



the
Golden
Candlestick

**LIFE IN THE UNSEARCHABLE
RICHES OF CHRIST**

Part 1

T. Austin-Sparks

Volume 181

INCREASED SPIRITUAL CAPACITY

Prayer

We are waiting before Thee, Oh Lord, our God, with hearts reaching out, with every faculty poised to hear, to see, what the Lord will say unto us. Our prayer most earnestly is that it may be the Lord's speaking — maybe through a human voice — but the Lord speaking. And for this one thing we pray — that it may be the consciousness of the Lord again in this hour, and that Thou wilt so govern everything toward that end of Thine own pleasure and satisfaction, through the Lord Jesus, Thy beloved Son. Amen.

The keynote to this series of messages is “the unsearchable riches of Christ”, which we find in Ephesians 3:8: “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

What I have to say in this meditation is very largely introductory to what, if the Lord wills, I will be saying in subsequent chapters. These words which we have just read are set in the midst of the letter which contains the concentrated essence of the ministry of the apostle Paul, Christ's greatest servant, and this letter, more than any other, is the letter of spiritual enlargement. The range of this letter, as you know, is from eternity to eternity.

That is the horizon of the letter, so-called to the Ephesians. Unfortunately ‘so-called’, because it was never limited to that in the beginning. Space was left in this letter for something to be filled in. It was just a letter ‘to ...’, and then filled in: Ephesus, Colosse, and so on. It was not reduced to Ephesus. In it the apostle says: “Unto the nations! This grace was given to preach unto the nations.” So the letter has that horizon of the nations within the horizon of the two eternities. This phrase, “The unsearchable riches of Christ”, is just one of a number of superlatives in the letter. If you read it through carefully and watchfully you will come on phrases like these: “The exceeding greatness of His power”; “The fulness of Him that fills all in all”; “The exceeding riches of His grace”; “Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”; “Far above all principality and power and rule and dominion and every name that is named not only in this age but in that which is to come”; “Unto all the fulness of God”; “Attain unto the fulness

of Christ”; “To Him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus unto all ages for ever and ever.” That is a selection of superlatives, but the apostle finds language exhausted to express what he has seen and what is in his heart. Am I not right in saying that this is the letter of spiritual enlargement?

Well, the crying need of our time is for increase of spiritual capacity in knowing the Lord Jesus. I expect that if you were asked today: ‘What do you feel to be the greatest need of Christians at this time?’, your answers would be various and many. This may not be the greatest of them all, but I do suggest to you that when I say that the need of Christians in our time is for an increase of spiritual capacity that will rank very high and take a foremost place.

In writing this letter Paul did not get very far before he dropped on his knees. There he was, with his parchment before him and his great vision, his heart bursting, and it was as though he said: ‘Can I get it over? It is a hopeless task! It is impossible unless the Lord does something!’ As he dropped on his knees he said: “And for this I bow my knee unto the Father of glory, that He would grant unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your heart being enlightened.” What a phrase! “The eyes of your heart being enlightened.” You know, the heart always has better reasons than the head. You ask any mother about that!

Yes, this is a day of mediocrity in many realms. The fact is that there are no people today who are big enough to cope with the situation in any realm; in the political realm, in the social realm, in the industrial realm, in the realm of society, in the realm of human nature. No one is big enough to cope with the situation today and bring it under hand, and that is very largely true in the spiritual realm. Christians are being forced up into a corner. The church is being pressed up into a corner where the one overwhelming consciousness is: ‘We are not sufficient for these things. We are not adequate to the situation. We are just not going to cope with this unless the Lord increases our capacity.’ Is that not true? If it is not true in the consciousness of any of you, leave yourselves in the hands of the Lord, and that is the way that He will take you — to the place where enlargement of spiritual measure will be the only solution to your problem within and without. Yes, it is true: we are not sufficient to cope until the Lord enlarges us.

