:9), “Ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son.” We are called into such a fellowship as that, a co-passion with Christ like that. We cannot avoid it, if we are to be true to Him. We are called to be partakers of the cross, if we are to be partners in the crown.

It will always be the endeavor of Satan to make you and me shirk the cross, to keep us from the cross, to make us shirk the painful element in witnessing, to shirk the act of sacrifice, to refuse the position that will prove inconvenient and to choose another position that seems to be less inconvenient. That is the constant temptation of the enemy, the same temptation to us that was hurled in the face of the Lord Jesus upon the cross, “Save thyself, and come down from the cross” (Mark 15:30). That is still the bait by which the devil seeks to lure us away from the path of the cross; it is the challenge that he is continually flaunting in our faces. But we dare not claim the benefits of the redemption of Christ unless we are prepared to accept the redemption position.

Satan never drove Christ to the cross. You have noticed in the Gospels how, by every possible means in his power, he tried to keep Him from that moment. He instigated Herod to kill all the little children in Bethlehem and its vicinity, in the hopes that he might get rid of the holy child, Jesus. All through the ministry of the Lord, if you look you can see the track of Satan. It is said if the devil left Him for a season it was a very short season. There was almost never a moment after that temptation that the devil left Him alone. He tried to drive Him over the brow of the hill, tried to stone Him, tried to drown Him, tried to force Him upon the throne when the people were aroused by the miracle of the loaves and fishes. I believe he tried to kill Him in the garden, and when he could not do that and found that Christ was bound to fulfill the purpose for which He had come to the earth, which was to go to the cross, he heaped insult upon insult upon the Son of God and tried to brand with the mark of shame what God meant to be the instrument of victory.

You and I will find, there is no use of hiding it from ourselves, perhaps more than ever, that the offense of the cross has not ceased, and upon those who stand for the cross, and who follow the cross, the hatred of Satan will be concentrated just as it was upon the Master. “Save thyself, and

come down from the cross,” that will be the temptation to you, my dear young man and woman, as you go back into Christian work, and as you go out into the mission field. That will be the continuous temptation that will be leveled against you, “Save yourself. Shirk that little bit of work. It is too painful, it is going to cost too much. Forget it. You will get on all right. Shirk it, save thyself, and come down from the cross.” But if you and I are ever to know the deeps of God’s grace, if your lives and mine are ever to be raised to the level on which God means them to be, in order to touch the conscience of that world outside, it will only be as you and I are willing to go into the mold of the cross, cost what it may, and yield ourselves to the power and purpose of the Holy Spirit. And the question is, are we willing to go on?

52. The Mold of Resurrection

The Mold of Resurrection The cross is just the gathering point for the children of God. It is the fixed point where the children of God can always find the most perfect assurance of safety and the most continuous spring of power, the cross. Without the cross as a mighty factor in your life and in mine, we should never reach the divinely revealed goal, we would be imperfect.

Therefore the call of the cross is to enter into this passion of Christ. We must have upon us the print of the nails. We hear the people of the world saying to us children of God today, "Except I see the print of the nails in you I will not believe" (John 20:25). We must have on us the print of the nails; we must share in the likeness of His death and have formed in our characters the pattern of Jesus.

What is it going to mean? It is not going to be for you what the world would have you believe it is going to be. It is not going to be for you what many Christians fear it will mean, the gloomy side of life uppermost, an experience of loss, a harvest of pain and suffering, and the repression of all the natural gifts with which God has endowed us. It is not going to mean that. What is it going to mean? Let us listen to the man who poured himself into the mold of the cross, as he tells us what it is to mean for you and for me. In the translation of Conybeare, Romans 6:5 reads: "For if we have been grafted into the likeness of His death, so shall we also share His resurrection."

Let me say that we do need to be careful not to emphasize a truth out of right proportion; not to preach what I have been calling the death side of the cross so as to forget the life side of the cross, but never to emphasize the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ so as to lose sight of the cross. That is what many, I fear, are doing today, forgetting that the constant reassertion of the self-life can be dealt with only by the cross, and can be kept under only by the Holy Spirit through the cross; and that only in the measure in which we enter into the death union with Christ can we know the resurrection life of Christ.

Look at an oak. It has been standing for hundreds of years. How was it born? In a grave. The acorn died and disappeared, and it sent its roots down and its shoots up, and it has grown big and strong, with its roots constantly in the grave, and all its strength, its beauty, its foliage and everything else it owes to the grave. Everything that you and I can have we owe to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the resurrection is the flower that springs out of the tomb, and if we share in the death of Christ, the very first thing that comes to us is sharing in the resurrection.

Look at Romans 6:8 : "Now if we have shared the death of Christ, we believe that we shall also share His life," life over which death can have no dominion, a power that nothing in the world can destroy, a hope of which nothing can rob us.

I want to quote some lines by an old mystic, written in 1277 along the line of this truth, which shows what a wonderful thing it is to share in the death and the resurrection life of the Son of God: The loathing of thy sin thy cross shall be, Thy crucifix the crossing of thy will, The nails thine obedience that shall fasten thee; And love shall wound and steadfastness shall slay, Yet thou shalt

love me still. The spear shall pierce thy heart, my life shall be The life that lives and moves
henceforth in thee, Then, as a conqueror, loosened from the cross, Laid in a grave of nothingness
and loss, Thou shalt awaken and be borne above Upon the breath of mine almighty love.

53. The Mold of Victory

The Mold of Victory

Look at Romans 8:17, “If now we share His sufferings, we shall hereafter share His glory,” and Ephesians 2:6, “Seated in heavenly places in Christ.” We share His seat in the heavenlies today in the place of victory. Revelation 3:21 shows we are going to share His throne. And will you notice in those letters to the churches, the greatest of all the promises is made to the one who overcomes in the church of Laodicea, because there is no atmosphere so difficult for a man to witness in. to overcome in, as the atmosphere of the church of Laodicea, the church of the present-day. And the overcomer is going to share in His throne.

