



## Conference 2008 - Conference Service Address

### “Labourers In His Harvest”

Reading: Luke 10:1-12

From the Heavenly Doctrines:

*“A person ought not to let hands hang down and wait for influx to come, for that would be behaving like a lifeless statue. A person should think, will, and act as if doing so all by himself, yet should attribute to the Lord all his thought of what is true and endeavour towards what is good. When this happens the Lord implants within the person the ability to receive him and influx from him.*

*For the human being was created with no other end in view than to be a receptacle of the Divine; and the ability to receive the Divine is formed within him in no other way. Once it has been formed in him he has no other wish than that the situation should be such, for he loves the influx from the Lord and loathes operating all by himself. This is because influx from the Lord is the influx of good, whereas operating all by oneself is the operation of evil.”* Arcana Caelestia 10299:4,5

**Text: Luke 10:2**

*“The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.”*

I was never a farmer’s boy, but I grew up close enough to the farming community to know just how strenuous and exhausting is the work of gathering in the harvest. The hours put in by the labourers are long and the physical effort is great; by the time the harvest is fully gathered the labourers are tired out. In the days before mechanisation, the work of harvest required the help of every available body. In many parts of this country school holidays were scheduled to coincide with the harvest so that even the children could be drafted into the fields to help with the work. All hands are needed to bring the harvest in.

*(Continued on page 2)*

“Labourers in the harvest”	1
Notice - Committee for Auxiliary Ministry	3
The Upper Room - 8	4
From the Writings ...	4
Gathering Leaves - 2008	5
The Four Seasons	8
United Search for Divine Providence part 1	10
God our Parent	12
Services at Purley Chase	12



**The  
Tree of Life**  
See page 5

**August 2008**  
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**Our mission is to express, share and experience with others in life an inclusive, non-judgmental vision of God’s kingdom**

(Continued from page 1)

Jesus was never a farmer's boy but, as the village carpenter, he would have lived close to the farming community. He would have been well aware of the rhythms of the seasons and the work that was going on in the fields. This being so it was natural enough that in his teaching he often used illustrations familiar to such an agricultural community. The Gospels are full of references to sowing, reaping, threshing, winnowing, and gathering into barns. Jesus uses these images to describe the sowing, the growth, and the gathering together of his heavenly kingdom.

In the Lord's kingdom human life is at its best and most joyful. This is because the essence of that kingdom is that each person there looks out from self to love others; furthermore they each find their greatest joy in making others happy. It is really a very simple yet a very beautiful vision. But we only need to look at the world around us to see what a gulf exists between that vision and the reality of human life here. Clearly a lot of hard work will have to be done before the heavenly harvest can be brought in.

To do this work for him, the Lord needs labourers in the harvest field of human living. The work of such labourers is to bring the vision of the Lord's kingdom to people's notice, to keep the vision before them in the face of an often negative and hostile world, and to support and strengthen people in their efforts to live out the vision in their personal lives. May the Lord send out many such labourers into his harvest field.

It is very easy for us to leap to the conclusion that we are among those labourers so much needed by the Lord. However, before we make that leap, perhaps we should hear a prophetic message spoken by the Lord in the Old Testament:

*"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."* Isaiah 55:10,11

Here the Lord is telling us that it is the words he speaks that accomplish his work in the harvest field of human living. These words are expressions of his divine truths and are the labourers which he sends forth to bring in the heavenly harvest. Such truths have the love and authenticity of Jesus in them, for they are the very principles by which he formed and lived his own earthly life. Jesus lived out to the full every single divine truth, using it to gain a victory over hell and making it a vehicle for his love. If our church is to be a fruitful harvest field and if the kingdom of God is to be built among us, then these truths are the labourers that the Lord needs to send out.

