

The Great Transition from One Humanity to Another

by T. Austin-Sparks



T. Austin-Sparks

A series of addresses given by T. Austin-Sparks -
The spoken form has been retained in printing.

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This book contains a series of messages given at a conference in July, 1968, by our brother T. Austin Sparks just shortly before he went to be with our Heavenly Father in glory. Having received so many spiritual benefits from these messages, we feel that God would have us to share them with the Church, His Body.

Therefore, in an effort to retain the Holy Spirit's anointing upon them, we have sought to preserve these addresses in their original spoken form, with very little grammatical correction. We feel our brother Sparks has left behind an abundant spiritual legacy for the members of Christ's Body because we have found these messages have brought us into a fuller and greater revelation of the Heavenly Man. And so it is our sincere prayer to God that this book will help furnish in His Body what is needed until we all come to see what Paul saw in the Heavenly New Man of glory.

Chapter 1 - The New Testament: The Great Transition

Our Father, our God, we ask Thee now that Thou, Who didst say "Let light be," will shine into our hearts at this time "To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is that face we together have said we are seeking now. We seek Thy Face. We thank Thee that the veil is taken away. We thank Thee that the heaven is open. We thank Thee that the Holy Spirit has come. What we pray for is our need — so deeply conscious we are of it — our own impotence and helplessness, our inability to do anything, to say anything worthy of Thyself. O Lord, we confess utter dependence upon Thee, but we say to Thee, Lord, we trust Thee. Now make this then a time of entering into the good of that opened heaven, that anointing Spirit, that revelation in the Face of Jesus Christ. We ask it in His Name, Amen.

I want to lay the foundation for our meditation in this morning session, the first session of this week, by asking you to turn to several passages of Scripture from the Old Testament and from the New. Beginning in the Book of Genesis at chapter five, verse two, it states: "Male and female created He them, and blessed them, and called their name, man" (A.S.V.). Now come over to the New Testament in the First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter fifteen, verses 45–49: "So also it is written, the first man became a living soul; the last Adam a life-giving Spirit. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second Man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall (*or let us*) also bear the image of the heavenly" (A.S.V.).

And then, please, in the Letter to the Colossians, chapter three at verse nine: "Lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him That created him; where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all" (A.S.V.).

And finally, in the Letter to the Hebrews, chapter two at verse five, it says: "For not unto angels did He subject the world to come, whereof we speak. But one has somewhere testified, saying, 'What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the Son of Man, that Thou visitest Him?' "

As I have said, in this morning session we are laying the foundation for our meditations. We shall be somewhat general and comprehensive and later work inward to get to the real heart of things; however, first it is necessary for us to have a comprehensive view and vision of what is before us.

I have no doubt that not a few of you who are here at this time have come with problems, and I find that Christians everywhere the world over are full of problems in our time. If it is not problems about their own spiritual life and themselves (as it is in many cases), it is problems about other Christians; or it is problems about the Church generally and, perhaps, locally. Also, there are problems about the world. These problems are manifold, and they are apt to drain our spiritual life and get us very much locked up and held up in our spiritual progress. It is like that. A lot of Christians are doing that today. They are missing the glory because their eyes are either turned inward or earthward: that is their problem.

You remember when the people of Israel were going over the Jordan into the promised land: the Word to them was this, "You shall set the ark, a space between you and the ark, of two thousand cubits, because you have not passed this way heretofore" (Josh. 3:3–4, paraphrased). There is a wealth, a mine of profound wisdom, in that simple prescription: "a space of two thousand cubits between you and the ark, because you have not passed this

way heretofore." If you get too close to things, you will lose your perspective and you will lose your way. Do not get too near. Keep things in proportion, in perspective.

Now do you not agree with me that we have got too near things, and we have made things the everything? Is that true? Yes, even our Christian doctrine — and it is precious and important and vital and essential — yet, we have isolated our doctrines and made them the everything. We can make even the doctrine of the Cross the everything, and I can mention many other things which are like a circumscribed circle for many Christians today. They cannot see beyond that, and they cannot see anything more than that. If you talk to them, they have no interest in anything but that. They come back to it every time and hold you to it. This loss of proportion and perspective and vision in its entirety is the cause of many of our problems and much of our arrested spiritual life.

Now why am I saying this? For two reasons. You will have to get a larger vision than your personal problems and see them in a related way. I do not know very much about the science of relativity, but I come down very strongly on the principle of relatedness or relativity. We must see everything in its relatedness to everything else, and not just things as an end in themselves. I want to share with you this morning what is on my heart, and what is so much alive to me now is this comprehensive setting of the spiritual life, getting it in its greatness, its vastness, its immensity.

Now immensity can, of course, be awe-inspiring to the point of making you stand still and hold your breath. But immensity can also be an emancipating thing. You see the greatness of that into which we have been called in Christ! The Greatness of Christ! Oh, if we could this week get a new apprehension, grasp, of the infinitudes of our Christian calling, we would go away an emancipated people. And in that setting then, let us begin.

Humanity is God's End

This morning we have read many passages in the Bible, and I would have liked to have added many more of the same kind, but these are enough as a starting point. Do you recognize what they are all about? From Genesis, the beginning, right through the Scriptures, it is one thing: man. No, it is two men, and what we are going to be occupied with is this double humanity, or two humanities, for they are the subject matter of the whole Bible. The Bible is the story of God and man, and everything is gathered into that; nothing is in the Bible but what relates to that.

Of course, the Bible begins with God: "In the beginning God...." First we have the fact of God. This is where you start, and you are not far along before you come upon man. Human history begins with God, God as a fact — God initiating everything, taking the initiative; God at work — God's mind working out in action, in what He does. Remember that is a Bible principle. If you want to know the mind of God, you will come to know it by what God does and not always by what He says to do. More often, God's mind is revealed by how He deals with you than by what He says in words in your ear.

God is speaking in His actions, speaking very loudly in His works. God's mind is being revealed in His actions; God is at work, at work preparing everything for man. When He has made that preparation and brought man in, God says: "There is nothing more to do; at this stage, We can rest." And God is at rest when He has man introduced into his prepared place and scene.

That man Adam, the New Testament tells us, is a figure of Him that was to come, in Whom God will ultimately find His full rest. Man constituted; the man conditioned; the man environed; the man probationed. All God's interests are centered in humanity; not in things, as such. No thing is an end with God. Man is God's end. Humanity is God's end.

With this thought, we are right back there in the very center of the interests of God, humanity. But that man Adam disappointed God, failed Him, and was rejected by God. And at that point, God re-acted, *re-acted* with the intimation of Another One, Another Man. A Representative Man, Whom God had foreordained before the foundation of the world. This *Man* is foreordained and then forecast, foreshadowed; and that line of the reaction of God toward the *Man*, against this other man, runs all the way through like a red line through the Old Testament. In figure, in type, in prophecy, in the spiritual history of an elect line, all moving on toward that Other Man, that Other Humanity, the different Humanity, until we reach the New Testament.

The New Testament is the crisis of humanity. Have you thought of Christianity like that? Or have you thought of Christianity only in its parts, its fragments, such as the Atonement for a man's sin, man's personal salvation, man's securing of eternal hope and glory. These are all the parts of salvation, and we have made so much of them. Well, you cannot make too much of the parts, of course, until you reach the point where the parts become less than the whole; and, dear friends, we have got to readjust our conception and idea of Christianity at this point to see that with the coming of the Lord Jesus, a crisis in the whole history of humanity is reached. It is the crisis of the final word of rejection of a humanity, a kind of man, and the introduction of an entirely different kind of Humanity with the Person of Jesus Christ. When you grasp that, your whole Bible is going to come alive; it will come alive.

What have we come into? What is regeneration? You call it conversion, being "born again," or you call it regeneration. What is it that we have come into? — It is generation into Another Humanity altogether different as a member of a different race of creatures, a different species of Humanity. With the New Testament, this immense crisis in human history is introduced, a crisis of humanity. Another Humanity is introduced with our New Testament, the full and final type of Humanity that God is going to have; and, the tremendous thing is, all that belongs to the perfection of man is found in this Representative One. That is introduced with our New Testament.

Jesus stands in a unique relation to the human race, and do you not see how rays of light focus upon this great fact? What is it that God is doing? — with you, with me, as a bit of this humanity. What is He doing? What is He after? What is the explanation of our experience under the hand of God?

When we get under the hand of God, we are going through it. What are you expecting this week? When you go away from here, you will meet friends and they will say, "Have you had a happy time?" I think I told you before of a conference I was at once. At the end, testimonies were asked for from the ministers as to what the conference had meant to them; one and another got up and said, "Oh, I have had a wonderful time; I have had a glorious time; this has been the best time of my life..." and so on. And then one man got up, his eyes were red, his face was strained; he said, "I do not understand this; I have had an awful time. This week has meant devastation to me. Everything that I held as important is gone. I am left with a necessity for a new Christ, a bigger Christ than ever I have known." What are you expecting this week? Well, I hope you have a good time! But your "good time," dear friends, in the light of eternity may be a very bad time. When it comes to seeing the real fruit, it may come out of a devastation.

What is God doing? — He is devastating one kind of humanity. We are going to see that as we go on from day to day. He is doing it. I do not know what your experience is, but I know it is mine. I know it is the experience of many of the most used and blessed servants of God — that they are going through a terrible time. Spiritually they have come to the place, where if the Lord, the Lord does not really stand by and take over and see them through, it

is an end even of their long spiritual experience. All the past will not stand unless the Lord comes in in a new way. Is not that true with many? Yes, that is what He is doing. He is working on this very ground of the two humanities — *one being that which we are by nature; and the Other, that which we are in Christ.*

So, what we are to be occupied with at this time is first of all, to behold the Man, to behold *The Man*. And I would pray, and do pray, that when this week is finished, we shall be able to truly express our hearts in those wonderful words of a poet known to many of you. These are some lines from that wonderful poem,

"Christ"

*I am Christ's, and let that Name suffice me.
Aye, and for me He greatly hath sufficed.
Yea, through life, through death, through sorrow,
and through sinning,
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed.
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning.
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.*

Those words express what we would all like to be the issue of this time — Christ.

A New Captivation of Christ

A New, Wonderful Appreciation of Christ

A New Seeing of the Significance of Christ in God's Universe

Now for these remaining few minutes of the introduction, I want to just pinpoint this one thing. Have you recognized, (perhaps you have without putting it in these words) have you recognized that the very heart and pivot of our Bible is an immense transition? The heart of the Bible is where the Old Testament ends and the New Testament begins, for here are two halves of human history, of humanity. Right there, at that point we come on this great immense transition. The New Testament is wholly taken up with the meaning and the nature, the fact of this transition, this movement from one thing to Another in humanity.

You will recall so much in your New Testament when I just mention these things. First of all it is a transition from one man to Another, from Adam to Christ. We read that in 1 Corinthians 15: "the first man," He called "him."..? No, He called "*them*" man (Gen. 5:2). That is racial; that is humanity. He called them. That is very simple — the first man, Adam. It is the same thing, "Adam" and "man," as you noticed in the margin of Genesis 5. "He called them 'man'." And the New Testament wholly bears upon this transition from one humanity to Another, from one racial head and inclusive person to Another. It is a New Humanity, going beyond transition then, which is a racial one, from Adam to Christ, from the first man to the last Man.

Secondly, there is a transition from one nation to Another. I know there is room for a lot of controversy there about Israel; nevertheless, the New Testament and Christ Himself came down on this quite emphatically: "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you (that is, Israel), and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Heavenly Fruit, not earthly. Transition from one nation to Another.

And Peter, oh, Peter! I am amazed at Peter, are you not?! That erstwhile Judaistic traditionalist who had a battle with the Lord over Gentiles in Cæsarea, going to the house of Cornelius and even saying in a contradiction of terms to the Lord, "Not so, Lord." You

cannot put those words together — “Lord” and “Not so.” The other man, Paul, you remember when he met Christ, said: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” But Peter has not got out of his tradition quite yet; and even at Antioch — dissimulation. When James and the elders came down from Jerusalem, Peter withdrew himself from eating with the Gentiles. He has still got a little bit of grave clothes left on him, but marvel of marvels, when you come to his letters he is out. “Ye are an elect race.” Who? — The saints scattered throughout Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia. An elect race. He is out of the one nation, now into the Other. The transition has been consummated in this man. But it was a battle. Always a battle over this old association with the natural man. We are going to see much more of that.

Then it is a transition from one economy to the Other. Your letter to the Hebrews is one solid argument for this transition. I am so impressed with the constant recurrence in the New Testament of one phrase which leads out with linking words: the phrase is “*Not, But.*” John began that, did he not? Christ said to the woman of Samaria: “Not in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem, but in spirit” (John 4:21, 24 paraphrased). “Not, nor, but” — and you find that occurring again and again.

And here you come to this great transition from one economy to Another, the old economy taking in the great ministry of angels: that is a subject for a morning in itself. The ministry of angels in the old economy. The law was given through angels. Angels came again and again to Gideon, to Daniel. The archangels, marvelous ministry of angels — but the Letter to the Hebrews opens up, “Not unto angels... but” — “Not, But” — what a change! And the following argument is that this New Economy infinitely transcends the ministry of angels.

And as you get on toward the end of that letter to the Hebrews, you have another of these transitory phrases: “You are not come unto a mount, a palpable mount, that burned with fire... but ye are come...” — how vast is this movement from that old economy to the bringing in of the New Economy. There is one thing only in your New Testament, introduced by Christ in the Gospels and followed out by the apostles; and in this letter to the Hebrews, the solid object of the whole letter is the transition from one economy to Another. Oh, read it again and glory in it. Read that letter again to the Hebrews. Glory in this: “My, what a thing we have been brought into.” Tabernacle? Yes, says the writer, there was a tabernacle on this earth, and for the time being... until the time. That is all gone, he says, and now we have come into the True Tabernacle not made with hands, which God has made, a Heavenly Tabernacle. See how wonderful the transition is! — the passing over from one economy to Another.

I must pause to ask, is this where Christendom has gone astray? —

Is it still holding on to the old economy?

Is it still in the grave clothes?

Is it still that old Mosaic economy with its forms and ways?

Is it not emancipated into the Heavens?!

That is what the Lord wants to do with us here.

From one nation to Another: Abraham to Christ, Moses to Christ. From one sovereignty to Another: we know how full the New Testament is of David and His Greater Son — full of it. But it shows the transition from one earthly sovereignty to Another Heavenly Sovereignty in Jesus Christ.

And so we could go on marking these aspects of the transition. And if you want a key to the Gospel by John, remember John wrote the whole of that gospel on one thought only. The key to the whole of that gospel is this transition from one to Christ. He has taken over. That is why the many "I Am's." You notice those "I Am's" have a reflection upon the old. I am not the vine, "I Am the True Vine." Israel was a vine, but He has taken over as the True Vine. Israel was a false vine — did not bring forth the fruit.

Now, I am not going to start with John's gospel, but I give you the key. When you move from the introduction of this Other Humanity in the Person of Christ in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, (and this is the key to them all) and come through the desolation of the Cross, you come into Acts, and what are you in? Oh, this marvelous emancipation — transition, transition — in the Book of the Acts. What desolation was made in that whole system because through the desolation of the Cross, there is the emergence into this Other side — this New Humanity. Watch how the Lord is working on this old humanity to wind it up, progressively now bringing it to where He has put it.

The Climax of the Full Knowledge of Christ

You know, friends, God always works backward towards something. Well, in the creation, He was working backward. Read it again. Why have we in the New Testament so many words which begin with the little prefix "re," regeneration, reconciliation; all have that little prefix "re," for He is working back.

Things have gone away, gone wrong, got out of God's way, and God is returning to where they went wrong. God usually does that with us. And so what is God's beginning? — It is His Son before the foundation of the world. Right back in the Eternal counsels His Son was made the beginning, God's starting place. Men have all gone astray, because of history, "all of us like sheep have gone astray."

God gets back to His beginning, His Son. Christendom has gone astray, and the only way of saving Christendom is to get back to God's beginning, a true and right apprehension of His Son.

I do not want to just go on with material. There is an application of this to us. I am convinced, I know it is true, that what the Lord is doing with so many of us is stripping us, stripping us of the things which we have taken on or we have gotten into; He is stripping them off and bringing us down to the place where it is the Lord Jesus or it is nothing! If the Lord Jesus fails, there is nothing to live for, and some of us have come to the place where we have said to the Lord, "Lord, if You are not going to come in and fill this place, please take us away: there is nothing more to live for." Is that exaggeration?

I believe the Lord is doing that with many of His people today, taking away their ministry, taking away the fellowships on which they rested so much, taking away the things, even the Christian things — their work, their preaching. When you start preaching there becomes a fascination about preaching; you get over that as you get older... you say, "Lord, don't let me preach unless You're going to do the preaching." The Lord is doing that sort of thing, just stripping us, stripping us of things, even Christian things; and He is going to fill the place Himself.

