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The Holy Spirit and the Cross, the Church, and the Coming Again of the Lord Jesus

by T. Austin-Sparks

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A Message as Spoken

The Theme is "The Holy Spirit and the Cross, the Church, and the Coming Again of the Lord." As to the first part, the Holy Spirit and the Cross, we can see that the one great and inclusive question in view was, and is, the securing of God's rights in the universe for Him. God, as the Supreme and Sole Object of all worship or worth-ship; the breaking in before this world was created of another will and thought, to divide that worship, to rob God of it, a disputing of God's sole right in the universe; an uprising to ascend into the heavens above the clouds to be equal with the Most High on the part of one, Lucifer; bringing about his downfall and the casting out of heaven of a company of "angels which kept not, their first estate," and who are now, we are told, "reserved in everlasting chains," in chains unto everlasting perdition and darkness: the reappearing of that one upon this earth, and assailing the citadel of God in the soul of man, and therefore dividing the rights of God, the worship of God, and securing recognition, acknowledgment, obedience, thus worship. Then right down through the ages, the two Gods, the true God and the god of this world - the false god; the two worships; the worship of God and the worship of this other, in many forms, by many systems, in divers manners, but always the one thing behind to take away from God, to divide the rights with God. It does not matter how it is done, it will be done always in the way which is most calculated to succeed.

At one time, it will appeal to the dominant faculties of that time, which may be psychical along the line of superstition, fear, dread, especially in the realms of little enlightenment, great darkness; and in another time, in another realm, perhaps along the line of intellect and reason and considerable enlightenment. Anyhow; it does not matter so long as the end is attained, that God has not His place, and is not allowed to be supreme in His universe, having undivided and unrivalled sway. The persistence of this other thing at times is manifested in - one was going to say, - an impertinence, the impertinence that it will even assail the Son of God, and say "if only THOU wilt worship me" - *Thou* wilt worship me! It stands at nothing, pays a great price for that recognition. All this we have seen, or gathered up in the Cross of the Lord Jesus, and we no longer look upon Calvary as merely the crucifixion of the Jewish Messiah, we no longer talk about the *crucifixion* of Christ, we no longer talk about this Calvary scene as an historic human tragedy, we look back on it and see this whole realm and range of contrary worship, the thing which had its own strategy against the Throne of God. That was involved, and it was there that Calvary's meaning had its full significance, and in that Cross the Lord Jesus met the whole of that thing, gathered it up in His Own Person by one all-inclusive sacrifice, whole-burnt-offering, because He, He alone could do it - God and man united in sinlessness. Such a One was required, such a One alone could do it. He did it in this whole-burnt-offering.

He Secured in His Person the Entire Universal Rights of God

for Him, and in that typical offering and that literal offering of Himself He offered Himself to God, as representing many sons whom He would bring to Glory - a new creation which He would bring into being, and in that Person there is provisioned and secured a sacrifice out of which shall be ultimately plucked the last remnant of that false thing, and in which God shall be All and in all, worshipped without a rival. He secured that in the Cross. The Cross, therefore, represents God's rights secured in Christ, and when we speak about the Cross let us always have a large enough vision and background to see why the Lord calls us into fellowship with Himself in death, burial, and resurrection.

It is of such a range that Satan should never again, so far as we are concerned, have a vestige of ground upon which to work against God. That is the meaning of it, and when we are called into the fellowship of His Cross it is to wipe out the ground of Satan's rights and claims and activities, and Satan's hand against the Throne of God. Oh that men saw that every bit of flesh uncrucified is the hand of the Devil against the Throne of God! It is that, beloved, when we choose our will against the Will of God, it is a hand against the Throne; it is an expression of the enemy's attitude, who said "I will be equal with the Most High." When He calls us into fellowship with Himself in the Cross it is not only to remove the ground of the enemy's operation and activity, but it is a declaration that in our risen union with the Lord Jesus we are wholly unto the Lord. Calvary represents utter consuming unto the Lord. No one dare talk about the Cross, sing about the Cross, no one has a right to speak of the Cross of the Lord Jesus as being anything to them who will not go the whole way. That Cross is the brasen altar upon which utterly, without a vestige left, they are consumed unto God, that, *in the intention of God*, there should not be one fragment or atom upon which the enemy should have a claim. As a whole that is the Cross, that is what it meant in the Person of Christ representatively, and that is what it meant for us as included therein, so that in that Person, that Ascended, Exalted, Glorified Person of the Lord Jesus everything is secured unto God. Oh do get the sufficient emphasis upon that; everything is secured unto God. Take the little phrase itself "unto God," or "unto the Lord," and trace it through the Word and see.

