

The Nature Of That Which Issues In The Resurrection Of Christ

by T. Austin-Sparks

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Chapter 1 – The Threefold Challenge to the church which the Lord will Build

Reading: Matt. 16:16-18.

That with which we are occupied is the nature of that which issues in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The object is what He has called: "My church". We are not now so much concerned with the contemplation of the object, the church, as with a looking into its essential nature, its spiritual factors upon which, and by which it is constituted, and the very title itself contains the basic and central thing of our consideration, that which issues with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Now looking at this passage again just for a moment, we recall the familiar elements in it, but do so by way of being able to pass on to something fuller. "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" That is the statement made, and the Lord Jesus says of that statement that it was the result of a revelation from the Father to the one who made it. He took up that statement and declared that upon that truth revealed from heaven, that truth known in heaven, He would build His church. And then almost immediately there comes in a threefold challenge to both the statement and to the church which the Lord declares He will build.

1. The Challenge of the Cross

The first challenge is the challenge of the cross. Notice: "*From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed ...*" (Matt. 16:21). That is the challenge of the cross from man's side; that is what man will do. "*And Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from You, Lord; this shall never be unto You. But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan: you are a stumbling-block unto Me; for you do no mind the things of God, but the things of men*" (Matt. V.22,23). You have got a deeper element there; the challenge of Satan through carnal nature. It is a challenge to the church. It is a challenge to the intention of Christ. And then you go deeper still: "*... and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*". As we speak of that clause you notice the meaning is: "*The house of death*"; that is meant by: "*... the gates of Hades*". And the 'house of death' at this time, at this point, is seen to be something antagonistic and inimical to the divine intention, to the church which He declares He will build. It is seen on its positive side, not as something neutral or latent, but active, opposing, seeking to gain mastery over, or asserting itself against the church. The gates of Hades, the house of death, shall not have power to overcome or to hold down. You see that threefold challenge to a declaration? A challenge in the realm of man, and that religious man. The challenge in the realm of Satan, active through carnal nature in a disciple. And the challenge coming from the deepest depths, the power of death itself.

And when the Lord Jesus says: "*I will build My church*" in spite of that threefold challenge, He in effect says that "*My church*" will be something different from and superior to all that. In resurrection all those things will have been put behind, because if He is now going to the cross, and is going to build His church, it means that He must get past that cross, past that killing, and be alive again, so that it will be the Risen Lord who will build the church, and if so, the threefold challenge, with its content, will have been ruled out and overcome.

Now if you do but recognize it, from this time onwards those are three of the great things which are continuously opposing the building of the church by the Lord Jesus. Religious man, carnal nature in disciples, and the positive power of death. These are the challenges which all truly spiritual work has to meet, and these are the things which in the building of the church are being continuously overcome.

Now for a great illustration of that you turn to 1 Corinthians and that whole letter just sets forth that truth magnificently. In that letter you have the power of natural religion, the philosophy of natural religion, by which the destiny of man is analysed and systematized, and brought in and accepted. It found its way into the Corinthian church, the first, and perhaps the greatest of the churches in the Greek world, and in the early part of this first letter you see the positive activity of that thing here working against the true church, the spiritual church. There is so much more lying behind these two chapters at the beginning of this letter than we have either time or ability to make clear. If you care to resort to some of the standard works on the life and epistles of Paul, you will get great help. Take up Conybeare & Howson's '*Life and Epistles of Saint Paul*' and you will get a lot of light on the matter, and you will discover that the whole realm of Greek philosophy, which had as its object the destiny of man, in other words natural religion, the religion of the natural man, the religion of nature, that had crept in and got a hold, and the apostle has to bring in this tremendous emphasis against the wisdom of this world, the wisdom of man, and he shows how the wisdom of this world, and the wisdom of man had accomplished the most calamitous and terrible things in relation to the Lord's Christ, and therefore was opposed to: "*You are the Christ*", and being opposed to that, was opposed to: "*I will build My church.*" The wisdom of man expressed in terms of the philosophy of religion is a positive antagonist of the pure spiritual church of the resurrection. You may think that that is remote, that that carries you back to Corinth, away back into the Greek world, but it does not. It is very up to date.

The greatest force today against the Christ of God, the Anointed, and the true church of the resurrection, is what is called Modernism. There is no force in this world more positively detrimental to that which the Lord Jesus determined to have. It strikes first of all at the very heart of things because it strikes at the Person of Christ, and striking at the Person of Christ, it strikes at the very nature of His church. And yet it still keeps a Christ, and it still keeps a church, and still seeks to persecute the building of the church that it calls the church of Christ. And the Christ that it has is the Jesus of history and not the Christ of the resurrection; and the church that it has is the church of man's natural ideas about God.

In the days of Elisha the prophet, one of the golden calves which had been set up in Israel, had its location in those days in Bethel, the House of God. And unless we are mistaken, we understand that to mean man's natural ideas about God had come to be the characteristic of the House of God whereas originally Bethel was divine revelation. Now it is reason versus revelation; now it is man's natural conception of the things of God versus His revelation of His own things. Reason having a Christ and having a church but not *the* Christ and not *the* church. It is rather opposed. It is a Christ opposed to *the* Christ. It is the Jesus of history over against the Christ of God in resurrection. It is the church of man's conceiving over against the church born out of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. These two things are running on through the ages over against one another. And the fact that it is so forms the battlefield and the conflict of the true people of God. To make that perfectly simple, is it not true that our real spiritual conflict is between that which is revealed by the Holy Spirit as being God's mind about His church, and that which man himself has thought out as being God's idea for His church? That is the battlefield. I can put that in another way. The most difficult task that spiritual men and women have is to bring (now I have got to use a word in a very general sense and not in a perfect sense) Christian people to see the real nature of the church which is Christ's Body. Something else has become so deeply entrenched in their mentality, having existed for so many centuries, that immediately you touch that thing, question it, doubt

it, you meet something that, but for the power of His resurrection, will smash you. What I have said is this, that the whole established, man-made system of the church so widespread, so deeply rooted, so firmly grounded, so universally accepted, is a thing which you touch at your peril. And you will find that it is there that you meet one of your main antagonisms.

Let me put it this way. You stand with every bit of your being for the true church, the Body of Christ, as a heavenly thing and not an earthly thing, as a spiritual thing and not a thing of man, and you seek to have that true heavenly, spiritual thing made known, and expressed among the people of God, and you run counter to something which will rise up against you in the organized system of the church today, which will as far as it possibly can, break you. I do not mean that it will come out in open persecution but you will be conscious that you have roused something and that an issue has been raised. Well, that is what is here. The scribes and the pharisees, the elders, represent the church as it was, the accepted order of things, and they were going to put the Christ to death, and He recognizes that as one of the things to be reckoned with, and over against that, the worst that they can do, He said: "*I will build my church.*" Now it is true that that is one of the things that has got to be met in building the true spiritual church of a resurrection order. I could stay with that much longer and make it much clearer, but I think you see through what I am saying. It is more deeply true than you recognize. Try it, and you will know that what I have said is true. If the Lord has revealed to you the true nature of the church which is His Body, and you minister concerning that, you know quite well you meet something else which is called the church, and that very thing is out against you, but it is still held to be the church. Then that is in the beginning of the Corinthian letter.

2. The Activity of Satan through the Carnal Nature of Man

You move into the second challenge as you go on; the activity of Satan through the carnal nature of man. This is a terrific thing that the Lord Jesus says to Simon Peter: "*Get behind Me, Satan: you are a stumbling block unto Me.*" The word there is 'skalandon', a stumbling-block in the way of that object to come into being through that cross, out on the other side, and that has got to be put behind. You come into the Corinthian letter and you find the next thing you meet is that very carnal nature in the disciples. You know what the apostle says here about the natural man, and then he goes on to say: "*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal ...*" (1 cor. 3:1), and he said: 'You speak and act as men,' The things of men and man, natural and carnal man. And the conditions at Corinth which represent anything but the true resurrection nature of the church are resultant from that introduction of natural and carnal elements into the church through these Christians. Well, we can hurry to our conclusion without going very fully into that for it is true that that church which Christ builds on resurrection ground can never be realized only as every natural and carnal element in believers is ruled out and put behind. The cross of the Lord Jesus represents that. The church which He is building is a testimony to the fact that, in the first place He has triumphed, and gloriously triumphed, over all the antagonism of something which claims to be His and is not; and in the next place, it is the testimony to the fact that He has triumphed gloriously over all the power of carnality and the natural man. And if we are being built in this church of the resurrection, we know quite well that our spiritual progress and development runs parallel with, and proportionately with the setting aside of that which is of nature, and that which is carnal in us.

3. The Positive Power of the House of Death

And then the third thing, the positive power of the house of death, the gates of Hades; death itself. Turn to 1 Corinthians 15, and there you meet it. The whole chapter deals

with the matter of resurrection. The words themselves, 'resurrection' and 'raised' occur twenty-two times in this one chapter, so you can see what the chapter is about. Now the striking thing about this chapter is the way in which it begins. Of course when Paul wrote it he did not write it in chapters, and did not say: "Now I come to chapter fifteen"! His is a continual narrative, but at this point he breaks in with: "*Now I make known unto you, brethren ...*". Get the force of that. In all that has been said he comes to the point where he says: "*Now ... brethren ...*". I want you to get right into the spirit of that, the atmosphere of that. He has been saying something about a good many things which have arisen, questions which have been asked, things which have been troubling this assembly. He has given an answer to them, has dealt with them, and steadily worked his way through that mass as though he were eager to get to something else. These are serious and important things, but they are by the way. They have arisen and they have to be dealt with, but they are by the way. These are not things in the direct line of the church. This represents a detour, and when he gets to chapter 15 it is as though he has now reached the point he has been longing to reach all the way, and he says: "Now brethren we have got that all off, let us get right back to the beginning of things". "*Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you received ...*". That is the main thing. All these other things are touched by the main thing; and what is the main thing? "*... the gospel which I preached unto you wherein also ye stand ... For I delivered unto you ... first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that He has been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas ... and last of all ... He appeared to me also. Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*"

And from that point he goes right on with the central place that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus has in his gospel. He hangs everything upon it, or he gathers everything around it. "*... if Christ has not been raised, then is our preaching vain*"; that is one thing. "*... and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain ...*"; that is another thing. "*Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that He raised up Christ*"; that is another thing. "*... and if Christ has not been raised ... you are yet in your sins...*". "*Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.*" Another thing. He musters round this central thing all the great magnitudes of the faith. If this is not true, then everything goes, everything collapses. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the central and supreme thing in the Gospel. Why? Because, as this chapter makes clear before it closes, it represents: "*O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is your sting?*" The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Sin, death — destroyed, and manifested as destroyed in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and we have victory. That is where the resurrection of the Lord Jesus brings us. Death, the house of death plundered, robbed of its authority, its power, the keys in His possession: "*... and I have the keys of death and of Hades*". And the church no longer subject to the dominion of death either in time or at the end of time. The resurrection church is the thing which is marked above all other things by the power of His resurrection. It embodies all the meaning of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. That is the church which He is building, but it encounters those three things, and its progress towards final consummation is the progress of a battle. A battle against the first thing mentioned, and that second thing, and this third thing. The opposition is the opposition of death, for although in Him death is fully and finally destroyed, for the church the last enemy to be destroyed is death, and she has to come finally and ultimately into that triumph. She comes now into conflict with death; our battle from day to day is with the spiritual power of death.

Why have I said all this? Not to present so much teaching, but because it is of tremendous importance for us to recognize this, that our life depends upon our emancipation from dead things. If it is a dead system which claims to be what it is not, and denies the spiritual reality of the truth we are better out of it for our very lives. It will

kill us if we are not raised entirely above it and made something by resurrection, apart from it. Our life depends upon our having all carnality put away, and all the touch of carnality obstructs the progress of this spiritual building in the power of resurrection. And this of course, is such a commonplace with us in our knowledge and experience that it hardly needs mentioning, that spiritual development, progress, is fraught with terrific conflict with the power of death. Some of you know that perhaps more than others, but it is true.

If you come into the testimony of Christ Risen as some thing which has to be exemplified, demonstrated, manifested, in every true member of the Body of Christ, you come into a battle with death itself, and a dual battle, and you will know the meaning of death more than any other person in this world. All who are not in that testimony will have a limited idea of the meaning of death. Get into that testimony and you will know the extraordinary experiences in the physical realm, the workings of death; you will know extraordinary experiences in the mental realm, the operation of death; and in the spiritual realm. You sometimes feel you are right up against the suffocating, blanketing, numbness, something which would crush your spirit out and make it impossible for you to go on; and every bit of ministry in that testimony is only brought through by conflict, and when it comes out in life it is there a fresh testimony to its power over death. And the Lord is making His church in its individual member, a living expression of this great truth that He has conquered death; not a bit of its doctrine, or its creed, but a bit of its experience. Whenever some real spiritual bit of work is to be done, some spiritual message is to be given, some bit of divine revelation to be got out, it is not easy. A battle starts, perhaps days or weeks beforehand. The Enemy lays his plans to thwart that, and when at last that is through with the shout of victory, which has in it all the solemnity of a great conflict faced. That is true to experience but that is what you and I are in, and that is how the Lord is building His church. He is building His church against the religious mind of the day. It has its own ideas of what the church ought to be, and what ought to be taught in the church, and if you come out with what the Lord has revealed as over against that, you encounter the religious mind, you are up against something very strong. The Lord is building His church against that which is represented by: "... *this shall never be unto You*". "*Be it far from You, Lord.*" What is that? Why that is the refusal of the natural mind to accept the cross. The natural mind does not accept the cross gladly or willingly, but fights it, and the building of the church is right up against that.

