

THE CHANGED OUTLOOK THROUGH THE CROSS**~Other Speakers G-L: Jessie Penn Lewis:**

LET us turn back a moment to 2 Corinthians 5: 14-16 (Conybeare): "The love of Christ constrains me, because I have thus judged, that if One died for all, then all died [in Him] ... I therefore, from henceforth, view no man carnally; yea, though once my view of Christ was carnal, yet now it is no longer carnal". Here we have the outcome of the changed centre in a wholly new point of view, i.e., when the 'I' is crucified there is a changed outlook! We view no man from the ordinary standpoint of the flesh, we have exchanged the earthly vision for the vision of God. The Corinthians had charged the Apostle with being 'mad' in his zeal for God, but he replies showing how the centre-spring made all the difference. Now turn to the Gospel to see that this was the very kind of life lived by Christ when He walked on earth as man.

Let us read first the Lord's words in John 5: 19 and 30. "Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do. . . ." "I can of Mine own self do nothing

This is the position and privilege which the Cross is purposed to bring us into. Not only identification with Christ in His death, as a judicial fact, but a practical life where the 'I' is kept in the place of death, so that there results such a union with the Risen Lord, that moment by moment we rely upon Him as our new centre, our source of action-even of speech, as He depended upon His Father, saying, in our measure, as He did, "I can do nothing of myself ". When Christ is thus the centre spring of a believer's life, as he is taught of the Spirit he draws upon Him even for words. What a revolution this would make in our conversation and our general tenor of speech.

The 'old creation' life is very profuse. But as Christ becomes our centre., and the 'I' is yielded to the Cross, the whole life is brought into light to be placed under His control. Then it is possible that you will become slow of speech, for the knife of the Cross deals with the profuse and diffuse language of nature-what we may describe as 'unnecessary talk' and the clamour of earth dies away! You will be willing then to sit in silence when you have nothing to say, and what is more,you can be still amidst the clamour of tongues, and be content that you cannot join in the soulish streams of earth.

In the Church of Christ there is a vast amount of infant talk. May the Lord bring us to the Cross to have the prattle of the 'I' cut down. What shall be done about our speech? Shall we consent to be like John the Baptist, and say "I am a voice"? May the Lord deal with our words. "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, for more than these is of the evil one." The evil one is at work in the old creation life, and he knows how to fan up and inflame floods of speech. But the Lord says 'yes' or 'no' is enough, if we are relying upon Him to enable us to speak according to His will. Shall we go out of this Conference a more God-controlled people in our words and actions? Shall we choose not to 'talk' except as He gives the words, and consent to have the diffuseness of nature's speech taken away? How much better to have the few words, given in reliance upon God, than to have a flood of empty speech. We need in our Conferences more time to get alone with God, for there is danger in all Conferences of an outpouring of words which almost cloud the light, so that we have scarce time to find Him and hear His voice. Are we willing to be brought to that place where we cannot 'do anything' without our God? Where we cannot do anything of ourselves? To lose our 'natural' ability, in the sense of using it apart from God? Oh the danger of those who speak on platforms. There is a great difference between handling the sacred Word of God, and the Holy Ghost handling it through us, and yet we acknowledge that unless God unveils the Word, our speaking is in vain. The Lord take from us the power to do anything without Him.

"The Son can do nothing of Himself." Let us lay down at the Cross our natural abilities, and be willing to really feel these words are true. Then we should be freed from all pomposity and ostentation in our work, and we should become simply dependent and helpless, actually relying upon the Living Christ every minute. It was Jeremiah who said, "Lord, I cannot speak, I am a child"! In His great grace, the Lord Jesus Christ was a child with His Father in all things. As He moved among men He said, "I speak not of Myself," and He was listening to, and relying upon His Father for judging all things, and all men around Him, all the time. (See John 5: 30.) We sorely need that discriminating power. We may know it if we press on to realize that Christ will live in us. To this end let us put aside everything which feeds and strengthens the 'I'. Because of sin in the mind and will, it is an impossible thing for the natural man to have a judgment without a self bias. But "My judgment is just" said the Lord, because He was 'judging' in reliance upon His Father. The cry among the people today is for 'justice'. They crave for righteous judgment. Any man who sees that you have no self-bias in your judgment will trust you. "My judgment is just."

Now let us turn to John 7: 17 "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself. . . ."

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In the light of the theme we are considering, these words are wonderful. See verse 18: "He that speaketh of himself (i.e., from himself) seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him". This is not only a statement of the Lord's attitude, but it embodies a principle of which, in the believer the self-centre taken to the Cross is the key. We know that the Lord Christ spoke the words of God, but He says the attitude of no self-bias is necessary for the reception of those words! i.e., if any one wills to do the will of God without any bias or flinching, then he will prove for himself the Divine origin of the Master's words. Any self-originated action has always the 'own' as its objective, although it may not appear so. What comes from the 'own' seeks the 'own', and what comes from God seeks God's will always, and only at all times. The self-centre taken to the Cross for the displacement of the 'I' as the originating spring of actions in word or deed, is the principle upon which alone God can reveal Himself and make known His truth to men. In this way, as the Word of God is revealed to us, we can stand unshaken and immovable on that Word as in very deed the Word of God.

Again in John 8: 28 we read, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I AM, and that I do nothing of myself, but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things."

Now the question for us is, shall God bring us individually to the bedrock fact of the 'I' crucified for Christ to be the new centre of our being? Shall He reach the very core, so that 'I' shall be recognized by us as displaced and crucified, for the Holy Spirit to re-create and produce a new personality, after the pattern of the Man Christ Jesus? Shall we ask Him to do it?