It may be something of a surprise to discover that we are not the labourers of whom the Lord is specifically



speaking in this verse. However, there is great mercy in knowing this; for if we were those labourers we would feel obliged and even pressurised to exhaust ourselves with unremitting busyness. The work of gathering in the harvest is strenuous and it leaves a person quite weary. We should not imagine that the Lord wants us to work till we drop; there is no merit, but plenty of danger, in being a workaholic church. If we take upon ourselves such a punishing schedule we are left with too little time and energy for the other important areas of our life; our religion begins to lose its sparkle and joy; we are also left with an inability to share our time and the gracious love of God with our fellows. No! The Lord does not want us to punish ourselves with the heavy burden of responsibility for the success of his church. Indeed, Jesus assures us that he will never impose such heaviness upon us, *"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light"* Matthew 11:30.

For these reasons the Lord sends us truths to do the hard work of gathering in the harvest. Such divine truths have within them the Lord's power to combat evils, reform our lives, and prepare us to be the loving people of which heaven is made. Truths also point us to the Lord, reminding us that he takes upon himself the responsibility for, and the hard work of, forming his church and kingdom. The Lord willingly carries this burden and we do not have to weigh ourselves down with it.

However, the Lord does ask something of us, *“Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest”*. Does this perhaps suggest that our main focus needs to be on the Lord and his truths? Certainly we can do nothing without them; if we do try to be the church from our own strength and ideas alone, we shall put ourselves to hard grind that can only end in failure. Prayer, of course, covers far more than the saying of prayers. It involves a relationship with the Lord, and requires us to be grounded in the reading of his Word, committed to living his Gospel, and open to his love. Such a focus on the Lord and willingness to embrace his Word is an urgent priority for us.

With the Lord’s Second Advent we are blessed with a revelation of divine truths beyond compare. Not only do these truths bring to us a glorious vision of God’s kingdom, but they also work hard to form and establish that kingdom within us. We do need to give our attention to those truths, to love them, and to give them the opportunity to get to work in us. We shall find that they are sufficient for the task. Their coming into our lives and church will fill us with joy and love. As a result we shall become living witnesses to the Gospel, and so the kingdom of God will be established here. We should not doubt the power of the Lord and his truths to do the work and bring in the harvest. Remember what the Lord said through Isaiah, *“So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”*

Now, of course, we still have our Christian tasks and duties to discharge, for none of this teaching gives us leave to spend our life in idleness. But we are not required to be workaholics either, nor should our offering to the Lord be one of exhaustion. The success of the work we do and the gathering in of the heavenly harvest is not our burden to bear. We have in the New Church two little words that well express what I mean; those words are *“as if”*. *“A person should think, will, and act as if doing so all by himself, yet should attribute to the Lord all his thought of what is true and endeavour towards what is good”* Arcana Caelestia 10299:4.

In the tasks we perform for God’s church and kingdom it appears *“as if”* we are the one doing the work. But really it is the Lord and his truths that are working in us and through us. As we give ourselves over to the Lord and let his truths loose in our life, they do all the spiritual work necessary to bring in the harvest. It is the world with its selfish and material agenda that turns us into workaholics, but the Lord takes that burden off us and gives us a far healthier and more joyful life. We may still be busy at times, but the busyness is no longer a heavy burden because we are allowing the Lord to carry us through it.

Each individual needs to decide for themselves just what and how much they will do for God’s church and kingdom. I would suggest that whatever we do will be unhealthy and fruitless, unless we make a living relationship with the Lord our main priority. Furthermore it is essential that in all we do for God’s church and kingdom, divine truths should be our constant guide and pattern. What we teach should be the Lord’s truths, the way we care for others should conform to those truths, and even our conduct of the business affairs of our church should be in line with what those truths teach.

Our willingness to conduct ourselves in this way gives the Lord the greatest opportunity to gather in a harvest of people from which he can form a kingdom of love. The success of this work is not a burden that falls on our shoulders; we can certainly be part of the story but the Lord himself will carry all the burdens and take full responsibility for the successful building of his church and kingdom.

*“The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.”*

**Rev Robert Gill**

## Committee for Auxiliary Ministry

### Services of Worship by Alan Misson

CAM is pleased to announce that a new collection of nine Services of Worship produced by Alan Misson is now available. Worship leaders are free to adapt them to suit their own particular speaking style.