And then, as though you leave the realm of any kind of concrete expression of opposition and go into the realm of the abstract, which is more real than all the rest, you come right up against naked death itself, the house of death. And I do not want to stay there; that is the conflict side. I want to resolve that into its two sides. There is the cross of the Lord Jesus which stands between all that of which we have spoken, and the church that He builds, and that cross closes a way, a highway. Up to the point of the cross there has been this movement. It has moved everywhere with its purpose, its idea, out from Satan through carnal nature, through natural religion, seeking to build this thing. You must remember that the work of Satan is to build a temple in which he is god; to make this world a temple of god in which he sits in the place of God Incarnate, in antichrist. That is the climax of history on one side, and he is moving, and has been moving through the ages, by these means, religion. Oh when will you and I have clearly and strongly enough apprehended that religion can be one of the most antagonistic things to the true purpose of God; religion can be positively opposed. And I do not mean the religion of Islam, or of Buddha, but the so-called Christian religion. Just as Judaism at length became the outstanding opponent of the Christ of God and of God's purpose in Christ, and Judaism was originally constituted by God Himself, so Christianity, originally constituted by God, can become something so estranged from God, and yet remain Christianity in name, that it becomes the most positive force of antagonism to the purpose of God. This is by religion, by man in nature carnally coming in and taking a place, ruling, influencing, governing, manipulating, asserting, reasoning, willing, yes, by that all moving on to have the false temple of god; and by death, to conquer by death, to realize that thing by the

power of death. All that meets a deadlock in the cross of the Lord Jesus. It is like a great barrier set in the way which says: So far shall You go and no further. The religion of nature, even the Christian religion of man cannot get past the cross of Christ. The natural man, the carnal man, even in Christian activity cannot get past the cross of Christ. It is arrested there and death is also arrested in the cross of the Lord Jesus. And in that cross where these things meet their arrest they meet their doom, and in His death He destroys them and they are put away; but that cross represents an end. You who have a mental grasp of the picture which I have drawn must not forget that the cross is an abiding principle which goes on. You and I may be saved, and there may be carnality about us as spiritual men and women, but that does not get past the cross. As the Holy Spirit has His way with us, He will more and more thoroughly demand that these things go where He put them when Christ died. We will never get through this barrier of the cross with one bit of that other creation.

The cross of the Lord Jesus is God's eternal "NO!" to this world, and to fallen man by nature: "NO NEVER! NOT ONE BIT." God's NO! When the Lord Jesus cried in that cross: "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me*", that was the cry of the despair of all that belongs to nature. He, at that moment, had taken upon Him representatively, the whole nature of the creation in Adam, and God turned His face from Him, and His back upon it, and said: "No!" and Christ said: "*Why have You forsaken Me?*" It was not His Son He forsook as His Son; it was a Representative of creation, and in forsaking Him thus He forsook that old order, and in effect He said: "No never! I will have none of you. I repudiate you". It was the cry of a repudiating on the part of God of something with which He had become bound up by His Son in a representative way. God said to Him, as it were: "NO; finally, utterly, irrevocably No; this cross ends it all." That is one side.

There is a resurrection, and while the cross is a barrier on the one side, it is an open door on the other side, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is God's: "YES!", His great, wonderful, glorious "Yes". God in His terribleness, God in His unchangeableness, God in His unalterableness, God saying with terrific emphasis: "NO!" You come up against that "NO" of God and you cannot move that. No pleading will move that; no argument will move that; no praying will move that. God says: "I have said No." That is the end. You come away and say: The thing is finished, I can tell that He means that and nothing I like to say or do will alter that; that is the end. It can be despair if you like, for all human reason, thought, ethic, morality, human religion, human work in the Name of God, which is still human work — everything — No, not one bit; shut down by God. That is an awful picture; that is stern and terrible. Move over on to the other side and see another side of God. You meet God now not with a stern frown of a terrible foreboding, but a smile of triumph, and He is found with the marks of invitation on His face, everything is possible after all and He is saying now: "YES, a thousand times Yes" — but not to that; to this. You and I need to step into God's "Yes". We must recognize we can never have the "Yes" until we have had the "No", but it is a blessed thing to get past that crisis; nothing of the old, not my natural mind, not my natural desires, not my natural activities, nothing of my old creation life now, no longer I but Christ. And God says "Yes" on that ground: "Everything is possible", and there is a way through. To live on the side of the divine "Yes"! What is the book of the Acts but God's "Yes." "Go on, I am with you." It is good to have God in a relationship like that. God saying: "Yes, go on", and that "Go on", that is resurrection ground. It is prospect; it is possibility. You will say: "Yes, but Lord I am very weak." "Never mind, that is no criterion at all; come along, We will do it." "But I am empty, Lord." "Never mind, let Us go on with it." God is on the "Yes" side when we come on to it. Nature goes out but all things are possible on resurrection ground. Oh get on to that ground; the Lord needs us on that ground. It would be easy for any one of us here to say: "Because I am not constituted as I feel I ought to be, I am not made as I think I ought to be made, I never had the natural qualifications for this thing the Lord has called me to. I have this and that handicap, it is no use me entertaining anything." Any of us could take that ground, but that is God's ground of "No". The ground God wants us to take is: "Yes, I have everything against me but that is not the criterion at all. Here is a

possibility through faith in the Risen Lord which is bigger than all my impossibilities." "Here is something which would represent an entire handicap, but I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". That is resurrection ground. Oh to get on to it positively.

You get up in the morning feeling more dead than alive, and you say: "This is my infirmity; I repudiate this and if the Lord has anything today, then I may be nine-tenths dead but I trust the Lord and mean to have it done". That is resurrection ground. The Lord calls you to do something, and you say: "Look at me, I have nothing in myself to do that; I have never done anything like that in my life." Take this ground: "Lord, You know altogether what I am by nature, but I am not going to allow that to influence the situation. I am going to trust You in the matter of that which You have laid upon me, and by faith I step into all the possibilities of the Risen Life of the Lord Jesus". Move on that ground and God says "Yes." I know that is true almost every day of my life. The power of His resurrection is a working reality. Over against something in nature which says "No", taking resurrection ground, God comes in and says "Yes" to the weakest, to the most empty, most helpless. By faith lay hold of the Risen Lord and God says "Yes" every time, for His will. Of course there must be no presumption and trying to use His Risen life for your own ends and glory, but in the will of God, He says "Yes" every time. Yes, all things are possible to them that believe.

Whether you forget all the mass through which we have waded to get to our point, remember the issue is: "*I will build My church*" and it is a very practical thing in every-day life. "My church" is a testimony to the power of resurrection. Every living stone is living in the power of His resurrection and has to be daily a testimony to that power, and it can be, through faith. The Lord help us to repudiate and set aside all that gets in the way of that life and take our ground with Him there where He builds, and the gates of Hades do not prevail.

Chapter 2 – The Constituents of the Soul

Now we resume our consideration of that inner nature of that which comes out in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In the previous chapter we covered a great deal of outline paving the way for a more minute and closer consideration, and without going back over that ground we shall seek to go right on from the point at which we arrived.

To resume we will ask ourselves the question: What is it that we are really concerned with at this time? And for all the most vital purposes of our own spiritual life and service it is important, it is indispensable that we understand the difference between that which is of the soul and that which is of the spirit. We will dwell then in this chapter on the soul and its constituents.

We have seen that man, since the fall and by the fall, is definitely said by the Word of God, to be a soulish creature. That is stated and quite emphatically by the apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians chapter two. Our translation uses the word 'natural' in the place of the Greek word 'soulical'.

As to the constituents of the soul; there are those which lie near to the surface, or on the surface, and there are many others which lie beneath the surface which are not apparent, and some of which are altogether beyond our power of reaching and naming. Man as a soulical creature has factors and elements in his make-up which are deeper than our perception. He is a very complex being capable of manifesting most extraordinary features. In a sense he is a very dangerous being and it is mainly in that realm of the danger of the soulical man that we are occupied at this time. On the surface it is quite well-known that the soulish nature is comprised of three phases or

departments, of reason, feeling, and willing. There you begin with any simple study or consideration of psychology. Back of this thing, and much deeper, there are many other things which come within the category of what is called the occult, more remote things which become a basis for all such things as so-called spiritism and what is ultra psychical. We are well aware of these facts. They are not strange to our knowledge but it is important for us to bear them in mind in a day when we are dealing with phenomena so extraordinary as much of what there is about today. For unless we recognize that we shall be confusing things and mistaking certain things for other things, failing to recognize that certain things which might appear to be of a certain character, can be accounted for altogether on other lines. That is speaking somewhat veiledly, but you can have something which looks very much like a spiritual thing which can be altogether accounted for on psychical or soulful grounds by reason of those deeper depths of the make-up of man by nature. That is just a first statement by way of bringing man into view.

The second thing, which has already been intimated, but which needs to be emphasized afresh is, that man as a soulful creature is not an isolated creature, but that there is an alliance between him in his very nature, and Satan. We said that interference of Satan with the creation, by man's consent and by man's action, changed the nature of man from being primarily a spirit man to a soul man. And that interference had the effect of making man suitable to satanic ends, so that man in his very being became adapted to the purposes of Satan. Therefore there entered into man's very being a deception which he has handed down in the constitution of the race all the way through, so that the entire race is a deceived race because the faculty of spiritual knowledge and understanding fell out of union with God, into what is called death.

To explain that simply, if you will have in your mind's eye three circles, one on top of the other, and yet each one running into the other, the top, spirit; the middle, soul; and the bottom, body; you have the original order. The spirit joined with God; the faculty of spiritual transmission from God who is Spirit; that is spiritual understanding, apprehension, knowledge, discernment. Satan did not come to the spirit but to the soul and called upon man to act, choose, in his soul, ignoring his spirit; and you know that the three uppermost features of the soul were used — reason, argument: *"Has God said ..."*. And desire, an appeal to a desire. Desires were perfectly legitimate, but it is entirely on what principle you gratify your desires as to whether desire is right or wrong in the long run. And then will, volition, action, choice. And man on his soul level acted contrary to what he knew in his spirit to be God's revealed will. When he did that, that governing organ of his being, the spirit, died in the Scriptural sense of death; it fell out of union, or was separated from God, and no longer was man *"joined to the Lord one Spirit"*. He became a soul man with soul government instead of spirit. But that act had let the deceiving work of the devil into his being and he was deceived, and all that ever came from him and through him have been deceived and are deceived. And in the very nature, therefore, of the race, there is an alliance with Satan, and Satan has ground suitable for his purpose.

What is the purpose of Satan? Satan's great aim is to make everything of the soulful man, of the psychical man; to set up man according to his own heart. God has a Man after His heart who will do all His commandment, but that is a spiritual Man. Satan has a man after his heart who will do all his will, and that is a psychical man, or soulful man, and Satan's ultimate triumph is the antichrist, the super-man; man deified and worshipped, which is Satan incarnate, taking the place of God incarnate in Christ. counterfeit, imitation.

So that it is of primary importance for us, as the Lord's servants, as well as the Lord's children, to see that the soul man is a mixture of Satan and humanity, and that there is an alliance in the very nature of man. Now you must be careful lest you say that man is devil incarnate. He is not. The difference is this. Satan sinned in the spirit. There is no

hope for him, and there never is any hope for anyone who sins in the spirit. Man has sinned in the flesh. There is hope for him until he is enlightened, as Satan was, and knowing the power of God he sins in spirit, then there is no more forgiveness. There is no chance of Satan's salvation whatever the Universalists may say, because he has sinned in spirit. Man has not done that. Man's spirit is dead in that sense. Man is sinning in soul and in body. He can sin ultimately in spirit as the Word teaches. I know that raises difficult questions, but it is not unimportant to recognize the difference, because while it is perfectly true that Satan is related to, and bound up with the very nature of man, man is not the devil incarnate, there is a difference. The sin of man in the spirit eventually will be whether he, with enlightenment and knowledge, chooses allegiance to Satan or chooses allegiance to the One about whom he has been enlightened, the Lord Jesus. Then will come the issue, as to whether he sins merely as a natural man sins or whether he sins in another realm. That enlightenment is the work of the Holy Spirit. That work of the Holy Spirit requires the spirit of man as its organ. Therefore, to sin against the Holy Spirit is to sin in the organ of spiritual enlightenment, which is the spirit. The world is sinning, but it can be saved while its spirit has not been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and quickened. It is sinning in the soul and in the body, but once you pass beyond that realm and get to the realm where spirits sin, they are held in chains unto everlasting punishment. That is an awful side of things, but I mention it by way of discrimination, to seek to get at the heart of some of our difficulties, and mainly, of course, to define certain differences between a soulish man or a soulish creature with Satan implicit, or mixed up and allied with that nature and becoming another thing such as Judas eventually became, an incarnation of Satan, when he entered into him. There was a point where Satan was working through Judas; there came a point where Satan worked in him. He worked through him by alliance with his soul, he worked in him when Judas consented to his entering in, and ultimately rejected his Lord.