I believe that the very first thing towards this will be a new vision of the Lord Jesus. He is going to carry us right along that line. It has been spiritual limitation, inadequate capacity, which has been responsible for so many spiritual tragedies in history. It was the cause of the tragedy of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea, when they came to the border of the land and were

wheeled around, turned back into the wilderness and perished, and did not enter into the inheritance. That was because of this one thing: insufficient spiritual capacity. They saw the giants in the land, the walled cities, and the forces which stood in the way, and they said: ‘We were in our own sight, and in theirs, as grasshoppers.’ Well, you know, it is quite a good thing to see yourselves like that sometimes; indeed, it is essential in the divine economy that you and I should feel that we are in ourselves no more than grasshoppers, even feeling that we are not able to hop at all, but there can be a wrong attitude like that. It depends against whom you are measuring the situation, yourself or the Lord, and if you measure every situation by the Lord, grasshopper you may be, but you hop over into the land to take possession. They measured by what they themselves were naturally, and not what they were by faith in the Lord.

We often see that paradox with Paul. We may light on it as we go on, because, you see, the apostle is saying here: “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints ...”. Less than the least of all saints! Does that sound like spiritual capacity? Oh, but he did not stop there — “was this grace given”. To the least of all, less than the least, it was given to preach “the unsearchable riches of Christ” to the nations. That is the capacity in one whose conception of himself was so small and limited (as he wrote and referred to himself), and yet he wrote this letter with all the superlatives. It is a contradiction, is it not? And yet it depends entirely upon your viewpoint.

I am, for the moment, speaking about the limitation which does exist, but which should not exist, and that is this persistent tendency to reduce everything to what is called simplicity. There is a simplicity in Christ, again paradoxical, which is quite right, but there is a simplicity which is quite wrong. When people say: ‘We want just the simple gospel’, as they often do; ‘we are not interested in all this high-flown language, this great realm of spiritual ideas. Give us the simple gospel!’, it is because they do not know their New Testament. The Lord is always well ahead of us, while we want Him to come into step with us. We are always trying to get Him into step with us, trying to reduce Him to our size, trying to make the Lord one with whom we can cope, whom we can fully understand, and with whom we can wholly agree and with whom we can be on terms of absolute happiness; and the Lord won’t have any of it. If you know anything about life with the Lord and going on with the Lord, you will know that He is always well ahead of you. He is always making demands which are beyond you, beyond your capacity and beyond your ability. The man who wrote this letter had also written: “We were pressed beyond our measure.” Beyond our measure! Yes,

the Lord is always getting us out of our depth, beyond our measure, for very good reasons.

But, of course, you do not accept this principle of having things in your measure in any other realm but the spiritual, do you? Why do you send your children to school? To be taught the things they already know and that are quite easy to them? Do they come home and say: 'Well, I did not learn anything fresh today. I knew it all and it's very easy'? No, you do not do that in any realm of education. You know quite well that the law of education and growth is that something must always be making demands upon you which is beyond your present knowledge and ability, and it is like that in the spiritual life. I do not want to discourage you at all, but it is going to be like that more and more as you go on. Our capacity for understanding what the Lord is doing with us is too limited. He has got us beyond ourselves, and rightly so. It must be so, or we will never grow. Do understand that He is on the road of increasing capacity. We will come back upon that again, but the Lord's object in all His dealings with us is to increase and enlarge our spiritual measure, and it is a hard school.

The enlargement of spiritual capacity is the solution to many of our problems, and that is the only way in which the problems are going to be resolved. For an illustration, look at the letters to the Corinthians and the situation in Corinth. If ever there was a situation representing spiritual limitation, that situation was in Corinth! "I could not", said the apostle in 1 Corinthians 3, "speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. I fed you with milk. You were not able, neither are you yet able", and the result of this spiritual limitation was found in all the tragic and terrible things found in this letter; their relationships with, and attitudes towards one another, their going to law against one another, their attitude towards the apostles. Some said: 'Well, Paul is our man. We like Paul. You can have Peter and you can have Apollos, but this is our man.' Others said: 'Well, our man is Peter. We like his style, his way of speaking and his material. You can have Paul — he is beyond us; Peter is more within our range.' Others: 'Now, you know, Apollos is a learned and eloquent man, a man mighty in the Scriptures; he is the man for us.' There were divisions over ministries and men, human complexions, preferences and prejudices. And the apostle says: 'That is spiritual smallness. When things are like that, it is a contemptible and mean state of spiritual life.' There are many hints given in his letters, and he summed it up, I think, in one phrase: 'The more I love, the less I be loved.' What about that spiritual measure!