Now is not that the real climax revealed?! Put it into these words of the Apostle Paul, "Till we all attain unto..." what? Oh, what a pity our translators have not given us an exact translation! They have said, "until we all attain to... the knowledge of the Son of God." No! it is "to the full knowledge of the Son of God... to the measure of the stature of..." what? A Man. The climax of the knowledge of Christ, the full knowledge of Christ, is our attainment. And what is it? — a kind of a Man which is the reproduction of, if I may put it this way,

Jesus Christ the Man. And so we are coming more and more to this — that it is only the Lord: it is Christ.

*I Am Christ's, Let the Name Suffice.
Oh, if only we have got
A large enough apprehension of Him!*

Well, now I am going to break off here, and if the Lord wills, continue from that point getting nearer to this tomorrow morning. With all this greatness of setting, of background, in which we are if we are in Christ, does not that very phrase open up to this conception of God's purpose that in Christ there is Another Humanity?!

This is what the Lord is doing with you, with me, making something different; oh, it is too slow, I know, for us. We do not seem to be making much progress that way, but He is undoing and He is adding.

But, what do we know? But, what do I know? Oh, I feel worse than ever I did in my life in myself. If it were not for Christ, I would not be here today. No, I would have gone out; I would not be here through all the stresses, all the strains, all the experiences, all the devastations, all those times when down in the dust I have simply said, "Lord, You have made a mistake, You've made a mistake, I am Your great mistake. You ought never to have brought me into this position." It always seems like that in our experiences; but here we are. We have survived, and more than survived; we are here. And we believe we are here by the power of God in Jesus Christ. That we do know, and so we can say, "It is Christ, it is Christ, and it is a mighty Christ in our history."

Well, this is enough for this morning. See what He is doing?! May He show us that He has marvelous thoughts for what He has conceived — Humanity as His crown and His goal. Shall we pray...

Lord, we do beseech Thee, we entreat Thee, to open the eyes of our understanding. Do not let this be so much more talking, teaching — certainly not an end in itself. But Lord, bow us in Thy presence. We know that the real discovery of whether we are in with Thee at this time will not just be in our attending the meetings; it will be in the prayer that is behind, outside of the meetings, in our rooms, in our hearts. Lead us, we pray Thee. Deep exercise about this matter of what Thou art working toward, and why Thou art dealing with us as Thou art. So help us, by Thy grace, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, Amen.

Chapter 2 - Practical Devastation of our Old Humanity

Lord, we know that we have just used the words which one of old, long time ago, used, but did not understand that it was the Lord speaking. He thought it was a man, though a man of God, until he was brought face to face with the fact, no, it is not man that speaks, it is God; and then directly with Thyself he said, "Speak Lord, Thy servant heareth." We pray that we may have that enablement to discern when the Lord is speaking, when it is not just a man but the Lord. And O how much hangs upon the Lord speaking to us as it did with Samuel. We would be like Samuel, that mighty power amongst the people of God. We ask Thee that we may truly hear Thee through any other voice that may speak, ...that we may hear inwardly the voice of the Lord, ...that we may go down before Thee and receive whatever instructions or commissions Thou wouldst have us receive. So help us, Lord, this morning, for Thy Name's sake, Amen.

There is a hymn in one of our hymn books; some of you will know it, others may not. And it runs like this:

*My goal is God Himself.
Not joy, nor even blessings,
But, Himself, my God.
'Tis His to lead me there;
Not mine, but His, on earth,
At any cost, dear Lord,
By any road.*

Young Christians without much experience sing that with a good deal of enthusiasm. Older, more mature Christians sing it holding their heart. I wonder if you would commit yourself to those last lines: "At any cost, dear Lord, by any road." You say, "Yes." If you do, then you are prepared for what is coming, for on that very ground I am quite sure we are going to meet a challenge this morning. It will bring a challenge of a real crisis upon which so very much for us all will hang, far more than we are aware of.

Well now, having said that, let us go on. In this hour of our sessions, we are occupied with the two humanities, and especially with the great transition from one humanity to Another: the humanity of the first Adam (an inclusive word and term; collective as well as individual) to the last *Adam*, Who also is individual and collective.

Later in the week we may have something more to say about the collective aspect of the New Humanity, but we have a lot of ground to cover before we get there, to the place where I think a very big adjustment has got to be made in our mentality and conception of that corporate aspect — we call it the Church. I am certain that we have got to make some mental changes over this Church conception; however, we leave that, and this morning we come back to this transition, this passing from one humanity to Another, with which the whole Bible is occupied, and particularly the New Testament.

I weigh my words; I am very careful. I am not a bit concerned with or interested in just passing to you a lot of teaching and information. I am too old for that. Everything has got to contain something vital upon which destiny hangs. So I weigh my words, and I want to repeat this: the New Testament in its entirety is occupied with one thing (there are many things about the one thing contained in it) but this is the one thing: the transition from that one humanity, kind of being — mankind, to Another. The Other being Christ, the First of this New Race and Order of mankind upon which God's heart has been set from the beginning. This New Order of humanity is of far greater importance, as we said and pointed out yesterday, than even angels. As little children, we used to sing a little hymn: "I want to be an angel." Do you? Well, God has a far, far greater destiny for you than that of angels. "Angels desire to look into these things;" it says: "they desire to look into this." "Not unto

angels, but unto Man" — this is the supreme conception of God's heart in this creation of which Christ His Son is the First — the Beginning.

Change-Over: In the Control of the Holy Spirit

Everything therefore that you will find in your New Testament in one way or another has to do with this change-over, and everything that we shall find in our own spiritual experience, if we are really in the hand of the Holy Spirit, has to do with this. You say: "Oh, I am going through this experience. I am having this difficulty. I am passing this way of sorrow, of perplexity." Whatever it is, it is all in the control of the Holy Spirit related to this transition, movement from one ground to Another, from one personal kind to Another Personal Kind. The focus is right now upon the situation that you are in, whether it be a good one or a bad one: "by any road, at any cost."

And here it is that we begin what is not going to be in the first place pleasant to contemplate. What is it? The absolute necessity for the practical devastation of one kind of humanity. I underline the word practical, not doctrinal, not theoretical, not theological, not philosophical, but practical devastation of our old humanity.

I wonder if you have recognized that the Old Testament throughout is occupied on one side with this: the exposure of the inability of that humanity under the most favorable conditions to satisfy God. God took out a people, related them, attached them to Himself. While they remained on His ground, He blessed them with every, not spiritual, but temporal blessing in the earthly. They had only to be obedient to the commandment and blessed was their balm and their store and their basket and their family and their business and their everything prospered on this earth. He gave them a marvelous economy under His sovereignty right through from the garden, through Israel. And what have we when we close our Old Testament? The failure of that kind of humanity under every condition, and every favorable condition that God could give temporally. It is a tragic story, and the Old Testament has to close. No, it has not attained: it has failed. You have to write on that side the big word "Failure" over that whole history of mankind in relation to God.

Now when you come into your New Testament, what do you find happening? This whole issue is being headed up to its climax in the New Testament. God has stepped in with an intervention and along one line said: "We are going to definitely and positively bring this thing to a culmination and a climax; but to do it We must let people see and know, and all history and all time, recognize why it is necessary for Us to bring about this culmination and climax of that humanity." Oh, note this, while we are not interested just in fascination, there is something fascinating about this. It is gripping, when once you begin to see.

God's Kind of Man: This Other MAN

So, not in the order of time or chronology, we have our four gospels as they are called, and what are these four gospels? They are two things; of course, they are the introduction of God's kind of Man. He is put there, and then alongside of God's kind of Man, the other kind of man is arranged. You cannot read these gospels from that standpoint without being shocked. It is the only word for it — shocked — at the exposure of man alongside of this Other Man, this *Man* that God has put down in the midst. Read your gospels again in this light: the reactions of men to this Man. Are they not terrible? You wonder sometimes how on earth they got the cleverness to note some of the things that they bring up against this Man.

Now steadily moving on in the gospels, moving on in that way and uncovering, exposing, there is a manifestation of that kind of man intensifying. Note the point where it seems a new intensification comes in in this *malice*, this *hatred*, this *prejudice*, this *wickedness* —

against Whom? Why, what has my Lord done? What means this rage and spite? Intensified, until you come right up to the days of the Cross. You remember, of course, He has been moving on the ground of the crucified Man from His baptism onward, and that is a significant fact when you carry it into the unseen realm, where the forces of antagonism are at work.

The Heart which says 'No' to God

But now we come actually up to the time of the Cross, the hours before the crucifixion, and the hour itself; and you have gathered around that Cross a representation of every aspect of the human race. From the inner circle to the wider circle, they are all there; and the focal point is the Cross of Jesus Christ. And what is that Cross bringing to light? Let us take a few cases and instances of this. We will begin with the highest representation of the highest religious system and order that history has known.

Caiaphas, the high priest of Israel, in whom the race is officially centered and gathered up — he is representative of the nation. You read the story put together from these accounts where Caiaphas is the chief actor on the stage of this drama. No words of mine or of man can describe, really, that man with this Other Man in his presence. I think the only description, the only words that approach the description of this man were long before prophesied by Isaiah. You remember? You are so familiar with them in Isaiah, chapter six, when the prophet has made his response to the Lord's appeal, "Who will go for Us?..." — said Isaiah, "Here am I. Send me!" What did the Lord say to him? ...and He said (the Lord said): "Go, and tell this people, 'Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed.' " That sounds terrible. "Lest... lest... lest they turn again." Make it impossible for them to do so, take away their ability to go back upon their course. Is not that terrible?

But what are you dealing with — you are dealing with a hardness of heart which has been hardened and hardened and hardened again against the Word, against the prophets, against all the revelation that God has given, a hardening, a hardening until they have gone beyond the point of no return and God has said: "You have so hardened your heart and said so positively 'No' to My Ways, that it is beyond now remedying." That is Caiaphas and Israel at the Cross; the heart which says "No" to God.

What a heart, what an exposure, what a revelation of human capacity in the Presence of the Highest Privilege. Yes, it is coming out now, what has gone on. It had perhaps a very simple beginning, but it grew and grew — there was no turning back when it was possible — until it reached the point where God said: "Take away their capacity for hearing and seeing." The judgment of the hard heart of man, even under all those appeals and pleadings and sobs and tears of God, comes out at the Cross — what the Cross reveals about what is possible in our hearts!

You say: "That is Caiaphas, that is not me." Oh, you do not know the human heart if you say that. You do not know the human heart if you have never had any rebellion in your heart, if you have never had the capacity for saying "No" to the Lord and had to have a battle over it. It is there: it is not Caiaphas, it is Adam: this is Adam following through by coming to development.

What an Opportunity this Man Had

In the high place of religion you come from Caiaphas and move over to Pilate. Pontius Pilate!! What an opportunity this man had. Oh, what has history said about Pilate? We do

not think of Pilate without some feeling of disgust. Pilate, who had the opportunity of humanity in his hands, and what is he doing? Well, you say, he is vacillating, he is moving from one foot to the other; he may at times seem to be rocking, but all that speaks of weakness — inability to come right down one hundred percent on one foot and make his full and final decision, trying to pass it over to someone else to make the decision, trying to shed the responsibility... but why? Why? — he represents a time server... "If you let this Man go, you are not Cæsar's friend." That is it! — Cæsar's favor, Cæsar's ability to further my worldly interest: "If I take this line, then all my worldly interests are in jeopardy; my prosperity in business, my good standing with the authorities, those who have it in their power to further my interest." He is a time server, and Pilate goes down in history as the man who handed Jesus over to be crucified from his own inability to make a decision in His favor. "Take Him, you take Him; I have said, I find no fault with Him, but you take Him and crucify Him." The weakness of what? — the awful tragedy of a divided heart, the main feature and factor in which is: "how this is going to effect me and my interest." That finds us out all the way along.

You see, that was the battle that Jesus Himself fought in the wilderness with the devil. The devil was saying how it would effect You if You go the way that You have decided to go, how it would effect You: "You want the kingdoms of this world, You take the line of compromise." — That was Pilate . . . what an exposure of what is in man.

Wanting to Have

We hurry on and come nearer, nearer to the center of the circle, we come to Judas Iscariot. You cannot use that word, that name now, can you, without a frown, almost a sneer. "Judas" — when you want to say the worst thing that you can say about anybody, you say: " — he is a Judas." It started somewhere in a very simple way, it started in a day when either the Lord Himself (Who knew what He was doing, mark you) or the other disciples, said to Judas: "Look here, people will give us gifts to help us along, we have to have somebody to look after the gifts. Judas, you, you have the bag."

A simple beginning, but what happened? Being in that position drew out something that was deep down in that humanity. Perhaps not even Judas knew it, but this drew it out. You know the end. A man who again goes beyond the point of return and recognizes at last that he has been betraying the Lord. Everything was put in his way of glory, the heavenly order; and there is nothing else to do but to take his own life.

What has been exposed? What is it in this humanity that is down there in the root of things and comes up and up if only given an opportunity?! I heard Dr. Campbell Morgan once say in preaching that we are capable of anything if only we have the opportunity for it. That is searching. What is come out? Covetousness, that is all. Wanting to have; and my friends, while you shrink from the name Judas, be careful, this is in us all, even in the work of the Lord. Covetousness to be recognized, to be given opportunities of service, wanting for ourselves even in the things of God. As disciples, the root may be there — this wanting to have, to make ourselves something. Covetousness, which the Word says is idolatry. The Cross will discover what is in us; it will bring it out. — Well, that is Judas.

A Man who did not Know Himself

Now let us come nearer still, perhaps to the innermost circle, Simon Peter. Simon Peter is a man who did not know himself and who thought so differently about himself from what was true: "I will never forsake Thee, I will go with Thee even unto death. Though all men forsake Thee, yet will I not. I will not," — "I will," — "I." Where did that begin? You have heard this before. Blinded by this ego, this selfhood, oh, Simon Peter, you do not know yourself, but the Cross is going to uncover you, find you out, and expose you and devastate

you. You will go out in despair of yourself and shed many tears. The Lord will have to send someone searching for you with a special message: "Go to My disciples and to Peter... I know what is happening there, I know where he is and what is happening."

Poor, poor Simon Peter. What was happening? Well, the Lord told Simon Peter what would happen, and Simon Peter did not understand it until afterwards. "Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat" — strip off that false covering of selfhood that covers. Really, Peter, what is there, you do not know... *sift you as wheat*.

Simon Peter found that the Cross is a very searching and a very devastating thing to any kind of self-confidence, self-sufficiency, self-interest, or anything of self. It is going to simply desolate that kind of humanity.

Men without Anything Left

Now I take just one other instance after He, Jesus, is crucified, after that part of the drama is completed. Two of them, two of His disciples, went on that day to Emmaus, a village. You know the story in Luke 24. As they talked sadly, this stranger drew near to them (their eyes were holden that they should not recognize Him) and He said: "What manner of conversation is this that you have as you walk, sad?" They replied: "Are you only a visitor to our city, have you only just arrived, have you not known what has been happening in the last few days?" Then the Lord inquired: "What things?" He is drawing them out — "What things?" They said: "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth. He was a Prophet mighty in Word and in deed. We hoped that it had been He that should redeem Israel, but our rulers crucified Him." In other words, they said, "Our hope is all gone, all our expectation is destroyed. We are men without anything left."

Then this stranger took the Old Testament (I do not think He had it in His hand: they knew it, they had it in their heads) and He started at the beginning and worked His way all through the Scriptures. And as He opened to them the Scriptures, their mouths opened, their eyes opened, and when they arrived... you know the end, they sat down to a meal, He took the bread, the loaf, and blessed it. Eyes were opened; they knew Him, and then He disappeared from their sight.

What has been disclosed? What has been exposed? This — you can have your head absolutely full of the Scriptures and know them up there, and they will never save you in the day of crisis. The very thing that is written by God for our salvation does not save us when the Cross is planted right at the heart of our lives; it is a crisis in which we collapse. That is a terrible thing. You can know all the Scriptures, and yet when it comes to the test of some tremendous experience, some devastating experience, all that we have read and heard and thought we knew is no good to us.

Of course, there is a lot more in this story than that, but this is my point — what a disclosure of the human heart. What an exposure of this other man, how he can be a disciple, how he can go about with the Lord for years, how he can know all that the Lord has said, and seen what the Lord has done and how he can have the teaching in his head and then when it comes to the real test of the man, he cannot stand up to it, he collapses. — We had hoped (with our Bible in our hands) we had hoped, and they are in despair.

Another Humanity Altogether

The devastation of that one humanity under every kind of test is essential to the Other Humanity which Christ is. How different *He Is — Another Humanity altogether*, Another kind of Man in Whom there is nothing of this at all, nothing of this. The apostle once said to the believers: "You have not so learned Christ;" in other words, "If you had learned Christ, you would not be doing that, you would not be like that."

Now let us get hold of the issue before we go further. What is it? Oh, it may not all come at once — it could not, this devastation; it is spread over a whole lifetime, but it has a beginning, mark you, a beginning; and this is the course of a truly spiritual life. You will mark spiritual progress and spiritual growth and spiritual maturity by this one thing: *how* little the individual thinks of themselves, *how* little they are in the picture, their own picture and other people's picture as themselves. Or shall I put it the other way: *how* much of Christ do you meet in them and not themselves. That is the test — *how* much the Cross has devastated them in their own natural life. It is the essential and inevitable way to spiritual fullness, to Christ, and the fullness of Christ, which is something altogether different from what we are.