Now this alliance between the soulish man and Satan is to be recognized, what its nature is. I am quite sure a lot of people have not made that discrimination and are in difficulty. They are conscious that in their soul life there is some kind of an alliance with the evil one, and at certain times they are acutely conscious of it and they suffer, and they do not know where their own personality ends and where the devil begins, and then they fall into accepting the suggestion of the devil that they have become demon possessed and that is another thing altogether. Mark that difference, it is a tremendous difference.

In your soul life, under given circumstances, the effect of too heavy a meal at night, or something like that, you become irritable and short-tempered and perhaps you show it in word or act, and when you do it, it is like the very devil himself, you feel the very presence of the devil, and when you have passed it, it was like an awful nightmare. Yes, a child of God. It is the close relationship of your body and your soul. Then the devil begins to whisper to you about being demon possessed, and if you take it on there is no end to that, the blackness and the darkness. But this is another thing altogether, You have not sinned in your spirit. It does not mean you are without responsibility because the very fact that you know that that is wrong, and rebel against it, is the uprising of your spirit to tell you to go and put that right. But it does not mean you have sinned in your spirit, although your spirit may have been touched by the uncleanness of that, and you will have to go and ask for cleansing of the flesh and of the spirit. That is the Word of God. But keep your line drawn between the two things. Demon possession is when the devil gets into your spirit not merely into your soul. Look at the Word of the Lord about this.

James 3:15: "*This wisdom is not a wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish (soulial, demoniacal)*". Now wisdom is a faculty of the soul. It is on the intellectual side of the soul, the intellect. The Word says that that wisdom is soulish, it is earthly, and its inspiration is from hell; it is demoniacal. It is a strong word here translated 'devilish'. You carry that over to the letter to the Corinthians, Paul's discussion on the wisdom of this world, see it brought into the Corinthian assembly. You may take it

for granted that those Corinthian believers did not take on or bring in anything that was obviously and patently iniquitous or wrong. The philosophy of the Greek world was a very sublime and beautiful thing. That philosophy on the destiny of man — read any of those Greek philosophers — was beautiful. They were bringing this in and mixing it up with the Christian truth in an assembly of saints, and the apostle says it is the wisdom of man and he relates that wisdom to the soulish man who *"receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them ..."*. And he says that being soulish is the wisdom of the world, and James defines all that as earthly, soulical, demoniacal. And did it not prove to be so? The apostle says to the Corinthians that by that wisdom they crucified the Lord of Glory. Demoniacal, beautiful stuff, sublime conceptions of man and his destiny issue in the crucifying of the Lord Jesus. It is the natural wisdom of man. You see how dangerous a man may be in his philosophy, in his very thoughts, reasonings. And therefore man in himself, reasoning, arguing, philosophizing, analysing, is ruled out altogether by the cross of the Lord Jesus, and has no place in that which issues with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Oh this wisdom *"Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"*. This is resurrection wisdom, a different thing altogether.

Or read what Jude says about this natural man: verse 19: *"These are they who make separations, sensual (soulical), having not the Spirit."* Those two things are set over against one another, having the Spirit and being soulical. What does 'having the Spirit' mean? Well, it means that the human spirit has been raised from its place of dormancy, renewed, born again, and become the vessel of the Holy Spirit. Any such one is expected, therefore, to be pre-eminently spiritual on that double ground that their spirit has been born anew and the Holy Spirit is resident within, and therefore, they are not soulical pre-eminently, and these things will not be, or should not be. *"... who make separations"* because they are soulical: *"not having the Spirit"*. This clause says that the soulical man who is pre-eminently soulical, has not the Spirit. It says, to make that more emphatic, that the child of God is altogether, or should be altogether above the mere works of his, or her soul. Is it not true that Satan's successes come through the soulical nature always? *"These are they who make separations ..."*. What is it that makes separations of this kind? (Jude is not talking about those separations which are legitimate, that we are to separate ourselves from everyone who walks disorderly but these kinds which are of the Corinthian character: *"I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ."*) Because of the natural element triumphing. Well, the cause of these things is just the soul life, either in its reasonings or desirings, or in its willings. The remedy for these things is, as Paul points out to the Corinthians, that that natural man should recognize Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and that the Spirit should be pre-eminent in the believer.

Now then, that has to do with Satan's alliance with the natural man, in his nature; then as to the soul being ungoverned by the renewed spirit. This is the ground of deception and false works. When the soul is ungoverned by the renewed Spirit that is the ground for all the deceiving work of Satan and all the false works of man. As to the unbelieving that applies firstly. The word is: *"... because they received not the love of the truth ... for this cause God sends them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."* And notice, that follows this: *"... whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing; because they received not the love of the truth"* (2 Thes. 2:10-12). Therefore in the unbelieving the soul is the ground of deception and false works. And what is the nature of deception? A great working of error, delusion. Well it would never be a delusion to capture the unbelieving unless it was a delusion. I mean, if this one comes in this way, with power and signs and wonders of falsehood, as nakedly as that, no rational being would take it on; it must necessarily come along the line of a great

delusion, deception, which must be an imitation, a representation of Christ — Antichrist standing over against Christ, but imitating Christ. There are multitudes of people today who have been in the way of truth, not the heathen who have never been in the way of the truth but those who have all the Christian traditions, who have a free, unchained Bible, who have that which speaks of the unmistakable pre-eminence of Christ, who have refused to believe, for whom the authority of the Word of God is altogether undermined, and the authority of the Person of Christ is abandoned, and these people are being caught in a great delusion, something false. Satan is successful along the line of their own soulish life; the deception is by reason of what these people are in their own nature, and the attitude which they have taken towards the presented truth. What I mean is this; that what is called the Christian world, this country and continental countries, I think particularly Germany, have had the knowledge of the truth as no other countries in this world, the truth of Christ, and a much fuller knowledge of the truth has been in these countries than anywhere else. Now the acceptance of what is called Modernism, is unbelief at its very core. We are going to see the greatest delusions that the world has ever known arising in these countries. We are going to see the great religious deceptions in these countries, a great working of error, and there will be these lying wonders, powers and signs, and the deceit of unrighteousness. The soul life along the line of intellect and volition has been developed in this part of the world more than in any other part, and that development is running so clearly in fellowship with a bedrock of unbelief. Some of you know how impregnated the Christian world in its highest development is, with that which is called Modernism. Even evangelical circles have unconsciously received into their very substrata pagan ideas, pagan psychology of which we were speaking in the previous chapter. I ask you, how many, comparatively, of the Lord's people and Lord's servants today have a clear perception of the difference between soul and spirit, and have a working apprehension of it so that in their ministry they are able to recognize and discern that difference and work accordingly? Comparatively very few. So that our evangelical work is carried on on the basis of a psychology which is not scriptural, and the soulish nature of man is the ground of both. Man in nature is appealed to, if only his reason can be persuaded and his emotions moved and his will influenced, to act on certain presented propositions, and you have got a conversion! Nothing of the kind. Conversions do not take place on that level. That which is born again, born anew is not the soulical man, it is the spiritual man. The soul can no more be born anew than the body. It is the spirit that is born anew. The soul derives the benefit but do not confuse effects with causes. A truly born anew one, whose spirit has been renewed by the Holy Spirit will have a change in the soul life but the changes in the soul life will be the effects and not the cause. The danger is to go off on your effects and make them everything. Your new feelings, your new way of thinking, your new sense of purpose, new desire, volition, choice; they are the fruits not the cause, but people take up the effects and begin to make the effects everything and circle around an experience and that is the danger of everything, that they have got back on to another level. It is important to recognize that. You get a young convert, truly born again and he begins to move out on the effects of the new birth, the new feelings, that which comes through to the soul as the good of the birth of the spirit, they move out on that and if you have had much experience you feel you want to give them a little caution. But it is not always wise to sit on their new enthusiasms; they will not understand, or begin to restrain. But you know the danger, and if you are wise as a watcher of their souls you will wisely, gently, carefully, without chilling, dampening, you will seek to keep the fundamental things in view because you know that in a month or so they will come up against something when these outer things will not be what they were, and when the blossom begins to fall and the winds blow, they will begin to question whether after all it was but an emotion, or whether it was real. And you know the danger of that hour. You want to understand, and be able as a wise nurse of souls to point out: Yes, do not confuse the effects with the cause; you were born deeper than that and you have to learn to stand on your spiritual feet without a sensation; in the long run you have to learn to stand with the Lord where you have not a feeling of any kind. The soul cannot be born again any more than the body just now. It is important to know that and to recognize it.

As to the believer; we have touched that so far, but I want to say a word about the danger of soul projection in the believer. That is, of projecting, asserting the natural will, or the natural feelings, or the natural reasoning. There is a great peril here for believers and especially in the Lord's work. Of course it applies to life generally for the believer. If you and I are projecting or asserting our own will as a child of God, two things may happen, either or both. We may become deceived and misled. So often a child of God wants something very badly and begins to work and manipulate to get that something, and asserts their will in that direction. That child of God is most likely going astray, that is, going into a wrong direction, going into a deception. The same is true in our feelings, our likes, our preferences, our emotions. If we project them they will lead us astray. If we allow them to carry us away they will carry us to a false position. And the same with our reasoning. Oh, the reasoning of a child of God so often gets that child of God into an awful mess. Either deception of that kind, and they come into a false position. And the alternative is no alternative at all, it is only the practical outworking of it — false works. That that projecting of our will, that asserting of our will, or our feelings, our desires, our emotions, or our reasoning will result in works which are false fruits and which will not stand. It may be works for the Lord, but it will eventually be proved not the work of the Spirit but our work. That in life. We have to be very careful in our work, especially in the matter of preaching, that this soul projection does not go beyond the government of our spirit under the Holy Spirit.

It is one of the most real things, this difference. One of the most comforting things to me as I look back upon years when I did not know what I know today in the theological way of these differences, when I had not come experimentally into the fuller meaning of the cross in this realm to know I was born again. This is because so often in days of very little enlightenment on this matter I remember distinctly how in the course of preaching I would say something in my sermon and the bottom would drop out of everything when I said that; it was as though I had fallen into an air pocket. I knew where I ceased to move on one level and dropped down on to another, and I had to get to prayer and say: Lord, I will never say a thing like that again. And many times that happened. I remember distinctly how, after the war, having seen a fair amount of what was going on, one would be preaching and refer to the war in some way, some experience, and invariably it was as though the Holy Spirit stopped there and would not go on with me, and I came to the place where war was taboo in sermons, not because I had any outward theory on the matter at all, illustrations in the soul realm might have been effective, but the Holy Spirit said: I am not in that horrible thing; that is a black, dark thing, don't you touch it, leave it alone. I had to leave that out. And I had many such experiences before I understood these things from a theological point of view, but I see today, and I see what the cross of the Lord Jesus means. You may have the experience although you have not got the theory. People who have no real spiritual life with God can do all those things, but those who are moving with the Lord come to the place where they learn a lot of new things, and they learn inwardly in their own spirit. Now what is true on the one side is true on the other. There is a great danger of soul projection in strength which leads to deception and false works. There is also a danger of spiritual weakness in relation to the soul.

The soul may not be strong, may not be of the aggressive type soulically, may not be finding any strong feelings or emotions, may not be finding any strong affections and reasonings or any sense of being urged by a strong intention, and because that is so, you are equally in danger. You have come to the place which is perhaps one of the most dangerous places you can come to, dangerously near to passivity, which is a happy hunting ground for the devil. David was in a state of passivity in the day when the time came round for kings to go out to battle and he sent his field marshal and stayed at home, went up on his bed — you know what the devil did with him that day. For the rest of His life he was scarred. And there is a danger of spiritual weakness (I am speaking to believers now of course) in relation to the soul. The spirit has got on the one hand to hold the soul back and keep the soul under; on the other hand the spirit has to say to the

soul: Come on now, no passivity, no lying down. When we do not feel like it the spirit has to say: Come on! You understand what I mean? It is just as important to see that side as the other side. You can be deluded on the ground of passivity just as much as on the ground of soul aggressiveness.

