

things that ought to be operating here. That is what the Church is here for—to be the demonstration of heavenly things that one day will be eternal, so that God is able to point to the Church and say, 'Look at them! It is happening now, they have glory now, there is glory in the Church now'. Is all the Lord's satisfaction to be withheld until the end is reached? Is the Lord never to have anything here and now that delights His heart? Surely there ought to be that which here and now brings joy to His heart: so that He is able to look upon it and say, 'This is what I have been wanting'. He should even be able to look at *us* sometimes and say, 'This is what I wanted'. The Lord wants to be satisfied *now*. "He shall see . . . and be satisfied". And we need to be very exercised about this matter.

What is it that the Lord gave Himself for, that was so costly? What was the point of the terrific scene in Gethsemane? 'Not My will, but Thine, be done' (Luke 22:42). Well, let us say it straight away—it was unto something very great: not unto something small or partial, but unto something very worthwhile. The Lord is never satisfied with half a thing. The Lord wants the full thing, and this raises the great issue of what is the full fruitage of redemption. There are some statements in the Word that tell us. "*To this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord . . .*" (Rom. 14:9). He did not die and rise again for partial possession, but that He might be Lord. Everything belongs to Him; His rightful place is Lord. Here we get an explanation of what it is that satisfies Him.

Satisfaction In A Seed

"He shall see His seed." Satisfaction, first of all, in a seed. Notice it says "*His seed*". In Psalm twenty-two, which is again the travail of His soul because it is the psalm of the Cross, we find the same expression used—

Chapter Three

The Fruit Of His Travail

Reading: Isaiah 53:10, 11; Psalm 22:22-31.

In this passage in Isaiah, we get those words concerning the suffering, the Cross, of our Lord Jesus—"When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed"; then that is enlarged further—"He shall prolong His days"; and finally we read in the eleventh verse—"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied". The question which arises from this tremendous passage, this tremendous statement, is—What, after all, is it that will satisfy the Lord as the fruit of what He has endured? There is no doubt about it that the cost has been tremendous. We have only to read Isaiah fifty-three: the whole of that experience is called "the travail of His soul". This is a vital matter—the question to what end, after all, did He endure so much, why did He go through it all? Such suffering must have an adequate fruitage; there must be that which comes out of what the Lord went through to justify it. Here, for our great encouragement, we read, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied". There is an end when it will be glory, when the Lord will be satisfied.

But, while, as in every other matter of the Word of God, there is an ultimate realization, an eternal realization, there is also a present or a spiritual realization before the end comes. There is a great peril amongst Christians of relegating everything to heaven; but the point is that the battle is here, and there are many

"a seed" (vs. 30). "A seed shall serve Him"; out of His travail, in other words, there will be a seed or a generation who shall serve Him. And earlier in that passage, we find that He uses those words—"I will declare Thy name unto My brethren" (vs. 22). In Hebrews two, where that passage is quoted, the Lord uses the words—"For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren", but a little further on another Scripture is quoted which says, "I and the children whom God hath given Me" (vs. 13). "As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself" (John 5:26); and "the Son . . . giveth life to whom He will" (John 5:21).

There is a very great word used about the Son of God, particularly in John's writings—"the only begotten". "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father" (John 1:14). "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son (one reading says 'God only begotten') . . . He hath declared Him" (John 1:18). That word 'only begotten' means that He is the unique One in that He derives His life from God Himself. He is unique as the only One directly deriving life from God. The eternal God is in the Son. "In Him was life" (John 1:4).

But the amazing thing is that He has a seed and imparts His life to those who become joined to Him. He is the life-giving Son of God, and those who become partakers of His nature are His seed. They derive their life, their nature, from Him. The Lord as a fruit of His travail has brought into being a seed. And then it says that He shall see that seed, and there are two things that we need to recognize about the seed.

Travail Unto Full Growth

First of all, that the impartation of the life of Him Who is the Only Begotten is not the end of the process—it is the beginning of it. He puts the seed in, in order

that the seed may germinate and develop and come to fullness. A child is always intended to be a full-grown man or woman, and what obtains in nature is always an illustration of an eternal reality. We are not satisfied with an undeveloped human life. However small it is, so long as it is developing properly, we are happy; but when development ceases, and ceases for months or years, then it is a serious thing, the life is not moving. The Lord is not satisfied with His seed being merely imparted, though everything begins there.

