



❖

MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

❖



❖

OSWALD CHAMBERS

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

Oswald Chambers

Oswald Chambers Publications Association

and

Marshall Morgan & Scott

3 Beggarwood Lane

Basingstoke, Hants

This book is protected by the provisions of international copyright law until the year 2016 AD

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Copyright owner.

ISBN 0 551 05510 3

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

Foreword

I HAVE rough notes of these lectures as given in their first form at the Perth Convention in 1914. I sat enthralled at the beauty and power of the truth being given to us. The essential message of this book was expressed then in these words: "In the Life of our Lord... as Son of Man, when He transformed innocence into holiness by a series of moral choices, He gave the pattern forever of how a holy character was to be developed." It is a basic book. It reminds me of Henry Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of Man*, a volume that greatly influenced Whitfield and the Wesleys. That Aberdeen Professor wrote in 1668, "The power and life of religion may be better expressed in actions than in words They are perfectly exemplified in the Holy Life of our Blessed Saviour, a main part of whose business in this world was to teach by His practice what He did require of others; and to make His own conversation an exact resemblance of those rules which He prescribed. So that if ever true goodness was visible to mortal eyes it was then when His Presence did beautify and illustrate this lower world."

Oswald Chambers here shows us the parallel between our Lord's wondrous life on earth and our life lived in His Name. The psychology of the sanctified life is perfectly illustrated in our Lord's life as set forth in the Gospels. The First Adam mishandled and disarranged his human nature. The Last Adam restored Human Nature to a right

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

working relation to God. When through the Atonement and the New Birth we are lifted into the shared life of our Risen Lord, the same laws of development operate for us as with Him. And “Christian psychology is not a knowledge of man, but a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” To profit by this book demands concentrated thought, with Bible in hand, and with a humble eagerness to “act on the Word, instead of merely listening to it and deluding yourselves,” James i. 22, Moff. This book meets a timely need because it shows how “holiness” works out in human nature as we know it. It shows how sin has taken possession of human nature, but that sin is abnormal. Sin is the outcome of a relationship which God never ordained. Our Lord in His Human Nature cancelled that wrong relationship through His Cross; and established a new relationship. It is in that new relationship we work out that holiness of life and thought and feeling and purpose and service which is the fulfilment of the New Covenant promise. Hebrews viii. 10–12.

I pray that the book may prove as great a blessing to many thoughtful students as it has been to some of us for years, bringing them to the Apostolic climax of confession, “For to me to live IS CHRIST.”

DAVID LAMBERT.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



◆

CONTENTS

Where to Start These Studies

How to Study the Start

His Birth and Our New Birth

His Unrecorded Years and Our Hidden Life

His Baptism and Our Vocation

His Temptation and Ours

His Transfiguration and Our Secret

His Agony and Our Fellowship

His Cross and Our Discipleship

His Resurrection and Our Life

His Ascension and Our Union

His Glorification and Ours

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

Where to Start These Studies

1 Corinthians ii. 11–15

FIRST MAN SECOND MAN

1 Corinthians xv. 45–50

ADAM CHRIST

Living Soul, v. 45 Quickening Spirit, v. 45

Natural, v. 46 Spiritual, v. 46

Earthy, v. 47 Heavenly, v. 47

NEW MAN

Saint

Earthy and Heavenly Image, v.48.

Earthy Effaced by Heavenly Image, v. 49.

Divinely Inherited Kingdom of God, v. 50

Christian Psychology is based on the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, not on the knowledge of ourselves. It is not the study of human nature analysed and expounded, but the study of the new life that is born in us through the Redemption of our Lord, and the only Standard of that new life is our Lord Himself; He is formed in us by regeneration

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



(Galatians i. 15–16). We are apt to start with the way we are made naturally and to transfer our reasonings on that to Jesus Christ, inferring that to understand ourselves is to understand Him. In Christian Psychology we have not to introspect as we do in natural psychology; we have to accept the revelations given to us in and through our Lord Jesus Christ; that is, we must take all our bearings from the Son of God, not from our natural wits. We have not to study and understand ourselves; but to understand the manifestation in us of the life of the Son of God Who became Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to the Bible, there are only two Men—Adam and Jesus Christ, and God deals with them as the representatives of the human race, not as individuals. All the members of the human race are grouped round these two Men. The first Adam is called 'the son of God'; the last Adam is *the* Son of God, and we are made *sons* of God by the last Adam. The Christian is neither Adam nor Jesus Christ, the Christian is a new man in Christ Jesus. The first Adam and the last Adam are the only two Men according to God's norm, and they both came into this world direct from the hand of God.

First Man

Living Soul. "The first man Adam was made a *living soul*" (v. 45). Beware of dividing man up into body, soul and spirit. Man *is* body, soul and spirit. Soul is the expression of man's personal spirit in his body. Spirit means I, myself, the incalculable being that is 'me,' the essence that expresses itself in the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

soul. The immortal part of a man is not his soul, but his spirit. Man's spirit is as indestructible as Almighty God; the expression of his spirit in the soul depends on the body. In the Bible the soul is always referred to in connection with the body. The soul is the holder of the body and spirit together, and when the body disappears, the soul disappears, but the essential personality of the man remains. In the resurrection there is another body and instantly the soul life is manifested again (John v. 28–29). It is not a resurrection of spirit, i.e., personality, that never dies, but of body and soul.

A 'living soul' means man expressing himself as God designed he should. God created man a splendid moral being, fitted to rule the earth and air and sea, but he was not to rule himself; God was to be his Master, and man was to turn his natural life into a spiritual life by obedience. Had Adam done so, the members of the human race would have gone on developing until they were transfigured into the presence of God; there would have been no death. Death to us has become natural, but the Bible reveals it to be abnormal. Adam refused to turn the natural into the spiritual; he took dominion over himself and thereby became the introducer of the heredity of sin into the human race (Romans v. 12), and instantly lost his control over the earth and air and sea. The entrance of sin means that the connection with God has gone and the disposition of self-realisation, my right to myself, has come in its place.

“For by Him were all things created ...”
(Colossians i. 16). Did God then create sin? Sin is

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

not a creation; sin is the outcome of a relationship which God never ordained, a relationship set up between the man God created and the being God created who became the devil. God did not create sin, but He holds Himself responsible for the possibility of sin, and the proof that He does so is in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Calvary is God's responsibility undertaken and carried through as Redemption. The essential nature of sin is my claim to my right to myself, and when sin entered in, the connection between man and God was instantly severed; at-one-ness was no longer possible.

Natural. "Howbeit that was no first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" (v. 46). Unless we are born again, we will always be 'natural' men. In John iii. our Lord is not talking about sin and hell, He is talking to a religious leader, a clean-living, upright, good, noble man—a natural man—and it was to him that He said—"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." The general idea is that a man must be a blackguard before Jesus Christ can do anything for him. The average preaching of the Gospel deals mainly with the scenic cases, with people who have gone through exceptional experiences. None of the early disciples had had these exceptional experiences; they saw in Jesus Christ what they had never seen before—a Man from another realm, and they began to long after what He stood for. We preach to men as if they were conscious of being dying sinners; they are not, they are having a good time, and our talk about being born again is from a domain of which they know nothing. The natural man does not want to be born again.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



Earthy. “*The first man is of the earth, earthy*” (v. 47). This is man’s glory, not his shame, because it is in a creature made of the earth that God is going to manifest His glory. We are apt to think that being made of the earth is our humiliation, but it is the very point that is made much of in God’s word. In the Middle Ages it was taught that sin resided in the actual fleshly body, and that therefore the body was a clog and a hindrance. The Bible says that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, not a thing to be despised. Sin is not in having a body and a nature that needs to be sacrificed; sin is in refusing to sacrifice them at the call of God. Sin is a disposition which rules the body, and regeneration means not only that we need not obey the disposition of sin, but that we can be absolutely delivered from it (Romans vi. 6).

Second Man

Quickening Spirit. “*The last Adam was made a quickening spirit*” (v. 45). Jesus Christ came into the human race from the outside, and when we are born again, His life comes into us from the outside. Jesus Christ is the normal man, and in His relationship to God, to the devil, to sin and to man we see the expression in human nature of what He calls ‘eternal life.’ We try to enter the life of Jesus in the wrong way. We do not enter into His life by imitation: we enter into it by its entering into us by means of His death. Jesus Christ gives us His life, viz., Holy Spirit. When we ask God for the Holy Spirit, we receive the very nature of God, *Holy Spirit*. We become regenerate, born from above, by the gift of life from the last Adam, then we have to live in

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



obedience to that Spirit which has come into our spirit.

The records in the Gospels are given, not so much that we might understand the Person of our Lord from the natural standpoint, but that we might understand how to exhibit His life in us when we are born from above. We have to take our instructions for this from Jesus Christ. The danger is lest we praise God's salvation and sovereign grace while we refuse to manifest His salvation in our human nature.

Spiritual. "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" (v. 46). That which is not earthy, but in accordance with the nature of spirit. There are counterfeit spiritualities, but the spirituality of Jesus Christ is a holy spirituality. Jesus Christ worked from a spiritual standpoint, the Spirit of God so indwelt Him that His spirituality was manifested in His ordinary soul life.

Heavenly. "The second man is the Lord from heaven" (v. 47). The Second Man is the Son of God historically manifested, and the prophecy of what the human race is going to be. In Him we deal with God as Man, the God-Man, the Representative of the whole human race in one Person. Jesus Christ is not a Being with two personalities; He is Son of God (the exact expression of Almighty God), and Son of Man (the presentation of God's normal man). As Son of God, He reveals what God is like (John xiv. 9); as Son of Man, He mirrors what the human race will

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



be like on the basis of Redemption—a perfect oneness between God and man (Ephesians iv. 13).

New Man

Earthy and Heavenly Image. “As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly” (v. 48). The ‘natural’ has not life in itself, therefore we must be born from above. To be born from above means that we are lifted into heavenly places in our personal spirit by the Holy Spirit Who comes into us, He quickens us all through. The Holy Spirit does *in* us what Jesus Christ did *for* us. Holy Spirit is essential Deity, and He energises our spirit and presences us with Deity as our Lord was presenced. Holy Spirit never becomes our spirit, He quickens our spirit, and instantly we begin to express a new soul.

When God’s Spirit comes into our personality, our soul life begins to be upset, and the bodily life often gets disorganised. Health is simply the balance of our bodily life with external circumstances, anything that upsets the equilibrium on the inside upsets the bodily equilibrium on the outside, consequently when a man is convicted of sin, his ‘beauty consumes away like a moth’ (Psalm xxxix. 11). Beauty means the perfectly ordered completeness of a man’s nature. A man into whom the Spirit of God has entered is for a while out of harmony. The Spirit of God brings upset and conviction, He throws light on what is dark, He searches the recesses of the disposition; consequently the preaching of the Gospel, while it awakens an intense craving,

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

awakens an equally intense resentment. Conviction of sin means that we realise that our natural life is based on a disposition that will not have Jesus Christ. If the man will obey the Holy Spirit, the new balance of holiness will be set up, the balance of his disposition with the law of God. Then he must obey God's will in his body, and this will mean crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts (Galatians v. 24).

Earthy Effaced by Heavenly Image. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (v. 49). Have you never seen the earthy effaced by the heavenly? Watch the face of a man or woman who has been born again and who is going on with God; there is a change in the features which cannot be defined. The explanation of it is that when God makes us all over again, our bodies are moulded by the new Spirit within and begin to manifest that Spirit (2 Corinthians v. 17). When we receive the Holy Spirit, He lifts us into the realm where Jesus Christ lives, and all things become new. We cannot estimate Jesus Christ along the natural line, He does not belong to this order of things, and He says that if we want to belong to His order we must be born from above (John iii. 3, 5). Tolstoi taught the principles of Jesus, but he ignored the need to be born again. Let a man receive the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ will do in him all that he ever imagined He would do, and he will find that it works all the time.

Nothing is born without pain, and a man cannot be born into the Kingdom of God without pain. He must have his conscience and his mind readjusted,

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



and this will mean pain. Redemption makes a man right for heaven, but there is much more in it than that. New birth has to do with being of value to God in this present order of things.

Divinely Inherited Kingdom of God. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (v. 50). The characteristics of the natural man, apart from sin, are independence and individuality. Individuality is the strong and emphatic and somewhat ugly husk that guards the personal life. Individuality is a right characteristic in a child, but in a man or woman it is not only objectionable but dangerous, because it means independence of God as well as of other people, and independence of God is of the very nature of sin. The only way we can get rid of the pride of individuality and become one with Jesus Christ is by being born from above.

Sin dwells in human nature, but the Bible makes it very clear that it is an abnormal thing, it has no right there, it does not belong to human nature as God designed it. Sin has come into human nature and perverted and twisted it. The Redemption of God through our Lord Jesus Christ delivers human nature from sin, and then begins the possibility of the manifestation of the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh. We are saved by God's grace, but, thank God, we have something to do. We must take care to meet God's supernatural work of grace by our human obedience. When we have been delivered from sin, the characteristics of our natural life have to be sacrificed, not murdered, not denied in the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

sense of being ignored, but sacrificed, that is, transformed into agreement with the heavenly by obedience (Ephesians iv. 23). We are saved from sin and readjusted to God, but we are still human beings, and we have to take the trouble to *actually* prove what God has *really* done in us. God never saves men and women the trouble of manifesting the fact that He has made them His sons and daughters. We begin all right, but it is easy to get switched off. If we do not continue to live in the right place, we will get back into 'Adam' sympathies. It is on 'Adam' sympathies that much of our Christian work is based, not on sympathy with Jesus Christ, the last Adam. Satan's temptations of our Lord were based on sympathy with the first Adam—'Put men's needs first.' Jesus Christ says—'Do not think first of the needs of the people; think first of the commands of God' (Mark xii. 29–31).

Natural individuality holds strongly to natural relationships. The natural relationships on which individuality is based are—father, mother, brothers and sisters, husband and wife, children, self-interest. These are the relationships with which our Lord says we are likely to clash if we are going to be His disciples. If the clash comes, He says it must be instant obedience to Him (Luke xiv. 26). Our obedience to Jesus Christ is going to cost other people a great deal, and if we refuse to go on because of the cost to them, or because of the stab and the jeer, we may find that we have prevented the call of God coming to other lives; whereas if we will go through with God, all these natural relationships will be given to our credit spiritually in the final wind-up.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

How to Study The Start

Some Things to Remember

The Revelation of Christ (Mathew xvi. 16–17)

The Records of Christ (John v. 39, R.V.)

The Realisation of Christ (1 Corinthians i. 30)

Some Things to Realise

The Evangelical Experience (The Synoptic Gospels and St. John)

The Examined Experience (The Epistles)

The Exercised Experience (The Present Obedience)

The basis of Christian Psychology is not a knowledge of man, but a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is easy to put up our Lord as an Example, but according to the New Testament He is much more. He is the Redeemer, One who can reproduce His own life in us. To be born from above means more than conversion. It means that Christ is formed in us, and the Christ in us must be exactly like the Christ outside us. The characteristics that Jesus Christ exhibited in His human life are to be exhibited in the Christian. Christian Psychology is based on our realisation of Who the Lord Jesus Christ is and on an experimental understanding of His life in us.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



There is a difference between sight and the organ of sight. Most of us are quite content to see, we do not bother about the organ of sight. But when something goes wrong with the organ of sight those of us who can see only are of no use to put the eye right; we must know how the organ of sight is constructed. The Christian worker is apt to say—‘Oh, well, I have been saved by God’s grace and that is sufficient.’ It may be sufficient for you, but if you are going to be “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,” you must do more than ‘be saved,’ you must take the trouble to find out what the Bible says about that salvation. Most of us are like the folks who are content with being able to see; but the organ of sight spiritually in many has gone wrong, and we have no knowledge of how to deal with it, all we can do is to give our testimony. That is not good enough. The point of the study of Christian Psychology is not only that we might understand salvation for ourselves, but that we might understand how to assist others.

Some Things to Remember

The Revelation of Christ. “And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven “ (Matthew xvi. 16–17). The Lord Jesus Christ is not a commonsense fact, that is, we do not understand Him by means of our common sense. The disciples at this stage only knew Jesus Christ by means of their common sense—by their eyes and ears and all the powers of commonsense

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



men; they had never discerned Who He was. Our Lord is a revelation fact, and when Peter confessed, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus Christ recognised from Whom he had received the revelation, not from his common sense, but from God. Is Jesus Christ a revelation to me, or is He simply an historical character?

The Bible is the universe of revelation facts; the natural world is the universe of common-sense facts, and our means of communication with the two universes is totally different. We come in contact with the natural universe by our senses, our intellect has to be curious. Scientific knowledge, which is systematised common sense, is based on intense intellectual curiosity. Curiosity in the natural world is right, not wrong, and if we are not intellectually curious we shall never know anything, God never encourages laziness.

When we come to the universe of the Bible, the revelation facts about God, intellectual curiosity is not of the slightest use. Our senses are no good here, we cannot find out God by searching. We may have inferences from our common-sense thinking which we call God, but these are mere abstractions. We can only get at the facts that are revealed in the Bible by faith. Faith is not credulity; faith is my personal spirit obeying God. The Bible does not deal in common-sense facts; the natural universe deals in common-sense facts, and we get at these by our senses. The Bible deals with revelation facts, facts we cannot get at by our common sense, facts we may be pleased to make light of by our common sense. For instance, Jesus Christ is a revelation fact,

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



sin is another, the devil is another, the Holy Spirit is another. Not one of these is a common-sense fact. If a man were merely a common-sense individual, he could do very well without God.

In order to get scientific knowledge we must use our common sense; but if we are going to know the facts with which Jesus Christ deals, the facts which He says belong to the Kingdom of God, we must have them revealed to us. 'Marvel not that I say unto you, You must be born again before you can come into contact with the domain in which I live.' The domain in which Jesus Christ lives is the domain of Bible facts. How are we to get the revelation of Jesus Christ? Very simply, if we want it. Jesus Christ said that the Holy Spirit would glorify Him, and we can receive Holy Spirit for the asking (Luke xi. 13). Then we too shall be in the same category as Peter, and Jesus Christ will say to us, "Blessed art thou, ... for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Jesus Christ is a Revelation, and we can get the revelation of Him by receiving the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ continually said things (such as Luke xi. 13) the meaning of which cannot be got at by common sense. Have we ever received Holy Spirit? If we refuse any one way of getting at the truth because we do not like that way, we are dishonest.

The Records of Christ. "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life" (John v. 39, R.V.). The Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, are all revelations of Jesus Christ. The context of the Bible is our Lord Himself, and until we get rightly related to Him, the Bible is no more to us

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



than an ordinary book. Common sense does not reveal Jesus Christ; to common sense He is nothing more than a Nazarene carpenter who lived twenty centuries ago. No natural man can know Jesus Christ (Matthew xi. 27). Higher criticism, so called, works on the lines of common sense, consequently when it deals with our Lord (Whose highest sense is not common sense, but Deity), He has to be explained away, His Person is 'dissolved by analysis' (1 John iv. 1-3). The findings of higher criticism may be logically proved, but the biggest facts in life are not logical. If they were, we should be able to calculate our ends and make sure of things on rational logical lines. Logical truth is merely the explanation of facts which common sense has gathered. Men say, 'I must have these things proved to my reason. How much good spiritually did a man ever get by proving things to his reason? In spiritual matters logical processes do not count. Curiosity does not count, nor argument, nor reasoning; these are of no avail for spiritual discernment. There is only one golden rule for spiritual discernment, and that is obedience. We learn more by five minutes' obedience than by ten years' study. Logic and reasoning are methods of expounding Reality, but we do not get at Reality by our intellect. Reality is only got at by our conscience. When we deal with the records of Christ we are dealing with fundamental realities, not with intellectual problems. Faith in God is the only way of coming in touch with the fundamental realities, and there is nothing logical about faith; it is of the nature of life.