In Php 1:7, “You all share,” says Paul, “in the grace bestowed upon me.” That is the power for confirming the truth of the Gospel by our sufferings, our co-passion with Christ, and this co-passion with Christ will mean strength for the day, the accomplishment of life’s purposes, giving to the world the testimony of the power of a living Christ, victory that is full and complete. Therefore let me read my last passage in 2 Corinthians 4:7-10, Conybeare’s translation: “But this treasure is lodged in a body of fragile clay; that so the surpassing might which accompanies the work shall be God’s and not mine. I am hard pressed, yet not crushed; perplexed, yet not despairing; persecuted, yet not forsaken; struck down, yet not destroyed. In my body I bear about continually the dying of Jesus, that in my body the life also of Jesus might be shown forth.” Do you not see the picture? Every time you are hard pressed in that field of yours and yet not crushed; perplexed, and yet not despairing; persecuted, and yet realizing that you are not forsaken; struck down, and yet not destroyed; you are winning the victory, you are living the victorious Christian life.

Some people seem to think that the victorious Christian life can only be lived when you are on the crest of the wave. You are sometimes most victorious when you are being submerged and coming up again with a smile on your face and with trust in your heart—perplexed, not despairing; pressed down, not crushed. Every time you are that, you are putting yourself into the mold of the cross; the cross is doing its work, and the proof is being given that Christ is in you, and the life of Jesus is being shown forth.

Oh, there is nothing that the church of God requires more today than men and women in whom the Holy Spirit is being allowed to do all His work. The church is suffering today from unmolded Christians, Christians who say they are His and do not look like it in the eye of the world. What the world is hungering for is men and women in whom they can see Christ and from whom they can receive the hope that they too can find Christ and know the power of His resurrection and triumph over sin and Satan, and over death and hell. What the world needs is cross-molded Christians. Will you and I be one of them?

54. Chapter 8: The Imperatives of the Cross

The Imperatives of the Cross

Chapter 8

It is very remarkable how clearly and unhesitatingly the Word of God emphasizes the imperatives of the cross and the obligations resulting from the cross. And yet that is just what we might expect. The imperative note of the Word of God is clearly and distinctly sounded as it summons the believer to a walk of truth and of obedience. For this reason the Lord Jesus Christ did not come to the cross for a mere ideal, but to meet a tremendous, actual need and to lead everyone who should believe in Him and who should yield to Him into an experience of the most practical nature of what Christian living and Christian serving really means. I believe that that experience can only be realized and enjoyed as there is given deliberate and personal obedience to the great imperatives of the cross.

55. Be Reconciled to God

Be Reconciled to God

There are three imperatives that I want to bring before you. The first you will find in 2 Corinthians 5:20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." That is the imperative of the cross, "Be ye reconciled to God." It was sin that made that command imperative. It was sin that brought about the condition of peril in the experience of the human race that compelled God to issue that command. This is the day of grace and this is the hour of opportunity, and therefore if anyone has not yet listened to and bowed before that imperative command of the cross, "I beseech you, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20), and do not let the opportunity slip away, and do not let the day of grace turn into the night of dark judgment. The imperative command of the cross is: "Be ye reconciled to God," and the way to be reconciled to God is to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, God's gift to you, through whose death reconciliation has been made possible.

56. Glorify God

Glorify God

Now let me turn to the second imperative, which is the imperative claim of the cross, 1 Corinthians 6:20, “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” The reason for this claim is that we are bought. Now on everything that is yours you have a claim. If you go into a store and buy something, three things at least you expect to get; first, value for your money; second, some service out of what you purchase, and third, some pleasure out of what you get. If you do not get those three things you have made a very poor buy, haven’t you? Oh, I wonder if any of us are poor bargains to the Lord Jesus Christ. I wonder if any of us have been proving that for all practical purposes Christ has died in vain for us, that we are poor bargains for the Son of God.

What is the price that He has paid for us? Calvary and all that that means in laying down His life, in yielding Himself into the hands of wicked men, in surrendering Himself to do the will of God. That is the price He has paid for us. What is the purpose for which that price has been paid? That we might glorify God. That we might glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are His: that is to say, in the outer life and the inner life; in the activities of mind and body as well as in the attitude of heart and spirit; in the public life and in the private life; in the place where the eyes of others are upon us and in the place where no eye is on us except the eye of God. And in yielding to God for this end we do want to remember that it is only honest and honorable to do so, because, body and spirit, we are His.

Calvary claims the whole man, because Calvary proclaims that the whole man has been purchased. You remember in Titus 2:14 how Paul says that we have been redeemed from all iniquity that we might be His peculiar people, that is to say, His possession. He has paid out a tremendous price for that possession, and He is looking for interest from His investment. The word “peculiar people” means something over and above abundant wealth. You get the contrast in the cognate word in Matthew 6:11, “Give us this day our daily bread,” bread for the day, bread that is just sufficient, just sufficient and no more. That is the contrast, but that is not what God is looking for in you and in me. He is looking for abundance, not merely just what is sufficient, but for something over and above that which is actually required for carrying on His work. We are His peculiar people, His own personal possession, that we might be an abundance of wealth for Him in the work that He has to do.

One of the ways in which we can give God some wealth is by glorifying Him. In Scotland for many a long generation we have had in our schools and churches a catechism called, “The Shorter Catechism,” one of the finest ground-works of theology ever penned by man. The first question in that catechism is, “What is man’s chief end?” And the answer is: “To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Our great Scottish philosopher, Carlyle, once said, “The older I grow the fuller and deeper the meaning of that answer becomes.”

How am I to glorify God? Let me put before you one or two passages of Scripture: Galatians 1:24 : “And they glorified God in me.” That is what the apostle Paul had to say, and it was a new Paul who was saying it to the Christians of Galatia. They had found a new Paul and therefore they glorified God. The old Paul (or Saul) was one of whose militant spirit they had had the most bitter experience, but they found one day in the midst of them a new Saul. The reason for the transformed life of Saul of Tarsus was simply that the risen Christ had met him and conquered him and possessed him. Is that not the secret of every transformed life? That is the proof that the work of Christ is not vain, when that transformation takes place. That is God's starting-point. To reach the goal of the real life and the death message of the cross is always this: You are the sinner Christ can save, and you are the one whom Christ can make new. And when you are a new creature your old friends begin to see God in you and they glorify God.

