



*the*  
**Golden  
Candlestick**

**THE DEEP THINGS OF THE SPIRIT**

**Part 2**

**CHRIST AS IN  
THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD AND  
THE SHEWBREAD**

**THE OIL FOR THE LAMPSTAND**

**T. Austin-Sparks**

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*Volume 191*

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD (CONTD.)

*“And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 9:1).*

*“Verily I say unto you, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Matt. 16:28).*

*“And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you” (Matt. 12:27-28).*

### **The Kingdom operates through the Son of man**

Now we are going a little further with this matter of the sovereign rule of God as that which has come in with the Lord Jesus. I cited the two passages from Mark and Matthew in order that you might recognize one thing. In Mark the form is: “There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power.” In Matthew it is, “the Son of man coming in his kingdom”. Both these passages relate to the same thing and the point in quoting them both is that the Kingdom or sovereign rule of God operates through the Lord Jesus as the Son of man. It is the Son of man with whom the Kingdom of God, the rule of God, has been brought in.

### **The Kingdom inaugurated in the church by the Holy Spirit**

Now then, we have to note in the first place that this sovereign rule of God by His Son Jesus Christ was inaugurated in the church by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. That statement needs to be noted in its several parts. The Kingdom or rule of God in this particular dispensational form was inaugurated or introduced in the church by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and a quiet contemplation again of all that took place on that day, the reading of the details, will make clear the meaning and nature of

the sovereign rule of God coming into this world, being deposited in the church, to operate through the church in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is very comprehensive, but it is very important to recognize each several part. It would be quite valuable to us to stay with each part and explain what it means, but that is not our purpose at the moment.

It was then, on that day, that this prophecy of the Lord Jesus in His foresight through the Holy Spirit was fulfilled. We quoted that other passage in Matthew in order to just get our finger upon one point. "If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." That what Jesus was doing was by the Spirit of God, by the Holy Spirit, and by the Holy Spirit the Kingdom of God came in. It is a part of that pre-vision of the Lord Jesus in the Holy Spirit that on the day of Pentecost the Kingdom would come in in power. The rule, or sovereignty, of God came in by the Spirit in power on the day of Pentecost.

### **The power of the Kingdom**

And again dwell upon the nature of that power and the simile used of that power and we have an interpretation of the sovereign rule, the Kingdom, which has come in. It says, "like a mighty rushing wind" (Acts 2:2). A long-drawn-out season of terrible gales with all the havoc, wreckage and peril it brings, rendering man and his means helpless, incapable of controlling and subduing is a parable of the sovereignty of God. And the day of Pentecost was like that. Man was entirely put at a discount, all the forces of men and devils which had combined and loosed themselves at Calvary for the utter and final annihilation of Jesus Christ and all to do with Him were simply made as straw before a hurricane on the day of Pentecost. It swept through Jerusalem almost like a laughing at all that combination of forces which had brought Christ to the cross. This is the answer of the rule of God. That is what the Kingdom of God means and that was inaugurated in the church, and did not just remain for one day. There was a long enough period at the beginning to show that this thing was intended to be the normal life of the church. So, for some considerable time, in spite of a lot of every nature and kind, religious, political, everything else, the wind went on, the wind expanded. The mighty rushing wind proved all obstacles no hindrance. The Kingdom had come, the rule had been introduced with power. That is, the sovereignty of God took charge, just as the wind takes charge, and there is no setting yourself against it when it does. You have just to let go or be broken. It took charge.

I will not stay to speak of the mystery of this heavenly rule; it is there.

## The basis upon which the Kingdom rests

What I do want to come to particularly to conclude is the basis upon which this Kingdom, this sovereignty, rests. If it is true that it was by the Holy Spirit that this Kingdom was inaugurated in the church, then we have to look again at the Holy Spirit, for we are occupied with the things of the Spirit and the titles of the Holy Spirit will help us, one particularly at this point. He is called, “the Spirit of Jesus”. You will remember that that title and clause occurs in the missionary journeys of Paul. When he and those with him essayed to go into Bithynia, He, the Spirit of Jesus, suffered them not (Acts 16:7). In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle slightly enlarges upon that by “the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:19). It is the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, inaugurating the rule of God in the church.

What is the Spirit of Jesus Christ? I think there is no better passage to answer that question than this: “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor” (2 Cor. 8:9), and to link with that His own words, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). The Spirit of Jesus.