After we are born again, the Bible becomes a new Book to us, and we search the Scriptures, not to get

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

'life' out of them, but to know more about Jesus Christ. "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life, ... and ye will not come to *Me* that ye might have life" (John v. 39–40, R.V.). The vital relationship which the Christian has to the Bible is not that he worships the letter, but that the Holy Spirit makes the words of the Bible spirit and life to him. Before we are born from above the Bible is only an ordinary book; after we are born from above, the Bible becomes a universe of revelation facts whereby we feed our knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The Realisation of Christ. "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption " (1 Corinthians i. 30). In Proverbs viii. we read of Pre-incarnate Wisdom, and in John's Gospel that Wisdom is referred to as the Logos, or Word. Historically, the Word was called Jesus Christ. The whole wisdom of God has come down to the shores of our lives in a flesh and blood Man, and John says, we have seen Him and we know Him. How are we to realise Jesus Christ? He says "Come unto Me," and there is no profounder word in human language than that. The one thing that keeps us from coming to Jesus Christ is obstinacy; we will do anything rather than come. It is not God's will that a man should be smashed before he is saved, it is the man's obstinacy that does it. There is no need to go through the agonies and distresses that so many do go through, it is because men will not *come* . If we want to realise Jesus Christ, He says "Come unto Me," and when we do come, God makes Him "unto us wisdom, and righteousness,

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

and sanctification, and redemption.” If Jesus Christ is not revealed to us it is because we have views of our own, and we want to bend everything to those views. In order to realise Christ we must come to Him. That is, we must learn to trust Someone other than ourselves, and to do this we must deliberately efface ourselves. Devotion and piety are apt to be the greatest opponents of Jesus Christ, because we devote ourselves to devotion instead of to Him. To surrender to God is not to surrender to the fact that we have surrendered. That is not coming at all. To come means that we come to God in complete abandonment and give ourselves right over to Him and leave ourselves in His hands. The Lord Jesus Christ is the one Person to Whom we ought to yield, and we must be perfectly certain that it is to Himself that we are yielding. Do not be sorry if other appeals find you stiff-necked and unyielding; but be sorry if, when He says “Come unto Me,” you do not come. The attitude of coming is that the will resolutely lets go of everything and deliberately commits all to Him.

Some Things to Realise

The Evangelical Experience. The Synoptics are the first three Gospels; John’s writings include his Epistles and the Apocalypse as well as his Gospel. Our Lord neither talked of Conversion and Regeneration and Sanctification in stages; neither does the Apostle John. If we get hold of books which talk in the stages of experience and then come to the Gospels where those stages are not marked, we are apt to get embarrassed. The Gospels always present truth in ‘nugget’ form, and if we want to know the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

stages of evangelical experience, we must go to the Epistles which beat out into negotiable gold the nuggets of truth presented by our Lord. In John iii. our Lord is not talking about the stages of conversion; He is talking in the great terms of what He came to do-viz., to make Redemption the basis of human life. We can introduce other things into His words if we like, but we must not say He said them. Our Lord is not examining the evangelical experience, He is stating it. He said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." That is not a command, but the statement of a foundation fact.

We mean by the Evangelical Experience an experience based on the fact that the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, His death, is the gateway for us into His life. We delight to hear about the life of Jesus, it captivates our imagination to hear sermons on following in His steps—until we find that we cannot begin to do it. 'Jesus Christ was a great Teacher.' So He was, an amazing Teacher, but where are you going to begin to carry out what He says? The Sermon on the Mount is exquisitely beautiful teaching, and it fascinates us so long as we deal with it intellectually only, but when it comes down to our daily life, practical and sordid and real, we find we cannot begin to carry it out. We may give our mental assent to it, but our actual life won't walk that road. The teachings of Jesus must produce despair, because if He meant what He said, where are we in regard to it? The revelation of the New Testament is not that Jesus Christ came to teach primarily but that He came to redeem, to make us what He teaches we should be. Then the teachings of Jesus become the description of what God has

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

undertaken to make a man if he will let the power of God work through him. Redemption means that Jesus Christ can give us His own disposition, and all the standards He gives are based on that disposition—i.e., His teaching is for the life He puts in us. We enter into the life of Jesus by means of His death, that is our only door of entrance. We may try and batter through some other way if we choose—through Bethlehem, through the teachings of Jesus, but we cannot get in. Those ways in would produce frauds and humbugs. If a teacher or preacher has not an evangelical experience himself, his preaching and teaching will degenerate into mere intellectual common sense. It may be smeared over with the teachings of Jesus and may sound beautiful, but there is no power in it to alter anything in us. We cannot get into the life of Jesus by imitation, by trying to do the right thing, because something in us will not do it. We can only enter in by identification with His death. The Cross of Jesus Christ is not the cross of a martyr, but the door whereby God keeps open house for the universe. Anyone can go in through that door. The Cross is the historical presentation of the one Reality there is, viz., Redemption, and if we come to Jesus that Reality works in us by the incoming of the Holy Spirit and we find that we are brought into a new Kingdom. There is something totally different now, we can do what we could not do before. We can show in our bodily life the disposition of Jesus Christ which we receive by means of His Cross, we can begin now to live the kind of life He lived.

The Examined Experience. The evangelical experience is stated in the Synoptics and in John's

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



writings in its great wonderful revelation form, not in its examined stages; but if we want to have the experience examined and stated so that we can see its stages and get a grasp of it, we must turn to the Epistles. The Epistles are the posthumous writings of the Ascended Lord; He sent the Holy Ghost, and the 'pens' used were the apostles, and the expositions given are from the Holy Ghost. Our Lord's teachings and the expositions given in the Epistles stand or fall together. The Epistles are our guide in finding out the stages of the experience. There we will find all about Conversion, about Regeneration, and about Sanctification. We will find the stages all carefully set forth, but we must take the trouble to find them out. Acts xxvi. 18 gives the examined experience in condensed form better than any other passage in the New Testament. We so often try to worry out Jesus Christ's statements apart from the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the workman of God who can rightly divide the word of truth who becomes the expert in the things of God, and when anyone is being led astray by false doctrines, the expert can show what is wrong.

The Exercised Experience. If we have experienced regeneration, we must not only talk about the experience, we must exercise it and work out what God has worked in (Philippians ii. 12–13). We have to show it in our finger-tips, in our tongue, and in our bodily contact with other people, and as we obey God we find we have a wealth of power on the inside. The question of forming habits on the basis of the grace of God is a very vital one. To ignore it is to fall into the snare of the Pharisee—the grace of God is praised, Jesus Christ is praised, the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

Redemption is praised, but the practical everyday life evades working it out. If we refuse to practise, it is not God's grace that fails when a crisis comes, but our own nature. When the crisis comes, we ask God to help us, but He cannot if we have not made our nature an ally. The practising is ours, not God's. God regenerates us and puts us in contact with all His divine resources, but He cannot make us walk according to His will. If we will obey the Spirit of God and practise through our physical life all that God has put in our hearts by His Spirit, then when the crisis comes we shall find that we have not only God's grace to stand by us but our own nature also, and the crisis is passed without any disaster, but exactly the opposite happens, the soul is built up into a stronger attitude towards God.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

His Birth and Our New Birth

His Birth in History (Luke i. 35)

The Highest. The Holiest. The Lowliest.

His Birth in Me (Galatians iv. 19)

The Lowliest. The Holiest. The Highest.

Do I come to Jesus because of what they say, or because of what I see? (John i. 12–13).

Do I seek for signs of the Kingdom of God, or do I see the Rule of God? (John iii. 3).

Do I seek to stop sinning, or have I stopped sinning? (1 John iii. 9).

The basis of Christian Psychology is in Jesus Christ, not in Adam. Therefore, if we are to study the characteristics of the Christian soul, we must not look to Adam or to our own experience, but to Jesus Christ, the Foundation. Christian Psychology is the study of a supernatural life made natural in our human life by the Redemption. We do not know Jesus Christ by knowing ourselves; to think we do is a modern fallacy. “No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Matthew xi. 27). If we are ever going to know the Father and the Son, we must have their nature, and we are not born with it. The meaning of New

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

Birth is that we know God by a vital relationship, not only by our intellect. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God ... which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John i. 12–13). The characteristics of the new-birth life are not the characteristics of our natural life, but the supernatural characteristics of our Lord’s life, which we have to see are manifested in our natural life. Jesus Christ sets the standard of God’s life in us. We have not to ask what good men have experienced, but to go direct to the Lord Jesus Christ and study His exhibition of the character of God’s normal man.

His Birth in History. “And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee : therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God ”(Luke i. 35). Jesus Christ was born *into* this world, not *from* it. He came into history from the outside of history; He did not evolve out of history. Our Lord’s birth was an advent; He did not come from the human race, He came into it from above. Jesus Christ is not the best human being, He is a Being Who cannot be accounted for by the human race at all. He is God Incarnate, not man becoming God, but God coming into human flesh, coming into it from the outside. His Life is the Highest and the Holiest entering in at the lowliest door. Our Lord entered history by the Virgin Mary.

His Birth in Me. “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you”(Galatians iv. 19). just as our Lord came into

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

human history from the outside, so He must come into us from the outside. Have we allowed our personal human lives to become a 'Bethlehem' for the Son of God? The modern tendency is to talk of birth from beneath, not of birth from above, of something rising up out of our unconscious life into our conscious life, not of something coming into us from above. This preaching has so permeated people's views today that many who name the Name of Christ and are supposed to be preaching His Gospel are at the same time undermining the very foundations of their own faith.

We cannot enter into the realm of the Kingdom of God unless we are born from above, by a birth totally unlike natural birth (John iii. 5). People have the idea that because there is good in human nature (and, thank God, there is a lot of good in human nature) that therefore the Spirit of God is in every man naturally, meaning that the Spirit of God in us will become the Christ in us if we let Him have His way. Take that view if you like, but never say it is the view of the New Testament. It certainly is not our Lord's view. He said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again," that is, something must come into you from the outside. Today people are dethroning Jesus Christ and belittling the need of salvation by making new birth to mean nothing more than a rising up from beneath. The conception of new birth in the New Testament is of something that enters into us, not of something that springs out of us.

We are dealing with New Birth as our Lord presents it. The Holy Spirit, sent by Jesus after He

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

was glorified, is the One Who expounds the various stages in the experience of new birth. Our Lord never speaks in stages of experience, and the reason people divide into stages what our Lord said to Nicodemus is that they have taken their light from the Epistles. We are not dealing just now with the stages of experience, but with the fact of new birth—Christ formed in me. This does not correspond to what is evangelically known as being saved, but rather to the Methodist doctrine of entire sanctification, which is but the beginning of the purpose of the Christian life. If we are to understand how the new birth is to work, we must look at the Epistles. Paul alludes to the new birth life at work when he says, “I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” It is the travailing of one who has himself been born from above. How many of us know anything about this travailing for those who have been really quickened by the Holy Spirit until Christ is formed in them? We are apt to rejoice in the number of souls who are evangelically described as being saved, but what becomes of them all? They have been introduced into the Kingdom of God, but as yet there is no evidence that Christ is formed in them. Jesus Christ sent His disciples to ‘disciple’ all nations. The regeneration of souls is God’s work; our work as saved souls is to work under His orders on the basis of Redemption, and Galatians iv. 19 is an indication of what that work is. “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest” (Matthew ix. 38). The labour is prayer. We labour on the ground of our Lord’s Redemption in simple confidence in Him.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

Do I Come to Jesus Because of What They Say or Because of What I See? "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God ... which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12–13). The Life after new birth has very simple characteristics. In order to know whether we have been born from above, we must be guided by the revelation given by our Lord. One great characteristic of new birth is that we come to Jesus not only because of what we have heard about Him, but because of what we see He is to us now. Our Lord did not send forth His disciples on the ground of what He had done for them; He sent them because they had seen Him after His resurrection, and because they knew Who He was—'Now go and tell My brethren.' Mary Magdalene was His first apostle, she was the one out of whom our Lord had cast seven devils, but that was not to be the ground of her going. It was not until she had realised Who her Lord was after His resurrection, and the altered relationship in which she now stood to Him, that He said—'Go.' If Christ is formed in us, the great characteristic is that we know Him and perceive Him for ourselves. We do not need anyone to tell us about Him now, He is our Lord and Master.

Another characteristic of new birth is that Jesus Christ is easily first. Where do we go in a crisis? If we are born from above and Jesus Christ is Lord and Master, we will go direct as a homing pigeon to Him. The reason the majority of us know so little about the Lordship of Jesus Christ is that we only know the quickening of His Spirit, we have not gone on to the experience of Christ being formed in us. We know a

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

great deal about the evangelical doctrine of being saved from hell, but very little about Galatians i. 15–16. In Acts i. 8 our Lord said this striking thing—“Ye shall be witnesses *unto Me*. ”When Christ is formed in us, we are a satisfaction to our Lord and Master wherever He places us. The point of importance is to know that we are just exactly where He has engineered our circumstances. There is no ‘foreign field’ to our Lord. The reason we feel called to foreign mission work is because God introduces His own nature into us when we are identified with Jesus Christ (John iii. 16). We know what the nature of God is like, because we see it manifested in Jesus Christ. Immediately Christ is formed in us, His nature begins to work through our hearts and to alter our conceptions.

Do I Seek for Signs of the Kingdom of God, or Do I See the Rule of God? “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John iii. 3). Another evidence of new birth is that we see the rule of God. We no longer see the haphazard of chance or fate, but by the experience of new birth we are enabled to see the rule of God everywhere. “Who hath believed that which we have heard? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (Isaiah liii. 1, R.V. marg.). Literally, ‘Who has the power to discern the arm of the Lord?’ We all see the common occurrences of our daily life, but who amongst us can perceive the arm of the Lord behind them? The saint recognises in all the ordinary circumstances of his life the hand of God and the rule of God, and Jesus says we cannot do that unless we are born from above. In the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

beginning we only discern the rule of God in exceptional things, in crises like a friendship, or marriage, or death, but that is an elementary stage. As we go on we learn to see God's rule in all the ordinary haphazard circumstances of a common-sense life, and to say, 'I shall never think of anything my Heavenly Father will forget, then why should I worry?' Are we irritable and worried? Then do not let us say we are born from above, because if what Jesus says is true, how can we worry? Worry means one of two things-private sin, or the absence of new birth. Nothing happens by chance to a saint, no matter how haphazard it seems. It is the order of God, and the experience of new birth means that we are able to discern the order of God.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of principles to be obeyed apart from identification with Jesus Christ. The Sermon on the Mount is a statement of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is getting His way with us. The Holy Spirit applies the principles of Jesus to our circumstances as God engineers them, and we have to see that we exhibit the new birth life at work. Tolstoi made the blunder of applying the principles of Jesus straight away to practical circumstances while he ignored the need for the new birth. Jesus Christ does not lay down the statements in the Sermon on the Mount as principles and say, 'Now work them out', He is describing what the new life is in its working from His standpoint. When circumstances arise by God's providential engineering, and the Holy Spirit brings back some word to our remembrance, are we going to obey our Lord in that particular? Never debate when the Holy Spirit brings back a word of Jesus

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



Christ. A fanatic is one who takes the statements of Jesus and tries to live up to the standard of them while he ignores the necessity of a personal relationship with God through new birth. We have not to live according to maxim, but according to the new life in us in which Jesus Christ is manifested.

*Do I Seek to Stop Sinning, or Have I Stopped Sinning? "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John iii. 9). Do we seek to stop sinning, or have we stopped sinning? We are always inclined to make theoretical what God makes practical. Learned divines and others talk about the sin question, and make it a doctrinal matter of dispute. In the Bible it is never, Should a Christian sin? The Bible puts it emphatically: *A Christian must not sin.* The confusion arises when the practical experimental doctrine is made a philosophical doctrine to do with God's election. Deliverance from sin is not a question of God's election, but of an experience in human life which God demands. The effective working of the new birth life in us is that we do not commit sin, not merely that we have the power not to sin, but that we have stopped sinning—a much more practical thing.*

The one thing that will enable us to stop sinning is the experience of new birth, i.e., entire sanctification. When we are born into the new realm the life of God is born in us, and the life of God in us cannot sin (1 John iii. 9). That does not mean that we *cannot* sin; it means that if we obey the life of God in us, we *need not* sin. God never takes away

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



our power to disobey; if He did, our obedience would be of no value, for we should cease to be morally responsible. By regeneration God puts in us the power not to sin. Our human nature is just the same after new birth as before, but the mainspring is different. Before new birth we sin because we cannot help it; after new birth we need not sin. There is a difference between sin and sins; sin is a disposition, and is never spoken of as being forgiven, a disposition must be cleansed. Sins are acts for which we are responsible. Sin is a thing we are born with, and we cannot touch it; God touches sin in redemption. If we have been trying to be holy, it is a sure sign we are not. Christians are born, not made. They are not produced by imitation, nor by praying and vowing; they are produced by new birth (John iii. 7). “By the grace of God I am what I am.”

The characteristic of new birth is that we deliberately obey all that God reveals through His Spirit. We yield ourselves so completely to God that Christ is formed in us. When He is formed in us, the characteristics of His life in our mortal flesh are that we see Jesus for ourselves; we see the rule of God; and we quit sinning—all by the wonder of His supernatural new birth in us, and that is how it works all through.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

His Unrecorded Years and Our Hidden Life

The Unrecorded Years

His Physical Development

His Physical Development (Luke ii. 40)

His Personal Development

Our Unconscious Form

Our Subconscious Mind (Colossians iii. 3)

Our Conscious Self

The Unveiled Year (Luke ii. 40–52)

His Environment and Ours (Matthew ii. 13–14, 19–21)

His Intimates and Ours (Matthew xiii. 55–56; Mark iii. 21; Luke ii. 51 John vii. 5)

his Imaginations and Ours (Luke ii. 49; Colossians iii. 1–3)

His Unageing Youth

(John viii. 58; Matthew xviii. 3–5)

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



The new birth is illustrated by the supernatural advent of our Lord, not by the birth of a child into the world. Just as our Lord came into history from the outside, so He comes into our human nature from the outside. Our new birth is the birth of the Son of God into our old human nature, and our human nature has to be transfigured by the indwelling life of the Son of God. Mary, the mother of our Lord, is the type of our natural human life, which at critical moments so misunderstands the aims and objects of the Son of God. It was so in the historic life of our Lord, and it is true in our own personal experience. We make the blunder of imagining that when we are born from above, we cease to be ordinary human beings, whereas we become much more ordinary human beings than we were before. Our human nature goes on all the time. All through the unrecorded years of our Lord's life His ordinary human life was being lived, nothing is recorded simply because there is nothing to record. After our birth from above there is a corresponding phase in our lives when the life of God goes on in the deep unconscious part of our lives and there is nothing to record.

The new birth is not the working of a natural law. The necessity for being born again is indicative of a huge tragedy. Sin has made the new birth necessary; it was not in the original design of God. New birth does not refer simply to a man's eternal salvation, but to his being of value to God in this order of things.

The Unrecorded Years

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES





“*And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him*” (Luke ii. 40).

When a young life passes from early childhood into girlhood or boyhood, there is a new birth of the mind, and the boy or girl becomes interested in literature, in poetry, and usually in religion; but that is not spiritual new birth, and has nothing to do with the working of the Spirit of God; it has to do with the ordinary natural development of the life. At this stage great devotion to God and to Christian service may be manifested, and this is apt to be looked on as an evidence of the work of the Spirit of God, whereas it is the mere outcome of the natural life beginning to unfold itself in the process of development. These things always go together—physical development, an alteration in bodily organs, and mental, moral, and spiritual development. The boy or girl sees more purely and clearly than the man or woman. No man thinks so clearly at any time or is ever so thrilled as he is in his ‘teens.’ Generally speaking, thirty years of age is the age of maturity. Some reach maturity before thirty and some after, but round about thirty is the age at which all the bodily and personal powers are matured. Up to that age, or what is represented by that age, life is full of promise, of visions, of uncertainties and expectations; after that there is no more promise, no more vision, the life has to be lived now in accord with all the visions it has had. There is a stage in ordinary natural life when maturity is reached, and if it is not reached someone is to blame. That is in the physical domain. In the spiritual domain the passing of the years counts for

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



nothing. When we are born from above and the Son of God is formed in us, it is not the passing of the years that matures His life in us, but our obedience.

The angel said to Mary, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall over-shadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is to be born shall be called the Son of God” (Luke i. 35, R.V. marg.). That is symbolical of what happens when the Holy Ghost overshadows us: our natural life is made the mother of the Son of God. What have we done with Him? Has He grown and developed? Has He been nourished and looked after, or has He been buried? When God comes does He find something dead in us instead of the real living Son of God? We have to nourish the life of the Son of God in us, and we do it by obedience, that is, by bringing our natural life into accordance with His life and transforming it into a spiritual life.

