

## The Lord's Recovery Movement

### T. Austin-Sparks:

On the whole today, the Lord's full thought and conception is not the general thing among His people. The testimony of the Lord has largely broken down, and the great multitude called by His name are governed and manipulated and controlled by something that is religiously of the earth and not of the heavens - of man and not of the Holy Ghost; and there needs to be seen the impossibility of accepting that state of things. It is one thing to recognize that... and quite another thing to be in relation with the Lord's movement to recover for Himself that which is according to His mind.

One can be occupied all the time with the bad state of things, bemoan it, make people feel miserable... yet never get anywhere. That is not sufficient. It is quite easy to do that and to be, in a sense, religious malcontents; but that is not being active in the Lord's recovery movement. The Lord would act in relation to this thing... and He is acting. God must have a vessel - an instrument brought into such sympathetic fellowship with HIM that the conditions around of breakdown and failure become acute suffering - an agony. Paul knew something of that "suffering for His Body's sake"... "filling up that which was lacking of the sufferings of Christ." We must face that! The thing that is going to count for God is the sharing in His travail.

There is all the romance of Christian work, but that is mere glamour... all the enthusiasm and interest of organized Christian activity - all that. But it is not what we are before men in this matter, but what we are before God in the secret place - having heart concern for the Lord's testimony. We shall never get anywhere till in measure we enter into His travail. Ministry in its real, abiding, eternal value will depend upon the measure in which the travail is entered into.

This is a day for travail. Whether it be a travail for unsaved or for the Lord's people, every true spiritual activity is born out of travail; and those who have been most used of God in every time have been men and women who had this travail in their soul - in their secret life with God, who carried on their hearts a burden which led them to a point where their interests became quite secondary... and they took their life in their hand and held everything in relation to the Lord's own interest and His testimony, willing to let all go for God. This becomes a heart burden... to be carried all the time, not merely a ministry burden. This is necessary to any real ministry.

The Lord must have an instrument - a Daniel instrument - whether personal or collective, that moves out toward God for His testimony. He must have a Nehemiah with a heartache over the people because of the breakdown of the testimony. He must have an Ezra who is not for a moment compromising with anything contrary to the mind of God; and the Esther instrument who flings fear to the winds and goes, taking life in hand, to besiege the throne for the life of her people - for the deliverance of the people of God from the threat of the enemy. And, beloved, the burden of the Lord has got to come on our heart in like manner if we are to be effective instruments for the Lord in His End-time activities; we have got to be exercised in a very deep way with the interests of God. We must hold back nothing that will count for the Lord and His interests. You would be surprised how the Lord would come through if you gave Him a chance.

The whole thing begins with a recognition of the need... and the burden of those things upon our hearts. When we are really in it by the urge of the Holy Spirit, the common features found in these Old Testament instruments will be found inwrought in us... and we shall be found a people abandoned unto this ONE THING - the Lord's burden and heart concern for His testimony in His people. Then when you get into it, you find you are in a realm of opposition... and that you are really in a battle. If we are going to stand with God for that which wholly represents His mind, we have got to meet the most fierce antagonism, conflict, and pressure from every quarter; there is going to be no method overlooked by the enemy for frustrating the end in view. Why so much antagonism? Why so much pressure? Each time when something is in view which is to count for God in relation to His End-time purpose, there it is - you meet it all the time.

We meet this pressure from within and without when we are in the thing that is counting for God. When it comes, you must recognize that it is related to something which is to count for God. It will come through people; and if we blame the people and focus our attention on them, we have missed the point. We begin to fight people, and all the time it is something deeper than that: "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies."

People get cross with one another, and that gets on top of us; and we begin to direct our attention to them. We

get out with them and there is a situation and a mess... and we see afterwards how silly we are in allowing the devil to swing us off into a human track when it is a spiritual issue. It has not really been the fault of persons... or just inconsequential happenings; there has been a spiritual issue at stake. And all these other things were brought about by... and used of... the enemy to occupy us with the lesser and to blind us to the real issue, thus keeping us out of prayer and out of standing with the Lord for His rights which were at some point or other being challenged. It is the realm of unceasing conflict; and we have, it would seem, come into that part of the age when the enemy takes no rest... and we find we can take no off-times. Anything you do must be done deliberately with God, and you must never act out of, or apart from, God: such an exposed movement has been watched for by the enemy, and you have to pay for it.

Deliverance from oneself comes along the line of being concerned for the Lord's interests. You can become tied up with your own spiritual problems, and the way out is to have the burden of all God's people on your heart. It is that that creates ministry, that means strength, that means praying. It is an emancipating thing to have the Lord's burden. Things today are terrible spiritually; but there are those who are reaching out for more of God... and asking where they can find spiritual food. The Lord would, I believe, do something in our day - a day of small things - and He will begin by having an instrument with a burden - an instrument with whom is deposited the full-orbed revelation of the Lord Jesus, who would step out in faith and trust the Lord... and give the Lord a chance to vindicate Himself.

Are you dabbling with things - toying with pebbles on the beach - instead of being out in the deep with God in His big thing? Are you just interested... or desperately concerned; just having a nice pleasant time, or really carrying God's need in His people on your heart? Ask the Lord to bring you into His concern; stretch yourself out before God to be brought into His burden for the time in which you live. Ask the Lord about this matter; and, if it is true, ask Him to lay it on your heart and bring you into fellowship with HIMSELF in what He would do today.