



the
**Golden
Candlestick**

THE POWER AT WORK WITHIN US

Editorial

THE POWER OF THE NAME

T. Austin-Sparks

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THE POWER AT WORK WITHIN US

Reading:

"... according to the power at work within us, ..." (Eph. 3:20).

Introduction

Reading through Paul's letter to the Ephesians we cannot ignore his language of power and authority. Probably it has to do with the occasion of this writing and therefore with its purpose as well.

Having heard of the faith of the believers and their love, Paul can only be very thankful. There does not seem to be a particular problem that drives the content of the letter, although there may be potential threats. The Jew-Gentile issue is important, but may not have been a reason for concern in Ephesus; Paul may just mention it in the course of his exposition of God's eternal purpose and in the context of his ministry to preach it (3:7-8). His exhortations have a general character, covering many areas of daily life, although the Church's unity and maturity are a major theme — again in the light of God's plan of redemption. His message is that the Church is to show how completely different it is to the world, as light over against darkness, in moral excellence, worship (in the broadest sense) and in the home. Love is the key in all these matters, both God's love and their own.

Paul's (main) concern is that the believers in Ephesus (and beyond) might loose heart because he is in prison (3:13). That is why he puts his situation, as God's minister of the gospel to

the Gentiles, in the perspective of the unfolding of God's plan of eternal glory. He says his sufferings are 'for (on behalf of) you' and that they are 'your glory'. And this is all about Christ. He takes the opportunity to show what is really going on in the world, based on God's revelation to the prophets and apostles, as to encourage the Church (6:22). And it is in this light that he uses his power language. Paul sees God's temple being built as in a vision. He knows what is needed for its progress and completion and he knows something of the hostile powers that try to slow it down and frustrate it. But what does Paul mean by 'the power at work within us'?

Structure

To be able to understand what Paul means by 'the power at work within us' it is necessary to look at its context and to try to follow Paul's argument through the letter. It helps to see that he wrote it in a traditional five-part fashion: heading (author, addressees and blessing), praise and prayer, the letter proper (including exhortations), a rounding-off section (usually with future plans and greetings, but in this case a little different) and a final blessing. Paul uses much space for his praise and prayer section (1:3-3:21)¹, because he uses it to lay the foundations — on a grand scale! — for his exhortations. The phrase 'the power at work within us' is part of the doxology with which he finishes his praise and prayer section. But this doxology functions as a bridge to the next section as well. The reader probably does not have to look far back to understand where the 'therefore' with which this new section begins, refers to. Indeed, the exhortations he starts with are about love and love is the matter he ended his prayer with. Is this 'power at work within us' about love?

Redemptive history

To see how Paul arrives at this point of love and unity in the

¹ Others prefer to let the praise and prayer section end at 1:23, but the length remains considerable.

Church and how this is connected with the power of the Spirit we have to look back a little further and read the praise and prayer section again. Paul builds up his argument carefully, so that the reader should be able to grasp his intent straight away, though it might be more difficult for us, two thousand years after it was written, than for the Ephesian believers.

In a few but very long sentences Paul uses his praise and prayer section to outline the whole of redemptive history, starting from before the foundation of the world and ending by the age to come. The great turning-point in history is Christ's sacrifice for redemption, the forgiveness of our trespasses. This loving grace is what restores humanity — note the use of creation language in the letter — to God's original plan of glory 'in Christ'. In God's plan of redemption there were 'we who were the first to hope in Christ' and 'you also', Jewish and Gentile believers respectively, who have now been created 'in Himself one new man in place of the two'. This new creation of the one people of God is what Paul has in mind so vividly when he is writing his letter. He is fascinated by its calling and its purpose, to be 'holy and blameless before Him' and to be 'to the praise of His glory', the inheritance, the holy dwelling-place of God. To fulfil this purpose, not only are Jews and Gentiles being united under Christ's headship, but 'all things, things in heaven and things on earth' as well. No wonder Paul uses words like 'unsearchable' and 'immeasurable', things that surpass knowledge and are 'far more abundantly than all that we ask or think' — words that we do not expect to hear from the mouth of a prisoner. So the 'therefore' in 4:1 will imply that if all this is true, it must have consequences.

Suffering and glory, resurrection and authority

What Paul wants the Ephesian believers to know is that his imprisonment (mentioned or alluded to four times in the letter) does not imply defeat but is in fact a sign of victory. He says his sufferings are their glory. In order that these believers may understand this seeming contradiction and benefit from understanding it

for their own spiritual growth, Paul is praying for 'knowledge'. This is the experimental knowledge of God's grace (which is sometimes described in theological terms by 'subjective truth' over against 'objective truth'). Thus it is Paul's prayer that the Ephesian believers may know — that is, may experience — what is 'the greatness of His power towards us who believe' and he explains that it is the same power with which God raised Jesus from the dead and 'seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority ...'. So Paul has every reason to expect that his sufferings, his 'death', so to speak, will result in 'resurrection glory', because he is a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus and the gospel. And this ought to encourage the believers to persevere, to grow in their faith and walk with the Lord. The resurrection principle is already at work in the Christian (community), on a daily basis and it concerns all his (its) relationships — in the Church, at home and in the workplace — as well as opposition and persecution. Christ has all authority. He is in control, so His Church is in control — in spite of Paul's imprisonment and in spite of the suffering the Church may have to go through. The days are evil, but believers are fully in control, because they belong to Christ. Because of their faith in Christ they have boldness and access to God with confidence. This is what ruling with Christ means. Paul's own dealing with his imprisonment is an evidence of Christ's resurrection and if the believers do not lose heart they will be an object lesson of Christ's resurrection too. It becomes evident by their love, holiness and joyful perseverance.

Paul's exhortations are therefore closely linked with this fact of the resurrection of Jesus and the believers' inclusion in it by grace. The exhortations flow out of this truth. And that is the flow of his argument through the letter. The believers should not lose heart, but, on the contrary, walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which they have been called. Paul almost stumbles over his own superlatives concerning Christ and the grace of God, so that the readers of this letter cannot but be encouraged and see that his imprisonment only serves to fulfil God's purpose. So, as a prisoner for the Lord (4:1), he has solid ground to urge his readers to live together as

worthy representatives of the Kingdom of God (see also 5:3-5) in the midst of a dark society that is run by evil powers. The message is uttered by someone who knows what he is speaking about by experience, which makes it all the more powerful.

The corporate experience of the power of the Spirit

This resurrection life, being seated with Christ in the heavenly places, is expressed in a way that is to be expected, namely in a Christ-like manner. It is Paul's prayer that 'according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith'. The Spirit is not the agent of resurrection, but He is the agent of working it out in the hearts of the believers. And this is a beautiful truth, that this Christ-likeness is meant to be worked out corporately, in the community of believers together. And so the Spirit is very much the Spirit of the Church — the saved ones — just like God's powerful presence among the Old Testament people of Israel, but now 'in the inner man', 'within us'. The 'power at work within us' is, of course, working in the hearts of individual believers, but cannot be isolated from local communities of believers, because it has all to do with mutual love. We cannot love on our own, can we? The Spirit gives power to love. But this power is not something mechanical. It is Christ Himself dwelling in our hearts through faith. So the Spirit reveals Christ in us as we walk in faith, resulting in humility and love.

This dynamic of the power of the Spirit is something delicate as far as 'what comes first' is concerned. Is it our faith? Is it our action? Is it God's revelation or the Spirit's prompting? It may be our faith, but we cannot have faith without the Spirit. Sometimes it is the Spirit's prompting or our coming to understand the Scriptures and seeing more of Christ in it — God reckons with our personalities and situations, whether we are a retired doctor or a busy mother of five, having been brought up in a more Calvinistic or in an evangelical tradition. This matter of what comes first and how the Spirit works

in us should not bother us too much. Paul prays for this ongoing process of God giving 'the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him'. We just have to learn to practice it and experience it. It is part of our spiritual growth. We may say that it works in such a way that the love of God demands a proper response, or it moves us to imitate Him (see 5:1) and as we step out in faith to do so — knowing who we are by nature — we receive the power of the Spirit to function well within the Church, so that it becomes a holy dwelling place of God and it testifies, in a very practical way, of the reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus and thereby of the reality of the age to come. How marvellous!

The defensive and offensive aspects of the power of the Spirit

But salvation is not something to just marvel at, neither should the Christ-likeness the Spirit is working out in the Church only be spelled out in terms of gentleness and patience. Indeed, Christ's character can be summed up by love, but love includes correction and justice, which implies judgment of what is wrong and evil. Paul realizes that his exhortations will have little effect when he sticks to urging believers to change bad habits into good habits, with a comforting word added that the Spirit will help them to do so. Is that how we could summarize most of the sermons we hear or even preach ourselves? There should be a 'finally' (6:10). Both a strong, unwavering, defensive position — in the strength of the Lord's might — against the powers of darkness and an offensive proclamation of the gospel and continuous praying in the Spirit are needed. In the first half of his letter Paul fills a lot of space explaining how the Church has been equipped by Christ's death and resurrection and the consequent outpouring of the Spirit. Now he urges believers to use that equipment to the full, so that the gospel will continue to be spread.

What may surprise us is that Paul puts prayer at the offensive side. We cannot be sure if that is why he adds 'in the Spirit' to it

or whether this phrase is emphatic. By adding the phrase he may want to remind the Church of the temptation to become sluggish in prayer and that every time we pray we should see to it that we pray 'in the Spirit'. It may imply to just take that extra effort to connect ourselves consciously with the Lord rather than just mumble something we hope the Lord will do for us some day. It may mean that we first take some time to become aware of what is really going on in the universe and the seriousness and greatness of it all and what is at stake. We really need the Spirit in that. It may also point to the importance of praying privately. It involves discipline as well. Again, it depends on our personalities and situations how we can apply this continuous praying in the Spirit, but if a red traffic light or an open bridge has become an opportunity instead of a nuisance, we may have made some progress.

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THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE NAME

Reading: 1 Cor. 1:23-31; 2 Cor. 12:7-13; 13:4.

The power of the Name is, in His will, to be operative and active in the church, and it is an extremely important thing that the Lord's people should be in the good of the Name of Jesus. To make that statement, and then to go with it to the Scriptures is to have it very fully corroborated, proved, and demonstrated. Not only in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament, the Lord's glory was bound up with His Name. That Name rested upon that which represented His House; in the Old Testament the House in type, in the New Testament the House in spiritual reality. To trace the Name of the Lord through the Scriptures is to come out with a very deep and strong realisation of how important it is for the Lord's people to be in the good of the Name.

There are several things which are comprehensive in connection with the Name.

The name stands for universal sovereignty

The Word of God shows that the Name of Jesus stands for universal sovereignty: "... God ... has highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ..." (Phil. 2:9-10). "... according to

the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when he raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come; and has put all things in subjection under His feet ..." (Eph. 1:19-22). So that that Name sets forth the universal sovereignty of the Lord Jesus.

That is a comprehensive statement. It can be analysed, broken up, and thus seen in application in every realm. It can be seen in the realm of spiritual forces. They are brought into subjection to the Name of Jesus, their power bound, their work destroyed. It can be seen in the realm of nature. The Name of Jesus prevailed over the effects of spiritual forces working evil in the creation, in physical conditions, sicknesses and infirmities. It can be seen in the realm of testimony. Everything was done in the Name of Jesus. It is a Name the sovereignty of which is recognised and acknowledged in every realm. Sooner or later it will be acknowledged by that which at present is last to acknowledge it; that is, man himself. Other forces recognise the sovereignty of that Name; man is very slow to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus. But every knee *shall* bow in the Name of Jesus, and every tongue shall confess, because God has decreed and determined that to the farthest bounds of this universe everything within those bounds shall bow in the Name of Jesus.

The name rests upon the church

Then the Name is shown by the Word of God to rest upon the church, the House of God. We are familiar with the words relative to the temple, that it was to be a House for His Name. The Lord referred to it as the place where His Name was. The appeal to the Lord was always made in the interests of His Name: "For thy great Name's sake". The Lord Himself said that He acted in sovereignty, not for man's sake, not for the sake of any earthly thing, but for His own Name's sake, and that because His Name was bound up

with that on the earth which He had chosen to be the vessel of that Name.

We move from the Old Testament to the New Testament and see so distinctly that the spiritual counterpart carries that significance with it, that the church is the place where the Name is; the people of God bear His Name. As James puts it: "That holy name which was called upon you".

The name functions in power on the ground of the blood

Then we also see by the Word of God that the Name functions in power on the ground of the blood. That, in other Words, means this, that the mighty work of the cross in the efficacy of the blood of the Lord Jesus is a work of universal triumph over sin, over the flesh, over death, over judgement, over all the power of evil. The blood speaks of a mighty, comprehensive, universal victory, and that blood brought into the sanctuary and sprinkled there becomes the basis of the operation of the Name. The Name takes up all the values of the blood; that is, all the victory to which the blood testifies, and the Name embodies that victory, and is mighty, and energetic, and operates in virtue of the mighty work of the cross and the power of the blood of Jesus. It functions on the ground of the blood.

The Name and the blood must ever go together. The appeal to the Name must ever be by way of the blood, and a right apprehension of the value of the blood will lead us into the power of the Name. You will notice that, while not using exactly that form of Words, the truths are kept together all the way through; "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him has God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour ..." (Acts 5:30-31). They are only other terms for the cross and the Name, the blood and the supreme Lordship. These two things are kept together, and they are parts of one another.

The name demands moral and spiritual qualities in order that the power may be manifested

Then the next thing which we see, is that the Name demands certain moral and spiritual qualities and values in order that its power may be manifested. Of these moral and spiritual values the first is

a) Humility

The nature of humility, and the tremendous power of humility, is in the Name of the One who was crucified, the Name of the One who was despised and rejected of men. These things are kept together in testimony in the New Testament, that when the explanation of the power was given Jesus of Nazareth was brought into view; not first of all Jehovah, but Jesus of Nazareth. An explanation was asked: "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" (Acts 4:7). Whether asked for or not, the explanation was always given that the working of this mighty power manifested among men was related to Jesus of Nazareth, whom men crucified, rejected and cast out, whom they slew and hanged upon a tree. The cross, the humiliation, the degradation of the Lord Jesus is brought up, and then over against it is set this mighty power of His Name. That means that the power works through the weakness or humility of the Lord Jesus, the humiliation which was prompted by His humiliation. He, in humility, allowed the humiliation, and this is the outcome.