Each set costs £5.00 if you require printed copies. If you prefer to receive copies by email these are available at a cost of £1.00 per set and CDs are also available at £2.00 per set. Cheques should be made payable to The General Conference of the New Church. If you would like to receive this new collection please send your order to:

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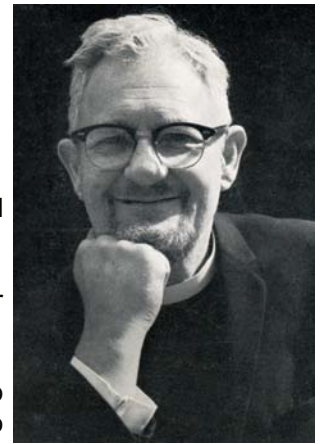
# The Upper Room

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From 11th May 1974 to 1st February 1975 the Herald, the forerunner of Lifeline, published a series of fifteen Meditations by Rev Brian Kingslake using the title - The Upper Room.

His meditations and the accompanying prayers seem as relevant today as they did over thirty years ago and are now re-published in Lifeline in the same series.

The term 'Upper Room' can be seen as representing the higher levels of our minds into which enlightenment from the Lord can flow when we seek to know the truth and wish to apply it in a life of usefulness to others. Such enlightenment involves our coming closer to the Lord just as the disciples came close to Him at the Last Supper.



**Rev Brian Kingslake**  
1907 - 1995

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## 8: "The Divine Human"

READ Revelation 1: 8-10, 12-20

Perhaps the most startling fact revealed in the Sacred Scriptures is that the Infinite First Cause and Origin of all Creation is, not, as might be supposed, a blind force, but actually a PERSON! – a Divine Person, supremely endowed with the human qualities of Love and Wisdom. He is the infinite Source of Love and Wisdom, the prototype Person from whom we all derive our human-ness ; hence He is called our "Father". (We are, finitely, what He is infinitely.) Moreover, as Jesus Christ, He actually entered His creation, taking upon Him a human body like ours, which He subsequently glorified and made Divine. Jesus is very God and very Man, the Divine Human. Jesus is "God with us". We can draw near to Him. He loves us personally, and needs our love. He can join us at table, converse with us, feel with us; comfort, guide and protect us. I can confidently hand over the control of my life to Him—not just as God above, but as a supremely loving, wise and powerful MAN.

PRAYER

Almighty God, Creator of the universe, I marvel that, though You are so high above my highest imaginings, You have nevertheless revealed Yourself in Jesus Christ as a Divine Human Being, with whom I can align myself, and from whom I can receive understanding and sympathy. I know from the Gospel story that You are infinitely compassionate, loving and wise. I feel the pull of Your Holy Spirit, and desire nothing more than to follow You as one of Your disciples, and become more and more like You, the heavenly Father of us all.

## From the Writings ...

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The soul acts in and on the body, but not by means of the body; and the body acts of itself from the soul. The soul does not act by means of the body, because they do not consult and deliberate together; nor does the soul order or beg the body to do this or that, or to speak by its own mouth. Nor does the body demand or request the soul to give it or supply something, for everything of the soul's belongs to the body, and vice versa. It is the same with the Lord's Divine and His Human; for the Divine of the Father is the soul of His Human, and the Human is His body. The Human does not ask its Divine what it is to say or do. Therefore, the Lord says:

*On that day you will ask in my name; and I do not tell you that I shall ask the Father for you, for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved me.* John 16:26, 27.

'On that day' means after His glorification, that is, after His union with the Father was accomplished and completed. This is a secret revealed by the Lord Himself for the benefit of those who are going to belong to His new church.