The Tragedy of the Carry-Over of the Other Humanity

Well, now having said that, we are going further with this this morning. I want to take you over to that part of the New Testament which focuses this whole issue more than any other part; which brings into view on the one side, the exposure of the one kind of humanity and on the other side, the Other Humanity which the Christ is. I have often been asked the question, for example in Romans 7: "Is that the history of a 'born again' man or an unborn again man?" I have had the question asked me since I have been here, and I have proposed to postpone the answer until now.

"The first man is of the earth, earthy..." and so on. Is that an unconverted man, a man before he is born again, or is that a born again man? That is a born again man, make no mistake about it. Paul is writing to born again people in Corinth. He opens his letter with an address to the saints which are in Christ Jesus — saints by standing through faith in Christ Jesus, and all that is in those letters is addressed to Christians; but it is a horrible exposure of something about Christians. I confess to you I have more than once in my life in reading that First Letter to the Corinthians asked myself: "Were these men, these people, really born again? Can we classify them as Christians?" Yes, the address is "to the saints by standing through faith that are in Corinth."

The tragedy in Corinth was the tragedy of the carry-over of relics and remnants of the other humanity. There is something here of the New Humanity, but there has been a carry-over of the old in the Christian life; the result: confusion — confusion in judgment, confusion in behavior, confusion in relationships. And if you think that word is not justified, I want to remind you that they wrote to the Apostle Paul on one occasion asking him ten elementary questions about the Christian life, about what Christianity is. They were in confusion about the elementary things of Christianity.

I am not going to stay this week with all those questions, but there they are. There is confusion, terrible complications in Corinth. There is weakness — weakness in life, in a living testimony. There is shame, reproach. The apostle has to say some very strong and some very hard things to Christians because of a carry-over of the old humanity into a relationship with the New without the clean cut. Is that why the apostle, after his introduction in the First Letter says: "I made up my mind, I determined, I resolved, to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Oh, we are going to meet "*Christ crucified*" repeatedly through these two letters, at critical points in their spiritual life. "Christ crucified," Paul says, — "that is the foundation on which we are going to build, you Corinthians, you who have carried-over some of the old humanity into the realm of the New and find that the two things will not go together: — immediately there is confusion and defeat."

Well, here we are in these letters to the Corinthians, and these more than any other letters in the New Testament represent the battleground of the two humanities. Right there at the

beginning of the First Letter as a heading, this is carried right through. The battleground of the two humanities — that is with the Corinthians.

May I mark one thing before I go further. Paul came to this situation to deal with it, in Corinth, and said in doing so: "In coming to you, I made a definite, positive, conclusive resolve 'to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.'" What did he do when he said that? What does that mean? — "I am not coming to you people who are philosophically-minded and are so interested in philosophy, I am not coming to you with a new philosophy, I am not coming to you with a new religion, I am not coming to you with a new system of teaching. I am not coming to you with a new order and form and technique. I am coming with everything gathered up and focused in a Person, in a Man."

You see the force of that? It is forceful. In essence, Paul said, "No, I am not interested in any of these other things that you may be interested in. For me it is this Man, Christ Jesus, this different kind of Man and this Man Who is crucified to all the other kind of man: *crucified* to this world, *crucified* to old humanity, *crucified* to all these things that you think so much of, that are so important to you, *crucified* to the whole realm."

It is a Man, and a Man only, a kind of a Man, that is the point of this letter; all is focused, gathered into a Man. Now from that point onward, the whole thing develops. There is on the other side that man that they have tried to bring over and are still nursing here at Corinth, and there is on the other side this Other Man. You read right on and find: "If any man be in Christ, there is a New Creation, the old things have passed away; and behold all have become new." The great divide is at the Cross. Well, this is Corinth, and the old and New Humanity is the real battleground; and what a battleground it is.

If you are thinking objectively and historically, stop, stop at once; come over your two thousand years, bridge that gap, get away from geographical Corinth or historical Corinth, and come right here. We belong to that same humanity by nature; but by grace, we belong to Another Humanity. And this is where Christendom is all in confusion today and in defeat, so that we read in papers, Christianity has had its day, it is not counting, it really does not matter, it is no impact upon world conditions and situations, and so on. That is the conclusion of the natural man because of what he sees in Christendom.

We have to agree to a very large extent, even though we do know something else. Nevertheless, Christendom has got into that terrible plight today for this very reason — it does not understand the cleavage which the Cross of Jesus Christ has made between the two humanities. It does not understand that there is no bridge tolerated by God between these two. The Cross has cut right in between these two humanities; and as I was saying, it may not all happen at once, but through a lifetime, the Holy Spirit will be teaching us, *if* we are teachable, *if* we are sensitive, *if* we are walking in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit will be teaching us: "That is you, that is not Christ — (putting it in a phrase). That is you, that is your way of talking, that is your way of thinking, that is your way of going about, that is just you, that is not Christ."

Oh, it would take a long time; but, oh, it would be so profitable to study this Other Man as He walked in this world and see the principles which governed His life, which were all heavenly and all spiritual and made Him absolutely incalculable in this world.

The Dividing:

"he that is spiritual" and "the natural man"

We are now coming to Corinth, and we have not moved far into the letter until we are shown what belongs to the one side and what belongs to the Other. Oh, that Christendom had really had its eyes opened to chapter two of the First Letter to the Corinthians. Here we have two designations; here are the two humanities. One is the natural man, and let me say

again that is not necessarily the unborn again man. Corinth shows that and is used to show that. It stands through spiritual history to show the tragedy of a carry-over from one humanity to Another in not allowing the great transition to be clear cut. That is what is here, and so in Corinthians we have the dividing: we have "he that is spiritual" and "the natural man," and then there opens up the characteristics of each.

When we launch out into the characteristics at Corinth, we come almost immediately on this: personality complexes — that is "the natural man." "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Peter, and I am of Christ." You tell me that we are not capable of that — making even a servant of God, a greatly used servant of God and a servant of God who is a saintly man, making him the focal point, the pivot around whom we circle — his way of teaching that appeals to me, his interpretation, his personality. The apostle of the Holy Spirit puts that sort of thing in the category of the natural man because the effect of that is the divisiveness in the Body of Christ — that is what the letter opens up: divisiveness in the Body of Christ. Oh, do not talk about personalities; they may have been used to your help; you may owe a lot to the Lord because of them, but do not be constantly bringing them into view. Paul will argue back and say: "Who is Paul, who is Apollos, who is Peter? — Only servants of God through whom you believed!" Let the instrument recede into the background, and let Christ come to the fore; be occupied with Him, talk about the Lord Jesus.

Perhaps there is a lot of this in a conference like this — this man's name and that man's name and this teacher and that teacher. We have our preferences and attachments, but we must drop the whole thing. Paul is saying nothing but "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." We must drop all that personality complex business which in the development only means division in the Body of Christ, and division is weakness and defeat. We must restrain from this sort of thing, for this is moving along the wrong line. This is moving from the outside — trying to gather around personalities and calling that "unity" instead of dealing with it from the inside; and after all, if only, if only we saw Jesus Christ, we would see what the Church is.

Dear friends, the Church of Jesus Christ is not an "it." It is not a system of teaching. It is not something ecclesiastical. It is not an institution. (Oh, I thank God for the day when He showed me this.) *The Church is a Person and That Person is Jesus Christ in corporate expression.*

We must revise our mentality when we talk about the Church, the Body of Christ. What are you talking about? — Not an *it*, a something, as though it were a something in itself, and a teaching in itself. No, it is this Man with a family, with children, brothers and sisters, begotten of God. That is the Church.

Oh, how much ecclesiasticism we can have without the family life, but the Church after all, when you come to the final Word, is just the measure of Christ that there is in those who make it up — "till we all attain unto... the measure... of Christ" — every one of us. That is the Body of Christ. That is the Church.

Now I am going to close this morning. We have seen the very first thing that you meet at Corinth is this carry-over of an old humanity in personality complexities, and the Lord says "No" and the apostle says: "No... only 'Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.'" The Lord search our hearts concerning these two humanities. Let us pray...

Now, Lord, this can very quickly and very easily be all covered over in the next moments when we go away and have to think back as to what it was about in that hour. Spare that; save us from that. Lord, we are not wanting to impose upon Thy people any kind of suppression, but we do pray that the Holy Spirit will solemnize our hearts in the presence of such great issues in the greatest issue of all time and eternity. Give us quiet meditation,

prayerful meditation in our hearts to see where we are, where we are in this whole Bible. So help us, God, for Thy Son's sake, Amen.

Chapter 3 – Battleground of the Two Humanities

Lord, Thou knowest that this very act of prayer as we pause at this point is our acknowledgement and confession that we cannot go on without Thee, and we have no wish to do so. Lord, for the speaking of Thy truth, for the reception, understanding, and obedience, we need Thee; we cannot do without Thee. We rest back upon Thy faithfulness, Thy mercy, Thy grace, and we believe that trusting in Thee, Thou wilt not fail us; and we shall come through by the help of God, so be it. And seeing that it is so, the glory will be Thine alone through our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

We in these hours are being occupied with the climax of humanity as represented in the appearing in this world of God's Son in human form, and we have reached the point in these meditations where we are at present occupied with the battleground of the two humanities, that battleground being particularly focused in the two letters to the Corinthians; that is their place in the sovereign ordering of God. Other letters have particular aspects, but here in Corinthians we find the focal point of the great controversy between the old and the New, the first Adam and the last *Adam*, the one humanity and the *Other*.

Let me say here before we proceed that our consideration may seem to be very much of a destructive character, hard, exacting, not pleasant at all to our old humanity. These letters are drastic; and as we have said, devastating to the old humanity; and the apostle is really hitting very hard, saying some very strong things — while in love, yet being very faithful. I do want to very definitely point this out that the apostle took that attitude and handled the situation as strongly, forcefully, radically as he did, not because he wanted to hurt anybody, not just because he did not agree with these people, but because he had seen — *he had devastatingly seen the Lord Jesus in Glory*. This man's whole life and ministry were actuated by what he called "the heavenly vision," and *he had seen the greatness, the immensity of the significance of Jesus Christ in the whole economy of God in this universe*.

Beyond Paul's power to explain and express (for he exhausted all language in his attempt to do so), Jesus Christ for him had appeared and was continually in his heart being revealed in such magnitudes as to make him feel that anything that gets in the way of our attaining must be ruthlessly dealt with. He said: "Brethren, I have not attained, I am not already complete, I press toward the mark, the prize of the on-high calling." What was it? —

Utter conformity to the image of God's Son —

*the real apprehension in his own experience of
the wonder and glory of Jesus Christ —*

*to attain unto that was the all-consuming object
and passion of his life because he had seen!*

Now my point this morning is not intended to be destructive and negative and only against. If we are seemingly being very hard on this old man, it is with the positive always in view; it is unto something — unto the image of God's Son. Now having said that, let us proceed with this battleground of the two humanities as gathered into these two letters to the Corinthians which we will only be able to touch so lightly and so imperfectly this week, but I think sufficiently to indicate a great deal more which you will grasp.

The Expression of Jesus Christ

So here we are in the midst of the whole business of the New Testament, the transition from one humanity to Another and that where Christians are concerned. You must remember these letters were written to a local assembly, and while individuals in the

assembly are picked out and pinpointed and spoken straightly to about their conduct, their behavior, their manner of life, it is the assembly that the apostle is concerned with and what a local assembly should be as an expression of Jesus Christ. That is the only object for the existence of any local assembly — the expression of Jesus Christ. The apostle was concerned with that nucleus in Corinth of the whole Body of Christ, and I think that it is very impressive that down through twenty centuries in ever widening circles from nation to nation, country to country, to the farthest bounds of this earth, the ministry to the Corinthians has expanded and today it is dealing with us. A local assembly ought to take on that character and not just be a localized thing. It ought to have a universal significance, to say something. Oh, that every local company of the Lord's people said something for all time and for all eternity and to all the world as to the meaning of Jesus Christ!

A local church is intended to have the values of Jesus Christ, which are never capable of being just localized. They must — not by their effort, organization, machinery, or anything of that kind, but because they are that — they must have an expansive influence beyond themselves and beyond their own time: spiritual values. Now I want to get to this matter of how that is reached and what it is that makes the Lord's people like that, both individually and collectively.

You see, the heart of this whole matter is not a system, either of teaching or of practice. It is not an ecclesiasticism: that is only another word for church order. It is not that or any of the things which Christianity has become, not all the accretions and the developments and the forms, but the heart of this whole thing is the Person — the Person of a Man with a capital M. Manhood is God's great thought from creation. He has put His supreme value upon this form of creation — humanity — and bound up all His interest with a kind of humanity that He wants to possess to represent Him. "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." What is an image, what is a likeness? a representation. God said: "Our image, Our likeness, a representation of Us." But I am afraid the representation is more or less very poor at Corinth. God expressing Himself in a species called humanity — to that He has committed Himself and all His interests; and if you want to know really what the Holy Spirit's coming and operation is for, it is just that — To Get Hold Of A Mankind After This One Man.

So it is a Person; always focus your eyes on the Person, keep your eyes on the Person. The New Testament is all about that. It is always the Person, and this Person is repeatedly saying and affirming: "*I Am.*" Whatever the capacity, Shepherd or Door or Vine, these are only aspects of His Person, of what He is, "*I Am.*" He has stepped right into the arena of history and is the only One Who is allowed to do it, to say: "*I Am.*" Tremendous things are said concerning this, and God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness not by, but in a Man of His Own choice. The judgment of this whole world is going to be on the ground of Christ. Not what sins you have committed, more or less what you might call small or big. No, that is not the ground of judgment. The ground of judgment is where do you stand in relation to Jesus Christ, and how much of Him is there. He will judge the world in the Man. Now think about that. It is the Person which we must keep all the time in view as we proceed!

This Man is utterly and absolutely different from the whole race of humanity; hence, as we have seen, because of that immense difference, there has got to be the undoing of the one in order to make room for the Other. God's full and utter beginning all over again is with this Man. You notice that this implies or indicates that at the time the Lord Jesus came into this world, God had considered and decided that the human race had become big enough and large enough to wind it all up. Here is this great multitude, Jews and Gentiles, filling the world that then was, and it was enough to represent the whole world, a race, a great race. Then the Lord God said: "Finish and We will start with One Man all over again, One Man, the

last Adam, a New Race." The whole humanity is set aside and a New Race brought in by its first Man, "the Firstborn among many brethren."

Here in these letters to the Corinthians, as we have pointed out, we see the tragedy that can come about amongst Christians, Christians as individuals and Christians as a company. The tragedy is because of this one thing, because of a carry-over of that old rejected and discredited humanity into the realm of the New. This is a terrible tragedy. See, the Spirit of God has caused this to be written in Corinthians. It is unpleasant reading, and I do not like reading a lot of this letter. When I read what is here, when I read about what they are doing in this Christian assembly, that there is such a thing as incest in a Christian assembly (and all the other things, some of which we shall touch upon); when I read, I think — what an awful tragedy amongst Christians.

You are not going to tell me that belongs to Corinth two thousand years ago alone. Are we not meeting this in Christian companies continually, adultery and what not? It is a terrible tragedy when you ignore that great gap that God has placed by the Cross between one humanity and Another, when you do not recognize how utter is that cleavage which the Cross has made. When you bypass the Cross in this matter of human life, you are in the way of tragedy, the tragedy of your whole spiritual life and testimony. This is very testing. The Cross is more than a teaching, a doctrine — it is a terrible setting forth of the great thing that God has done and is after; though, on the other hand, a very glorious setting forth, for here is the New Man introduced. And we must keep Him in view even while we speak about this tragedy, and the battleground of these two humanities.

The Battleground is between Two Men: "the Natural Man" and "He that is Spiritual"

Now we must spend a little while getting our position, as is represented by this First Letter to the Corinthians in particular. Their position (and what might be our position) is undoubtedly the position of many Christians today. What is the position in which the apostle, or the Holy Spirit through the apostle, puts the Corinthians? I wonder if you have noticed that in this First Letter to the Corinthians, Israel's history in the wilderness is mentioned fourteen times, as it is recorded in Exodus to Deuteronomy, and is pinpointed in a very particular way. Here the Corinthians are shown to be in that period between Egypt and the land. That is their position spiritually; that is, they are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and have come out under its covering. The Corinthians are there, and the apostle takes note of that as he introduces the letter unto the "saints." Now you revise, if necessary, your mentality about that word "saints;" it simply means the "separated ones," those who have come out unto God. That is all! That is a saint, one who has come out to God, been separated, redeemed by precious blood, positionally separated and out. How? They are redeemed by precious blood.

In First Corinthians, chapter ten, Paul says: "I would have you know, brethren, that all our fathers were baptized into Moses in the cloud, and in the sea." Baptized — the Corinthians have been baptized and had come under the regime of the Spirit, the Cloud, the regime of the Holy Spirit. These are Christians positionally, if not conditionally. Positionally they are separated; they are baptized, but they are in the wilderness as we find them here in Corinth. They are Christians positionally, they are under the regime of the Holy Spirit, the era of the Spirit; they are in the Kingdom of God, and if the Kingdom of God means the Sovereign rule of God, as it does!, they are under the Sovereign rule of God. They are positionally in the Kingdom of God — not in the general sense of Divine Sovereignty of the Universe, but in a more particular sense of Divine Sovereignty. Yes, they are all that, and they are experiencing supernatural activities of God; objectively supernatural things are happening to them.