When speaking about the Lord's work, he made an invidious com-

parison between them and those at Philippi. The saints at Philippi were ready — ready to give, ready to send to those in need, but here you are: you said a year ago that you would do something and you have never done it. Now let there be a doing of what you promised! There was tardiness in outgoing fellowship and co-operation in the work of the Lord.

All those things are true — but what was this large section of Paul's first letter about? "Now, concerning the 'spirituals'!" I do not know if there is a tang of sarcasm in this, and perhaps I should not even suggest that there is. "Now, concerning the spirituals" — and then he went on to correct the 'spirituals'. Within that category there were healings, tongues, and the manifestation of gifts. Paul was not saying they are wrong, but when you sum it all up you have to say: 'You people are more concerned with these demonstrative aspects of Christianity than you are with Christ. Your whole focus is upon these things which appeal to the senses, and by which a show can be made.'

Do you know the one word which Paul uses in that connection? It is the focal point of what we are saying: 'unto edifying'. What a pity that that is in our translation! Whenever we come to that word 'edifying', or 'edify', we should retranslate it into the original, which is 'building up'. So many people, when they read or hear the word 'edifying', really interpret it as being 'headified'. Nothing that is 'headifying' is building up in the spiritual realm. No, it is 'building up'; and Paul's challenge is: Do these things, after all, issue in building up? (That is increase, enlargement spiritually.) Not as something in themselves which will leave you in a state of spiritual immaturity, but are you, through these things, or without them, growing up, becoming full-grown, spiritually mature? That is the thing that matters! And I put in a parenthesis here; it is a very impressive thing that so often the people who are most concerned about these manifestation aspects of Christianity are the least spiritually mature. You cannot talk about anything with them but those things, and you have to fight to talk about the Lord.

But here, over the 'spirituals', Paul is saying: 'Well, these things which you think to be marks of spirituality, are they really marks of spiritual growth out of these conditions which exist among you, to which we have made reference?' There is Corinth in a nutshell, and it is very limited, is it not?

But what is Paul's remedy for Corinth, for all the problems, for all the conditions, for all the disappointments and all the defeats? It is in one clause: "Be ye enlarged." "Our heart is open to you, oh Corinthians. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own affections. Now for a recompense in like kind ... be ye also enlarged." That is the answer! 'If you

were bigger people these things would not limit your lives at all. You would have grown out of these infantile features and elements.’

Now, this is a challenge as well as a statement of fact. I do not want to come right down to earth-ground on this, but it may be a challenge. It is just possible that with the various ministries you might have your preferences, partialities, and perhaps your prejudices. It is quite possible for you to say: ‘Well, you know, I like the American way of things’, or you might say: ‘I like the Asiatic way of presenting’, and you might say: ‘Well, I have not much room for the European.’ Let me say that if we get into that realm we are in Corinth, which is poor, mean, contemptible, earthly. Spiritual capacity means a focus upon Jesus Christ. He is the criterion of ministry; not this man, that man, or the other man, but something of Christ to minister. And so we focus upon that: forget the man and all other natural things. It is to be the Lord Jesus, is it not? And the remedy is: “Be ye enlarged.”

Paul was straitened, restricted and limited in Corinth. He had to put an embargo upon himself. As he approached them he said: “When I came to you I determined not ...”, in other words: ‘I limited my scope and concentrated on one thing only for you — Jesus Christ and Him crucified’. He was limited — not that he wanted more than Jesus Christ and Him crucified, but the dimensions of Jesus Christ and Him crucified are not Corinthian dimensions at all! When Paul passes from Corinth to Ephesus, look at the dimensions! It is almost like two different worlds, is it not? From Corinth to Ephesus, speaking spiritually, the man is released! He is emancipated! He is out of all bonds. He is out of the bonds of language. Master of languages that he is, he cannot find language to speak what is on his heart. The floodgates are open, and he is out of this world and in the heavenlies. His only problem is: How am I going to bring the infinite to this people to whom I am writing?

