

the word of the Lord. That gives us the church in complete pattern.

From you hath sounded forth. That is quite literally. echoed forth. Sounded as a clear trumpet note. Sounded forth. It is not that these people went everywhere preaching; but it is that these people in their unity of life have the church become an instrument through which the word of life was sounding forth.

Think of another word - sounded forth. Another word than echoed forth. From you the word of the Lord reverberated. Thru the valleys and over the mountains and through Macedonia. The word of the Lord reverberated. That word, I remember reading, that a man said when Moody was speaking in England he described his mission as that which reverberated. When Moody preached at Newcastel the thrill was felt to the southern coast. From you reverberated the word of the Lord.

Dr. Findlay says the expression ^{v. 8} "the word of the Lord" is the designation for God's revealed will. In the history of the Old Testament a fine and perfect definition of the meaning of the phrase there. In the New Testament the phrase means Christ himself inclusively. Particularly it means first always an argument for the Lordship of Christ. The word of the Lord is the argument of his Lordship. And that is supremely the word of the resurrection of Christ. And then it is the fact itself of his Lordship. The word of the Lord is the argument that proves

Given a church, constituted by the life of Christ, communicated in answer to faith, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, governed by the one supreme, ever present Lord, Himself; and disciplined by his tenderness and earnestness. We find that here is a society equipped an instrument for divine activity.

When we approach the subject of the work of the church, we are not considering a privilege granted to the church. We are hardly considering a responsibility placed upon the church. We are considering, rather, (the necessity) the invariable activity of the church. If there is to be failure in those matters which we are about to consider, the reason of such failure will be discovered in failure in some of those things for which it was founded. For the church may tolerate certain things that are anti-Christ. And thus will hinder its way of fulfilling His will

The declaration of the text is a word from Paul written to the Thessolonian Christians. ^{v. 8} "From you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord." This constitutes a revelation and it refers and illustrates great matters. In that word and in that particular church, great principals were focused on by the camera and we see the picture in the great mission of the church.

We might concentrate our attention, for a few minutes, on the picture presented. And then pass outside and attempt to see in broad outline, something of the meaning of the service of the

church. This letter was written to Thessolonian Christians. Written to this church which he had described, not as a church in Thessolonica; that was a later method of address when he wrote to Corinth; but to the church of the Thessolonians he deals with fundamental things - both concerning life and service. Service is not dealt with at all fully but in this passage, service is very clearly seen in its relation to life.

We read our lesson from the first chapter here. At the beginning he addresses those people; he thanks God for three things - first, work of faith; second, labor of love; third, patience of hope. And when at the close of this particular chapter, he is at the end of the introductory portion of his letter, he says that they "turned unto God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his son from heaven." These (two descriptions) are identical. That at the close of the introduction stands over against that which he commences with and we have only to look at them for a moment and we may see from the opening and closing words we have the whole fact of the church life revealed to us.

Take the opening words "your work of faith" which does not at all mean the work they were doing as a result of faith. But that very work of faith whereby they became Christian men. The work of faith when men ask our Lord, upon one occasion, what must we do that we may work the works of God? His answer was,

"This is the work of God that we believe on Him whom he hath sent." And that is the thought embodied here. The work of faith. That is the first fact. What is the work of faith? We turn to the concluding description in the introduction "Ye turned unto God from idols." That is the work of faith. Second, The labor of love has described in verse 3. That is the outcome of the work of faith. That which necessarily inevitably follows it. For the work of faith on the part of man is answered by the gift of life on the part of God. And that life is his life. And that life is love. What is that labor of love? We go back to the final description again. "To serve a living and true God." That is the labor of love.

Now we turn back to the introductory words in verse 3. Patience of hope. And that is explained by the final word - "To wait for his son from heaven."

Thus in the opening description, you see the inspirational things of the Christian life. Faith, love, hope. And the expression of each faith to work; love to labor; and hope to patience. And in the final description that is all started again in another form.

So we begin "from you" - that is from the people of faith, the people of love, the people of hope; the people who have turned to God; from idols; and serving the living and true God. And who are waiting for the son from heaven have sounded forth

sacrifice.

We are concerned about the power of the church for her work.
What is the church's power for service? Or the Christian church?
 The spirituality of her own life. Not the power of the spirit
 bestowed but the spirit the power working through.

How shall we know whether we have that power or not? The
 church is constituted by the spirit. It is by the spirit's bap-
 tism into life that men come into the church. The church is
governed by Christ. The church can only have this power of the
 spirit through love and light. The power in itself is a spiri-
tual life of the church. Or a little company of men and women
who have seen the one Lord, who have exercised faith in him and
 who have the Holy Spirit and are now living in answer to the
inspiration of that life and obeying the impulse. There is the
 gospel or God's instrument. For sounding forth the word of God.

The power in itself is that of the spiritual life of the church.
 And yet again if that be the power in itself, observe the
 power in its working. How does this power of the spirit operate?
 For the sounding forth of the word of God.

In obedience, in service, in perfect confidence. Obedience,
 the work of faith. He turned to God. In service, the labor of
 love. Ye serve the living God. In confidence, the patience of
 hope. We wait for the son from heaven. There is the three

him Lord. The resurrection wherein he proved and the vision in
 the disciples was born again and there was living hope. The word
 of the Lord sounded forth, reverberated, through Macedonia. And
 the instrument was that fellowship of men and women who had
 turned to serve, to wait, in faith, in love, and in hope.

Now this was the picture of the church work. As we leave
 this thought, we look out into the wider meaning to the place of
 the church in the scheme of the work of God. To the work of the
 church in the fulfillment of that intention. And the power of
 the church in doing that work.