Upon what does this sovereign rule rest, this power which none can resist or stay? It rests upon the whole self-centredness and self-sufficiency of man having been undercut. Strange paradox, and yet there it is. Power rests upon human weakness. Paul has told us that as to himself quite definitely, but here is a law or principle of the sovereign rule of God in the church and through the church. It rests upon our entire self-life having been shattered and broken. It is probably the greatest feature of the life of the Lord Jesus Himself from His birth to the cross: His complete human weakness, from man’s standpoint, from the world’s standpoint, His human insignificance, His utter self-emptying, or, to put it into His own words, “I am meek and lowly in heart.” Meekness, the destruction of pride; the whole kingdom and strength of the prince of this world, of Satan and his kingdom, is pride from first to last. God’s abhorrence and hatred of pride which is declared again and again in the Scriptures, is because it is the strength of a kingdom inimical and antagonistic to His own rule. Pride is only the definition of self. Arrogance, which is presumption, conceit, our notions about ourselves, self-centredness — those are the laws and principles of this other kingdom which Christ is casting out by the Spirit of God in order to bring in the Kingdom of God. It is tremendously searching. It is not pleasant hearing or seeing, but it is very important, that you and I should recognize this and get this thing deep down and settled in us, that, to clear the way for the sovereignty of God in terms of power like this, God has to utterly devastate our soul-life. It is a deep, maybe

a long process. It may be lifelong, but sometimes it seems to be concentrated to the point of despair, if Paul is an illustration: “We despaired even of life: yea, we ourselves had the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves” (2 Cor. 1:8-9); “A thorn in the flesh ... that — here is the clue — that I should not be exalted” (2 Cor. 12:7); keeping the way open for the power of the rule of God.

And therefore the church ought to be the most chastened, disciplined vessel in this universe, if it is to be the vehicle of this rule, this Kingdom. It is within the church that we shall find this work of the Spirit going on more than anywhere, if it were found anywhere else at all, this work of undercutting the entirety of our self-life in all its aspects, and aspects are countless in this matter. God only knows what we never suspect, would never have believed, in what we believed to be utter devotion to the Lord, what we have thought to be an unreserved abandonment to Him to pour ourselves out to the last drop, and then to discover that there are depths of self-life yet to be dealt with. It is devastating. Oh, the depth of this thing! How deep Satan has gone in human nature. The kings and the princes in this Kingdom are the meek and lowly of heart. It is something, not to take up and go and worry about, make the stuff of introspection and all that sort of thing, but to recognize that God, moving on positive lines, does this. An example of ‘emptying’ is Job, but in the end God’s vindication of Job is perfectly clear. He is the man alongside of whom God stands. “My servant Job” — ‘You go to him; if you want anything from Me, you will get it through him’ (Job 42:7-8). And may that not be a parable of the church when rightly related and chastened? If the world is going to get anything, it will get it through the church. God will be jealous for His chastened vessel and will not ride over its head. ‘You go to My people; I will meet you there.’

God cannot establish His rule, His government, His Kingdom, upon anything that He has set aside, and He has set the very nature of this kingdom of Satan in man’s heart aside.

## **The permanence of the Kingdom**

One of the characteristics of the Kingdom of God, His sovereign rule, is its permanence. “His kingdom (dominion, ASV) is an everlasting kingdom (dominion, ASV)” (Dan. 4:34). God will not build that Kingdom upon something that is rotten or will break down. The kingdom of this world is like that. It is itself a divided kingdom; it cannot stand. The sovereign rule of God is focussed upon that which is going to abide.

## The mystery of the Kingdom

And here is the mystery element or factor in the rule of God. We shall be completely baffled over this matter of the sovereignty of God. We will have to stand back and yield to it, and in these days, there is a very great deal of perplexity about the sovereignty of God. I do not mean in the world but in Christian activity. It would seem that there are numerous things which are associated with some work of God which in principle you cannot accept. You have to say, 'That is the world. What is the difference between that and the world? There is no difference between that and the way the world goes on.' You are completely defeated when you try to explain this method of divine sovereignty; you have to stand back. But be sure of this one thing — the sovereignty of God is focussed upon what is going to endure, and all the rest will go. In months or in years you will find nothing of that, but what you will find is that something within it all was secured by God, was the result of His sovereignty. *Within*, within — that is not it, but this is.

But let us take note of the principle, the law of the Kingdom. It is permanence, and nothing will abide that has not passed through the fires in which the self-element has been consumed. Everything — and it may be a large percentage — that is of man's own making and projecting and energizing will go and not be found. Though it were ninety-nine per cent, you will not be able to trace it. It will be a story of the past. But what the sovereignty is doing is just within to get something permanent that abides.

We will leave it there. But you see the permanence, the abiding, is that which is not of man; it is of God. And the maximum of what is of God will be where there is the minimum of what is of man.

*Concluded.*

# CHRIST AS IN THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD AND THE SHEWBREAD

*Reading: Exodus 25:23-30; Leviticus 24:5-9.*

We remind ourselves of the inclusive truth of this whole revelation, that which embraces everything. It is what Christ is as set forth in these types and symbols. We are not looking for truths as such. We are seeking to see the Lord Jesus as God sets Him forth and not as He has been conceived by man. These are divine thoughts given in revelation and those thoughts of God always circle round and point to His Son. So here we look to see in the very first place what Christ is signified as being in the table of shewbread.