We pass to a consideration of the second of these spiritual and moral values and qualities which are essential to the working of the power of the Name. It is of the family of humility:

b) Human weakness

That is one side of it. The other side would be that the Lord alone is our strength. But for the Lord alone to be our strength means that we in ourselves have no strength at all. Weakness is a great element in the operation of the power of the Name. We must take it as a settled thing with God, that to which we shall have to

come, and from which we shall never escape, if we are to know anything at all about the power of the Name of Jesus. That is, we shall have to learn the meaning of weakness and come to the place of conscious weakness. It will have to be settled in us that weakness is essential to God, so far as we are concerned, weakness is complementary, weakness is divine strategy and is God's opportunity. If that be so, then our eyes, our faces, our direction will have to be towards glorying in weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon us. It is easy to talk like that. Words of that kind can slip through our lips, but it may take us decades to reach anything like a situation of that kind.

By way of illustrating this, we will turn back to the Old Testament to that familiar incident in Genesis 32:29: "And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" For what reason? What is your object? To what end to you ask after My Name? Why do you think it necessary to know My Name?

You notice the setting of this. "Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day" (Gen. 32:24). Then the Man asked his name, and he had to confess that it was Jacob. I wonder whether Jacob ever bore that name happily. When you remember what it means, and for a man to have to carry that label about, and then in the end for the Lord to demand the confession of that name, makes you wonder if he ever bore it pleasantly. Jacob is my name, and Jacob is my nature! "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

Notice carefully the significance of that. There is a statement here which says, "there wrestled a man with him". The statement of the Man indicates the Name that Jacob sought to know and shows us why the Man refused to give the designation. The statement is

in two parts: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel." That is one part. Then, "Thou has striven (had power) with God and with men, and hast prevailed." The name of Jacob was changed to Israel-el, a *Prince with God*. "Thou hast *striven with God* ... and has prevailed." You do not want a Name after that. You know who it is you have had to do with. It need not be put into a designation. Why do you ask? You ought to know! Why do you want a title when you have met what is in the Name? That Jacob instantly saw the significance of the refusal is seen by his naming of the place, 'Peni-el', which means 'the face of God'. "For, said he, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." The Man was God, and the Name withheld as to a title, a designation, is known by what is met, the power.

Before we touch that further let us turn to the book of Exodus 33:20: "And He said, Thou canst not see My face; for man shall not see Me and live." Now link that with Jacob's Word, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Is that a contradiction? No! Jacob did not know it was God; He met a man, and it was man to man, and the man he met was endued with the very power of God, it was the God-Man.

The whole of the New Testament can be crowded into that. Here is a Man. Ask Jesus of Nazareth His Name. Why do you want to know My Name? Look upon the effects, and you will know who I am!

Now note: "... there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he (the man) saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained, as he wrestled with him." Jacob came out with every ounce of strength at his command. He gathered up all his power, all his forces, to exhaust himself in his strength against this man, and the man drew him out until his strength had reached its last extremity; that is, all Jacob's strength was put into this thing. Then note: "And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched ...". It looks as though the Angel (or the Man) was exerting all his strength. Not at all. Jacob was being drawn out to use up every ounce of strength, and then all the man had to do was to

put his finger upon him. Paul tells us that the weakness of God is stronger than men. It is only a finger touch, after all, when Jacob has got to the end of his strength, and he bears the mark of that to his dying day. "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" Do you want to know who I am? Look at the effect! My weakness is stronger than men, greater than all the power of the devil. He was "crucified through weakness". He lives "by the power of God". The mighty power of God was allied to that weakness.

So the Name as a mere Word was withheld, and the interrogation was intended to direct the attention of Jacob to the power in action. You need not ask My Name, you ought to know! It was as though Jacob said, Oh no, I need not ask, I have met it, I know! It has proved more than a match for my utmost strength! That simple touch crippled me when I was at my strongest.

The Name of the Lord is known by its power. The Name is power; that is the point. It is not a title, not a Word, not a place. The Name means power, *but* this power is manifested on the ground of human weakness. When his greatest strength has met the touch of God and broken under it, been crippled by it, then he is a Prince with God, then he knows the meaning of the Name. I do not know whether we know the Name which is above every name. The Word says that God has given Him the Name. I am not sure that we have the Name that God has given Him. We are not told what the Name is that is above every name unless we conclude that it is the title of God known to us, Jehovah. What that Name is may well be something unrevealed. The point is that we know He has been given a title of authority and power over every other title in the universe, and we know it by the power that is in Christ. The Name is the power, and that power operates when our strength has been broken. So weakness becomes the background of the power of the Name. That is what is revealed by types in the Old Testament. Look where you like, and you will see the value of God operating and the Name of God resting, and you will see that God has dealt with the vessel to its breaking, weakening and emptying.

Is it a Moses, coming out from Egypt in the strength of his own

person to do God's work? God does not ally Himself to that Moses. God does not commit His Name to him. But in the day when Moses has been weakened and emptied in the desert, then Moses says: "When I come unto the children of Israel ... and they shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them?" And God tells him, "Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Ex. 3:13-14). But that is vague, indefinite; they will not understand that! "What is that in thine hand?" And Moses said, "A rod". All right, that is the key to the Name, the rod of supreme authority. They will know My Name by the power that is manifested! They will understand that I AM when that rod becomes active! And they did. All their enemies were slowly, steadily, surely brought into subjection to that Name until the last enemy, death, met that rod, met that Name, undefined but active, and was broken. The Name proved to be above every name. Moses, in order to come into the power of that Name, had to be broken in his natural strength.

So we could follow through in every case, and on into the New Testament. Our Lord Jesus, to whom all these others point in type, as the great Antitype, sets this truth so clearly before us. From this world's standpoint, according to this world's standards and judgements, there was nothing mighty about Him, so much so that they thought that they could do just as they would with Him. They treated Him as a man, who could be dealt with as other men. Finally they came to take Him, and He said: "Whom seek ye?" They said, Jesus of Nazareth! He replied, I AM! And they all fell back and became as dead men. It is but a flash, for a moment, but apart from those momentary flashes of revelation as to the truth, on the face of it there is nothing but weakness, yet behind it is the tremendous reality of God.

Follow on to the example servant of Christ, Paul. See him as he was by nature, in his natural strength, and then hear all that he has to say about weakness, and the Lord's work to keep him weak because of the perils of his strength, "... wherefore, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me ..." (2 Cor. 12:7). Now notice the

implication: "Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for *My power is made perfect in weakness.*" Oh, then the messenger of Satan, the thorn in the flesh, was a weakness, that was all. Somewhere there was a weakness, of which the apostle was terribly conscious, a weakness from which he naturally would gladly escape, because nature hates to feel weak; nature loves to feel strong. For this Paul sought the Lord thrice, but the Lord said, in effect, No! Weakness is the safest thing for My glory! So this servant of the Lord makes it perfectly clear, as an example for the dispensation, that weakness is the background of the power of the Name.

Our strength forms the battleground of so many conflicts and until it is really touched we cannot know the meaning of the Name. Our own strength is very often the battleground with ourselves, not only the Lord's battleground. It is a long time before most of us come to the place where we are prepared to recognise, acknowledge and accept the necessity for weakness. We fret, we complain and groan. All our pride is against weakness, we hate it if others think that we are weak. It is no use our projecting the strength of our own mind, will, judgement, or ideas against men, to try to convince them, to get the upper hand over them, to master them, to defeat them. The way to win is often to let go and let them think that we are weak. We are not going to let others think we are weak, that we can be played with. We are going to stand up to them. We put on a false dignity, and we tell ourselves that it is not worthy of our Lord that we should take things lying down; that we ought as the Lord's servants to have dignity and stand up to men. That is all false. Very often it is necessary for us to let men do as they will, to just leave the field to them, and stand back with the Lord. Our attitude towards the Lord is shown in Psalm 62. See the attitude of man: the cruelty, hatred, the vindictiveness, the casting down of the righteous. What was the attitude of the Psalmist to it all? Did he stand on his rights, on his dignity? No, he said, "My soul, be thou silent unto God" (Ps. 62:5 R.V.M.). What happens? Oh, that is very weak! Yes, but the Lord in His own time vindicates such, the

Lord in His own time takes up the cause of such as meekly put their trust in Him and then these others have to acknowledge, bow and recognise something. The Lord does not come and fight the battle of those who are fighting their own battles. The Lord does not take sides with those who are seeking their own advantage. The Lord does not secure the end of those who are seeking to secure their own ends. Very often it is necessary to suffer wrongfully. "The meek shall inherit the earth" is the Word of God; but, oh, this is a bitter cup to the flesh, the bitterness of allowing people to believe that we are weak.

We have to face facts. Either this is true, or it is not. You may perhaps call up a lot of Scripture, such as, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might", "Quit you like men!" Are you going to counter that which we are saying with Scripture? Well, let us note that to be strong in the Lord means not to be strong in yourself. "The Lord *only* is my strength." Our strength is only in the Lord. This battle of weakness has to be fought through, until we get to the place where we are settled on the matter that weakness is necessary to the Lord, and we are ready to keep on asking the Lord to keep us from our own strength, and that He alone shall be our strength, our might. When that is so the Lord has the ground and the background for His Name. It gives us the ground of appeal to the Name: "... I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinks upon me ...". The Lord will bring us to the place where we have to recognise and acknowledge where we are in ourselves — Jacob! When we have got there, and we are feeling and knowing all the time that we are Jacob, a wretched thing, a worm? When we have got that meekness of spirit, the Lord says: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob!" It is not that the Lord is going to glorify the worm Jacob, but because Jacob has come to the place where he knows himself, and the Lord sees that that man knows how weak he is, and is prepared to call himself Jacob, then the Lord says: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob!" The Lord comes in then. That battle has got to be fought to a finish.

Before we close we want to bring in the positive side, Christ crucified — the power of God! There is a Man in whom power,

even the power of God, can be deposited without causing God a moment's anxiety. That Man is not you and that Man is not me. If the power of God were deposited in you or in me, God would have a good deal of anxiety about His power. When the Lord blesses us, we are in the most dangerous place, for we immediately begin to take hold of the blessings of God and use them as a platform upon which to stand and be something; and the devil is not slow to come along and take up anybody who is blessed of God and make a lot of them. Perhaps you are saying that the Lord is keeping you very much down. Nevertheless, let us remember that the point is this, that "power belongs unto God". There is only one Man in God's universe in whom the power of God is deposited, and that is the Man Christ Jesus. Therefore we are to be strong *in the Lord*. The strength is in Christ, and the power that is to be manifested can only be as we are out of ourselves and in Christ, as we stand apart from ourselves and stand in him, and it can only be as we abide in Christ that the power of God can be manifested in us. Immediately we get apart into ourselves, into nature, into flesh, not only does the power of God become checked, but something far more dangerous than that, the power of Satan gets an opportunity.

The point is this. There is One in whom the power of God rests in fulness. That One is at God's right hand, Christ, the power of God — but Christ crucified. You and I need to be in Christ *crucified* if the Name is to be manifested, if we are to know the power of the Name, if the forces of evil are to know the power of the name, if the glory of God is to be upheld in the Name, by power.

We are going to find it increasingly necessary to know the power of the Name; we are going to have to deal more and more with the forces of evil themselves. It may be in men, it may be behind men, it may be apart from men, it may be those dark assaults of the enemy without any human intermediary or agency. However it may be, you and I are going to have to do primarily with the enemy, the spiritual realities, and whether they come through human instrumentalities or not, the fact is ultimately the testimony of the Lord has to be established there. If we have to meet men energised by

the devil, then it is no use trying to break and defeat the men; we have to triumph over the enemy behind them. We may beat the men in debate, in reason, or in sheer force, but we have not won. It may be we have lost, and the enemy has all the greater power. We have still got to meet the enemy behind the situation. The power of the Name is what is necessary to defeat, to overpower the enemy. These are no mere Words, but something which, after all, is the supreme and ultimate value of the testimony of Jesus. The testimony of Jesus is not a teaching to men. The testimony of Jesus is a witness to the whole kingdom of darkness. I am convinced that we are going to have to deal with forces of evil in a deepening and intensifying way, and the only means of dealing effectively with them is in the power of the Name of Jesus. So it was at the beginning, so it must be at the end.

If all this is true unto the effective working of the Name of Jesus, you and I will have to be kept in a place of deep dependence upon the Lord as our strength. That means that we shall have to be emptied, we shall have to know weakness. But is that the reason why we should be mournful or melancholy? Because the suffering lying behind the weakness makes us know how worthless we are, are we to look as though we have been deprived of the last treasure in the universe? Are we to bear a miserable sound and appearance towards men because the Lord has dealt with us in this way? We must take the attitude that all this weakness, emptying and breaking, is the very best thing in the Lord's interests that could possibly be. Oh, for grace to take Paul's attitude of glorying in weakness that the power of God may be manifest. We shall not have to regard it as loss but gain, not something which is to be escaped but something precious to the Lord. We have to revise our idea of weakness and strength. The world's idea of strength is so different from this, and that is why the world must be crucified to us. Our ideas must be divine. The day will come when it will be proved that supreme divine dominion is moral and spiritual, not physical and psychical. That is a different realm of things altogether.

So may the Lord make us know His strength perfected in weakness.

THE NAME AND THE WORD OF GOD

Reading: Rev. 19:12-16.

At the outset it is necessary for us to make a general observation about the three things here in connection with the Name. You will notice that in this passage the Word 'name' appears three times.

"... He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself."