Take 1 Peter 2:12, where Peter tells us that we glorify God by our good works. The question is: what are good works? Not necessarily works you and I think are good and not necessarily works that the world calls good, because there are many works, good works, that may yet have at the back of them a selfish motive. They may be done for self-interest or for sectarian advantage. Good works are accomplished when the Holy Spirit finds a life so free that it can become the channel by which He can pour His life and power through it, and so make men see something of Christ and something of God; and when works are done in the power of the Spirit they are stamped as God glorifying.

John 21:19 says, “This spake He, signifying by what death He should glorify God.” The Lord had been telling Peter what was before him, and it was not a smooth path that He was opening out before Peter. Then the evangelist adds, “This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God” In death God is to be glorified. Someone has said that the last act of a man's life is the test of it; that is to say, the end can prove what the life has been. Death so often brings out the dominant note in a person's life. For instance, Paul could say as he stood before eternity with the glow of it entering into his soul, “I have fought a good fight; I have completed the glorious contest” (2 Timothy 4:7 interpretation). And the infidel philosopher on his deathbed had to say, “I take a leap into the dark.”

Isaiah 24:15 reads, “Glorify ye the Lord in the fires” Oh, the testing times of life prove whether our faith is vital or only nominal, and such times as these are just like battlefields on which we carry the colors of our Captain to glory or dishonor. Without the trials of faith we should all be ruined. These trials give us opportunities of linking ourselves on to the mighty power of God and bringing through the trials some blessing that wonderfully glorifies God, or else, missing God, turns the blessing into a burden that fills the heart with weariness and pain.

Psalms 50:23 reads, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me” Now I come to something that is within the reach of everybody, praise. An old writer has said, “Praise is the rent we owe to God. Yes, and the larger the farm the greater the rent.” Then he adds, “The Lord has many fine farms from which He receives but little rent.” Do not let us forget Psalms 103, to be sung every day, the daily Psalm of Praise. And lastly, John 15:8 tells us what the Lord says, “And herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit” Now what is fruit? It is not something put on, it is something that grows out. Fruit is a product of the life of the tree through the branches, and in a Christian sense it is the life of Christ through character and through conduct. It is likeness to Christ, and

when these marks of Christ are seen in us then God the Father is glorified. So the imperative claim of the cross is that we shall glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are His.

57. Live unto God

Live unto God

Now we come to the last imperative, which is the imperative call of the cross. You will find it in 1 Corinthians 5:15, just three words in that verse, "Henceforth ... unto Him." That is the imperative call of the cross, that we should live no longer unto ourselves but unto Him who died for us and rose again. That is the natural conclusion of obeying the command and of yielding to the claim of the cross. It means simply to acknowledge without any reservation the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note these passages: "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Romans 14:9); "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36); "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" (Php 2:10). This supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive inasmuch as it forbids anyone or anything rivaling it. Christ is the one absolute Lord, and the acknowledgment of the supremacy of Christ implies the denial of the right of anything else to be supreme.

About the middle of the eighteenth century there was the last of the rebellions in Scotland. It was called the Jacobite Rebellion. It was an attempt on the part of the Stuarts to regain the throne of Britain and place the one who was called "The Young Pretender," Prince Charles, Bonnie Prince Charlie, as he is called in Scottish songs, on the throne. He went on the northeast coast of Scotland and set up his standard there, and his first meeting was with a great Highland chief, Cameron. Lochiel knew more about the situation than his prince, and tried, by every possible means in his power, to dissuade him from what he knew was a hopeless effort. The prince listened to him, and then sadly said, "Well, I suppose I shall have to go forward without the support of Lochiel, who my father assured me would always be with me to guide and strengthen and counsel me." This was too much for Lochiel, and flinging himself at the feet of his prince he said, "Nay, my prince shall have Lochiel and everything that Lochiel possesses, and everyone over whom Lochiel has any authority, for anything that he wants to be done."

Now it is just an unreserved acceptance of the supremacy of Christ like that, that Christ is wanting, such an unreserved acceptance of his supremacy that the Lord Jesus Christ is asking from you and from me. That is the call of Christ. Do not let anyone of us imagine that there can be a dual sovereignty in our lives, Christ and something else. Christ never goes halves with anything or with anyone; it is all or nothing. That is the claim that He makes, and when you respond to that claim as Lochiel responded to the call of his prince, you can love everybody and you will find that everything else in life falls into its right place. This supremacy that is very decided in its exclusiveness is as clear in its inclusiveness. While it excludes every rival, it brings under its rule and government the whole man. And if that call is answered God will withhold no good thing from you. Life is full of the most splendid possibilities for the soul that will dare to be unreservedly true to

the supremacy of Christ. Life begins to glow with a wonderful glory, when, at the heart of it, there is a yieldedness that makes Christ sovereign.

What does this inclusiveness mean? Let me try and put it simply before you. What does this inclusive supremacy mean? It means the supremacy of Christ over our minds. There is no channel through which Satan is operating today with more success than through the mind. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of those who believe not," and who are perishing, and the mind of the unbeliever hates the cross, it revolts against the claim of the cross. It is always toning down the language of the cross or dispensing with the language of the cross altogether, just because the cross is God's weapon for tearing aside the Satanic veil and letting the light in.

Even with the Christian there may be disinclination to allow the Lord Jesus to have the mind, the intellect, yielded.

There is a man on the other side of the water whom I know, one of the best men whom I have ever met, but when he was at the university he was a yielded Christian on every point except his mind. He was afraid to let Christ have his intellect, full control of his intellect. But he was brought by the Spirit of God to that point where he yielded his intellect, and found the Holy Spirit flooding and filling him, and his intellect was sanctified. You and I need sanctified intellects today, sanctified minds, yielded, Christ-controlled minds. Remember that a mind unsundered is a mind unguarded, and that is the reason why I believe there are so many minds today that are becoming the dumping grounds of all the possible fancies that are floating about in the air inspired and dictated by the devil, and they are getting led off the path and deluded and deceived.