All that which is redeemed by His Precious Blood is redeemed unto God. It is for the Lord. Do we hold everything unto the Lord? Hold our business unto the Lord? hold our home unto the Lord? hold all our money unto the Lord? hold our children unto the Lord? hold our friendships unto the Lord? hold our bodies unto the Lord? hold all our opportunities unto the Lord? Everything unto the Lord, and everything that we cannot hold unto the Lord let go! No longer a question, "is there any harm in it?" that is negative. There is nothing negative in this life, the question is, is it unto the Lord positively. That is the meaning of Calvary - "unto the Lord," the whole burnt-offering unto the Lord. That is what it means to be in Christ. He is the whole burnt-offering. To be in Him is to be offered wholly unto God. "Henceforth," says the Word of the Spirit, "henceforth not unto ourselves but unto Him." He secured it all. He secured the earth in His Own Person for the Lord. He settled the dispute as to who should be the prince of this world, who should be the God of this world, who should hold sway of this world, who should sit upon the throne of this world? That is the dispute of the ages. He secured the world unto God in His Own Person. Beloved, this world by right of Christ's Victory belongs to God. Therein is our vocation found, to take it for God, to stand on it, put our feet down and say "we stand here for God." He secured the world, "all authority has been given unto Me in heaven and in earth." He secured man. Man, that disputed thing, made for the glory of God, but meddled with by Satan, so that even man gave his consent to Satan's will and authority and right. But in His Own Divine Person as *Man* (oh the wonder of the incarnation), as Man God and man joined in one Person. As Man He secured man representatively for God, for "as by *man* came death, by *Man* also came the resurrection of the dead" - *the* God-Man. He secured man in that Cross as free, utterly free from the power of Satan. It is in that sense that God has secured man in Christ. He has secured the world, He has secured man, He has dealt with Satan and He has dealt with death, all in this Cross of Christ.

The issue now for the world is to recognise the rights of God, to recognise the rights of God as secured in Christ, to take sides, to acknowledge that. Now that sets up a testimony, that is the testimony of God in Christ, which becomes the testimony of Jesus. That is the testimony, all this secured in the glorified Person of the Lord Jesus by means of the precious Blood. That is the Testimony of Jesus. That testimony has been taken and settled in the heavens. The Holy Spirit thereupon is sent forth to find some place on this earth in which to establish that testimony, and thus you come to:

The Holy Spirit and the Church.

The Spirit constitutes the Church, which is the true Church according to the mind of God. Not what we call the Church, but what God calls the Church. He constitutes that and He constitutes it - as we have seen - a thing in which that testimony is placed in trust. The Church is here left on the earth but having a heavenly Life, in order that that Testimony may be here borne and upheld on the earth, that God has universal rights, these rights are secured in the Person of Jesus Christ, and that the Cross of Calvary was the scene and is the power of the establishment of that Testimony; the message of the Cross, Christ crucified, the power of God, the wisdom of God. The Church is here in trust for that purpose. The Testimony of all that Calvary secures in Christ is deposited in the Church, and in as much as God has not wiped the adversary out of the universe yet, but let him remain and given him so much liberty, is explained along this line that God is going to work out all the content of that Testimony in and through the Church. That explains why immediately there is an entering into the Testimony of Jesus in the power of the Holy Ghost, not in mind, thought, doctrine, teaching, human association, but *in the power of the Holy Ghost*, the enemy at once begins his terrific onslaughts and goes over the ground again to, by any means, device or scheme, wipe that