Do not minimize the coming of the life of God into a human being. That is new birth, that is eternal life; and "they shall never perish". "There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:7). Praise the Lord for the millions who have been saved because there is life for a look at the crucified One. New birth is a glorious thing. But the Lord Himself wants something more than that. His own nature is now there as a seed, but He wants to see it. He wants to see the nature coming to development and to full fruition. We are stupid about spiritual things. If we were planting an orchard, would we be content to put in little plants that never grew, and they were supposed to be fruit trees? Would you bring your friends round and say, 'Look at my dear little fruit trees'? But with many of us it almost amounts to that. The thing has never come to life. The fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22). It is the nature of Christ being expressed. It is something that takes a lot of developing; it is the formation of Christ. The Lord is satisfied when He sees Himself reflected, when He sees that He is now beginning to take shape in many sons.

So Hebrews two says: "It became Him, for Whom are all things, and through Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (vs. 10); not 'in bring-

ing many sons into eternal life', but "in bringing many sons unto glory"; and glory is moral glory, it is likeness to Christ. The only glory in us is the measure of Christ—not this wretched person. Glory is the presence of the One within, Who is there that He may increase and grow and develop, until His very features begin to appear in these poor vessels of clay: so that qualities and characteristics and beauties, which just are not in us at all naturally, begin to appear; and that is what the Lord is looking for. 'My seed', seed like that—because seed means nature. He is looking for the nature; He is looking for that which in Himself finds its fulness, manifested and brought through into actual expression in redeemed lives. The Lord's satisfaction with a seed is found not only where the life is implanted, but where it is increased and comes to expression.

We could spend much time on the great secret of that increase of Christ. There is a New Testament Scripture that bears right on this matter—Galatians four and verse nineteen. Paul, who has been used to bring into being a nucleus of believers called 'the churches in Galatia', says to these Christians, these saved people, "I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you." "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3). 'Having started in the power of that new God-given life, are you now going on in the energy of this same old one that you had before? You have a tradition, you have doctrines that you hold on to, you observe days and years—you are trying to be pleasing to God by doing things. That is all a dropping out of the realm of this new life which has made you sons of God; you have become withered, you have become babes again; and now I am in travail until Christ is formed in you.' Travail unto the full measure of Christ—that is the first thing.

The Way Of Growth

The second great matter here is that not only is the

seed a life imparted that it may come to fulness, but that fulness never comes without a basic work being done in the life. Paul touches on that in Galatians. He says, "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). We have the corollary of this in Romans eight and verse thirteen: "if ye live after the flesh, ye must die". If you ask, How can I live in the realm where Christ increasingly becomes my life?—the answer is: "They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof" (Gal. 5:24). Only if we have repudiated the old natural basis of life and said, 'I have finished with it, I want it to be no longer I but Christ', only if we have decided that it must be Christ, can it so be. Do you want it to be you or the Lord? You have to make up your mind. The Lord says, "If any man would come after Me" the first thing he will have to do is to "deny himself" (Matthew 16:24). The word 'deny' in the Greek is a deliberate and final repudiation of self. Baptism declares that; but baptism does not end the process, rather does it begin it—because from that crisis, what happens? Then all that is not Christ in us begins to come to light, bit by bit. You say, I did not know it would mean that! Then crisis follows crisis. But if you have wholly committed yourself, then there will be that further word of the Lord: "let him deny himself, and take up his cross"—in one case it says "daily" (Luke 9:23). As far as self is concerned, the way of the Cross is the only way of the increase of Christ. 'Not I, but Christ.'

But that has to be a heart matter settled secretly with the Lord. When a child of God settles that with the Lord, the Lord's mighty hand closes on him. He says, 'I will see you through'. How blessed it is to see children of God who come up to crisis after crisis; perhaps you see them meet the crisis, and you can tell from their faces what they are going through, it may be for two or three days, and then life breaks, and they seem more gentle. You have some fellowship with them: they say, 'Praise

the Lord, that is done! With those who mean business, it is remarkable how often that comes, and how quickly they grow. You do not have to engineer your own crises—the Lord does it. The Cross is the only way for Him to “see . . . and be satisfied”. Can the Lord be satisfied with the carnal Christian—with someone full of their own importance, going their own way? Does heaven look down and say—“That satisfies God”? It is nonsense! The Lord is looking for something quite different. He is looking for the ruling out of that, that His Son may come into view.