Now one other danger which comes in the realm of the believer's life in this connection is that of the refined realms of soul in service. I mean those refined realms of soul which may be called the 'mystical', the artistic, the occult. So many people mistake the mystical for the spiritual. And some of the great soul cults, Christian systems which are entirely soulish, have their greatest vogue in this realm where there is an atmosphere enshrining, or heredity of mysticism, where there is an artistic atmosphere or state of things. Rome has developed that to a finis. You can get a very pure kind of counterfeit Holy Spirit's work in a realm where the mystical and the artistic is highly developed. In these parts of the world where the hard and more or less cold background of the practical, the commercial, exists and in the historic setting things are more blatant, but get into those parts of the world where the whole history is mystical, artistic, those finer realms of soul, and you will find that a false spirituality has far purer expression there and looks much more like the true thing because of the soul setting, the beautiful colouring, the artistic conditions, and the mystical temperament. The deception becomes far greater. The whole thing works according to its background. If you get a Teutonic background you get one expression; if you have a Celtic background you get another. It is important to recognize that. It is only a matter of degree between that passivity that sits and has a quiet time and registers what comes, and the Buddhist priest who separates himself from society and goes through long fasts in order to get his soul in tune with the mystic world, and receives communications and impressions. It is only a matter of degree. It is the one thing; it is soulical. The Buddhist priest can teach us a lot, a very great deal of what comes from the other world. He is far ahead of our cults. It is only a matter of degree; the same thing. You get a deeper and a purer (if you like to call it that, if this thing is pure at all) thing in the realm of a Buddhist priest because you have got a historic mystical background, a refined soul realm. It is mysticism. That is not the spirit.

We all know, that is those who have any real spiritual discernment and life, that certain people of an artistic temperament far more quickly accept the teaching, say of the Body of Christ, or such teachings. They accept, respond to, take them on, but we know that they are using phraseology. They have got ideas, but we know that they are not in the good of the thing at all. The soul, in a refined state can appreciate after a manner these things, and seem to receive and take them on. And that is one of the greatest perils for the church of Christ, that there is all the difference between a spiritual or spirit apprehension under the Holy Spirit, and that ability of a refined mystical soul to appreciate ideals, high thoughts.

Now with this I close. It is easy to get at the soul through the senses, through hearing, through feeling and so on. It is impossible for anyone but the Holy Spirit, by the Word of God, to get at the spirit through the soul. That is the work of God's Spirit by the Word of God. And so Hebrews 4:12 makes it perfectly clear: "*For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.*" That is the Word of God in the hands of the Holy Spirit. It is that; and only the Word of God in the hands of the Holy Spirit can do that. Nothing else can do that. If a preaching of Christ is without the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit it will reach the soul but it will not reach the spirit. What the results may seem to be is not the criterion at all; it is what did it. Did the Word of God do it in the power of the Holy Spirit? Give the Word of God a secondary place, a minor place and you have not the means for effecting the essential work of reaching the spirit. "... *piercing even to the dividing ...*", the Greek word does not mean separating the two, it means getting in between the two and finding out where the one begins and the other ends. "... *joints and marrow*" is an illustration of it. Until the first one to dissect the human body put his knife into the bone,

probably all thought the bones were hollow, but they found there was something inside the bone and you could drive the knife between the bone and marrow. The Holy Spirit takes that up and says, there is something there which no one knows of except that knife, and that is the Word of God by the Holy Spirit, and He alone can find out what is in there and touch that, and He is able to get in between those two and show the difference, and only the Holy Spirit with the Word can do that.

You see the necessity of three things. First, that the Holy Spirit has His instrument, which is the renewed spirit of the servant of the Lord. Secondly, that the servant of the Lord has the Holy Spirit and works and preaches in the power of God the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Thirdly, that the Word of God is the means used. Oh there is a wonderful virtue in using the Word of God in the power of the Spirit; it gets somewhere where nothing else can get.

Now ask the Lord to show you the meaning of these things.

Chapter 3 – Completing the Testimony in the Power of Resurrection

Reading: Matt. 16:16-22; Heb. 11:13,39-40; Gal. 2:20.

"I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

"... He must go to Jerusalem ... and be killed ..."

"Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from You, Lord: this shall never be unto You."

Why did Peter begin to rebuke Him? Because Peter thought that if the Lord Jesus was killed, that would be an end of everything; that his faith could not go beyond death, his faith could not go beyond the cross, his faith could not go beyond that killing, and it was a lapse in faith which led him to begin to rebuke his Master when the cross was brought into view. If that church was going to be built, and the cross, the killing, the death was to intervene, to come before its building, then that church demands a faith which goes through death, goes beyond death and overcomes death. At that moment Peter had not that faith. You see a fresh principle is brought in as to the nature of that which comes up in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is the principle or constituent of faith which triumphs over death, and does not believe that death is the end of everything. Now that is exactly the faith which is referred to throughout Hebrews chapter 11.

We are there told quite clearly that the faith of the saints was a faith which looked beyond and apprehended it though death intervened: *"These all died ..."* (v.18). Yes, death intervened, but they died in faith. They had not received the promises, therefore if the promises were anything to them, they must believe that although they die the promises will be fulfilled to them and therefore, their faith must be a faith which reaches beyond death. *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country ..."* (v.13,14). And they died with their eyes looking on believing that this is not the end. And so theirs was a death-conquering faith, or, in other words, its was resurrection apprehended by faith unto the realization of God's purpose. They, by faith, lived in the power of a coming age. *"... God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect"* (v. 40). So that what is now here before us is the church, the resurrection of the perfecting of faith. These saints are said to have triumphed over death by their forward look and apprehension of faith. We are in the succession and completion of their faith. We are told here that the responsibility of perfecting their testimony rests upon the church, and the church will not perfect their testimony on any other ground than that upon which they developed the testimony. They developed the testimony and carried it on from age to age, generation to generation, on the basis of a faith in the power of resurrection triumphing over death, and the completing of their faith, the consummating of their testimony which falls to the church will not be accomplished on any other ground than that.

We notice that the whole of Hebrews chapter 11 does not only tell us of certain exploits carried out by saints covering many hundreds of years, from Abel to begin with and the Maccabees to end with, but this chapter represents the testimony in progressive development. There is the dispensational feature in the whole chapter.

Abel represents, shall we say the simple beginning of the testimony. A sinner away from God, finds justification, righteousness, access and favour on the ground of the excellency of his sacrifice. It is the basis of the Gospel. That is where the testimony of Jesus begins so far as the Gospel is concerned and every successive man mentioned represents an advance in the testimony. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and all the time you are developing the testimony. Abel hands on something which was gathered up in Moses;

Moses gathers up all the features which have preceded him in the testimony, and embodies those features in a corporate representation. Exodus 31 brings that in. The tabernacle of testimony is the inclusive corporate representation of all the features of the testimony which have preceded, from Abel onwards.

That testimony is carried forward. It becomes a very thin line again, unto a remnant, and then the remnant of a remnant; you come to the dark days between the two Testaments, three hundred years, the wars of the Maccabees. But the writer of the letter to the Hebrews knew all about that. Some of the things here mentioned were the things which were done to the Maccabees who sought to maintain the testimony between the old dispensation and the new. The testimony was carried on progressively, but one feature characterized that testimony from start to finish, and it was that they refused the dominion of death. They refused to allow that death could defeat God's purpose, and that refusal, which was the refusal of faith, was virtually the power of His resurrection operating in them through faith. The ultimate victory by which all the promises to them would be secured and fulfilled was the victory of Christ over death. The 'better thing' which God had reserved for us was that we should actually come into the inheritance of the full victory which they had only looked on to by faith. But the testimony is not completed yet; the testimony is taken up by the church. The church inherits the testimony of the saints of all ages, gathers it up into itself and fights the final battle against death. The church's ultimate battle is the battle with death.

Death is not merely a physical thing. Death is a great power, a great spiritual force in this universe. There is a great responsibility resting upon us as we live in this day, which is the end of the ages; it is to complete the testimony of the saints. And as Paul passes on he urges: "*Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses ...*", that we shall complete the testimony. In effect he says: They are all looking on and saying to you: 'We have done our bit in the testimony and have not yielded to death. We have stood not accepting defeat and death, now see that you do not do it; you complete the work.' "... *.seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith ...*". The perfecting of faith in the perfecting of the testimony. Well, we note the progressive factor in the testimony as is here presented.

It might be perhaps helpful if we stay for a moment upon that little fragment: "... *God having provided some better thing concerning us ...*". We have suggested what generally that 'better thing' is; but what is it particularly? If you go back to chapter 8 of this letter you will see what it is specifically. : "*But now has He obtained a ministry the more excellent, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises*" (v.6). And what are the 'better promises' that we inherit? The rest of chapter eight tells you. The old covenant was that in outward things, the covenant which He made with them when He took them by the hand and led them forth out of the land of Egypt, the covenant of outward things, and now the better covenant which comes by the better promises: "*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them*". Better promises unto the better covenant into which we enter by the Holy Spirit, is the reality of things within and not without; but now for the believer everything is inside not outside. That is the better thing which God foresaw for us. It represents all the glorious work of the Holy Spirit who was the promise of the Father, in whom all the promises are fulfilled — better promises. The Holy Spirit indwelling now writes the law of God in our hearts and makes everything inward.

Now it is upon that basis that the testimony is to be completed. It is upon the basis of faith in the triumphant Lord as within us: "*Christ in you the hope of glory*", "*by the Holy Spirit; that is the better thing*". If you think about it for a moment that is the battleground of faith: "*Christ in you ...*". The devil will do anything to make you doubt

that, question that, be uncertain about that, forget that, fail to apprehend that, that Christ is in you, the triumphant Lord, the Lord that has conquered death. "... *and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God ...*". "I live", that is the life triumphant over death, but it is 'by faith' in Him. The testimony is going to be completed upon that basis. Oh, if we really did more fully and strongly believe that the Lord who has conquered death is in us the testimony would be more perfect and we should be in the way of completing the testimony, because the testimony is Christ triumphant over death, Christ Risen in power over death, now within, by faith. You see the ground upon which the testimony is to be perfected. On different ground from the Old Testament; the ground of better promises, the better covenant, the better thing of God. And this should make us feel ashamed of ourselves, that they for whom everything was external and in the future, so marvellously and mightily overcame death by faith, refused to accept that the promises of God were quenched when they died. Of the promises made to them they said in effect: 'Yes, I die this violent death, I am to be burned alive today, sawn asunder today, torn to pieces by wild beasts today, but all the promises will be fulfilled to me. I shall enter into the promises yet, I embrace them as I see them afar. I die but I die in faith'. And here are we who have the living, victorious Christ resident within us, whose testimony is not always as glowing as theirs who had not the better thing. It is perhaps well that we should be shamed, but may the Lord mightily stir us, for that is the object of the apostle's writing this portion of the letter. Here were those believers contemplating a return to their old system because their having come out of it was fraught with so much difficulty and persecution, contemplating adopting a line of less resistance, taking an easier way. The apostle is writing to get them urged on to complete the testimony and not to abandon it, to maintain that which their brethren before them had held to unto death. And this letter is handed down to us for exactly the same purpose. We have it preserved by the Lord through all the centuries to show us how the testimony is completed, how the church is built, and what it is we are in. That church which He builds will be built by the constituent of the faith of those who are of it, which is a faith which is on resurrection ground, triumphant over death. The abiding basis of all time is that of conflict with death to complete the testimony in the power of resurrection.

You and I are now called to live in the power of Christ's resurrection life, and the Lord's dealings with us are to get us on to that ground. He will weaken our strength, empty us of our fulness, bring us up against things which are altogether beyond us, and His dealings with us in every way will all point to one direction, to get us to live our life upon no other basis than His resurrection life, the life that we live by faith in Him. Those who are going to complete the testimony will be on that ground. Those who are going to make full the saints of past ages because it was not possible that they should be made complete without us, those who are going to make full their testimony and complete that will be those who will be brought on to this ground.

I feel that this word is intended to have two effects, two meanings. One, to show us the nature of the thing we are in. The nature of the thing that we are in is the battle of the testimony of the risen life and power of the Lord Jesus in us, over against all the power of death. That is what we are in. The other thing is to get us to definitely take our position anew on resurrection ground so that from now on we have it quite clearly understood that, although perhaps not in exactly the same forms as they met death, yet in exactly the same force, we have got to meet it. We may not go to the stake; we may not be cast into the ring for the wild beasts; we may not be sawn asunder; ah! but death is going to be just as real as an antagonist of our spiritual progress as it was to them, just as great a reality in the spiritual sense as it was to them in the literal sense, and there has got to be in us, and by us, a clear and strong testimony that Christ has overcome death, and as the Overcomer of death He is in us. This is the power of His resurrection working in us now. Do you see what we are in? The testimony involves that.

We speak much about "The testimony of Jesus". The testimony of Jesus is some terrific thing, it is not some system of doctrine. Sometimes it becomes the most grim reality, and if this word has a sifting-out effect, well, perhaps that is good to see if we are in the testimony or we are not in it, and if we are in the testimony we are going to fight the battle of the heroes of faith in a spiritual way, a battle with spiritual death — and the Lord is going to allow it.