You know that the battle of Eden was fought in the mind. Eve yielded her mind to the evil one, and the moment she believed and took in the devil's lie, the truth of God went out. She took in death, and life went out; she took in darkness, and light went out; and through the stream of humanity's life the poison has flowed, and it is flowing today. God is so concerned about getting the minds of men and women yielded to him and controlled by him, because the mind is the strategic position, and therefore we have to ask now: Is there deliverance for the mind? Yes, there is, at the cross.

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." The cross is the place of deliverance, the way of the cross is God's weapon to destroy the Satanic veil that hangs over the minds of men today; and we want to recognize that the unyielded mind and uncontrolled mind, the mind uncontrolled by Christ, belongs to the old creation, and therefore it has to go to the cross, it has to be dealt with by the cross, by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. That uncontrolled mind has to be deliberately, by faith, and the act of the will, on the ground of Calvary, taken from the enemy and put to the cross, and then God trusted to give a new mind, a clear mind, a wise mind, a sound mind; for that is God's gift to His children. God gives us sound minds; and a mind under the control of the Spirit of God is such a mind as that. He wants that mind of yours, and if there is some point there where you are not surrendered, that is the imperative call of the cross to you now. The cross claims the supremacy of your thought life. In the second place, Christ claims the supremacy over the heart, and I want you to read two passages of Scripture, "Out of the heart

proceedeth evil thoughts,” and Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit” The first passage is a picture of the natural heart, which supplies the life. The second passage is the heart under treatment by the great Surgeon of love. And how does He treat it? By the knife of the Word, and whatever the knife of the Word lays bare there is shown to you and to me the way of life and victory.

One of God’s great purposes with you and with me in these days is to make us know how to get soul and spirit asunder, how to get soul and spirit divided. I am just beginning to understand a little about it, the division between the soul and the spirit. There are three parts of us, the spirit (that is meant to be in continuous touch with the Holy Spirit), and the soul, and then the body (which is the lower part of us). The soul is the battleground, the soul is the seat of our senses, of our personality, the seat of the old man, the seat of the self-life, and that is the battlefield of life. It is on the soul that Satan is continually sending his onslaughts, because if he can win the battle in the soul he puts the soul up upon the top and the spirit is brought down. Whenever the soul life is supreme, dominant, then the spirit and the body get out of order.

We hear a great deal today about the psychic, and that is the soulish, that is the place where the enemy today is at work deceiving people, and through this psychic sending forth deceptions and delusions by which men and women are being entrapped by him and being led to believe in what Paul calls the declarations of demons as if they were the truth of God. You will find that all these false cults today are developing the psychic. The whole emphasis is being put upon the soulish part of the being.

What does the Lord Jesus Christ say? You will find this is always the point of difference. The Lord Jesus Christ says these things have to go to the cross, and the cross is the only place of safety for the psychic. The devil says “Develop the psychic.” Christ says (Matthew 16:25), “To the cross with it,” “If any man will save his life he shall lose it. If any man will lose his life [that is, the psychic life], he shall find it again,” in its right way, and he shall find it in a way that will help him to use it to the best purpose. But if he develops the natural away from the spiritual he allows the soulish part of himself to become dominant in him and the spirit becomes weak, and the body gets out of order, and life becomes deceived and sidetracked.

Therefore God’s great purpose is to get us to see the place of the cross and the purpose of the cross in our lives, working through the Word of God to put the soul on that side and the spiritual up on the top; and when the spiritual is on the top, if touched by the Holy Spirit, disciplined by the Holy Spirit, governed and guided by the Holy Spirit, then the spirit keeps the soul in its place and the soul and the body work out the functions for which God has created them. The knife of the Word is here to lay bare in our lives all that needs to go to the cross; and when we obey the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, then we find God dealing with the heart of each of us in a way that makes the heart healthy. When you and I put away everything that the Word of God shows us is soulish and sinful, and when we put it to the cross, then the cross is doing its work and the spirit is becoming supreme.

I know something about it myself, but it is one of the most difficult things to explain to others, and it is only something that you are led into in experience if you will go instantly to the Holy Spirit about it and say, “Let me know the meaning of these things,” and if you are willing to pay the price.

Christ claims supremacy over the conscience (Acts 24:16), “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” You will find a difference. A conscience that is being controlled by the world or by the prince of the world is usually a quiescent conscience, an inactive conscience. A conscience that is controlled by Jesus Christ is a quickened conscience. There is the difference: Conscience requires right treatment. Conscience is often ignored, even by Christian people, treated as an insignificant quantity, and custom—the custom of the place where we live, the opinion of others, our own desires—takes the place of conscience. It was not so with Paul; he said, “I exercise my conscience, that I may have a conscience void of offence toward God and men,” and conscience demands honest dealing if it is to be kept healthy.

Some people are not honest with their conscience, and they are always transferring the blame from themselves to some others, instead of allowing conscience to bring them to the bar and say, “Thou art the man.”

I was preaching sometime ago in Scotland, when a young girl of seventeen came into the vestry of the church at the close of the service, and said to me, “I am going to say something that will surprise you.” I pricked up my ears, and this is what she said, “I decided for Christ when I was fourteen, but I have been very disappointed with Him. I never thought that He would leave me alone.”

“Well,” I said, “go on.” It was a surprising thing to hear. So she told me this story, that the night she decided for Christ she went home and she did not confess Christ. The Holy Spirit told her to confess Him again and again through the days and the weeks that followed. The Holy Spirit pressed her to confess Christ in her home, and one day she said, “I woke up to find myself in darkness and Christ had left me. I never thought He would forsake me.”

“My dear child,” I said, “the Lord Jesus Christ, as I know Him, is not a hard taskmaster, and you have only got to come back to Him in penitence and confession of sin and seek the cleansing of His blood, and I am perfectly sure He will forgive.”