Testimony out of the earth by wiping the Church out - if he can. Immediately God brings the Church to light other things are brought to light. The dark things are brought to light, the enemy is brought to light, the devices of the enemy are brought to light, and it is in the face of that the Church stands. Oh, beloved, we are here, if we are really members of His Body, not merely to present to men the gospel, that is a part, a great vital part of this whole, but we are here that "Now unto the principalities and powers in the Heavens might be made manifest the manifold wisdom of God by the Church," "NOW"! We have heard that many times that the vocation of the Church is not limited to flesh and blood, it reaches far beyond to other spheres. The testimony is universal, not local, even as to the earth, but beyond the earth. Otherwise, how are we to explain things? I think I can safely say that nine-tenths of the terrific spiritual conflicts through which we pass have no direct effect upon men and women. They seem to be without any virtue so far as people are concerned. It seems that men and women are only touched in a manner far short of commensurate with the terrific conflicts that go on. There is something more involved. Surely the nine-tenths are counting somewhere! Yes,

God is Doing a Thing Out of the Sight of Men

in this matter and displaying His manifold wisdom. One has to conclude that upon the mere ground of logic or righteousness, but one comes to see that it is definitely stated to be so in the Word of God. We might refer to the Book of Job. Where is the drama of the Book of Job set? Oh, in the realm where Satan appears before God and challenges Him concerning the faith and the faithfulness of one of His servants, and God says I will prove to you by that very man that he does not serve Me for what he can get out of Me, I will prove to you that there is such a thing as a faith in the universe which believes in Me for what I am. And Job is a type of the Church, stripped and led into affliction and adversity, and the hand of the devil is allowed to be against him as against it. It might seem that Job's faith is shaken, but the strength of God comes in at a critical moment and triumphs, and the issue, the ultimate issue, is that God has exhibited to principalities and powers His grace, His glory, and the thing which speaks of Himself, His testimony.

That is the story of the Church, but God is not only doing that on the dark side, He is doing it on the light side, and angels desire to look into these things; angels and archangels are being instructed by the Church, the testimony is a very wide testimony. The explanation, beloved, of our spiritual conflicts is far-reaching, it goes a long way, you will see it in that day. That is the Church. The Holy Spirit constituted the Church for that. Is that the Church we know? Is that the Church to which we belong? Is that the nature of the vocation which we are fulfilling? Are we in that or are we engaged in trying to hold people together into some human association, an organised thing on this earth that we call the Church, and trying to get them to live more decent lives, and to give some recognition to God one day in the week, and get them how we will? An entertainment, a bridge party, a dance? Is that the worship of God? Nay! but that, of course, is a long way off from this. There are many grades, but oh, God wants the true thing where Calvary means for every member of Christ's Body that there is only one thing to live for, and that is the glory of God. So the Church is set up as an earthen vessel to enshrine the Heavenly treasure, the testimony, and the Church is set up to minister to the glory of God, to His pleasure. There to be displayed the riches of His grace, the manifold wisdom. But there is the myrrh, the myrrh with which Esther was prepared for the intercessory work before the throne - six months of myrrh; but it is there that the beauty of the Lord comes in. You know what I mean. The Lord leads us into suffering, into trial, into heart-break, into the place where humanly there is nothing to get us through, and then His grace comes in. Thus after the myrrh the frankincense, the beauty of the Lord. And so He displays the riches of His grace through the Church in the fire. Shall

we not make it personal, and say when the Church is in the fire, the one thing that attracts attention is that there is Another in the fire, and that One like unto the Son of Man. That is it. That is our calling, beloved, a holy calling, a sacred calling, if you like, a costly calling, but a worthwhile calling. It is bringing God into His place; it is unveiling His glory. The Church is here for the glorifying of God. "He that overcometh shall sit with Me on My Throne as I have overcome and sit with My Father in His throne." "If we suffer we shall reign with Him."