"... and His name is called The Word of God".

"And He has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

The two latter are no contradiction of the former. It is perfectly clear that the first reference to the Name is something by itself, not affected by the following statements.

In our last meditation, speaking of the Name which is above every name, we remarked that we were not sure that we knew what that Name was. "God ... has given Him the name which is above every name ...". So far as names and titles of God are concerned in the Scriptures, Jehovah is the greatest of those titles, and it may be that Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, as Son of Man was invested with that Name in His exaltation, but it does not say so. All that we are told is that He is given the Name which is above every Name, and we are not told what that Name is. We can infer that it was Jehovah Jesus, but, on the other hand, it may be this Name which no one knows save He Himself; something that is hidden, so far as its actual terms are concerned, from all, and only known to Him.

There may not be very much value in that observation, but this

passage leads us to see that He possesses a Name which no one knows save He Himself. That which follows is a Name that others do know, and others have got to know, and others will have reason to know. That we shall see as we go on. "... and His name is called, The Word of God".

That is something which we can know, "... a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS". That is something for men to know.

We just point out these two things: firstly, that the Lord Jesus possesses a secret Name which is not revealed to men, which is evidently of some transcendent meaning and value far beyond our knowledge; secondly, that there is no contradiction between this statement that He has a Name which no one knows, and His Name is *The Word of God, King of Kings, Lord of Lords*.

The written word and the living (or personal) Word are one

We come to the practical values of this second reference, for it is the passage with which we are mostly concerned just now: "... and His name is called, The Word of God".

It is a matter for our realisation — not just for our information — that the written Word and the Living Word, or Personal Word, are one. Probably we have heard that many times, and probably we have read that statement, and not been very interested. It has been something which has perhaps been taken for granted, but there is more in that than a statement of fact. The written Word and the Living or Personal Word are one; they are not two things. The Word spoken is not something just said, even though it may be said by God. The Word spoken is something itself when it comes from God. It is the very essence of God. God never speaks mere words or phrases. God speaks out Himself. When God speaks, He comes in His Word Himself. To meet the Word of God is to meet God, not something said by God. In that way the two are one. The Word of God does not speak of things. The Word of God *is* those things mentioned. So that God does not talk *about* Himself; God

talks Himself. (...) God does not speak about life. The Word of God is not about life. Life can become a theme, a subject, something talked about. God does not speak in His Word about life. God's Word *is* life. God's Word is not about light; it *is* light. "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Ps. 119:130). God's Word is not about truth; it *is* truth. God's Word is not about power; it *is* power. God's Word is not about judgement; God's Word *is* judgement. Judgement is immediate when the Word comes from God.

You will see from these and many other instances that the spoken Word cannot be divorced from the Living, Personal Word. They are one, and truly to meet God's Word on any matter is to meet God *in* and *as* that matter, be it life, or light, or truth, or anything else.

The Personal Word is Christ, as the Scriptures clearly state. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1.1). "And the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us ..." (v. 14). Exactly the same Word is used here in this passage in the book of the Revelation. It is not the alternative Word for the spoken Word, verbal utterance, "rhema"; it is "logos". "In the beginning was the Logos ... and the Logos was God", and yet God has come out in the terms of something which utters Himself. That is the meaning of the Word. It is an utterance; not an utterance of a theme, a subject; it is an utterance of God. It is God uttering Himself.

It is important to realise and grasp this, because in many directions the language is of very solemn account. Being in the presence of God's Word means that we are in the presence of something with which we have to reckon, and we cannot, therefore, begin to take hold of these things in a mental way and analyse and judge them and then decide whether we will accept them or not. We have to face God, for it is God's Word being spoken.

So it is in ministry. We may talk about things out of the Bible and effect nothing. We may have our conferences and conventions, and mountains of Words may be uttered which are all Scriptural and true doctrine, and nothing happens. In our ministry it is not

a matter of speaking things, but of uttering God. Those who have responsibility in ministry should always be much before the Lord so that they are not going to talk "things". Sooner or later they will get heartsick of that, and will want to escape it; they will become tired of hearing their own voice repeating Words, tired of talking even about the things of God. We must be much before the Lord that ours shall not be a ministry of things, subjects, themes.

When we speak of utterance we refer to the deeper meaning of that Word. Utterance is not merely expression in speech. When Paul sought the prayer of fellow-believers that utterance might be given to him, he was not asking them to pray that he should have facility of speech, that he should be able to find Words, that he should not be tongue-tied and at a loss for a way of expressing himself. That was not what he was after. When we speak of uttering, we are speaking of projecting something. Paul was not thinking of projecting Words and ideas, but that there might be a coming out of something which was hidden: "... that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery ..." (Col. 4:3). Here is something that is pent up, that must be uttered, that must be loosed. When God utters Himself He does not just put Himself into language, He puts Himself into effect; it is God Himself coming out. It must be like that with us in our ministry, and therefore there is much need for us to be in the presence of the Lord before ministering, and to ask such questions as these: What is before us on this occasion? Are we going to talk about an interesting theme, or something that we feel is important for people to hear? Is it to be something that we have prepared, or are we going to minister Christ? The living Personal Word is in the written Word, and one with it.

God's Word brings Christ in, and wherever you look at the written Word you find God's written Word bringing Christ in. It is difficult to know where to light upon the best example of that. You may take a very comprehensive example in Moses. Moses himself is a type. He represents the government of the Word of God. You can gather up the whole of the meaning of the life of Moses into that. Read the last chapter of the book of Exodus, and you will see

that the phrase "... as the Lord commanded Moses" is repeated seven times. Each time it was in relation to some execution of the Lord's work, and it was so exact that it should be said about it: "As the Lord commanded Moses". Every detail was like that. Then you notice that from the time of the death of Moses that was the thing that was carried forward. It was carried forward into the life of Joshua, into the life of the people over Jordan in the land: "As the Lord commanded Moses". "As the Lord spoke by the mouth of His servant Moses". Israel's life was brought utterly under the Word of God through Moses.

What was this government of the Word of God? Well, the tabernacle was one thing. What was the tabernacle? The tabernacle represents Christ, so that it is Christ who is brought in. Comprehensively and minutely the Word brought in Christ, and that Word meant the government of Christ in its outworking. See the government of the tabernacle, see the government of the altar, see the government of the ark of the testimony, of the mercy seat, of the cherubim, of the priesthood, of the sacrifice. It all represents Christ and was "as the Lord commanded Moses". The spoken Word and the living Word are one. The one brought in the other, so that by the Word Christ became the dominating reality of the life.

When the people are over Jordan the same thing goes on: "as the Lord commanded Moses". What does it mean to be over Jordan? It is simply Christ again, Christ in the heavenlies, Christ governing, and it is "as the Lord commanded". It is all concerning Christ.

So that as you get nearer to the close of the whole divine revelation, the whole Scripture record, you come to these Words: "... and his name is called, The Word of God" (Rev. 19:13). When you read Revelation 19, what do you have before you? "He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood ..." And what follows; "... and He shall rule them (the nations) with a rod of iron ..." (Rev. 19:15). There goes forth from His mouth a sharp sword. The Word of God in Person is dominating the whole situation and bringing the whole world to judgement. How is the world to be judged by the Word of God? What is the Word of God? It is God revealed in Christ, "... and

his name is called, The Word of God". In other words, His Name is the revelation of God, the presence of God in manifestation.

We must remember that the letter is not the Word of God in the full sense, "... the letter kills ..." (2 Cor. 3:6). The letter of Scripture is not the Word of God in the full sense. The Word of God in the full sense is the Word spoken and the Word Personal combined; the living Word and the spoken Word united. The Scripture can be taken and divorced from the living, Personal Christ, and then it ceases to be the Word of God. To be the Word of God it must be united with the living Christ. It is not enough in order to realise God's purposes, that we take hold of Scripture as subjects, themes, written matter, and organise the Scripture and produce it in the form of addresses and Bible readings on subjects. We do not get at God's end that way. The Word of God is something more than that! It is the divine meaning and the divine sense ministered through the written Word, and these two things must go together. That is why it is indispensable and essential that the minister of the Word should be anointed with the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit brings that combination into manifestation, and gives the meaning and sense and brings God out. That is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. We must be anointed to preach the Word, because the Spirit is the Lord in the Word.

Take a passage like Jeremiah 1:9-10,17,19: "Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my Words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant ... Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them ... And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, says the Lord, to deliver thee."

You see there the meaning of this of which we are speaking. The Lord and His Word combined, making one ministry, and the effect is tremendous. We know how effectual it was. When you read through

these prophecies you see the plucking up, the pulling down, the destroying and the overthrowing; and then the planting, though not in Jeremiah's day. Years afterwards it is said: "... that the Word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia ...". The result was that a remnant was planted in the land. "Behold, I have put my Words in thy mouth ..." (Jer. 1:9): "... that the Word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled ..." (Ezra 1:1). Israel was plucked up, pulled down, destroyed, planted.

But there were others that came under the power of the Word spoken by Jeremiah. In Daniel 9:2 we read: "In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." Babylon came under the power of the Word of God as uttered by the Word of that man now dead, and Babylon was plucked up, destroyed and overthrown. When God gives us His Word, He is with it, He is in it, and it has power to overthrow kingdoms and the mighty empires of this world and of darkness. His Name is called *The Word of God*. All that the Word of God means, as God Himself in expression, is in the Name of Jesus. The Name of Jesus embodies that, the Name of Jesus gathers that up into itself and comes to mean all that God Himself in His almighty power is in expression, in action. That is the Name of Jesus.

No wonder Jeremiah, speaking to the false prophets, drew the contrast between the Word of God and that which was an assumed Word of God. He said that the false prophets prophesied falsely, and that they said that the Word of God was something which was not the Word of God at all. Then he drew the contrast: "The prophet that has a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that has My Word, let him speak my Word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? says the Lord" (Jer. 23:28). That is the difference.

In a simple illustration like that you can quickly get at the nature of the Word of God. What is the chaff? The chaff is light and flimsy and can be carried away by any draught or breeze that comes,

but the wheat cannot be got rid of like that. The whole process of winnowing in the East proves that. With the winnowing fan it is all thrown up into the breeze, and away goes the chaff, and the wheat falls at the feet of the one who is winnowing. It cannot be carried away. It cannot be got rid of like that. All the winds that blow cannot get rid of the Word of God, and if that Word is Christ you see that, whatever our attitude may be towards the thing said, we cannot get rid of the reality; when it is God's Word it is God Himself. When all the winds have blown, He still remains.

"What is the chaff to the wheat?" Well, eat them both and see! Start with the chaff, and see how much satisfaction, how much enrichment you get out of the chaff. You will soon discover the value of the two by trying them. The chaff never satisfies. There is no nourishment in it. The wheat does satisfy. It meets our need. Yet these false prophets were giving chaff, and it was being accepted. Why? Because people were not prepared to put it to the test. There is a deceptiveness about chaff. Unless you taste it you might often be deceived into thinking that the chaff was the wheat. See it all in the bin. Look at it from the outside. You might say, There is a bin of wheat! But put your hand in and feel and taste it! The people were deceived by the appearance which the false prophets were making. The chaff looked like the wheat, and they never put it to the test. Put the Word of God to the test, try it, and you will find there is something there that is very different from the chaff. It is substantial. It is effective. So the illustration is very true to the fact of the Word of God being living, effectual, quick, powerful, because it is the Lord Himself.

"His name is called The Word of God." It would seem that the matter the Lord is seeking to say to us in connection with the Name is that He wants us to stand in all the meaning, value and virtue of the Name of the Lord Jesus. He wants us to know the tremendous power resident in that Name. In these various ways He is seeking to show us that that Name represents something of tremendous meaning. The Word of God! Oh, what a decree! It is not a statement, it is an act, something that is living. You will remember that

little phrase in Luke 1:37: "For no Word of God shall be void of power" (R.V.). You will know that the connection of that very clause was the accomplishment of something that was altogether beyond nature, the bringing into this world by a miracle.

The Word of God is spoken of as the means of our being begotten: "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth ..." (James 1:10). What does it mean to be begotten? What is it to be born? What is the meaning of the new birth? Nicodemus got into difficulties on that matter, but the Word makes it perfectly clear that new birth is the introduction of Christ into the renewed spirit. It is Christ being born in us as He was born in Bethlehem by the Word of God. It brings in Christ. It makes us a new creation.

We know the parallel of this, in that the worlds were made by the Word of God. Yes, but a new creation is also produced by the Word of God, What is the new creation? It is the living Word brought to birth in the spirit of a believer. That is the new creation. It is a new creation in Christ, and in which Christ is. It is not just new, that God stands forth and makes a command; it is that God Himself puts Himself into something, and it is born. God in Christ is put within. The Living Word is put within. We are begotten again by the Word of God. Christ is that Word, the Word of our begetting. Christ is our new birth, Christ is our new life, Christ is the new creation, Christ is the new man.

The apostle Paul illustrates this for us in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4 in his reference to the old dispensation, and the Word of God written upon tables of stone. There is the Word given in an objective way then, but only as a type and illustration, Now the apostle goes on to say: "God ... has shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He has not written upon tables of stone, with pen and ink, but He has written by His Spirit upon the fleshy tables of our hearts. God has shone into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Word of God has been put into us by the Holy Spirit, but what is that Word of God? The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. What

do you mean by "the face of Jesus Christ?" Simply this, that Christ is God's expression, and Christ as God's expression has come into our hearts by the work of the Holy Spirit, and that is the Word in us. You cannot divorce the two. It is not something written, it is a Person inwardly revealed. When Paul said that, he was thinking of that day of which he spoke at another time in this way, "It pleased God ... to reveal His son in me ...". That is the Word of God personally inscribed, unveiled, uttered; but what power there is in that, what power there was in that in the case of the man who used those Words! We shall never cease to wonder at the miracle of Paul. Look at the things he came up against — the terrific power of national prejudice, for instance. Those of us who have tasted of the miracle of God's grace in getting rid of national prejudice, so that we can come together from all nationalities and find blessed fellowship, know something of a sting and a cut that no one else feels when we meet national prejudice. What a power there is in national prejudice especially when that is carried into the realm of religious fanaticism and developed to its highest point of tension, between Jew and Gentile. And then for that national prejudice to be developed through generations and ages by every means to strengthen it. And then to find that with one stroke the man who was the embodiment of that age-long national prejudice, with all its fanatical intensity, had become the apostle of the Gentiles. There is something there which is supernatural. That is the power of the Name of Jesus, the Word of God. What power there is in the revelation in the heart of God in Christ. Oh, that we may be better ministers of the Word, know more of the power of the Word, which is the Name of Jesus.