“Oh, I have done that,” she exclaimed, “and it is no good.”

Then I saw something in her, and I said, “Now look here, you are not honest. You are not letting your conscience be honest. You have got a root of bitterness in your heart against the Lord Jesus Christ, haven’t you?” And she dropped her head. “You have been transferring to Him the blame that is on your own shoulders. On your own confession you disobeyed the Holy Spirit, and yet you are here trying to make out that it is Christ who has left you, and you know yourself what has happened. You will never get peace and you will never get joy or anything else until you come back to the Lord Jesus Christ and confess—not only the sin of not confessing Him, but the greater sin of misjudging Him. Then you must seek the cleansing and go back and confess Christ, and you will find the Holy Spirit where you left Him.” Do you know, a conscience is a very troublesome thing? Have you found it so? I hope you have, and if you have not I hope you will go back from this conference and find it so. It is troublesome if it is healthy, but it will never work rightly until you have made the Lord Jesus Christ supreme over it and said to yourself, “I will obey the Holy Spirit in matters of conscience, no matter what it costs me.”

Let me carry you to another point. Christ claims supremacy over the will, and here is a very important point, for it is perhaps the strategic position in our lives, here is the citadel in our lives, the will. He claims supremacy over the will. Remember this, that supremacy will be clearly and consistently contested by Satan. It is well to understand the difference between a will under the supremacy of Satan and a will under the supremacy of Christ. We have to remember this especially in these days, that the essential condition of Satan for supremacy over the will is what I have discussed as passivity.

I want to illustrate that by a contrast. It is a disease that is afflicting multitudes of Christian people today. Passivity means dropping the will; the supremacy of Christ always means linking the will with the Holy Spirit. Passivity means substituting the will of another for your own will; the supremacy of Christ means accepting God's will as right and then putting your will in line with His to carry out His. Passivity always makes one an automaton, a machine; the supremacy of Christ teaches you how to use your intelligence, your commonsense. Passivity makes you accept all that happens as the will of God for you; the supremacy of Christ leads you to test everything that happens, by the cross, and to accept nothing that you are not sure is the will of God. Passivity opens the way to the inrush of evil spirits and to the deceptions and delusions of Satan, and he is giving people today counterfeit holiness, counterfeit piety, counterfeit powers; he can counterfeit every blessing of God that God has in His heart for His children today. He can counterfeit them and he is doing it. The supremacy of Christ always leads you into cooperation with the Holy Spirit to walk with Him by means of a living faith and an intelligent obedience, and that is the only way in which you can be kept safe in these days. This is the mark of a will under the supremacy of Christ, in perfect cooperation with the Holy Spirit to accomplish divine tasks, and the imperative call of the cross is for such as that, such a will as that today, because of the need of God in regard to the world, and the need of the world for God.

Oh, men and women, God can reach the world today only through yielded wills, and the world can only be convinced of the powers of God to satisfy it as it sees lives in which the power is at work. I fell sometime ago upon peculiar lines that I want to read to you, that have a great truth in them:

O, will my will to will Thy will, And then to will is well. The willing will which wills God's will Within God's will will dwell.

Christ asks the supremacy over our wills.

One word more. He claims the supremacy over the body. Will you note these texts: 1 Corinthians 3:16, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"; 1 Corinthians 6:15; 1 Corinthians 6:19, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid"; Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

There are two descriptions of the body in the Word of God, the first is the temple of God, and the second is the body of sin. As a temple, it is to be yielded to the Holy Spirit to be indwelt by Him; as a body of sin it is to be put out of action by its members being mortified. How is it to be done? 2 Corinthians 13:4, "For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you,"

and the power of God operates to make Christ supreme, and we live no longer unto ourselves but unto Him. That is to have Christ on the throne inspiring and regulating life in each department and detail.

There is only one head of the body, that is Christ, and just as body and will, conscience and heart and mind respond in loving, cheerful obedience to the head, does life become fruitful in service and radiant in experience, so that brings us to the point of consecration.

What is consecration? It is not giving up something to God, it is not even giving myself to God. I have nothing to give. Myself is not worth giving. If you will look in the Old Testament you will find that consecration means coming to God with empty hands, and He putting something into them that we can give to Him. Consecration means God coming in, possessing, filling, conscience, heart, will, mind, body—His temple, and then that temple, every whit of it, utters His glory.

58. Prayer

Prayer

Dismiss us, Lord, with thy blessing, and keep thy Word in our hearts and minds, that the blessed Holy Spirit may have something to work upon to do what needs to be done. Continue Thy presence with us throughout the hours of this day, and lift our eyes to Thine on the throne.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

59. Chapter 9: Following the Lamb: the Way of the Cross

Following the Lamb: the Way of the Cross

Chapter 9

There has been a message laid upon my heart which I think is expressive of the Lord's desire in relation to each one of us, as it is a challenge to our profession as Christian men and women. You will find it in Revelation 14:4-5, starting in the middle of the verse, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

I desire to take these words away from their dispensational setting and apply them to this hour; for what is prophetically true of the future can always be, I think, spiritually true of the present. To follow the Lamb is the definition of discipleship. To follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes is the test of discipleship.

What the Church is needing and what the world is waiting for is a race of men and women who will follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes; men and women who will take all the risks and bear all the consequences of such following.

Following the Lamb is not exactly talking about Him. What we are needing today is not more talkers but more walkers. In a city in the north of Scotland where I spent my school and university days we had a minister, the principal of a theological college, who was a very great man of God. His name was Dr. Brown. There lived next door to him another man of exactly the same name, but a medical doctor. One night a man was ushered into the minister's study, very hastily, and began describing the symptoms of the trouble at home. The minister, who loved a little bit of a joke, with a twinkle in his eye said to this man that he was afraid he had come to the wrong Dr. Brown. The man in his anxiety burst out, "The Dr. Brown I want is not the Dr. Brown that preaches but the Dr. Brown that practices."

