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Supposing?!

by T. Austin-Sparks

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There is no real point in our going round to the back door, or, in other words, using camouflage, for we do not want to take anyone by guile. So let us be quite frank, and if the matter is of no concern to you, or, rather, if you think it to be of no concern to you, just don't read on. Frankly then, we are going to look squarely in the face this matter of God's interest in us, and our relationship to Him.

A good many people are seriously thinking along these lines, and, sooner or later, everyone will do the same. Let us in the first place take off our blinkers and take in some facts. You know that a lot of responsible people, governments and officials have come under pretty severe condemnation recently because, it is said, they refused to believe facts. For seven years Germany has been most thoroughly establishing Fifth Column agents and forces in almost every country. But whenever anyone said so and warned the governments of those countries that it was so, not only was the suggestion repudiated, but evil intent was disbelieved. Well, the persistently disbelieved reports have proved true, but this has meant the undoing of a few countries in a most disastrous way. Then again, if, in 1939, someone had prophesied that in a little over a year Germany would have overrun and defeated Holland, Belgium and France, in addition to the number of other European countries which have fallen to her, such an one would have been ridiculed, if not put into prison or an asylum as mad or an incurable defeatist. Today we see those "unbelievable" things as actualities. So it is that the things which had been reported and rejected have become terrible realities; and things beyond imagination are facts. The suffering involved is very largely — if not entirely — due to unbelief.

Surely all this should make us the more disposed to give some attention to one or two very much more vital matters which are not lacking in evidences that there is something in them. At least we should be ready to entertain the suggestion — "supposing they should prove true."

To begin with, supposing it should prove true after all that God *did* send His Son Jesus Christ into this world so long ago and determine men's eternal destiny according to their attitude toward Him, in acceptance or rejection of Him as their Lord and Saviour? Supposing that it should prove true that man's eternal well-being rests upon his being able to satisfy God with absolute righteousness as to nature and conduct, and God saw that "there is none righteous, no, not one," but "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"; and so God provided Himself with His requirements in the person of His Son, and then proclaimed to men that His Son would be accepted for them if they would believe on Him in one or two respects:

- (a) that He *was* God's sinless Son;
- (b) that He — in His death — took man's sin and suffered man's judgment for sin;
- (c) that He rose from the dead to be man's representative and mediator before God?

Then again, supposing it *is* true that, after His Son had returned to heaven with this perfect work done for man, and as man's representative and advocate on high, God *did* send His Holy Spirit to make all that good in the heart and life of every man who will accept His Son as his Lord and his Saviour, so that what is true in heaven becomes true within?

Finally, supposing it should prove true that what has been done by Germany in this present world-situation has been done by another enemy in this realm of so much vaster consequence? You now know that the reason why the governments and responsible people would not believe that Germany was plotting and insinuating Fifth Column activities in these countries was because it was a very part of the whole scheme to deny it on the part of those very agents. Unbelief was fostered as an important factor in their success, and so unbelief meant culpable blindness and neglect. You find it difficult to forgive that when you look at the results. Well, do not be caught in the same device and guilt in relation to your own eternal well-being, for multitudes have been lost by an unbelief which would not allow even the suggestion — "supposing it should prove true."

Evidence there is in abundance. For many centuries there has been a line of those who have proved the "supposing" to be fact on both sides. On one side definite faith in and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour in the terms above mentioned has resulted in a real experience of a new life, peace, joy, assurance, and purpose in being alive: while rejection of Him has resulted in a consciousness of having missed the real purpose of life and having — as one man put it — to "take an awful leap into the dark."

Here is a true incident. A certain famous Judge who had been an equally famous Advocate, one day had a man appear before him on a serious charge. The man made a very earnest appeal to the Judge, saying that he — the Judge — had years before taken up his case when he was then in trouble and had secured his discharge. The Judge replied — "My man, when you came to me years ago I was in a position to be your Advocate. That time has passed and I am now only able to be your Judge." God's Son, Jesus Christ, is now in the position of Advocate and Mediator; the time is coming when He will be Judge, for it is written — "He (God) has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). But that will be too late!

Our talk has been without sentiment, no "sob stuff," but straight from the shoulder. The issues are far more serious than those of the present world affairs. If you want to settle things, bearing in mind that God has given the fullest possible evidence in the gift of His Son that He has a tremendous concern for our salvation, and is wanting to make that a personal matter with every one of us, just talk to Jesus Christ as you would to your best friend, and tell Him all about it; and if you do so, believing that — although unseen — He is a living person, you will have the evidence in yourself very soon.

Get hold of a copy of Paul's letter to the Romans and read the first eight chapters. This will put things fairly fully and clearly before you.

Remember that God has only one ground upon which He receives or rejects men. That ground is not whether you are a small or great sinner; that is, a sinner more or less, few sins or many, better than some and quite as good as some others. No, His interrogation will always be, "What about My Son, Jesus Christ; what have you done with Him? I appointed Him to be your Lord, and I gave Him to be your Saviour — What about it? Or rather — What about *Him*?"

The difference which is all the difference of two worlds is whether Christ as a living Person is — by His Spirit — resident within your heart, or is outside. He leaves the decision to us, but has left us in no darkness as to how much is bound up with our decision — one way or the other.