Some of us have been perplexed sometimes, as to why it is that having taken such high ground, such utter ground with the Lord, the ground where we do honestly will to have none of the flesh and none of the natural man, and where we do with all our heart stand to have everything of God right up to the hilt, one hundred per cent, why, having taken a place like that, we have such terrific experiences of death. It is a most perplexing thing and we have thought that to take high ground like that, that the mighty, glorious power of His resurrection operating, death would be nothing. It has been the opposite. Sometimes we have been more terribly conscious of the awfulness, the deadness of spiritual death than anything else; in the atmosphere, circling around; something you have to battle through; death — to pray, to get out a message, sometimes pressing in upon your whole being spirit, soul and body. Well, if what we are saying is true this is the explanation, that the very fact that we have come into such a testimony demands that testimony be established over against a more clear manifestation of death than any other realm. It means for the full testimony to be established there must be a fuller testimony against which the testimony stands.

If resurrection is the testimony we are going to know, and we do know the resurrection side, the victory side, at any rate we do up to this moment. The enemy may work in the future, but he cannot undo the past. We do stand today upon that testimony. We do know something, it may be but a little, about the triumph of His resurrection in us over some terrific onslaughts of death. That is the nature of the testimony, and that proves that we are in the testimony, the ultimate thing. If you do not know what a battle with death is, spiritually, you have reason to doubt whether you are right in the testimony of Jesus. I am not going to tell you to ask the Lord to put you in. The abiding basis for all time is conflict with death, to complete the testimony in the power of resurrection, and we have entered into that.

Now the thing which comes up in this connection is the matter of faith, because faith is the thing upon which it all hangs. In the presence of death faith is terrifically assailed. The one pre-eminent antagonist of faith is death. In His death even the Lord Jesus found His faith being assailed, and death is the assailant of faith. In spiritual experiences of death, when you feel yourself to be dead, and the last thing in all the world seems to be true that Christ is in you and death has settled down on you as a child of God, and your faith gets knocked about all over the place and you begin to wonder, to question, to doubt, what is going to happen? Well, you are going out or you are coming in, and it depends upon whether faith rises up and asserts God's facts over against your feelings, or whether you accept your feelings and all that seems to be as the end of your faith. I am not talking theory; I am talking real, living facts of experience. Oh, do we not know the times when we feel as dead as anything can be, and empty, and utterly lacking in any of those spiritual energies and abilities. The heavens are as brass over us, it is all death and darkness and weakness and emptiness; and the evil one is making suggestions to us and telling us the Lord has abandoned us, set us aside and there is no more ministry, and there is no more anything. We know that; but some of us do know by the training of the Lord through years that that is the time when we have definitely to stand up on our feet and assert our faith against that, and positively say: "Yes, all this may be more real than anything else that I feel, or have, or know, but I stand upon an unshakeable rock. Christ is in me, Christ has not abandoned me, the Lord has not forsaken me, He cannot go back upon His Word. In so far as I have not with all my intelligence, enlightenment, understanding and knowledge, in my spirit repudiated Him, refused Him, turned against Him, inasmuch as I have not done that, He has not left me,

according to His Word, and I may abide in this state for a bit but this is not the end. I am coming out sooner or later, it may be very soon, or I may have to wait. I will be looking back upon this valley from some height, and I will be in victory, ascendancy again. I will remember the dark day but I am coming out of this.”

Faith asserts that in God, and this is the victory that overcomes. Of course you come to that by spiritual education. We have all gone the way where we have accepted those conditions and gone down under them, and we have discovered that was going to be the end of us, and we have had to fight back again to some sort of ground. But through continuous experiences, and the way the Lord graduates His training of us, we have come to the place where — not finally, there may be greater tests — we have been able to say: “Yes, this is another attack of death and I shall come out alright.” Faith which stands on resurrection ground even when death seems to have gained dominion is what makes the testimony so real. That is the testimony of the church. That is, the church which He builds. It is the perfecting of faith which brings the perfection of victory and perfects the testimony of Christ triumphant over death.

It has been difficult to make clear, to get it out, naturally (or Satanically) but I believe if you will ask the Lord, you will find a real message in it, something that will get to the heart of things. There is something far too deep in this to put it into any kind of clear form of words; we can only enter into it in understanding.

We are in this testimony of Jesus, to be perfected by the church, completed by the church, and the principle of the completing of the testimony is faith which takes and keeps resurrection ground when death seems to be everywhere triumphant. We will be no use if we are not there. We will be out of the fight and out of the testimony. We can hope and and pray as much as we will and go over the difficult situation, but never come to it until we take definitely with both feet our position by faith in our Risen Lord, and repudiate everything that argues to the contrary. These bodies will not help us in this fight. These souls of ours will not be much good in this fight. We shall have to be strengthened with might by His Spirit into the inner man by putting into active operation what we have already got of the Lord, and then we will get more, the fulness. Start right away on the little bit of the Lord you have and He will add, and this will come that way.

Chapter 4 – The Need for Balance in Spirit, Soul and Body

We have been occupied with the inward nature of that which issues with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and we have been looking again into the nature of man as he is by reason of the fall, what it is that the cross of the Lord Jesus does with him, and what it is that comes out in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus to be the material of the church which He said: “I will build”. The constitution of man is very largely the subject of consideration and while we have said very little about his body, there may be something yet to say on that, we have been mainly occupied with the other two aspects of his being, soul and spirit.

Just to take that up now with a view to saying a few further things, let us remind ourselves that the Scripture teaches us quite plainly that the soul, or ‘psuche’ is the sum total of man’s natural powers, the life as born into the world, and all that it contains or can attain unto. That is man, of course, since the fall. But the spirit, the ‘pneuma’ is not only that which lies behind the soul, just as the soul, or ‘psuche’ lies underneath the bodily organism, the spirit is that part of man which is unable to expand of itself, or to attain to its proper end in consequence of the fall. The Scripture tells us that there is a spirit in man, there is a ‘pneuma’, but that in consequence of the fall it is, for all divine purposes, as though it did not exist; what the Scripture calls ‘death’ has taken place, and that is that that part of man by which he was joined to the Lord, the Lord being a Spirit,

has fallen out of that relationship so that man is no longer a spiritual man but a soulical man.

Further, the Word of God makes it perfectly clear that man does not know that he is in that state. If man could know his own spiritual powers, or even know how lamentably he has lost their use by the fall, he would not be as fallen as he is. The root of his trouble is that he knows not that he has got it, and the work of the spiritual Physician is primarily not that of removing something but making the patient know that he has a function of which he is altogether unconscious, and that function is not functioning. He has to disclose the function, the healthy enjoyment of which has never been known, and therefore it is hardly suspected. It is that organ and function of the 'pneuma' which is basic to everything in relation to God.

Now then we trace the history of a child of God, and again we refer to that which is born again. We have taken pains, and gone to some length in seeking to point out that it is not the soul that is born again, any more than it is the body, but it is the spirit. "*That which is born of the Spirit is spirit*", and it is said not to be born of bloods, "Born not of bloods", and the soul is in the blood, so the Word says. And God is spoken of as; "... *the Father of our spirits*". It is by a divine act, an act of the Spirit of God in the power of resurrection, that the spirit which died (always using that word in the scriptural sense, which does not mean that it is non-existent, and which does not mean that it is non-active for the fallen man has a human spirit which may be active, but death in the scriptural sense is a falling out of correspondence with its essential source of life) is born anew, or from above. That is where the history of a child of God begins.

Now it is just here that some of our greatest mistakes are made in Christian work, perhaps particularly so in missionary work, but not exclusively so by any means. There is a beginning made by the assumption of a universal God-consciousness even among the heathen. That may, in measure, be true, but it is from that point, whether altogether true or not, whether true only in measure, whether in some cases not at all true, because there have been those traced who have not, so far as it is possible to recognize, any God-consciousness; but whether it be true or not, or only true in measure, it is from that point that the mistake is made. There is an assuming usually of that God-consciousness, and then procedure to build a teaching upon it, the truth of the Gospel if you like; that is, taking something for granted as being there, and thus seeking to develop it by the truth of the Gospel, by the Word of God, and bring it up, and educate or enlighten it. It is only or mainly a matter of degree, a matter of kind in difference between human philosophy and Christian teaching with its thought, but the whole of the philosophy of this world and all the Greek philosophers constructed their philosophy upon the assumed universal God-consciousness.

I will never forget exploring the fields of John Caird's history of the Greek philosophies. I tried to wade through those Greek philosophers, and the whole ground was constructed upon this statement (I think I can quote it almost verbatim although it is 25 years since I read it!): "There is in every human creature a consciousness of standing in responsible relationship to some supreme object of reverence which that creature calls God". Then Caird goes on to show the expression of that is manifold from the tree, or the image of stone to the heavenly bodies, but there is consciousness which produces that in every human creature, and all philosophy has been constructed upon that.

Well now, you can take your Christian doctrine and just do exactly the same thing, build it upon some assumed thing and with your Christian doctrine you have no guarantee of getting beyond the point where pagan philosophy gets. And pagan philosophy was able to make some very good products in the elevation of human life, the ennobling of human ideas and in the changing of lives, but that is a different thing from regeneration. Elevation and regeneration are entirely different things, and it is because of a fundamental misapprehension, the developing of something assumed to be there and the

educating and enlightening of it with the Gospel. The result is a soul Christianity, a Christianity of reason, feeling, volition, brought about by teaching, by persuading, in the light of certain presented evangelical truths, and a spirit still unborn. Instead of recognizing that the spirit in fallen man is dead, or dormant, God-consciousness is spoken of as active in all men, and then the worker proceeds to uncover this something as buried beneath sensuality, rather than to recover what is lost and discover what is unknown. There is all the difference.

The Lord Jesus is always true, of course, to basic principles. Let us look at the parable of the prodigal son — and by the way, it is always doubtful whether that parable ought to be used as an evangelistic sermon. It usually is, but you have to take it with the three other parables of Luke 15, and it was a Jewish question which was in view, a Jew and Gentile question which was raised by the Lord at that time. The elder and younger brother represent the two sides of the human race and the last thing the Lord said about the son was: *"... for this your brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found"*. That is true to Biblical psychology. It is not simply the bringing back of something. It is the quickening of something from the dead. It is not just the lifting of man from a low state, it is making a new man. He *"was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found"*, and that is the state of the pneuma in man. Dead, to be made alive. Lost, and if lost you cannot work upon something that is lost; it has to be found. And we cannot be too explicit as to the work of regeneration and what it effects in fallen man. The special work of regeneration is to quicken the spirit. It will, in turn, control the animal, and refine the intellectual and moral life but it does not begin there. And it is this fatal assumption that all men have got something upon which you can work, that has led to so much confusion and so much disappointment. There is nothing to work upon only as there is a quickening into life, and there must be a something which produces that life, which has that life in it and effects that life in the object before you can get the result of regeneration. Now the Word of God has that life. The messenger must have that life. The Spirit of God must be in the Word and that Word must become spirit and life in a dead spirit before there can be regeneration. It is no use bringing Christian teaching to the natural man's intelligence and trying to persuade him to act in response to it unless the Word of God is brought in the power of the Spirit of God to bear upon something which is dead and which cannot react to that Word unless quickened. There is all the difference between getting these false conversions which are purely soulical and which eventually collapse under spiritual strain, and are at best in a false position, and getting a real regeneration of the spirit.

Herein then, is the necessity for the preacher to be one filled with the Holy Spirit, and herein the necessity for the Word of God to be preached by normally Spirit-filled men and women. The Lord sometimes does use His Word apart from any human instrument, but His chosen way is to have men filled with the Holy Spirit, to use a Holy Spirit filled word in order that what He says may be the power of resurrection in a spirit which can never respond to merely psychical urge or argument. It is important for us to recognize that in the work of the Lord. Oh how much prayer, therefore, is necessary back of all work of seeking to lead souls into life. Our very best products of mind, of intellect can never effect anything. It requires the living Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring a soul to new birth, and any easygoing way of what may be called evangelism may be marked by very unsatisfactory issues in the long run. These are days in which things like this need to be taken to heart. You want to know on what ground a soul has been supposedly saved. Tell me a soul can be regenerated by an upheaving of some of its inner secrets of sinfulness, apart from the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit? I say that is not regeneration. That is psychoanalysis, and it can have wonderful effects of soulish elevation for a time — but for a time. We see then, briefly, what it is that is born again; and, therefore, in the second place, what is indwelt by God. It is the spirit of man that is indwelt by God, not firstly the soul or the body. I know you may say the Word says: *"What? know do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit ..."*. Yes, that is true in the same sense as the outer court of the tabernacle was the place of

God, and the holy place was the place of God, but only in that sense. The essential, the primary place of God was the Holiest of all, the inner sanctuary, and God only filled the holy place and the court by reason of His being personally settled in the most holy place; and He only makes our souls and our bodies His dwelling place on the ground of His being personally resident within our spirits. God does not dwell in our bodies alone or in our souls alone, and He does not dwell fully in either soul or body, or both. He overflows to them from the spirit, and in that sense, a vessel within vessels, He dwells in man. He dwells in the spirit of a child of God.