I want that story to sink into your hearts and memories. That is exactly what the world is saying today: "We are not much taken up with the Doctor Browns who preach, we want the Doctor Browns who practice what they preach." That is the walker and not the talker. The most eloquent talker is the man who follows the Lamb whithersoever he goes. The most successful worker for God is the man who will give obedience to the Lamb up to the last glimmer of light that is given to him.

60. Following Is Obedience

Following Is Obedience

What does following the Lamb mean? It means two things: first, the wholehearted acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ in a threefold position, as the Prophet who reveals the will of God, which it is our duty and privilege to do; as the Priest, who through the offering of Himself on the cross calls you and me to a life of sacrifice, a life of blessing, a life of intercession; as the King, who alone has the right to our lives. It means the wholehearted acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord, and King, and then it means, as well, instant, unquestioning obedience to Him in the daily life. Not the obedience that is given by fits and starts; not the obedience that is easy to give; not easy circumstances; not easy surroundings; obedience that is meant in the hymn where the writer says:

Anywhere with Jesus, Though He leadeth me
Where the path is rough and rude, Where the dangers be;

Though He taketh from my heart All I love below,
Anywhere with Jesus I will gladly go.

Acceptance and obedience, these are the essential conditions of discipleship.

There is nothing in these days that we are more constantly engaged in, both in theological and political circles, than the endeavor to get a proper definition for matters which concern us; and there is nothing which gives rise to greater controversy than definitions. But here, in terms that are of the clearest description, with words that no one can mistake, the Lord Jesus Christ defines discipleship, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27). "They which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth ..." (Revelation 14:4). Discipleship means to stand in the most definite relation to the Lord Jesus Christ in the acceptance of Him and in obedience to Him. That is the essential condition of discipleship, taking up the cross and following Him, accepting Him in the fullness of His claims, giving obedience to Him up to the last glimmer of light that we have.

61. Following Is Discipleship

Following Is Discipleship

Perhaps some of you say, "Well, I am following Him as best I can, according to my own ideas, my own plans," and perhaps some of you are following Him just as far as you want to; but that is not following the Lamb. Following the Lamb is not following Him according to my ideas and my ways; it is not following Him just as far as I want to. Following the Lamb means letting the Lamb have the control of every department and detail of your life.

Let us make no mistake about the cross that we have to take up. The cross is not that old temper of yours, that is a cross to some other body, the one who has to live with you. The cross is not some undesirable circumstance that you cannot get away from. What is the cross? The cross is what identifies us with Jesus Christ and marks out our discipleship. The cross is what separates us from the world in its worldliness and its Christ-rejection and separates our lives unto Him. The cross is what stands between us and every temptation to be disloyal to Christ and to His scheme of redemption and to His blessed Book. The cross is what we died by to the manifested forms of self life. The cross is what takes us into union with the Lord Jesus Christ and keeps us in definite union with Him. "If any man doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27).

Christ and the cross, and Christian witness, are inseparable. In one word, discipleship is just making Christ first in life, and last, and all the way through; it is making Christ in life what the cross has made Him in heaven, and what the cross will yet make Him in His Father's universe, supreme and pre-eminent. Does that describe our attitude to Christ? Is that a true picture of our discipleship? The hour calls for an unambiguous answer to the question: Where have I put Christ in my life? A Christian does not reject Christ as Savior from sin, but he may reject Christ as the master of his life. A Christian does not refuse the gift of Christ's life, but he may refuse Christ the gift of his life. A Christian accepts the salvation of Jesus Christ, but he may refuse or deny the supremacy of Jesus Christ; and the question of all questions is this: Where and what is Christ in my life? Is He first? Is He supreme? Is He the acknowledged, crowned Lord of my life? That is the condition of discipleship. You may object to it, but it is there. You may say the standard is impossible, but it is there. You may answer that the terms of Christ are far too high, but there they are. And the Lord Jesus Christ will not lower His standard or lessen His claims to get anyone of us. He has laid down His conditions, "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. If anyone will come after me let him take up the cross and follow Me" (Luke 9:23, Revelation 22:13) And the emphasis that you put upon the "ME" will decide the strength or the weakness of your discipleship.

62. Following Is Being Redeemed

Following Is Being Redeemed

Ere I go further let me ask this: Who can follow the Lamb? You will notice in my text that there is a twofold description of those who follow the Lamb. The first is redeemed from among men. That is the character of them, by which they were known in heaven as heaven saw them when they were on earth. Have we all come to this point? Are we all able to say, "Thank God, I am redeemed; not by silver and gold but by the precious blood of this Lamb?" Are we all in this condition tonight, so that with a perfect, glad, humble but real assurance, we can say, "Yes, I am redeemed"?

One of our great Scottish preachers of the eighteenth century put the Gospel in a nutshell. He said, "On the one hand it is a personal offer of salvation through a Savior; on the other hand it is the personal acceptance of salvation through a Savior." You could not have it simpler than that. An offer of salvation through a Savior is made to you, and your part is what? Personal acceptance of salvation through a Savior. Will you accept that? You know you are a sinner. You know that nothing you can do will give your heart peace and your life power. You know it in your own spirit, and sometimes when the thought of eternity breaks in upon you you are at the point of despair, for you know that your best efforts are of no avail. Will you stop, then, and just lay hold of this wonderful salvation which the Lord Jesus Christ offers to you, and will you say in your heart, "Yes, God, I accept salvation through Thee"? That will put you among the redeemed of God.

Notice that the redeemed means "a bought one." A redeemed man is a man who has been purchased and whose placing is at the disposal of the purchaser. The redeemed man is one who has been loosed from his sin, loosed from his self-life, loosed from the spirit of the world, loosed from the domination of Satan; he is a redeemed one. Oh, what a redemption Jesus Christ has wrought out! It is not a thing that touches your life only at one little point and says, "Now you are saved from hell." It is a redemption that takes in your past, present, and future, every need of it. It is all included in the redemption of Jesus Christ. The redeemed one is one who is loosed and bought, and who therefore belongs to Jesus Christ.