There is another element in this new life which is often overlooked, viz., that it is unconscious in its growth. When Jesus said “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow,” He was referring to the new life in us. If we make His words apply to the natural life only, we make Him appear foolish. If we are born of God and are obeying Him, the unconscious life is forming in us just where we are. God knows exactly the kind of garden to put His lilies in, and they grow and take form unconsciously. What is it that deforms natural beauty? Overmuch cultivation; and overmuch denominational teaching will deform beauty in the spiritual world. Our danger is to take the place of God in regard to the new life. Jesus said, ‘Disciple in My *Name*’, My nature. The new life is in

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



Him, and we have to remember that it grows like the lily. The right atmosphere for the new life to grow in is exactly where our natural life is placed. The things we cannot touch are not things for us to pout over, but things for us to accept as God's providential order for us. As natural men, we are not inclined to like the things God makes. At certain stages of our life we much prefer the friends we make to our God-made relations, because we can be noble with our friends, we have no past history with them. We cannot be noble with our relations, because they knew us when we were mean, and now when we are with them we cannot put on the pretence, it won't work.

The new life must go on and take form unconsciously. God is looking after it, He knows exactly the kind of nourishment as well as the kind of disintegration that is necessary. Be careful that you do not bury the new life, or put it into circumstances where it cannot grow. A lily can only grow in the surroundings that suit it, and in the same way God engineers the circumstances that are best fitted for the development of the life of His Son in us. It is the unconscious form that is continually alluded to in the New Testament. We must allow plenty of time for God to develop that life.

We hear it asked, 'What is the good of all this study and reading of the Bible? We get no 'change' out of it.' Most of us want something to show for what we do. We are not interested in God's life in us, but only in our life in God. We are not after the development of the unconscious life of the Son of God in us, but after the 'small change' which enables

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



us to say, 'I did this and that.' The life of the Son of God grows feebler in a life of that order.

Every mind has two storeys, the conscious and the unconscious. Most of what we hear passes out of our conscious mind into our unconscious mind and we think we have forgotten it, but we have not, we never forget anything; we cannot always recall it when we want to, but that is a different matter. We forget nothing; it is there, although not in the conscious mind, and when certain circumstances arise, suddenly the thing we thought we had forgotten is there to our amazement right enough. This is exactly what Jesus said the Holy Ghost would do, "He shall ... bring all things to your remembrance. whatsoever I have said unto you." The Holy Spirit is forming the unconscious mind all the time, and as we 'mop up' His teaching—simply take it in, not try to estimate it as we would a mathematical study—we shall find God is putting in the right soil for His life to grow in. Our one concern is to keep in the right atmosphere. Where we are actually is the Almighty's business, nor ours. "Consider the lilies." Our Lord knows what to do with His own lilies; if we try to transplant them they will die. We are in such a desperate hurry, but it is in the unrecorded years, the times we are apt to think are of no account, that we are developing most for the value of the Son of God. There is a time coming when He will give an unveiled year, as He did in the life of His Son, and show what has been going on all the time.

The Unveiled Year

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him ... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke ii. 40–52).

In the Temple the Child Jesus was astonished that even His mother did not understand what He was doing. The one thing in us that makes us misunderstand Jesus Christ is our ‘Mary’ life, i.e., our natural life.

God will bring us to an unveiled year, when we will realise how we have grown without knowing it, things have altered amazingly. For example, we go through a great personal crisis in our life with God, and we conjure up all kinds of imaginary difficulties as to how things are going to fit in now with this person and with that; but when we come up to the circumstances there is no external crisis at all, only the revelation of the tremendous alteration that has gone on in us unconsciously. When a crisis does come, it reveals that a tremendous alteration has taken place in us, and if there is any astonishment, it is in the fact that those whom we had thought would have understood us do not. Crises always reveal character. A great snare about crises is that we want to live for them. If we have had one great crisis in which the revelation has come of how wonderfully God has altered us, we will want another crisis. It is a risky business to live in crises. Most of our life is lived in ordinary human affairs, not in crises. It is comparatively easy for human nature to live in a big strain for a few minutes, but that is not what human nature is called upon to do. Human nature is called upon to live a life of

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

drudgery. The intense awful crisis of the war will be followed by years of drudgery for the lives that are left—shattered nerves, maimed men, and marred lives. We get our moments of light and insight when we see what God is after, and then we come to where there is no crisis, but just the ordinary life to be lived. By and by God will give an unveiled year and reveal the wonder of what He has been doing in us all the time.

His Environment and Ours. “And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt...” (Matthew ii. 13–14, 19–21). We each make our own environment; it is our personality that does it. Our Lord in His historic life came up against the providential order of tyranny, to which He submitted; He also met hatred and detestation and compromise; and He is born into the same kind of circumstances in our bodily lives. So beware of getting on the line of ‘Oh, well, if only I had better circumstances.’ The circumstances of our Lord were anything but ideal, they were full of difficulties. Perhaps ours are the same, and we have to watch that we remain true to the life of the Son of God in us, not true to our own aims and ends. There is always a danger of mistaking our own aim and end for the aim of the life of God in us. Take it regarding the great subject of the Call of God. The call of God is a call according to the nature of God; where we go in obedience to that call depends

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

entirely on the providential circumstances which God engineers, and is not of any moment. The danger is to fit the call of God into the idea of our own discernment and say, 'God called me *there*.' If we say so and stick to it, then it is good-bye to the development of the life of God in us. We have deliberately shifted the ground of His call to fit our own conception of what He wants.

The curse of much modern religion is that it makes us so desperately interested in ourselves, so overweeningly concerned about our own whiteness. Jesus Christ was absolutely interested in God, and the saint is to be a simple, unaffected, natural human being indwelt by the Spirit of God. If the saint is paying attention to the Source, Jesus Christ, out of him and unconsciously to him are flowing the rivers of living water wherever he goes. (John vii. 37–39.) Men are either getting better or worse because of us.

His Intimates and Ours. "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" (Matthew xiii. 55–56). (See also Mark iii. 21; Luke ii. 51; John vii. 5.) These were the intimates our Lord grew up with in His own historic life. We say, 'Oh, but the Lord must have had a sweet and delightful home life.' But we are wrong. He had an exceedingly difficult home life. Jesus Christ's intimates were brothers and sisters who did not believe in Him, and He says that the disciple is not above his Master (Luke vi. 40). Jesus Christ was a

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



Man among men, a Man living in unsullied communion with God. That is the kind of man He expects us to be through His regeneration of us. He went down to Nazareth, and “was subject unto them.” An amazing submission! The next time you feel inclined to grouse over uncongenial companions, remember that Jesus Christ had a devil in His company for three years.

Our Lord preached His first public sermon in the place where He was brought up, where He was most intimately known, and they smashed up His service and tried to kill Him. ‘Oh, but,’ we say, ‘I expected that when I was saved and sanctified, my father and mother and brothers and sisters would be made right, but instead they seem to be all wrong.’ If the mother of our Lord misunderstood Him, and His brethren did not believe in Him, the same things will happen to His life in us, and we must not think it strange concerning the misunderstandings of others. The life of the Son of God in us is brought into the same kind of circumstances that the historic life of Jesus Christ was brought into, and what was true of Him will be true also of His life in us.

It is not only our intimates who will misunderstand Him, but we ourselves. There is a good deal in our natural human nature that will not understand the life of the Son of God, that will say to Him, as His own mother did, ‘Now is Your time to work a miracle.’ The natural in us will always want the Son of God to work in our way. Jesus said, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come,” and Mary accepted the rebuke. Some

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

of the things which belong to the life of the Son of God in us do not look sane or practical to the natural man, and when Christ is formed in us by His regenerating power, our natural life experiences what Mary experienced, “A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,” a sword we should never have known if we were not born of God; a type of suffering we should have known nothing about if the Son of God had not been formed in us. A sword had to go through the heart of Mary because of the Son of God, and because of the Son of God in us, a sword must go through our natural life, not our sinful life.

His Imagination and Ours. “And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business” (Luke ii. 49). (See also Colossians iii. 1–3.) Our Lord was absolutely taken up with His Father, that was the inner state of His mind. To Jesus the earth was His Father’s house, and His Father’s concerns possessed His imagination. The teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is on this line. Jesus says—‘Don’t make the ambition of your life in accordance with your old human nature, but be the children of the Highest—put your concentration on the things of God.’ Jesus Christ is not simply making fine characters or virtuous men; His end and aim is that we may be the children of our Father in heaven (Matthew v. 48).

Where is our imagination? In Colossians iii. we are told to set our affections on things above. That means concentration, and concentration is spiritual determination to fix the mind on the things of God.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



Don't say, 'What shall I eat? What shall I drink?', but seek first the Kingdom of God. 'Oh yes, I did get born again, but ...' 'Yes, God did do something for me, but ...' 'You will soon 'but' the whole thing out and leave yourself as you were before. Jesus says, 'Be anxious for nothing, fix your mind on Me, be carefully careless about everything saving your relationship to Me.' This will take time to do. When the unveiled year came it revealed where our Lord's mind was, and He was amazed that His mother's mind was not there too. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" It was the question of an amazed and wistful child who felt His mother should have understood. Neither have we any excuse for not understanding what Jesus Christ is after; when we are born again, we ought to know exactly why His life is born into us—for the glory of God.

His Unageing Youth

"Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58). (See also Matthew xviii. 3–5.)

Spiritually we never grow old; through the passing of the years we grow so many years young. The characteristic of the spiritual life is its unageing youth, exactly the opposite of the natural life. "I am ... the First and the Last." The Ancient of Days represents the Eternal Childhood. God Almighty became the weakest thing in His own creation, a Baby. When He comes into us in new birth we can easily kill His life in us, or else we can see to it that His life is nourished according to the dictates of the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

Spirit of God so that we grow “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” The mature saint is just like a little child, absolutely simple and joyful and gay. Go on living the life that God would have you live and you will grow younger instead of older. There is a marvellous rejuvenescence when once you let God have His way. If you are feeling very old, then get born again and do more at it.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

His Baptism and Our Vocation

His Baptism

The Anticipations of John (John i. 26–34)

The Attitude of Jesus Himself (Mark i. 9–11)

The Acceptations of Jesus for Himself (Luke iii. 21–23)

The Appointment of Jesus in Himself (Matthew iii. 13–15)

Our Vocation

The Anticipations of God (Hebrew ii. 9–10)

The Attitude of the Saint Himself (1 Corinthians i. 26–29)

The Acceptations of the Saint for Himself (Acts xx. 24)

The Appointment of the Saint in Himself (Philippians iii. 10)

The age of thirty represents the perfection of physical, mental, and spiritual powers. Jesus Christ was thirty years of age when He was baptised; all His powers were fully matured. For thirty years our Lord had done nothing in public, then at the preaching of John the Baptist He emerged and was baptised with the baptism of John, which is a

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

baptism of repentance from sin. Our Lord's baptism is not an illustration of the Christian rite of baptism, nor of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. At His baptism our Lord accepted His vocation, which was to bear away the sin of the world. We have no corresponding experience to that. Jesus Christ did not come to do anything less than to bear away the sin of the world, that is His vocation as Son of Man. By His bearing away the sin of the world, the way is opened up for every human being to get to God as if there had been no sin. The revelation in the Bible is not that Jesus Christ was punished for our *sins*; but that He took on Him the *sin* of the human race and put it away—an infinitely profounder revelation (see 2 Corinthians v. 21; Hebrews ix. 26). All through the Bible it is revealed that our Lord bore the sin of the world by *identification*, and not by *sympathy*. He deliberately took upon His own shoulders, and bore in His own person, the whole massed sin of the human race. Our Lord knew what He had come to do, and His baptism is the first public manifestation of His identification with sin with a conscious understanding of what He was doing. At His baptism He visibly and distinctly and historically took upon Him His vocation.

The Anticipations of John. "John answered them, saying, I baptise with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.... And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God’ (John i. 26–34). The anticipations of John, which were built upon the Old Testament, begin to be fulfilled in our Lord’s baptism (Matthew iii. 10–12). Jesus Christ is the true Baptiser; He baptises with the Holy Ghost. He is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, my sin (1 John ii. 1). He is the One Who can make me like Himself; the baptism of John could not do that.

The Anticipations of God. “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angel for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews ii. 9–10). God’s anticipations work in us because our Lord accepted His vocation. God anticipates that He is going to bring sons and daughters, not ‘saved souls,’ to glory. A saved soul is simply one who has partaken of the mighty efficacy of Redemption. A son or daughter of God is one who has not only partaken of Redemption, but has become of value to God in this order of things.

We must ever make a practical distinction in our minds between the revelation of Redemption and the conscious experience of salvation. Redemption is absolutely finished and complete, but its reference to individual men is a question of their individual action. The whole human race is condemned to

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

salvation by the Cross of our Lord. God nowhere holds a man responsible for having the heredity of sin; the condemnation begins when a man sees and understands that God can deliver him from the heredity of sin and he refuses to let Him do it; at that moment he begins to get the seal of damnation. John iii. 19 is the final word of condemnation—"This is the judgment," i.e., the critical moment, "that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil."

Is God realising His anticipations in our lives? Is the Son of God reaching His maturity in us? The formation of the Son of God in us and our putting on of the new man must go together. We are brooded over by the Holy Ghost (Luke i. 35), and that which is formed in us is the Holy Son of God (Galatians i. 15–16). His life is formed in our human nature and it develops quietly in the unrecorded years. We live our ordinary life as human beings, remembering that our natural life, although delivered from sin, is continually in danger of misunderstanding the Son of God, just as Mary misunderstood her own Son.

In a hundred and one ways we can prefer that the sword should go through the Son of God in us rather than through our natural life, and that our natural impressions should have the ascendancy rather than the Son of God. The putting on of the new man means that we must not allow our natural life to dictate to the Son of God, but see to it that we give Him ample chance to dominate every bit of us. He has delivered us from sin, now we must see that He

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

dominates our natural life also, until the life of Jesus is manifested in our mortal flesh.

This is the meaning of bringing a son or daughter to glory, and it is also the meaning of the efficacy of our Lord's baptism and the acceptance of His vocation being worked out in individual lives. Our Lord's vocation, which He accepted at His baptism, was His identification with sin. Our vocation is to fulfil the anticipations of God and to become His sons and daughters. The majority of us so harp on the ordinary evangelical line that we thank God for saving us and then leave the thing alone. We cannot grow *into* holiness, but we must grow *in* it. Are we accepting our vocation and determining to let the Son of God manifest Himself in our mortal flesh? If we are, it will mean that our human nature must be perfectly obedient to the Son of God and that we must bring all our imagination and fancies and thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

The Attitude of Jesus Himself. "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark i. 9–11). The baptism of our Lord was an extraordinary spiritual experience to Himself. "And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." We have no experience like that; it stands unique. There is only one beloved Son of God; we are sons of God through His Redemption.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance from sin, and that was the baptism with which Jesus was baptised. He was baptised into sin, *made to be sin*, and that is why His Father was well pleased with Him. When our Lord took on Him His vocation as sin-bearer the Holy Ghost descended, and the voice of the Father came. The Holy Ghost descended on Him as a dove; He comes to us as fire. The descent of the Holy Ghost and the voice of the Father were to our Lord the seal on His accepted vocation.

The Cross of Jesus Christ and His baptism express the same thing. Our Lord was not a martyr; He was not merely a good man; He was God Incarnate. He came down to the lowest reach of creation in order to bring back the whole human race to God, and in order to do this He must take upon Him, as representative Man, the whole massed sin of the race. That is why He is called "the Lamb of God." It was in this connection also that God said, "Thou art my beloved Son." "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." The Son of God alone can redeem, and because He was the Son of God, He became Man that He might bring man back to God.

We so continually run down the revelations of the New Testament to the level of our own experience. That is wrong; we must let God lift up our experience to the standard of His word.

The Attitude of The Saint Himself. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Corinthians i. 26–29). This is our calling as saints, and it is the only line on which the Holy Spirit will witness to us. He will never witness to our wits, or to our intelligence, or to our physical perfections, or to our insight or genius, or to anything at all that is natural to us; He will only witness to that which has been produced in us by His Redemption. Are we watching our experience, or are we estimating the witness of the Holy Ghost? The Holy Ghost witnesses only to the Son of God, and not according to our fleshly estimates of things (2 Corinthians v. 16), and if we try and estimate Jesus Christ according to the flesh, we shall find there is no reality in it.

Spiritually, God always builds upon the weakest link, never on the strong link. The empires of the world were all founded on strong men, consequently they broke, because no chain is stronger than its weakest link. God Almighty became Incarnate as a helpless Babe in Bethlehem, and Jesus Christ begins His life in us by a new birth. Do we realise that our human nature has to become the birthplace of the Son of God, or have we only realised the miracle of God’s changing grace? ‘Bring up this child for me.’ How is the life of the Son of God growing in our bodily life? Are we putting on the new man in keeping with the Son of God born in us? How is the Son of God progressing in the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

affections of our heart and the imaginations of our mind? Have we crushed Him? The historic Son of God was put to death because the wits and wisdom of this world could not agree with Him, but blasphemed Him and crucified Him, and the same thing may happen in any individual life. Watch the barriers God puts into your life. The natural life says, 'I ought to be this and that.' But God has told you you cannot. Woe be to you if you hanker for a second after the thing about which God has said 'No' to you. If you do, you will put to death the life of God in you. Are you willing to accept the barrier from Him? It may be a barrier with regard to personal ambition for His service. This must be our attitude to ourselves—fellowship with the things that are despised, the things that look ostensibly weak to the wise things of the world. They are not weak to God because they are based on His Redemption. When we accept our vocation of sons and daughters of God, we become identified with the Son of God, Who was Himself despised and rejected of men.

The Acceptations of Jesus for Himself. "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus ago being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased. And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli" (Luke iii. 21–23). We read that Jesus was in communion with His Father at the time of His baptism, "Jesus also being baptized, and praying." Our Lord accepted His vocation in the centre of His

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

spirit, consequently the temptations when they came made no appeal to Him although they were based on amazingly wise strategy. Satan could not get near Him. The vocation our Lord had accepted was that of sin-bearer, not of dominating world-lord. Satan's aim was to get Him to fulfil His vocation on another line, "There is no need *to die* for sin, You can fulfil Your vocation by a 'short cut' and evade the cross." Our Lord came here for one purpose only-to bear away the sin of the world in His own Person on the Cross. He came to redeem men, not to set them a wonderful example.

The Acceptations of the Saint for Himself. "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24). "None of these things move me," says Paul. What things? The things that were to smash Paul's heart, crumple up his body, and extinguish all his earthly ambitions. Have we accepted that kind of vocation, or are we only concerned that we get deep conscious communion with God? The acceptance of the saint for himself is that he is concerned about nothing at all saving this one thing, "that I might finish my course with joy", not happiness. Joy is the result of the perfect fulfilment of what a man is created for. Happiness depends on things that happen, and may sometimes be an insult. It is continually necessary to revert to what the New Testament asks us to accept about ourselves. Have we received this ministry from Jesus, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

world?” How did the Father send Him? “For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” The first obedience of Jesus was to the will of His Father, not to the needs of men. Then our first accepted vocation is not to help men, but to obey God, and when we accept that vocation we enter into relationship with the despised and the neglected. It is always easy to neglect a man or woman who deliberately accepts the aim of his life from the Lord Jesus. Many of us are imitators of other people; we do Christian work because someone has asked us to do it. We must receive our ministry, which is to testify the gospel of the grace of God, from Jesus Christ Himself, not from other Christians. Paul determined to relate everything to Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians ii. 2). ‘You may do what you like with my external circumstances, but you shall not deflect me by making me consider myself, I have only one end—to fulfil the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus.’ Just as our Lord accepted His vocation and Satan could not turn Him from it, so we as sons of God through His Redemption have to accept our vocation and to fulfil the ministry we receive from Him. All the onslaught of Satan gathered round the Son of God to prevent Him from fulfilling His vocation, and Jesus says the same thing will happen to us. We must beware of affections, of imaginations, of successes, of practical work, of organisations—of everything and everyone that would deflect us for one second from Jesus Christ’s purpose in our life. It will mean going “without the camp”, the camp that wants to dictate over the head of Jesus Christ, “bearing His reproach.”