The Church an Intercessory Instrument

Now we must also see that the Church is here to be an intercessory instrument for the Holy Ghost for two purposes. Here we have got the Book of Esther very much in mind. And just to mention that will explain to you what we mean. In the first place we have the intercessory instrument as represented by Esther for the purpose of preserving the Life of God's people; preserving the testimony to that Life of the Lord's people. Oh, that is a big calling and vocation. Here is this satanic scheme as illustrated in Haman who is out to blot out the people of God as the instrument of the testimony of God in the earth, though at the time a poor, decadent instrument, nevertheless the people of God; and Esther comes into relation to the throne in order to have that foul plan of the enemy reversed, destroyed, and the testimony of life maintained. That is the Church's vocation, that is what God is after securing, a company who will be to Him an instrument in this day to save the testimony of God in a decadent spiritual age and day; and many of the Lord's people are failing, are in captivity, weakened, robbed of their place, robbed of their witness, robbed of their power by the evil one because of their own idolatry, because they have been guilty of dividing God's rights and not giving Him His whole place. Idolatry is not merely the falling down and worshipping of gods of wood and stone. Idolatry is anything, beloved, anything in all the universe which detracts from God. If a young man takes to the smallest degree the place of God in a young woman's life, and the other way round as well; husband and wife, parent and children, business, home, anything that comes in to take God's place. We can be idolators with our time, with our money, with our affections.

If God's place is interfered with by another consideration, that is idolatry, and it was idolatry which brought about this spiritual condition amongst the people of God, and it always does. Oh, God would bring back His people, bring back His people into a relationship with Himself that they shall truly be His right representative on the earth. To do that, He must get those into relationship with Himself Who will become an intercessory instrument like Esther to save the testimony of the Life of the Lord's people. For that, He calls us, and such must take this thing upon their hearts as a tremendous burden; that is, the state of the Lord's people must become a heart-ache, a heart-break. The spiritual condition of those who are the Lord's must ever be a tremendous burden upon the heart of the instrument that God would have for saving the situation, and in order to save that situation He must put that burden upon some hearts. Esther took it on her heart, she took her people before the Throne, and to such an extent, that she took her life in her hands, saying "If I perish, I perish," "but I give myself to this business without any personal interest or consideration whatever; in this matter, I live or die."

Oh that God would find a company of men and women today like that, so burdened, so weighed down, so distressed by the spiritual condition of His own people, by the fact that the world is not having registered upon it the testimony of God through His own people. Oh for such an instrument. Would that the Holy Ghost would light upon us and turn us into at least a part of that instrument for today. This instrument is to be God's instrument, by the Holy Ghost, of bringing about the overthrow of Satan. Oh, wonderful work, oh, wonderful work, "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

Within the decadent Church, Laodicea today - overcomers, through whom the Lord will bring about the undoing and the overthrow of Satan. Solemn business, terrific business, but it is the Lord's decision, not ours. He has chosen to do it, and if He has chosen to do it, He is well able to do it, and if the Holy Ghost constitutes the instrument, it will be done.

The Exaltation of the Lord Jesus

Now, beloved, I would very much like to put in here a little about the Church's appreciation of the exaltation of Christ as we have it in the Book of Esther. Mordecai, who was there, sitting in the background, at the gate, unrecognised, unacknowledged, despised, nevertheless, watching, bringing to Esther the information, giving her the urge, telling her how to do things and laying the great responsibility upon her, and then as, inspired by Mordecai, she goes into this solemn and tremendous business through deep preparation, and the thing is done. But what is the issue? The greatest issue of all is, not that the Lord's people are saved, not only that Haman is overthrown, but Mordecai is exalted to the throne. That in type is the greatest thing, and, beloved, the greatest thing that will ever happen in this universe will not merely be the salvation of the Lord's people, it will be that as an inseparable part of the rest, and it will not only be the overthrow of Satan, but it will be the exalting of Jesus Christ to the Throne. The whole Church rejoices in the appreciation of that.