In this presentation of the sanctuary we are told nothing at this point about the veil dividing between the most holy place and the holy place. Vessels are first dealt with, and then the surroundings. So we find ourselves, without being told so, at this point on the other side of the veil in the holy place, and no longer in the most holy. We are moving spiritually now. When it comes to moving literally in the construction of the tabernacle we shall move from the outside to the inside and finish in the immediate presence of God. That has its own significance. But we are moving now from the divine side, and not from the human side. When it is our side we begin outside the court and have to come by way of the altar and move steadily towards the centre towards the ultimate place with God. All these things of spiritual value have to become operative to bring us in. When we are speaking from the divine side we begin in heaven; that is, God begins at His end always. God begins at the consummation in Christ and then shows us how that consummation is reached. Here we are on the divine side, and so we move from the centre outward, and now we are in the holy place.

Into the most holy place the high priest entered just once a year himself, signifying that going in of the Lord Jesus in the capacity of High Priest, not once a year but once for all for ever. In the capacity of High Priest He goes through once and for all with His precious blood into the presence of God. But when we come to the holy place, it is not that full and ultimate significance of the high priest in atonement; it is priesthood viewed from another standpoint. Here the priesthood more in general is in view. It is priesthood not on the basis of the once and for all atonement of the High Priest, but it is priesthood in relation to other things. It is now priestly ministry which

results from that inclusive and final thing, the High Priestly work of the Lord Jesus. Because a High Priest in an inclusive and comprehensive way has gone through these issues, as it were, from that a priestly ministry in relation to other things, and on a more general scale. By that we mean that the High Priestly work is gathered up and focussed in the full atonement. That is specific, that is final, there is nothing more to be done in relation to that, it is complete once and for all. But because that is so, because there is a High Priest in the presence of God, and because the full atonement has been made, and because there has come about a fellowship with God, a communion with God on the basis of that atonement, then a priestly ministry issues out from that and has to do with a testimony not only Godward, but a testimony manward. It is a ministry now which is more outward.

First of all God is satisfied, God's requirements are answered, in His presence He has what He requires. Then out from that, still having the Godward relationship but now having a relationship, a ministry of a priestly character manward, there is priesthood outward as from God's full satisfaction. This is what begins in the holy place in a peculiar way.

Now the Lord Jesus is the first and inclusive Priest in every respect. This table and this Shewbread are closely bound up with priestly ministry. It is food for the priests, it is a memorial in priesthood, in priestly ministry. It is priesthood that is centred in this table.

Then you ask, What is, then, the nature and basis of a priestly ministry carried on in the Lord Jesus in an outward way? What gives that ministry its quality, its power, its energy? Food is a question of value, of energy, of activity, and you ask, What is it that gives this priestly ministry its strength, its sustenance, its value, its energy? What lies behind it? Once more, it is just what the Lord Jesus is.

The ark is of acacia wood covered with pure gold around it, and a mercy seat of pure gold resting upon it. Now you have exactly the same elements in the table. You have acacia wood representing an incorruptible humanity overlaid with pure gold, symbolising His essential Deity, divine nature. Then the crown of pure gold again upon it, showing that it is not only the union of the divine with the human as in the table but that the thing which governs and controls as from above, the thing which marks it as something above ordinary union of divinity with humanity, but gives it that distinctive feature which is unique, which does not and cannot relate to us, is His Deity, His very Godhead.

The Lord safeguards truth, and it is well for us to be quite clear on the doctrine. We must remember that — although it is true that in Christ we are joined to the Lord one spirit, and our union is a very real union, and in Him

there is a union between a divine nature and a human nature, and it is true in us now in Christ — Christ is, after all, much more than that, and we never do come to share His Deity. If we are partakers of the divine nature, as the Word says we are, we are not partakers of the divine person, God. There is no Deity in which we share. That is where, of course, false teaching has led so many astray. I think that was the heart of what was called at one time New Theology. The slogan was the deification of humanity, that by certain processes upward eventually man would become deified and God. That is a lie of antichrist. This *crown of gold* upon the mercy seat and upon the table of shewbread is something which marks that vessel off as distinct from another vessel. It is the Deity superimposed, and Christ, while He is Man and God united, has as the supreme feature in His ministry the fact that He is Very God, that there is Deity there ‘superimposed’ (though that is hardly the right word), crowning all. We come to Him as our consummation. That is very blessed. He is that one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. He is the divine Man, but He is God. “My Lord, and my God”. That is the ultimate strength of this one thing, the crowning factor in this whole thing.

When we have seen the Lord Jesus in that position, carrying on His priestly work outward in the values of His representative person, but also in the value of what He is above and beyond that in union with the Father, in common equality with Jehovah, then we are able to move downward in this matter, and see that these values are carried out in the sanctuary and are, again, to be expressed in the very ministry of the sanctuary: that is, the ministry of the people of God.