**True Christian Religion 154:6**

# Gathering Leaves 2008 - The Tree of Life 11th-14th July

The venue for the third Gathering Leaves was Purley Chase Centre - a gathering of Swedenborgian women from the different branches of the New Church. The event had taken well over a year's planning and preparation. Unfortunately we weren't blessed with particularly good weather and certainly those from California found it very cold. This didn't detract from the warmth of the welcome we received from Anne and David Gaffney and their team, and the warmth and fellowship of the group of 43 women from the United States, Canada and the UK representing the General Church (North American and British), Convention and Conference. Overheard: *"I can't think of anything to improve it - I enjoyed every single minute."*

The large group meetings were held in a square marquee which enabled us all to sit in a circle. It was wonderfully arranged with four displays from the Labyrinth and Soul Symbols workshops. There were also two trees in pots representing the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and a colourful floral display. During the opening plenary a representative from each branch present was asked to speak on what these Biblical trees meant to them in



their lives and beliefs. Tryn Clark, Chris Laitner, Jody Morris and Helen Brown spoke very movingly. After a tea break we broke into small groups mixing the women as much as possible. We introduced ourselves and then shared, at a personal level, a quotation from the Word or the Writings about 'life' which we had chosen at random from a small branch of a tree.

During Gathering Leaves there were slots for four workshops with a choice of four options each time. They were very varied with sessions on movement and art, exploring spirituality, Biblical themes and doctrinal aspects. The choices were "Let's get together and create", "Happiness - a spiritual perspective", "Female disciples of Jesus" (this needed to be repeated because of the numbers who chose it), "The purple bracelet", "Finding comfort and joy in the book of Revelation", "In company with angels", "At sea with God", "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening", "Legend or prophecy?", "Walking the labyrinth - pathway to wholeness", "The Tree of Life sacred dance", "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Swedenborg", "Soul collage: exploring our view of God", "How might we worship?" and "How do we reach out and engage with seekers?" These were led by different women from the three branches. Overheard: *"I wish I could have done all sixteen workshops."*

Uplifting worship began and ended every day either in the Beech Room or the marquee. Each was led by a different group representing the various branches. Wonderful singing accompanied by guitar was a regular feature.

On Saturday we went out for the day by coach to Stratford-upon-Avon. We visited Mary Arden's house and farm and Anne Hathaway's cottage. The Americans were fascinated by the old buildings and the stories connected with them. The history was brought alive by people dressing up in the costumes of Shakespeare's

*(Continued on page 6)*







*(Continued from page 5)*

time and enacting their jobs and answering questions. We were then taken to Stratford to a fish and chip restaurant which served us all with excellent traditional fare. Everybody was given a ticket to Shakespeare's birthplace and a £5 note to buy a cream tea. Most people visited the birthplace; some walked by the river and visited Holy Trinity Church where Shakespeare was buried; others shopped for gifts; wandered round the town and bought ice-creams. The weather could have been kinder to us so no-one ventured out for a cruise down the River Avon. Overheard: *"Aren't the flowers beautiful and isn't the countryside awesome?"*

We returned to Purley, and after some free time a traditional "Church Social" party with fun and games was enjoyed by all. We did Barn dances; in teams we acted animals, drew objects connected to our trip to Stratford and created amazing hats out of newspaper, crepe paper, feathers and other craft things and played "Stations" with names of churches from around the world. Anne and her team created a lovely buffet meal which was laid out in the hall. Before the party started people said that they weren't hungry but when they saw what a feast was provided their appetites returned! Overheard: *"It's surprising how they got us to do things we didn't want to do and had such good fun doing them."*

One of the highlights of the whole gathering was the Sunday morning communion. A large table was placed at one side of the marquee with thirteen women sitting on three sides of it. A Convention ordination student gave the address on the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations. Then twelve women spoke from the heart as followers of Jesus such as Mary of Magdala, the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears, and Martha and Mary. Many felt blessed by this affirming and imaginative depiction of these women. After Jane Siebert had blessed the bread and wine

the same women brought groups up to the table to share the elements with them. Overheard: *"The highlight of the whole weekend was the Sunday morning worship."*

In the afternoon there was free time – some walked by the canal and the golf course; some learnt to do watercolours; some walked around the Purley grounds finding the different Swedenborg quotes on the trees and others slept. Overheard: *"This is the best spiritual retreat I've ever been on."*