You notice how all the land rejoices in the appreciation of Mordecai's exaltation to the Throne. Oh, they had a special feast, the feast of Purim. You might look at that feast of Purim, in which we find that the people of God are called together to rejoice in the wonderful character of the work of God by Christ, in virtue of which they, the Lord's people themselves, are set free from the power of the enemy, from the presence of evil, and they walk in the fulness and in the joy of the Lord Jesus Himself. That is Mordecai translated into the realm of Jesus Christ - the feast of Purim, the Church coming into its rejoicing in the exaltation of Christ. That is the main end in view. Oh, but does it appeal to our hearts? Does it so appeal to our hearts that we say yes, that is more than my salvation, more than my glorifying, or having riches of the Kingdom. It is more than the overthrow of the devil. That Jesus Christ shall be exalted high over all! Is that the thing that stirs and warms our hearts? Do we walk in the light of that prospect, that great anticipation?

Oh it is a blessed thing to hear those "Amen's," I am sure they are recorded in Heaven. There is nothing that Heaven delights in more than that it should be true, that when a proposal of this kind is made that the greatest thing that should be in the universe is the exaltation of Jesus Christ in the Throne, His people say "Amen." Beloved, it brings us back to the practical out-working; what about the instrument which is going to bring that about? It comes back to the practical. If He is to be exalted, then, beloved, we have got to enter into this thing, a matter which, in a sense, seems a matter of life and death, but I dare not stay with that longer, nor for the other thing in this Book (Esther) which is a very blessed thing, namely, the anticipating of the full display of the glory of God in Christ. There is a prophecy in this Book, the full display of the glory of God in Christ is here seen and there is an anticipation of it, but I must leave that at present. But I do want to touch in closing:

The Holy Spirit and the Coming Again of the Lord Jesus.

I am not going to speak along the line of prophecy or the signs of the times so much, but I want you to see the connection of all these things. I want you to recognise that when we speak of the Holy Spirit and the Coming again of Christ, the Holy Spirit's work is one work, whether it be by the Cross in that Christ "through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself to God," or whether it be in constituting the

Church for the Testimony of God, the instrument for the overthrow of Satan, or whether it be the Holy Spirit and the Coming again of the Lord, it is one work. It is not three works, they are all one work.

The Cross is always related to the Coming again: the Church is always related to the Coming again. When the Lord Jesus sits down and takes the Jewish Passover and translates it into the "Lord's Table" what is He doing? Why, He speaks of His Blood shed, His Body given, and says "As oft as ye eat this Loaf and drink this Cup you do proclaim the Lord's death till He come." He is saying, in effect, that that Passover is eaten with loins girded and sandals on the feet and the staff in the hand, ready to take a journey, the end of which was the Glory. The Cross, beloved, is the beginning of a journey, and it is the beginning of a journey which is conducted by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit begins at the Cross, and His eye is on the goal, the Glory, the divine Glory, the Coming of the Lord all the time. This gets over all the problems of the questioners which even existed in the days of the apostles, for we read that some men were saying then "where is the promise of His coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning," and how much more ground in that realm, on that plain have men for talking in that way today.

Two thousand years, and it seemed that even Paul was expecting the Lord in his lifetime. What is the explanation? Oh, this, beloved, there is no time with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit lives in eternity, the Holy Spirit has brought the two ends together in His work, and whenever you come on the Cross you have the witness of the Spirit, and whenever you come on the Advent, whether 2,000 years ago or today, the thing is still alive, and it is the very life of the thing by the Holy Spirit that is here in the Book. It is just as much alive after 2,000 years as it was then. The explanation is this, the Holy Spirit has this thing as an abidingly living thing in His Mind and intention, it is never dead with Him. Is it not remarkable? Argue as you like, question as you like, and we have all done it. I turned right away from the "Second Coming" because in my infancy I heard people say day after day "the Lord may come tonight," and at last I got so scared, and He never came. I said, "well, now, they have been talking about this for centuries, and here are people living in this thing, and it has made them very happy, and they rejoice in it, and they die, and they said they would live to see the Lord come." And so I turned away from the whole thing, but I missed the secret of it.