That leads us to see then, the third thing: what is the educational organ and basis of the child of God, which is the renewed spirit. We shall be taught by the Spirit of the Lord in our spirits, everything that the Lord has to teach us. Yesterday we illustrated this from personal experience, how that having truly committed ourselves to the Lord from time to time for ministry, we have inadvertently, unwontedly, in the course of ministry slipped into saying something which was not according to the Lord's mind, and we have known it instantly. For it seemed as though the very bottom dropped out of the whole message, and from that point we floundered on and when it was all over we have noted distinctly the point at which the very life of God went out of our message, and what it was. And as we have looked at it, it is as though the Holy Spirit said: That sort of thing must be kept out; I am not with that sort of thing and if you are going on with Me it will be as you leave that sort of thing out. On that truth we have gained a great deal of education, and slowly, bit by bit, there has been sifted out of ministry things with which the Holy Spirit could not agree. He has done it progressively because our education was at stake. I illustrate from my own experience. I have already mentioned that we had to decide once and for all that the war was taboo. The Lord allowed one to go on using literary citations and quotations, Browning and all the rest, wholesale, but slowly the Lord put His finger upon these things as they were used to try and accomplish spiritual ends, and made to know that He would rather not. That education was along this line, that when you did it there was something which went flat. And you came to drop all that out and came altogether to use the Word of God, and to find that the Word of God was ample and it is not a bit necessary to go outside the Word of God for anything. The Holy Spirit will use the Word of God.

Now this is a matter of education. Don't think I am saying all those who do these things must be ruled out. They have got to be educated just the same and we are not saying we are far ahead of anyone else, but I am indicating, remember, the organ and basis of spiritual education is the quickened and Holy Spirit indwelt spirit, so that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit on the things of God. But it is a test as well as a statement of fact; that if you can make your address nine-tenths stuff of man based upon one-tenth or one-tenth of a tenth of a background of the Word of God, your work is in the soul and not in the spirit. Well, you do not expect spiritual results from that.

As a company of the Lord's servants we need to recognize these things, although doubtless in your own history they are by no means new. The thing is to recognize that the basis and organ of the Holy Spirit's education of the child of God is the renewed spirit, and as we walk in the Spirit by our spirit, we shall grow and come to a larger apprehension of the Lord's mind about things. "*For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the spirit is life and peace*". He is again: "*The Father of our spirits*", and that word is used as you know in connection with the training of the child, and the Father who trains the spiritual child trains that child through the child's spirit because He is the Father of the spirit.

Then, in the next place, what is the instrument of cooperation with God? It is again the spirit. We cooperate with God in our renewed spirit basically. Paul says: "*whom I serve in my spirit ...*". To Timothy he closes his letter with: "*The Lord be with your spirit.*" Our cooperation then is with Him in our spirit, of course, ever remembering by the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is intended to be cooperation with God but there are three kinds of prayer, and the three kinds of prayer correspond to the three departments of our being. There is lip prayer. That corresponds to the body. There is what we may call 'notional' prayer; you have a notion of something. Something more than lip prayer. That corresponds to the soul. The soul has an inkling, as we say, a notion of things. It is something more than merely the words of the lips. God is — you have a notion that God is, and you have a notion of certain things about God. Our ideas are perhaps in a general way that God has a will, and what God wills as to reverence, worship, and so on. It corresponds to the soul. Then there is devotional prayer in which there is immediate communion with God. That corresponds to the spirit. That also might well sift and test us in our prayer life. I do not suppose that any of us need be tested on the first point. I hope not that any of our prayer is simply words. God forbid that we should be just launching out to say the next thing that comes to us without having anything beyond half a sentence. I do not want to criticize, but so often we have felt that words have been started and there is no ghost of an idea of what the people are after, and they are simply letting one word follow another and there is hardly a relationship between their words. Now I am not speaking about those broken prayers where words cannot express, but I mean simply talking, it sometimes seems for the sake of talking, without any relation to their own inner life or to spiritual things.

Perhaps we need testing a little more on the second thing — on objective, external, abstract notions about the Lord, and prayer is mental, out there. There is some sort of an inkling but quite remote from ourselves.

What is needed is prayer in the spirit where everything becomes immediate in fellowship with God, and that always counts. Sometimes it is a matter of battling through to that; in our praying we pray. But we should never be satisfied with merely having uttered words or prayed in notions. We should always seek before we cease praying that we have touched the Lord in our spirit and we know there has been a vital contact with Him.

Preaching, of course, has to be on the same basis. There is a preaching of ideas, and a preaching even of doctrine which may be quite correct and according to Scripture; and yet it may be a mental grasp of scriptural truth. But real cooperation with God in preaching has to be through the spirit of the instrument, not just through the brain, through the mind, through the reason, or through the emotions, but through the spirit, and only as it is, is there a real link with God in a purpose. And all service must be on the same footing. We just mention it and pass on.

Of course we have then to say a word in the fifth place on what of the departure from this world, and the intermediate state, because at the beginning of our meditation the other day we said this matter of the difference between soul and spirit touches primarily upon four of the greatest things with which we have to do.

Firstly it touches the nature of original sin. You can never understand the nature of original sin until you know the difference between soul and spirit. And then you can never understand the new birth until you understand the difference between soul and spirit. Thirdly, you cannot understand the nature of the intermediate state until you have the key, which is the difference between soul and spirit. In the fourth place we cannot understand the nature of the resurrection until we are able to make this discrimination.

We must say a little word here touching the question of the intermediate state. When Stephen was martyred and was passing away to be with the Lord, he cried: "*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*" We have a large doctrine on the immortality of the soul. Now I am not

going to enter upon that whole field, but I doubt whether we are right in using that word. If you make the soul something apart from the spirit, you are on doubtful ground when you talk about the immortality of the soul. We showed from the Word that what God created was a spirit-soul, man became a 'living soul', that is, a spirit soul. And it is by reason of that union that the soul is maintained. Get in between those two and the soul ceases to have an existence apart from the spirit, if you divide them, put them asunder. The body: well, it will go back into the gases. The soul: well, what is it? Is it an entity? You know quite well that every bit of reason, feeling, willing, depends upon the circulation of the blood through the veins for the brain, and in the hour of death when the carbon begins to fall over the brain, all your thinking, feeling, everything else, goes. And if that is something by itself, well, it simply goes out. But God has joined these two together, and we do not go out in death, but we are maintained afterwards, the soul is maintained by the spirit, and reserved, because there has got to be a coming back. There has got to be a resurrection of the just and of the unjust. And it will not simply be that God says, and it is done, as in creation; an automatic or mechanical thing from the outside. No! Resurrection is different from creation. Creation is one thing, resurrection is another. There has got to be something which can respond to the Word of God which is energizing and constituting, and that spirit is there for that. It may be dead. *"The hour comes, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live"*. *"... the hour comes, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth"*. What is the organ of hearing the voice of the Son of God on the part of the dead? The spirit always. Just as in the regenerated child of God the spirit is the organ of hearing, now quickened and made alive, so in the unregenerate the spirit is there and will be made to hear the voice of the Son of God for that purpose. And that is where the consciousness lies, there. What happens when we leave this world? Do we go up to heaven? The Word of God does not give you anything to warrant that that is so. At death the spirit which is united with the soul descends into hades, the sheol of the Old Testament. To the thief on the cross the Lord Jesus said: *"Today you shall be with Me in Paradise."* What is Paradise? It is not heaven. It is a reserve of hades, the garden of rest where the saints are waiting. That is not heaven. But there are other paradises. There are four paradises in the Scripture. Two of them are extinct. The first was that in which Satan, the covering cherub, had his place, probably his dominion, in the midst of the paradise of God. Then there was the paradise of Eden in which Adam was before the fall. Both of these are extinct. The paradise to which the Lord Jesus referred when He spoke to the thief is another, and there is the paradise of Revelation 21 which is in heaven. Did the thief go to that paradise with the Lord? The Lord Jesus said to Mary: *"Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father..."*. And in His argument as to the sign of Jonah, He said: *"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"*. Where was He between His death and resurrection? In heaven? Now Where was paradise? In the heart of the earth. *"Today you shall be with me in Paradise."* The Lord did not ascend between His death and resurrection, and He explains exactly where He was — in the heart of the earth. David, we are told, did not ascend into heaven. In Luke 16 you have the rich man and Lazarus both in hades but in their respective divisions with the great gulf between. There are reserves in hades and one is the reserve of the blessed and the other of the condemned. Samuel's spirit "came up". There have been only two who have left hades. The Lord Jesus Himself, and those who were raised from the dead after His resurrection and went and appeared unto many in Jerusalem. No disembodied spirit has ever yet entered heaven because to be unclothed with the body is the stigma of death. You recall 2 Corinthians; you know that believers have to be raised up and presented, and you study 1 Thessalonians 4:16 in that very connection. The confusion of course, has come about very largely by the misunderstanding of the Word of the Lord, and it is no use arguing on a point such as 2 Corinthians 12:4: *"I knew a man how that he was caught up into paradise ..."* because that translation is quite incorrect. In the Greek it says he was 'caught away'. There is a great deal of difference between being caught up, and caught away, if you are going to base a theory on it. *"... absent from the body, and to be*

present with the Lord"; "... *having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better*". But that does not mean necessarily to be in heaven in the full sense. In Psalm 139 David says: "... *if I make my bed in hades (Sheol), behold, thou art there*". "At home with the Lord".

Coming back to our basic passage of this week: "... *and the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail ...*". "The house of death shall not prevail against it". Now full victory will be when this mortal shall have put on immortality and not before, and you cannot enter heaven in the full sense without the full victory. That demands a resurrection body. No one will be in heaven without their resurrection body. I hope that does not take any glitter out of things for you! It does not make any difference if we are with the Lord and at rest; that is all that matters. Nowhere are we told that we go straight away with our heavenly body, our heavenly reward, to be in the fullness of bliss in heaven.

The Resurrection Body

The resurrection body by which we shall eventually come to heaven depends upon our spirit having become indwelt by resurrection life, to be clothed upon with our body. It is the spirit already raised which will be given a resurrection body. There will be resurrection for the evil, but the word of the Lord Jesus in John 5:29 makes clear the difference: "... *they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life (or unto the life resurrection); and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment (or unto judgment resurrection)*". There will be resurrection for both, and both will be resurrected because of the spirit soul, something upon which the resurrection Word can operate. But one is not coming out in life resurrection, one is coming out in death resurrection, and it all depends upon what has happened here, whether we are born anew. That is, whether the spirit has become indwelt by eternal, indestructible, heavenly life.

We must not confuse language and not confuse eternal life with immortality. They are two different things entirely.

May I conclude by pointing out one or two things which are important for recognition. Just a little word upon mixture. Having studied this fully, not by any means extensively, the nature of soul and spirit, and the organs and operations and fruits of both, it is important for us to remember that there can be terrible mixture of the two. There can be something which is of the Spirit of God, and therefore through a quickened spirit and therefore truly spiritual, divinely spiritual. But it becomes terribly wrapped around with a great deal more that is of the soul, and whenever that is so you get a terrible mixture and confusion. There is such a thing as to begin in the spirit and go on in the soul. There is such a thing, as having something which is of God, but so terribly encompassed by the swirlings of the psychical as to make the thing so confused and so mixed that you do not know what is of God and what is of man. And in the long run you are very often compelled to abandon something because it has become almost entirely captured by the psychical. You cannot divide between the two, and you become involved in something so mixed that the only thing to do is to come out and leave it. This is the way Satan seeks to mar something of God, something pure of God, and then a tremendous psychical flood is let loose. Because men in their soulish nature take up the fruit of something spiritual and make everything of the fruit instead of everything of the cause, making everything of the experience instead of everything which brought about the experience. And then they begin to make experiences the whole thing, to inflate it and get crowds to come along and have the experience. Then the whole thing becomes soulish in that sense, that multitudes of people come into the psychical thing without having the rock bottom spiritual cause of fruit. That is a false thing which has grown on a tree and has come in through man's own soulish being. And we want to be very careful about this, to recognize that this is so, that it is possible for the soul to over-ride the spirit in any one of us. It can be that what God commenced to do in the spirit is so developed in the soul and so taken up in the soul that what is of God shrinks into practically insignificance, and there

is all this thing of emotion, ecstasy, psychical elements, and God is not in it. It is something which has to be maintained by abnormal methods. One of the problems as well as of the perils of the day, is that of mixture.