In the evening we admired the artwork that had been produced; we divided into four groups to portray the poem "i carry your heart with me" by e e cummings in either music, dance, words or art. The groups then performed their productions. Community circle dance was enjoyed by many and the whole evening finished with worship. Overheard: *"I loved all the dancing."*

Our final morning arrived with sunshine. After our last workshop we gathered for the closing plenary where we



**The steering group who organised the event**

shared the blessings/gifts we had gained during the event, a common one being the strong feeling of oneness we had experienced with each other and the Lord. We were led on a guided meditation as we entered the Holy City. Thanks were expressed to Rita and the steering group of seven British women – Helen Brown and Hilda Johnson organised the workshops; Mary Duckworth, the plenaries and opening and closing worship; Helen Newton, the bookshop, welcome pack and the technology; Margaret Presland was our travel agent; Gwendolen Rowe, the artwork; Judith Wilson, the party and programmes and Rita Russell organised the marquee, the Stratford day trip and acted as the chair of the group. Zoe Brooks and Lisa Hyatt Cooper coordinated the money affairs. Overheard: *“It’s been very well organised and all our needs have been met.”*

We then left the marquee, walked to the flowering cherry tree which had symbolised the Tree of Life and four young women planted it. We danced around it, sang to it and blessed it. We trust that it will flourish and be a lasting symbol of the fellowship, the fun, the spirituality, the deep sharing and the friendship and love felt amongst us. Overheard: *“It was incredible, warm and wonderful.” “Purley had beautiful facilities, great food and clean.” “It was the best ever.”*

**Philippa Peacock and Rita Russell**

### **A prayer written at the end of the event by Tryn Rose Smith**

Thank you, Lord for pouring into all of us fine women so we can LIVE and share what we have to give with each other. May we carry these gifts we’ve receive in our hearts, and keep alert to the moment when we can share them with others in our lives, that they too may benefit from the community we created during Gathering Leaves. May we learn to close the gap between appearance and reality, and simply enjoy being conduits for beauty and truth, from scholarly studies to sacred dance, from singing to painting. Guide us, Lord, as we remember the feelings of being raised up into your heavens, and how to bring good things back to earth, rejoicing in our daily lives.

And in the words of the many songs we sang – “You shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace”, “While I live, I will love”, “God will heal you, return the love”, and “Oh, sisters, let’s go down, down in the river to pray...Good Lord, show me the way”. Amen.

## **New Church Youth Association - Conference Report**

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The New Church Youth Association Conference was held at Keighley on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> of May. We were warmly welcomed by the Keighley friends with tea and coffee. The proceedings started with the opening service in the beautiful little church conducted by our retiring president Mr Clive Goalen.

The theme of our Conference was the Four Seasons and after the business part of the proceedings our day’s programme was based on it. We had an introduction to the theme in the opening speech of our President and a more in depth presentation given by Pauline Grimshaw (see page 8). We then explored practical ways of introducing it as a teaching theme. We all learnt a simple circle dance and song with a catchy tune called “The Bells of Norwich.” This celebrated the coming of spring and the saying of Julian of Norwich that all would be well.

During the lunch break we admired the ‘Colouring Exhibition’ of children’s art work and tucked into thick homemade soups and fruit pies, crumble and cakes. To set the scene for the afternoon session and to gently help us relax from lunch we enjoyed Barbara Stanley’s slides on the ‘Four Seasons’ accompanied by Vivaldi’s music. Then followed our workshop sessions stationed

in four corners of the room and presented by Kath Higgins, Peter Schofield, Gwen Rowe and Carolyn Kennion. There we had the opportunity of making winter friezes with lift up flaps, sunny pictures with felt like shapes, messy finger paint trees and growing cress in egg shells. We also had take away explanations and ideas sheets - not only a resource for teaching children but also a source for writing talks for worship leading. As someone commented ‘I’ve had enough material for at least four sermons!’