Why is it that you cannot sing a hymn about the Lord's Coming, amongst the Lord's people, without the Holy Spirit making the thing become marvellously alive? Why is it? In spite of their reasoning, arguments, in spite of the mystery of the postponement, sing the hymn, and if the Holy Ghost is in them they are all alive. It is the Spirit's witness to the thing which is always in His Mind. The end of the Cross is the Advent. Let no one ever say you are always strumming on one string, you are always on the Cross. Beloved, you cannot isolate the Cross. Get the Cross, and you get everything that is involved in it. The Coming is on the ground of the Cross, the Cross demands the Coming, for it is the consummation of all its content, and so at the Cross the Church has its birth, its beginning of its pilgrimage, the end of which looms immediately upon the horizon - the Rapture!

A Hebrew Idyll

You remember that beautiful romance of the Old Testament (pardon me for referring to it, it is so well known now, but it is a perfect illustration of this thing). Abraham and his servant, and the vow of the servant, going to a far country, another country, to find a bride for Isaac. The servant setting out, taking with him the treasures of Abraham's house, arriving at his destination and putting God to the test, and the seal of God coming upon his quest, and there he discovers the bride, and then all kinds

of things set to work to try and cause delay, to keep the bride back. They want to detain, or entertain, the servant rather than respond to what he is after. So today, we want to keep, to entertain, to have the Spirit, and the Spirit is here for a purpose. They tried to entertain him, to hold back the thing for which he had come, to be nice to him. But the Holy Spirit has none of it, Eliezer has none of it, he says "Look here, I am not going to stay here, I want to know if you are going to accede to the thing for which I have come," and in spite of all the manoeuvring, he comes to the point, and says "now about the business," and they have to put the question straight to Rebecca, "wilt thou go with this man?" and, without any hesitation, she said "I will go"; and he brought out the treasures of his master's house, and adorned her and led her away.

Now, beloved, the Spirit has come on behalf of the Lord, He has come here to get the Bride for Christ. He has come with the riches of His grace to adorn that Bride, to speak of the glories of the Bridegroom and His inheritance: but the Holy Spirit is not going to be entertained or detained, He is come on business, and He is saying "Are you coming, are you coming with Me?" His business by a covenant with God is that He will do His work thoroughly, present the issue clearly. And so, the Holy Spirit is here to get us on a journey, the end of which is to find the Lord Jesus coming out to meet us as Isaac went out from the house; out on the way, doubtless anticipating, expecting, scanning the horizon, waiting, eagerly waiting.

The rapture! That is the issue of the Cross in the Church, for all these things are one. Oh, it is not possible to accept the Lord Jesus in relation to the Cross without seeing that it is going to issue in the rapture and the Coming again. The things are one, they are all one, and so the Spirit brings them all to birth. I want you to notice this as we close.

Primarily, the Glory of God

It is the testimony of God in the earth. This involves the very life, the spiritual life of God's people: and then back of that the overthrow of Satan: and then as through all that the exaltation of Jesus Christ. These are the things which are all at stake, so to speak, the things which are in view. Are they not immense things, tremendous things? The Glory of God in the universe, the exaltation of Jesus Christ, the testimony of God on the earth, the spiritual life of God's people, the overthrow of Satan. Why, what more tremendous things could you think of? These are the things which are before us, in a sense, committed to us, entrusted to us, to which we are called. Now then, beloved, do they not give an adequate motive for the Cross? Do they not make the Cross worth while? Do they not constitute a sufficient basis of appeal for identification with Christ? Surely they do. Surely, beloved, this is a ground good enough for our presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God! Surely that is ground enough. What greater appeal to your or to my heart for letting God have us altogether. Well then, that gives the strength of the motive for an uttermost surrender, but that also presents to us:

The Urgency and Necessity for a Life in the Fulness of the Spirit.