The Seed Is The Church

But the further meaning of this seed, I believe, is that it is a corporate term. The Lord has not died and risen again merely with individuals in view, though it begins with individuals; but as we come into Christ, we become His seed, a kind of person—many persons, of course, but of a certain kind—and in that kind of person the mere persons begin to be very much at a discount. It does not mean that personalities and individuals are ruled out, but they become something more than just a lot of units: and that brings us to that word in Galatians three and verse sixteen, where Paul is speaking about Abraham’s seed, “*He saith not, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many; but as of one, ‘And to thy Seed,’ Which is Christ.*” Christ Himself is, of course, the seed of God, the Only Begotten, but in Christ we become a seed or a generation which is Christ corporate. What we are naturally is all under judgment at the Cross and ruled out. God is only seeing a new creation altogether, where He sees but one person—His beloved Son; one Christ, and every one of us in Christ.

Therefore the fruit of the Cross is not just individual salvation. The fruit of the Cross is the Church. The fruit of the Cross is a very big thing: it is *oneness*. Will you

look at Galatians three, verses twenty-six through twenty-nine: “*For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise.*” As individuals, each with our background, our opinions, our personal angle on things, which seem so real to us—if I am a Jew, well, I see everything Jewishly, and if I am a Greek, I cannot abide Jews, and therefore I see everything Greekishly. But then there is a grave, and we say, ‘Lord, I want it to be You and not me’, and there is resurrection on the other side. The Jew says, ‘I want it to be You and not me’; there is resurrection on that side. How many Jews and Greeks are there over there? You cannot find one; there is nobody there at all except Christ.

So you go down into death as an individual, but you come up as part of a whole. There is only one Christ, Christ and His members, and that is the Church. The Church is Christ as the life and the realm of His people. The Church is not a lot of people. It is one new man, and the only way to know the Church is through death and resurrection. You have got to go right out of the picture, or you will never know what the Church is; because it is not on this side—it is on that other side. There may be religion on this side, but it is not the Church. The Church is on that side, and it is just Christ. It is not a thing, an organization; it is a life in union with the living Lord and vital union with one another. We feel for one another, we care for one another. How the whole physical body hurries to the aid of the foot that is damaged, or anything else. How insensitive we can be to one another, how terribly self-occupied and self-centred. The Lord wants to deliver us from that and bring us on to a new ground where we ‘love one another from the heart

fervently', where we really care what happens to one another.

That brings us to what I believe is the key to what was in the Lord's heart as He faced the Cross. I do not know where you think John seventeen took place. It looks as though it took place in the upper room, because chapter eighteen tells us that afterward they went into the garden, but it all seems bound up with Gethsemane. I do not know whether He prayed it in Gethsemane, but He prayed it within minutes or hours of Gethsemane. It was the same night, and more than once in John seventeen the Lord uses the actual words "I pray. . . ." When He is facing the greatest issue that has ever been faced, He pours out His heart to His Father. This is, so to speak, the Holy of Holies. You could not have a greater opening of His heart really than John seventeen. He is letting us into His secret. What an extraordinary thing for those men to have been there in His presence when He so prayed!

What does He pray for—the Saviour of the world, the One Who is going to the Cross as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world? "*I pray for them; I pray not for the world*"—is that not extraordinary?—"I pray . . . for those whom Thou hast given Me" (John 17:9). And what is the heart of His burden for those who are His children? His one heart cry to His Father for His seed, His own ('they are Mine', He says, 'for they are Thine'), is "*that they may be one, as we are one*" (John 17:11). The Lord's burden is—not that people may exist spiritually, but that they may be one; not that they may be brought to the birth, but that, having been brought to birth, they shall be brought into oneness. The full fruitage of redemption is not merely their salvation. God's great issue is not only our standing in Christ but our spiritual state. We have a glorious standing in Christ, but the state is a very serious matter. There is no testimony by standing; the testimony is by the state. It is not until something

happens inwardly in the life that there is any testimony. Just being a Christian does not necessarily make you a witness.

Then there is one further thing. The travail of His soul requires something more than individual spirituality. You can as it were beget a lot of semi-spiritual people, because they have had the teaching and they have heard about the Cross; they are, as it were, going on with the Lord all by themselves, but there is very little impact in an unrelated, isolated spiritual individual. A ministry can so easily produce spiritual individuals, the tragedy is that so often these individuals, if you meet them aside, fall into one of two categories. Either they think they have something a bit better than other people, therefore they cannot help feeling a bit critical of other people, and other Christians can smell their critical spirit miles off, and so are not interested—and so that testimony has gone out. Or, at the other extreme, they are going through such a time, because they are trying to go on with the Lord, that they are nearly always 'under the weather'—in other words, they are always having spiritual problems because they have heard this deeper thing and it has got them tied up. Even if you get quite a measure of spiritual life in a child of God as an isolated unit, and they go on faithfully and seek to be true to the Lord, the weight of things proves too much for them, and the more real they are, the more the weight of it is on them. They are nearly crushed out of existence. The Lord has another way, and the Lord's way is the Body—one life together, oneness. "That they may be one."