Paul says: "Corinth, you come behind in no spiritual gift." All the gifts are there — "supernaturals." (Nestle's *Greek Interlinear*). Later, the apostle in answering one of the ten questions that they present to him says: "Now concerning the spirituals...." Now let us move slowly, carefully, for these are all truths that were Israel's while they were in the wilderness between Egypt and the land. Yet, with all that was true of the Corinthians, the apostle had to gird himself up and gather himself together and make one positive resolution. To these people with all this, he said: "I determined, I have made up my mind, to know nothing amongst you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." To Christians with all this, redeemed by the precious blood, positionally separated unto God, within the Sovereign rule of His Kingship and His Kingdom, and objectively knowing much of His sovereign, supernatural activities in their history — to them the apostle has to say this categorical thing: "To you I have made up my mind, I resolved, I determined, that amongst you it shall be nothing but *Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*" What is all this about? It is this cleavage in chapter two between what the apostle designates "the natural man" and "he that is spiritual;" and the battle is between the two. That is the battleground, between these two men.

I wonder if you people in this country ever have time to sit down and think. I know your tremendous activity, but I wonder if you ever have time to just sit down and think. Now I would recommend something to you, for your own need, for your own quiet time, not for public reading or anything like that, but I would recommend to you that translation of the New Testament in *The Amplified Bible*. If you remember, the translators of *The Amplified Bible* state in their introduction: "Our object is to get inside of the original language which is so much richer than the English and has so many shades of meaning that no English words can convey and give that amplification which is true to the sense and meaning of the original language. It takes a lot of words and a lot of shades to explain the Greek there, the original language, and so we have given the amplification which is true to the sense of the original language." (A paraphrase of the Amplified statement) Now you will need a lot of patience to read that, but if you would sit down with that Bible, you would be searched and illuminated as you think your way through clause after clause of your New Testament.

Now, why am I saying all this? Because I look at Christians today, and I think many have not read their New Testament. My word, look at Christendom! Here (as in the Corinthian letter) there is an utter contradiction; they are not seeing, yet they hold this New Testament as their charter.

Now, why is this? The answer is in a phrase. When Paul wrote this First Letter to the Corinthians speaking about the condition there, he pinpointed and said: "When you do so and so, are ye not 'as men'? You say, 'Must I not be as men?'" No, not after a certain humanity, that man is not allowed in here to be "a man." The Cross has stripped him of that manhood, "...you have put off (and the Greek language again is) you have taken off the clothes; you have put off the old man and his doings and have put on the New Man," and so there is a manhood that is not allowed in here at all.

"Are ye not as men?" Paul says: "You are talking like men, as men talk; behaving as men behave; and it is not allowed, that kind of humanity is not allowed." That man is an intrusion, and he is under a Divinely imposed embargo; and this second chapter indicates the embargo. "The natural man" — that is the man, and "he cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them." Would to God that Christendom would imbibe that. This natural man is an intrusion into the place where he has no standing with God; it is an assumption which has led to a presumption. It is presumption for us to come into this realm of the New Humanity with ourselves, to bring ourselves in in any way. You see the strength of this natural man is shown here in this chapter two, and I am keeping close to

the text although I do not quote the actual wording. It is the truth that is here: the strength of the natural man in his proceeding is of himself. The apostle is talking about power, and these Corinthians had a great idea of power-politics. Power! Yes, power is all right if it is the power of God; but their idea of power was the world's idea of power, and their power was of themselves which meant that it was of the world.

Now we bring in the Other Man, and what is the Other Man saying about this? Go back to John 5 where He says: "The Son can do nothing out from Himself" — the Son of God can do nothing out from Himself. And this great servant Paul, who wrote the Corinthian letter, said: "Of mine own self, I can do nothing; when I am weak, then I am strong; I glory in my weakness that the power of God, Christ, may encamp upon me."

The strength of the power of this old creation, this old humanity, is utterly undercut in the New Humanity. And, whether you have reached it yet or not, if the Spirit of God gets hold of you — and you want Him to, perhaps you pray that He will — but let me tell you, you are in for something; if He really gets hold of you, the day is coming when you will feel utterly helpless in yourself. You are at the end of all your ability for anything in yourself, and you will come to the place where you will say: "Lord, if you don't..., this is the end." All this power idea for which the first Adam made his bid — to be as God, powerful in himself — all that has been undercut in the New Man, "Christ crucified."

Power? dear friends, keep the positive in view that the power be of God. Unto these Corinthians, the apostle states: "I was amongst you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." Why? He answers the why — "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

The Way the Old Humanity does it: A Realm that is Not Allowed

Wisdom is another great word in this second chapter; it speaks of the wisdom of this world, the wisdom of men, (and that quest for wisdom, wisdom and their philosophers, that was almost lust with the Greeks and with the Corinthians). "Wisdom" is "the power to judge, to discriminate, to determine, and to decide;" but the wisdom in their procedure was of themselves in Corinth. Their wisdom was their own and the wisdom of this world.

There is something here that I confess I do not understand, something beyond me. To this Corinthian assembly, the apostle comes down on one of the other points of this carry-over. If any of you have a matter, do not ask a worldly man with worldly wisdom to decide your affair; that is the way the old humanity does it. Now you in Corinth ought as an assembly in the New Humanity in Christ to have an ability that this world has not got in the matter of wisdom and judgment. And here is the thing that I do not understand; it is this phrase: "Do you not know that we shall judge angels?" Have you thought about that? Oh, I thought they were superior beings to ourselves; obeying God in everything, but the time is coming, the apostle says, "when we shall sit in judgment upon angels." We shall judge angels, and he uses that here to show that there is Another Kind of Wisdom altogether from the wisdom of the best in the old humanity — Wisdom he says which is not "of this world," for in Christ He "is made unto us" the Wisdom of God.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, and, therefore, the spiritual man ought to have the power of judgment, discrimination, discernment, and understanding that even a magistrate in this world has not got. Yes, this humanity in the New Man is very different! However, the Corinthians brought in this old humanity, their worldly wisdom, for their driving force was of their own souls in Corinth. It was soul force, and that is the principle of this world. Soul force — that is something to dwell upon. Soul force — have we not in this last part of the age seen what that can do?! Yes, we have seen it extended to literally terrible, frightening proportions, soul force in the nations. That soul force is with us

all, but I am not going to start on soul and spirit. I am beginning to feel that there is a little too much being said about that. There was a time when it had a real point, it has that today; but it has become a subject, a fascinating subject, and we want to be very careful not to be taken up with subjects. But here is the fact that at Corinth, the driving force was soul force; it was not the force of the Spirit. These people were clever people, they were intellectual people, they were efficient people; but it was in a realm that is not allowed.

Do not make too much of human intellectualism. I think one of the most deadening things today is theology as such; I think that is where Christendom has gone astray, intellectualism in the realm of Divine things. The power of the brain has made an awful mess in Christendom. Yes, they were intellectual with the philosophy of the Greeks. They were clever, they were efficient; but this letter is saying, that is out — that kind of wisdom is not allowed in here. There is Another Kind of Knowledge here, and how utter the apostle is in this matter when he says: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, they are spiritually discerned" by the spiritual; that is the spiritual man — the man of the Spirit. And he says: "As it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

I suppose you at once would think that that must be after this life — what He has prepared for us afterwards. Oh, I do not believe that; I believe that begins now. It is for us now. The things that the eye, the natural eye, the old human eye, have never seen and never can see, the things of the Spirit that have never entered into the natural heart, the old humanity heart, "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit:" "hath revealed" — "hath." That is not hereafter: "hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." You are standing in the good of that — the open heaven, the Anointing Spirit, and God revealing His Son in us; and in so doing He is devastating us, but He is also opening a new vista entirely of possibilities, of wonder. It is like that all the time in our going on. Can you say that is going on in you? Yes, I am seeing in my heart more and more of His Son, not the truth as a theory but His Son; and seeing His Son is undoing a lot of my own conceptions and my ideas and my valuations. It is just making them shrivel up; I see Him to be an entirely New Conception, and in Him I have a new conception of the Church.

The Church is a Person Expressed in Mankind

I must reiterate that the Church is not a thing; it is not an institution; it is not a denomination, nor is it all denominations put together. It is not anything like that. The Church is a Person expressed in mankind, expressed in human life. The apostles never went anywhere with the preconceived idea: "We will have a church here; we will set up a church here; we will form a church here." No, they went and preached Jesus Christ; and when people saw God they began to see Jesus Christ, He became the Cohesive Power drawing together, and if they were really on that ground, what did they meet? They met Jesus Christ. They met Jesus Christ — that is the Church, and there is no other Church in the New Testament.

Well, it comes back to this — the natural man cannot see and is debarred from the things of the Spirit, "but he that is spiritual judgeth all things." He that is spiritual has this New spiritual capacity; and it is, as this letter teaches, the increase of that spiritual capacity, of spiritual measure, which is the thing that is the ground of appeal to these people in Corinth. Paul says: "While you talk 'as men,' while you behave 'as men,' are you not babes?" And as in Corinth, so today, we are to recognize that though that natural man should be the greatest brain that has ever been produced — compassing all the bodies celestial and terrestrial, this "nuclear-age" man developed to the dimensions of humanity today — though he be a man like that, he cannot know, he cannot see, the things of the Spirit of

God. There is a limit on the natural man. That is how it is, but there is a world, a realm, open to the spiritual man of the New Humanity which is beyond anything else of which the old humanity is capable.

Corinthian Questions: The Enunciation of a Principle

Now from that point, we begin on these things about which the Corinthians wrote to Paul. At some time they sent a letter to him with a whole list of questions, and I am not going to try to answer them all; but I want you to note one thing — how did Paul really answer all of those questions? He did answer them, and while he said some things about some of these matters, giving advice and discussing the thing with them, he did not answer them in the form of something that you could put into a book as a book of regulations, as a book of laws. He did not just write a blue print to answer, for example: "Should a woman who has become a Christian and has a non-Christian husband, leave him?" Or the other way: "Should a man who has become a Christian and his wife has not accepted the Lord, should he leave her?" "Should a slave who has become a Christian, give up his position as a slave and try to be free?" "Should we refuse to eat meat that has been sold in a market, but previously offered to an idol?"

There are a lot of questions like that in the letter, and evidently there had been one question about what is today called *charismatic*, "spiritual gifts." Paul has some things to say about this, but do you feel that he is conclusive in the things that he says? I do not think so. Paul never intended that here, and he never intended to be another Moses writing ten commandments over against ten questions. He had a far better way of answering them than that, if only they would recognize it. In all these things, what was his real way of approach and answer? — the enunciation of a principle. If only you can get hold of the principle, you have got the answers. Please get this, whatever you forget, please get a hold of this: the answer to it all is a principle.

Now I am coming down to that question of gifts, tongues, and so on. It was a problem, a question, at Corinth. Paul had been asked something about it, and so he uses a part of his letter and says: "Now concerning the spirituals...." He says some things about tongues, apparently quite a bit about tongues; but as far as I can see he does not finally answer the question on tongues. However, he does enunciate a principle about it and all the gifts, and he answers it in this way, this is the effect of it, this is really the answer: on the one hand, none of these things — none of the gifts of God, are ends in themselves. If you draw a circle around either one or all of them and say — this is the "know-all and the end-all," you are going to come to an impasse, sooner or later. You are going to find that you are held up, and your spiritual maturity is arrested.

Brethren, however supernatural and precious it might be, beware of an experience becoming the beginning and the end. None of these things are ends in themselves, and the apostle says about this particular thing, and about gifts as a whole as he deals with them, that this is the principle concerning them: — *Are They Leading To A Greater Measure Of Christ?*

In this letter, the apostle uses a word which I am sorry that the translators have left out and put another one in its place. The word they have used is "edification," and, of course, if you give a very strict explanation or definition of the Greek word for "edification," you will get the true meaning of the apostle's thought. What Paul did say and mean was "for building up." For building up what? — *The increase of Jesus Christ.* Are these things ends in themselves, wonderful as they may be? *Are they leading on to a greater measure of Jesus Christ? Are they building up the Body of Christ?* That is the challenge of every gift: How does it minister and effect an increase of Jesus Christ?!

Now they had every one of these things at Corinth and over against them was this low moral level: this poor spiritual standard. Here at Corinth they had the gifts and came behind in no spiritual gift, but where is Christ, where is the increase of Christ? Paul had to say: "I have to speak to you as babes." What the Lord looks for, what must be, is the increase of the measure of the fullness of Jesus Christ. The question is, after all, how much of Christ is in the individual, in the assembly? How much of Christ, and not the obsession with things even though they be the supernaturals, but the captivation of Jesus Christ — *because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained*;... It must be just the Lord, the kind of Man that He is, the kind of Humanity that He is.

Conformative to His Son

Some of you, and some of us, have gone through deep, deep waters, dark waters under the Hand of God. We have cried out and asked, "Why should this come to me, Lord? Does this come to other Christians? Why?" — Well, I have only one answer: "He is working all things out to the counsel of His own will" — conformative to His Son. And on the one side, the side of the Cross, this is getting rid of something, breaking down something, emptying you of something; you were too full, you had to be emptied on the other side. You may not see it, but Heaven knows a bit more of the Lord Jesus in your softness, in your patience, in your sympathy, in your understanding, in your heart going out for others and for the Lord. And I suppose I ought to say that the most perilous thing that the Lord could allow for us is for us to know how good we are getting. Is that not true? I will have something more to say about that later on. Shall we close...

Our Lord, there is so much here; it does need Thy covering, and Thy handling, Thy protection. It will need grace in Thy dear people, much grace. Give them that grace to receive, to understand. Protect us all as to just how much it is Christ, not even, not even Christian things. He is our Object and Goal. Be it so for Thy Name's sake, Amen.

Chapter 4 - The All-Governing and Dominating Vision: The Seeing of Jesus our Lord

Lord, we have to appeal to Thee again for Thy compassion. What a pathetic thing it would be if we tried to do heavenly work with earthly means; Divine work in our own human strength. And that is just where we are now. We need Thy sympathy, Thy compassion, for our speaking and our hearing will really profit us nothing, will have no eternal value. O Lord, help us with Thy Divine help at this time that we may speak under the anointing and with the unction of the Holy Spirit; and also in the same way hear. Anoint our ears, anoint our ears, and give us a hearing that is not just our natural hearing that we may this morning by the power of the Holy Spirit hear the voice of the Son of God and live. Grant us this mercy for Thine Own Name and Glory's sake, Amen.

We have been occupied in these morning hours with the great transition from an old discredited humanity as in Adam to a New accredited Humanity in Christ. Our first attention was with the exposure and the devastation of that discredited humanity as we saw it representatively gathered around the Cross of the Lord Jesus in Caiaphas, Pilate, Judas Iscariot, Peter, and the two on the Emmaus Road. Then we saw what a devastation the Cross was or an exposure of the old humanity at its highest, at its best; and there could have been nothing worse when we were finished. Then we went on to the battleground of the two humanities as we have it in the two letters to the Corinthians: on the one side, "the natural man" which is the old humanity; on the other side, "the spiritual man," the New.

We stood and did little more than look into those letters in a general way, pinpointing a few things in the letters where the carry-over of the old to the New is shown, the conflict being between the natural man and the spiritual man or that which is natural and that which is spiritual, the natural touching so many things, even the most sacred things. The things of the Spirit touched by the hand of the natural man and taken up and used for the natural man's gratification and glory. That is what is in the First Letter to the Corinthians.

There is much more detail, with which we are not going to deal; we have only touched it in order to indicate something. I trust that you have seen the indication of how dangerous it is and with what tragic consequences the touch of the natural man on spiritual things can be. We brought out that most terrible warning, the warning to Christians as in Corinth: to "born again" people called "saints," separated unto God, came that terrible warning where Israel's tragedy in the wilderness is taken as the ground of the warning. They perished in the wilderness, and the apostle uses that to warn the Corinthians that the battle can be lost in the wilderness if there is any compromise between the natural and the Spiritual. If you are still in Egypt, while being geographically so to speak out of Egypt but Egypt not being spiritually out of you, then you are positionally where the Corinthians were.

Now that is all the negative side, however we came yesterday morning to point out that the answer the apostle gave concerning the whole compass of things in the First Letter, the answer he gave to the ten questions raised by the Corinthians in a letter to him, was not in a code of rules and laws like the Mosaic, but in principles. And all the principles gathered into one principle which amounted to this: how much of Christ is in this? How much of Christ is in your divisions? "Is Christ divided?"

Paul, pinpointing the whole question of division, said: "Is Christ divided? Were you baptized into Paul?" Christ is the principle of solving that problem of divisions and all the other matters which I am not going to reiterate now. The answer he gave to the solving of these difficulties is focusing on Christ. The answer he gave them was how much does this minister Christ? How much does this represent of Christ? Everything is tested from that standpoint, judged and settled. Paul said these things are answered by principle and the principle is Christ.