All that is only going to be realised by the energy and power of the Holy Ghost. Oh, then we must seek that, being emptied by the Cross of all else, we shall be filled with the Holy Ghost. The fulness of the Spirit - the Church must begin to pray for that incoming fulness of the Spirit to restore its testimony, to save its life, to constitute it God's instrument for His glory and the exaltation of Christ. It requires the Holy Ghost to do that, but He is not going to do it apart, He is going to do it by the Church, that is His instrument. Oh, we must pray, pray that in this day of decadence, God will yet

again fill an instrument with His Spirit and make it His effective instrument at this time. It is true, we are in the last of those Church ages, the Laodicean age. What are the characteristics of the Laodicean age? Well, mediocrity - neither one thing nor the other, neither hot nor cold, nothing outstanding, nothing conspicuous on the spiritual side. It is a very ordinary level, a compromise, yes, that, but oh, worse than that - self-satisfaction, complacency, lack of vision, a feeling that it is alright, "I am enriched and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," it is alright. Plenty of good work being done, plenty of enterprise, plenty of organisation, plenty of machinery, yes, plenty of people busy. What have you got to grumble at? Oh, but there are other eyes, and you note what it says "Saith the Amen." It is a significant introduction.

What is the meaning of that "Amen"? "Saith the Verily," which means "Saith the One who is positive," and you are negative, and you are not in oneness with Me in spirit in this age of complacency and contentment amongst those who call themselves the Lord's people. I am speaking in a very broad way about this. It is true, and worse still, the awful blindness to the condition by reason of this compromise "Knowest not that thou art blind?" You talk to many Christian people about spiritual matters, and they do not know what you are talking about. Talk about spiritual needs, and they gape at you, and really do not know what it is you are getting at. I have talked to ministers, many of them, and multitudes of Christian workers, and when I have used the phrase "spiritual things," I have discovered that they thought I was talking about mysticism or metaphysics. They may be extreme cases, and there are different levels of that, but we do not have to come out to a very wide circle to discover that there is an awful blindness to spiritual matters, and to spiritual needs amongst the people of God, and the tragedy is that they do not know that they are "blind and naked and poor," and that is the trouble. It is the age, the condition of the age.

You see one characteristic of the whole thing, and the explanation is that things have got big. When they had to fight for their very existence their spiritual condition was different, but when they became successful and big, they lost their spiritual power; and that is the position of many, and many a thing which once had a testimony for God. When it succeeded on an extensive scale it discovered or recognised that no longer had it to fight for its life, and losing its fighting force, it lost its vision and its testimony. It is a good thing to be kept in a place where you have to fight for your life if it means spiritual power, drawing upon God. God save us from ever getting to the place where we feel it is no longer necessary to fight: but it is the spirit of the age, the Laodicean age. There is an appeal made. What is the appeal? "What the Spirit saith."

Oh, the Spirit is saying something. What is the Spirit saying in the midst? "Him that overcometh," overcometh what? This state of things, this awful state of things, this tragic spiritual weakness, this decline, this blindness, this indifference! "To him that overcometh," the Spirit says in effect, "I want, in the midst of this, some to rise up to throw this thing off, to get to God in desperation to save the situation." Oh, will it have our response? The Spirit saith "To him that overcometh," the Spirit saith - do we respond? Have we an ear to hear what the Spirit saith? Is all this falling merely upon our brains as special teaching, doctrine, idea?

Oh, GOD FORBID! Beloved, believe me, this is not something got up for an article. This thing has been wrung out almost like blood. The assaults of the enemy in relation to this, have been almost unspeakable. Oh, this thing has been withstood up to the last moment. The enemy has tried to stop this, to hinder these words, to get us right out of this thing altogether. There has been an awful conflict, day and night. Now, if that is true, surely you are not going to regard it as a mere discourse; surely the Spirit is saying something. What is He saying? God wants that Company who may be

called overcomers, who, in the power of the Holy Ghost take upon them the burden of the Lord's interest in the universe, to see that He gets His rights, to bring about the overthrow of the enemy, to save the spiritual life of many of His people, to maintain His testimony in the earth. Shall we consecrate ourselves to that? May the Holy Spirit aid us.