We rounded off the afternoon with a plenary session which also provided a source for projects and initiatives during the coming year. Finally we recessed once more into the church for our closing service. There Clive’s term of office came to an end as he installed Mrs Jean Chambers as our President for the coming year. Many thanks to all who helped make our day a very happy one and especially to the Keighley people who welcomed us so warmly and again provided another magnificent meal before we departed. Alice’s cakes deserve a five star rating!

**Pauline Grimshaw**



# The Four Seasons

*"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."*

Genesis 8 v 22, 11 Samuel 23:20, Heaven and Hell 166

This was the chosen theme for the New Church Youth Association Conference day and when I first volunteered to provide a spiritual perspective for the Conference I hadn't a particularly clear idea of the way in which I wanted to approach this subject. In my own mind I have been increasingly concerned about the lack of people interested in doing hands on work with children and in particular about the ages of the people doing this work. But two incidents, one from many years ago which popped into my mind suddenly and secondly a brief incident that occurred only the other week.

I play the piano, not perhaps with any great degree of musicality, but in a reasonably adequate workmanlike manner. So some thirty years ago I was quite surprised when I was asked to accompany three other instrument players to form a quartet to play in a soiree- an overawing formal sounding word. Well somehow after weeks of dread and anxiety I managed to produce a passable performance and our modest quartet was quite successful. Why do I recall this incident today? – well the name of the quartet was 'Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter!' Spring was a young teenager who played the violin, summer was myself, autumn played the viola and was in his fifties and winter, the cello player was over eighty. Today many years on, spring is summer, summer is autumn creeping ever closer to winter and autumn and winter are both in the spiritual world where hopefully they will now be advancing to the springtime of their lives in the beauty of angel hood! I guess the cycle of our advancing ages represent perhaps the four seasons rather well. The changing seasons of our own lives, our own ageing processes are reflected in the patterns of life in the natural world in which we live.

As we look around the outside world today we can see the evidence of God's promise to Noah. Trees are full of blossom or new green leaves, plants are shooting up, the weather is warmer, the days are lengthening, seedtime, harvest, heat and cold, summer and winter, day and night unfold in an evolving continuum. In today's rapidly changing and developing world I still find reassurance and certainty in the changing seasons. To walk through a wood and still see the remains of winter; the fallen bare branches, the dead bracken fronds but in amongst the bleakness minute green spears as new growth begins poking through gives me certainty and hope that winter is not the end of the process.

When we look around in the world we can see this pattern of cyclical growth and death throughout nature.



Some species of animals, such as insects and birds, complete the cycle in an amazingly short time, other take nearly as long as human beings. Some plants blossom and flourish in less than a year whilst some species of trees take many thousands of years. In our everyday technological age in our homes and workplaces we can still see the cycle. We may think of fashions coming in, going out and coming around again. We go in the kitchen turn on the washer and off it goes on its wash, rinse, spin, tumble dry cycle. We think of policies in education or in government where old policies and fashions are constantly reinvented and recycled sometimes in decades, sometimes in weeks. We might think of the great empires of the world rising and falling and being replaced by others. In more thoughtful mood we may think of our own physical and intellectual development going in a cycle, perhaps best summed up by Shakespeare in the seven ages of man when we start without teeth and hair and end up likewise.

What turns the straight line graph of progress or the curve of rise and fall into the circle of a cycle? I guess it is when a stage or a state or a process is repeated time after time. Even when a cycle appears to result in termination the seeds are usually sown during that cycle or ideas germinate within the cycle so that renewal occurs and the cycle starts all over again.

Spiritually speaking our life is a succession of circles or cycles that take us forward on the path of regeneration. We are tempted, we fail, we recognise our failure and ask for forgiveness or repent, resolve to do better and to shun evil in future until of course we fail and then the process starts again. The same thing can happen with a church, both the church universal and the church within our own minds. A church can begin with ideas of the truth but the ideas become tainted with evil and true worship can become perverted so that in the end the church is no longer fulfilling its use and ultimately fades away. Yet within what is, is always that which is to come. It is a thought that consoles me when I look at our church organisation which at times seems positively wintry. Even from seemingly bleak and arid landscapes new growth can come.