At last this great apostle is free from the personal occupation with local problems on the spot, the problems of the churches, and all the work of here and there, the different problems that he was meeting all the time. By the sovereign will and way of God he is in prison. But is he in prison? There was never a man more enlarged than that man with the chain on his wrist and the Roman guard watching nearby. In the restrictions that were his, never was a man more enlarged. He is out and free! And now, by that sovereign will of God, that so strange, mysterious ordering of God, he was able to sit down quietly and look the thing in the face. Strange that he should have come to Rome like this, when he had said that he longed to come to Rome. He had longed to come to give them some spiritual blessings. His ambition was to get to Rome, the centre of the world, and preach Christ there. And then

notice the way in which he did finally get there — all the conflict, battle, shipwreck, obstructions, frustrations and everything else, but at last the all-governing phrase: “And so we came to Rome.” ‘Alright, we are here, by the sovereign power of God’, but this way has been strange, perplexing, difficult and hard. There seems to be so much contradiction in the methods of God, but now Paul sits down quietly and everything is focused. It comes over him: ‘Now I have the opportunity that I have longed for. I have never been able to do this before. I have been too busy, too occupied in the work of the Lord, (and rightly so) too obsessed with the problems of believers and churches. Now the thing that I have longed for has come. I can unburden my heart of all that has been accumulating there, being stored up and wanting to get out, but I have had no opportunity, no facility. Now I have it.’ And so this letter came out with all its unspeakable fulness of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Here, then, in this letter, is the great calling of the church, the great capacity which God desires the church to have, and the great responsibility resting upon those who have the light.

The New Testament takes account of three categories of people. Firstly, the unsaved; and here I want to say a thing that I think needs to be said, and said with emphasis: Where the unsaved are concerned, and when the word ‘Gospel’ is used or employed, people think of something elementary, quite simple, just the beginning of things. You are not going to find that in the New Testament, and I do believe that here is one of the great mistakes, for the greater the Gospel you preach to the unsaved, the better kind of Christians you are going to get. Put that round the other way: the tragedy is that so many Christians are so poor in their birth because they have not had a big enough Christ presented. Oh, I do wish that some of the greatest realities, the big things of the Gospel of salvation, were made known to the unsaved, to the convert, to the beginner! You might have your counsellors, your advisers and instructors, afterwards, but you know that the New Testament is based upon this: If when you truly believe and come to the Lord, you receive the Holy Spirit into your heart and understand that you have received Him, *He* will teach you, *He* will tell you what you ought to do and what you ought not to do. You won’t have to have people coming along and saying: ‘Now, you know you are a Christian; you must not do this; you must not go there.’ That is not it.

We will always remember our dear brother Watchman Nee in dealing with a convert when he went out from the city for a rest in the country. He lodged in the house of a heathen peasant and his wife, and he did not say anything for some time, but he lived Christ. Then eventually he spoke about

Christ, told them about the Lord Jesus and left a Bible with them when he went back to Shanghai. He did not tell them what they ought to do and what they ought not to do. The man was a great drinker. After brother Nee had gone, the man, at the next mealtime, said to his wife: 'Bring me my drink.' She put the drink in front of him and he said: 'Brother Nee asked the blessing before we took our meal, so let us ask the blessing.' He bowed his head to ask the blessing, but nothing would come. He was startled, for it would not come, he could not pray. He said: 'What is the matter? I cannot ask the blessing. Brother Nee always did. Let us try again.' No, he could not. 'I cannot ask the blessing on this.' After a while, his wife said: 'Brother Nee left us a Bible. You can read the Bible; I cannot. I will bring it and you find in the Bible where it says something about this.' So she brought the big Bible (I suppose it was a big Bible in Chinese), and he went through it trying to find something. Then he said: 'I cannot find anything about this, so take the Bible away and we will try again.' Then he said again: 'No, I cannot pray. Perhaps I should not have that drink. Take it away.' Then he tried again and found that he could ask the blessing. So his wife said: 'You better go to see brother Nee and ask him about it.' Off the man trotted into the city and visited brother Nee. He said: 'Brother Nee, after you left I asked my wife to bring the drink and I tried to pray as you did, but I could not pray. I tried again and again, but I could not pray. Brother Nee, Resident Boss would not let me have that drink!'