"Have I Not Seen Jesus our Lord?"

Now having come past that, with all there is left in the letters, we come onto the positive side. I want you just to look at one or two fragments from the First Letter to the Corinthians. It is only a fragment found in chapter nine at verse one: "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" It is that clause that I want you to take hold of and hold for a moment — "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?"

And now over to Second Corinthians, chapter four, verse four: "In whom the god of this age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them." And in verse six: "Seeing it is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, Who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

"Have I Not Seen Jesus Our Lord?"

"God has shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Again I would like to add another fragment; this time from the Letter to the Galatians, chapter one, verse fifteen. It is in a rather large section, but I would like to lift out just a fragment, "But when it was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the nations:" — It was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in me.

"Have I Not Seen Jesus Our Lord?"

Of course, the immediate context of those words is the apostle authenticating his apostleship and answering those who said that he was not an authentic apostle because he was not one of the twelve. That is connected with that charge, but it has a very much larger and more comprehensive context than that, as you see from these other verses and many more like them. His answer to them: "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." God, the same God Who said in the beginning, "Let light be, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" which means, in the Person of Jesus Christ.

The Seeing of Jesus our Lord

What we are going to be occupied with this morning is this all-governing, all-dominating vision of Jesus Christ. This brings in four of the greatest matters with which we can have to do. The seeing of Jesus — how comprehensive and revolutionary it is! These four things are major things. Firstly: The place and destiny of man in the economy of God. That comes in with a seeing of Jesus our Lord.

I am glad the apostle added that last clause, "our Lord," and I would like to point out that in the New Testament, the name "Jesus" by itself is only used when it relates to His pre-resurrection life. If the name "Jesus" is used alone, you will find that the context is of His pre-resurrection life. However, after the resurrection, the apostles never called Him "Jesus" alone; they always linked on our Lord, our Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us note "Jesus," yes; but "our Lord" and His Lordship came into view after His resurrection and ascension. Right there on the Damascus Road, "and he said, 'Who art Thou, Lord?'" — "I Am Jesus." He knew it was Jesus. "Lord, (not, 'Jesus, what will You have me to do?' but) Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The very beginning of a revolution of a transition from knowing after the flesh to knowing after the Spirit. All that is parenthetical. Let us go on.

The four magnitudes which come in with a true Spiritual seeing of Jesus are:

The Place And Destiny Of Man In The Economy Of God

The Nature And Dynamic Of Ministry In This Dispensation

The Nature And Purpose Of The Church Now And In After-Ages

The Immense Significance In That Three-fold Context Of Jesus Christ Crucified, Risen, and Exalted

These are four very big things, and they are all comprehended by "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" — "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me;" and when He revealed His Son in me, this is what I began to see. That is what the apostle is saying: "This is what I began to see." He does not tabulate these things like that, but I have just taken these four magnitudes as the content and substance of the New Testament.

This is where we begin; firstly the seeing of Jesus our Lord or God revealing His Son *in us*, illuminating, unveiling, the place and destiny of man in the Divine Economy. I must say here (though it might get me onto controversial ground) I am a firm believer that the Apostle Paul had a very real hand in the writing of the Letter to the Hebrews. Whether he actually wrote it or dictated it, I am certain that Paul had a very definite and direct influence, to say the least, upon the writing of the Letter to the Hebrews; and you will recognize it in what I am going to say. It is there; it comes out of that.

Paul, from the beginning in his First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter fifteen, takes up man from his inception. He says, "The first man, Adam." It starts with man; it goes right back to the beginning of humanity, mankind, and he follows right through mankind on the battleground of the two humanities until he reaches the point of man glorified. How marvelous that chapter is. I have stood back from that chapter many times, and said, "How did any mortal man know that?" It could only be because he had seen Jesus Christ. That is the only answer: —

A New Man in Christ

"There are bodies terrestrial, and there are bodies celestial. There are bodies earthy and there are bodies heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly." Here Paul describes something of the nature of this Heavenly Body, this Heavenly physical Body, this glorified Manhood. This is an amazing unveiling of the destiny of man in the economy of God.

So Paul takes up manhood first in Adam, and then by the Cross he smites that race in Adam, discredits it, rejects it, and puts it aside, and starts with the New Man, "The last Adam:" "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation," — the old humanity past, all is New. We have the whole history of man in this letter, right from his inception in the heart of God, his inception in the creation of the first Adam and his rejection in this letter; and then we have man created in the New Man, Christ.

Oh, what a Man this is in glory. In this we groan! But what is the groaning about? Oh, for that for which I was created; which God meant for me. In this we groan waiting, "waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body," the putting on of our New Man. "When this corruptible will have put on incorruption." My, do you not groan for that? Incorruption, this mortal dying "will have put on immortality," eternally living. Now how did Paul get all that? "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me."

Paul said: "God has repeated His Divine fiat in me. Over all the world in chaos and darkness God said, 'Let light be — and there was light,' a fiat of God, and He has done that in me. God has repeated and said, In this darkened humanity, 'Let light be'; and when He said that, I — in that Light — saw His Son and in His Son I saw all that God intended and intends for mankind" — man's destiny in the economy of God.

All that is in chapter fifteen, and Paul tells us out of this seeing that the world to come is going to be entirely subjected to this Man and this Humanity. As I was saying, this is Hebrews two: "For Thou madest Him in order to have dominion over the works of Thy hand. Thou has put all things in Thine economy and intention under His feet," but we do not see that true of the old humanity. It is discredited, it is lost, it has lost that kingdom.

But we see Jesus, we see Jesus the Representative Man of this New Humanity, the Inclusive Man, the Last Adam of this Humanity, we see Him crowned with glory and honor. That is the destiny of man in the intention of God. That is what Paul is saying here by the Spirit.

He Must: He Must Have: He Will Have!

Paul shows us in these letters to the Corinthians and by his influence, at least, in the Letter to the Hebrews, he shows us God's intense interest in man and God's infinite patience and perseverance and pains with man through history. God never, never wiped out any mankind until it had finally gone beyond the point of no return where mankind said, "We will not, we will not," finally "We will not" — that was Noah's day. Noah — a preacher of righteousness, and the effect in them was: "We will not." So God said, "The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." God never did anything like that until *the cup of iniquity* was full to overflowing, and there was no hope because of man's settled determination not to have the revealed will of God.

Apart from that, look at the infinite pains and patience and perseverance of God. Oh, how marvelous is God in His Sovereignty. I think God chose the Jewish race because it was going to extend Him to the fullness of His patience; and it did. God is marvelous in His Sovereignty, sometimes I think that He chose it for no other purpose than just to show what mercy He has. Well, that would take us into another part of First Corinthians: "God hath chosen the foolish things... the weak things... the ignoble things... that are not." We see what patience, what long-suffering, what pains, what perseverance is shown by the apostle on the part of God with mankind because God has set such store by this kind of creation; and if God should never have a humanity like that at the end, then God is defeated utterly and He is not God, the God of the Bible. He must — He must, and He will have a humanity that His heart is set upon.

Moreover, the apostle shows here by the Spirit, that all God's dealings with His Own children (and the terms are family terms: His Own children, His Own family) he shows that all God's dealings with His Own children and family had this end in view — the transition unto the glory, bringing many sons to glory, getting many sons to glory. But we must link with that: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked or reprov'd of Him. Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth. He scourgeth every son that He places by Him." That wonderful chapter in Hebrews 12 about God's dealings with His children, His family, showing that "no chastening (child-training) for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous" — for the present, grievous.

You and I know something about that. But "afterward," there is an "afterward;" and it is that "afterward" that God is working toward in His dealings with us, difficult as they may be. We will come to that again, and I do not know whether we will get to it this morning, but here is the principle. Oh!! God is not against us when we are having a hard time. The devil

says He is. Have a bad time, and there is at once a little demon at your ear accusing God, maligning God, trying to get a twist in your mind that questions God, trying to get you right back into the garden again, "Hath God said?" trying to get you onto the old Adam ground again. Oh, brethren, I can say this more easily than I can go through it, and so can you hear it more easily than you can go through it, but there is that "afterward." What afterward? The end of First Corinthians, chapter fifteen. Oh, yes, all this, "But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." All His dealings with us are governed by this great destiny for which He has made us and called us.

Destined For Sonship

Now all this the apostle shows, all this is represented by the perfected Man in glory, and all this is not only represented by Him there as the ultimate of God for mankind, but it is secured in that Man in the glory. It is security for us, and in this connection the apostle uses a figure from the Greek about the Holy Spirit having been given to us as an "earnest" of our final redemption. You know what the figure is? What is it? You see some goods, some produce at a depot on a railroad station. It is destined for something or somewhere, and there is stamped on it "sample," "sample," destined for sonship. It is an earnest, it is a firstfruits, it is a prophecy, but there is more to follow; and a great deal more to follow. This is only the beginning, this is only a piece of what is coming; and the apostle uses that figure of speech. The Greeks understood quite well what he was talking about. Paul says: "He has given us the Spirit as the 'sample,' the earnest, the prophecy, of what is to be." It is secured, it is all there secured in Him to come to us; and He has sent Him (is it irreverent to speak of the Holy Spirit like this?) — He sent the *Sample*. If you and I really have the Spirit, what have we got? — The earnest of our inheritance, and what is it? — We have this witness, this assurance, and the working of this Power holding us unto something, unto a destiny. *Thank God for that holding*. To quote the Apostle Peter: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto a salvation to be revealed in the last time."

We Are Kept By The Power

Now where would any of us be today if there had not been that holding of us? When we really did let go, when we really did say: "We can go no further, this is the end." And we would have gone if it had been left to us. Well, the miracle is we are here kept by the earnest of the Spirit unto that because it is secured unto us in Christ. So the apostle says: "Cast not away, cast not away your confidence which hath great recompense of reward. You have need of patience that after you have done the will of God...." Brethren, there is so much in all this. He shows that it is all represented in the Man perfected in heaven; even more, it is secured in Him up there. I am glad it is up there and out of this world beyond any power to undo the security.

(1) The Summation of All — His Son

Now the apostle shows then that the advent of Jesus Christ into this world was this: first of all, it was the summation of all God's former forms and ways of His Self-revelation. "God Who at sundry times and in divers places spake unto the prophets," spake by the prophets in many-sided fragmentary bits. Here a line and there a line; a bit through this one and a bit through that one, all speaking bits and pieces and fragments. He has summed them all up now, gathered them all together, made One Sum of them; and it is the summation of all when His Son comes into this world Incarnate. That is what is here! See Jesus and you see the summation of all God's previous methods and ways and times of Self-revelation. It is the full and the final revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

That is what this young man Saul of Tarsus, with his background of the Old Testament in his mind (so that he could quote the whole thing without the Book) with that he saw Jesus

Christ, the Risen Glorified Lord; and his Bible became a new book. Paul saw that in the One everything was gathered up, everything was summed up. "Have not I seen Jesus our Lord; and when I saw Him, I saw." There are no more fragments, the thing is complete now; no more bits and pieces, it is just One Great Glorious Whole. No more "then" and "now" and "afterward," it is all eternally present in Him now: the summation of all God's previous ways of Self-revelation.

(2) *His Son — The End of the Old Economy and the Introduction of an Entirely New Economy*

Then Paul saw, and this meant so much to a Jew and an educated Jew, so thoroughly educated as was Saul of Tarsus, he saw that Jesus our Lord was not only the summation of all God's previous ways of revealing Himself, but He was the consummation of a whole economy, the whole of the Mosaic economy. That is why I say I am sure that Paul had a hand in this Hebrew Letter, because the whole of the Mosaic economy is gone over in that letter. And what is the purpose of that letter? The transition *from that Mosaic economy* to Christ. *He* is the High Priest. *He* is the Sacrifice. *He* is the Altar. *He* is the Temple. *He* is everything that that economy represented in type and figure, but *He* is the consummation of that. He is the end of that and the introduction of an entirely New economy. It is a Heavenly One in the heavens, "not made with hands." Oh, the terms are so definite. "Not of this creation." — The consummation of a whole economy. Brethren, has Christendom seen what Paul saw? Has Christendom grasped this yet? Is it still clinging onto the old economy in its vestments, its robes, its ritual, its external things? Has it failed to see that this is all finished with, and now our robing is the robing of His Righteousness, and no other can appear before God. All our adornments are spiritual.

Peter has seen this, for in 1 Peter 3:3-4 he speaks to the dear sisters "whose adorning is not the plaiting of the hair and the wearing of the jewelry." What is the word "adorning?" "Adorning" in the original is "Whose world (cosmos)" — "whose cosmos" is the word "adorning." "Whose cosmos, whose world," whose realm and system of things is not this getting yourself up in making an impression. Oh, I am not holding any agreement with carelessness and slovenliness and that sort of thing, but the question is what "world" do you live in? — how do you appear to others, what impression do you make by these outward things? "No," says Peter, of the saintly women whose world is not that. That is not their world, that is not their cosmos, their system, but their "adorning" is "the ornament of a meek and a quiet spirit." So we see one system of externals is gone, and it is all now a system of the Spirit in the heart, a Heavenly thing for a Heavenly people.

Now some people have seen the principle, and they have tried to put it into effect by putting on a certain kind of raiment and becoming a sect who wear that kind of raiment. They have seen the principle all right, but you cannot fulfill a principle in that way. It is the Spirit that comes out and expresses itself. The end of an economy, its consummation and then the transition to an entirely new regime, the regime of the Man perfected and installed in glory as God's Model for this New Humanity. "According to Christ" is the phrase so often used. It is "according to Christ" or "not according to Christ." That is the test, the challenge, according to the perfected Man and Humanity installed in Heaven, God's Pattern, to which He is working.

He is working, and here we come back again to the place of the Holy Spirit in the Letters to the Corinthians, especially the First Letter. As we look through the letter, what is the full, ultimate, supreme function of the Holy Spirit? — "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, ...though I give all my goods to the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, I have nothing." The supreme work of the Holy Spirit is the Character of Jesus Christ, not love as a thing. You can put on love as a thing. You can put that on, and it can be a pretension, a way of behaving and speaking. Beloved, people can

come and put their hand on your shoulder and be treacherous behind your back by pointing out your faults to someone else. It must be "unfeigned love" the apostle says. "Unfeigned, unhyprocritical, love of the brethren:" it is the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Are you not surprised when Paul has finished his letters, and he says, "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...*" (This benediction has become so commonplace and lost so much of its contextual significance as applying and relating to the whole Corinthian situation.) What is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? *...though He were rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich.*" That is the grace of the Lord Jesus, self-emptying; Paul will later say that to the Philippians.

The benediction, what is it? "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.*" It is Jesus Christ all the time. "*The love of God.*" How do you know it? in Jesus Christ only, never in any other way can we know the Love of God. "*The fellowship of the Holy Spirit:*" the communion, the unity, — the removal of those divisions and that divisive spirit, ("I am of Paul, Apollos, Peter, and so on —").

*"Have I Not Seen Jesus Our Lord?"
"He Was Pleased To Reveal His Son In Me"*

Now time does not permit me to start this morning on that next great thing: *how seeing Jesus is the Source, the Character, of all ministry in this dispensation.* But let us hold what we have heard this morning quietly before the Lord because it challenges us. How far are we here able to say with the effect of it, the revolution, the transformation, the transition: — "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" — "He was pleased to reveal His Son in me." And when that happened, my word, what a lot went. It just went and what a lot came. How different! I have called this section:

The All-governing and Dominating Vision — The Seeing of Jesus our Lord

Go and ask Him to do that with you, and let me just say this, it is not something that is going to be all done at once. Oh, no, some of us after many years are seeing more today of the significance and meaning of Jesus our Lord than we have ever seen all through our lives. It has got to be like that, thank God, it has got to be like that. We always have a margin, a plus, an extra right to the end. As one brother has said, "All ministry should have such an overflow that no man ever finishes his sermon," and you know what he meant. When you have come to the end of your time, you have got far more than your time will allow you to go on with. And it ought to be like that over the Lord Jesus. Oh, how much more I see than I have ever been able to say or could say today. I see *He is so vast, so full, so immense.* We are here, dear friends, not to talk about the greatness of Christ as a subject, but to be the expression of it! — It may defeat us. We may go to the grave (if He does not come) feeling, "Oh, we haven't begun yet," but it should be like that. *He is so great, so wonderful.* And may the fiat take place, if it has not. But if it has, and our eyes, *the eyes of our hearts, have been enlightened,* we have begun to see something of Him. Remember, there should be no stalemate over this, no arrested progress as at Corinth, no undue babyhood. Yes, it is all right to be a baby when you are a baby; but it is a horrible thing to be a baby when you have the years of maturity.

That is how it was at Corinth. Growth was stunted, it was arrested, because of what? They had really failed to see the Lord Jesus. They had heard the teaching; they knew what the apostle was talking about, but he has to come back with this: "The eyes of our heart be enlightened." He has to come back with this Second Letter to them: — "The veil taken away," and we all with unveiled face see Another Face, "*the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,*" and "*are changed into the same image from glory to glory.*" Shall we pray...