How can we relate this to ourselves in church today? So far as our external material bodies are concerned I think it is fair to say (with apologies to those who are not !) that a good few of us are in the autumn or winter states of our life in this world. Yet within our internal selves I would guess that mentally and spiritually speaking we would probably be in the spring time or the summer time of our lives. For spiritually speaking a regenerating person comes increasingly into the springtime of life on earth as well as in heaven. It is interesting that we are told in Heaven and Hell that there is no time or space in heaven but only state- that is the inner quality of our very being.

This might seem at times a hard idea to get our heads round. A heaven without the constant variations of season and time and temperature might seem truly boring but even on this earth we can see that our happiness and mood do not necessarily depend on the variety of seasons but on the feelings within us. If we feel sad inside, the most beautiful spring day seems to emphasise and deepen our mood rather than lifting it. If we feel happy inside the most miserable day will fail to depress us. The following quotation from the book Heaven and Hell paragraph 176 tells us that angels have no idea of time or space but instead they perceive states of love and of truth.

*“As angels have no idea derived from time, such as people in the world have, so neither do they have any idea about time and the things pertaining to it. They do not even know what is meant by the terms of time such as year, month, week, day etc. When angels hear these terms used by man (for angels are always associated with man by the Lord) in place of them they perceive states. Thus a man’s natural idea is turned into a spiritual idea by angels.”*

The same is true of all things that exist from time, as the four seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter, the four ages of man called infancy, youth, adulthood and old age and all other things which either come into existence from time or have a succession in accordance with time. In thinking of these a man thinks from time but an angel from state. In consequence what is from time with a person, is with the angel changed into an idea of state. Spring and morning are turned into an idea of the state and love and wisdom as they are in their first state with angels and so on. Natural things in the thought of man become spiritual with the angels who are with man.”

I find this a cheerful and heartening passage when such thoughts as “I’m getting far too old to be running camps for children,” creep into my mind and I wonder how I am going to survive without too much sleep. I sometimes feel that when I and others read and prepare material for camps and church in a very humble but yet important way we are by our study helping to maintain and preserve the link between heaven and earth. As teachers, whatever our age, before we even present a lesson or a talk we have performed a useful role as a spiritual use as an aqueduct.

To return to the seasons, spring and autumn and summer and winter are complementary to each other and each relies on the other and each gives and takes from the other. A child comes into the world in innocence, the innocence of ignorance (here I use ignorance in its best sense.) An adult of mature years should have innocence, the true innocence that comes with the acquisition of wisdom. To be fully up to date and au-fait with the ways of modern technology whilst having many advantages and uses is in some ways not necessarily a good thing. The pace and speed of the instant, highly visual electronic age seldom gives the opportunity for the considered expression of opinion or for reflective thought and discussion. I think it is probably just beginning to dawn on the best educational minds in the land that a computer for every child might have some benefits but it cannot take the place of interaction between a child and a real flesh and blood teacher. To grow as individuals all children need loving and personal relationships with adults and most of all a loving and personal relationship with their Creator, the Lord himself. Autumn and Winter have much to give to Summer and Spring.

All time passes on this earth, time physical passes and our states of mind and spiritual development also change just as the seasons do. Winter here enables us to appreciate summer, Spring cheers us and gives us hope, whilst autumn gently prepares us for winter. Each state enables us to appreciate another. Youth cheers and enlivens age whilst age teaches youth patience, endurance and the beginning of wisdom.

The second event that made me think was a meeting where surprisingly the introductory talk was on ‘While the earth remaineth.’ The leader gave each of us a small packet of different seeds to help us to reflect. Some of the seeds were almost microscopic, some were bean sized, some were smooth and some were knobbly- each seed was a different shade of brown- no two were alike.