We should recognise and grasp this that it is on the basis of what Christ is that ministry is fulfilled. Ministry comes out of what Christ is, and therefore all ministry which is really going to be spiritually effectual must be on the basis of a revelation of what Christ is, a knowledge of what Christ is, and a union with what Christ is. There is no place in the heavenly order of things for merely professional ministry. There is no place for human appointment, or choice of ministry. That is altogether foreign to divine thought. No man can take up the ministry. No man can be appointed to the ministry.

If you have a spiritual experience of a deep character which is *your* experience, something that has come into the innermost part of your being and is yours in a spiritual way; if you could impart that to me, then I could do as you do in virtue of that. But you cannot, therefore for me to try and do as you do on the basis of your experience would be merely imitation, objective, and would be devoid of that spiritual life and strength that you have. That is exactly what has happened over ministry; it is imitation, it is taking up something objectively, whereas true ministry according to God’s thought is on the

basis of something spiritual in our own history, and that something spiritual is an inward knowledge of what Christ is, and ministry can only be fruitful and effectual in the measure in which we have that inner knowledge of what Christ is. On the other hand, that knowledge of Christ does issue in ministry. You do not need to have it organised. It is not necessary that anybody should appoint you to work, should open a door for you to minister, to send you here or there. A knowledge of the Lord Jesus issues spontaneously in ministry. I believe that the Lord, therefore, for a great many of His people has no kind of appointment as they look for appointment to ministry. So many have a mentality that they must join some kind of society which will send them out to a certain place to fulfil ministry before they can be the Lord's servants. For the greater number the Lord has no such thing, but He has ministry just as definite. That is no more definite than the ministry of the whole church, and that is what we are coming to. It is all Israel that is in this ministry, but at the moment we are concentrating upon Christ Himself.

What is this ministry which is just as real, just as definitely a divine ordination as any ministry which is specifically sent out to some particular part of the world to do a certain kind of work? The Lord simply causes the majority of His people to live somewhere, perhaps where they would not choose to live. They do not see on the face of it any kind of marked appointment of God; they find themselves there. If they try to get out they find they cannot get out so easily, they find that they are moving in some way out of the will of God if they try. Now then, they are there for this purpose, that their own spiritual knowledge of the Lord should spontaneously express itself. That is ministry. All ministry is what Christ is, and then, so far as the ministering instruments are concerned, what they know Him to be. You may never be appointed to what you call the ministry, and yet you are appointed by God. The real value of ministry is the expression of the Lord Jesus. It is not doing something on the outside that we call the Lord's work. It is the living expression of the Lord Jesus. If we are really under the government of the Lord Himself in this matter, as in all matters, the Lord will never send us out to what we might call some specific ministry until what we have and know of the Lord has found expression where we are. What have you got of the Lord? What do you know of the Lord? That has got to be expressed to the full where you are. The whole inclination is, If only we could get away from where we are, out to this great world of need, into this sphere and that sphere where there is such a call, then we could be of some value. The Lord says, You must extend to the full measure where you are before there is going to be a move. If I want you somewhere else, leave that to Me. This is a governing law that not until what you know and have of the Lord has been expressed

where you are, and in being expressed represents the ministry of Christ, can there be anything else. Now you see the long-drawn-out waiting sometimes is allowed to have the opposite effect of making us to some extent indifferent or careless as to the present, the here and the now. Oh, that terrible evil of some time ahead! We have got a mental eye upon when we are released, when we are called out, when our ministry comes, when the object of this present time is reached. The object is injuring the present, some intangible will-o'-the-wisp-tomorrow is injuring today. The point, here and now, is your ministry — and your ministry is not official but what you have of Christ being expressed. That is the law of increase, strength, energy and sustenance. These sons of Aaron had their ministry maintained upon what Christ was as set forth in those loaves. The values of Christ are the constituents of ministry.

Seeing that that is the heart of the thing we can turn our eyes outward a little more, and see this wonderful thing that it is Aaron and his sons, it is a family in ministry. It is man according to God's mind to whom priesthood is committed. Now the Lord Jesus on the side of His Manhood was as a Priest — and the apostle distinctly says this — taken from among men. He is Man. He is not of their kind, but He is from among them. And He is Man wholly according to God's mind, and God has committed to Man according to His mind the whole matter of priesthood. That is, when that supreme thing has been done, the atoning work. The High Priest does that. It is done apart from us, and it is final, so that it is now for us. But when that is done as basic, then the priestly ministry on the basis of that is given to Man according to God's mind. I think it is one of the most wonderful things in divine revelation, that what is meant by priesthood is laid upon man, that man is called into the place of priesthood — man, mark you, as he is according to God's mind — but then, of course, we come to that by union with Christ. We are regarded in Christ as being according to God's mind and then priesthood is entrusted.

In our meditation in this book in another connection we have said that this universe is 'redempto-centric' and will be for all eternity, that right at the centre of this universe is redemption. In coming ages the Lamb is in the midst of the throne and the song will be of the Lamb. It will be the redemption song. At the heart of this universe is precious blood, a sacrifice, redemption; this universe is 'redempto-centric'.

