

Where are the Fruits St. George's, Parktown  
of the Holy Spirit? 29-07-79.

John 15:16-27

When one reads the passages in both the Old & the N.T. ~~about~~ <sup>dealing</sup> with the H.S. and the fruits of the new life which the H.S. offers, it all sounds so beautiful, so idealistic, so good! But when one starts comparing it with one's own life & example, with the life and witness of the Christian church there tends to call out in despair: it is too good to be true! It is an utopian dream! It cannot be realised! ~~Do not~~ <sup>We are</sup> wished by such beautiful, high-sounding promises of Christ and the apostles as found in <sup>Isaiah 36,</sup> John 15, and Gal. 5! Upon <sup>further</sup> reflection we have to admit that there is a very serious discrepancy between the marvellous descriptions of the H.S. as the Spirit of life, of truth, of love, of unity, of peace and the reality of Christian life as portrayed in the life of the Christ church - and in our own lives! Does this imply that Christ and the apostles were lying or deceiving themselves and others when they were describing the remarkable difference which the Holy Spirit is able to make to people's lives and attitudes?

I don't think so - I don't think either Christ or the apostles were lying or deceiving themselves or us. But what these passages do

not come to us clearly enough is the hard and sometimes unpalatable truth ~~expressed~~ in other parts of the N.T. that these fruits of truth, of love, of justice, of peace do not automatically fall into our lap, they are not easily obtained or bought cheaply as we do with foodstuffs in a supermarket. ~~On the~~ <sup>On the</sup> contrary, they have to be obtained at high cost of sweat and hard labour, painful conflict, serious differences of outlook, tremendous sacrifice of one's own preconceived ideas, traditions, ~~and~~ value systems & way of life.

If our Christians in our country wanted to have vivid illustrations of both these aspects of the way in which the U.S. operates, it could be seen in the recent conference of SACLA (5-15 July) followed by the Nat. Conference of the SACC this week. Both were ~~serious~~ <sup>off</sup> gatherings of Christian bodies & individuals dealing with the  vexing question of how to witness to South Africa at this point in time; both were claiming their utter dependence upon the guidance of the U.S., both expressed their deep concern about many aspects of our national life, both were seeking the answer in Christ and his Gospel and both were convinced that if the Church and the Christian community

was unable to supply the answer, no answer would be forthcoming from any other source. The solutions offered were in many instances very different, the convictions expressed in many instances widely divergent and the viewpoints of what Christ demanded here in many instances ~~very~~ far apart. Both conferences illustrated so clearly how deeply divided the Christian community in S.A. is on ~~the~~ crucial national issues, on personal attitudes and on the task and responsibility of the Church. This tragic difference in <sup>present</sup> outlook and hope for the future was described in graphic terms by the President of the SACC, Rev S. Buthe as follows: "Over whole country is to-day walking in the valley of the shadow of death. The one group wants to maintain the status quo at all costs; the other group wants the word of liberation to be spoken and the voice of liberation to be heard" During the same conference the Epul. Sec., Bishop D. Tutu was quoted to have said when, after a short address he pleaded with whites in saying: Don't do this to yourselves; don't do this to us, please believe us that we love you, God please give us the words to make you believe us - We love you, we really love you, we really love you. man"

These utterances raise some vital questions: if the N.S. is the Spirit of love, <sup>of unity</sup> of truth, of justice, of peace why then the need for such conferences to bring Christians Together? ~~who are otherwise so deeply divided?~~ What has the N.S. then been doing all these years: sleeping, hiding which Christians of different confessions and cultures have been drifting further apart? Or is it because the N.S. is powerless against the ~~power~~ <sup>might</sup> of political power, military ~~strength~~ <sup>wealth</sup> and economic wealth which the whites possess and central and <sup>in</sup> which the Blacks ~~want~~ want a full share?

Perhaps I should put the question in a different way: Is the Holy Spirit powerful enough to heal these <sup>painful, longstanding</sup> ~~deep~~ divisions by creating a new <sup>deeply meaningful</sup> relationship of unity, by ~~building~~ <sup>forging</sup> new bonds of love and justice, by effecting true reconciliation between Christians otherwise ~~so~~ deeply divided?