Perhaps it’s rather like that with the seeds of the Lord’s love and truth that we, as adult teachers, tend in the garden of the minds of young people. Each seed planted is different, the soil within each mind is also different. Some seeds may germinate instantly, some seeds may take many years and some may never germinate. The Lord gives every recipient of his seeds of truth enough warmth and enough water, enough goodness and enough truth to make his seeds grow. We will as teachers seldom see the results of the seeds that have been sown, we may not see the fruits in the lives of others for the life of a gardener is very hard !

*“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”*

We are all young and old part of this enduring cycle that lasts to eternity.

**Pauline Grimshaw**

In the late 1960's Rev Christopher Hasler wrote, published and distributed a course entitled 'United Search for True Christian Religion'. Now, some 40 years later, he is working on a new course - 'United Search for Divine Providence' which he presented during a talk at Conference this year. The first part of the talk is printed in this issue of Lifeline and the second part will be in the September issue. That issue will also include details of how the lesson notes will be published when the course starts in October.

## Divine Providence

### The Big Sell

If I were trying to sell you a face cream, I would have no hesitation in promising you new, supple and radiant complexion which would make you look 20 years younger, or even 30 if you were approaching 60. How many of you would believe me?

Such claims would be mainly a pack of lies, but I want to be 'absolutely clear' (as our politicians say) that I am promising you: eternal youth, vigour as well as beauty and happiness. If you don't believe me, I am not the loser, since I am not selling anything. Only you would be!

I am referring to God's intentions for your life - your eternal life. He is constantly touching your life, yet without forcing you to do as He tells you.

If you were to win a new superior car, low in fuel consumption and with nil emissions, I am sure you would not mind taking a few lessons and study the Manual so as to know how to use it properly. This superior vehicle is actually your body, your mind, spirit and soul. The Manual I have in mind is called **Divine Providence** - and you probably already have it on your bookshelf. But have you read it?

This Manual assures you that the divine is constantly interacting with every part of you. In this process many things are happening without interruption: Poisonous substances created by activity are filtered out, as constant heartbeat pumps the blood through various filtering and purifying stations such as the kidneys and lungs.

Of course, you know all that, this is simple human biology. But what about the real you? The loves, the fears, the doubts you experience. Your lack of knowledge can lead to deep frustrations. And furthermore, what about your eternal and spiritual Self? How is that getting on? Who or what is maintaining that in working order? Certainly not you, since you are not consciously maintaining these myriads of functions in your physical body.

*Divine Providence* is a most astonishing book which shows how the Divine is constantly interacting with your whole self, on every level. It also answers the questions which often worry us when we look at the world around us.

As I was working on this speech, I saw that the very successful **ALPHA COURSE** is preparing a big campaign for the coming September, and this is their poster:

### If God did exist, what would you ask Him?

(And here are the UK's favourite questions for God):

- Why is there suffering in the world?
- What is the meaning of life? Why am I here?
- Why are there so many wars? Why don't you stop them?
- Why is there so much wickedness? So much hate?
- Is there life after death?
- Why do you let good people die?

It is expected that 1,500,000 people will be taking the Alpha Course. It would be nice to think that all these would be studying the book *Divine Providence* - since it answers all those questions. But I doubt it, nor do I believe that everyone will get a satisfying answer in the Alpha Course. The good news is, that *you* will be able to get them!

In fact, the book *Divine Providence* answers many more questions, such as, "Why is there a hell?" The answer to that one is so unexpected, that at first you will wonder if the answer given can be correct, but after a little consideration, you will say, "Well, of course, why didn't I think of that myself? It's so obvious!"

### Start with God

All these difficult questions about God's interaction with the human race, seem to start at the wrong end: With us, with our problems and fears. And as long as we put ourselves at the centre of the enquiry, we are not likely to get true answers. We need to start with God, because He is the Centre, the Beginning, the source of Life, of Love and Wisdom. Unless we understand something of His nature, we shall never understand just what is going on, and why human life can be so confusing. We may be tempted to agree with the atheist who says, "If ever there was a God, He has certainly forgotten all about us. Just look at the state of the world!"

The truth is that were we to step outside the Divine in creation, we would immediately cease to be. The fact that you are alive, conscious, thinking and capable of