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

The Appointment of Jesus in Himself. “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptised of him. But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptised of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew iii. 13–15). John knew Who Jesus Christ was, viz., the One Who was to baptise with the Holy Ghost and fire, and yet that One comes to him to be baptised with the baptism of repentance. No wonder John was amazed, and he refused to baptise Jesus until Jesus said, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” John as the forerunner of the Messiah had no business to introduce his own conceptions as to what was fitting for the Messiah; John had to obey just as the Messiah did. The vocation of our Lord was His identification with sin; He became absolutely and entirely identified with sin, and His baptism is the sign before the whole world of the acceptance of His vocation ‘This is what I am here for.’ It was not a baptism into power and dominion, but a baptism into identification with sin. The disposition of sin, i.e., my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race by one man (Romans v. 12), and the Holy Spirit entered into the human race by another Man, so that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Jesus Christ by His death bore away the sin of the world, and by our identification with His death we can be delivered from the heredity of sin and can receive a new heredity, the unsullied holiness of Jesus Christ. We receive this new heredity not by imitation, but by identification, by giving up our right to ourselves to Jesus Christ (Galatians ii. 20).

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

The Appointment of the Saint in Himself. “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death” (Philippians iii. 10). It is one thing to recognise what God is doing with us, but another thing to deliberately accept it as His appointment. We can never accept the appointment of Jesus Christ and bear away the sin of the world, that was His work; but He does ask us to accept our cross. What is my cross? The manifestation of the fact that I have given up my right to myself to Him for ever. Self-interest, self-sympathy, self-pity—anything and everything that does not arise from a determination to accept my life entirely from Him will lead to a dissipation of my life. How many of us have dispassionately and clearly looked at Philippians iii. 10? Paul is not speaking poetically but expressing plain, blunt, simple, spiritual, heroic fact. “That I may know Him”; not what He can do, nor what I can proclaim that He has done for me, but “that I *may know Him* , and the power of His resurrection”; that I continually receive my life from Him by deliberate appointment on my own part; “and the fellowship of His sufferings”; that I enter determinedly into His relationship with things, which means going contrary to my natural intuitions, “being made conformable unto His death.” It is appalling how few are willing to efface their natural nobility. Fasting from food is an easy business, but fasting in its true nature means to fast from everything that is good until the appointments of God in my soul are accepted. For instance, there are times when a preacher if he is eloquent or poetical must fast from his own conceptions of things until he has accepted the appointment of God

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



for his life. The One Who is being hit hardest in this war is Jesus Christ, and those of us who should have been fasting in fellowship with His sufferings have been out on the 'noble natural' line, and the sword that was thrust at Him we have not turned aside but have lashed into Him, and been applauded for doing it. "Being made conformable unto His death;" that I may be identified with the things in which He has interests; "if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"; that I may have a resurrection like His, not merely the resurrection of a saved soul, but of one who has proved himself a son of God by the redemption of our Lord.

Many of us are not living in the domain in which Christianity can alone be lived—the domain of deliberate identification with Jesus Christ. It takes time, and it ought to take time, and the time is not mis-spent for the soul who will wait before God and accept His appointment for his individual life.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

His Temptation and Ours

Hebrews ii. 18; iv. 15–16

The Isolation of Mastership (Matthew iv. 1–2).

His Watch in Faith (Matthew ii. 3–4).

His Wait in Hope (Matthew iv. 5–7).

His Way of Love (Matthew iv. 8–10).

The Limit to the Devil (Matthew iv. 11).

The Inner Martyrdom (1 Peter iv. 12–13).

Our Lure of Wits (Matthew xi. 6).

Our Light of Wisdom (John xii. 16).

Our Liberty of Wonders (Luke xvii. 21).

The Limit to Temptation (1 Corinthians x. 13).

Temptation is not sin; we are bound to meet it if we are men. Not to be tempted would be to be beneath contempt. Temptation is a suggested short cut to the realisation of the highest at which we aim. The way steel is tested is a good illustration of temptation. Steel can be 'tired' in the process of testing, and in this way its strength is measured. Temptation is the testing by an alien power of the possessions held by a personality in order that a

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

higher and nobler character may come out of the test.

This makes the temptation of our Lord explainable. He held in His own Person His unspotted sanctity and the fact that He was to be the King of men and the Saviour of the world; and Satan was the alien power that came to test Him on these lines. The period of temptation came immediately after one of spiritual exaltation (Matthew iii. 16–17; iv. 1). It was a period of estimating forces, and the records reveal how our Lord faced and rejected the visions of a swift fulfilment of His vocation presented to Him by Satan. Jesus Christ in His baptism had accepted His vocation of bearing away the sin of the world, and immediately He was put by God's Spirit into the testing machine of the devil. But He did not 'tire'; He retained the possessions of His personality intact. He was tempted, "yet without sin."

The temptations of our Lord have no home at all in our human nature; they do not appeal to us because they are removed from any affinity with the natural. Our Lord's temptations and ours move in different spheres until we become His brethren, by being born again (Hebrews ii. 11). The temptations of Jesus are not those of Man as man, but the temptations of God as Man. The statement that our Lord was tempted as ordinary men are is readily accepted, but the Bible does not say that He was so tempted. Jesus Christ was not born with a heredity of sin; He was not tempted in all points as ordinary men are, but tempted like His brethren, those who have been born from above by the Spirit of God and

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

placed in the Kingdom of God by supernatural regeneration.

The records of our Lord's temptations are given not that we might fathom Him, but that we might know what to expect when we are regenerated. When we are born again of the Spirit of God and enter into fellowship with Jesus Christ, then the temptations of our Lord are applicable to us. We are apt to imagine that when we are saved and sanctified we are delivered from temptation; we are not, we are loosened into it. Before we are born again, we are not free enough to be tempted, neither morally nor spiritually. Immediately we are born into the Kingdom of God, we get our first introduction into what God calls temptation, viz., the temptations of His Son. God does not shield any man or woman from the requirements of a full-grown man or woman. The Son of God is submitted to temptations in our individual lives, and He expects us to remain loyal to Him (Luke xxii. 28). The honour of Jesus Christ is at stake in our bodily life. Are we remaining loyal to the Son of God in the things, which beset His life in us? The personality of a saint holds all that God intends a man or woman to be, and the temptation to him comes along the line it came to our Lord—to fulfil what his personality holds on a line other than God intends.

The Isolation of Mastership

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred” (Matthew iv. 1–2).

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

The Spirit of God drove our Lord into the wilderness for one purpose—to be tempted of the devil, not only to test Him, but to reveal what Christian mastership means. In that isolation the Lord Jesus Christ met the strong man and overcame him and bound him, and He gives us “power ... over all the power of the enemy.” The writer to the Hebrews does not say, ‘When you are tempted, imitate Jesus’; he says, ‘Go to Jesus, and He will succour you in the nick of time.’ That is, all His perfect overcoming of temptation is ours (Hebrews ii. 18). The Bible reveals that man is responsible for the introduction of Satan. Satan is the result of a communication between man and the devil, and man must deal with Satan; God does not deal with him direct. Satan is to be overcome and conquered by human beings. That is why God became Incarnate. It is in the Incarnation that Satan is overcome

The Inner Martyrdom

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 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 iv. 12–13).

In the history of the Church inner martyrdom and external martyrdom have rarely gone together. We are familiar with external martyrdom, but inner martyrdom is infinitely more vital. Paul deals with it in Philippians ii. “Christ Jesus ... made Himself of no reputation”; that is, He annihilated by His own

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

deliberate choice all His former position of glory, “and took upon Him the form of a servant.” If we are to be in fellowship with Him we must deliberately go through the annihilation, not of glory, but of our former right to ourselves in every shape and form. Until this inner martyrdom is gone through, temptation will always take us unawares. Peter says, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which try you.” The internal distresses are accounted for by the fact that the saint is being taken into an understanding of what our Lord went through when He was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. Satan tried to put Jesus Christ on the way to becoming King of the world and Saviour of men in a way other than that pre-determined by God. The devil does not tempt us to do wrong things; he tries to make us lose what God has put into us by regeneration, the possibility of being of value to God. When we are born from above the central citadel of the devil’s attack is the same in us as it was in our Lord—viz., to do God’s will in our own way.

His Watch in Faith. “And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew iv. 3–4). In each of the three never-to-be-forgotten pictures which our Lord has given us the temptation of Satan centres round this point—‘You are the Son of God, then do God’s work in Your own way; assert Your prerogative of Sonship.’ The first temptation was to set up a Selfish Kingdom. ‘You are the Son of God,

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

then command these stones to be made bread; You do not need to be hungry; satisfy Your own needs and the needs of men, and You will get the Kingship of men.' Was Satan right? Read John vi. 15—"Jesus perceived that they would come and take Him by force to make Him a king." Why? He had just fed five thousand of them! It must have been a dazzling vision that Satan presented to our Lord, for who could ever have such sympathy with the needs of men as He? For one impressive moment He must have wondered. But our Lord would not be King of men on that line. "But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He deliberately rejected the suggested 'short cut,' and chose the 'long, long trail,' evading none of the suffering involved.

In His temptation our Lord does not stand as an individual Man; He stands as the whole human race vested in one Personality, and every one of us when regenerated can find his place and fellowship in those temptations.

Our Lure of Wits. "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me" (Matthew xi. 6). The deep dejection of John is the dejection of a great man (Matthew xi. 11). John's misgivings arose from the fact that the wonderful things God had told him about the Messiah, Whom he foreran, seemed to be without application to Jesus Christ (Matthew iii. 11-12). It was a case of wits versus revelation.

The first temptation of our Lord comes to us on this line—"Be sensible, You are here for the service

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

of men, and surely it is the most practical thing to feed them and satisfy their needs.’ The clamour abroad today is all on this line, ‘Put man’s needs first; never mind about the first commandment, the second commandment is the all-important one’ (see Mark xii. 29–31). This advice sounds sensible and right, but at its heart is the temptation of Satan to put men’s needs first. The insistent demand in the world today to put men’s needs before God’s will is the outcome of the reasoning of human wits and wisdom, and who can say that the demand is a wrong one? So long as our wits and human solutions are on the throne, to satisfy the needs of men is ostensibly the grandest thing to do. Every temptation of Satan will certainly seem right to us unless we have the Spirit of God. Fellowship with our Lord is the only way to detect them as being wrong.

The conditions of our civilised life today ought to be realised more keenly by the Christian than by the natural man, but we must see that the worship of God is put on the throne and not our human wits. The evidence of Christianity is not the good works that go on in the world; these are the outcome of the good there is in human nature, which still holds remnants of what God designed it to be. There is much that is admirable in the civilisation of the world, but there is no promise in it. The natural virtues exhaust themselves; they do not develop. Jesus Christ is not a social reformer; He came to alter *us* first, and if any social reform is to be done on earth, we will have to do it. Social reform is part of the work of ordinary honourable humanity and a Christian does it because his worship is for the Son

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

of God, not because he sees it is the most sensible thing to do. The first great duty of the Christian is not to the needs of his fellow-men, but to the will of his Saviour. We have to remember the counsel of our Lord, given from the centre of His own agony, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," keep steadfastly true to what you know is God's order and listen to no suggestions from elsewhere. The one thing that will keep us watching and praying is continuing to worship God while we do our duty in the world as ordinary human beings.

His Wait in Hope. "Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angel charge concerning thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew iv. 5–7). This temptation presents a wild reach of possibility: 'You are the Son of God, then fling Yourself off the pinnacle of the temple; do something supernatural; use signs and wonders and bewitch men so that they will be staggered out of their wits by amazement, and the world will be at Your feet. Set up a Spectacular Kingdom.' Our Lord never once used signs and wonders to get a man off his guard and then say, 'Now believe in Me.' Jesus Christ never coerced anybody, He never used supernatural powers or the apparatus of revival; He refused to stagger human wits into submitting to Him, He always put the case to a man in cold blood, 'Take time and consider what you are doing' (cf. Luke ix. 57–62). Jesus Christ is engaged in making

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

disciples in the internal sense, consequently He never entrances a man by rapture, or enamours him out of his wits by fascination. Instead, He puts Himself before a man in the baldest light conceivable, 'If you would be My disciple, these are the conditions' (see Luke xiv. 26–27 and iv. 33). A man must believe in Jesus Christ by a deliberate determination of his own choice. The temptation to the Church is to go into the 'show business.' Our Lord told His disciples they would be witnesses unto Him, a satisfaction to Him wherever they were placed (Acts i. 8).

Our Light of Wisdom. "These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him" (John xii. 16). Our Lord's temptations are carefully presented so that we may know the kind of temptation to expect when His life is formed in us. This second temptation is apt to come with tremendous lure after the experience of sanctification—'Now that I am saved and sanctified, God will surely turn the world upside down and prove what a wonderful thing He has done in me—every unsaved soul will be saved, every devil-possessed man delivered, and every sick person healed!' 'You will easily get Your Kingship of men if You will use signs and wonders and stagger men's wits,' said Satan to our Lord, and the same temptation comes to the Church and to individual Christians, His brethren. It sounds right to ask God to produce signs and wonders, and all through the twenty centuries of the Christian era this temptation has been yielded to, every now and again, in the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

most wild and inordinate manner. For the past ten years or more it has been in our midst in the Tongues movement, and hundreds of those who were really enlightened by the Spirit of God have gone off on the line of this temptation.

We are apt to have the idea that we can only estimate what God is in us by what He does through us. What about our Lord and Master, what did He do? The marvellous thing about Him is what He did not do. Think what an ignominious failure His life was, judged from every standpoint but God's. Our Lord did not say that signs and wonders would not follow, but that the one set purpose for us is that we do God's will in His way, not in our way. All the wisdom seems to be with the temptations, but our Lord by the light of the Holy Ghost reveals where they are wrong. Are we prepared to continue with the Son of God in His temptations in us, or are we going to betray Him and say, 'Now that I am saved and sanctified, I must expect God to do wonders'? It sounds right and wise, and it commends itself to our natural wisdom if once we forget our Lord's counsel to watch and pray.

His Way of Love. "Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew iv. 8-10). Our Lord was then asked to compromise: 'You will become the king of men and the Saviour of the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

world by judicious compromise; build Your Kingdom on broadminded lines; be judicious, You know there is evil in the world; then use it wisely, and don't be so intense against sin; don't talk about the devil and hell; don't be so extreme and say a man needs to be born from above. Tolerate my rule of the world, call things 'necessary evils;' tell men sin is not anarchy, but a disease; fall down and worship me and my way of looking at things, and I will withdraw and the whole world will be Yours. Establish a Socialistic Kingdom.' The first sign of the dethronement of Jesus is the apparent absence of the devil, and the peaceful propaganda that is spread after he has withdrawn. Will the Church that bows down and compromises succeed? Of course it will; it is the very thing that the natural man wants. This line of temptation as revealed by our Lord is the most appallingly subtle of all.

Temptation yielded to is lust deified. In the Bible, the term 'lust' is used of other things than merely of immorality. It is the spirit of,—*'I must have it at once* , I will have my desire gratified, and I will brook no restraint.' Each temptation of our Lord contains the deification of lust—'You will get the Kingship of the world at once by putting men's needs first; use signs and wonders, and You will get the Kingship of men at once; compromise with evil, judiciously harmonise with natural forces, and You will get the Kingship of men at once.' At the heart of every one of our Lord's answers are these words: "For I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John vi. 38), that is 'I came to do God's work in His way, not in My own way, although I am the Son of God.'

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

The temptation to win and woo men is the most subtle of all, and it is a line that commends itself to us naturally. But you cannot win and woo a mutiny; it is absolutely impossible. You cannot win and woo the man who, when he recognises the rule of God, detests it. The Gospel of Jesus Christ always marks the line of demarcation, His attitude all through is one of sternness, there must be no compromise. The only way in which the Kingdom of God can be established is by the love of God as revealed in the Cross of Jesus Christ, not by the loving-kindness of a backboneless being without justice or righteousness or truth. The background of God's love is holiness. His is not a compromising love, and the Kingdom of our Lord can only be brought in by means of His love at work in regeneration. Then when we are regenerated we must not insult God by imagining that in dealing with our fellow-men we can afford to ignore the need for Redemption and simply be kind and gentle and loving to all.

Our Liberty of Wonders. "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii. 21). "The Kingdom of God is within you"—uncompromisingly within you. We must never compromise with the kingdoms of this world; the temptation the devil presents is that we should compromise. We recognise his temptation in the teaching which proclaims that there is no such being as the devil and no such place as hell; much that is called sin is a mere defect; men and women are like poor babes lost in the wood; just be kind and gentle with them; talk about the Fatherhood of God, about Universalism and Brotherhood, the kindness of Providence and the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

nobility of man. Our Lord's temptations reveal where the onslaught will come. Today, through an overplus of Christian activities, Jesus Christ is being dethroned in hearts and Christian wits and wisdom are taking His place; consequently, when trials and difficulties come most of us are at our wits' end because we have succumbed to one or another of these temptations.

The Limit to the Devil. "Then the devil gaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him" (Matthew iv. 11). The sign of victory is that the temptation has been gone through with successfully. If our Lord had failed in any degree, the angels would have had no affinity with Him. The affinities of a man after a period of temptation prove whether he has yielded to it or not. The practical test for us when we have been through a season of temptation is whether we have a finer and deeper affinity for the highest. Temptation must come, and we do not know what it is until we meet it. When we do meet it, we must not debate with God, but stand absolutely true to Him no matter what it costs us personally, and we will find that the onslaught will leave us with higher and purer affinities than before.

The Limit to Temptation. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation ago make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians x. 13). God does not keep us from temptation, He succours us in the midst of it. Temptation is not something we may escape; it is essential to the full-orbed life of a son of

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



God. We have to beware lest we think we are tempted as no one else is tempted. What we go through is the common inheritance of the race, not something no one ever went through before. It is most humiliating to be taken off our pedestal of suffering and made to realise that thousands of others are going through the same thing as we are going through.

Under the three pictures presented by our Lord every temptation of the devil is embraced; we must ever remember the counsel of our Lord to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. Prayer is easy for us because of all it cost the Son of God to make it possible for us to pray. It is on the basis of His Redemption that we pray, not on the basis of our penetration, or of our wits or understanding.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

His Transfiguration and Our Secret

1

Our Lord's Attitude (Luke ix. 28)

Prayer always transfigures

The Attitude of the Disciples (Luke ix. 32)

The natural must sleep

Our Lord's Aspect (Luke ix. 29)

Pre-Incarnate Glory

The Aspect of the Disciples (Luke ix. 32)

Face to face with Reality

Our Lord's Attendants (Mark ix. 4)

Converse with the Glorified

The Attention of the Disciples (Luke ix. 32)

They saw His glory and His companions

Our Lord's Attention (Luke ix. 31)

¹Chambers, O. (1996, c1930). *Making all things new*. Hants UK: Marshall, Morgan & Scott.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



His Death the Theme of Glory

The Amazement of the Disciples (Mark ix. 5–6)

Hysterical Suggestions

Almighty God's Ascription (Luke ix. 35)

God Incarnate

The Awe of the Disciples (Luke ix. 34)

God's Word

As has been already stated, Christian Psychology is not the study of human nature Christianised, but the endeavour to understand the wonder and the mystery of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Jesus Christ must ever be profoundly more than we can fathom, but we must study Him in order to get to know the characteristics of the new life which is to be manifested in our mortal flesh.

The Apostle John does not allude to the Transfiguration in his Gospel, yet his Gospel is written from that standpoint, the standpoint of the exceeding majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to the revelation of the Bible, our Lord is not to be looked upon as an individual Man, but as the One Who represents the whole human race. At His Baptism our Lord accepted His vocation as sin-bearer, the Holy Ghost descended upon Him as Son of Man, and the voice of God came with the Divine approval; and at the Transfiguration the voice of God came again. The Baptism and the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



Transfiguration reveal Who our Lord is, and the secret of the Christian is that he knows the absolute Deity of Jesus Christ.

The Transfiguration occurs practically in the centre of our Lord's earthly ministry. The fulfilment of the Transfiguration is the Ascension. These two mountain peaks, without the Cross and the Resurrection, would portray the development of human life had there been no sin. The Cross and the Resurrection deal with sin and the need of Redemption.

Our Lord's Attitude

“And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray” (Luke ix. 28).

In our Lord's presentation, prayer is the point where the Reality of God merges with human life. Until we are born from above, prayer with us is honestly nothing more than a mere exercise; but in all our Lord's teaching and in His own personal life, as well as in the emphasis laid on prayer by the Holy Ghost after He had gone, prayer is regarded as *the* work (see John xiv. 11–13). Prayer in the Son of God as Son of Man is amazingly significant. If prayer is the highest reach of communion possible between Almighty God and the Son of Man, what part ought prayer to play in our lives? Prayer with us often becomes merely a way of patronising God. Our Lord's view of prayer is that it represents the highest reach possible to a man or woman when rightly related to God, perfectly obedient in every particular,

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

and in perfect communion with Him. Prayer is not meant to develop us, but to develop the life of God in us after new birth.

