

ADDRESSES AND OTHER RECORDS

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THE NEXT STEP

THE BISHOP OF SALISBURY

I AM going to group what I have to say around two sayings of our Lord—one in the way of direction, and the other in the way of invitation.

The first is His special word to us spoken through the young man in shining garments on the resurrection morning: 'Tell My disciples and Peter that I go before them into Galilee.' Galilee stands for the place of home and everyday work. To Galilee the Lord is pointing our eyes to-day. We have indeed been on the mountain with Jesus, but if we seek to stay on the mountain we shall be with Him no longer; He goes before us, back to our home and daily task.

And that leads me to speak of the new task which now awaits us in the daily routine of our lives. What is the next step for us all after our conference? Surely it is a step forward in the art of corporate prayer. Here we enter at once upon a very intimate and personal sphere. Corporate *work* we are learning day by day, and beyond doubt we have advanced a great step in that way during the past fortnight. Our fellowship here has been not only between individual and individual but between Church and Church, between race and race; and your experience will, I know, corroborate my own, that this fellowship has been fostered and realized mostly in the moments of our corporate prayer. How can we maintain these experiences of corporate prayer?

We shall no longer be able to be visibly present to one another, but we can still maintain our corporate prayer in separation; we can still be of one mind, we can still approach the Throne of Grace with a common and definite desire. Although we are in one sense a *diaspora*, yet in another sense we are a unity. We believe in the Communion of Saints. That Communion, please God, we shall realize, though separated, in our common prayer.

And so we come to the second saying of our Lord, which is His great invitation to us to-day: 'I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on earth concerning anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.' Jesus laid greater stress on corporate prayer than on individual prayer. The art of corporate prayer is a higher art than the art of individual prayer, and we all have a lot to learn about it. Now the very essence and secret of corporate prayer is a common mind, and in order to secure a common mind we must have an agreed object in our prayers. If therefore you and I are to maintain our fellowship in the months and years to come we must be agreed as to what we are asking of God.

This, of course, means entering in some sense upon binding obligations. Some people do not like being disciplined or bound in their prayers, and yet our loyalty to one another demands that we should pray the same thing. Put in one word, that thing is revival. In view of what we know of the tremendous demands of the world's need upon the Church—punctuated with so much emphasis during the past fortnight—we are driven to our knees to beseech God to revive the spiritual forces of His Church. Not otherwise can we obey His command, not otherwise

can the Church of our generation behave aright in this 'day of the Lord.'

That prayer for revival is broken up into eight objectives in the prayer paper which has been circulated among you. These eight objectives are: a missionary spirit, a spirit of prayer, a spirit of sacrifice, a spirit of unity, a spirit of witness, a spirit of self-offering, a spirit of interpretation, and the completion of our own conversion. These eight objectives are not the fruit of mere quiet thought: they were worked out by the promoters of the Jerusalem Chamber Prayer Fellowship and by the Committee of the International Missionary Council through agonies of helplessness. We were driven to them by the experience of our own sore need. Can we not then take up our Lord's challenge, and agree as touching something that we shall ask? Can we not take these eight objectives into our prayer life and bind ourselves to keep them before us as the bond of our Communion wherever we may be throughout the world? The Master whom we follow is challenging us. His invitation searches out the desire of His Church; it assures us that when, and only when the Church desires it, revival will come.

And so, in conclusion, let me leave in your minds a third word of Christ: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.'