The church occupies the central place in this universe. Christ the Head, the church His members, one. That is the sanctuary of Exodus, Christ and His own forming the sanctuary for God, as this Tabernacle gathered up all Israel (and we see it in the twelve loaves here, representing the twelve tribes, all centred there in priesthood). The church became the centre of a universe, a cosmos, and everything was related to Israel, so that all the nations were

dealt with according to their attitude towards Israel — if favourable, mercy was shown; if unfavourable, judgement was shown. So this sanctuary of the book of Ephesians, built up a habitation of God through the Spirit, the church, Christ and His members, becomes the centre of this universe, but it is redemption. The church's foundation, the church's song, the church's testimony is redemption: "He has redeemed us unto God by His blood."

Now you see that the church has the testimony of Jesus and the testimony of redemption at its heart, and thus the universe becomes 'redempto-centric' but the church is the vessel of that truth, of that great reality. So then, if redemption is the great central thing to this universe now and for the coming ages, priesthood is simply the expression, the ministry of redemption. Redemption is a much bigger thing than forgiveness of sins and salvation from hell. Redemption goes right on to God's ultimate thought. It is not just what we are redeemed from, it is what we are redeemed unto. Redemption is the deepest thing. The church is the embodiment of redemption, and priesthood has to do with redemption. That is the whole meaning of Exodus and Leviticus. Redeemed unto God, unto all the eternal purposes.

God projected His purposes in eternity past. There was an interruption and an interference, but redemption goes back to the purpose. The purposes are now reached through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, the Redeemer. He is made unto us redemption.

What is priestly ministry? What is this ministry to which all the people of God are called, the whole church; not the ministry of a certain class now as typified in the Old Testament, but the ministry, the priesthood of all believers? Coming back to this immediate type, the table and shewbread, it is an active, energetic thing; it is a thing of power, for that is the meaning of the bread. It is something living, active and energetic. It is strength. If you do not have bread you will lose your energy, your activity. This bread is to maintain a priesthood in strength and energy. What, then, is this ministry? It is the active power in relation to redemption; it is the going forth of a divine energy in relation to redemption. It is not just the evangel for the salvation of sinners from their sin. Redemption is a comprehensive thing, including all the purposes of God, but you and I and the whole church are called by God to be the vehicle through which the power of redemption and the mighty testimony of redemption operates. It is a mighty power — not a truth or doctrine — that that great redemption that is in Christ Jesus is mediated through us. If we have a living spiritual knowledge of what Christ is, then when we speak of redemption there is the power of redemption in our speech. It is not something we have said; it is something we have done. Every utterance of God is a fiat, is an act; every Holy Spirit utterance is a work,

not just a statement; it is an energy, it brings conviction, it leaves a mark, it makes it impossible for those who have heard it to be the same before God afterwards. They are held responsible for something, for one thing, and it is a savour of life unto life or of death unto death. It is a ministry of a spiritual power, the reality of redemption. That is the meaning of priesthood.

Priesthood is a spiritual expression — if you like, a declaration, but a declaration is so often linked with and limited to words, but an expression is something more than that. It is power. Paul said that he did not wish that the faith of the Corinthians should stand in the wisdom of words but in the power of God. Therefore he meant that what comes through him is not just to be an oration but an effective something. That is deeper than words. That is the priestly ministry to which we are called. On the one side it comes from our apprehension and appropriation of what Christ is, our knowledge of what Christ is, our receiving of what Christ is by faith, our living daily upon what Christ is, and then out from that there is spiritual influence in word, in life and in deed. That is priestly ministry.

Prayer is one form of priestly ministry. Intercession is one form. It is powerful; it is the mediation of divine power. The ministry of the Word is another form. And there are many other forms of priesthood. Some have personal ministry and have no gift for public ministry at all, but that is priesthood. It is all related to God's end in the church, the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. That ministry is sustained in a spiritual fellowship and union with Christ in what He is.

That is the heart of the Lord's table. We are not going to link this table of the holy place with the Lord's table necessarily, but in principle we have a link. When we come to the Lord's table and we take the loaf, what are we doing? What is the meaning of that? It is the church there gathered exclusively, the church that is gathered at the Lord's table. No one else has a right to the Lord's table but members of Christ. When the church is gathered to the Lord's table and takes of the loaf it is in testimony declaring that its life and its ministry are based upon its union with what Christ is in His perfected humanity. God's priestly power is entrusted to Man after His own heart and Christ is that inclusively and representatively.