The Attitude of the Disciples

“But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep” (Luke ix. 32).

The natural must sleep. If we are ever going to know Who the Lord Jesus Christ is we must be born from above into another Kingdom, and discern by a power other than our natural wits. The natural is not sinful, but the natural is not spiritual. When the Redemption of God has dealt with sin and delivered from it, then the natural must be sacrificed. Simeon said to the mother of Jesus, “Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,” but not because of sin. Mary was the natural mother of the Son of God, and in that wonderful experience of the incoming of the Son of God into the human race she stands for our human nature. The natural has to be transfigured and subordinated to the spiritual; it must not obtrude itself.

It was required of Adam, the Federal Head of the human race, that he should turn his natural life into a spiritual life by obedience. That is, he was to have dominion over the life in the air and in the earth and in the sea, but he was not to have dominion over himself; God was to have dominion over him, and as he obeyed God his natural life would be turned into a spiritual life. Adam represented what Jesus Christ represents, viz., the whole human race, and if Adam had obeyed and transformed his innocence

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

into holiness by a series of moral choices, the transfiguration of the human race would have happened in due course. But Adam disobeyed, and there entered in the disposition of sin, the disposition of self-realisation—I am my own God. This disposition may work out in a hundred and one different ways, in decorous morality or in indecorous immorality, but it has the one basis—my claim to my right to myself. That disposition was never in our Lord. Self-will, self-assertiveness, self-seeking were never in Him. When we become rightly related to God, we are not simply put back into the relationship Adam was in, but into a relationship Adam was never in; we are put into the Body of Christ, and then God does not shield us from any of the requirements of sons. We have the notion at first that when we are saved and sanctified by God’s supernatural grace, He does not require us to do anything, but it is only then that He begins to require anything of us. God did not shield His own Son; not only did He not shield Him, but He allowed Him to be driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. After the baptism of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, God took His sheltering hand off Him, as it were, and let the devil do his worst. So after the work of sanctification, when the life of a saint really begins, God lifts His hand off and lets the world, the flesh, and the devil do their worst, for He is assured that “greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

The trouble comes when we forget that the Son of God is born into our old human nature. Whether we are six years old or sixty, our human nature is thousands of years old. Jesus Christ says that His

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



Father makes His revelations, not to the virtues of human nature, not to the astute wisdom accumulated by the ages, but to 'babes.' Our Lord's words can only be understood by those who are born from above, and He reveals Himself only to such.

The Church of Jesus Christ is built on these two things: the Divine revelation of Who Jesus Christ is, and the public confession of it (see Matthew xvi. 13–19).

Our Lord's Aspect

“And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering” (Luke ix. 29).

Our Lord had emptied Himself of His glory for the purposes of the Incarnation, and the Transfiguration reveals His glory again. The subliminal nature of Jesus was absolute Deity, and it was that subliminal nature, the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, that suddenly burst through on the Mount of Transfiguration, and gave the manifestation of God and Man in perfect oneness—in His Son, God became His own Incarnation. The Apostle John is insistent that any tendency to dissolve the Person of Jesus by analysis is anti-Christ (1 John iv. 1–3). It is this pre-Incarnate glory that is being dissolved today. The dissolving of the Person of Jesus by analysis is prevalent because men refuse to know Him after the Spirit, they will only know Him after the reasoning of their own minds.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

The test of any teaching is its estimate of Jesus Christ. The teaching may sound wonderful and beautiful, but watch lest it have at its centre the dethroning of Jesus Christ.

The Aspect of the Disciples

“And when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him” (Luke ix. 32).

The disciples were with Jesus Christ on the Mount, and in his Epistle, Peter records what they saw there; he says, “we were eye-witnesses of His majesty” (2 Peter i. 16). Jesus Christ is no Comrade to Peter, He is absolute King of kings. In the Apocalypse the Apostle John gives the same revelation of the appalling and sublime majesty of Jesus Christ. The disciples are fully awake now and face to face with Reality.

Intellectual thinking and reasoning never yet got a man to Reality, because these are instruments of life, and not the life itself. Our only organ for getting at Reality is conscience, and the Holy Spirit always deals with conscience first. Intellect and emotions come in afterwards as the instruments of human expression.

The disciples came down from the Mount into the demon-possessed valley, but it was not until after the Cross and the Resurrection that they began to understand what they had seen, the reason being that what they had seen in vision on the Mount had to be worked out into actual experience in their lives. By the presence of the Holy Ghost in us we know

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

Who the Lord Jesus is. We know Him “after the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus to us and in us until we know Who He is, and know the exceeding majesty of Him Who said, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” We do not know this by our intellect or by our sensible reasoning, but by the real witness of the Paraclete of God. The eyes of the disciples needed to be opened by the impartation of quickening life from our Lord after the Resurrection before they knew Him (Luke xxiv. 16 and 31); and the only way in which we can know our Lord is by His Spirit.

Our Lord's Attendants

“And there appeared unto them Elias and Moses: and they were talking with Jesus ” (Mark ix. 4).

Jesus was standing in the full blaze and glory of His pre-Incarnate glory while the two representatives of the Old Covenant talked with Him about the issue which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Then He turned His back upon that glory, and came down from the Mount to be identified with fallen humanity, symbolised by the demon-possessed boy. Had He gone back into the glory which was His before the Incarnation having only reached the Mount of Transfiguration, He would have left the human race exactly where it was; His life would only have been a sublime ideal. There are many who look at the life of Jesus Christ as an ideal and nothing more—‘His teachings are so fine, we do not need to have anything to do with the Atonement, or with those crude doctrines of the apostle Paul’s about the Cross and personal

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

apprehension; it is quite enough for us to have the Sermon on the Mount.' I should think it was! If Jesus Christ came to be an Example only, He is the greatest torturer of the human race. But our Lord did not come primarily to teach us and give us an example; He came to lift us into a totally new kingdom, and to impart a new life to which His teachings would apply.

The Attention of the Disciples

“ and when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him ” (Luke ix. 32).

The disciples were eye and ear-witnesses of all that transpired on the Mount. There is a curious insistence in the records on the fact that our Lord at His Transfiguration and in the Garden of Gethsemane, took His disciples to be witnesses of things which they could never experience. We see one reason why Jesus took them in Peter's Epistles and in John's Gospel. The Christian faith must stand in an Almighty Christ, not in a human being who became Divine.

Our Lord's Attention

“ who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem ” (Luke ix. 31).

The visitants on the Mount talked to Jesus in all His majesty and glory of Almighty God, but they spoke of His death, not of His glory. Does not that seem an appalling anti-climax? The whole of their

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

attention is centred on the death of the Lord Jesus. The word 'death' has the meaning of 'issue'. They spake of the issue He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem by His death, viz., the historic manifestation of the Redemption of the human race.

The Redemption of the human race does not necessarily mean the salvation of every individual. Redemption is of universal application, but human responsibility is not done away with. Jesus Christ states emphatically that there are possibilities of eternal damnation for the man who positively neglects or positively rejects His Redemption.

Jesus Christ emptied Himself of His glory a second time; He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration and accomplished His death at Jerusalem—for what purpose? That any individual of the human race might go straight to the heart of God without the slightest fear, because of what Jesus did on the Cross. This is the great effective working of Redemption in human experience. Our Lord's death is not the death of a martyr; it is the exhibition of the heart of God, broken in order to bring the whole human race back into perfect oneness with Himself.

The death of Jesus is the only entrance into the life He lived. We cannot get into His life by admiring Him, or by saying what a beautiful life His was, so pure and holy. To dwell only on His life would drive us to despair. We enter into His life by means of His death. Until the Holy Spirit has had His way with us spiritually, the death of Jesus Christ is an insignificant thing, and we are amazed that the New Testament

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

should make so much of it. The death of Jesus Christ is always a puzzle to unsaved human nature. Why should the Apostle Paul say, “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified?” Because unless the death of Jesus has the meaning the Apostle Paul gave to it, viz., that it is the entrance into His life, the Resurrection has no meaning for us either. The life of Jesus is a wonderful example of a perfect human life, but what is the good of that to us? What is the good of presenting to us a speckless holiness that is hopeless of attainment? It would simply tantalise us. Unless Jesus Christ can put a totally new heredity into us, there is no use asking us to think about the wonderful life He lived. The revelation made by the Redemption is that God can put into us a new disposition whereby we can live a totally new life.

Now we can see why our Lord lived the life He did for thirty-three years. Before He made the entrance into that life possible for any human being, He had to show us what the life of God’s normal man was like. The life of Jesus is the life we have to live here, not hereafter. There is no chance to live this kind of life hereafter, we have to live it here. Our Lord’s death is not the death of a martyr, not the death of a good man; His cross is the Cross of God, whereby any human being can enter into a totally new life. The way into the life of Jesus is not by imitation of Him, but by identification with His Cross. That is the meaning of being born from above: we enter into His life by its entering into us.

We talk about imitating Jesus, but isn’t it highly absurd! Before we have taken three steps, we come

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

across lust, pride, envy, jealousy, hatred, malice, anger—things that never were in Him, and we get disheartened and say there is nothing in it. If Jesus Christ came to *teach* the human race only, He had better have stayed away. But if we know Him first as Saviour by being born again, we know that He did not come to teach merely: He came to *make* us what He teaches we should be; He came to *make* us sons of God. He came to give us the right disposition, not to tell us that we ought not to have the wrong one; and the way into all these benedictions is by means of His death.

To Christianise human nature is simply to venerate that which is not real. The life of Jesus Christ is the Standard, and we receive His life by means of His Death. The emphasis on His death is explained when we remember that His teaching only applies to His life in us. When we preach Christ, it is not His birth that we preach, but His Cross, and we bring ourselves face to face with the wonder and the power of His resurrection life.

The Amazement of the Disciples

“And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid” (Mark ix. 5–6).

Peter wist not what to say, then why did he say it? Have you never said things you should not have said? If we get a great grasp in vision of Who Jesus is and try to work it out in our ordinary human life

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

by the energy of the flesh, we shall do what Peter did, talk nonsense through sheer bewilderment. When we come to Peter's Epistles, there is nothing hysterical about them. Peter has gone through disillusionment about himself; he has gone through seeing the death of his Lord and through identification with His death; through the experience of receiving from the Risen Lord the gift of the Holy Ghost, and he says, we are not hysterical, we were eyewitnesses of His majesty when we were with Him in the holy mount.

Repeatedly the vision of entire sanctification, or of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is mistaken for the actuality. The only test of the actuality is when we are brought down into things as they are; it is then that the reality must manifest itself. When Jesus had healed the demoniac boy, the disciples asked Him, 'How is it that we could not cast it out?' and Jesus said unto them, "This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer and fasting," by spiritual concentration on Him. We can ever remain powerless, as were the disciples, by trying to do God's work through ideas drawn from our own temperament instead of by concentration on His power.

Never mistake the wonderful visions God gives you for reality, but watch, for after the vision you will be brought straight down into the valley. We are not made for the mountains, we are made for the valley. Thank God for the mountains, for the glorious spiritual realisation of Who Jesus Christ is; but can we face things as they actually are in the light of the Reality of Jesus Christ? or do things as they are

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

efface altogether our faith in Him and drive us into a panic? When Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you,” it was to the Cross He went. Through His Cross He prepared a place for us to “sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus” *now*, not by and bye. When we get to the Cross we do not go through and out the other side, we abide in the life to which the Cross is the gateway; and the characteristic of the life is deep and profound sacrifice to God. We know Who our Lord is by the power of His Spirit, we are strongly confident in Him, and the reality of our relationship to Him works out all the time in the actualities of our ordinary life.

Almighty God's Ascription

“And there came a voice out of the cloud saying, This is My beloved Son; hear Him ” (Luke ix. 35).

It is the same voice that spoke at our Lord's baptism. God emphatically states, “This is My beloved Son”: this Man, known to men as the humble Nazarene Carpenter, is Almighty God presented in the guise of a human life; “hear Him.” How many of us do hear Him? We always hear the thing we listen for, and our disposition determines what we listen for. When Jesus Christ alters our disposition, He gives us the power to hear as He hears.

The Awe of the Disciples

“There came a cloud and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud ”(Luke ix. 34).

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



When the clouds around are dark and terrible, thank God, the saints know that they are but “the dust of His feet,” and when they fear as they enter into the cloud, they see “no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.”

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

His Agony and Our Fellowship

His Destiny (Matthew xxvi. 36–41; iv. 1–4)

Our Destiny as His Disciples (Matthew xx. 22–23; 1 Peter ii. 21)

His Dread (Matthew xxvi. 42–43; iv. 5–7)

Our Dread as His Disciples (Philippians iii. 10; John xii. 27)

His Devotion (Matthew xxvi. 44–46; iv. 8–11)

Our Devotion as His Disciples (Luke xii. 49; Colossians i. 24)

We can never fathom the agony in Gethsemane, but at least we need not misunderstand it. It is the agony of God and Man in one, face to face with sin. The agony of our Lord in Gethsemane is not typical of what we go through, any more than His Cross is typical of our cross. We know nothing about Gethsemane in personal experience. Gethsemane and Calvary stand for something unique; they are the gateway into Life for us. We are not dealing here with the typical experience of the saint, but with the way the saintly life has been made possible.

We must read the record of the agony in the light of the temptation three years previously. There are three recorded temptations, and three recorded spells of agony in Gethsemane, “And when the devil

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season.” In Gethsemane he came back, and was again overthrown. Put away the reverential blasphemy that what Jesus Christ feared in Gethsemane was death on the cross. There was no element of fear in His mind about it; He stated most emphatically that He came on purpose for the Cross (Matthew xvi. 21). His fear in Gethsemane was that He might not get through as Son of Man. Satan’s onslaught was that although He would get through as Son of God, it would only be as an isolated Figure; and this would mean that He could be no Saviour.

Notice again the curious insistence in the records on the fact that our Lord took His disciples with Him, not to share His agony, but to witness it.

His Destiny

“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder ...” (Matthew xxvi. 36–41). (Cf. Matthew iv. 1–4.)

At His Baptism the Son of God as Son of Man, i.e., as the whole human race rightly related to God, took on Himself the sin of the whole world; that is why He was baptised with John’s baptism, which was a baptism of repentance from sin. It was at His Baptism that the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove, and God said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”; and before His birth the angel proclaimed that He should be called Jesus, “for He shall save His people from their sins.”

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

◆

This is our Lord's destiny. No human being has a destiny like His; no human being can be a Saviour. There is only one Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the profundity of His agony has to do with the fulfilling of His destiny. The only possibility of God being satisfied with the human race is when the whole human race lives as the Son of God lived; and God became Incarnate that through His Son every one of us might be enabled to live as He lived.

In God's programme Holy Spirit and man are always identified. Adam was created to be indwelt by Holy Spirit, and God intended him to transform his innocence into holiness by a series of moral choices. But Adam refused to do this; instead, he started up a wrong relationship with the devil, and thereby became the introducer of the heredity of sin into the human race (Romans v. 12). The entering in of sin meant the departing of the Holy Spirit from the home of man's body, not the departing from him of the Spirit of God as Creator. 'Elohim' has reference to God in correspondence with human flesh. When Adam sinned, this correspondence with God ceased until God became manifest in the flesh in Jesus Christ. At His Baptism the Holy Ghost came upon Him as Son of Man, and His coming was the seal of our Lord's accepted vocation. Jesus Christ represented 'Elohim,' God manifest in the flesh, God and man *one* in the Person of the Son of Man. The sin of the world upon the Son of God rent the Holy Ghost from Him on the Cross, and the cry on Calvary is the cry of the Holy Ghost to Jesus Christ—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It was not the cry of Jesus Christ to His Father. Jesus never spoke to God as 'God'; He spoke to Him

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



always as “ Father.” “Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, ... He said, It is finished.” These words of our Lord mean that God and the human race in the Person of the Son of Man are now one for ever in that one Person. Holy Spirit may be partaken of by any one. Anyone can enter into real fellowship with God, into fellowship as real as the communion which Jesus had with His Father, and the way into it is by means of His agony. Ephesians iv. 13 is a picture of the human race redeemed by Jesus Christ. He is God’s revelation in one Person of the human race as God intends it to be.

We are dealing here with revelation, not with experience. Revelation is that upon which we must nourish our faith; experience is that which encourages us that our faith is on the right track. The need to connect revelation and experience must never be overlooked.

In the temptation of our Lord Satan’s first attack was in the physical domain. In Gethsemane his onslaught is against our Lord as Son of Man, not against Him as Son of God. Satan could not touch Him as Son of God, he could only touch Him as Son of Man; and this is his final onslaught on the Son of God as Son of man. ‘You will get through as Son of God, I cannot touch You there, but You will never get one member of the human race through with You. Look at Your disciples, they are asleep, they cannot even watch with You. When You come to the Cross Your body will be so tortured and fatigued, so paralysed with pain, and Your soul will be so darkened and confused, that You will not be able to retain a clear understanding of what You are doing.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

Your whole personality will be so clouded and crushed by the weight of sin that You will never get through as Man.' If Satan had been right, all that would have happened on the Cross would have been the death of a martyr only, the way into Life for us would never have been opened. But if Jesus Christ does get through as Son of Man, it means that the way is open for every one who has been born or ever will be born to get back to God. Satan's challenge to our Lord was that He would not be able to do it; He would only get through as Son of God, because Satan could not touch Him there. The fear that came upon our Lord was that He might die before He reached the Cross. He feared that as Son of Man He might die before He had opened the gate for us to get through, and He "was heard in that He feared," and was delivered from death in Gethsemane.

When our Lord came to the Cross, His body, soul, and spirit were completely triumphant, there was perfect self-possession. Did the pain of the body cloud His mind? "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." His mind was as clear as a sunbeam—"Woman, behold thy son!" And He was so triumphant in spirit, in His essential personality, that He cried with a loud voice, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

The Garden of Gethsemane is the agony of Almighty God: the Cross of Christ is one terrific triumph, a triumph for the *Son of Man*. The cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" is not the cry of the Son of God in destitution; it is the cry of the Holy Ghost being torn from the Son of God

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

by the weight of sin upon Him. Gethsemane is the agony of the Son of God fulfilling His destiny as the Saviour of the world, and the veil is taken aside to show us what it cost Him to make it easy for us to become sons of God.

Our Destiny as His Disciples

“But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able. And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father” (Matthew xx. 22–23). (See also 1 Peter ii. 21.)

Our destiny is determined by our disposition. Our Lord’s destiny was determined by His disposition. Our destiny is preordained, but we are free to choose which disposition we will be ruled by. We cannot alter our disposition, but we can choose to let God alter it. If our disposition is to be altered, it must be altered by the Creator, and He will introduce us into a totally new realm by the miracle of His sovereign grace. Redemption means that Jesus Christ can give us a new disposition. At regeneration the Holy Spirit puts in us a totally new disposition, and as we obey that disposition the life of the Son of God will be manifested in our mortal flesh.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

Within certain limits we have the power to choose, for instance, a man has the power to refuse to be born again, but no man has absolute free will. There comes a time when the human will must yield allegiance to a force greater than itself. God is the only Being Who can act with absolute free will, and when His Spirit comes into us, He makes us free in will, consequently our obedience becomes of value. It is not obedience when a man does a thing because he cannot help it, but when a man is made a son of God by Redemption, he has the free power to disobey, therefore the power to obey. If we have no power to disobey, we have no power to obey. Our obedience would be of no value at all if the power to sin were taken away.