So, Lord, we can only say that with the presentation of the truth Thou would go beyond,

take us beyond; and grant that every life here may stand in the good of the unveiled face of Jesus Christ — the glory therein... may stand in the good of having seen Jesus our Lord. O make that true of every one of us, very true, wonderfully true, and growingly true, until we finally see His face. We ask it in His Name, Amen.

Chapter 5 - The Nature and Dynamic of Ministry, and the Nature and Purpose of the Church

What more can we say and how better can we say than: more of Thyself. O show me hour by hour more of Thy glory. O my God and Lord, more of Thyself in all of Thy grace and power, more of Thy love and truth. Incarnate Word, answer that prayer in this hour. We ask in the Name of the Lord Jesus, Amen.

In our consideration of the great transition from one humanity which has been exposed, discredited, judged, and set aside to Another Humanity which has been tested, perfected, and installed in glory in our Lord Jesus Christ, we have come at length in the closing hours of this time together to the all-governing vision in the light of which this transition becomes both clear and very practical. And we saw yesterday that with the Apostle Paul to whom this vision, this "heavenly vision" as he called it, was the secret and key to his whole life ministry when he saw the Lord Jesus risen and glorified, four things became clear to the Apostle Paul in that vision. These four things we have mentioned: Firstly, the place and destiny of man in the Divine economy. Secondly, the nature and dynamic of ministry in this dispensation. Thirdly, the nature and purpose of the Church now and in the after-ages. And fourthly, the immense significance of Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and exalted, all this in these three things.

Now yesterday we were occupied with the first of these four things. This morning we proceed to the second, the nature and dynamic of ministry in this dispensation, and whether we shall get to the end of the fourth is with the Lord.

The Apostle Paul said: *"It pleased God, ...to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the nations."* Now we must stay for a moment to ask and answer one question: "What do we mean by ministry?" Perhaps we need a revised version on this matter of ministry, for, immediately, when the word "ministry" is mentioned, people's minds automatically think of someone with a Bible in their hand standing up and teaching out of the Bible or someone preaching the Gospel to the unsaved or someone having been shut up with their Bible, studying it and making some notes and coming out into public and giving the result of their Bible study. Something like that is usually associated with the word "ministry." As I speak of ministry in this dispensation, some of your minds at once may think of someone with Bible in hand upon a platform or in a group, teaching and preaching. I trust the Lord is going to revise that concept for you entirely before we are through this morning.

The New Testament has two things to say about this matter of ministry. It does speak in Ephesians about special, personal gifts for ministry in the Church. He gave, the ascended Lord *"gave some, apostles; some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."* These are specific personal ministry gifts in the Church, and please put a circle around that word "in." There are these personal ministry gifts in the Church; however, the New Testament has much more to say about the ministry of the Church Itself, and the Word says that these personal gifts in the Church are for the purpose of enabling the Church to fulfill the ministry — to do the ministry, to be the minister of Christ.

Now you remember the passage: *"and He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of the ministry."* Do not put any break in your sentence: "the perfecting (of the Church, the 'making complete,' of the Church) unto the work of the ministry." I heard Dr. Campbell Morgan once say in this very connection in this passage: "and God help the minister whose Church does not fulfill the ministry...." And it is with this second thing, the ministry of the Church Itself, that we will be occupied this morning.

I am not going to talk about apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, these specific ministers, but about the ministry of the Church; and the two letters with which we have been mainly occupied this week (the two letters to the Corinthians) have in view, very clearly and emphatically so, the ministry of the Church. All that the apostle is saying is with this background of the fulfillment of the Divine ministry in Corinth, and as those letters are a vehicle down through the whole dispensation to our own time, it is what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church about its ministry.

In the First Letter of Corinthians, the apostle is dealing with all those things which either frustrate or spoil the ministry of the Church. In the Second Letter, he comes out very clearly and emphatically on the matter of the ministry as he uses these words: "seeing then that we have this ministry;" and you must remember that the apostle is writing to a church, a local church, he is not just talking about his own ministry. Paul has much to say about that, but here he is speaking of the Church's ministry and the "we" is the Church at Corinth: "we have this ministry;" and the associated phrase is: "*we have this treasure in vessels of fragile clay*" — is that only Apostles? No, the "we" is corporate; it is all of us. We shall come to that again presently, for what we are really concerned with this morning is the ministry of all believers, or the ministry of the Church.

The Nature And Dynamic Of Ministry Part One

Now having said that, we can proceed to a consideration of the nature and dynamic of ministry; and once more referring to the apostle, a particular apostle who is writing these letters, let us remember that Paul is a representative or example ministry. That is how he speaks of himself throughout these letters, and what was true of him as to ministry, he was saying, has got to be true of the Church. He did not put it in just this way, but this is very clearly what he is saying: "What is true in my ministry, as to its Source and its Nature and its Power, has to be true of all believers, and of the Church." He is a representative minister, not an exclusive one; he may have dimensions beyond anyone else's, but that is just his representative character. The Lord is saying by this man Paul that here you have an example of what ministry is and how ministry is produced and what the principles and laws of ministry are, and, inclusively, what the background of ministry is. That is how you must look at the apostle (as a great minister quite true) but as in principles, a representative minister.

As Paul begins, he goes right back to the Damascus Road, to the beginning of his Christian life and ministry, for you will remember that it was there, right at the commencement, when the Lord met him on his way to Damascus that the Lord gave him his commission: "to whom I send thee" (Acts 26:17). Paul goes right back to his conversion, to the beginning of his life in union with Christ, and he says this: "as to life, as to vocation, as to ministry, that I might proclaim Him among the nations, God revealed His Son in me." Here you have the Source of everything! It is this vision of the Lord Jesus that is the Nature of the ministry, that is the Source of the ministry, that is the dynamic of all true ministry, for all true ministry in this dispensation issues and proceeds from an in-shining of Divine Light revealing Jesus Christ. "*It pleased God to reveal His Son in me.*" That gives us a secret.

Saul of Tarsus is on the way to Damascus, and on the way he saw a Light from heaven. That is objective, something that blinded him from without. That Light turned out to be the Glorified Lord Jesus, and Paul is saying here in this fragment to the Galatians that he not only objectively saw that Light and that Glorified Man, but also something happened inside of him. Inside of him, he said: "Jesus of Nazareth Whom I am on the way to persecute and Whose persecution has become the one passion of my life — Jesus of Nazareth, that impostor (as I believe) that evil man, that deceiver — this is He?! He has been here amongst us walking the streets of Jerusalem, of Galilee, up and down the country, that

same *One* has now appeared to me, that same *One*, not a different *One* — only in appearance and in knowledge, but the same *One*. What does this mean?!"

That in-shining carried with it an overwhelming significance in the life of Paul, and so away to the desert he went to live and to dwell upon this; and that Light which has shone on him was shining in him, and he was seeing the significance of Who? — God's Son! True, but he was seeing Jesus of Nazareth, the Man Glorified — the Man having reached the ultimate of God's intention for man. Paul thought within: "Because I knew Him as a man, whether I saw Him in the flesh or not, I knew Him — all about Him as a man amongst men; and human eyes could not discriminate between Him and other men, only there was something about Him that was different, but He is a *Man* amongst men, and this is that same *Man* — transfigured:" this he had to think in the light of that inward revelation.

People who know the Greek here know that this Word: "*It pleased God to reveal His Son in me,*" is a subjective-objective. Paul could say: "I saw objectively, but I also saw subjectively," and until that happens, dear friends, we are not in the way of effectual ministry. You may be seeing by what is said to you throughout this week, you may be seeing in a sort of objective way, everything objectively, and that is very wonderful; but has it broken through from the objective to the subjective where you can say: "My word, I have never seen it like that, I have never seen Him in that way." This "objective-subjective" seeing is what happened to the apostle, and it was the beginning both of his Christian life and of his ministry; and they both went together.

Brethren, do you know that you as a believer, as a Christian, are constituted for ministry from the day of your new birth? Do you know that you are ordained a minister the moment you are regenerated into this New Humanity? Do not wait for the day when someone will ordain you to the ministry. Oh, no, your calling of God is from the beginning unto ministry. About this, Paul said that it was, it corresponded to, what happened at the creation. Paul said in Second Corinthians, that great letter of the ministry: God Who said, "*Let there be light, let light be,*" has repeated that Divine fiat in a spiritual way in our hearts, "*has shined into our hearts;*" — God has said in these darkened human hearts, "*let light be*" ...shined into our hearts with what object? — "*to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" For those of you who have heard this before and have heard me say it before, bear with me if I may just stay for a moment with that word "glory." Yes, it was objective glory with Saul of Tarsus which he saw, but what is that glory? What is the glory of God?

We have been hearing in the second session about the God of glory appearing to Abraham. What is the glory of God? The glory of God is His absolute satisfaction with anyone or any situation. When God is satisfied, something emanates from Him. We know that in simple ways in Christian experience. If there is something over which you may have had a battle, a real battle, and you have got through to what the Lord has been trying to get you to and the battle is over and you are responsive wholly to the will of God, what happens? There is such a sense of blessedness inside. The fight is finished, the battle is over, there is rest and peace and joy within. Now that is glory because it is on the way to that ultimate accomplishment of the whole will of God in a Humanity when the glory will be universal. Yes, the "*glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*" just means this: because the Lord Jesus was so satisfying to the very nature of God that there was about Him something of peace and rest and joy. He carried with Him the satisfaction of God. "*I always do the things that are pleasing to Him:*" that is the glory.

Do not think of glory just as this objective, shining, blazing something, but think of it as shining into your hearts. Oh, how can I explain it?! It is just this — that inside we have come to the place where we are satisfied with the Lord Jesus and meet the satisfaction of

God. "Not what I am, O Lord, but what Thou art — that, that alone, can be my soul's true rest. Thy Love, not mine, is glory." Paul said: "God carried out this New fiat in my heart, and in your heart, Corinthians. He shone in. He said, 'Let light be, and there was light.' " It was a Light that was never on land or sea, "the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Now that is the spring of ministry, and what is the ministry? What do we mean by ministry? Well, ministry is the outshining of Jesus Christ from our lives, and you do not need to have gone to convocations; you do not need to have any artificial or mechanical means. You may study your Bible, and you may give the most wonderfully organized and arranged Bible readings; but the question is: is that ministry?

Are you emanating Christ?
Are you transmitting Christ?
Is Christ coming through your teaching?

Are people sensing Christ and not your study, not your library, not your commentaries, not your versions, not your translations. But the point is, where does this come from, where did we get it, how did we get it???

Brethren, I am not saying that Bible study is wrong, but I am saying that through it all, has Christ appeared?! and is He appearing?! You may be a minister, a preacher, a Bible teacher of renown, and it may stop there; but the whole question is whether I am officially that or just a humble member of Christ, without any public gift at all, without any human ordination, I can be ministering Christ, in some way ministering Christ, and that is the ministry. That is the source of all true ministry from beginning to end. Here the apostle is making it that. Paul is saying: "It began in me and is going on in me, and all that I have to say to you believers is what I am seeing of the Lord Jesus, a growing, inward unveiling of God's Son."

The Growth of Ministry is Through "Afflictions" — "Consolations"

Now the question arises, how does the ministry grow, proceed? In these letters, and especially in the Second Letter to the Corinthians, we have the answer; and it is going to touch us quite deeply, acutely I think, on this matter of the procedure of ministry, of the growth of ministry. How will this be? Will it be by more study, more books? Oh, no, dear friends, that is not the way of a growing, continuing ministry; and the ministry has got to grow all the time, deepen and enlarge all the time, but how? Please read again your Second Letter to the Corinthians, and before you have gotten very far, indeed almost immediately in that letter, you come on some words which are repeated again and again. What are they? "afflictions;" "consolations."

Underline those words right at the beginning of the Second Letter. And in that connection the apostle brings forth his own great experience: "I would have you know what befell me — so great a death. (He had the sentence that it was death.) But we had the sentence of death. We despaired of life. We were pressed out of our measure." Then, and right through that letter, the apostle is constantly striking that note of sufferings, sufferings, sufferings.

*"We Have This Treasure"
which is this ministry,
the revelation of Jesus Christ
in our hearts.*

"We have it in vessels," and I like the literal translation of "fragile clay," capable of being broken and smashed. "Beyond our measure of endurance, even unto despair, we despaired of life," and then he will give us a couple of catalogues of his afflictions.

Now you ought to sit down brethren, and think about that if you are thinking about ministry. My, you ought to think about all that Paul himself met, encountered, and went through from center to circumference. At the center what do you find? — unfaithful, disloyal, and treacherous brethren; and moving out from that center in ever enlarging circles, there are many implications in this letter, as well as statements, of what people were saying about him: "He was not a true apostle. He is not one of the twelve. He never saw Jesus after the resurrection. He is not a true apostle; he is an imposter. He is a deceiver. He is just going around cadging, getting money from Christians." These are all implications; a whole list of them. This is implied. It is there.

Paul goes on to say: If any man has suffered, "I more than them all." And then he speaks of the many times he was in prison, of how many times he received the stripes, and how many times he was in the deep and shipwrecked, a night and a day in the deep, of how many times he was in hunger and in nakedness and in peril — in sea, on land, from robbers and fellow-Christians. It is a terrible double list that he gives in these chapters of Second Corinthians. Read them again, and no wonder that word has such a large place at the beginning of the letter — "the afflictions of Christ which abound unto us, that the consolations also may abound." That is the ministry, those periods when even men like this man Paul, perhaps the greatest minister that Christ ever had, will say: "I despaired. I despaired of life, I was pressed beyond my measure of endurance." That is how the ministry grows.

If we really say to the Lord, "Lord, make my life a ministry of Christ," this is how the ministry grows, this is how it goes on. This is how to be an effectual minister. This is how the ministry proceeds, deepens, and becomes more fruitful. Believe me, dear friends, if the apostle is representative of ministry and if we as servants of God are to be spiritually fruitful — if really true ministers of Jesus Christ, there will be in the background of our lives the secret sufferings, a hidden history with God under His hand.

If you are going to be a true minister of Christ, *ministering Christ*, He is going to take you into some deep experiences with Him, very deep experiences, where you will discover something that is going to be of great value to others; for it is the crucified and suffering servant of God who is really the fruitful one, the one of whom you can say: "That man is not talking out of his library, from his books, that man knows what he is talking about — he has been there. He has been in it. This has come out of the travail of his soul." Read 2 Corinthians again in the light of how the ministry grows. Oh, I speak and say these things to you, but God only knows how I hold my breath, for we do know that if the Lord has done anything at all, it has been by a hard way. It has been by the "*afflictions*" of Christ that we might know the "*consolations*" of Christ; and, as the people of God, what do we want? Information or consolations?

I know what your answer is over that, but I want you to notice that this is something terrific in the whole cosmic realm, for ministry is not just limited to the people amongst whom we move. This kind of ministry is "cosmic ministry." What do I mean? I mean this: the god of this age had blinded the minds of the unbelieving, lest as a precaution, as a move, a strategic move, lest the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God should shine upon them. If our gospel is hid, it is hid in them that are perishing in whom the god of this age had blinded. — What is such a ministry? *It Is The Undoing Of That Devilish Work Of Spiritual Blindness*. All spiritual blindness is not just natural, it is satanic, and you have got to have something that strikes there beyond the merely natural condition, that strikes right home to the source of that condition, "he hath blinded."

Satan is "the god of this world," and the trouble at Corinth, as the whole of the First Letter shows, is that the world has laid its deadly, paralyzing hand upon those people. The world

and the old humanity lie under a curse. Does that sound strong, brethren? But have you never said, "this accursed self." It is this accursed self that is in the way all the time. Yes, that humanity lies under a curse from the beginning, and this world lies under a curse which means that that humanity and this world can never go through to God's end as it is. The end of that humanity and of this world is what? Destruction, removal right from the Face of God. Paul saw this as to the Corinthians, the natural man intruding, and this world — its judgments, its standards, its conceptions, its values, its ideas — amongst these people in the church; controlling, influencing — the world of Corinth had come into the church at Corinth — *in* its mentality, *in* its manner, and *in* its procedure: how the world does it... that was at Corinth.

Yes, our natural man lies under a curse, our old humanity lies under a curse. It cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God because God has put His veto on it. It is vetoed, and this world is vetoed as to God's things. And who has done it? The god of this age, the prince of this world; and when God breaks in, He said: "*Let there be light,*" because darkness is not of God; it is of the devil. And here we have it in the spiritual part: "he hath blinded" — the god of this age, blinded and brought into darkness this old humanity; and when God says, "*Let there be light,*" the work of the devil is undone and the judgment is removed and that should be the effect of ministry.

The ministry of Christ should be out of darkness into Light; and you remember the commission to the Apostle Paul at the beginning, "To whom I send thee, to turn them from darkness to light." — The right translation in the Greek language is: "That they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive an inheritance." This is ministry, the turning from darkness to Light, from the power of Satan unto God, to have an inheritance which they lost in Adam. It is very full. That should be the impact and influence out of our presence as ministers of Christ.