You will notice also that that other description of the redeemed is, "In their mouth was found no guile" (Revelation 14:5), that is to say, no deceit. They were like Christ, there was nothing crooked about them, nothing unworthy. They were true at all costs. That was the description of them when they were on earth, those men. Is that not to be the truth about redeemed ones today? A disciple is a man who is redeemed in character and who is right in conduct. "They follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes."

63. Following Is Willingness to be Misjudged

Following Is Willingness to be Misjudged

What does it mean practically to follow the Lamb? I want to turn you, to answer that question, to three crises in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. There were many crises in His earthly life, and you can study them at your leisure and see what it means to follow the Lamb; but I want to give you three crises that will just show what following the Lamb means in the details of the day's life.

In Matthew 9:11 our Lord was sitting at meat in a house. Publicans and sinners were with Him and there was considerable criticism of His action on the part of the Pharisees. He said to them, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:12-13).

Notice that the Lord Jesus Christ again and again broke through the conventionalities of His day and braved the displeasure of the people, or rather of the religious people. Why? In order that He might do God's will and bring salvation to men and women. Do you remember how He risked His reputation as a Jew that day when He was found talking to the woman of Samaria, and He risked His reputation as a teacher, as a prophet, when, in the house of Simon the Pharisee, he allowed the woman sinner to touch His feet? Here He risked His reputation as a proper-minded person, by taking dinner with publicans and sinners, the outcasts of society. He did it all to bring salvation to men.

I believe today that to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes will mean for us that we have often to be in positions where we must be willing to be misjudged, and where, perhaps, we have to risk our reputation and be called names by the circle in which we move. But what the world is needing today is less conventionalism and more consecration on the part of Christians; less starch in religious life and more salvation. That is what the world is needing.

You know how people say, "Well, something is due to custom." "You will offend people if you do this and do that." "You will lose in business, you cannot afford that." The question for you and for me is, are we prepared to be uncompromising and when the thing is right to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes? That is the test of our discipleship. Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not be untrue to conscience or principle or God or nation, and he prospered. In the days of the Reformation there were men of different degrees of loyalty. Erasmus, for instance, said, "Yes, I will be true to God as far as the customs of the age allow me"; but Luther said, "Here I stand, I can do nothing else. God help me." The question, as you and I go down from the holy mount is, "Will I follow the Lamb whithersoever He leads, although it means risking something, although it means my circle calling me names and labeling me with a certain label? Will I follow the Lamb? Oh, the world is waiting for some people who will show that they will follow the Lord Jesus Christ no matter what it costs. May you and I be among the number!

64. Following Is Going All the Way

Following Is Going All the Way

Let me turn you to another crisis, Matthew 16:22, where He was telling His disciples that Calvary was before Him. “Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.” And Peter was astonished when he heard his Master say, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” He saw who was standing behind Peter, and who was egging Peter on to speak those words.

Here was the crisis in Christ’s life. It was the temptation to shirk the cross. “Far be it from thee, Lord. Spare thyself. Pity thyself.” Although He saw the source of it behind Peter, I am sure He felt it was very hard to have to speak to Peter as He did; and when that temptation comes it sometimes comes through those who are dear to us, and it is always hard when it comes through somebody you love and somebody who loves you.

I met, on the other side of the water, a splendid young fellow who was the leader of a Christian band in his university and who gave himself up to God for the mission field. One morning early, his father came into his room and said to him, “Your mother wants you.” He went into his mother’s room and his mother said, “If you go to Africa it will be over my grave.” He said, “Oh, well, mother, if that is how you feel I will not go.”

What was the result? The poor fellow went back, back, back, back, went into the world and was found standing with those who were waiting to get into the theater, this fellow who had been the leader of his Christian companions and who had given himself up to God. Thank God, just a few years ago he got to know the meaning of that lovely text, from that lovely message that Calvary means Victory, and it brought him back to God, and he is now just in the hands of God for anything. But, oh, it comes hard upon one when the temptation to shirk the cross finds as its channel the lips, the heart, the life of someone who loves you and whom you love.

Notice that Christ defines discipleship as He speaks to Peter, and He pushes the cross into the forefront, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (Matthew 16:14). We must go all the way if we are to be disciples. If we do not we will soon lose sight of the Master. He is going on. We must be prepared to go with Him through the garden with its shadows and its struggles, and through the judgment hall with its scourgings and its scourgings, and up to the cross with its shame and its scorn. When Oliver Cromwell was going into battle, his great soldiers, the Ironsides, waiting for his commands would look at him, and they would say to one another, “See, he has on his battle face,” and they too got the battle face as they looked at their leader, and they went into battle to win the victory for God and for country. The Lord Jesus Christ has still got His battle face. He is not done fighting. He is in the midst of a tremendous conflict in the heavenlies, and He wants you and me, before we go farther, to take a new look into the face of our leader and catch the light of the battle face, the face that was set steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. The face always speaks in the Christian of a character and a life that is in the grip of

the divine power, and that is what you and I are needing, that means victory.

Oh, will you follow the Lamb, even though somebody tries to keep you back? Will you say, with true hearts, "Where He leads me I will follow, I'll go with Him, with Him, all the way"?

I wonder if I am talking to someone who, at a previous convention, or somewhere else, yielded himself or herself to the Lord and said, "Yes, I will follow Jesus even though it means going to China?" Then there came the choice of two roads, and you took the lower, you chose the second best? There is time for you to catch sight of the leader's face, and the Lord, I think, is saying to you, "Rise! rise and follow me." There is time for you to undo the past and take a fresh step forward, and once again put your life into the hand of Him to whom it belongs. Will you do it?