Our destiny as His disciples is to be in fellowship with God as Jesus was. The cup and the baptism of our Lord are the gateways for every human being to get into perfect oneness with God. Jesus Christ gives us salvation and sanctification, but the places we take hereafter depend upon our obedience and the disposal of the Father. There is no respect of persons with God for salvation, but there are degrees of position hereafter. We are all saved by the cup and the baptism of our Lord, but the position we take individually depends entirely upon our obedience to Him. We are born again through our Lord's cup and baptism, i.e., through His fulfilling of His destiny; we do not have to agonise and suffer before we can be born from above. All the distress and all the sacrifice in the world will never atone for sin. We must be born again through His sacrifice into the Kingdom where He lives, and when we are there we have to follow in His steps, and we find we can

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

follow now that we have His Spirit, His nature. Our fear starts when we imagine that we have to live this new life by the energy of our human nature, because we know that it cannot be done, and every time we think of what we were before, we falter. The Bible reveals that when the Holy Spirit has come into us, every command of God is an enabling. Jesus Christ gives the power of His own disposition to anyone, that is why He is apparently so merciless on those of us who have received the Holy Spirit, because His demands on us are made according to His disposition, and not according to our human nature. The old nature says it cannot be done. Jesus Christ says it can be done—‘I did it, and I can do it in you if you will enter My life by means of My death.’ It is no use trying to be what we are not. We are children of God when we are born from above, and God will never shield us from the requirements of being His children. “Follow His steps”—that is the conduct of regenerate human nature. The life of Jesus is the life of the normal man of God, but we cannot begin to live it unless we are born from above. Unless we have been taken up into His destiny, we cannot fulfil our own destiny. If we are born from above, are we trying to follow His steps, trying to work out in our mortal flesh that which God has worked in? (Philippians ii. 12–13). Salvation is a sovereign gift of the Redemption of the Lord Jesus. Many will be saved through the fulfilling of the destiny of the Son of Man who have not been worth anything to God in this life, their life has been self-centred and wrong, it has not been lived on the foundation of the Son of God. Our destiny is to work out what God works in. It is not that our eternal salvation depends upon our doing it, but our value

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

to God does, and also our position in the Kingdom of God.

His Dread

“He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done ” (Matthew xxvi. 42–43). (Cf. Matthew iv. 5–7.)

The disciples are the representatives of the human race in connection with Redemption, and Satan’s sneer in Gethsemane is, ‘You will never do it, these men are the specimens of the best You have, and they are asleep. You should have gone to heaven from the Mount of Transfiguration, but instead, You came down and declared You would redeem the human race, and I am determined that You shall not.’ Our Lord’s dread in Gethsemane was born of the knowledge that if He did not get through as Son of Man, the redemption of mankind was hopeless; we could only then have imitated Him, we could never have known Him as Saviour.

This is the agony of God as Man, not a human agony. Our Lord did not want human sympathy, His agony come anywhere near. The darkness was produced because it looked as if Satan were going to triumph, and the disciples, who represented the new humanity, were without the slightest element of understanding what Jesus Christ was doing. He “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared.” His prayer was answered every time, and when He

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

came to the Cross His relationship to His mother, and to John, and to His murderers, showed that His mind and His reason were triumphantly clear. It was not only a sign that our Lord had triumphed, but that He had triumphed to save the human race, so that every human being can get through into the presence of God because of all the Son of Man went through. Jesus Christ is either all that the New Testament claims Him to be—the Redeemer of the human race, or else a futile dreamer, and the only proof is in personal experience. Can God form the life that His Son lived in us? Jesus Christ claims that He can. Then have we let Him do it?

Our Dread as His Disciples

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death ”
(Philippians iii. 10). (See also John xii. 27.)

Our dread as His disciples is lest we fail Jesus Christ in our service, lest in our experience of the revelation we forget the God Who gave us the experience, forget all about Jesus Christ. As disciples we have not to serve God in our own way, not to tell Him what we are going to do for Him, not to ask Him to baptise us with the Holy Ghost to make *us* something. ‘If you would be My disciple,’ says Jesus, ‘give up your right to yourself to Me, and take up your cross daily.’ No man can carry the cross of God. The Cross of God is the Redemption of the world. The cross we have to carry is that we have deliberately given up our right to ourselves to Jesus Christ, and we steadily refuse to be appealed to on

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

any other line than He was appealed to on when He was here. With regard to all the pleasures and sciences and interests of this life, push this simple consideration, 'Is this the kind of thing the Son of God is doing in the world, or is it what the prince of this world is doing?' Not, 'Is it right?' but 'Is it the kind of thing the Son of God would be doing in the world?' If it is not, then don't touch it. If you only give up wrong things for Jesus Christ, don't talk any more about being in love with Him. If you want to do a thing all the time, it is no virtue not to do it! Jesus Christ takes the 'want to' out of us and enables us to do in this world the things He would be doing if He were here. We say, 'Why shouldn't I? it isn't wrong!' What a sordid thing to say! When we love a person, do we only give up what is wrong for him? Love is not measured by what it gets, but by what it costs, and our relationship to Jesus Christ can never be on the line of, 'Why shouldn't I do this?' Our Lord simply says, 'If any man will be My disciple, those are the conditions' (see Luke xiv. 26, 27 and 33). Is He worth it? Will He cast it up at us that we never gave up anything for Him? No, He will never do that, He will never tell us what sneaks we have been, but we will find it out (Matthew x. 26). Our dread is to be lest we forget Him. Do we know Jesus Christ better today than ever we did?

If we have been put right with God through the agony of the Son of God, have we enthroned Him as Lord and Master as well? (John xiii. 13; Luke vi. 46). Is He absolute Master of our body? (1 Corinthians iii. 16–17). We have no business to be master of our own body. Our dread is lest we forget that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. We

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

are to know Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection in our body, to know the fellowship of His sufferings in our body. “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.” There is no ‘if’ in connection with salvation, only in connection with discipleship. The conditions of discipleship are found in Luke xiv. 26, 27 and 33. If the commands of Jesus Christ in our life clash with the most sacred relationships on earth, it must be instant obedience to Him. We must hate the claim that contends with His claim; *hate* it that is, in comparison with our love to Him. We must abandon to God at all costs. Abandon is of infinitely more value than self-scrutiny.

His Devotion

“And He left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh He to His disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me ” (Matthew xxvi. 44–46). (Cf. Matthew iv. 8–11.)

‘Still sleeping? It is all right now, it is all finished, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.’ That is a joyful utterance. Our Lord is absolutely sure that as representative Man before God He will get the whole human race through, in spite of everything the devil can do, and the Cross is an absolute triumph. Our Lord, as Son of Man, has been through the depths of His agony in Gethsemane, and He has won at every point. He

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

has won for the bodies of men, He has won for the minds and souls of men and for the spirits of men; everything that makes up a human personality is redeemed absolutely, and no matter whether a man be a vile sinner or as clean as the rich young ruler, he can enter into the marvellous life with God through the way made by the Son of Man.

“Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,” that is, the spirit of the Son of Man, the spirit of the whole human race represented by the Son of Man getting through to God on the Cross. “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered” (Hebrews v. 8). He did not learn to be a Son, He was a Son, and He came to redeem as Man, and He learned obedience as Redeemer by suffering. His agony is the basis of the simplicity of our salvation. His suffering is the basis of all our light and liberty and joy. His Cross makes it simple enough for any one to get into the presence of God.

Our Lord in His agony was devoted to God’s purpose. The supreme obedience of Jesus was never to the needs of men, but always to the will of His Father. The Church goes astray whenever she makes the need the call. The need is never the call; the need is the opportunity; the call is the call of God.

Our Devotion As His Disciples

“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?” (Luke xii. 49). (See also Colossians i. 24.)

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

“Our God is a consuming fire,” and when God comes on to this earth in the effective working of the Redemption of Jesus Christ, He brings pain and havoc and disaster (Matthew x. 34). The first result of the Redemption of Jesus Christ in human life is havoc. If any human life can stand before God on its own basis, Calvary is much ado about nothing. If it can be proved that rationalism is the basis of human life, then the New Testament is nonsense; instead of its being a revelation, it is a cunningly devised fable. There is no need for redemption, Jesus Christ is nothing but a martyr, one of whom it was true that He was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. If we can stand before God apart from Jesus Christ, we have proved that Calvary is not needed. immediately Jesus Christ comes in, He produces havoc, because the whole world system is arrayed against His Redemption. It was the world system of His day, and particularly the religious system, that killed the Son of God.

“And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh”—for Redemption’s sake? No, “for His body’s sake, which is the church.” On the ground of Jesus Christ’s Redemption, we can enter into identification with His sufferings, but we do not need to unless we like. I Corinthians xiii. and Matthew v. 43–48 are practical home-coming Christian truths. “Come unto Me... Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me,” ‘then go and bear with others for My sake.’ What have we suffered for Jesus Christ? Think of the passionate indignation we get into when someone slanders us!—“Consider Him.” We do not need to take the blow, but if we do not, it will go back on Him. We will get off scot free, and

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

everyone will applaud us for doing so, but the blow will fall upon Jesus Christ. If we let it come on us, it will not fall on Him. We have always the privilege of going the second mile. It is never our duty to do it, but will we go the second mile with God? Are we deliberately filling up that which remains behind of His sufferings, or becoming mere critical centres? If we have been brought into a right relationship with God by the Redemption of Jesus Christ, He expects us to Put on His yoke and to learn of Him.

The devotion of the saint is to “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His body’s sake,” nothing remains behind to be filled up for Redemption’s sake. How did Jesus Christ suffer? Because people misunderstood Him? Because He was persecuted? Because He could not get on with men? No, He suffered for one thing only—that men might be saved; He let Almighty God do His whole will in and through Him without asking His permission. He suffered “according to the will of God.”

How can we fill up the sufferings that remain behind? 1 John v. 16 is an indication of one way, viz., that of intercession. Remember, no man has time to pray, he has to take time from other things that are valuable in order to understand how necessary time for prayer is. The things that act like thorns and stings in our personal lives will go instantly we pray; we won’t feel the smart any more, because we have got God’s point of view about them. Prayer means that we get into union with God’s view of other people. Our devotion as saints is to identify ourselves with God’s interests in other

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



lives. God pays no attention to our Personal affinities; He expects us to identify ourselves with *His* interests in others.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

His Cross and Our Discipleship

The Collision of God and Sin (Acts ii. 36)

The Sacrifice to Christ of Myself (Romans xii. 1–2; Matthew xvi. 24; Luke ix 23)

The Contradiction of God and Satan (John xii. 31–33)

The Suffering for Christ of Myself (Colossians i. 24; 2 Corinthians i. 5; Philippians iii. 10)

The Centre of God and Salvation (2 Corinthians v. 14)

The Sacrament of God in Myself (Acts xx. 24; 1 Corinthians xv. 30)

There is a difference between revelation and experience. As Christians we must have an experience, but we must believe a great deal more than we can experience. For instance, no Christian can experience the Cross of Christ; but he can experience salvation through the Cross. No Christian can experience God becoming Incarnate; but he can experience the incoming of the life of God by regeneration. No Christian can experience the personal advent of the Holy Ghost on to this earth; but he can experience the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. A New Testament Christian is one who bases all his thinking on these revelations. He experiences

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

the regenerating power of God, and then goes on to build up his mind in the most holy faith. Until a man is born again, he cannot think as a Christian. Belief of doctrine does not make a man a Christian. There are those who emphasise doctrine, they would go to martyrdom for the faith; whilst others emphasise experience, and take everything revealed in the Bible as picturing our experience. Either of these views is likely to become a dangerous side track.

Jesus Christ took thirty-three years over the historic completion of Redemption in order to exhibit what God's normal Man was like. He lived the pattern normal life of a man as God wants it to be lived, and He demands of us that we live as He did. But how are we to begin to do it? We did not come into this world as God Incarnate came. He came from pre-existing Deity; we are born with the heredity of sin. How are we to enter into the life He lived? By His Cross and by no other way. We do not enter into the life of God by imitation, or by vows, or by ceremonies, or by Church membership; we enter into it by its entering into us at regeneration. The Cross of Jesus Christ is the gateway into His life.

The Cross is not the cross of a man but the Cross of God, and the Cross of God can never be realised in human experience. Beware of saying that Jesus Christ was a martyr. Nowadays He is frequently looked upon as a martyr, His life is acknowledged to be very beautiful, but the Atonement and the Cross are not being given their rightful place, and the Bible is being robbed of its magnitude and virility. The death of our Lord was not the death of a martyr, but the exhibition of the heart of God, and the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

gateway whereby any member of the human race can enter into union with God. The Cross is the centre of Time and of Eternity, the answer to the enigmas of both.

The Collision of God and Sin

“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 ii. 36).

The Cross of Jesus is the revelation of God's judgment on sin. It is not the cross of a martyr; it is the substitution of Jesus for sinful humanity. The Cross did not *happen* to Jesus, He came on purpose for it. The whole purpose of the Incarnation is the Cross—“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” The Cross is beyond Time; the actual crucifixion is the historical revelation of the heart nature of the Trinity of God. The symbolic figure of the nature of God is not a circle, complete and self-centred; God is not all. The symbol of God's nature is the Cross, whose arms stretch out to limitless reaches.

The Cross of Jesus Christ is a revelation; our cross is an experience. If we neglect for one moment the basal revelation of the Cross, we will make shipwreck of our faith, no matter what our experience is. The test of our spiritual life is our understanding of the Cross. The Cross of Jesus is often wrongly taken as a type of the cross we have to carry. Jesus did not say, ‘If any man will come after Me, let him take up *My* cross,’ but, “let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



Our cross becomes our divinely appointed privilege by means of His Cross. We are never called upon to carry His Cross. We have so hallowed the Cross by twenty centuries of emotion and sentiment that it sounds a very beautiful and pathetic thing to talk about carrying our cross. But a wooden cross with iron nails in it is a clumsy thing to carry. The real cross was like that, and do we imagine that the external cross was more ugly than our actual one? Or that the thing that tore our Lord's hands and feet was not really so terrible as our imagination of it?

Do we agree with God's judgment upon sin in the Cross? There is a difference between sin and sins. Sin is a heredity; sins are acts for which we are responsible. Sin is a thing we are born with and we cannot touch it. God touches sin in Redemption, and the Cross reveals the clash of God and sin. If we do not put to death the things in us that are not of God, they will put to death the things that are of God. There is never any alternative, some thing must die in us—either sin or the life of God. If we agree theologically with God's condemnation of sin on the Cross, then what about sin in our own heart? Do we agree with God's verdict on sin and lust in our lives? The moment we do agree, we may be delivered from it. It is a question of agreeing with God's verdict on sin and of will. Will we go through the condemnation now? If we will, there is no more condemnation for us, and the salvation of Jesus Christ is made actual in our lives. Unless our salvation works out through our finger tips and everywhere else, there is nothing to it, it is religious humbug.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

The Sacrifice to Christ of Myself. “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. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans xii. 1–2). (See also Matthew xvi. 24; Luke ix. 23.)

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice.” We cannot present an unholy thing at the altar, and Paul’s word ‘brethren’ means saints. It is only from the standpoint of sanctification that these verses apply. Our Lord says to those who have entered into His life by means of His Cross, “Let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Not, “Let him give up sin”; any man will give up sinning if he knows how to, but, “Let him deny himself,” that is, ‘give up his light to himself to Me.’ Our cross is what we hold before the world, viz., the fact that we are sanctified to do nothing but God’s will. We have given away our right to ourselves for ever, and the cross we take up is a sign in heaven, on earth and to hell, that we are His and our own no longer. The right to ourselves is the only thing we have to give to God. We cannot give our natural possessions, because they have been given to us. If we had not our right to ourselves by God’s creation of us, we should have nothing to give, and consequently could not be held responsible.

Jesus Christ is not dealing with sin here (sin is dealt with by His Cross), but with what has been referred to as the natural life, the life symbolised by

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

Mary, the mother of Jesus, which must be sacrificed, not annihilated. The idea of sacrifice is giving back to God the best we have in order that He may make it His and ours for ever. Have we done it? Have we as saints given up our right to ourselves to Him? or do we while accepting His salvation thoroughly object to giving up our right to ourselves to Him? Sanctification has to do with separating a holy life to God's uses. "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John xvii. 19).

We are apt to imagine that the cross we have to carry means the ordinary troubles and trials of life, but we must have these whether we are Christians or not. Neither is our cross suffering for conscience' sake. Our cross is something that comes only with the peculiar relationship of a disciple to Jesus Christ; it is the evidence that we have denied our right to ourselves. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians ii. 20). It is not only that we give up our right to ourselves to Jesus Christ but that determinedly we relate ourselves to life so that we may be appealed to only by the things that appeal to Him, and do in the world only the things with which He is associated. There are myriads of right things in this world that our Lord would not touch, relationships which He described by the 'eye,' and the 'right arm.' Our right arm is not a bad thing, it is one of the best things we have, but Jesus said, 'If it offends you in your walk with Me, cut it off.' Most of us baulk this; we do not object to being delivered from sin, but we do not intend to give up the right to ourselves to Him. The only right a Christian has is the right to give

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



up his rights. Unless we are willing to give up good things for Jesus Christ, we have no realisation of Whom He is. 'But really I cannot give up things that are quite legitimate!' Then never mention the word love again in connection with Jesus Christ if you cannot give up the best you have for Him. This is the essential nature of love in the natural life, otherwise it is a farce to call it love, it is not love, but lust; and when we come to our relationship with Jesus Christ, this is the love He demands of us. If we have entered into the experience of regeneration through His Cross, these are the conditions of discipleship (Luke xiv. 26, 27 and 33). Always notice the 'If' in connection with discipleship, there is never any compulsion. "If any man come to Me, and hate not ..., he cannot be My disciple." He may be anything else, a very fascinating person, a most delightful asset to modern civilisation, but Jesus Christ says, "he cannot be My disciple." A man may be saved without being a disciple, and it is the point of discipleship that is always kicked against. Our Lord is not talking of eternal salvation, but of the possibility of our being of temporal worth to Himself. How many of us are of any worth to Jesus Christ? Our attitude is rather that we are much obliged to God for saving us, but the idea of giving up our chances to realise ourselves in life is too extravagantly extreme. Some of us will take all God has to give us while we take good care not to give Him anything back.

The sacrifice of myself to Christ is not a revelation, but a experience. Have I sacrificed myself to Him, or have I refused to give up my right to myself to Him because there are several things I want to do? 'There

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

are so many other interests in my life, and, of course, God will not expect it of me.' Always state things to yourself in order to realise whether you ruggedly are what you sentimentally think you ought to be, and you will soon know the kind of humbug you are. Spiritual reality is what is wanted. 'I surrender all'—and you feel as if you did, that is the awkward thing. The point is whether, as God engineers your circumstances, you find that you really have surrendered. Immediately you do surrender, you are made so much one with your Lord that the thought of what it cost never enters any more.

The Contradiction of God and Satan

“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die” (John xii. 31–33).

The prince of this world and Satan are synonymous terms. Satan is the manifestation of the devil for which man is held responsible, that is, Satan is the result of a communication between man and the devil (Genesis iii.). Our Lord did not say to Peter, 'Get thee behind Me, *devil*,' but, '*Satan*;' and then He defined Satan—"thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." What was it that Peter savoured? Self-pity; 'Pity Thyself, Lord: this shall not be to Thee,' and Jesus "turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, *Satan*; thou art an offence unto Me." Peter's appeal was made on the ground of self-interest, and the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

prince of this world governs everything on that basis. Self-realisation is the essential principle of his government. "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." The world is that system of things which organises its life without any thought of Jesus Christ. Paul says that the lost are those whose minds are blinded by the god of this world (2 Corinthians iv. 3-4). Nothing blinds the mind to the claims of Jesus Christ more effectually than a good, clean-living, upright life based on self-realisation. For a thing to be Satanic does not mean that it is abominable and immoral. The satanically managed man is moral, upright, proud, and individual; he is absolutely self-governed and has no need of God. The prince of this world is judged for ever at the Cross. If we enter into the Kingdom of God through the Cross of Christ, self-realisation cannot get through with us, it must be left outside. The Cross of Christ reveals the contradiction of God and Satan. The disposition of self-realisation is the manifestation in us of the devil as Satan, and when we come to the Cross we leave Satan outside, Satan cannot take one step inside the Cross.

The Suffering for Christ of Myself. "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" (Colossians i. 24). (See also 2 Corinthians i. 5; Philippians iii. 10.) That is suffering without any notice from the world, saving its ridicule. It is not suffering like Christ, it is suffering for Christ. It is not suffering for the sake of Redemption; we have nothing to do with Redemption; that is completed. We have to fill up "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



His body's sake, which is the church." When by the Cross of Christ we have entered into the experience of identification with our Lord, then there comes the practical working out of Matthew xi. 29, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." When we learn of Jesus we shall not 'grouse' at a dispensation of God's providence that we cannot understand; we shall not give way to self-pity and say, 'Why should this happen to me?' Jesus said—"Let him ... take up his cross, and follow Me." This means putting into exercise the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and deliberately identifying ourselves with God's interests in others, and it involves a moral decision on our part. God will bring across our path people who embody the characteristics that we have shown to Him—stubbornness, pride, conceit, opinionativeness, sensuality, a hundred little meannesses. 'Now,' He says, 'love them as I have loved you.' It works in this way, we see that someone is going to get the better of us, and every logical power in us says—'Resent it.' Morally speaking, we should, but Jesus Christ says, 'When you are insulted, not only do not resent it, but exhibit the Son of God.' The disciple realises that his Lord's honour is at stake in his life, not his own honour. A coward does not hit back because he is afraid to; a strong man refuses to hit back because he is strong; but in appearance they are both the same, and that is where the intense humiliation of being a Christian comes in. The Lord is asking us to go the second mile with Him, and if we take the blow, we will save Him. We can always avoid letting Jesus Christ get the blow by taking it ourselves. Be absolutely abandoned to God; it is

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

only your own reputation that is at stake. People will not discredit God; they will only think you are a fool.