We could spend a considerable time in reviewing the effect of God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit, but that is something known to us all. Nevertheless, the Lord is trying to bring us into the greater meaning of the Name of Jesus for spiritual purposes. May He open our eyes.

THE FALSE AND THE TRUE MAN

Reading: Ephesians 4:4-6, 13-15.

Let us note at the beginning of our meditation that Adam, through his complicity with Satan, became, both personally and racially, an altogether different being from what he was when God made him, and from what God intended him to become. We do not believe that Adam was all that he was intended to be when he was created. He was created with potentialities, and with a purpose, to become something more than he was; but he became altogether other than that. Spiritually and morally he became a different kind of being.

He became possessed of a changed and different consciousness; a change took place in his mentality, a change took place in his capacity, and a change took place in his personality. Spiritually and morally a change came about. Self-consciousness became the ruling and dominating force of his being. 'Self-consciousness' is used in the broader sense than the way in which it is sometimes used today. We speak of people being self-conscious when we mean that they are nervous, but we use the phrase in a much more general and absolute sense; we mean consciousness of self.

You will notice that the effect of his sin is immediate self-consciousness, so that God said to him: "Who told thee that thou wast naked?". Adam said: "... I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself". Who told you that? Where did you get that consciousness? You have become alive to yourself; you have risen into a place that you did not occupy before. It is at least a hint of another

consciousness which is self-ward, about himself. That is not the full range of self-consciousness, but that is the suggestion of a change of consciousness which is self-ward. How do you know yourself? How did you rise into that place which has so dominated you, that has driven you to act like this in self-defence, self-preservation, self-interest. Self has become the consciousness, and that was not there before.

In the soul self-consciousness works in three directions. Firstly, in the mental realm, that you can use your own mind. You have discovered that you have a mind, and you can use it; you call it reason, intellect. Secondly, you also have feelings, emotions, affections, desires, and you have discovered that you can use them, follow them, be governed by them. Thirdly, you have a will, which you can use, be directed by, governed by, and assert it and achieve by it. Human reason, human feeling, human will.

Now let us note that, while these things in themselves were not evil or wrong, when Adam entered into this complicity with Satan, this self-consciousness was elevated to a place above the divine intention for it, and above the divine order of it. It is not wrong to have a mind, an intellect; it is not wrong to have a heart; it is not wrong to have a will; but when these are elevated to a position which they were never intended by God to occupy, that is wrong. And the elevation of self-consciousness to a position which was never intended by God, and which therefore represented an upsetting of the order established by God, makes man become something other than God made him and intended him to be, a different kind of being.

This elevation of the self-conscious life had a motive, and the motive indicates the wrong, or where the wrong entered in, the nature of the wrong. That motive became and remains the underlying force of human life in the first Adam. That motive is human dominion. The mind was used to assent, and although Adam may not have been conscious of exactly what he was doing, being deceived, and acting under deception, he elevated his human mind above the mind of God; he elevated his human feelings above the

desire of God; he elevated his human will above the will of God. It was dominion. It had come from the devil, who had said: "... I will exalt my throne above the stars ... I will be equal with the Most High" (Isa. 14:13-14). That is the motive — elevation to equality with God, dominion.

This motive of dominion was not wrong in itself, for dominion was intended by God for man, but it was subverted by pride. It was subverted from God to man. Instead of having dominion in union with God, under God, it was having dominion independently of God in himself. Thus it was the elevation of self.

Pride is the root of all evil and means absolute apartness from God. "... the proud He knoweth afar off" (Psa. 138:6). Pride is an abomination to God.

Redemption and Reconciliation

What is redemption and reconciliation unto? It is the putting away of that apartness to result in union with God. Redemption and reconciliation are unto union. What does redemption and reconciliation mean, therefore? It must mean another kind of man from that which the first Adam now represented. There can be no union unless there is a return to God's kind of man. Therefore, that man must disappear from God's sight, and God's kind of man must be introduced, brought back, before there can be union between God and man.

This, as we know, has different aspects. On the one hand it means the end of the one type, the false man. It is a tremendously important thing for us to recognise that man in Adam is a false man. In Adam we are natural men, we go on in our blindness as though nothing had ever happened, and the very nature of our blindness is that we repudiate the fall. The deepest darkness, the most utter blindness, is found where the fall is most utterly ruled out, and we go on, and still argue, and talk religion. We make up a kind of religion of our own, about the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man, and that we are all children of God, by nature of God's creation. You will know that whole system of things, which ignores the fact that man in Adam is a fallen man

and is not a true man. Man by nature is not the man of God, he is a false man, and we are all a lie, a falsehood by nature, assuming or pretending to be something which we are not. We are other than that, and God knows us exactly as we are, and knows that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and the deepest deceitfulness or deception of the heart is that man thinks himself to be what he is not, and therefore that man cannot come near God or be accepted by Him. He approaches God and finds that God will not have him. That is the truest fact about the approach of any sinner to God in his sin; God will not have him. Until he has discovered that there is no hope for him, and the darkest hour in a man's history is the hour in which he discovers that God will not have him; and even when he has come under conviction of sin, and is abandoned, and is crying to God, very often God keeps him out there for a bit. This is to let that man know that as he is there is no way in for him, he is not accepted, the door is closed. God never accepts the old Adam, and tears and repentance have to be sifted out as to whether this old Adam is trying to get to God to get rid of his sin; not that he hates sin, but he has come up against the consequences of sin and is afraid. That self motive, even in being saved and obtaining forgiveness, even in being delivered from sin has got to be smitten, until the man cries from the depths of his being. It is not a matter of whether I escape the suffering, it is a matter of whether I escape sin, because sin is sin; and not because sin is against me but because it is sin against God. That is the point to which man has to come.

Christ's teaching is always so utterly true to principle, and when He gave that parable of the prodigal he was true to principle. When He at length got that young man returning to the father, He made him say, not, I have sinned against all the laws of humanity, sinned against myself and am suffering from the consequences of my sin; receive me back and deliver me from my misery! No! He said, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight! That is the true nature of sin. A man never gets home until he recognises that sin is something more than injury to himself or to society. Sin is some-

thing which puts him away from God. It represents a type of man with whom God can have no dealings. So that this false man must be brought to an end, that one type must be finished with; it is not God's type of man at all.

Then, on the other hand, there must be the establishing of the true man before God.

These two things are two sides of Christ's present work. This also has different phases.

a) The true Man brought in, tested and approved

This is the Son of Man, who is also the Son of God. He comes in as Man, and He is brought in as the true Man, God's true type, and being brought into the world He is subjected to testing. He is tested, tried (or tempted if you prefer that Word), in all points like as we. Through testing He is proved. Then He is glorified. You see that side in the earthly life of the Lord Jesus, and you do not have to wait to see that Man go to heaven to be glorified. He is brought in, and there is a public presentation of Him, as it were, before heaven, earth and hell. In His baptism, anointing and temptation (three phases of one thing) you have heaven, earth and hell involved and affected, and thus, as in the centre of the universe, He is presented. Then He is tested by heaven. You must remember that, occupying in a spiritual sense a heavenly position, He was tested by all that was heavenly. If you and I take a heavenly position over everything we shall be tested by that position which we have taken as to whether we will stand on that heavenly ground and refuse to come down on to earthly ground. It is one thing to say that we are seated together with Christ in the heavenlies, and it is another thing to refuse persistently to be governed by earthly laws and considerations, and consequently suffer because of the position that we have taken, and not come down out of that position. If you prefer to use the Word 'spiritual' instead of 'heavenly' it might help a little. You have taken a spiritual position, and now heaven tests you out according to its laws. The question is, will you live according to spiritual laws, or will you, under stress, trial, and pressure, come

down on to a lower level and break with your heavenly covenant.

Earth tested Him, and hell tested Him. He was universally tested as God's Man, and He was proved; that is, after the testing it was proved that He was the true Man that came down from heaven, that He was true to God's type, true to God's order, true to the mind of God about man, as to what man should be.

Being proved He was glorified as Man. The Mount of Transfiguration sees the end, so far as the representation of what man according to the mind of God is; it is the end of the cycle of the true Man standing before God. His humanity was glorified, and for Himself there was every right at that moment to pass into heaven. At that moment there was nothing more to be done, so far as He was concerned personally, to give Him a rightful standing in the very presence of God in heaven as Man. Everything had been done, everything provided and secured in order that there should now be a Man in heaven glorified.

b) The false man representatively removed

From that moment He assumed another capacity. He stepped down from that which was His by personal right as Son of Man, to become representative of the other false man. To mention the false man strikes a harsh note, and may startle you, but it is no more startling than to say that He was made sin; not just that He took our sins, but He was made sin. That is even more terrible. He stooped down from the Mount to represent and voluntarily take the place of the false man and to bring him collectively and corporately under God's full judgement and removal. So in His death He representatively removed the false man by the judgement of God. When we look upon Him in His cross we see God's attitude towards the first Adam, and what God has to say to and do with every member of Adam's race.

c) The seed of the true Man brought forth

In His resurrection, and through His resurrection, "He shall see his seed." That is brought out at Pentecost. The seed of the true

Man is brought forth and raised up with three aspects.

7. On the basis of the death and resurrection of Christ

This seed is only brought forth on the ground of His death and His resurrection. That is, its very being, existence and its very coming into being is governed by the fact that one order of man has been put aside, and another order has been brought in. Oh, if only the Lord's people would recognise that all the way through! It would make for a very different situation. There is such ignorance as to the difference that the cross of the Lord Jesus has made before God, and to the demands in our consciousness.

We do not want to break in there with these Words again, but you will see at once the meaning of a changed consciousness, because once you get into the true Man you have a different consciousness from the consciousness of the false man. This consciousness is born and maintains by the Holy Spirit, which says regarding the old man every time he comes into view, that he is ruled out. If you let the old man in you get on to a false ground with God, you come in a false position. Is that not true in our knowledge of the outworking? Every time the flesh and the old nature, the Adam life, gets up in us, and in any way controls an issue, we find ourselves upon false ground, which in its outworking means that we have not got hold of God; that is, we have no appeal to God, we have no ground of standing with God. It is no use praying. Heaven is closed when you are in that realm. If you want it you have to repudiate that old Adam element. It is not just a matter of getting forgiveness for something; it is repenting of getting onto that ground which is forbidden. You lose the consciousness of your clear way through and hold upon God. But here is this new consciousness in the risen man, the difference between Adam and Christ.

On the basis of the death and resurrection of Christ the new, true Man, is brought into being and stands.

8. *Progressively conformed to the image of the true Man*

We shall see in a moment more of what that means. In God's eyes he is not progressively conformed. In God's eyes the whole thing is absolute; that is, God does not leave any place for the old man. So far as we are concerned it is progressive conformity to the image of Christ, so long as you and I walk in the light of Christ, according to the new consciousness which the Holy Spirit has given us as to the difference between Adam and Christ in us. While you and I go on in obedience to Christ, God lays to our account all the perfections of Christ. That is very important and necessary, because not one of us will be perfect on this earth.

We are being progressively conformed to the image of Christ. We shall never reach that perfection here on the earth, but when the Lord takes us from this earth it will only take a moment of time to make us perfect. We shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, into the perfect likeness of Christ; that is, if we are obedient to the truth right up to the point where our knowledge of it ends. Our responsibility is to live up to all the light that we have, if we want the rest put to our account. While we are on the earth our business is to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him.

This is where the Word from Ephesians has its place. "Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ..." (Eph. 4:13). The Word 'knowledge' there means 'full knowledge'. Our responsibility is to grow up into Him in all things. That is our responsibility now. That is the progressive growth, development, realisation of the true Man: Christ in us, we in Christ.

9. *Fulness of conformity*

The instantaneous consummation of that will either be in being called out of the grave or being called apart from the grave. We shall be changed in a moment.

In the true Man the false life is vetoed

In the true Man, the new Man, the false life, deranged order, wrong consciousness, mentality, capacity, personality is vetoed or forbidden and repudiated, and the right life, the right consciousness and mentality becomes dominant. The whole thing is reversed in Christ. Soul life or self-conscious life is made subject to the Spirit, which is the divine order, which was deranged and upset, and made subject to the Spirit which is God-conscious life. Before Adam fell his consciousness was pre-eminently God-consciousness, afterwards it was pre-eminently self-consciousness. In the reversing of the order in the New Man, the true Man, God-consciousness becomes dominant again, and self-consciousness is subjected to the spirit. That means that pride is changed for humility, arrogance is changed for meekness, assumption is changed for lowliness, vainglory is changed for simplicity. All this is seen in Christ. According to God the true man is a very humble and meek man, from whom all the traces of pride, arrogance, assumption and vainglory have been overcome.

From God's standpoint that is a settled thing, in finality, where we are concerned when we come into Christ. From our standpoint that has got to be made more and more true in a progressive way. That is the nature of discipline, chastening and child-training unto the fruits of righteousness. Humility, meekness, the ornament of a meek and lowly spirit, are of great price in the sight of God. They are the marks of the new man, the marks of the victory in the cross over Satan's interference with man. Self-strength is put away, and weakness with dependence become characteristics of our new manhood; in ourselves weak, in the Lord strong. But that is spiritual, it is not natural; that is divine, it is not human in the old sense of humanity.