The Work Of The Cross

The Cross has done a mighty thing. If we could see what the Cross has really done, we would all stand up and say, Hallelujah! It is tremendous, it is a mighty deliverance. It has taken away the whole sin of the

world—yes; but that is not all, though that is big enough. When you and I had our sins forgiven, I wonder how many of us, after a little time, ran into a 'sticky patch'? I did; I am sure most of you did. We discover that, although we have a new nature through new birth, unfortunately we also have another nature still there. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit" (Gal. 5:17). We still have this other nature.

That constitutes the next battle for the child of God. To begin with, the Holy Spirit, as it were, does not talk about this; He just gives the joy of salvation. But after a bit there is the discovery of the need of something deeper. What is the final solution to a defeated Christian life? It is the end of Romans seven—"I thank God *through Jesus Christ*", and he thanks God because what is in Romans six has been realized. "*Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified (released) from sin*" (verses 6, 7). And the revelation of the Spirit comes as to the further meaning of the Cross as deliverance from the power of sin.

The next thing is that the Cross begins to deal with the self-life itself, and we run into a deeper discovery of what self is—not actual sins and wickednesses, but motives, a whole world of iniquity which is our self-life; and the end of it is that the Lord will lead us to a crisis, where we see that the Cross has dealt with that person, that self. Paul tells us in Romans six that the old man is crucified, and in Galatians two, verse twenty he says, "I have been crucified with Christ . . . no longer I . . . but Christ". So the Cross is our deliverance from that.

But the deepest thing is that the work of the fall was undone by the Lord Jesus. Redemption was an adequate thing. He was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). Now, one thing that was injected into the human race was enmity against God. The enmity

between man and God was dealt with at the Cross; we who were once enemies were reconciled, and there is peace with God. But the fall has always brought enmity between man and man; between each one of us and every other one there is an enmity. If we had to live with one other long enough and uncomfortably enough, trouble would soon blow up. There is something that is 'I', and it is irritating. Well, the Cross has slain that enmity—of course, in the Lord Jesus—but that is our refuge. Our refuge is the Cross, and Ephesians two touches that very matter. It says, "That He might create in Himself of the two one new man", "having slain the enmity thereby" (verses 16, 17). The Lord is not satisfied with a lot of warring units. It is a travesty to think of having peace with God upwards while there is war between His children down here. The Lord says, I want to get among you all and clear that away, so that you become one. And the proof that the Cross has done its work is the oneness that is in Christ.

A Practical Expression

Now, this is not just theory: it is the thing that the Lord longs for. "I pray for them . . . that they may be one", and our first exercise must be to commit ourselves to the Lord's will in this matter. He may touch actual points where there is not absolute oneness. That is a practical issue that we have to face. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar" (1 John 4:20). The proof that we are right with God is that we are right with one another. We are living in tremendous, terrific, days: every man of the world you talk to admits it. But, in the midst of all the chaos, the Lord has an answer. How encouraging that in Isaiah it says, "*Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon thee*" (Isa. 60:2). As the darkness deepens, the Church is the answer, and that means corporate life.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). It does not mean two or three in a room; it means two or three who have been made one, who have been through the fires of the Cross until they are one and you cannot get a wedge between them; Christ has done something. And love is not sentiment—it is a miracle. You have to love people with whom you could not get on naturally. The Cross has to deal with that life, that the life of Jesus may be manifest; and it is one life. The Lord says, if even two of you are one, you can have anything you like. It is an immense thing to get two people really one.

What, then, is the answer to the day in which we live? It is the Church; it is Christ corporate; it is the 'togetherness in Christ', at all costs, of the saints. "We ought to lay down our lives" (1 John 3:16). It is the losing of that natural independent self-life, whatever it costs, in the place where we live, in order that the Church may be built. The churches are the expressions of Christ in His people, and that is what matters. There needs to be a closely related practical life in Christ to make this effectual. In other words, the Church has to be built. There has to be a knitting of member to member in order that the Lord's presence may be known. The Lord is not just present, in an indefinite way, in the middle of a room where the saints are. He is in saints who are *one*. The key to the whole situation in the earth is this matter of *oneness* in the saints, and I believe that it needs practical expression.

"I pray for them . . . that they may be one." The travail of His soul will not be satisfied until He finds something of His own likeness reflected in us, and that reflection requires our being close together. We must "grow up in all things into Him, Who is the head, even Christ", but we cannot grow separately.