After the Resurrection, Jesus Christ did not invite the disciples to a time of communion on the Mount of Transfiguration, He said—“Feed My sheep.” When God gives a man work to do, it is seldom work that seems at all proportionate to his natural ability. Paul, lion-hearted genius though he was, spent his time teaching the most ignorant people. The evidence that we are in love with God is that we identify ourselves with His interests in others, and other people are the exact expression of what we ourselves are; that is the humiliating thing! Jesus Christ came down to a most miserably insignificant people in order to redeem them. When He has lifted us into relationship with Himself, He expects us to identify ourselves with His interests in others.

The Centre of God and Salvation

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead” (2 Corinthians v. 14).

We cannot be saved by consecration, or by praying, or by giving ourselves up to God. We can only be saved by the Cross of Jesus Christ. Salvation is an absolutely free, unmerited gift of God. We would a hundred times rather that God told us to do something than we would accept His salvation as a gift. The centre of salvation is the Cross of Jesus Christ, and why it is so easy to obtain salvation is because it cost God so much; and why it is so difficult to experience salvation is because human

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

conceit will not accept, nor believe, nor have anything to do with unmerited salvation. We have not to experience God saving the world; it is a revelation that God has saved the world through Christ, and we can enter into the experience of His salvation through the Cross. The Cross is the point where God and sinful man merge with a crash, and the way to life is opened, but the crash is on the heart of God. God is always the sufferer.

The Sacrament of God in Myself. "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24). (See also 1 Corinthians xv. 30.) "Neither count I my life dear unto myself." Paul was absolutely indifferent to any other consideration than that of fulfilling the ministry he had received. He could never be appealed to by those who urged him to remain in a certain place because he was being of so much use there. Watch our Lord also. He went through villages and cities where He was marvellously used, but the great characteristic of His earthly life was that He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem; He never stayed in a place because He had been of use there (Mark i. 37–38). Beware of the sweet sisters and beloved brothers who say to you, 'Now do consider whether you will not be of more use here than anywhere else.' Probably you will, and in the passing of the months you will become mouldy bread instead of eating bread. We have nothing to do with God's purpose, but only with the sacrament of God in us, that is, the real Presence of God coming through the common

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



elements of our lives (John vii. 37–39). The measure of our service for God is not our usefulness to others. We have nothing to do with the estimate of others, nor with success in service; we have to see that we fulfil our ministry. “As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world” (John xvii. 15). Our Lord’s first obedience was not to the needs of men, not to the consideration of where He was most useful, but to the will of His Father, and the first need of our life is not to be useful to God, but to do God’s will. How are we to know the will of God? By living in Romans xii. 1–2. By being renewed in the spirit of the mind and refusing to be conformed to this age, we shall make out “the will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

His Resurrection and Our Life

His Resurrection Declared (Mark xvi. 5–8)

Our Eternal Life (John xx. 22)

His Resurrection Destiny (Luke xxiv. 26)

Our Experimental Life (Philippians iii. 10; Romans vi. 23)

His Resurrection Deity (John xx. 17)

Our Entire Life (Colossians iii. 1–4)

We must always distinguish between the truths we receive as revelations and what we experience of God's grace. We experience the wonderful reality of God's salvation and sanctification in our actual lives, but we have also to receive into our minds and souls Divine revelations which we cannot experience. We cannot experience Jesus Christ rising from the dead; we cannot experience His Destiny or His Deity, but we must understand where the regenerating forces in our lives come from. The New Testament insists on an instructed mind as well as a vital experience.

His Resurrection Declared

“And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 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” (Mark xvi. 5–8).

Our Lord died and was buried and He rose again, and this is the declaration of the Resurrection in all its incredibleness. Any question that arises in connection with the Resurrection arises in the minds of those who do not accept the necessity of being born from above. There is always a quarrel between our common sense and the revelations made in God’s Book. We must lose our soul in order to find it. We have to be born from above and receive Holy Spirit into our spirit, and then begin to construct another soul, or way of reasoning, and to do this we must accept not only the facts that come to us through our common sense, but the facts that come by revelation. We say *seeing is believing*, but it is not. We must believe a thing is possible before we should believe it even though we saw it (John xx. 29).

Our Eternal Life

“And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost ” (John xx. 22).

Eternal life is the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. “He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life (John vi. 47), i.e., the life He manifested in His human flesh when He was here, and says Jesus, ‘Ye have not (that) life in yourselves’ ” (John vi. 53; R.V.). His life is not ours by natural birth, and it can only be given

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



to us by means of His Cross. Our Lord's Cross is the gateway into His life; His Resurrection means that He has power now to convey that life to us (John xvii. 2).

The onslaught of Satan in Gethsemane was that Jesus Christ would never get through His agony as Son of Man. As Son of God, Satan could not prevent His getting through, but his challenge was that he would prevent Jesus Christ bringing one soul through with Him—and Satan was hopelessly defeated. By the death of the Son of Man upon the Cross, the door is opened for any individual to go straight into the presence of God; and by the Resurrection our Lord can impart to us His own life. When we are born from above we receive from the risen Lord His very life, our human spirit is quickened by the incoming of the life of God. That is the marvel of the power of the Lord Jesus Christ through His resurrection. "I would know Him in the power of His resurrection" (Philippians iii. 10, Moffatt).

Holy Spirit, Salvation, and Eternal Life are interchangeable terms. 'Holy Spirit' is the experimental name for eternal life working in human beings here and now. The only thing that makes eternal life actual is the entrance of the Holy Spirit by commitment to Jesus Christ. Our beliefs will mock us unless something comes into us from God, because nothing has any power to alter us save the incoming of the life of God. The Holy Spirit is the One Who makes experimentally real *in* us what Jesus Christ did *for* us. The Holy Spirit is the Deity in proceeding power Who applies the Atonement to

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

our experience. Jesus Christ came to redeem us; to put us right with God; to deliver us from the power of death; to reveal God the Father; and when we receive the Holy Spirit He will make experimentally real in us all that Jesus Christ came to do. The great need for men and women is to receive the Holy Spirit. Our creeds teach us to believe in the Holy Spirit; the New Testament says we must *receive* Him (Luke xi. 13). Are you powerless in your life? Then, for Christ's sake, get at Reality! Ask God for the Holy Spirit, i.e., His eternal life, and you will begin to manifest in your mortal flesh the life of Jesus. One day we shall have a body like His body, but we can know now the efficacy of our Lord's resurrection. We can receive the Holy Spirit and experimentally know His salvation.

His Resurrection Destiny

“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” (Luke xxiv. 26).

The sufferings of Jesus Christ were not an accident, they are what He came for; He knew that His life was to be a ransom for many. The men who do not suffer in this world are not worth their salt. The finest men and women suffer, and the devil uses their sufferings to slander God. God is after one thing—bringing many sons to glory, and He does not care what it costs us, any more than He cared what it cost Him. God has taken the responsibility for the possibility of sin, and the proof that He did so is the Cross. He is the suffering God, not One Who reigns above in calm disdain. “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



He suffered.” He did not learn to be a Son, but because He was a Son, He deliberately chose to obey God through suffering. His resurrection destiny is to suffer and to enter into glory in order that He may bring “many sons unto glory.”

We must beware lest we put the emphasis of strain and suffering on the wrong thing. Salvation and eternal life are easy for us to obtain because of what they cost God. If we find it difficult to come to God, it is because we will try to drag our human pride through. If we will only come with the simplicity of a child, there is no need for any agony at all; we can receive the marvellous revelation of salvation and experience the impartation of the life of the risen Lord Jesus; but self-realisation and self-interest and sin must all be renounced. Never sympathise with a soul who finds it difficult to get through to God. It is perilously easy to sympathise with Satan instead of with God (Matthew xvi. 23). No one can be more tender to men and women than God. We are slandering God if we sympathise with the wilfulness of a person and think how difficult God makes it for him. It is never hard to get to God unless our wilfulness makes it hard.

Our Lord rose to an absolutely new life, to a life He did not live before He was Incarnate, He rose to a life that had never been before. There had been resurrections before the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but they were all resuscitations to the same kind of life as heretofore. Jesus Christ rose to a totally new life, and to a totally different relationship to men and women. The resurrection of Jesus Christ grants Him the right to give His own destiny to any human

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

being—viz., to make us the sons and daughters of God. His Resurrection means that we are raised to His risen life, not to our old life. “Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life ... we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection” (Romans vi. 4–5).

Our Experimental Life

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death ” (Philippians iii. 10). (See also Romans vi. 23.)

Eternal life is not a present given to me by God, it is Himself. “The gift of God,” not *from* God. How is the life of God going to work out in us? First of all, it will manifest itself in our mortal flesh in the way of death. The surging life of God instantly hates to death the things which have nothing to do with God. We experience exhaustion, a drying up of the springs of intellectual and physical life, the reason being that God is teaching us that all our life is now in the hand of God. Then the Holy Spirit will experimentally reveal the power of His resurrection. If we are right with God, physical exhaustion will always bring its own recuperation. The exhaustion does not tell because He recuperates all the time. It is not a question of being buoyed up with excitement, it is a superabounding supply of life all the time. If we live in touch with our Lord’s life experimentally, we realise that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. This comes to us first as a revelation, not as something to be experienced

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

only. If we live on the experimental side alone, we shall get distracted. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ has given Him the right, the authority, to impart the life of God to us, and our experimental life must be constructed on the basis of His life. "All my fresh springs are in Thee" (Psalm lxxxvii. 7). Watch the things that exhaust you, and you will find you are doing something outside God's arrangement for you. There are things for which His life supplies no energy and we get spent right out. If we are doing things inside God's arrangement for us, the natural exhaustion is so quickly recuperated by the resurrection life of Jesus that we do not feel the exhaustion. We must find out whether we are instructing ourselves in the Christian revelation. Do we know the power of His resurrection? are we making that the centre of our profound life? If we are, the experimental reality will work all through.

His Resurrection Deity

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God " (John xx. 17).

The risen Lord as Son of Man is talking to a particular representative of humanity, the woman out of whom He had cast seven devils. Our Lord is the same, yet so indefinably altered by His death and resurrection that Mary did not recognise Him at first. Then when He said to her, "Mary," she flung herself at His feet with a complete thrill of expectancy—'He is back again, and all things will be

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

well!’ Mary had to learn that the relationship she was now to be in to her Lord was not one that could be discerned by her natural senses, but a relationship based on an impartation of life from Himself. “I ascend unto My Father, and your Father.” It was to be a relationship in which she was made one with Jesus Christ. His Resurrection Deity means that He can take us into union with God, and the way into that relationship of oneness is by the Cross and the Resurrection. The weakest saint can experience the power of the Deity of the Son of God if he is willing to ‘let go.’ The whole almighty power of God is on our behalf, and when we realise this, life becomes the implicit life of the child. No wonder Jesus said—“Let not your heart be troubled”! The characteristic of the saintly life is abandon to God, not a settling down on our own whiteness. God is not making hot-house plants, but sons and daughters of God, men and women with a strong family likeness to Jesus Christ.

Our Entire Life

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your attention on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory” (Colossians iii. 1–4).

We starve our minds as Christians by not thinking, and we cannot think as Christians until we are born from above. So many of us have a good spiritual experience, but we have never thought things out

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



on Christian lines. It is just as true that a man may *live* a Christian life without thinking as that a man may *think* a Christian life without living it. We have to learn to combine the two, and to do this we must build up our minds on these great truths.

If we have been born from above, we must seek the things that are above. To any one who is not born from above, it sounds mystical and remote, but there is nothing too profound for a saint. We can always know a saint because he discerns the revelations of God, while the unspiritual man who has not been born from above looks puzzled. Truth is not discerned intellectually, it is discerned spiritually.

The power of the Resurrection is to work out in these mortal bodies. Provided we are alive when our Lord comes again, we shall be changed, Paul says, and he goes on to expound the marvellous transformation that will take place in a flash in everything to do with the natural.

“Your life is hid with Christ in God.” Christ is our entire life. When once we realise this, certain forms of doubt and perplexity vanish for ever. If we set our affection on things above, those perplexities will never trouble us any more because we know the Lord Jesus, and He is not distracted by these present perplexities. The things that are obscure to the natural man become clear to the penetration of the mind that sets itself on the things above. Such an one does not pretend not to have doubts, we know he has not got them; his is not a stoical calm. The reason is that he has been living for a long time in

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



Colossians iii., the entire life is hid with Christ in God, the whole set of the mind is on the things above, and the things on earth are transfigured.

Thank God that the almighty power of Jesus Christ is for us. All power is vested in Him in heaven and on earth, and He says, "Lo, I am with you all the days." All the power of the Deity of Christ is ours through His Resurrection.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

His Ascension and Our Union

Luke xxiv. 50–51; Acts i. 9–10

His Transfiguration Consummated (John xvii. 5)

Our Supernatural Salvation (Acts ii. 33)

His Transformation Completed (Matthew xxviii. 18)

Our Sanctified Security (John xiv. 13)

His Trustiness Continued (Acts vii. 56)

Our Simple Satisfaction (John xvii. 23)

All the events in our Lord's life to which we have no corresponding experience happened after the Transfiguration. From then onwards our Lord's life was altogether vicarious. Up to the time of the Transfiguration, He had exhibited the normal perfect life of a man; from the Transfiguration onwards, everything is unfamiliar to us. Gethsemane, the Cross, the Resurrection—there is nothing like these experiences in our human life. From the Transfiguration on, we are dealing not so much with the life our Lord lived as with the way He opened the door for us to enter into His life. At His Ascension our Lord enters Heaven and keeps the door open for humanity. His Cross is the door for every member of the human race to enter into the life of God. Because of His Resurrection our Lord has the



right to give eternal life to every individual man (John xvii. 2); and by His Ascension He becomes the possessor of all power in heaven and in earth (Matthew xxviii. 18).

His Transfiguration Consummated

“And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (John xvii. 5).

When our Lord as a Man had fulfilled all God's demands of Him, and when by obedience He had transformed His natural life into a spiritual life, He reached the place where it was all spiritual, earth had no more hold on Him, and on the Mount of Transfiguration His real nature, viz., His essential Deity, broke all through the natural and He was transfigured. He had fulfilled all the requirements of His Father for His earthly life, and God's presence, symbolised in the cloud, waited to usher Him back into the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. But He turned His back on the glory, and came down from the Mount to identify Himself with fallen humanity, because through Calvary there was to issue the newly constructed humanity. If Jesus Christ had gone to heaven from the Mount of Transfiguration, He would have gone alone. He would have been to us a glorious Figure, One who manifested the life of God's normal man and how wonderful it is for God and man to live as one, but what good would that have been to us? We can never live in the power of an ideal put before us. What is the use of Jesus Christ telling us we must be as pure in Heart as He is when we know we are

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

impure? But Jesus Christ did not go to heaven from the Mount. Moses and Elijah talked with Him, not of His glory, nor of His Deity, but of His *death*, the issue which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. By His death on the Cross Jesus Christ made the way for every son of man to get into communion with God.

It was on this point that the enemy of God and of man assailed our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane: 'You will never get through as Son of Man; You will get through as Deity, but not as Deity Incarnate.' Our Lord's object in becoming Deity Incarnate was to redeem mankind; and He did get through as Son of Man, which means that any and every man has freedom of access straight to God by right of the Cross of Jesus Christ. That is regeneration being made effectual in human lives, and the Holy Spirit is the One Who makes this marvellous Redemption actual in us.

On the Mount of Ascension the Transfiguration is completed. There is a similarity in the details of the two scenes, because the Ascension is the consummation of the Transfiguration. Our Lord does now, without any hesitation, go back into His primal glory; He does now go straight to the fulfilment of all the Transfiguration promised. But He does not go back simply as Son of God: He goes back to God as *Son of Man* as well as Son of God. The barriers are broken down, sin is done away with, death is destroyed, the power of the enemy is paralysed, and there is now freedom of access for any one straight to the very throne of God by the Ascension of the Son of Man. As He ascended our

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



Lord stretched out His hands, the hands that He deliberately showed to the disciples after His resurrection, and the last the disciples saw of Him was His pierced hands. Those pierced hands are emblematic of the Atonement, and the angels' declaration was that it is "this same Jesus" Who is to come again, with the marks of the Atonement upon Him. The Atonement means that the whole of the human race has been atoned for, Redemption is complete, and any man can get straight to the throne of God without let or hindrance through the wonder of all that our Lord has done. He is now at the right hand of the Father, not only as Son of God (John i. 18), but as Son of Man.

Our Supernatural Salvation. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts ii. 33). Salvation means the incoming into human nature of the great characteristics that belong to God, and there is no salvation that is not supernatural. It is easy to say that human love and Divine love are one and the same thing; actually they are very far from being the same. It is also easy to say that human virtues and God's nature are one and the same thing; but this, too, is actually far from the truth. We must square our thinking with facts. Sin has come in and made a hiatus between human and Divine love, between human virtues and God's nature, and what we see now in human nature is only the remnant and refraction of the Divine. Human virtues according to the Bible are not promises of what human nature is going to be, but remnants of what human nature once was. This

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

explains why we so often see remnants of original nobility in men and women who have not been born again into the Kingdom of God. As Christians we must learn to trace things to their right source. God makes very distinct the difference between the qualities that are Divine and those that are human. John xv. 13 has reference to human love, which lays down its life for its friends. Romans v. 8 has reference to the Divine love, which lays down its life for its enemies, a thing human nature can never do. This does not mean that human beings cannot forgive; they can and do forgive; but forgiveness is not human, it belongs entirely to the Divine nature, and is a miracle when exhibited in the human.

Beware of philosophies. It is much more satisfactory to listen to a philosopher than to a proclaimer of the Gospel, because the latter talks with the gibes and the cuts of God, and they go straight to that in man which hates the revelation of the gap there is between man and God. If we accept the revelation, it will mean that we must be born from above, and the Gospel message is that we can be born from above the second we want to.

Intellectually, we are inclined to ignore sin. The one element in man that does not ignore sin is conscience. The Holy Spirit deals with conscience first, not with intellect or emotions. When the Holy Spirit gets hold of a man and convicts him of sin, he instantly gets to despair, for he recognises that the holiness of Jesus Christ is the only thing that can ever stand before God, and he knows there is no chance for him. When conviction of sin comes in this way there is only one of two places—either suicide or the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

Cross of Jesus Christ. The majority of us are shallow, we do not bother our heads about Reality. We are taken up with actual comforts, with actual ease and peace, and when the Spirit of God comes in and disturbs the equilibrium of our life we prefer to ignore what He reveals.

Salvation is always supernatural. The Holy Ghost brings me into union with God by dealing with that which broke the union. It is dangerous to preach a persuasive gospel, to try and persuade men to believe in Jesus Christ with the idea that if they do, He will develop them along the natural line. Jesus Christ said, 'I did not come to send peace, but a sword'; there is something to be destroyed first. Jesus Christ does not produce heaven and peace and delight straight off, He produces pain and misery and conviction and upset, and a man says, 'If that is all He came to do, then I wish He had never come, But this is not all He came to do: He came to bring us into a supernatural union with His Father. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, i.e., commits himself to Jesus Christ—belief is a moral act, not an intellectual act—then the Ascended Lord, by the Holy Ghost, brings the man into oneness with His Father, it is a supernatural union.

