

"IT'S ALL IMAGINATION"

July 20, '86

~~██████████~~ UNSEEN, TO LISTEN TO THE VOICES THAT SPEAK TO US FROM A REGION BEYOND THE LIMITS OF OUR BARE INTELLECT -- JUST AS WE DO WHEN WE LISTEN TO GREAT MUSIC, OR GAZE AT A MASTER PIECE OF ART. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT OUR LORD GAVE US NOT ONLY THE RECORD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TO KEEP US IN TOUCH WITH HIM BUT ALSO THIS CURIOUS RITE WITH THE BREAD AND THE CUP? WASN'T IT THAT WE SHOULD GO BEYOND THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE MIND AND MEET HIM THROUGH THAT WHICH WE CAN EAT AND DRINK, AND SEE AND TOUCH SO THAT OUR IMAGINATION CAN BE STIRRED AND HIS TRUTH COME TO US WITH POWER BEYOND THAT OF THE INTELLECT ALONE? WHAT AN IMAGINATIVE GIFT HE HAS GIVEN US! CAN WE NOT RESPOND IN THE SAME WAY, LETTING THESE MATERIAL SYMBOLS CONVEY TO US HIS GRACE?

PERHAPS YOU ARE THINKING: "BUT DON'T SOME OF US HAVE MORE IMAGINATION THAN OTHERS?" THAT'S TRUE, BUT I AM CONVINCED THERE IS NO HUMAN BEING UTTERLY DEVOID OF THE GIFT OF IMAGINATION. AND WE MUST REMEMBER THAT IF WE HAPPEN TO BE ESPECIALLY ENDOUED WITH IMAGINATION, WE HAVE EVEN GREATER TEMPTATIONS. FOR WE CAN USE OUR IMAGINATION IN FOOLISH AND EVIL WAYS. IF WE HAVE GREATER POSSIBILITIES OF SORAING TOWARDS THE VISION OF CHRIST, WE HAVE GREATER POSSIBILITIES OF BETRAYING HIM BY IMAGES THAT CORRUPT, IMAGES THAT GLORIFY THE SELF, AND IMAGES THAT LEAD US TO CONTEMPLATE POSSIBLE DISASTERS. WHEN JESUS WARNED AGAINST ANXIETY AND WORRY, HE KNEW WELL HOW THE MOST IMAGINATIVE ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO CREATE THOSE NEGATIVE IMAGES OF TERRIBLE THINGS THAT MAY HAPPEN.

WHATEVER OUR IMAGINATIVE MAKE-UP THE WORD OF THE APOSTLE COMES TO US WITH SIMPLICITY AND POWER: "FINALLY, WHATEVER IS TRUE, WHATEVER IS HONORABLE, WHATEVER IS JUST, WHATEVER IS PURE, WHATEVER IS LOVELY, WHATEVER IS GRACIOUS, IF THERE IS ANY EXCELLENCE, IF THERE IS ANYTHING WORTHY OF PRAISE, THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS." SO OFTEN THE CHALLENGE OF THE GOSPEL IS PRESENTED TO US AS A DECISION OF THE MIND. CAN WE NOT HEAR IT NOW AS A CHALLENGE TO ^{OUR} IMAGINATIONS. "THINK OF THESE THINGS." IS THERE ONE OF US WHO IS INCAPABLE OF SWITCHING OUR IMAGINATIONS FROM THE NEGATIVE TO THE POSITIVE, CHOOSING WHAT KIND OF PICTURES TO HANG IN THE GALLERY OF THE MIND? THAT'S ONE OF THE GLORIES OF COMMON WORSHIP. WHEN WE MIGHT BE SITTING AT HOME WITH OUR MINDS FULL OF THE GRIM NEWS OF THE DAY, ~~██████████~~ AND WORRYING ABOUT SOME LOOMING PROBLEM IN OUR ~~██████████~~ ^{THINGS}, OR LYING IN BED CONCEIVING SATISFACTORY PICTURES OF COMING PROSPERITY OR THE DEFEAT OF A RIVAL, HERE WE ARE AT ~~██████████~~ ^{██████████} WITH THE CRUCIFIED AND RISEN CHRIST WAITING TO

RELEASE IN US THE IMAGES OF ALL THAT IS HONORABLE, JUST,
PURE, LOVELY, AND GRACIOUS.

