



The Online Library of T. Austin-Sparks

Published as a PDF by Austin-Sparks.net

Email: info@austin-sparks.net

In keeping with T. Austin-Sparks' wishes that what was freely received should be freely given and not sold for profit, and that his messages be reproduced word for word, we ask if you choose to share these messages with others, to please respect his wishes and offer them freely - free of any changes, free of any charge (except necessary distribution costs) and with this statement included.

"Not This Way Before"

by T. Austin-Sparks

First published in "A Witness and A Testimony" magazine, Jan-Feb 1965, Vol. 43-1.

(Joshua 3:4)

The third chapter of the Book of Joshua is, in itself and in Israel's history, a very great chapter, marking as it does the consummation of a long, long story related to Divine purpose. But in its figurativeness it represents the greatest crisis and event in human history. There are some fragments in this chapter which are tense and weighty with significance; such as:

"Ye have not passed this way heretofore" (verse 4).

"Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you" (verse 10).

"(Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of harvest)" (verse 15).

"Clean over Jordan" (verse 17).

The great new prospect by a new step of faith.

The superlative evidence of the presence of the Lord.

The making of the overwhelming difficulty the very way of that evidence.

The finality of God's redemptive work.

If Jordan is a figure of the Cross of Christ, as it surely is, these are some of the major factors of His death and resurrection, and of ours with Him. The death means death's removal from before to behind. There is no prospect whatever while death is before, straddling the path. Its removal as a barrier opens up a vast new prospect.

The resurrection is the once for all and the abiding expression of superlative power as God's means of making His presence and His faithfulness known. It is the immense "Hereby". How shall we know? The answer, including all answers, is "The power of his resurrection". God never makes it easy for His people to have this 'knowing'. The Cross was no easy matter. It was the supreme test of God's superiority over adverse forces, and the principle abides. The experience of the "called according to his purpose" is that of an ever-increasing realisation of the depth and strength of Jordan. "So great a death," Paul called it. "That we should trust, not in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead."

Jordan in flood spoke of sin's overwhelming of the whole scene. It spoke of death's inundating spread and power, breaking all banks. It spoke of human weakness and helplessness before these great forces. But it spoke of God's superiority over all.

Lastly: "Clean over Jordan." The finished, perfected work of salvation from all the above, and unto "an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who, by the power of God are kept...".