The wisdom of the world, of man and of nature are repudiated, and we become foolish in ourselves. We become fools for Christ's sake. Christ crucified is to the Greeks foolishness, but to them that believe He is the wisdom of God; but what weakness it is from the

old Adam standpoint. There is a mentality which is utterly different between those in Christ and those out of Christ. It is no use trying to reconcile these things. There is a danger in it. In that strength of our human nature in the fall we have tried to make a compromise here in order to influence the world, and we have done all sorts of things to try to convince robust people in the world that Christianity is a robust thing. That is hedging the thing. No one appeals for that which we call effeminacy in Christianity, but if we are seeking to win the world by putting up to the world something that appeals to the world and its mentality, we are throwing away our position and getting onto the world's ground, and that is where Christendom is ensnared. The world cannot and never will be able to understand us. We had better accept that. The world will think that we are mad, a crowd of imbeciles. Are we going to repudiate that, or are we going to let the higher wisdom prove itself? When the world has burned itself out, it says to the Christian in the end: You have been the wise person! You, after all, whom I thought to be so mad were the sanest!

We have to wait for vindication, but oh, there is a battle in ourselves so often to get to that point where we refuse any longer to try to be equal with men and the world. Let them think their thoughts. Leave them to their mentality. Do not in any way compromise your position or try to win them by going over on to their side. It cannot be done. The weakness and the foolishness of the cross of Christ are the ultimate dominating factors of this universe, and the Lamb will overcome, will be on the throne.

So you see it is from the natural to the spiritual power, strength and wisdom that we see the transition in Christ.

The end that the Lord seems to have for us is this: God making Christ universal and everything, not as some Person, far away, outside of the world, in heaven upon a throne, but in a corporate Body, in you, in me; not as an official but as a life, a spiritual nature, a spiritual order. That is what God is after, and it governs everything, in the sense that our work is not official work, our ministry is not in any official way. It is not something we take up,

enter into or engage in; Christianity is not a set of articles that we accept, assent to or believe in. The life of the Christian, the work, the ministry, and all that we have to do with is that Christ shall be expressed in an ever-growing measure in us, and the measure of Christ is the deciding factor about everything, whether we are Christians or not, and whether we are ministers or not. What we mean is this, that you and I have to be in as full a measure of Christ as possible in order to minister Christ. That ministry must simply, spontaneously grow or spring out of the measure of Christ, and if our ministry exceeds our measure of Christ, the Lord will have to keep bringing us back by painful experiences to get us abreast of what we are saying. He will have to deal with us in the light of the things that we say in order to bring the measure of Christ up to the measure of our utterance, otherwise there is a falsehood somewhere. The right way is that you and I should simply minister because we are, in measure, one with Christ. Therefore we should not grasp at ministry as something or regard ministry as something official, something to take up from the outside, but that we should be men and women with a measure of Christ, and accordingly give that which we have of Christ, not in our minds or in our heads, but which is in our lives the measure of Christ. The measure in which Christ is our very life, our very being, constitutes ministry. I believe that is why the Lord would hold us back and has held His servants back and not allowed them to rush into saying things that they have come to know about Him. It is much more important to live Christ than to talk Christ.

You see the object of the Lord, that everything should be Christ. The true man is that which is according to God's mind, and to that end He is dealing with us. His dealings are deep and drastic, and they are all intended to produce the true man after God, created in righteousness and true holiness.

INTO THE NAME

We are going to be occupied in this meditation with a little phrase which occurs several times in the Authorised Version as, "in the name". In the Revised Version it is "into the name". We are familiar with the phrase in both these forms, and it is that which is connected with it, as the meaning, that is to concern us just now.

Once more we stand back and get the large view of things from the divine standpoint. We stand with God before He moved out to create man, and in the light of the subsequent revelation in His Word we are able to some extent to get into the mind of God as He contemplated man's creation. In that mind we see the thought and the intention of a corporate man to fill His earth, and probably to be central to His whole creation.

The creation of the first man was but God's way of moving on to a race which was to be vitally and organically one with that first man, as a living part of him. So that by the sharing of one life, being made of one substance, it should not be so many units, unrelated in any inward way, not so many parts detached, living in isolation so far as their own persons were concerned, but all of a piece, forming one corporate man.

So that "man" became the title, the name, not of an individual but of the whole race, the whole type, the whole order, embodying the ever-growing multitude, should have a title in the singular, "man". It is a singular and a plural title in one. So that Adam was created with the intent that he should be an inclusive man, and that God should have a corporate man.

As we look with the eyes of God as the creation of man is about

to take place, we can see that God sees one vast man, through Adam one great collective man, all with the same mind, will, purpose, life and divine relationship, moving as one man towards a goal. That is what God saw and that is what God intended. In that man, through the racial head (Adam), was to be placed the fulness of the creation, the fulness of the earth. He was to be an inheritor of the earth and of the creation; he was to be an heir in God. We use that phrase "an heir in God" very carefully. He was to inherit and possess everything in God, not in himself, and not apart from God, not for himself, but for God, to have it all in God by reason of his living union with God.

So far as that man (Adam) was concerned, and the intention of God as to the race in Adam in the first instance, it would be an entirely earthly inheritance, of this creation. That was God's thought as it is shown to us in His Word. Then we see the failure of that man. He failed, and he lost the inheritance; he lost the fulness which he was to have in God and is no longer by nature an inheritor of that fullness; it has been lost to him. To that man it is irreparably and irrecoverably lost. That man will never possess it.

Then, as we were saying in our last meditation, God brings in His new Man, and designates Him, and destines Him to inherit all things.

Now notice that we have passed from God to man in Christ. We said that Adam of the first race was to inherit and possess all things in God. Christ is with God at the beginning, for all things were created by Him and unto Him. Adam was to possess all things in God, not yet in form of Christ but Christ the Son and all things to be possessed in Him. Now we have passed from Christ as God to Christ as Man. God becomes Man now, "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). Now God brings in Himself, the New Man, the Man Christ Jesus, Very God, Very Man, and determines that in this Man of His own producing, this Man of His own creation, all the inheritance, all the fulness — not only earthly but heavenly — shall be bound up. In Him it shall be possessed.

When you bring Man and God together in one Person, the Man is possessing all things in God, in that close way. You see that even

Christ did not possess things in Himself. His earthly life is a marvelous revelation of a Man having everything in God. The mystery of the revelation is always beyond us, and always will be, but these are the facts. So God brings in His new Man, and in Him both the heavenly and the earthly inheritance is secured.

Now we can come to the tremendous meaning of one of the commonest phrases upon our lips, "in the name of Jesus". I suppose there is no phrase which we use more often in our religious lives, but there is a tremendous meaning in that little phrase, "In the name of Jesus", or, as the Revised Version puts it, "into the name of Jesus".

The question is raised as to whether either of them is right, because the phrase is 'eis to onoma'. That is the most exact translation; "unto the name". We therefore see that "unto the name of Jesus" means 'coming unto'. It is what the Name is, or what the Man is who possesses that Name.

There is the new Man who represents God's true thought for man. The other man has failed. The other man has become a disordered creature and a false expression of God's mind. Now God has brought in His new Man, and this new Man is a true expression of God's thought. He is the express image, the exact reproduction of the mind of God. His Name implies what that Man is. The Name is the nature, the constitution, the Man in what He is, all that He means, represents and expresses of God's thought. And when we use the phrase "in the Name", or "unto the Name", God's meaning and the Holy Spirit's meaning of that, and the meaning of the Word of God, is the coming onto the ground of what Christ is, coming onto the ground of what the new Man is.

So you find that this phrase is used in various connections. Let us look at one or two. In the first place let us look at the book of the Acts: "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in (unto) the name of the Lord Jesus)" (Acts 8:15-16). "And he commanded them to be baptized in (unto) the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). "And he said unto

them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:3-5). "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:1-2). That latter reference is an illustration.

Now here we have the same Word variously translated. We need not be worried about the exact translation at the moment. Let us get the meaning, for that makes everything clear. "... baptized into (or unto) the name of Jesus". What are we taught by the Word about baptism? We are taught three main things.

Firstly, that it is a representation of death with Christ to the former man (Romans 6; Colossians 2). The Word clearly states that baptism is a figure of, and a representation, a testimony, to a spiritual fact of death to the former man, the putting away of the whole body of the flesh. Now the apostle has linked that with the putting on of the new man. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). It is perfectly clear that baptism speaks of the end of the old man; that is, the death, the finishing up of our relationship with the old man, with the former man. That hardly needs further stressing or argument.

Secondly, this is also set forth as life into the new man: "... like as Christ was raised from the dead ... even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). One man, who has broken down, who has failed, and who is a disordered and disrupted man, and a false man, now has been put away. We are *in* that man organically, not just historically, not just in association. To judge one man is to judge all, to condemn one is to condemn all, to bury one is to bury all. The great truth is this, that in the sight of God this whole race has been put away. That does not take place when we are saved, or when we are baptized; that has been done at Calvary. In our

confession we are taking our place deliberately in that which God did in the cross of the Lord Jesus. It was an organic whole that was taken into death. That man is put away, and a new man is brought in in resurrection. Baptism is a representation of our coming to life in the new Man, so that henceforth we have put on Christ; henceforth it is no longer I, but Christ.

Thirdly, the inheritance and the fulness come into view. That was God's thought for Israel in the beginning. It was never His thought that they should abide in the wilderness for forty years. His thought was that they should pass right on into the inheritance. The Red Sea is only one aspect. It speaks of death to Egypt. It is the negative side. They could have very rapidly moved from the Red Sea to Jordan, into the inheritance. The Red Sea and Jordan are only two sides of one thing; death to one thing, and life to the other; death to the inheritance which has been lost, represented by Egypt, a ruined world in which the people of God have no inheritance. They had no inheritance in Egypt, because Egypt represented a world now not to be inherited by man. Inheritance lay yonder, and they could have moved from the realm in which they had no inheritance into the realm where they had an inheritance, from the death side to the life side. The forty years had to do with them, not with God.

So you see that in type we have the principle laid down that baptism, while it is death on one side to a former man and life, on the other side life to a new Man, and brings to the inheritance. Risen union with Christ as represented in our being raised from the waters of baptism means that the fulness that is in this new Man, this tremendous inheritance, is open before us.

Let us pause for a moment, lest we go on in mental assent without recognising that this is very practical, for until this three-fold meaning of baptism is recognised there will be limitation in the spiritual life. The Lord's people have got to come to the place where they recognise quite definitely that they are finished with Adam, to whom they belong by nature. That can be put in many different ways. They have finished with the life of nature, they have finished with the old creation order of things, they have done with

self, done with the flesh, done with the world, done with all that Adam means as we saw him to mean in our last meditation. That is what we declare, that is what the Word means: "The love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14-15). Until we recognise the end of that life, not only as sinners apart from God, not only as sinful men living without God, but now as believers living not on a natural ground at all. We have got to come into death as men, not only as sinners, but as related to that old order; and then we have to begin to know and go on in an entirely different order of mind, desire, will and consciousness of capacity.

It is just as true of a Christian as it is of anyone else outside of Christ that the natural man receives not the things of God, neither can he know them. It is just as true of the old creation part of believers that it can never get through unto divine things, and we must not live on that ground at all. Until we recognise that, until that becomes something that we look straight in the face and accept we shall never get through. Therein is the solemn and tremendously vital nature of baptism. It is something that you look right in the face. When you see that grave open, and you stand by it, you say, That is my grave, that is the grave of me by nature, not just as a sinning man but as a man. You cannot divide between sin and the man in Adam. He is sin, and that is just the great and terrible mistake of a good deal of our so-called more spiritual teaching today. It is bringing that Adam and consecrating him to the Lord. The Lord does not accept the consecration of Adam, or of anything that he has. The Lord does not ask us to consecrate our natural life to Him. Our surrender to the Lord is the surrender of men, as those who have got to surrender to death. The Lord says, There is an open grave, I call upon you to surrender to the grave. In future, if there is going to be anything where you are concerned, it has got to be all out from Me, not from you.

You say, I am going to retain my personality and my brain!

Yes, but what is going to use your brain? What is going to energise your brain? Is it to be your soul or God's Spirit? If we are using our brains with our own soul energy, we shall get so far and find it is the natural man again and it can go no further. Until the Spirit of God becomes the life of our brain we shall never get through to see anything intelligently that is of God.

The same thing applies in every other part of our being. We shall, if we go on long and thoroughly enough with the Lord, come to the place where we shall know this in our very bodies. We shall come to the place where unless the Lord energises us physically we cannot go on.

We have to surrender to death, and you may take it that any man who serves God in the energy of his mind (that is, his reason, brain, will, zeal, enthusiasm or his physical strength) will not get through to anything very much of a spiritual character. When it is the Lord alone who is the life, the energy, the strength, the patience, the endurance, that which is of God is brought to pass and established, and life has an eternal significance in its value and outworking. Until we recognise that, we are not in the way of spiritual growth unto the fulness. That is why so many people are retarded in their spiritual growth and remain infants for so long. They long for more, they want enlargement, they want to grow in Christ, and they cannot. They never grow much, they do not grow into what the Lord would have, because they are trying to grow by the old creation, or, to put it the other way, because they have not recognised and accepted the death of nature and the necessity for a life wholly out from Christ. It has got to be recognised.

It has got to be recognised on the positive side, that our life now is in the new Man: "... the life which I now live (since I have been crucified with Christ) in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me". That life which I now live in the flesh is out from Christ, is Christ's life, which is mediated to me through faith. This is the life of faith. The life of faith has been very largely restricted to getting your bread and butter in some other way than earning it. The life of faith is this, that my very

going on depends upon the Lord, and I am drawing from Him the resources for my continuance. My drawing is simply faith's hold on Him for today, to be able to go on, and to be able to triumph over death and all forces that are set against this going on in the Lord. It is life in union with the new Man. Come into that and you will grow, you will know something of the enjoyment of the inheritance, you will begin to grow up in Him in all things, coming to the full knowledge of Christ. This is the way of maturity, and until we know this threefold meaning of baptism we shall be in spiritual limitation.