When Christ was present, He did say a lot of things; He did preach, mostly to His disciples, preparing them for their work ahead; but it was not only what He said, it was as much His personal presence. He would come somewhere and He had not said anything, and demons would cry out: "I know Thee Whom Thou art; the Holy One of God." They could not hold their peace. His Presence dragged them out. His very Presence was an exposure of man, an exposure of Satan: His Presence, and that is the ministrations of Christ. —

O Lord, make us ministers, make me a minister, as far as I can bear it, that the impact, the registration, the influence may be people moving into the Light, really seeing the Light in an inward way. The Light — not of truth, or even of Scripture to begin with, but through Scripture — the Light of Jesus Christ.

The Test of Ministry is in its Eternal Value

That is all I have time to say this morning about ministry — unless I add this word, again from Corinthians: — *the test of ministry is in its eternal value*. Now the Apostle Paul associates the two things: Affliction and Eternal Value. He says, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while..." (now do not stop there, get your conjunction) "...while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; (passing, transient) but the things which are not seen are eternal." The test of our ministry is perhaps not going to be what we see in our own lifetime, but what is afterward, going on to eternity.

When you get to glory, do you not want to discover that you meant far more than you knew you did? That there was a great deal more value in your being here than ever you saw. Oh,

this soul life of the old humanity does want to see, it is always doing things to see, to see the result, to see the value. "While we look not at the things which are seen." I think perhaps this is one of the most testing words in the Bible to the old man. How can we live on what is not seen and what is in the eternal future and be satisfied? Oh, that is not the old humanity, but it is the New — *the eternal value of ministry*.

The Nature and Purpose of the Church ***Part Two***

Now for a little while I will go on to the next thing: the nature and purpose of the Church, now and in the ages afterward; and here again, we need a revised version of what we mean when we speak of the Church. Through the years I have talked and written much about the Church, but on this very matter of the Church I find that I am being forced to a revision, not to abandon what has been said, taught, and believed, and acted upon, but as we go on, a great deal of what we did at the beginning, of what we called our Church teaching, a great deal has, shall I say, broken down?!

Now, brethren, what are you finding about the Church today? To begin with, you may be looking around everywhere and saying: "Where is it? Is this the Church? Well, this does not come up to Ephesians; far from it, it is very much like Corinthians." So, what is the Church? What is its function now and in the ages to come? The Apostle Paul always linked these two things together: "Unto Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus through all ages, forever and ever" — the function of the Church afterward, as well as now.

What is the Church? Of course, there are various symbols of the Church. The Church is called "the House of God," it is called a "Temple," it is called "the Body of Christ," it is called "the Bride," and so on. You may ask, "Are these different things?" No, they are only aspects of one thing. Each of those definitions or designations or titles is only a functionary aspect of the Church. The House of God — the place where God lives. The Temple of God — where He is worshipped. The Body of Christ — the vessel of a Personality. The Body of Christ is a function, a many-sided function of the expression of the Personality. The Bride — is the expression of the affectional relationship between Christ and the Church: "Christ loved the Church, gave Himself for it... so ought husbands to love their wives...." The Bride is the affectional relationship between Christ and His Church. These are all symbols of the one thing, but what is the one thing of which these are but aspects? And that is what we have got to come to, that is where our revision of mentality has to take place.

So, what is the inclusive designation of the Church? "One Man" — you have it in that great Church letter of Ephesians where "He has broken down the middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile (racially the old human divisions, compartments) He has removed the division and has made "of the twain one new man." The inclusive designation is a Man, "One new man," — a New Humanity. It is the aggregate of the New Creation people, men and women, Jews and Gentiles (not remaining as they are naturally, Jews and Gentiles) but just one New Man, one New Humanity: that is the Church! And which Humanity is it? That touches on the function: there is the nature.

Oh, do take this to heart, dear friends, for I do not intend to offend anyone, but what is God doing? What is He after? Is He after making a new institution called the Church, a new ecclesiasticism, something that has a denominator amongst men like the individual denominations or the non-denominations? Is God doing that? Is that what God is doing? (This is where we need a mental revision, a heart revision.) No! He is not in it. No, He is not doing that, He is only with the people, not with the thing. But God is doing in the spiritual way what He did at the beginning. He is saying and proceeding, proceeding with His concept: "Let Us make man, let Us make Man." The Church is the One New Man: — Let Us make a Man, not an institution, or any of these things that the Church is called. God said:

"Let Us make a Man," and that is what he is doing with you and with me. God is not trying to make of us any of these many things that Christians are called and the names by which they go. He is just getting to work on us to constitute us "*the Man.*"

You remember what we said in the beginning: "He called them (man and woman) — He called them man." Here in this (and, sisters, be careful how you take what I am now going to say, for "there is neither male nor female") it is a *Man*, that is, it is a *Humanity*. I cannot explain to you, because I do not know, what that Humanity is going to be afterward in glory, but Jesus answering a certain man's question about marriage and repeated marriages, (whose wife a certain woman would be afterward out of all she had married) said, "Ye do err... in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels." It is a kind of Humanity that is different. Oh, the questions will arise, "Shall I know my husband in heaven, shall I know my wife in heaven?" Yes! But we shall know in a way in which it is far better to know, however precious may have been the human relationships, husband and wife, wife and husbands here — yes, precious, very precious; but is it not better when a husband and wife know each other in the Spirit than in the flesh? Is it not lovely when they flow together from one Spirit, one vision, one objective that their united lives manifest Jesus Christ in the home and in the neighborhood?! There is something very precious about that.

I had a son, and the Lord took him about three or four years ago; and as my son, we had a good relationship, there was not strife between us as father and son, no difficulty at all; and he and I had such spiritual fellowship that I could open my heart to him as fully as I could to anybody, and more than to most people — for he was not only my son, but he was my spiritual friend. Brethren, you know what I am talking about. That is how we are going to know, and it will be a better kind of knowing. Do not worry, then, whether you know your husband or your wife. Oh, you will: "Then shall I know, even as I have been known by the Lord."

The Vocation: The Emanation of Christ

Now we must move on. The vocation of the Church now and in eternity is going to be just the emanation of Christ. It is now intended to be that, and God help us to be that. It is not this and that and one or more of a hundred things that are the idea about the Church today, but it is just this one thing, the presence of a different kind of Man, in the individual and collectively. Let us take it universally.

Are you not impressed with how Peter, having passed through the great transition from the old Jewish humanity, got right through: — after his battles with the Gentiles at Cæsarea, and Cornelius' house, after his battle down at Antioch when James and the elders came down from Jerusalem, when Peter withdrew himself from eating with the Gentiles ("dissimulation" Paul called it). When he got through it all, and thank God Peter got through it all, what did he say in the opening of his letter? — "To the saints, scattered throughout Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." Peter says: "Ye, Galatians, Cappadocians, Asians, Bithynians, you are all scattered. The dispersion has taken place, and you are all scattered, you saints, and yet you are a spiritual house, One House. Not so many houses, but One House. Everywhere." What is this? It is where the Lord is dwelling, in men and women.

The Church universal according to the Divine concept is just One Man in the earth. How we discover that when we meet somebody we have never met before and they are the Lord's. It is wonderful! — until you begin to ask or they begin to ask what you belong to. If you just talk about things of the Lord, One Man, One Blessed Man, it is like that. Well, that is very elementary; it is very simple, but that is what the Church is universally: that is what the Church is locally.

When people come into the local company, they do not come in and say, "Well, this is how they behave, this is what they do; they have baptisms, they have the Lord's table, and they have this form of worship." No, these things may be all right, they may have their place, they may be a part of a Divine order, but what is it they are to meet? — not our baptism, not our Lord's table, not our method of procedure, not our technique, but "God is in this place!" — *they meet the Lord*. They may not be able to put it like that, they may not be able to define it or explain it, but the impress is: "There is something there, these people have got life, these people are in the good of something that you will not find anywhere else. It is the Lord." Oh, that all our local companies were just like that, in whatever way we go on, the thing that impresses is: "The Lord is here, the Lord is here."

I have moved out from the universal to the local company, and now I am going to move down to the individual. To the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul said: "Do you not know that your body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit? He dwells in you." I am a microcosm of the Church (or intended to be), and each one of you is intended to be a microcosm of the Church. Now what is it? What is true of the universal Church collectively is to be true in our case; it is to be Christ that people meet when they meet us individually. What broke upon this man Paul's heart was not something that he studied up, read up, or worked out in his mind, but he saw Jesus as Lord (*and He is a lifetime of seeing*). Paul began to see, and to go on to see, what the Church really is. And I will say this, brethren, you do not know anything about the Church if you have not seen Jesus Christ — however much you have read and talked about it, if you have not seen Him, you do not know what the Church is. It is not a thing, an it. But if you have seen Him, it is a Him, it is a Person *Who* is dwelling in persons — that is the Church! I think that is enough this morning. Very much more could be said, but time has gone. Let us pray...

Make the truth live in us, O Lord. May that Divine fiat take place, light shine into our hearts, and the eyes of our understanding be enlightened that we may see light in Thy Light. For Thy Name and Glory and satisfaction's sake, Amen.

Chapter 6 - The Immense Significance of Jesus Christ: Crucified, Risen, and Exalted

Lord, when we say to Thee, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law," Thou knowest that the most "wonderful" Thou canst show to us is Thy Son; and so, not things, but Him. Open our eyes that we may see Him this morning. It is to Thee, and not to men, but to Thee that we say, "We would see Jesus;" and O Lord, grant it in Thy mercy that when we leave this place we are able truly to say: "We have seen the Lord." Be it so, for Thy Name's sake, Amen.

Now we come to the last of these hours in which we have been occupied with the "Great Transition," having said at the beginning that the whole Bible is occupied with God and humanity. The Old Testament, with an old humanity throughout, showed how utterly unreliable that humanity is, and how it eventually proved a failure as the Old Testament closes. I expect you have noticed that not in the chronological order, but in the spiritual order the Old Testament closes with Malachi, and what a sorry picture in Malachi it is, the closing of the book in failure. The New Testament is occupied wholly with the introduction and development of a New Humanity, brought in with the Lord Jesus Christ; and from that point the whole of the New Testament is occupied with this New Humanity, of which Christ is the Representative of its birth, its growth, and its eventual and ultimate glorification.

That is the general background of these morning hours this week. And we came two days ago to the all-inclusive vision of the Lord Jesus and began (as we shall never finish though we stayed here all our life) *began* to see what there is in Jesus Christ, what *He* has brought in, and what the Apostle Paul saw in the Lord Jesus when, as he put it, "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." What an immense revealing that was, which grew and grew all through the life of the apostle. And we said that four things came to the apostle in that vision, that "Heavenly Vision," that inward seeing of the Lord Jesus.

Firstly, in Jesus glorified, Paul saw, according to the eternal thoughts of God, the place and the nature and the destiny of humanity, the Humanity after Christ. Then Paul saw the nature and dynamic of a life ministry, of a ministry through this long dispensation between the ascension of the Lord Jesus and His coming again, he saw what the ministry is, the vocation. He saw *that* when he saw the Lord Jesus. We spent a lot of time on it: not enough. Then Paul saw the nature and the purpose of the Church now, and as he put it, "unto the Age of the ages." These three great things he saw, and then Paul saw a fourth. With this, we are going to be occupied this morning.

Paul Saw Jesus Christ Crucified, Risen, Exalted

Saul of Tarsus saw Jesus of Nazareth glorified — "The Man in The Glory." And as he gazed and gazed inwardly upon that Man, seeing that vision, that revelation, he saw these three things that we have mentioned, and then Paul saw the immense significance of Jesus Christ Crucified, Risen, and Exalted; and, of course, these are the things which fill all his writings. You will have to approach them with these four things before you. Let me repeat, *the immense significance of Jesus Christ: Crucified, Risen, and Exalted.*

We are totally incapable of sensing, recognizing, conceiving what happened to this man, Saul of Tarsus, when he saw the Lord Jesus, for he had thought of Jesus the Nazarene as an imposter, a false teacher, a false leader, as One Who was leading people astray; and all the feelings of animosity and hatred and bitterness, of which that great soul was capable, overflowed against this Man — Jesus of Nazareth. He made it his life business, with his tremendous abilities, his natural abilities, and his training, and all his knowledge; he made it his life business to blot out any remnant related to that Man, Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. Saul viewed the Cross of Jesus Christ as His deserved crucifixion. He viewed the

death of Jesus of Nazareth as death, death as we know it — the end. And that in shame — deserved shame, deserved ignominy, deserved disgrace. And more than that, from his Jewish standpoint, he viewed that Man on that Cross as cursed of God, as cursed of Almighty God! This was his mind about Jesus of Nazareth.

When Paul saw Jesus on the way to Damascus and he was smitten with the Light, not knowing at that moment Who and what it meant, he said, because of the overpoweringness of it, "Who art Thou, Lord?" — I say we can never enter into the tremendous convulsion that must have taken place in this man Saul when there came back in answer: " 'I am Jesus, I am Jesus,' that One of Whom you have had that mentality; that One, about Whom you have had all those thoughts and feelings. I *am* He, I *am* Jesus." I say, we cannot enter into what that man must have felt at that moment, but it was then, and from then on, that he began to see This Man Jesus, Glorified, in the Seat of Power, capable of smiting even such a man as Saul of Tarsus to the ground with one stroke, and prostrating him, leaving him one who has got to be lifted up by men, and by the arm led blind to the place where he was going. In the overwhelmingness of it, he began to see in that One that it was not just a crucifixion, and it was not a death such as he had thought of death; but that Jesus Christ, Crucified, was all that his life after (that which he learned by revelation and experience throughout his life) and teaching showed him to have seen.

He Died In My Place: He Died For All

And what an "all" Paul saw; it comes out in considerable fullness in his ministry. What Paul saw first of all was that death, that ignominious death, that shameful death, that awful death, was his own death. Paul saw what God thought of him; it was God's attitude toward him. He could say: "That Man on that Cross like that, in all that state of degradation and shame and helpless weakness, despised and rejected, all that — that was me, that was me; that was what God thinks of my humanity. He died for me (but you know that the meaning is 'in my place'). When He died, I died, that was my death, and that was God's conception of me, Saul of Tarsus!!" Oh, what a revolution! He had a great idea of himself and his own abilities; but, look, this is God unveiling Saul of Tarsus, but more than that: "He died in my place." And that was a death, a new idea about death.

Moreover Paul saw, and I am keeping, of course, firstly to his teaching; I am not reading in anything, making up something. You can sit down with it yourself and prove everything that I am saying from the New Testament. He saw not only that that death, that awful death, as a judgment upon a kind of man was *his* death, but he saw that it was the death of the whole human race in Adam. What does Paul say? "Because we thus judge that One died in the place of *all*, therefore *all* died." Coneybeare says, "It was the death of the whole race... 'As in Adam *all* die.'" This is the new conception to the Cross of the Lord Jesus. Our death, the death of the whole race, the humanity to which we belong by nature, the whole — all died. But then Paul came to see this also, that in the death of Jesus it was not death as an end; it was a death that destroyed *Death*. In a sense, it was a death which was the end of Death. "He tasted death for all men," it is true; but then, "He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

A Cosmic Cross: A Cosmic Death

So, from the death of Death, which Paul saw in the Cross, the death of Death has taken place: Christ is risen, *He is alive forevermore*. And Paul saw more: he saw that that Cross was, to use the word we have used before, it was a cosmic Death. That is, it reached out beyond the individual and beyond the race to that whole encompassing realm of evil forces which had brought about this condition, making that judgment necessary. And as he went to the Cross, Jesus said, "Now is the prince of this world (cosmos) cast out." And later the

apostle said, "He stripped off principalities and powers... made a show of them openly... triumphing over them in His Cross." A cosmic Cross, a cosmic Death, touching the uttermost bounds of the lower heavenlies, destroying him that had the power of death, that is, Satan.

Paul came to see all this when he saw by revelation of God His Son revealed "in him," and so, let us come further over into this matter of the Cross, the Resurrection, and the Exaltation of the Lord Jesus. You see,

If the revelation of Jesus Christ comprehends all those three things that we have said, comprehends the destiny of humanity (one side of humanity's destiny is judgment, out of Christ: the other side of humanity is glory, in Christ) —

If in the seeing of Jesus Christ in his heart revealed, Paul saw the nature and the dynamic of all true ministry during this whole dispensation —

If he also saw, began to see, and saw with increasing fullness as he went on, the nature and the vocation of the Church now and in the ages to come —

If he saw all those three mighty things in the Face of Jesus Christ, in the Person of Jesus Christ — that is, in the Presence and Revelation of Jesus Christ —

If he saw all that (and remember, this is the vital thing for this morning), Paul saw that all that human destiny, all that ministry through the centuries, and all that place and vocation of the Church in time and in eternity, *Paul saw that it was all centered in the Cross of the Lord Jesus.*

Mighty, mighty thing was the Cross to Paul. "May it never be," said he, "that I should boast, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ... We preach Christ crucified... I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," for all this content is in the Cross of the Lord Jesus. Paul saw that the Cross of Jesus Christ was the climax of humanity. He saw that the Cross of Jesus Christ was the zero hour of the old Adam race, the place at which in the darkness (ah, more than natural darkness) God said: "The door is closed; the door is closed upon a certain kind of humanity. This is zero for that humanity." We take a lifetime to learn that. When the Holy Spirit gets hold of a life, He is always bringing us back to that, that one fact, and putting His finger upon this and that, and something else, and saying in us: "That went out through the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; the Cross has closed the door on that. If you bring that in, you are countering the work of the Cross."