Now then just a word about the need for balance in spirit, soul and body. There must be the balance maintained, the balance of the three. We will be tempted along each line to make each more prominent than the other. There is the temptation of the public side of things for instance. That may have to do with the soul and body. Sometimes it is the body. Though it is so difficult to get in between the soul and the body, impossible I think, yet certain physical constitutions of a very nervous order, restless people, want always to be on the go; and that sort of thing comes into the Lord's work, constant bodily activity. No quietness, background of steadiness and waiting upon the Lord, and the body therefore becomes the main factor and feature in a great deal of work for the Lord. Doing things, always busy — and that was the Lord's difficulty with Martha in the first place. It was just that, the bodily activities, agitations, all well motivated, full of good intention, but at the expense of something else. We have to be very careful of that outer, public side of things which puts the bodily exercise in spiritual things into too great a prominence. I think very often the Lord has to call a halt there and make bodily exercises and activity in His work impossible for a little while in order to get the balance back again.

There is the verbal side. It can be purely bodily talk as we have said. But the verbal side may also be the soul side, where our words are far more than our meditation, far more than our prayer life, far more than our secret history with God. And the day in which our ministry in word exceeds our fellowship with God in secret, there will creep in an unbalanced state in our ministry, and there will come in weakness; we shall be unbalanced. We have to be careful. How our words carry us away, how we are carried on by floods and volumes of words. We shall lose our balance. The body and the soul can thus run away with us and run ahead of the spirit. If it is all body, then it will be all earthly; earthly, though for the Lord, and it will not last. If it is all soul it will be all superficial. It may do something for the moment in the way of stirring people up, getting things done, but it will be purely surface and it will not last.

There is an equal danger about it being all spirit. Men or women who are all spirit are rather cold, hard, judging, critical, without much heart. There is a need for keeping the balance. The spirit in charge, the soul functioning under the spirit, governed by the Holy Spirit, with all the love and tenderness, and sympathy, and kindness, and the faithfulness which characterises the soul. And yet, even our sympathies must not to run away with the deeper witness of the Spirit of God, not allowing natural love to render spiritual judgment unbalanced. Some people do that: their own natural feelings they call love and kindness, make them very indiscreet and unwise people. It is so necessary to have our affections and sympathies governed by the spirit so that they will not run away and run out into thin air; there will be something always which abides.

So it is necessary that we should have balance. Do not let anyone think that all that we have said about the supreme place of the spirit puts the soul out, or makes us despise the body. God forbid. There has to be a place for each, and the function of the spirit in the renewed child of God is to link the other two in itself and control them, soul and body. That is the renewed child of God. And all must function, but primarily by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and that working out intelligently by our renewed spirit. Because you have a strong feeling or emotion, that is no argument why you should put it into expression; that would be impulse, but our impulse and feelings have to come to the judgment of an enlightened spirit. Our body and our bodily habits have to be governed by an enlightened spirit, but all sanctified and used by the Spirit of the Lord.

Now ask the Lord to make clear to you all that may not have been clear.

Chapter 5 – The church as the Lord’s Testimony and Full Expression

Reading: Matt. 16:16-18; Luke 24:26,27,44-48; Rev. 19:10.

In this closing chapter (gathering of a series of fourteen meetings) in which we have been occupied with the content of that statement: “I will build my church”, we are going to be taken up for a little while with the church and the testimony of Christ. “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” “... upon this rock I will build my church”.

Luke 24 from which we have read spreads out before us the testimony of Christ from the beginning of the Scriptures to His own death and resurrection, and that whole range of Scripture is the spirit of prophecy. It all led up to Him, and the testimony of Jesus is seen throughout to be the spirit of prophecy. The Lord Himself, to His disciples as they walked on that occasion, took them through Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets, and in all the Scriptures of that threefold department spoke to them of things concerning Himself, and showed them how the testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy. That testimony (and this is our point) is gathered up by Him and passed on into them, and they are told that they are witnesses of the truth of that comprehensive testimony, that they have come into the fulfilment, the living knowledge of all that, and have become the repository of that testimony of Christ. They represent the church. These apostles will later be spoken of as connected with the foundation: “... *built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets ...*”. (That is not the Old Testament prophets of course, but the New Testament prophets). “... *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone*”. And with Him, forming the church, they become the repository, or the vessel of that whole testimony of Scripture which is no longer merely history, but now experience of it. And a witness is not one, in the New Testament sense, who simply speaks about things of which he has read or heard, but one who speaks about things in which he has participated, of which he has become a living sharer, participant, and that is the church. Not only at its beginning, but in the mind of the Lord for all time the church is that. It is the witness to the truth in a living, experimental way, of what is called the testimony of Christ, or the testimony of Jesus. The spirit of prophecy comes into the church testifying of Jesus.

We might just glance at the progress of that testimony in the Old Testament as the Lord Himself divided it, Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets, not by any means to deal with the content of those three sections but to take account simply of the fact that the testimony of Jesus was there in all. As we saw in chapter three in speaking somewhat along these lines, from Hebrews chapter 11, the testimony was progressive through those ages and dispensations, taking the broader view then, that of the letter to the Hebrews which has to do with persons. The broader view here has to do with the whole stretch of Scripture. You have Moses, representing the first section of the Scriptures, and in that first section of the Scriptures as gathered up into and under Moses, we have the testimony of Jesus figuratively presented. Everything gathered up from the patriarchs into a corporate expression, a collective representation in the tabernacle coming in with Exodus 35, the testimony of Jesus figuratively presented, and Moses is, so to speak, the figurehead, and Moses is called a prophet. If you look at Acts chapter 7, in Stephen’s mighty and marvellous discourse in chapter seven, when you get to verse 37 you find the climax to a section of his argument: “*This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me.*” That does not mean, as the margin makes clear, that Christ would be like Moses. The margin says: “As he raised me up”. “He will raise up a prophet as He raised me up.” In his representative character of that whole figurative system, Moses was a prophet pointing on, prophesying of that which was to come, and the spirit of prophecy in that whole system gathered up into Moses, was pointing on to Christ. Of course we know very well how everything in Moses did speak of Christ. Every detail of that representation spoke of Christ and of the spiritual principles represented by those who had been the predecessors of Moses in the covenant line were now collected into a whole in Moses and

the tabernacle. The blood of Abel is there, the walk with God of Enoch is there, the ground of a new covenant in resurrection in Noah is there, and all that Abraham stands for is there; all gathered up collectively, but it all points on prophetically to the Lord Jesus. I have no doubt whatever but that it was along these lines that the Lord Jesus spoke to the men on the way to Emmaus. As He took up Moses He would probably say: Now here is Abel; and explain Abel in the light of Himself. And then He would pass to Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and to Jacob, and go along the whole elect line and show Himself there in principle and truth, and so make clear how the testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy, all pointing to Himself. And then He would pass from the figurative side of things in Moses to the Psalms — and I have often wondered how the Lord Jesus dealt with the Psalms in bringing Himself into view. Doubtless He would take those Psalms with which we are familiar as quite definite and clear foreshadowings of Himself; but it is a most profitable occupation to dwell upon the whole book of Psalms in the light of the Lord Jesus.

For our purpose it is necessary to try and gather it all up into one word, and when we ask as to the Psalms, (and of course we especially mean the Psalms of David now; there are other Psalms in the book) when we take the book of the Psalms of David and view them as a whole and seek to get to the heart of things and what they represent, I think there is no truer way of concluding about their message than to say that what is there is God seeking and finding the Man after His own heart. And then you take the history of the Man after God's own heart, and what God intends for that Man; and you find in the book of the Psalms the Man after God's own heart. And for me the climax of the book of the Psalms is found in Psalm 91:14: "*I will set him on high, because he has known My name.*" God was after a Man whom He could set on high. Now the second Psalm sees that anointed One set on high: "*Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*" God was out for someone whom He could set on high. Then you take the history of the One whom God set on high, and you find that is the One who comes first of all down, continuously down until He is utterly empty, until in the uttermost emptying He cries - and remember this is a Psalm - "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" That is the One who is going to be set on high. He has come down, He has been emptied, He has reached unto the deepest depths, and yet He trusts even in the deepest depths, in the Name of the Lord, and: "*I will set him on high, because he has known My name.*" And you see in the Psalms the Man who is set on high, and in Psalm 8 you have all things put in subjection under His feet. When you come over to the New Testament you find the exposition in the letter to the Hebrews: "*But now we see not yet all things subjected to Him. But we behold Him who has been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour ...*". There is the Man after God's Own heart, exalted, set on high, having been down to the depths. I am not saying that is how the Lord Jesus expounded the book of Psalms to those disciples, but that is the message of the book for me. It is the Man after God's Own heart, what is the history of that Man and what the nature of that Man. See the history of and the nature of the Man whom He will set on high and you have arrived at the Lord Jesus, and there is no other to fully fulfil that. David is a shadow of it, he is the best known among men; he is the one who among men on earth, comes to be set on high, but David's Greater Son excels and occupies a place which David will never occupy.

Turn to your book of the Acts again and see the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy in this connection. Acts 2:30-31: "*Being therefore a prophet (the spirit of prophecy) in David pointing on to the cross) and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon His throne; he foreseeing this spoke of the resurrection of the Christ ...*". "Set on high" — "*... that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne*". That is the last word that Solomon was not the one ultimately in view as the son of David to sit upon his throne. It was Christ. And He is the Man set on high. That is the climax of the book of Psalms. "*... foreseeing this spoke of the resurrection of the Christ ...*". The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Pass to the third section of the Book, the prophets. I think it is unnecessary for us to take up the prophets to see the testimony of Jesus in them. Much will immediately leap to your minds as we take Isaiah, and move on from Isaiah with the Lord Jesus in view. In Isaiah He is found in His manger cradle and from the manger cradle the great unveiling of Emmanuel, God with us, comes in with Isaiah, and then on through the suffering Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 53, the matchless prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus. And what is true in Isaiah is true in the other prophets. I think it is perfectly patent that the Lord Jesus is the vision and the theme of the prophets, and there the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Now we come to the Gospels, and here He is Himself in Person. There is a gap between the dispensations. The new dispensation did not come in with the birth of the Lord Jesus. History is divided into B.C. and A.D. but the new dispensation did not come in with the birth of the Lord Jesus. The new dispensation came in with the birth of the church. The birth of the Lord Jesus, up to Pentecost is a gap, something which represents the terminus of the ages. That is, the old dispensation moves up to that and finds its fulfilment in Him, and the new dispensation moves out from that to carry that on, and His presence stands between the two. Neither the old nor the new dispensation in the days of His flesh, He occupying that central place in the dispensations where everything that has been is now clearly gathered up and manifested in His Own Person, and it is all seen in fulfilment in Him personally, and then that everything that is yet to be will take its character from Him, and be the outworking and expression of what He was. And the Gospels bring Him personally into view and show the spirit of prophecy has been fulfilled in Christ personally. But now we reach the point where we come in, and where the main matter of our present consideration arises.

That comes in with the Acts and the Epistles: the church. The church taking up the testimony of Jesus, not now in its personal or its progressive forms, but in its complete state. Everything has been fulfilled. Everything has been completed. Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets have had a full realization in Him when He is exalted, and the church takes up a completed testimony, and its business, its divine vocation is to maintain the fulness of the testimony of Jesus. It has not done that, but that is its business, and the Lord can never be satisfied with a church which has less than the whole testimony of His Son. And He is continuously active to secure a people in whom that complete testimony is manifested. The Lord is seeking to have a people in whom the whole testimony of His Son is expressed, not in relation to some aspect of truth, some fragment of revelation, some peculiar detached interpretation of Scripture, but in relation to the whole testimony of God's Son. And if there is any divine Sovereignty in our being together, I believe that that sovereignty has as its motive and object, to bring *us* as a part of the Lord's instrument and vessel, perhaps in the end times, to the fulness of the testimony of Jesus for His own satisfaction before the age closes. So that no small thing rests upon us. All that is in Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets is gathered up into a living realization and handed to us to inherit, experience, live by, minister in, in a living way; the power of resurrection. Beloved, this is no small thing. And that has a twofold meaning for us.

On the one hand it is the Lord's call to us to move into that testimony wholly and fully in life, in experience; on the other hand it means that the Lord would constitute us on that ground of life, a ministry in the testimony of Jesus to all others of His people. And that sums up everything of these messages. What is to be the issue? If the issue is not a fuller approximation to the testimony of God's Son in our lives, the whole thing has proved futile. And on the other hand, if through that movement into the testimony in greater fulness there is not a ministry more adequate and effectual, out in this world, by us, this word is in vain. Those are the things, the two sides of one thing which have constituted us these days, by which we have been held together, and for which the Lord has been speaking to us.

There is a sense, a New Testament sense in which the testimony only begins with the church. I mean in the sense in which Paul used the word in His letter to the Colossians.