65. Following Is Upholding the Standard

Following Is Upholding the Standard

Let me remind you of another crisis in the life of our Lord, Matthew 22:15. You remember they came to Him with kindly words, one day—the Pharisees—words that were couched in flattering terms, but they were all a trap. They asked Him whether they should pay the tribute to Caesar or not, and He said, “Show Me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? ...” (Luke 20:24). You know the story. What was the crisis there in Christ’s life? What was the temptation our Lord had before Him? Just to lower the standard and assent to something that was not right, in order that He might please some other one. They would have said, perhaps, “If He is a true patriot now, He will say: You should not pay tribute to Caesar.” There was the temptation to lower His standard and assent to what was wrong in order to gain the good opinion of those men. Is not that a temptation today? I believe that it is a very sharp temptation in business circles.

I was speaking at a convention in England, and while walking with my host, a keen Christian business man, he said, “Do you know, things are becoming so acute in business circles that it will soon be impossible for a Christian man to continue in business and follow the Lamb.” I believe it is a real temptation in the way of business men to lower the standard a little bit. I believe it is a tremendous temptation in the way of the churches, and they are yielding to it. How the churches are lowering the standards today! What extraordinary methods some of the churches are taking to raise money, proving to the world that they have no God. What awful means the churches are using to attract people into the empty pews! And what has the Church of God to do with the passing program of a world that hates the Christ? By taking up the world’s program the church is proving to the world that she has no God.

I know that it is a tremendous temptation to the preacher to lower the standard because of that man who sits in the back seat, or who sits in the front seat in the gallery—to lower the standard in order to please him, in order to get his check, and so on. It is a tremendous temptation in the way of the preacher to tone down his message. Some of you ought to be preachers just to have a little bit of sympathy with us preachers. If you had six months in a minister’s study and in a minister’s church you would never criticize him again.

It is not an easy thing to see people going away from your church because you are true to the cross. In my first church I had nothing to preach (and I have never had anything to preach) except the cross, and I saw pews getting empty and emptier, and people going away, and it was a hard thing for a young fellow just beginning his ministry to stand true; but this is what I found, and it may be an encouragement to some ministerial brother. I began to take notice that whenever a pew in the church was left vacant by unconverted people leaving it, it was very soon filled with converted people and people who would go out to the street with me, and people who supported me, and people who gave money. You know you cannot lose if you are true to the Lord Jesus Christ—you cannot lose in the long run.

If you are going back to a place that is awfully difficult, take stock of God before you go back; and if you will get what I got in my early ministry, this fact burned in your soul, it will help you. I got this from God: "God is faithful," and I stood on that; and in the midst of very severe tests I stood on that, "God is faithful," and He proved Himself to be so.

How did Christ meet this crisis in His life—this temptation to lower the standard? In this way: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). He said that the honest demands of the state are as holy as the requirements of the church. The Bible, remember, has only one word about a thing—it is either right or wrong, and if it is right, then we want today the spirit of the old Puritans, who used to say, "Let us do right, though the heavens fall."

Young man and young woman, it is better for you to go down with your flag flying, than to yield to the temptation to lower your standard in the hope that you will please somebody. But you won't go down. Jesus is stronger than Satan and sin, and Satan to Jesus must bow. You will not go down. To follow the Lamb means rigid adherence to what is right, but it means victory.

66. Following Is to Be Blameless

Following Is to Be Blameless

Now notice what God says is to be the end of those who follow the Lamb. They are to be without blame before the throne. That is what God is working up to. In the midst of all the tests of your lives that will face you remember this: Keep your eye upon the throne. It will help you to endure. It will help you to stand; and one day the Lamb will lead you by the fountains of living waters, and God will wipe away all your tears. My last word is this. How are we to do it? How can you and I go back and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes? How are we to be disciples? In our own strength and wisdom? No. In the strength that we get from such a time of fellowship as this? No, blessed though it is. I will read two verses in John's Gospel, the first chapter: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him" (John 1:32). Now join those two passages and you have the secret of being His, able to follow Him. What did John see? The Lamb, on Whom rested a dove: a Lamb indwelt by a dove. It is the combination of those two characteristics that will give us power to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes. The mark of discipleship is a Lamb spirit and a Lamb life. That is the result of making Christ first. Let me say this to you who are beset by difficulties, who are tried by very hard circumstances, who are surrounded perhaps by ungodly people, who are being tested through and through. Beloved, it is the Lamb life that Christ means you to live, and it is the Lamb spirit in you that is going to win. In that wonderful vision that John had in Revelation 4, he heard the angel say, "Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah." And John says, "I looked for the Lion, and I saw a Lamb." Oh, it is the Lamb life with the lion courage that is going to conquer. As you go to your work or out to the mission field, remember this, the world is only going to be won to Christ by lambs, but it takes the heart of a lion, in these days, to live the life of the Lamb. The Lamb life, that is obedience; the dove life, that is peace and power. The lamb means, "Thy will for me"; the dove means, "Thy power in me." And so we come face to face with the most tremendous question we can ever meet, and it is this: Am I ready to follow the Lamb? Am I ready to go to my home, and church, and business, and work, and follow the Lamb? Do you see it is the way of the cross? But it is worthwhile. Do you know why? The future belongs to the Lamb. Calvary means Victory. The future belongs to the Lamb, and He is going on to victory. He is here now wanting an answer to this question: Will you follow me? And He is not going to wait for an answer, He must have it tonight. Are we ready to give that answer? Shall we bow in prayer before Him?

67. Prayer

Prayer

O Lord Jesus, Thou hast been asking, "Will you follow Me whithersoever I go?" Thou hast heard what each one of us has said. The answer may cost so much, but we never can be brought into a position where we do not find Thee with us. Oh, we thank Thee for it. We thank Thee Thou dost not say "Go;" Thou dost say, "Follow me."

Blessed Lord, we thank Thee for it. Some of us may be just a little nervous about the future. Give us grace, now, to say, "I believe the Lord Jesus Christ is faithful, that He is able to give me an abundance of grace, that He is able to make all grace abound towards me, whatever be the circumstances of my life. I believe God." O Lord Jesus, we look into Thy face and we see the face of Him who has conquered and who is going on to conquer. Do Thou help us by Thy grace to be true to the answer we have given Thee through these days and in this closing service. For Thy name's sake, Amen.

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