In the Letter to the Hebrews, as well as in these Corinthian Letters, it is a terrible, terrible thing to go back upon the Cross and crucify afresh the Son of God and stamp upon the Blood of our redemption. Oh, the apostles had a lot to say about that, but that is controversial; however, it is not our subject this morning, but there it is. Brethren, the Cross has said an eternal "No" to the whole kind, type, and way of a certain humanity. The Holy Spirit is trying to teach us that; and if you are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, you know quite well what the Holy Spirit will allow and what He will not, or you ought to.

Oh, young Christians especially, but all of us, how important it is for us to know the Holy Spirit in this way. You go to this one, and to that one, going around asking your questions, "Ought I? May I? Should I? Can I?" No need for that at all; and if anybody begins to tell you "you may" or "you may not," they are doing the wrong thing. You ought to know in your own heart by the Holy Spirit, if you are born of the Spirit, you ought to know by the Spirit making you uncomfortable about certain things. Not whispering in your ear in words and saying: "No, you must not do that," but inside. "I'm not so happy about this as I once was;

I don't feel so free to do these things as I once did." You know what I mean; the Holy Spirit is only bringing you back to the Cross and saying again: "zero to that, the end of that, that belongs to the old humanity."

Brethren, I must not start with too much detail, but the Cross of the Lord Jesus is a very practical thing. The Cross is not just an historic thing. The Cross is not just something in the Christian creed. The Cross of the Lord Jesus is a devastating thing, a terrific thing, and it takes us a lifetime to learn how much that is true. However, the fact is here from the beginning: it is the zero hour of the Adamic race. And furthermore, *the Cross is the registration of the subjection of the prince of this world.* "Now the whole world lieth in the wicked one," says the apostle, "the whole world lieth (is in the lap of) the evil one." By nature, we are in that realm, in that kingdom, but the great and mighty work of the Cross is this transition — *"hath transferred (or transitioned) us out of the authority of darkness, ... into the kingdom of the Son of His Love."* By nature we are within that kingdom of the prince of this world, but at the Cross Jesus said, "Now is the prince of this world cast out." Now what did Christ mean? not the annihilation of the devil. We know that quite well. Not that he ceased to be a being or to have power, but something better than that. Perhaps you know there is such a thing as victory, and there is something more than victory; there is being a conqueror, and there is being more than conqueror. What do I mean?

Many of you can remember, although in America, perhaps, you did not take much account of it and do not know much about it, but some of us lived through the great Boer Wars in South Africa; and you know how that went on and on, and what devastation and desolation that Boer War saw in South Africa. At last, the British gained the upper hand and captured some of the Boer generals, and among them was General Botha: does that name mean anything to you? He was one of the great generals of the Boer army; and they captured him, and they put him in prison. He was conquered. As Botha watched the British, as he watched their way, their life, and learned the truth about them, he began to change. At last, to make the story short, he became one of Britain's best counselors and allies. The life of General Botha is a wonderful thing — how highly he was honored and respected. Even into the First World War he came as a helper, a great helper on the side of the British. What had happened? Ah, yes, he was conquered — but there was more than conqueror; the enemy was made an ally.

Oh, you say, "Is Satan for us then?" No, he is not for us. I suppose the analogy breaks down here, but what do we find in the New Testament? "I would have you know, brethren, the things which befell me have fallen out for the furtherance...." And those things which befell were satanic activities, and the Lord has taken hold of Satan's work and made them serve His End. That is more than conqueror!

Perhaps we would rather that the Lord would wipe him out, wipe out his resistance altogether; but it is better that the Lord in His All-Authority in heaven and on earth makes the enemy in the long run serve His Purpose. That is more than conqueror. You and I know that he is an unwilling servant, but you have this all the way through your New Testament, such as: "saints in Cæsar's household..." etc.

You see, the Cross was the registration of this subjection to Jesus Christ of the prince of this world. The Cross was the sentence of death upon the world itself, (I am keeping to Paul again), the sentence of death upon this world which lies under a curse. Jesus Himself as He came to the Cross knelt in prayer and lifted His heart to His Father in the presence of some of His disciples and said, *"They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world, I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but keep them from the evil one."* The world is banned, the world system, the world spirit, the world influence is banned by the Cross. There is no such thing as a worldly Christian. And if you are worldly, you are

contradicting your Christian life. However, here it is, the Cross pronounced the death sentence upon this world.

That is the negative side, but the Cross as Paul saw it in Jesus Christ was the D-Day of the New Creation. "D-Day" — what is that? Deliverance Day! Peter must walk in here and say to us:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath begotten us again into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God.

The D-Day — a New hope for a New Creation: a creation that breaks into New Life, New hope through the Cross in the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Ministry by the Spirit on the Ground of the Cross

Now surely all that does give us a much larger conception of the Cross. And I am not going to be able to cover all the ground of these three things, so I will mix up the next two, the ministry and the Church; mark you, issuing from the Cross, inherent in the Cross. No Church without the Cross. No ministry without the Cross. So hence, the Cross is the ground upon which the Holy Spirit encamps for ministry. Therefore, you can understand why it is that there has been such an assault made upon the Cross, to get it out of the preaching, to put other complexions upon it that are not true of it.

If you in the power of the Holy Spirit live the life of the Cross, and minister Christ crucified, the Holy Spirit comes on that! He comes on that! You want to know where the Holy Spirit encamps, where He takes up His position for co-operation? — He takes it up always on the Cross, and you will never come through to a genuine, true knowledge of the fullness of the Holy Spirit unless the Cross is the foundation. The Cross is the only safety, the only safety, in the midst of many things that are false and counter things. And what I want to know about everything is what place the Cross has there, not as a teaching, a theory, a doctrine, and something in the Bible, but where is the Cross in the life there?! That is the Holy Spirit's camping ground, Christ crucified, as preached in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul says, "Here is the wisdom of God" (the wisest thing from heaven) and "the power of God" (the most powerful thing from heaven): "*Christ Crucified.*" I repeat, the message of the Cross is not just a doctrine, a teaching; it is the message of human life. Before we can teach the Cross, we must know it and experience it. It must have done something in us, and a drastic thing in us. The preacher, the minister, the ministry, must be a crucified minister or vessel. And it must be quite clear that it is not a doctrine of the Cross that is being given, but that the person who is giving it is a crucified person. That searches a lot, does it not?

Oh, let us be careful about our talk on the Cross. Oh, be careful how you speak about the Cross. Many people come to me and say: "I came to the teaching of the Cross so long ago. I came to the message of the Cross." Brethren, you see it has become some "thing." How much better if you could say: "The Cross, by the Holy Spirit, did something in me that made it far more than a doctrine, a theory, something to talk about." There is an old saying, an old adage, "You talk so loud that I can't hear what you say:" yes, there is something in that adage, but I want to see what you are saying.

Here it is, ministry has got to be a ministry by the Spirit on the ground of the Cross. What will the Holy Spirit allow in ministry? What will He allow in ministry, and what will He disallow in ministry? You learn a lot about that as you go on. In the old days when I was very much in the preaching realm, before a big crisis of the Cross, I worked hard to get

good sermons; and I collected everything to make up a sermon, a quotation from this and a quotation from that, this poet and that poet. Later one day I was preaching, and in the midst of my sermon I made a quotation from a certain poet to make a point; and at that point, the bottom fell out of my sermon. Everything went, and I had to struggle to get to the end. I went home and got with the Lord on that, and when I looked up that poet (a very famous poet) the Lord said to me: "Do you know that poet is a modernist, a liberal theologian, that he does not believe in the great truths of Christ's personality and atonement — and you drew him in this morning as your ally to make your sermon a success?!" I learned a lesson that day, a life-lesson. And if really we are under the Cross, dear friends, we will know what the Spirit will allow and what He will not allow. We find that the Cross means that, the bottom does fall out of everything in that realm. Am I being too detailed? Oh, no, not for ministry, and I have defined what ministry is (not only pulpit ministry, platform ministry) but the function of the Christian — to minister Christ. That is the ministry, giving Christ, and this ministry must come out of the Cross because there it begins. Paul's ministry began there. The Cross must be the source of all true Holy Spirit ministry.

Now as for the Church, its nature and its purpose, now and forever, what has God in mind from eternity about this elect vessel? What is it? What does the Church exist for in the Divine counsels? Only to be itself the vessel, the embodiment, of all this meaning of the Cross. As with the ministry and ministers, so with the Church, it must be a crucified Church to preach a crucified Christ and to bring by the Holy Spirit all God's knowledge to men. The Church is a crucified Church. Ah, you look at the beginning and see, way at the beginning of these morning meditations, and see the devastation that took place at the Cross — not only in those of the world but with the disciples. We saw how their own humanity was devastated at the Cross. Scattered and desolated, they are men who have got nothing left when they come to the Cross of the Lord Jesus. In the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the Church begins. He gathers the scattered fragments, and here and there He is putting the vessel together again, but on Other ground. Why did He tarry forty days? Why? — to make sure that they were on New ground, that they had really grasped the significance of the Resurrection as a New ground. And why did He lead them out as far as Bethany and went from them in full view into glory? — to let them know that the Church is on New ground and on Heavenly ground now, on Heavenly ground, and that the headquarters of the Church is not at Jerusalem; it is in Heaven! All is to be governed from Heaven now, because of this Man Who is Exalted. He is the Head, He is the government, but it is Heavenly.

Am I using language that you do not understand or is it too familiar to you? Christ is installed in Heaven as the Representative of this New Humanity, and the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven is to govern everything, deal with everything, work in everything and in everyone — firstly, on the relegation to judgment of the old humanity and its development; and, secondly, the initiation and the development of this Other Humanity. That is what the Holy Spirit is here for.

The writer of the Hebrew letter makes it very simple about father and children and sons, for it says: "My son, despise thou not the chastening of the Lord." The chastening of the Lord — as a father chastens his son. Well, what about you fathers who have sons, what are you doing with them? Now you may not put it in this way, but this is how the New Testament puts it in meaning: "I am going to make a Man of you. I am out to make a Man of you. Sometimes you may not feel very happy about what I am doing, the way I am doing it, but I am going to make a Man of you." Paul says to these people: "Quit you like men." It is a Man, a Manhood that the Holy Spirit has come to develop, a kind of Man coming "to full stature of Manhood in Christ." These are Paul's actual words (and this applies to the sisters as much as to the brothers). One Man in Christ, all One Man in Christ. I am sorry the

translators have not given us the full translation where it says: "*all one in Christ Jesus*," but it is "*all One Man*." It is masculine. "All One Man in Christ Jesus," and the work of the Holy Spirit is to make a Man of us. Oh, yes, but a man *according to that Man*. Is this according to that Humanity? Everything according to that Humanity. That is why Jesus was here for those three and a half years. A *Man* amongst men, but different from all others. Everything "*conformed to the image of His Son*."

The Crucified Church, a Vessel, an Instrument: In Touch with the Throne

Brethren, I am going to close soon, but I want to get very near to the position of the Church, now and in the ages to come; and because this is a very large matter, I am going to focus on one thing to try and help you. We are going to focus upon the matter of prayer. I am convinced that in all the recovery that has to be made, the recovery of prayer, in the way in which I am going to speak of it now, is very, very important.

Have you ever seen, dear friends, what the position of the Church is, if it is in its right position and rightly constituted? Now I am not talking about the Church universal, it applies there, but let us come to a local church. Where is Christ? — "He is seated at the right hand of God." What does that right hand mean? — The place of power, the place of authority, the place of government. The Right Hand — He is there as "Head of the Church which is His Body." He has been vested, invested, with all authority in Heaven and in earth! Have you sometimes questioned that? Have you questioned Christ's authority here in this world when you see things going as they are going? Have you wondered about that? — all authority in Heaven and on earth? Now, dear friends, if you have a nucleus of the Church in any one place — a nucleus in any one place — rightly constituted on the basis of the Cross and the Resurrection and the Exaltation of Jesus the Lord, you are united with that Throne; and if you get to prayer on that basis, as such an instrument, you are going to touch things in the heavenlies and on the earth. Have we not lost something?

I think I have told you before of a personal experience on my first visit to the United States in 1925. I was just learning then, just learning the great principles of the Church, the Cross and the Church; and I had come to speak at a church convention in Boston. I went into my hotel, into my room, and as I got in there an awful sense of conflict and darkness and evil came over me. This was so terrible, and I had to go almost immediately to minister. I said: "I'm no good, I can't go and minister like this, something's got to happen." It was really awful. Abraham knew what he called "a horror of great darkness." That is what it was for me. And I began to use what means I knew of fighting the enemy, such as using "the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God" against the enemy and pleading the blood, but nothing happened. Nothing happened. I walked up and down in that room trying to fight this spiritual battle and never getting through. I cried to the Lord: "Lord, what does this mean? What are You saying? Have I got out of Your will? Ought I not to be here? What is it, Lord?" Then it came to me so clearly: "Just stand into the prayer for you of the Lord's people." Now that is very simple, but I stood there in my room and said: "I stand by faith into the value of the prayer of the Church on my behalf, in the Name of the Lord Jesus." And just like that the whole thing went! We went through!

Now that is not the end of the story. I wrote back to my brothers in London, and I told them of my experience. One brother answered and said: "Will you please let us know exactly the time that that happened, making allowance for a difference of five hours between London and Boston; will you give us the very hour when that happened?" So I wrote and told them just when it had happened. He wrote back and said: "In that very hour, we were met for prayer, we felt that you were having a great battle, and we felt that we had to take up that battle for you and pray it through, and we did."

Now do you see what I mean? Forgive the personal reference, but see the principle; now three thousand miles away — five hours difference in world time, but at that very moment the Church prays, far away something happens: the enemy in the heavenlies is touched — *Authority in Heaven*, and the situation on earth is touched — *Authority on earth*, the Church in touch with the Throne! Do you not think we want something like that now? Are there not forces of evil in the heavenlies that need to come under the impact of that “*All Authority in Heaven?*” Are there not situations, even in the Church of the churches, where that “*Authority in the earth*” needs to be brought in to change them? And the Church is the vessel of that, the instrument of that! Oh, for local companies on that ground, the Power of the Cross and the Authority of the Risen and Exalted Lord! That is a great need. Ask the Lord about that when you get back where you are. Oh, be careful about a “technique” which is called “prayer warfare” and attacking the devil direct. Be careful, he will make a mess of you, he will wait his time. Get hidden in the Cross. Remember that this is not your strength, your wisdom: it is a crucified vessel that is going to do this.

But oh, the Lord does need a recovery of that kind of vocation, and it is not going to stop here. I have said the vocation of the Church in the ages to come — oh, it may not be then against the devil, but I quoted a scripture the other day and told you, I do not understand what it means: “*Know you not,*” said Paul to the Corinthians, “*we shall judge angels?*” We shall judge angels? That does not mean that angels are doing wrong and are going to be brought into judgment by us in eternity: it means government, telling them what to do, what is required of them. Oh, it means, I do not know what all it means, but it says, “*We shall judge angels.*” It is the Church that is going to be the administrative instrument of Christ through the ages to come: — and the Church has got to learn administration now.

We are in a school of learning, a wonderful school, learning to fulfill such a vast vocation in the ages to come... in the ages to come. This school is for that. And if we are really through the Cross, under the Holy Spirit, under the Anointing Spirit, and if we are all “baptized in One Spirit into One Body,” if that is true, (perhaps we have got to get clearer as to what that baptism is and what that Anointing is and what that Body is) if that is true, then we are now under the Holy Spirit’s tuition, which is a practical tuition, and not a theoretical one, under His tuition in order that we shall graduate when the Lord comes — graduate into that vocation with which we have been called, unto which we have been appointed from eternity in the counsels of God: to be His governing vessel through the ages to come.

Too wonderful to grasp! Is it beyond you? It is beyond me. But this is what Paul teaches, and it is to begin with us now. “*And now,*” says he, “*unto the principalities in the heavenlies may be made known the manifold wisdom of God in the Church.*” It is a wonderful vocation. Yet how far we fall short.

Now this morning that is enough I am sure for you to lay hold of and wrestle with. Much more could be said, but that is quite enough for now. Be quiet about it, think about it, meditate upon it. All this, dear friends, that I have tried to say to you, that the Lord has tried to show you, does issue from an experimental knowledge of the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. It does. And you have seen now what that Cross means on both its sides. May it not be a subject, a doctrine, a teaching, a theory, but the mighty reality that it is in every realm. May we pray...

We are very conscious, Lord, that when we touch realms like this, there is much that tries to battle and stifle and make it difficult both to speak and to hear. So that now at the end of this course, or this time, we must appeal to Thee as on the Throne to exercise Thyself in Thy Authority, Thy Power, to make these things realities, living realities in us. Not the subject of the convocation in 1968, not the theme that certain people followed in their ministry; but, O God, save us and bring us into the good of what Thou dost say. Make it

live, make it a power in us. May it register in earth and in Heaven. In the Name of the Lord Jesus, Amen.

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