After that which is union with Christ personally there follows the corporate aspect of union with Christ. The new man is not only personal or individual; he is corporate. Read through Ephesians 4 and you will see this. When, as we read in Acts 19, they were baptized unto (or into) the Name of Jesus, then they laid their hands upon them. These representatives of the Lord, of the church, laid their hands upon them and that brought in the great reality that this is a corporate Man. This shows that now we are members of a Body, and that Body is the Body of Christ. As the body is one, having many members, and all the members, being many, are one body; so also is the Christ; that is, the Christ as corporately set forth.

The laying on of hands was a testimony to the fact that we are fellow members of Christ. Having been joined to Him we are joined to one another in Him, one Body. Here you get the beautiful significance of that little Word in Hebrews 6 (and it is interesting to note that the end of Hebrews 5 and the beginning of Hebrews 6 have to do with going on). In Hebrews 6 foundations are represented as being laid: "Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ (that is, these things have got to be settled), let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation ...". Let the foundation be well and truly laid, once and for all, and let us go on. What is the foundation? It is six things:

1. Repentance from dead works.
2. Faith towards God.
3. The teaching of baptisms.

4. Laying on of hands.
5. Resurrection of the dead.
6. Eternal judgement.

Then, when you pass to Hebrews 6:10, you read: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed towards His name, in that ye ministered unto the saints and still do minister." Here we have in the translation the putting in of the Word 'towards' when it is still 'unto'. You ministered unto the saints, and in so doing you showed love unto His Name. What is that but the Name resting upon the saints, and when you minister to the saints you are ministering to the Name; that means that you are ministering to Christ.

Is not that the teaching all the way through? "Inasmuch as ye did it (or ye did it not) unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it (or did it not) unto Me." "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." But it was the believers on earth who were being persecuted! It is the same thing. His Name rests upon the Body, and what is done to the Body is done to Him, because His Name involves the whole. Now see this Word again: "... the love which ye showed towards His name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister". What are we doing? We are ministering unto the new Man; that is, we are in fellowship with the new Man in an active way, we have come onto the ground of the new Man.

See how that worked out in those early days. When the new Man in Christ came into being there immediately and spontaneously arose an order of fellowship: "... they continued steadfastly in ... fellowship ..." (Acts. 2:42). What was the fellowship? "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (Acts. 4:32). If any had anything they sold it and brought the proceeds. It was one new Man spontaneously in action.

So that relationship to Christ personally is followed by relationship to Christ corporately. It is the same thing, "unto the name".

The same thing is said about Christ personally and our relationship to Him as is said about Christ corporately and our relationship to Him. It is both "unto the name". You are baptized unto the Name, or unto the new Man. You minister unto the Name, or unto the new Man. We cannot minister to Christ personally in heaven now, but we can minister to Christ by ministering to the saints. It is the same thing because the Name governs both the Person and His members.

We will refer to one other aspect of this in Matthew 18:15-16, 17-20. In verse 20 we read: "For where two or three are gathered together in (unto) my name, there am I in the midst of them." Here you have passed from relationship to Christ *personally* to relationship to Christ *corporately*, into the active corporate functioning of Christ. Now "there am I" in verse 20 is to be related back to verse 17; "... if he refuse to hear the church ...". In effect, He is refusing to hear Me. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." The church on earth and the Lord in heaven are one. "There am I" governs verse 17. It is Christ's authority functioning in the church in executive operation. "There am I" is to relate to "again I say unto you. That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven". There you have the new man, Christ represented, and are not on your own ground, the ground of your own desire, natural feeling, will or reason. You are not on the old Adam ground at all but, being on the ground of the new man you are in agreement, and things happen: "... it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven".

That goes to the root of praying effectually or ineffectually. So much of our prayer comes out of ourselves. We pray out of our own feelings, desires, mind or will, and we are unconsciously praying on a ground that is not Christ's ground. That does not represent Christ and therefore there is nothing done. The Father is doing everything for the Son, for the new man, and we have to get on that ground. "Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in (unto) my name, there am I in the midst of them." Where two or three are gathered together unto His name, unto what He is before God,

there He is in the midst. This is the Christ corporately expressed and functioning.

No more need be said. This is enough to show us the meaning of "unto the name". It is all bound up with one thing, that of being on the ground of God's Man, God's true Man, the ground of Jesus Christ, and not on the Adam ground. When we are there all these things follow.

LIFE IN THE NAME

Reading: Col. 3:1-17; John 20:30-31; John 1:4; John 5:26.

To us, in our familiarity with the truth, the statements in the above passages do not come with a very great deal of surprising force, but to stand back from our association with the Word and the truth, and just to allow the implication to fall upon us in a detached position, is to see that there is something quite surprising and very remarkable about these statements.

On the one hand the implication clearly is that man does not have life, and there is a very great difference between life as we understand it — the merely biological energy of our human being, the life which we possess as active creatures — and this life of which the Lord is speaking, which is represented as an altogether different and higher life. On the other hand, the implication is that the life is in God and Christ alone. As the Father has life, so has He given the Son to have life. We cannot evade the issue but must face it squarely, not as some would say, Well, we all have life, and life comes from God. God is the Giver of life, and by our very being here on this earth as animate creatures we have life from God. On that basis the false teaching of the universal Fatherhood of God is based, but to face such statements honestly is immediately to dispose of that idea, because there is brought into view this other question that there is evidently another life which we do not possess by birth, for these Words hardly imply, if they do not positively assert, that fact. Our familiarity with the truth takes the edge off that, but we have to begin there in our contemplation of a statement like this:

"... that ye might have life in His name ...".

John 20:31 brings before us the great truth of the union between God and man in the person of His Son. It is a valuable, significant and interesting thing to note that through this gospel by John there is the interchange of the terms "Son of God" and "Son of Man". It is that which is gathered up in this final statement: "... Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ..." (verse 31). You find that John on quite a large number of occasions uses the phrase "Son of Man"; that is, he takes up the occasions when the Lord Jesus uses this phrase of Himself. John made a note of that and records it in this gospel, He says some remarkable things in that connection. Yet at the same time the other phrase, "Son of God", is constantly being repeated. Some twenty-seven or more times the phrase "Son of God" is used in this gospel; and more than ten times, not merely incidentally but in some tremendously startling connection, the other phrase is used in the same gospel, "Son of Man".

I would advise you to look at the occurrences of the phrase "Son of Man" and see how tremendous the associations of that phrase are in this gospel. For the moment the point is this, that the bringing of these two things together in this one gospel, and the gathering up of them in this last clause: "... Jesus (that is the Son of Man) is ... the Son of God ...", presents to us the union between God and man in Him. When you have got hold of that firmly as the content, meaning and substance of the whole gospel, then this second thing is noted. The pre-eminent feature of that presentation is life, this particular life to which he refers "and that believing ye might have life through His name"; "in Him was life"; "the Father gave Him to have life in Himself". That is the pre-eminent feature of this union between God and man in Christ.

There are several things that we are going to see as brought out by this gospel in that connection.

Life is declared here to be bound up inseparably and exclusively with the person of Christ as Son of God and Son of Man. It is therefore the true Man with God that is the repository of this divine life. In the true Man according to God, and in Him alone, exclusively and

inseparably, is this life made to dwell. Let us emphasise that. That is not only something said about a person, that life is in Christ; that is, this life is in a kind of person which represents a type before God, and life is bound up, not only with a divine person, but with a kind of being who is constituted by certain features and characteristics, some of which we have already considered.

Here you get a Man of a certain order, a certain kind, from whom certain things are eliminated, and in whom certain things are seen which make Him different from all other men that we know. It is in that kind, shall we say in those elements brought together in a person, that the life is resident, or with which the life is bound up. You can only have the life as you have those elements, those constituents, those characteristics, those features, that kind of man. It is not official, but it is nature, it is kind.

That is a point where there has been a good deal of divergence, because there has been a good deal of mistakenness that officially, by reason of occupying an official position you can be a representative or a minister of these things, which is not at all true. You must *be* it before you can *minister* it. That is why the ministry can never be taken up or entered into. We have to be that in measure before ever we can minister that.

That was where the disciples failed on one occasion which is outstanding in our recollection. When the Lord was up in the Mount a man brought his son possessed of a demon to the disciples, and they attempted to cast out the demon and failed. It was a shameful failure, an exposure of them to all, and the men who looked on saw that they could not do it. Afterwards the disciples asked the Lord, "Why could we not cast him out?" The Lord, in answering their enquiry, made it perfectly clear that this sort of thing does not come into the official realm. The man came to them because they were, in his mind, the official representatives of Christ. In their official relationship they made the attempt and failed. The Lord said that it was not on official grounds at all that it could be done, except that "this kind goes not forth but by prayer and fasting". It is only on living spiritual grounds that this sort of thing can be done.

An Old Testament illustration of this is Elisha and his servant Gehazi. You remember the story of the woman whose son died, and who came to the prophet. The prophet turned to Gehazi, told him to take his rod and go and lay it on the child. Gehazi took the rod and went off in his official capacity and laid the rod upon the child. We can see this pompous youth in his official pride strutting off with that rod, and going in with a very assured air and thinking this thing is going to work the oracle, that this is going to be a magic rod. He holds the rod of office, but nothing happens; there was no movement, no life. It is not until the prophet comes and stretches himself upon that corpse, hands to his hands, lips to his lips, and there is an identification of the one who has life with the one who has not life, that there is movement.

So it is quite impossible for us to take up the work of God as something objective. We have to possess that which does the work of God. So it becomes perfectly clear that the true man with God is the repository of life, and that makes the ministry.

This true Man as set before us here is the prototype and example of the new creation in Christ Jesus, and His life on earth was lived according to the laws of divine life. He lived here in an expression of that life by conforming to its laws. John sets that forth on several occasions.

The heavenly origin of the true Man

The first of these which comes out in this gospel is the heavenly origin of this true Man. We turn back to the gospel of John: "And no man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). "He that comes from above is above all ... He that comes from heaven is above all" (John 3:31).

There you have the origin of the true Man. Notice that it is the Son of Man who has come from heaven and is in heaven, and who is above all. That is a tremendous statement. You would immediately accept that, grasp it, have no question about it if it were the Son

of God who came from heaven, and is in heaven, and is above all, but here the Holy Spirit makes no mistake in His language, it is the Son of Man who came from heaven. This is the origin of the true Man from heaven, and at the same time is in heaven, and this is the first law of the life of the true Man, this particular life which is ours by gift through faith.

It means that the life of the true Man is something altogether apart from this world. That is a fact. As a fact, of course, we could believe it, we could say that it is a heavenly life, it is life from above. We have no difficulty over that. But then we have got to apply it. Note that it is a law which governs, just as it governed Him here, and we must see behind the earthly life of the Lord Jesus to know what was governing Him from behind, because He was here as representing the life which you and I are called to live, privileged to live, which it is possible for us to live, and which we have to live. It is a law of life. The deepest reality, the innermost truth of our being when we are the Lord's, when we are joined to the Lord, is that we are altogether apart from this world. Now, if you and I at any point, in any way, voluntarily touch this world in a spiritual or a moral way, our life from above is immediately injured and arrested, and we shall never move into the growing fulness of Christ while at any point we have voluntary relationship with this world in a spiritual or moral way. A worldly-Christian is a contradiction in terms. Worldly-mindedness on the part of a Christian is a denial, and a positive denial of their Christianity. A child of God living in association with the world or having any kind of fellowship with the world is working against the very term "child of God", nullifying, countering and obstructing the deepest reality of their own life. Heavenly, spiritual mindedness is the very nature of this life, and is therefore essential to progress towards God's end, the full measure of Christ, the fulness of the stature of a man in Christ. It is a law.

If we are really living on the basis of this fact, that our origin is heavenly, our very life is heavenly. If we are living on that basis we shall be very sensitive to worldly influences, because we know that the very life in us is being touched, damaged, checked and resisted.

It is not a question of option at all, as to whether we abandon the world. We have started at the wrong point when we begin to talk about giving up the world or the things of the world. That is not the point where we start. The very fact that any child of God has received divine life means that the world is finished with because that life is altogether apart from this world and has nothing to do with it. It is from heaven and characterised by heaven. Christ in His life here was entirely governed in the first place by that law. The law of that divine life separated Him from this world and kept Him in the truest, deepest relationship of His being apart from this world. Spiritually and morally He was outside of it. While He had come out from heaven, He was still in heaven in the deepest reality of His being. We know that the later teaching of the Lord makes that perfectly clear: in the world but not of it; outside of it while here.

It is very important for us to recognise that this is a law which governs. You and I have to be very careful that we are not drawn into the realm of this world, touched by it and touching it. If we do our spiritual life is injured at once, is contradicted and set back. To put this in another way, if you and I are truly living according to the first reality of our being as children of God; that is, the life which is heavenly, we shall spontaneously move away from the world. It will not be a case of struggling to give up, we shall move out, and we shall find ourselves, in the very nature of things, moving further and further away from the world. It is a test of the genuineness of our relationship with the Lord.

Look at the case of Daniel and his three companions. They are a fine illustration of this very truth. These four in the beginning refused to eat of the dainties from the king's table and refused to be involved in this world system. On the one hand they were a testimony to life which was something more than the life of nature. When their countenances were looked upon, they were finer than all the others. They were a testimony to something outside of this world, Then, of course, they came under the impact of the scorn of men, the hatred of the devil, and were cast into the fire and into the den. It was the devil's attempt to quench that testimony of a life

which is outside of his domain. Satan is not going to have anything in his domain which he cannot govern, which is not subject to him. That, of course, is quite natural as well as satanic. In any kingdom those who are there have to be subject to the government of that kingdom. Now here was something which was outside of Satan's kingdom, and at the same time within; therefore he must crush and destroy it.

That is exactly what is happening in our own case. Here is a life which is something more, and which is outside, and it becomes the very object of the hatred and malice of the devil, the envy of men, and the scorn of men; so that we also are cast into the fiery furnace of that scorn and hatred simply because of the testimony.