Now here is one whose humanity is perfect and God has invested Him with priestly rights and priestly power. We are saying that we live by what Christ is, on the basis of Christ's perfected humanity. That is the loaf. Read the description of these loaves of the shewbread in Leviticus and you will see that it is Christ's perfected humanity; perfect, yet perfected by the fires of the cross and brought into the presence of God. I do like this play on words in the Hebrew in verse 30 of chapter 25:30: "And thou shalt set upon the table

shewbread before me always.” Here you have two words: (1) Shewbread, which is literally, “the bread of faces”. The Hebrew language literally translated always sounds strange to us. It means that the faces are in the presence of God, God is looking upon the faces; and (2) the literal translation of the last clause is: “before my face continually”. ‘Thou shalt set upon the table the bread of faces before my face continually.’ Face to face! A memorial to the people of God for ever, face to face in Him; what Christ is and our union with Him as that brings us to be face to face, His face to us and our faces unashamed to Him. It is face to face with the Lord in Christ because of what He is. We need to deal with the details of the shewbread to see what He is. That fine flour is His humanity brought into the fire and perfected, and then the frankincense spread over all is the divine excellencies of the Son of Man face to face with God. God looks on that. That can look up to God without fear. God can look at that without displeasure and we are in Him in the holy place. That is the basis of priesthood.

How much more there is to say about this! We can understand the meaning of the terrible and unabated assault of the whole universe of evil and evil powers upon a true spiritual expression of the church and the cross. Get a true spiritual expression and testimony to the church as resting upon the real work of the cross of the Lord Jesus and you see what that means. That means that the universe becomes redempto-centric, that all the mischief of the kingdom of darkness is put aside. The centre is the triumph of His cross and that triumph is gathered up into the church as the vessel of that testimony. Get anything like a testimony, though it may be imperfect in its expression, yet a living testimony to that, and a ministry in relation to that, and hell stops at nothing to ruin that testimony in some way and destroy that vessel, and also to bring its ministers into a place where their functioning is made impossible. You are right in the heart of universal conflict when you come to see these things and stand in them spiritually. It is tremendous what the enemy does in this connection. It is the explanation of this persistent, evil, fierce assault of the powers of darkness upon a true spiritual expression of the cross in and through the church, giving the church its real position and vocation in the universe of proclaiming, expressing and ministering in a priestly way in relation to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

The real issue is being before the Lord in a position of spiritual ministry, priestly ministry. That is where the whole thing focuses, on the ground of that, how that is sustained and the issue or result of it in this universe against all the power of evil.

*Concluded.*

# THE OIL FOR THE LAMPSTAND

*Reading: Exodus 25:31-40; 27:20.*

We come now to speak of the oil for the lampstand, or the candlestick, the oil which is to provide the testimony which is to be found in the Lord's House and in relation to priestly ministry. We know quite well that the oil of the Old Testament is the type of the Spirit in the New Testament. So, that being the case, we have here the Spirit in sevenfold expression. There are seven lamps in this one lamp. It is one vessel and it is one Spirit. If we were to use Paul's language we should say, "There is one body and one spirit ...". Here is one vessel of testimony and one Spirit in the vessel, yet expressed in a sevenfold way. This sevenfoldness is divided into three; that is, it is divided into one and two threes, the central stem and three branches on each side.

Now without staying longer, let us get right to the New Testament:

Rev. 1:4-5: "the seven spirits which are before his throne".

Rev. 3:1: "the seven spirits of God".

Rev. 4:5: "seven lamps of fire ... the seven spirits of God".

Rev. 5:6: "seven horns, and seven eyes ... the seven spirits of God".

The lampstand is before the Lord, a sevenfold expression of the Spirit divided into one and two threes.

## **The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus**

The one is the central, shall we say the inclusive and basic feature of Romans 8:2: "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus". Everything else springs out of that. The Holy Spirit before anything else in the active way of testimony, when it is a matter of expression in testimony, in ministry, makes the sanctuary of God a functioning thing; not just a beautiful picture, model or idea. It is the Spirit of life.

In Ezekiel, of course, you have that very strongly set forth in chapter 1, verse 13: "As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches; it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning."

This presentation of God's activities is a picture of vivid activity, energy; it is one word —life. It is life as the origin of everything in relation to God's purpose, as Nicodemus was told, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." That is where life begins, by the Spirit of life, born of the Spirit.

Then in John 6 you remember the Lord uses again the word in connection with the Spirit, "the Spirit gives life", "it is the Spirit that quickens (AV)."

There is the centre, the spring of everything in testimony, and before there can be any other kind of expression there must be the manifestation of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of life; then everything else lives.

Now we turn to the two sets of three. You really want to have this presentation of the lampstand in your mind's eye, and with that central branch and that central lamp at the top just write over it, "The Spirit of Life". Then you have the three branches on either side.

## **The Spirit of holiness**

Down on the one side over the uppermost lamp you will write Romans 1:4: "the Spirit of holiness". "Declared to be the Son of God according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead". The context, I feel, rules out the idea that that refers to the raising of others. It relates to His own resurrection. According to the Spirit of holiness raised from the dead, declared the Son of God with power.