He says: *"And He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."* You see as the Head of the body, the church, He is the beginning, as the Firstborn from the dead. I think the meaning of that is this: that the church, being constituted with Christ as it's Head, it's Firstborn, begins the new thing, that is, begins the living expression of all that which has moved up to this point, and is waiting for its real living expression. In Moses you have a typical expression and not the real; a prophetic expression and not the actual. In the Psalms, an illustrative expression but not the actual; in the Prophets, a foreview but not the actual. But when Christ rises in the fulfilment of them all, and the church comes into being, and He is it's Head, then you have the living and actual beginning of that toward which the ages have been moving, and the church is the beginning of the real testimony in life. And we have come into that. What an age we live in, and what a dispensation; and what a responsibility rests upon us! We are to literally represent the actual thing, Christ in all His fulness in the power of His resurrection.

Now the word, the term 'testimony' in the Scriptures invariably refers to that which God intends to show forth, to display. Wherever you may look for the testimony you will find that it relates to that which God intends to display. Take your letter to the Ephesians and you will see what I mean by display. Ephesians 2:4-8. *"But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus"*. You see here is the intention of the Lord, that for all eternity there should be a display of the exceeding riches of His grace and of His love toward us in Christ, in and through the church. In other words, the church becomes the eternally elected Instrument for the display of those exceeding riches of His grace and great love toward us in Christ Jesus. And that is the testimony of Jesus. It is something which is shown forth.

When we were speaking of the church as a 'Holy Nation', we saw that this holy nation was raised up in order to show forth the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9), and that word 'show forth' is the same word as we have in the Lord's Table: *"For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you show the Lord's death till He comes"*; we sometimes translate it: *"... you proclaim ..."*. You act a proclamation when you take the loaf and the cup. And here, it is, that you may show forth by an actual expression of His excellencies. Those excellencies are spoken of again by Peter in his second letter, where he speaks of the glories and fruits of Christ. It is the same word as excellencies, and it means the moral and spiritual splendours of the Lord Jesus; to show forth the moral and spiritual splendours of the Lord Jesus. And the holy nation is constituted for that. The church, which is the holy nation, is thus the means of showing forth Christ. The testimony is simply showing forth Christ in His excellencies, morally and spiritually. That is the testimony of Jesus which comes down to us. Go to Moses again and see the moral and spiritual excellencies of the Lord Jesus which are there presently minutely and in detail. Go to the Psalms and the Prophets and trace the excellencies of the Lord Jesus, and all that is taken up now literally in the church.

Why do we say all this? There is one thing always at the back of my mind in speaking in this way; it is to try and bring home to people what the church is, and that is not the church with which we are familiar. No! Oh some people think the church is a Christian Society you join in one department or another. No! Think of it like this; the church is essentially, indispensably a vessel for the display of the spiritual and moral excellencies of the Lord Jesus as wrought into the very fibre of its members. It is not something spoken about, it is something experienced, something known, and God works in the church and all the members with one object, to produce the spiritual and moral excellencies of the Lord Jesus in them, that they may be shown forth. That is the church,

and anything which claims to be the church, which is not moving on those lines is not what God has raised up. God has never raised up any church apart from this object, with this intention, that His Son might be in its very nature, constitution, its spiritual life, shown forth in His excellencies. The testimony of Jesus is not a creed, not a system of truth, not a doctrine but a life, a power, a something which has got to be brought to bear with God's Own mighty heaven upon the forces unseen: "*To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God ...*". It is the display of Jesus Christ in what He is NOW as ascended and exalted; for the display of Him thus in the life of the church that the church is in existence at all, and that is the only church that the Lord knows. And so it is to bring that about in fulness that the Lord is at work. In other words, it is to have Christ wrought into the very nature and life of every part of His Body, the church. Christ wrought in by the Holy Spirit; and that is why the Lord deals with us as He does. That is why the Lord allows us to have the experiences which He does allow us to have. It is not just because He wants to test our love for Him, but because He wants us to become the very embodiment of the virtues of His Son, that His Son may be universally displayed in the ages to come through the church. And every trial, and every bit of suffering, every bit of adversity through which the members of Christ's Body are permitted to pass, is with one object in the Lord's mind, to develop and bring out in clear testimony the triumphant excellencies of His Son.

Now do you see that governs the evangel. The evangel for so many people has been cut in two, and the second half overlooked. The evangel for a great many people is this: "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel ...*". That is only the half. And so, willy-nilly, go into all the world and preach the gospel. The other half is: "*... baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you*". The evangelist is a teacher, and unless he follows up his evangelism with his teaching his work is only half done and may fall to the ground. And in order to teach them you have got to get them together. Paul is the ideal evangelist who breaks the new ground with the evangel and gathers them into local companies and thoroughly grounds and teaches them all things, constitutes them a local vessel of the testimony in which Christ in fulness is to be displayed. That is the evangel.

There is a much deeper aspect of evangelism than is recognized and that is why we have such a great deal of weakness. Get souls to make decisions, and well, they must take their chance after that. What are you going to do with them? You cannot do anything, unless you follow your New Testament order, but hand them to the thing that is, and they are handed to something not manifesting the testimony of Jesus, a church which is not a church, only in name. They are lost, and become the ordinary nominal Christian of the day because the evangel has only been half accomplished. They have heard the word of the Gospel of salvation and have responded and they have not been taught all things and brought into that relationship which makes it possible for the whole testimony of Jesus to be expressed in their midst. This is to govern the evangel. The testimony of Jesus, beloved, is not just: "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved*" and leave it there. The testimony of Jesus is Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets, the whole thing, brought into realization. How far does our evangelism go? Just to get decisions, if you like, genuine conversions, and leave it there? The work is only half done and the commission has not been carried out. "*... baptizing them ... teaching them ...*". For us here we know what that means. Bringing them into a recognition of their identification with the Lord Jesus and by reason of that, making way for the whole testimony of the Christ, You see the result of the evangel must be this, that the first step leads to something else. And taught ones, if Paul is the model evangelist, were gathered together and held together to become a vessel of the whole testimony.

I know the practical difficulties which arise in saying these things, but nevertheless we are right up against this thing today; the tragedy of half-done work where the whole testimony of Jesus does not get a chance. Our burden is simply this, that the Lord wants

His whole testimony, a full expression of Christ, in those who are His. It is not enough for any of us to be just saved. We have to come into the fulness of God's testimony in His Son or we shall never satisfy the heart of God. And it is for that reason that we find such a tremendous preponderance of the New Testament bearing upon converts. One does not mean that what we call evangelistic work ceased with the apostles, but it is impressive that the New Testament is almost entirely occupied with believers, with converts. Whatever we may rightly or wrongly deduce from that, I think we may conclude, and rightly and finally, that the Lord is never satisfied to have people just saved, and that to be just saved can never represent the whole testimony of Jesus. There must be a moving on. We should move on with God into His whole thought.

I might just remind you of those features peculiar to the testimony in Moses. In speaking of the holy nation, that which made Israel in the days of her spiritual strength a wonderful expression of the testimony of Jesus was this: firstly, the absolute sovereign Headship of the Lord. That the Lord Himself was her King until the days of decline and the days of Samuel when the spiritual state was very low, when they said: "*Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations*", and they repudiated the Lord, as He said to Samuel: "*For they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.*" But when the Lord was their only and their absolute Sovereign Head, that was one of the features of their days of glory, the manifestation of a glory above all the glory of the nations. His word was that they should not be reckoned among the nations but something altogether above the nations. The absolute sovereign Headship of the Lord. Now if that is in type and figure a prophecy, a foreshadowing, and the church comes into that testimony, then we can say quite deliberately that the church which He builds is the church which has Him as its only and its absolute sovereign Head. That is, the people for whom the Lord Jesus has been made Head over all things. And that is something that has many practical outworkings. It represents the whole function of the Holy Spirit. The function of the Holy Spirit is to bring everything under the sovereign Headship of the Lord Jesus, and make Him Master of all things in the church so that nothing whatever is carried on only under His direction. The Holy Spirit is the expression in the church of the Headship of the Lord Jesus. Look at the book of the Acts. You see how utterly they surrendered to the Holy Spirit on all details; and that was, in effect, surrendering to the Headship of the Lord Jesus. Paul calls it, " *Holding fast the Head*".

Then not only was the Lord their only King, their Sovereign Head; the Lord was the life of Israel so that no matter what their natural conditions were — if in a wilderness where there was no life, no resources of life, no possibility of living upon the ordinary level, nowhere to look for natural sustenance, or they would look in vain, and yet for forty years in a wilderness the Lord was their life. And the Lord takes up that aspect of the testimony of Jesus in John six: "*This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*" (v. 50) "*For the bread of God is he which comes down from heaven, and gives life unto the world*" (v. 33). And the testimony of Jesus is firstly, that of His absolute sovereign Headship and government; and secondly, that His people know Him as their very life. And to make that testimony sure the Lord will lead those who are wholly consecrated, by ways and into experiences where they have no life but Him, and there the testimony comes out. He will take their life away, that upon which they rest, in order that He may become their life.

Again, in Israel He was their wisdom; and trace the wisdom of God in Israel, when they had no wisdom of their own, they knew not which way to turn, what to do, how to act, when all human wisdom failed, God was their wisdom. He became Wisdom unto them, and He became the God in Israel ever doing wonders, and ever keeping things in the realm of wonder. And do you see how the Lord takes pains to maintain the wonder element in the life of His people? He brought them into situations and crises where, for them there was an end of everything, and then He did something, and the issue was so far as they were concerned: Isn't our God wonderful! And He was seeking to maintain that testimony in Israel, the wonder of His Own way when there was no way; the wonder

of His wisdom when human wisdom came to an end. *"He is made unto us wisdom."* And the church which He builds is that in which there is a wisdom which the princes of this world never knew. Yes, a wisdom which to the princes of this world is folly, and yet is a wisdom which outwits them all the time. I believe the Lord would have us as His people more in a realm where we are saying: Isn't our God wonderful! It is wonderful! Some of us are having to say that every day. We have to close the day with saying: In comparison with what I thought the day would be, it is wonderful. How the Lord has brought us through, met every need. You began the day — there was nothing, but there has been the marvellous supply of the Lord, no lack. It is wonderful. And how the Lord finds a way through deadlocks and impasses and through situations where we can see nothing, no way out at all. That is the testimony of Jesus, the excellencies of Him in the life of His people. Is that the church with which we are familiar? The Lord make us more familiar with that church, build it around us, and us into it.

Finally, in those days the Lord was their strength. When they had no strength, the Lord was their strength. Compare them with the nations round about; compare them with the Philistines or the Assyrians, nations with a great history of war, trained for war, and all the armaments and tactics; and here a people who had never been trained in war, never been given a chance to learn to war. An oppressed nation in Egypt, brought out, and not one of the nations round about them, nor all the nations combined capable of standing before them — not because of what they were but because the Lord was their strength. That is the testimony of the Lord in the midst. That testimony in Moses is taken up and brought over in Christ into the church to be our strength: *"Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power"*. The Lord our strength when we have no might. That is why He has deliberately chosen the weak things. Are you a weak thing? Many of you will say: Yes. But do you go further and say: Because I am a weak thing then I am no good. Beloved, remember there is a divine election associated with your weakness. He has chosen the weak things in order to be their strength, and being their strength, to show Himself glorious. Christ is your strength. Christ is my strength, and as that is seen in vessels of fragile clay, it is known what the Lord can be, what He is made unto us; known among men, but known better among angels, and known well among demons. What Christ can be in something which in itself may be like a piece of tissue paper is amazing; He can do mighty things through weak things when He is our strength.

I am saying all this to point out what the testimony of Jesus is and what the church is for; to show that: *"Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many ..."* are called for the very reason that if they were wise and mighty the glory could easily go to them and it would not get to Him, but what we have called "The legion of Are-nots" He takes up and displays His wisdom and power through them.

The Lord encourage us and provoke us and show us anew what it is He is after, what it is He is building, that is the church. He is building it on this principle, to bring out these realities, those excellencies. In order to do that He must keep us low, keep us where no glory can be taken to ourselves, keep us dependent upon Him, keep us so that He, and He alone is our life, our wisdom, our strength, but as He does that His excellencies are shown forth. That is the object of our being in His church. This is the testimony of Jesus. Everything has pointed through the ages to this in which you and I are called; all the Scriptures lead to this. We are in the end of the ages when the testimony of Jesus is to be completed.

Ask the Lord for two things. To make the testimony good in you. When you are weak, to make the testimony good in you as strength; when you are feeling of all the most foolish, to make the testimony of His wisdom real in you; when you are feeling dead to make the testimony good of His life in you, and in faith, reach out to appropriate because it is for you in the Holy Spirit. This is faith's taking of Christ for life, strength, wisdom; ask the Lord to do that in your experience. And ask the Lord, on the ground of that, to put you out into the realm of need, to constitute a ministry through your experience, to the need.

The need of real ministry in the testimony of Jesus is so great. The need is desperate, and for any one of the Lord's children to be failing to fulfil a ministry to the full measure of what is possible is an awful tragedy today. The Lord deliver us from being less than we should be and can be in ministry, in a day of great spiritual need because we are not definitely exercising faith to make Him all that He is willing to be.