Brother Nee had talked of the indwelling Holy Spirit at new birth. 'Resident Boss' dictated what should be or what should not be. It is very simple, and you have heard it perhaps many times before, but you could not have a better illustration of what ought to happen through the Gospel to a believer. Already the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit ought to be a reality, and in action. Yet at Corinth believers of some long standing did not know or understand that. They would not have gone to law against one another if 'Resident Boss' had been heard. Oh, this challenges us, does it not? But my point is: the Gospel is a bigger thing than what is called 'the simple gospel'. Give them the greatness of Christ and overwhelm them with that to which they are called, and they will make better Christians.

The New Testament is largely focused upon the saved, with warnings, exhortations, admonitions, entreaties to go on; ninety per cent of the New Testament is on this line, exhorting believers not to stand still, not to remain where they are, but to go on, and to be ever going on because God is going on.

There is a category of what the New Testament calls 'The Victors'. The

word is ‘overcomers’ among believers, those for whom there is the crown. Paul was not concerned about his salvation and whether that was in jeopardy when he said, in Philippians chapter 3: “Brethren, I have not yet attained, I am not already complete, but this one thing I do: leaving the things which are behind, I press toward the mark of the prize of the on-high calling.” That is something more than just getting into heaven, being saved. It is what he calls ‘the prize’.

Everything depends upon our apprehension of Jesus Christ. What kind of Christ do we have? How great is He?

Prayer

“And now, unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto Him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus unto all ages, for ever and ever.” Amen.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE AS SEEN THROUGH DAVID AND SOLOMON

Prayer

Lord, Thou who readest all hearts, knowest how reticent we are to add words. Thou hast spoken, and Thou hast spoken more than we can carry out in a lifetime. Why more? And so our need is very real, great, a matter now of capacity, God-given, to receive, to be able to receive. O Lord, help us at this time, in this very real need, to speak, to hear, to further profit. Grant us this help. O Lord, grant us Thy help at this time, for Thy Name’s sake. Amen.

The phrase which is governing our meditations round the letter to the Ephesians chapter 3 verse 8 is, “the unsearchable riches of Christ”. We are going to be occupied with some of these “unsearchable riches”. Probably you know that in this letter, where these words are found, that word “riches” is related to quite a number of things. The riches of His grace, the riches of His glory, the riches of His wisdom, the riches of His inheritance in the saints, the riches of full assurance of understanding and so on. This is a vast land, full of mines of wealth, wealth of all these kinds. We shall never

exhaust that even if we stayed here a very long time. But we just go on as the Lord enables and now we take up again what it seems the Lord wants to underline. That is, the first of these connections — “the riches of His grace”. That is in the seventh verse, as you notice, of the first chapter of the letter.

Now, to help us in this occupation we are going to take our position at the summit of Old Testament fulness. That summit was reached as you know, with Solomon, as we read in two fragments: “And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that served the king by course, and the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds, and the rulers over all the substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officers, and the mighty men, even all the mighty men of valour, unto Jerusalem. Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, “Hear me, my brethren, and my people: as for me, it was in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God; and I had made ready for the building. But God said unto me, “Thou shalt not build a house for my name, because thou art a man of war, and hast shed blood. Howbeit the Lord, the God of Israel, chose me out of all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for he hath chosen Judah to be prince; and in the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel; and of all my sons (for the Lord hath given me many sons), he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts; for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father” (1 Chron. 28:1-6). “Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord” (2 Chron. 3:1). “And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly” (2 Chron. 1:1)

So we see that the summit of Old Testament fulness of glory was reached in Solomon. And we shall find that Solomon will lead us to Christ and then Solomon will be exited, or out of view when the ‘Greater than Solomon’ is here. Solomon’s wealth, wisdom, glory and heritage are of course proverbial and fabulous, renowned and far-famed. He does represent the zenith of kingship and glory in the Old Testament. Jesus Himself acknowledged the greatness of Solomon on two occasions—do you remember? He pointed to the flowers of the field and said, “Consider the lilies, they toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory is not arrayed like one of these” — Solomon in all his glory. It was proverbial, even in those days, and Jesus Himself acknowledged it. On another occasion He said, “The queen of the

south will rise up in judgement against this generation for she came from a far country to Solomon to consult him concerning his wisdom, with her hard questions” — acknowledging the great place that Solomon had in the world of wisdom. But then Jesus added, after that: “Solomon in all his glory, Solomon in all his wisdom, but a greater than Solomon is here.”