Here is the resurrection of the almond blossom, a lamp connected with the Spirit of holiness, because to obtain that new creation, that new heavenly kingdom, that eternal purpose of God, there can be no resurrection that is apart from holiness. There will be a general resurrection of the dead for judgement, but the resurrection unto life and not unto death is resurrection according to holiness. It is the only thing that can be raised, that which is holy in Christ. Therefore the Holy Spirit as the first expression of life in Christ, deathless life, resurrection life, is the Spirit of Holiness. This is a holy life, an incorruptible life, and to have life in Christ and the Spirit of life in Christ means, in the first practical outworking and expression, holiness of life.

It is a misapprehension, and a terrible failure somewhere, if people claim to have the Holy Spirit and are not living in holiness. There is something wrong there. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Holiness, and it should be taken for granted that to have the Spirit actively in us is to have holiness actively in us, and unholiness is a contradiction to our very having the Spirit, and a contradiction and a denial of the Spirit's activity in us. There ought not to be a subsequent experience in the history of a believer when they come to what

is called sanctification. That ought to be from the beginning. Unfortunately it is not because of bad teaching or lack of teaching. The fact is that from the beginning believers ought to be indwelt and filled with the Spirit, resulting in holiness. That is the expression of divine life and the Spirit of life operates to push off from us the fruits of unholiness and to produce in us the fruits of holiness. It ought never to be necessary to say to a young believer, You must give up this and you must give up that; you must stop going here and you must stop going there. We ought never to approach anyone on that ground. Many will say, If I become a Christian must I give up this? And must I give up that? And it is a mistaken thing to say, Of course you must! Never should we say a thing like that and never ought it to be necessary to say it to a young believer. Our attitude should be: You let the Lord come into your heart and suspend all those questions. You let the Lord have His place and all your problems along that line will solve themselves. For some of us I have no doubt we have discovered that when the Lord has really become Lord in us those things that we at one time thought we should have to give up and painfully lose have simply dropped off. We have lost interest in them; they no longer have any hold on us. In fact, we hardly realise that they have gone, we can hardly say when they went, but we find now they are no longer there and they do not trouble us any more. They were very dear and precious at one time, but strangely enough we count them as nothing. The Spirit of Life has forced off the fruit of an old creation and is now producing His own fruit unto holiness. So it becomes the living Christ who supplants by the power of His own risen life the old life of death.

### **The Spirit of truth**

The second branch down on that side will have written over it John 16:13: "... the Spirit of truth". Alongside of that we might well place Ephesians 1:17-18: "... a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him". That is the meaning of the truth. Life works out in revelation of Jesus Christ and truth is not academic or technical truth. Truth is personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus in a living, experimental way. Knowing is not just technical, mental, intellectual knowledge in the Word of God; it is association with a person. To know the truth is to come into association with the truth in a living way and that truth is not something in itself. It is in Jesus, "as the truth is in Jesus". Now life works out in that way when it has its free course, when the snuffers do their work and the dishes collect up that which obstructs, which only befogs, beclouds and besoots the light and the Lord has His golden snuffers in His sanctuary. He has His way of getting rid of the unpleasant,

odious things in us. He does it in love; it is all gold. There may be things which becloud the clear shining, arrest the pure light, that wick of our own nature which sometimes smoulders or makes a smoke. The Lord has His very effective and yet loving ways of getting rid of that. But when this sort of thing is done and the flame is made clear, then there is light, there is growing knowledge of the Lord, there is revelation of Him. It is when this smouldering wick of our own reasoning, our own argumentativeness, preferences and desires is there, that the light is not as clear. That is, the revelation of the Lord is not proceeding unhindered. There are mists and smokes about and we are not seeing light in His light. We are fumbling, and the atmosphere becomes a little thick. But when that self, that natural life of ours is kept trimmed, then we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and it is living.

### **The Spirit of the fear of the Lord**

The third lamp down on that side will have over it Isaiah 11:2: “The spirit of the fear of the Lord”. If we ask what the fear of the Lord is we shall have the answer best in Him concerning whom those words were written in the first instance and we shall see that the fear of the Lord in Him meant that in perceiving the will of the Father He never argued about it or debated it, but instantly did it. The fear of the Lord is immediate and instant response to the known will of God. It is fear to disobey, fear to be out of line with the Father’s will. It is fear to grieve Him. In another place it says, “He shall be of quick scent in the fear of the Lord.” A heart that is wholly set upon the Lord is quick to discern the Lord’s will and quick to obey it. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. The Holy Spirit is very quick in his registration of what is and what is not the mind of the Lord and calls for an immediate response as that is made known. In us the fear of the Lord is not long-drawn-out contentions and arguments with the Lord, not delays but perceiving the will of the Lord. Having reason to believe that the Lord has spoken, at all costs we respond. That is the Lord Jesus, upon whom the Spirit rested without measure.

Now we turn to the other side of the lampstand, to the other three branches.