The heavenly birth of the true man

The second thing which comes out is in John 3:3-8: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again ("born from above" the margin says), he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it comes, and whither it goes; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

If the heavenly origin of the true man becomes the law and means that the life of the true man is altogether apart from this world; the heavenly birth of the true man means that the life of the true man is apart from nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh (that is nature), and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (that is not nature)." Christ, the true Man, was born of the Spirit and not of nature, not of the flesh, and from the very depths of my being I repudiate every suggestion that Christ inherited the nature of fallen man by His birth. I say, *not of nature*, but of the Spirit. The birth of the true man means that the life which is His is the

essential life, is altogether apart from nature. (You can, if you like, call "nature" by another Word, "flesh").

This, again, is a law (not only a fact) which has to govern our whole course in relation to Christ. These two things are distinct (nature and spirit, flesh and spirit), and they must not at any point overlap or touch one another. Their distinctiveness and separateness must be maintained throughout. It was here that Satan laid his deepest plots and snares to entrap the Lord Jesus, to get an overlapping, to get Him to touch the life of nature at some point, to get on to natural ground, to live by some natural means. The answer which He gave to the devil was: "Man shall not live by bread alone (that is natural ground), but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live (that is spiritual ground)." We will touch that again in another connection presently.

You see these two things are altogether distinct, and they must not touch one another. That life in us which constitutes us members of Christ, parts of this new man, must not be touched in any way by the life of nature, and it must not confer or come under the influence or direction of the life of nature. These two things are set apart by God. You and I must not consult our own reason in relation to the things of God, nor our own feelings. Not in any part of our being must we consult our interests. If we consult our physical feelings we may do a great deal more than the Lord would have us to do, if we are walking on the basis of the life of nature. Or, if we consult our physical feelings, we may feel we cannot, and we shall not, but we know that there is another life to energise even our physical beings in relation to the interests of the Lord, a life which can be proved superior to all physical weaknesses and infirmities. On the other hand, because we have an extra spurt of physical energy and are feeling better, that is no reason why we should fling ourselves with that amount of energy into doing things for God. We have to consult the Lord in every case, and not resort to the life of nature.

The Lord Jesus lived on that basis. See Him at the well of Sychar: "Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well ..." (John 4:6). He was hungry and His disciples went away into

the town to buy food. He was wearied and hungry, and there came a woman to draw water. He might have said, I am too tired to talk to this woman; let Me have a rest and something to eat, and then ... That would be reference to nature. His disciples came back and found Him talking with the woman, with no sign of weariness, no sign of hunger, and when He said: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" (verse 32), they said: "Hath any man brought him ought to eat?" (John 4:33, KJV). Had He consulted the life of nature He would not have done that service for God; but He did not. His life was apart from the life of nature, and upon that He lived and was able to do more than nature would have allowed. His very birth, you see, is of the Spirit and not of the flesh, is of God not of man. It means that the true Man is altogether apart from the life of nature in the innermost reality of His being.

The point we must watch is that we move into this progressively. He was in it in an absoluteness and a fulness so far beyond us that we must not be discouraged and disconcerted if we sometimes are overtaken by the other, but the point for us is this, that the deepest reality of our being as children of God is that. We have to learn how to live on that basis, and we have got to grow according to the laws of this life.

The heavenly government of the true Man

The third thing comes out in John's gospel, and it is this in John 5:17-27, 30-32. All that is in those verses contains a fresh law of the true man. It is the law of his government, and it meant that the true man is not governed by any other than God.

Firstly, "the Son can do nothing out from Himself" (John 5:19), That must have put alongside of it: "... I seek not Mine own will ..." (John 5:30). The true man is not governed by His own will, but His own self-consideration. He is not governed by the god of this age, the prince of this world, nor by His own will. He is utterly under the government of God. It is all coming from above, from the Father.

That is a law of His life, and if you and I are going to *live* more

and more; that is, if life more abundantly is to be ours, this is the law, that our government in all things must be from above. This world, its ways, its policies, its judgements, its appraisements, its standards of values, and its whole system should not dictate our course for one moment. We are not to be influenced by its counsels, its frowns or any of its attitudes. Our law is from above.

The same applies to ourselves; anything coming from the inside of us as ourselves, anything influencing our lives which originates in us must not influence us. To live, to have life in His Name, is to have government from above absolute in all matters. That is a law. We cannot get away from it. Consult men, consult self, consult any other quarter, and we at once suspend the progress of life. Life only goes on, is renewed, released, continues, when we forsake that ground and come back where the Lord governs us. We take our government from the Lord.

It is going to prove more and more true as we go on. We are going to find, shall we say, the bondage of this. We are going to find this thing is pressed upon us more and more. These four men in Babylon (Daniel and his three friends), could have consulted personal interests and have compromised, and could have argued very well for doing it. Of course, inside I will keep true, but outside there is no reason why I should not give way and in so doing I shall live all the longer for God, and having my days prolonged will give me a greater opportunity of influencing men God-ward! You know how the flesh reasons in a very 'spiritual' way. But that is consulting with flesh; it is not the government of God. And this is always a costly way, a way of painfulness, and of desperate loneliness for those who take it. Very few understand those who seek to walk with God, whose position is, Well, I must go the way the Lord has shown me! It may not be the public way, the generally accepted way; it may not be the way that is the acknowledged way, even by Christian people. In this matter it is between the Lord and myself, and I have to go on. It is a lonely way, and a costly way. We shall be in the fire, and very often it will be the Lord's people who put us into the fire and make it hot for us. The traditional way, the religious way,

the generally accepted way by the religious leaders was one way. For Him the way was of another order, that of walking with God.

No one will use what we have said in a wrong way. No one will think that we should cut ourselves off from everybody else, be up against everybody else, if we walk with God. But walking with God means that we have to walk alone with God, it is the way of life, where we discover and prove the life of God, and in the outworking it comes to this: While it may have cost everything, while it may have created a world of difficulty and trouble all around me, yet because I have come to know God in the deepest reality of my being, for me it is no artificial way, it is not just the result of my own obstinacy and awkwardness. No, it is life! You cannot abandon a way which is life to you. You would not abandon your very life. If it is not that, then you and I can go back on it, or seriously reconsider the whole situation if it has not brought us into a knowledge of God in life. It is a law of life to walk with God under heaven's government, and not man's, not our own. That is how the Lord Jesus walked. As John says, we ought to walk as He walked.

The heavenly sustenance of the true Man

For the present the last thing that comes out of John's gospel for our consideration is shown in John 6:26-40. Read right on to verse 58, and you will notice that there is this one thing: "I am the bread of life" (verse 48); "I am the living bread (verse 51). "I will give ... my flesh ... for the life of the world" (verse 51). "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (verse 53). "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (verse 57, (KJV)).

You will notice the contrast here is between food which does not end in death and food which does. These people referred to the Manna, and our recollection of the Manna is that it was capable of putrefaction or corruption in a very short time. It must not be kept, and to keep it would mean that it would immediately breed disease

and death. So that in that food there was already the element of death. Now the Lord Jesus is saying that there is that upon which man lives which has in it corruption, producing moral and spiritual disease and ending in death. That is one kind of food. But there is another kind of food which has no basis of corruption, no element of death, which does not, therefore, produce disease but health and life, and that constitutes another law of the true man. It means that the true man is free from corruption, from spiritual disease and death, by living upon something. He escapes, he is outside of the realm of corruption, disease, death, because of the food which he eats, because of that by which he is nourished and sustained.

What is the food of the true man, which means life, more life, eternal life, deathless, incorruptible life? It is the revealed will of God. Do you notice the strong emphasis in this passage in John 6 upon doing the will of God? "For I came down from heaven," the Lord Jesus said, "not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (verse 38). He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me ...", to the disciples at Sychar. The revealed will of God, the law of life, escaping spiritual and moral disease, corruption, death, and growing in life. Revelation is progressive just as food is progressive. The babe has one kind of food, then after so long a time you change the food, then you change it again, and you are constantly changing it as the child normally grows, until in a normal person the child comes on to a full man's diet. It is progressive. Revelation is progressive. You begin your spiritual life as a babe by obedience to the will of God as it has been revealed to you in those initial stages in the simplest, the elementary things. But, as the apostle has pointed out, we are not to stay with the rudiments, the first principles, we are to go on to full growth, for strong meat is for full-grown men. That is progressive revelation of the will of God by which there is an increase of life.

Now try to feed a full-grown man on baby-food and see what happens? His life fades out. Life is bound up with the kind of food, and the measure of the value of that food. So is the will of God revealed progressively to those who are going on with Him in a

living way, and as there is a compliance with the growing revelation of God's will so there is an increase in the life, which is an increase of the position of victory over death, corruption, disease, moving on to that final triumph, where in the body as in the Head death is swallowed up in victory.

It is important for the issue of the dispensation that as many of the Lord's people as can be brought there shall know maturity. It is fatal for the Lord's people to be left in spiritual infancy at the end of the dispensation, because the end of the dispensation is to see in the church, the Body, the trampling upon death, the final overthrow of death. That which has been done in the Head has got to be done in the Body. Just as He bruised Satan's head under His heel, so Satan's head has got to be bruised under the heel of the church; that is the Word of the Lord.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death, and the church, with the Lord, has to conquer death. But that represents maturity, and so it is most important that the Lord's people shall not remain in immaturity, for the issue of the dispensation is bound up with the maturing of a company of the Lord's people. It is not just that the Lord wants them full-grown. It is not just that the Lord has His heart set upon a fully mature company. It is for the purpose of the Lord in the destruction of death, and so life must increase, life must abound.

You can see that there is a subtle strategy about the work of the devil in keeping the Lord's people in ignorance and thereby keeping them in spiritual infancy. The Lord's people ought not to be in that state. When the apostle speaks of immaturity which ought not to be, there is always a note which sounds somewhat heated which comes into his voice: "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing" (Heb. 5:11). There is something very wrong in an unduly prolonged immaturity of the Lord's people. It is the strategy of the devil to defeat the end of the age, the overthrow of death.

These are tremendous issues, and matters of great importance to the Lord, to the church, and in the dispensation. So it all comes

to this, that you and I are to know life as fully as we can know it and to want to know how to know it. The issue is life all the way through from beginning to end, and the end is the full triumph of life in the Head and in the Body, the one church, conquering death.

Then how is this life to be known, to abound? By these laws. They are very practical. You may take it that if the Lord is going to carry on a people to the fulness of His thought they are going to be taken up this way. And they are going to learn, perhaps through painful experiences to the flesh, how to live by the life of the Lord and have no life of their own. They are going to have their own life smitten so that they come to live on the Lord. Their own judgements are going to be confounded, so that they come to live on heavenly judgement. The Lord is doing it. These are tremendous realities.

If we did not know something of this, we would not talk about it, but we know what it is to have the natural side of things smitten, broken, crushed, so that the Lord alone is the hope of a future. It is a matter of life in its full expression, and for that there are laws, and those are the laws and the life of the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Head of the church. And what is true of the Head, the prototype, has got to be true of every member of His Body, of His race, of His creation. We have to come by this way: "... that ... ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31). Then, what is life in His Name? It means being upon the same basis as He was upon. When we come into His Name, or unto His Name, we come onto the basis of the Son of Man, the Son of God.

Please take it to heart. We have been trying to indicate the tremendous importance of a matter like this. I am quite sure that if we are going on with the Lord we are going to come up against these facts. Whether we can understand and interpret them is another matter. We are going to discover that we need something which we are not in possession of in ourselves, and something that only God can give us to get us through. If we are going in any way to count for the Lord effectively, and if the Lord is going to get anything like a fuller thing through us, we are going to discover our need of God

to the very fullest measure possible. And we shall cry to the Lord for something, and what the Lord will do will be to take us through experiences and those experiences will be the working out of these laws. You will understand the law when you have been through the experience, but it is as well perhaps to start with to have a little light as to what the Lord is doing in emptying and weakening us. It is in order to make His life everything, to bring us to fulness, increase, for supreme divine purposes and ends.

The Lord write His Word in our hearts.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

Reading: John 8:12, 26-36; 10:1-18.

“He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

You will probably be struck, in reading these portions of the Word of God, with the references to darkness, or ignorance, or blindness, or not knowing. That note is clearly related to this phrase “the light of life”, and it is made perfectly plain in these chapters that knowledge of a spiritual kind — true, spiritual, divine knowledge rests entirely upon life, the possession of life, and the increase of life.

The Lord Jesus spoke of having come that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly, and the connection, as you will see, is that they may begin to know, and that they may go on increasing in knowledge. So that the very beginning of knowledge is bound up with the possession of life, and the increase of knowledge is by way of more abundant life. Knowledge from start to finish is a matter of life in the sense in which the Lord Jesus used that Word.

We have, from this point in the gospel onwards, the matter of life-giving light, producing light, both as a fact and as to the nature of that light of life; that is, the connection, the kind of light or knowledge, the direction in which we get light and knowledge through life. We cannot hope to get very far in seeing that at this time, and maybe we shall only say a little on one or two points in which life produces light.

In John 8 there is the fact of light by life set forth, and we are shown the steps of light by life, the progress, the way. In John

8:31-32 the whole thing is intimated: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in my Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." That is a most comprehensive statement. You see the steps. First faith — "... those Jews which believed". Faith abiding in the Word — "If ye continue in my Word ...". Taught ones — "... then are ye My disciples indeed". Coming to knowledge — "And ye shall know the truth ...". The issue — "... and the truth shall make you free".

There are five steps in life unto light. First, faith; second, abiding in the Word; third, being taught, a disciple, a taught one abiding in the Word; fourth, coming to knowledge of the truth; fifth, the outworking of that knowledge is liberation, emancipation. That is far more comprehensive than it appears, because if you think for a moment that ranges the whole history of man. It includes the histories of the two races, the Adam race and the Christ race, the race of the first Adam and the race of the last Adam.