First, the place of the work in the divine scheme. The word
 became flesh and tabernacled among us. The church which is his
 body, the fulness of him, and we look back in Thessolonian letter
 and you observe in the very first verse Paul and Sylvanus and
 Timothy unto the church. We begin in that salutation with the
 final result. The church of the Thessolonians. The church
which is his body. The fulness of him. That filleth all in
 all. In God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ. God is love,
 That is a fact altogether too great for human speech to under-
 stand. Out of which all the movements of man uplifting have
sprung. Love is strong at death; mightier than the grave; love
 will pause at nothing to make possible the recovery and restora-
tion of sinners. That is a height I cannot climb; it is a depth
I cannot fathom. But the supremem, ultimate fact is that God

is love and out of the being proclaims the doing that God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners.

Christ was first the revealer of the love in its attitude toward man. Christ was the instrument of that love. One through whom it operated in the activity of redemption. He was the revealer of it. The word was made flesh; pitched its tent among us by the side of the place where our tents are pitched in the same campus. May the Holy Spirit make these things real unto us. He pitched his tent among us; by the side of man; as man; not by the side of a Jew as a Jew. By the side of the Jew; yes; and by the side of an Anglo-Saxon, yes. We ought to thank God that in each case by the side of man as man.

Thus we see the church which is his body; his instrument; as the instrument of God the fulness of him that filleth all in all. That through Christ the activities might be carried on.

What then is the inclusive and complete work of the church? It is that of the proclamation of the word of the Lord. From you hath sounded forth the proclamation of the word; the fact of the Lordship is the need that is supreme.

It is patly true; clear that he left no nation, kindred or class absolutely without light. Mr. Gladstone once said that the severest malady threatening England was its loss of the sense of sin and every preacher knows that to be true if he be a preacher of the word. Is not the reason partly to be found

in the fact that we have not been sufficient emphasis and intelligent enough in our preaching of Jesus as Lord? We have assumed his Lordship. But have we preached and proclaimed his Lordship? I do not know that I am making the thing clear in my mind or in yours. But I believe there are thousands of young people in our land today who will never tremble when you preach the Ten Commandments. The reason is not now to be discussed. I do not think you can find man or woman of intelligence; if you can but bring them into an actual presence of the Lord Christ. They will say if that be the meaning of human life, then, oh, God how I have failed. I am talking out of my own experience. Now we could not tremble under Mt. Sinai but as we have listened to the words that passed over from from God's lips we feel that we are unclean. The proclamation of the Lordship is needed in America. When the gospel we think men know it; and preachers preach it in simplicity. Because they imagine congregations know it. And its needed to the ends of the earth.

It is (not only) to be proclaimed as a theory; it must be vindicated within the church. The life of a church must witness the truth of the gospel. The church preaches. In the service definitely and positively rendered and finally in sacrifice. For its in his feet and his hands are the wound prints and in his side. We only begin to preach the word of God; to proclaim it with power as there enters into our work the elements of such

inspirations of faith and love and hope and waiting for the son. There is where the expression is lacking. It is because the inspiration is absent.

What then is the law of power in the church? For accomplishing her work? First of all, the cessation of self-control. Efforts. Second, an entire yielding to the interruptions and energies of the spirit of God. And finally, activity. Going, speaking, and doing.

Let me make that a little more clear. First, the passive part of it. The cessation. A man ~~may~~ deal with theory and miss the whole truth here. I'm convinced that during the past years, one of the hindrances the church's progress has been her attempt to diverse new methods for doing God's work. We're always trying by our own wit and wisdom to find some new method. What shall we do? Yield ourselves to the interruption of the spirit of God and to the energies of the spirit. Let the spirit of God have his way. That is where we fail. The spirit is the spirit of light. He will cast light on our pathway and indicate which is God's will for us in service and we are afraid. The cross lies there; we draw back. The spirit is the spirit of love. And touches us with a sacred impulse. And because we have not yielded to the spirit in a passive way, we fail. We attempt to make up for our failure in devotion. By finding out new methods of helping God. If we will only let the spirit have

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his way with us, if we will walk where he indicates, and do what he says, counting no cost, holding back no alabaster box of ointment for ourselves and we shall be out upon the highway of God's great enterprise in the world, going because we're driven by the great spirit that indwells us. Speaking, educating, with great power. The word of God will reverbrate, will sound forth.

The church of God, thus, at work is safeguarded against heresy. The church, obedient to the spirit, answering the spirit's interruption of the Christ cannot go far astray. It is a great safeguard against false motives and service. Imitations, false methods, false aims, against fears and panics.

The church doing God's work in this way will have a vision and then virtue and finally they will have victory. She will have strength too move on to the doing of the things seen and victory will follow wherever she goes.

It seems to me that (this has been a part) of the movement in our new mission church that we organized. The church sounding forth. That has been a part of the South Norfolk Baptist Church. Because the church did not all go there; the members. But it has been the service and the work of this church that has sounded forth there in that place.

Am I of this church? Have I been born new from above? Do I know the life of God? In my own soul as touched by the spirit? Am I under the lordship of Christ? Just what is

sounded forth from my life? Is my life so yielded to the Lord that I'm ready for service? Or is my life just sounding brass and a tinkling symbol. Clanging, clashing, clattering? Instead of (reverbrating) the act that bids others to come to the Saviour. In verse 7 it says, "so that we were examples." That is our challenge.

*and
The church
sounding
forth
reflect*

20. 10. 1960