### **The Spirit of love**

On the uppermost branch, corresponding to holiness on the opposite side, we have 2 Timothy 1:7: “the spirit of love”. Some people have got an

idea of holiness which is really a cold righteousness without any love. They call it holiness, but really it is legality; and it is a loveless thing, hard, cruel and icy. Holiness is not like that. Holiness is balanced by love. Love is holy. Holiness is love. “The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit ...” (Rom. 5:5).

### **The Spirit of grace and supplication**

The second lamp on this side may have Zechariah 12:10. over it; “the spirit of grace and supplication”, balancing truth, knowledge, revelation. When we come into a living knowledge of the Lord, a living revelation of the Lord, in the first place it does not produce pride, arrogance and self-importance. There is all the difference between possessing a lot of truth doctrinally and technically and having revelation. Revelation produces humility. It must do that because it is so vast that the one who has it knows quite well that the thing is altogether beyond them. It is not the cleverness of their brain; it is not what they have thought out and produced by any quality of their own intellect. This is something altogether of the Spirit of God and therefore a graciousness is found, a spirit of grace. There is no virtue in our having revelation. It is all of grace and therefore it produces in us graciousness. And a further significance is supplication. Here is the man who had great revelation and for other believers he bows his knees unto the Father, “I bow my knees unto the Father”; “I make supplication for you”; “I pray for you, that He would grant unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation ...”. The Spirit of life works out in grace and supplication.

### **The Spirit of fire**

Finally, the third on that side of the lampstand, Acts 2:3: —the Spirit of fire. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Matt. 3:11 and Luke 3:16). This reminds us of Ezekiel chapter one. Fire has many purposes, many uses, many effects, but there in Acts 2 surely fire is the Spirit of power. It is the Spirit of holiness; fire is purging. It is the Spirit of life; fire is living. But particularly the Lord’s word concerning Pentecost was, “Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come ...”. The fire was the symbol of a new power from heaven, as it proved that day. Now love in Christ by the Spirit is power. This requires much dwelling upon.

There you have the sevenfold light expression of the Spirit; life as central and basic, and holiness, truth, the fear of the Lord, love, grace and fire.

But then when you turn to the book of the Revelation, that last passage to

which we referred at the beginning of our meditation concerning the Lamb, it says, "He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God." Horns are symbols of power, and eyes are symbols of perception, together with the Lamb as the seven spirits of God. I think we are not wrong in saying that that means the sevenfold expression of the one Spirit, the sevenfold outworking of one source, the Spirit of God. If you put all those passages together and see them as being the sevenfold expression of the Holy Spirit, you will also see that each of these seven comes under the heading of horns and eyes, power and perception. In other words, holiness itself is a horn, it is a power: then the power of Christ, the power of the Lamb. Truth as the truth, not just revelation, coming through in any way has the whole power of the enemy set against it, because of the power of revelation. Once you get a thing by revelation you are out, you are emancipated, you are through, something is done; that is tremendous. You may have all the doctrine, and it make no difference, and the devil does not mind how much doctrine you have. I think he likes to bury us under mountains of doctrine sometimes; but get revelation and that is a thing that affects him. It is a tremendous power. It is a horn. It is the power of the Lamb. The fear of the Lord! A quick scent and instant obedience is power. Love! Surely this can be brought in relation to the horn; what power there is in divine love! Grace and supplication! Fire! Yes, all are expressions of the *power* of the Holy Spirit, the *power* of Christ, all in a living way, all through life, the Spirit of life. And the same is true of the eyes, spiritual perception. Holiness in the life works out in keen spiritual perception. "The pure in heart shall see God" and the pure in heart see everything else. To walk near to the Lord in any measure of holiness is a painful thing because of the resultant perception. It brings with it difficulties, problems, as you see and as you feel. Then the whole question sometimes of fellowship arises, but holiness is a keenly perceptive power in the life. And the same is true of revelation; oh, what difficulties revelation raises when you have seen. It is a power.

Judaism was a mighty power in the life and history of Saul of Tarsus. He saw the Lord, he had a revelation, and that did what nothing else in this universe could have done. It would have been utterly futile and fraught with some very serious consequences for the one who had attempted it, to try and argue Saul out of Judaism, to tell him that Judaism was no longer of any account before God. You have this firebrand Saul of Tarsus to deal with. Nothing would touch him along that line. A revelation of Jesus Christ did it, broke the whole power of that in him and emancipated him. Revelation is a great power, truth is a great power, and the power is bound up with the perception. The fear of the Lord brings an intensifying keenness of scent

in the things of the Lord. Love! Who will say that love is blind? There is nothing more keen-eyed than love, nothing that sees more than love. Love may be willing to cover, love may be willing to shield, but it is not true to say that love is blind. Love sees a great deal more. Grace, supplication and fire! These are all factors in spiritual perception.

So life works out through power and spiritual perception and it works through these six things of which we have spoken. They are the spiritual channels of this life, this risen life in the Lord, and they produce in the believer the power of that life and the perception of that life.

*Concluded.*