The first Adam is secretly referred to in the first Word; "... those Jews which believed" (faith). You will remember that the great issue for Adam was life. The greatest thing for him was truth of life. Life was open to him, with truth, so there you have the truth of life. It was not shut out from him. There was no forbidding while he remained true to God. Life was open before him He could come to know life, and it was open to him until he broke down in faith, until he disbelieved. While faith obtained, life was open. If he had been a believer right through, if he had believed and not doubted and not disbelieved, he would have come to know the meaning of that life. You notice that immediately, through unbelief and disobedience, the Lord shut off that truth of life and said, "... lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life...". So that life was put away from him. He could not come to that as an unbeliever. The first step in our very first relationship to life, which is going to lead to true knowledge, is faith. The last Adam reverses the order of the first Adam. The first Adam did not abide in the Lord's Word. The Lord had spoken, and he did not abide in the Word of the Lord, but stepped

outside of it through doubt, questioning and unbelief and died; life became impossible.

Because of Adam's unbelief and because he did not abide in the Word of the Lord, he did not go on in that divine instruction. Adam was on probation and in that probation he was to be taught a great deal; his knowledge of divine things was not perfect, but would have increased, would have grown, he would have been taught much. The devil suggested to him that he could get knowledge in an easy, cheap, quick way, by a royal road: "... ye shall be as gods, knowing ..." (Gen. 3:5), and God had laid down the possession of knowledge on the basis of faith and obedience, and abiding in the Word of God. That is the divine way of knowledge, but Adam stepped out of the Word, sought knowledge for himself in a direction and in a manner forbidden of God, and lost knowledge. Thus the race in Adam does not have the knowledge of God, is alienated from that divine knowledge, is dark in its understanding; for the natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God. He would have been taught if he had abode in the Word, and then come to the full knowledge of the Lord, and this would have resulted in freedom and liberty, the opposite of that which had come about. He fell into bondage, but the full knowledge of the Lord would have meant an emancipation, a deliverance from that bondage. It would have brought him out into a larger place in the Lord. It would have brought him to the place of sonship in the fuller sense. He lost sonship, the liberty of sonship which is the grand goal of this universe, which has never yet been reached by anyone but the Lord Jesus. You see the steps to that are here marked, and it is a universal story. It embraces the whole history of things in Adam and in Christ. You may not understand but God has spoken, and God has not told you why He has said certain things. He has not said what will be the outworking in detail of our abiding in these specific things said but has made it clear that our abiding in His Word will bring us to the knowledge of that outworking, and that knowledge will be our liberation.

You see the reversing of things from Adam to Christ. In Adam — unbelief, departure from the Word of the Lord, loss of instruction

by the Lord, and therefore missing the knowledge which the Lord intended, and as the result, bondage. In Christ — faith, abiding in the Word, being taught, coming to knowledge, liberty. “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

Life leads to knowledge, and knowledge leads to life. It is the light of life, the light out of life, and the way to that enlargement of life is the obedience of faith to what the Lord has said. That is simple, but the Lord has said quite a lot of things to us, and we have to take an attitude of faith towards what the Lord has said.

Think of some of the things the Lord has been saying to us as to His mind for His own, the great truth that the Lord wills that we should live by His life, out from above, live by His knowledge out from above. We say, That is a very elevated life; it is too high. Is that putting it on one side, or is that the attitude of faith? “The Word profited them nothing, not being mingled with faith in them that heard.” Are we going to be like that, or are we going to mingle faith with what the Lord says? That is where it begins, and that means that faith will hold us into the Word. Without understanding it we can take the attitude, If this is God’s Word I am going to hold on to that, I am going to stand on that, I am going to stand in that; I do not understand it, but I am going to stand in it. My attitude is, Lord, if that is your Word — and I believe it is — I stand into it. I am not going to push it aside, and just because I do not understand depart from it. I stand in it. If that positive attitude is taken towards anything that the Lord has revealed to us, we are His disciples indeed, and He will begin to teach us the thing which we have by faith accepted and stood into but did not understand. He will begin to teach us the meaning of that.

The Lord must have men and women like that to teach. The Lord does not give teaching to those who have not taken the positive attitude of faith to stand into and hold on to what He has said. It is so easy to be put aside from the Lord’s things because we do not understand. When the Lord has a people in His school like that, they are His disciples indeed. The Lord wants positive disciples. The Lord’s people are too easily put off. They say, Oh, well, that

is high-flown, and is beyond me; I do not understand it, and that is all there is to it. They do not abide in the Word, simply because they do not understand, but by abiding in it, disciples indeed, being taught, the result will be: "Ye shall know ...", and the knowledge is emancipating knowledge.

That is very practical. Some of us know exactly what that means in experience where the Lord said something to us that was of tremendous significance, but we did not understand it; nevertheless, we saw that the Lord, said it, and we had to take this position, Well, Lord, that being Your Word, and I not understanding it, I nevertheless stand for it and stand in it. We went on for a time and nothing seemed to be happening at all, and it seemed to have passed like a crisis, and then we come back again to it. We say, But, Lord, we took a position over that, and we are still holding on to know Your meaning, to open the thing. Then the Lord begins to open the thing, and in the end it was our emancipation.

It is the obedience of faith which, because we possess life, is going to bring through that life into light and then into liberation, and that means more life, life more abundant.

So we pass from that particular phase with that Word, that we have to take a definite attitude towards what God has said, not wait until we know all that it means. How many people have said, If only I had known what I know today when I took such-and-such a step of obedience! Do you not think that I ought to repeat that now with my present knowledge! No, you have got to be obedient to anything that the Lord has said, and stand into it, because the Lord has said it. If you stand into it you will get more light, emancipation, enlargement in Christ of life, and it will all relate back to that one step. It was all there in germ form, and out of it has come the greater fulness. If you had never taken that one step you would never have come to the knowledge, enlargement and liberation that is bound up with it.

We pass for a few moments to John 10, which teaches another aspect of light and life. This has to do with our responsibility. When we speak of responsibility we move into the realm of service. It is

not now our own spiritual growth or enlightenment or increase, but it is the advantage of that to others, and that is the right order of things. We first of all move with the Lord to a position of enlarged understanding and knowledge, and then, as a consequence, others are benefitted. John 10 brings in the matter of responsibility, by which others come into the good of our going on with the Lord. This is set forth in this example of the Shepherd and the sheep. "He that enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." We want to know the meaning of that Word. The Jews did not understand this parable. "This parable spoke Jesus unto them; but they understood not what things they were which he spoke unto them." We need light, therefore, to understand the meaning of service, the nature of service, for this is what He is speaking about.

He is serving the sheep. Service to the sheep is in view. What does He mean by these Words? To begin with it is simply a matter of having sheep. Here are various people represented as seeking to be in possession of sheep. It is not just the thought of a robber climbing over the wall and snatching a sheep. That is what a wolf does, but here what is before us is other shepherds, men assuming to be shepherds. "Hirelings" is their true name, but in their own eyes they regard themselves as shepherds, and what they are after is to possess a flock of sheep. So the first thing is a matter of having sheep, or being a shepherd of a flock, being in a position of authority, responsibility. That is the whole point that the Lord has in view.

Then He draws the contrast and says that there are those who would assume this position to possess sheep, to have sheep for themselves, who do not go the same way as the sheep go, but climb up some other way, do not enter through the door, but take a different course from the sheep. It is a tremendously keen insight which the Lord has. It is just wonderful to recognise this point that the Lord is making. He gives the explanation. They did not understand what He said to them, therefore he said: "I am the door of the sheep ... I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Oh, I see, the

sheep go the way of the Lord; the sheep go by the way of Christ. That is their way, their ground, their course. Then there are some who would assume to be shepherds of sheep, who would assume this position, who would possess sheep, but who do not go the way of the Lord, who do not go the way of Christ. They try to be what He is as a Shepherd without going the way that He goes.

Do you see the point? A shepherd, a true servant of the Lord, has to come right down on to the ground as the sheep, and go the same way as the sheep, to be one with the sheep in their experience of the Lord. It is so possible to assume the position of a servant of the Lord and then have a congregation, a flock, but never to have gone the way that that flock has gone or has to go. The sheep cannot climb up some other way; the hireling can. They can do things the sheep can never do; they are very clever.

The Lord is saying quite clearly here that true service to the flock means that you have to be one with the flock in the way that the flock has to take, you have to know Christ in order to serve these others, you have to know Christ in exactly the same way as all those others whom you are trying to serve have to know Christ. It is oneness with the sheep by the same experience. It is a matter of vital union with the sheep in the sheep's knowledge of Christ. That is a very simple principle, but a very fundamental law.

It can be put in different ways. That is how it is put here, that a true shepherd is not one who takes a course other than the sheep have to take in relation to the Lord. You cannot perch upon a pedestal and tell the sheep which way they must go, not having gone that way yourself. If you have not gone that way yourself and you tell the sheep which way they must go you are a false shepherd; you have stolen those sheep, you have no right to them. You have no right to have a flock unless you have gone the way that the flock must go, unless you have taken the course that you would tell them to take, or that they, in order to have life, must take. The Lord makes that very clear.

It means this in principle, that you and I have to take the way, or must have taken the way, that we seek that others should take,

if light and the life of usefulness in service are to be ours. We must take exactly the same course that we see others should take to know life. That is a law.

That brings us back to this point, which is perhaps just the enlarging of that, that the Lord makes His under-shepherds those who are living signs of His truth for others to follow. He does not make His under-shepherds mere talkers, speakers or preachers of Bible truth. He takes them in hand and takes them through things in order that others may see in them the living embodiment of Christ.

The Lord said to Ezekiel: "I have set thee for a sign"; "Say unto the House of Israel, I am your sign." "Thou shalt be a sign unto them, and they shall know that I am the Lord." That is very clear. How shall they know that He is the Lord, the Good Shepherd that gave His life for the sheep? He would make us a sign unto them, that they should know. He would that there should be in us a reproduction and an expression of the truth in Christ.

In laying down His life for the sheep we know that there was a vicariousness into which we do not enter. There is no atoning value about our laying down our life, but apart from the vicariousness or the atoning value of it the fact remains that there has to be manifested in us the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus before ever we can be of any use to others. There has to be a manifestation of the power of His death and there has to be a manifestation of the power of His resurrection.

That is embodied in the parable of the shepherd and the sheep. The false shepherd, the hireling, is one who is not the personal embodiment of Christ, the Door. Christ is the Door, Christ is the way, the course, and you and I are not to be pointers, we have to be 'ways' in the Lord. That is, there has to be in us that which is true of Him, so that others can see Him in us, know Him because the thing has been wrought into us. That is the light of life in relation to service and usefulness.

I do not believe there is any far-reaching service that is not based upon that, and you and I can take it as settled that the real value of our service will be just in the measure in which we have

been experimentally wrought into the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the sufferings of Christ have been wrought in us. The measure in which we know the Lord in a living way will be the measure of our value to others. If the Lord is going to get servants, under-shepherds of real character, He is going to take us through things, He is going to take us the way that He Himself went. That is how He makes servants, not by giving them information but by working in them the truths of His own life. That is the life of service, the light of life in service.

Here things are tabulated, and made perfectly clear: life, sacrifice, knowledge. "I am come that they might have life (the sheep), and that they might have it more abundantly." That refers to life, "... the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep". That is sacrifice. "I ... know My sheep, and am known of mine." That is knowledge.

Paul was a great example of this truth. He could never be satisfied that those whom he shepherded should just have information. His whole travail was that they might have life, that Christ should be fully formed in them. "My little children, on whose behalf I am again in travail until Christ be fully formed in you". He who said that, and entered into that, was one who went that way himself, and could say: "Follow Me", I am your example, I am your sign, I have gone this way. And he cried right to the end that he might be in that way: "That I may know Him, and the power of his resurrection, being made conformable unto His death." That is the way of a true shepherd.

There is no question about Paul's sacrifice for others. "I fill up that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for his body's sake, which is the church."

What kind of knowledge did Paul have concerning his sheep? "Who is weak and I suffer not?" That is entering into the experiences in an intelligent way, knowing the sheep, getting into their life, into their state. It is, in effect, saying, If any of you are in a bad state, I am suffering in your bad state; I am in it, I am so associated with it, I am so one with you, that your state affects me — "I know My sheep." When you are weak, I know and I suffer; when you are

full I rejoice. It is spiritual knowledge.

That is all that is meant here in John 10, or at least it is the basic thing here. It is a question of life union with the Lord unto service, and that life union means going the way that He went in order to lead others that way. It is being a personal embodiment of Christ to bring others by the way of Christ, and the Lord draws the contrast between such; the true under-shepherds, and these others who would not go that way, who would not allow this to be wrought in them, who would not pay the price, who would climb up some other way and take possession of a flock, assume the place of a shepherd. As thieves and robbers they have stolen that to which they have no right. No one, says the Lord here in effect, has a right to possess sheep who has not come the way of Christ for the sheep, who has not gone through this way of what Christ is in the interests of the sheep.

We have sought to lay down and point out two further laws of life. Life is unto knowledge through obedience, which knowledge leads still to fuller life. Life union with the Lord leads to effective service, the right kind of spiritual responsibility which is of value. It is life union with the Lord, and in no other way can the Lord's interests really be served.

The Lord is not going to let us be hirelings if He can help it. He is not going to let us be in an unlawful position. He is going to seek to put us in the right place, where we can be a genuine under-shepherd, one who is a sign.

That is why the Lord has taken us through a great many things that would not be necessary for us to go through in any other direction, in any other connection. We go through quite a lot that we should never go through if the Lord had not designs concerning us being useful to Him. The greater the usefulness to the Lord the deeper the experience of death and resurrection. It is left with us to say whether the Lord is to stop or not, whether we will go any further, or draw the line to our usefulness by resistance to His leading.

May the Lord Himself teach us the way of life.

The purpose of this publication is to encourage God's people to lay hold on eternal life, the hope set before them, knowing that Jesus Christ, their Saviour, will soon return to establish His eternal Kingdom, "so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:12).

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