The two centres of Christian life are Experience and Revelation. Are we thinking along the line of the revelations Jesus Christ has given? We can never get into touch with God by our own effort; but we must maintain touch with God by our own effort (Philippians ii. 12–13). Jesus Christ can take anyone, no matter who he is, and presence him with His wonderful Divine salvation. The nature of God is

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, but we have to maintain contact with His nature by obedience. Some sections of the Christian community teach that because we are all right in the anticipation of God, therefore it does not matter how we live actually. That is not true; we must not only be right in heart towards God, our life must show that we are right. Jesus Christ's life must work through our flesh, and that is where we have to obey. So many go into raptures over God's supernatural salvation, over the wonderful fact that God saves us by His sovereign grace (and we cannot do that too much), but they forget that now He expects us to get ourselves into trim to obey Him. We have to live in this mortal flesh as sons and daughters of God; we have to bring out to our finger tips the life that is hid with Christ in God, and we can do it because our ascended Lord has all power. If our flesh and blood does not allow the Son of God to manifest Himself in us, we are actually antiChrist, we preach what our life denies, we proclaim a creed which our practical life spits at in ridicule. It is unconscious blasphemy to deny by our life that Jesus Christ can do what He claims He can. If we are born again, we are born into the life of God, and we have to see to it that we obey His life, and the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit is shown by the way He conscientiously chases us into a corner by touching every point where we have not been obeying.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

His Transformation Completed

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth ” (Matthew xxviii. 18) (cf. Matthew xi. 27).

In Matthew xi. 27 our Lord states that the revelation of the Father is entirely confined to the Son, He is the only Medium for revealing the Father. In Matthew xxviii. 18 He says, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” Then has He power to make a saint of me? If not, He has totally misunderstood Himself and has misled me. Has He all power on earth? What about this ‘piece of earth’ I have to look after, has He power over it? Am I professing by my lips that I am a Christian while my actual ‘piece of earth’ laughs to scorn what Jesus Christ says? He says, “All power is given unto Me”; am I demonstrating that He has no power at all?

As Son of Man Jesus Christ deliberately limited omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience in Himself; now they are His in absolute full power. As Deity, they were always His; now as Son of Man they are His in absolute full power. At the throne of God, Jesus Christ has all power as Son of Man. That means He can do anything for any human being in keeping with His own character.

Our Sanctified Security. “And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John xiv. 13). That is where our salvation abides in its perfect security. Couple with these words our Lord’s other statement, “All power is given unto Me.” You say, ‘Oh well, then I

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

can ask anything I like.’ Try it! I defy you to do it. Our Lord says also, ‘Ask what you *will*,’ i.e., what your will is in. There is very little our wills are in, consequently it is easy to work up false emotions. When you have been touched by the Holy Spirit and have received His quickening, note what you evade in prayer. There is nothing that will detect spiritual rottenness quicker than to *ask*, i.e., with the will. We shall find we have to stop asking a number of things, and this will simplify prayer. Our Lord says, “Ask,” and we will always find that we do not ask when we talk about it. ‘I’ll pray about it’—but we won’t. To say we will pray about a thing often means we are determined not to think about it. Contact with Jesus Christ made the disciples realise that they were paupers, and they said, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke xi. 1).

If we are perplexed over the question of sanctification, or about the baptism of the Holy Ghost, we ourselves are the reason why we are bothered. God has written a Book, and the phrases ‘sanctification’ and the ‘baptism of the Holy Ghost’ are His, not man’s; why do we not go to Him about it? We are the reason why we do not go; we dare not go. If we honestly ask God to baptise us with the Holy Ghost and fire, anything that happens is His answer, and some appalling things happen. If we accept the revelation that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, are we prepared to ask God to fulfil the purpose of the Holy Ghost in our body? If we are, watch the consequences—that friendship must go, that book, that association, everyone of them must decay off like a lightning flash. If anyone has a difficulty in getting through to God, it is never God

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



who is to blame. We can get through to Him as soon as we want to, there is nothing simpler. The trouble is when we begin to sympathise with the thing that is proud and strong in independence of God.

If we have been supernaturally saved by the Redemption of Jesus Christ, we know we are unfit, therefore we do not bother any more about ourselves, and as we walk in the light we have perfect freedom of access into the very heart and presence of God. The life of communion with God that Jesus lived on earth is what He has made possible for us by His Ascension.

Do not ask others to pray for you; our Lord says, 'Pray yourself, *ask*.' We each have our families, our Sunday School classes, our communities, our nation; how many of us are praying for them, or are we shirking the responsibility? We have to ask the thing that our will is in, and we cannot put our will into things God has not brought before us. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do." "In My name," not in Christian jargon, or in the piety of spurious devotion, but 'in My *nature*.' "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The prayers of some people are more efficacious than those of others, the reason being that they are under no delusion, they do not rely on their own earnestness, they rely absolutely on the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews x. 19).

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



His Trustiness Continued



“And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts vii. 56). Stephen sees our Lord after His Ascension, and He is the same Jesus (cf. Revelation i. 17–15). Some teach that the Jesus of actual history is not the Christ, and that the risen Jesus is a conception of the divinely inspired imagination of the disciples. But it was “this same Jesus” that ascended—the marks of the Atonement were upon Him. When we look for the characteristics of the ascended Lord in the accounts of the historic Jesus, we are on the right track. We will find His characteristics in the New Testament, and He will exhibit these same characteristics to us in almighty power.

Our Simple Satisfaction. “That they may be made perfect in one” (John xvii. 23). The baptism of the Holy Ghost delivers us from the husk of independent individuality. By personality is meant the thing in every individual that the Spirit of God awakens and brings out into real communion with God. Individual self-assertiveness is the husk, personal identity with our Lord is the kernel. Individuals can never be made one; persons can. Individuality is all ‘elbows,’ it separates and isolates. A child is an individual, and it ought to be independent. Our Lord can never be defined in terms of individuality and independence, but only in terms of personality. The thing that is marked all through His life is personality, not independence and self-assertiveness. In the natural life when two people fall in love with one another, the individuality

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES





is transfigured because the personalities are merged. Identity is not domination, but oneness between two distinct persons in which neither dominates, but the oneness dominates both. In the natural life if the individuality re-asserts itself, there will be hitches and difficulties, and the same with the spiritual life. Jesus said, 'If you would be My disciple, you must deny yourself, give up your right to yourself to Me.' The natural independence of individuality springs from independence of God. If I will give up my right to myself to Him, the real true nature of my personality will answer to God straight away by the indwelling Holy Ghost. Jesus prayed, "that they may be one, even as We are one"; and when Paul urges us to put on the new man. he is urging on the most practical line that we put on in our actual life the habits that are in perfect accordance with this oneness with God, and that we do it all the time. Then there will come the simple satisfaction of knowing that God is answering the prayer of Jesus Christ. If you want to know what God is after in your life, read John xvii. He prays that "they may be one, even as We are one." How close to God is Jesus Christ? "I and My Father are One." That is what He asks for us, and the Father will not leave us alone until the prayer is answered. Are we hindering the power of God in our life? Then never let us blame God. We may not only be supernaturally saved, we may be supernaturally sanctified. If we will submit to God and obey Him, we shall know that all that the Lord Jesus is in Himself is ours straightaway with the greatest ease and power and satisfaction by the right of His Ascension. He is King of kings and Lord of Lords from the day of His Ascension until now.

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

His Glorification and Ours

His Former Form of God (John xvii. 5)

Our Present Glorifying (Galatians vi. 14)

His Fulfilled Fitness in God (1 Corinthians xv. 28)

Our Prevailing Glory (Romans viii. 30)

His Faithful Face of God (John i. 34)

Our Perpetual Glory (John xvii. 24)

As already stated, we must have Christian experience, but we must have more. Many of us are kindly interested in Christianity and in being devoted to Jesus Christ, but we have never received anything from Him. If we told ourselves the truth, we could not say that God had regenerated us experimentally. If we are not to be merely sentimental Christians, we must know what it is to be born into the kingdom of God and to find out that God has altered the thing that matters to us. That must be made perfectly clear first, and we have the experience described in Acts xxvi. 18. We must have the experience of the new life, and then we have to see that the new life is instructed by the facts in God's Book. There are things that we cannot experience as Christians, yet we must build our faith upon them and not choose

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

according to the predilections which are the outcome of our own experience.

His Former Form of God

“And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was ” (John xvii. 5).

Jesus Christ came from somewhere to here, and the ‘somewhere’ whence He came was Absolute Deity. Jesus Christ was not a Being Who became Divine, He was the Godhead Incarnated—“Who, being in the form of God ...” The ‘form’ of God originally in Absolute Deity is not the form we understand by the body, but ‘glory,’ the completeness of God, a form inconceivable to our human minds, in which what we call the Trinity was an absoluteness. The term ‘Trinity’ is not a Bible word, but a term that arose in the throes of a great conflict of minds, and is the crystallised attempt to state the Godhead in a word. One element of the Godhead became, through the Word of God, the Incarnate Son of God. Beware of separating *God manifest in the flesh* from *the Son becoming sin* . In other words, never separate the doctrine of the Incarnation and the doctrine of Redemption. The Incarnation was for purposes of Redemption. The New Testament reveals that God became Incarnate only for the purpose of putting away sin. God did not become Incarnate for the purpose of Self-revelation.

When the Son of God, Who became Son of Man, has done His work, He will be resolved back again

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



into Absolute Deity (1 Corinthians xv. 28; cf. John xvii. 5). This is where our vocabulary will not go. We get into difficulties over God becoming Incarnate when we bring in our own conceptions. For instance, we say that the essential nature of God is omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience; the New Testament reveals that the essential nature of God is holiness, and that He became the weakest thing in His own creation, viz., a Baby. Are we prepared to abandon our own conceptions? We are all idolaters, we do mentally what Isaiah ridiculed the people in his day for doing (Isaiah xliv. 9–20). Our ideas have no more power over us than we choose to give them. We bring God to the bar of the judgment of our ideas. Jesus Christ said that His Father made His revelations to babes. Are we modest enough, and humble enough, and regenerate enough, to accept Him as Master of our brains as well as of our souls? Are we willing to be as submissive to Incarnate Reason as we are to Incarnate God? Incarnate Reason is the Lord Jesus, and any man who exercises his reason in contradiction to Incarnate Reason is a fool. We must never take our Lord's words and interpret them by our own human reason; we must always interpret them by His life. Am I prepared to be a believer in Jesus Christ? To believe in Jesus means much more than the experience of salvation in any form, it entails a mental and moral commitment to our Lord's view of the world, of the flesh, of the devil, of God, of man, and of the Scriptures. To "believe also in Me" means that we submit our intelligence to Jesus Christ our Lord as He submitted His intelligence to His Father. This does not mean that

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



we do not exercise our reason, but it does mean that we exercise it in submission to Reason Incarnate.

“And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (John xvii. 5). Our Lord is referring to the former form of God. No human being has any conception of what that is, it is a revelation. The insidious teaching abroad today, the heresy that dissolves the Person of Jesus Christ, has crept in everywhere. Jesus Christ asks in His prayer, from His position as Son of Man, that He might be taken back to His former glory. “I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.” What was that work? To rehabilitate the human race, to bring the human race back to God—that is the work which God had given Him to do. Jesus Christ made the way clear for man to get straight into at-one-ment with God. Now that that work is completed—completed in His will, and soon to be completed in actuality—our Lord prays that He may be in the former form of God. There is no human connection in His prayer, it is superbly Divine.

Is Jesus Christ to me what He is in His estimate of Himself? He makes the destiny of the whole human race depend upon their relationship to Him. It is not the Divinity but the Deity of Jesus Christ that is the important thing.

Our Present Glorifying. “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” (Galatians vi. 14). Glorifying is the experience of joy on the inside, associated with the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

❖

fame of God on the outside. Paul says his glorying is in the Cross of Christ, 'and God forbid that I should glory in any other thing.' Joy is neither happiness nor brightness, joy is literally the nature of God in my blood, no matter what happens. The joy that Jesus exhibited in His life was in knowing that every power of His nature was in harmony with His Father's nature, therefore He did with delight what God designed Him for as Son of Man. Anything that exactly fulfils the purpose of its creation experiences joy, and Paul states that our joy is that we fulfil the purpose of God in our lives by being saints. How are we going to be saints? We all like to listen to the life of Jesus and to His teaching, but what does it all amount to? Ask the one who has been born again, and he will tell you, to the limit of his language, the difference it has made. It has made an absolute difference, because by the Cross of Jesus Christ, we enter into the life of the Son of God. What is the sign that we are born from above? That we see the rule of God. Have we got in us the new power, the new life, the new disposition that actually works itself out in our actual life? Our Lord did not tell us to ask for peace or for joy or for life, He told us to ask for the Holy Spirit (Luke xi. 13), and when we ask, the honour of Jesus Christ is at stake. The reason God gives us the Holy Spirit so easily is because of what His Son has done, and yet He never emphasises what it cost, that is in the background altogether.

Our glorying is in the Cross of Jesus Christ because it is through this doorway that all the new life comes in (1 Corinthians ii. 2). The normal life that God wants us to live is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ; but what good does it do us to talk about the

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

speckless perfection of Jesus Christ? It would be a tantalising thing if all Jesus Christ gave us was the example of His own life. If a man is in earnest, it produces absolute despair. What is the good of teaching the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount? They are out of our reach altogether. Once we remember that the normal life, the life of perfect oneness with God, is ours by means of Jesus Christ's death, it is all explained. We can enter there by His Cross. Have we entered there? It does not matter who the man is, how degraded or how moral, he can enter in at the door of His death, and then never cease to thank God that this is the crown of his joy. It is through the Cross of Jesus Christ that we begin to fulfil all that we are created for, and the great aim of the life is for the fame of God, not for the needs of men. Human sympathy has swamped the commands of God in the average Christian. Instead of the need being the opportunity it is made to be the call. The first of all the commandments is—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

The basis of Reality is Redemption and not reason. Reason is the basis of the way we work on reality, it is an instrument. Thank God for logic and for reason, they are instruments for expressing our life, but life itself is not reasonable. Man's intellect has no power to lead him; his intellect makes him either a polished hypocrite or, in the case of a disciple of Jesus Christ, it becomes the bond slave of the right discernment of God's will (John vii. 17).

His Fulfilled Fitness in God

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

“And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians xv.). This is the fulfilment of the prayer in John xvii. 5. When the Redemption wrought by the Son is actually fulfilled and all things are subdued unto Him, and when the whole human race—and God are at one, then the Son of Man will cease to be by resolving back again into Absolute Deity. “And when all things shall be subdued unto Him”—remember everything is not yet subdued unto Him. Redemption does not only mean personal salvation and the redemption of our body, it means the absolute and complete redemption of the whole material earth in every iota, and not only the earth, but the whole material universe—“a new heaven and a new earth.” It means that all relegated authority shall pass and God will be the absolute Authority, “that God may be all in all.” There is a time coming, thank God, when everything shall be under the direct rule of God in every detail. We look for new heaven and a new earth, and then shall the human race stand before God as Jesus Christ stood before Him when He was here. Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, is not a mere individual, He is the One Who represents the whole human race. In order to see the human race as God intends it to be, look at the life of Jesus; and by the Redemption the human race is to be brought there. When the human race is actually there, Jesus Christ as Son of Man ceases to be and becomes absolute Deity again. The Son becomes subject to the Father, and God remains all in all. Our Lord’s prayer is answered. “And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." That glory is to be in God.

Our Prevailing Glory. "And whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Romans viii. 30). In John xvii. 5 we see the transcendent revelation of the Absolute Deity of our Lord; in John xvii. 22 He speaks of a second glory, "and the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." What glory had Jesus when He became the Son of Man vicariously, when He became the whole human race in one Person? what was His glory then? Did every one who saw Him say, 'That is God Incarnate'? No, Isaiah said He shall be "as a root out of a dry ground," utterly disadvantaged. Is this true? Look in your own heart and you will see it is true. "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." It is not true that 'we needs must love the highest when we see it'; the human beings of His own day saw the Highest, and they hated Him. It needs the transformation of an inward surgery, being born from above, to see that He is the altogether lovely One. The glory of Jesus was not an external thing; He effaced the Godhead in Himself so effectually that men without the Spirit of God despised Him. His glory was the glory of actual holiness. What is holiness? Transfigured morality blazing with indwelling God. Any other kind of holiness is fictitious and dangerous. One of the dangers of dealing too much with the Higher Christian Life is that it is apt to fizzle off into abstractions. But when we see holiness in the Lord Jesus, we do know what it means, it means an unsullied walk with the feet, unsullied talk with the tongue, unsullied thinking of the mind, unsullied

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

transactions of the bodily organs, unsullied life of the heart, unsullied dreams of the imagination—that is the actual holiness Jesus says He has given them. This is the meaning of sanctification. Paul says, and no wonder, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” The holiness of the Son of God is to be actually manifested in our ordinary bodily lives. This is the actual experience of sanctification working out in each detail.

This is our prevailing glory; Paul is not talking about being justified and glorified hereafter, but now. Thank God, the joy of the Lord is an actual experience now, and it goes beyond any conscious experience, because the joy of the Lord takes us into the consciousness of God, and the honour at stake in our body is the honour of God. Have we realised that the Son of God has been formed in us by His wonderful Redemption? Are we putting on the habits that are in keeping with Him? This is the glory of the saint here and now—the glory of actual holiness manifested in actual life. Whether it comes out in eating and drinking or in preaching, it must show in every detail straight through until the whole limit actually manifests the complete new life.

His Faithful Face of God

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth” (John i. 14).

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



❖

In Genesis i. 2–3 we read that the Spirit of God brooded, the word of God was spoken, and creation was begun. John takes us back there; see also Proverbs viii. The Word has become Incarnate in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Word of God Incarnated, made flesh, and in Him we see the Face of God. All that our Lord said about Himself is in perfect accordance with this. “I and My Father are One.” He did not say, ‘I and Humanity are one.’ Jesus nowhere said that God and man are one; He nowhere said ‘He that hath seen *man* hath seen the Father.’ Jesus nowhere taught that God was in man; but He did teach that God was manifested in human flesh in His own Person that He might become the generating centre for the same thing in every human being, and the place of His travail pangs is the Incarnation and Calvary and the Resurrection. Jesus Christ did not say that human beings were all specimens of God, as some men try to prove from conceptions of their own. ‘Reason being God, there can be nothing unreasonable; sin is not a positive thing, it is a defect in the desire to grasp hold of God.’ These blasphemies start from a thing that looks so humble, ‘God is all.’ God is not all. I am not God, neither are you. Jesus Christ reveals God as the Father. “I am the Way ... no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” Jesus Christ is not the way to God, not a road we leave behind us, a fingerpost that points in the right direction; He is the way itself. “Abide in Me”; consequently the Lord satisfies the last aching abyss of the human heart. Has He satisfied yours? If not, why are you in Christian work? What is the explanation of the great craving for the salvation of the souls of men? If it is not born of the Holy Ghost experimentally realised in us, it is

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

nothing in the world but the introduction of sordid commercialism into religion (Matthew xxiii. 15). Why do we want people to be saved? Has Jesus Christ made such a difference to us that we cannot rest day or night till by prayer we get all our friends there? That is the passion for souls born of the Holy Ghost because its experimental reality is with us every day.

If we want to know what God is like, let us study the Lord Jesus. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." How did people see Him in the days of His flesh? By their natural eyes? No, after His resurrection they received Holy Spirit, and their eyes were opened and they knew Him. We do not know Him by the reasoning of our minds, but by the new life. Jesus Christ is to us the faithful Face of God. Could anyone be in doubt any more after they had seen Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost? Think of the absurd, painful, distressing, never-to-be-answered questions we ask—"Shall I know those whom I love after death?" Wild, vagrant, wrong, stupid, painful questions. Look at Jesus Christ, get into contact with Him by the Holy Spirit, and those questions are impossible. He says—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." The Face of God is the Lord Jesus Christ. It always comes back to the simple point, "Come unto Me."

Our Perpetual Glory. "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou has given Me" (John xvii. 24). Now our Lord is speaking of the glory which we are only to behold. We are not to be absorbed into God as drops in an ocean, we

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



◆

are to be lifted into perfect oneness with Him until God and the glory of perfected human redemption are transfigured by a mutual love. 'I want those whom Thou hast given Me,' says Jesus, 'to behold My glory.' What is His glory? "The glory which I had with Thee before the world was," and our perpetual glory is not only that we are saved and sanctified and redeemed and lifted into the glory of unspeakable things as the result of our Lord's Redemption, but something other—we shall see God face to face, an inconceivable beatific vision. This is what Jesus Christ has prayed for His saints. This is not the glory we have here, but the glory we are going to have, the glory of beholding His glory.

2

THINK AGAIN

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

²Chambers, O. (1996, c1930). *Making all things new*. Hants UK: Marshall, Morgan & Scott.