Solomon fades when Jesus arrives: the unsearchable riches of Christ. We have then to consider how in these various respects Jesus is greater than Solomon. One thing that we have been saying and that is in our hearts about this time together is our great need of a new apprehension of the Lord Jesus to adjust everything for us. But there are two preliminary matters before we can proceed in this matter. Why did God magnify Solomon? For it says the Lord magnified Solomon above all that had been before him. The Lord endowed upon Solomon this fabulous proverbial greatness of wealth, dominion and wisdom. Why did He do it? God from eternity has only one Person in view and that Person was not Solomon or any other one but His Son. And if the Lord so magnified Solomon, it was to bring His Son—the still greater—into view through the greatest thing that He could do here on this earth to lead on to the much greater, of the heavenly One. God has His Son in view, the other One, the greater than Solomon. And that’s why He did it. I wish Solomon had known this; it would have saved him a great deal of historic tragedy. If we really saw that, all these tragedies of which we have been reminded, the mistakes and blunders that we make, as Solomon did later, they would be done away with if this One, this only One were ever-filling our vision. All the wonderful things that God said seemingly about Solomon, and we have no time to look at them, could never possibly have been fulfilled in Solomon himself. It is quite beyond Solomon. God is reaching beyond this man in the things that He said seemingly about him and to him. And you have to pick up your New Testament in order to discover that that is true. Well, we may come on that as we go on, but the point is that we must not see Solomon as just the end in himself. We must look through him to Another and see whom God in His Sovereignty magnified and glorified. This Solomon, only with another One in view. But in the long run we should stand amazed when we see the greater than Solomon, greater than the greatest that God has ever done on this earth.

Another thing we must remember in this preliminary consideration is, that Solomon was not really himself. That sounds strange and of course you may ask, What do you mean? Well, I mean this: Solomon was his father David. Solomon was the fulness of his father David. And you can never see Solomon without seeing David. But it was not so much the person as the

significance of the person that is present in contemplating Solomon. When you turn to the New Testament, Solomon is only referred to at most a half a dozen times, almost in a casual way. But in the New Testament you will find David referred to in a very positive way over thirty times. The father eclipses the son; the son is but the fulness of the father. That is a statement that you must dwell upon, of course, to verify it. You open your New Testament with the first book, the Gospel by Matthew, and you find you have not read a few words before you come across David. David comes there in that place of priority right at the beginning of your New Testament. You go through your New Testament and as I have said more than thirty times you will find yourself with David. And right at the last book, the twenty-second chapter of the book of the Revelation, David crops up again. This man is someone very wonderful, very full, has a very large place. And there is one clause in Isaiah 55 which is repeated in the New Testament which defines this as “the sure mercies of David”. Oh, to be able to plumb the depths of that! But now we are going to see a little of that—the sure mercies of David.

All that pertains to Solomon was the sure mercies of David. That brings us to the first of greatnesses, the first of the unsearchable riches of Christ, the first everywhere and always, the riches of His grace. Do you see the riches of His grace as conveyed to us by Solomon? Having seen the great evidence of glory, wealth and wisdom, to which God brought this man Solomon, we have to look to see where it all began. Where did all that begin? And there is a very dark background indeed to Solomon’s birth and Solomon’s life. A dark background. We have said that Solomon was the fulness of his father David. Solomon was the son of David’s old age. Solomon was not the oldest son. We read: “God has given me many sons.” And we know some of them, and one in particular, Absalom. Solomon was the son of David’s old age. And it was an old age full of shadows, the shadows of tragedy, of sorrow, of great mistakes. Solomon was related to the darkest clouds in David’s life. We know the story, the story of David’s great sin. The sin with Bathsheba and her husband Uriah. A David relaxing wrongly when kings go out to battle, at the time when kings go out to battle. He went out onto the housetop. There are relaxations which are very dangerous. And from the housetop he espied that beautiful woman, Bathsheba, and coveted her and his passions rose and he said, ‘I must have her.’ And passion is a very, very fertile thing, you know, for evil. And so he schemed to get her.

You know the rest of the story, how he planned, plotted, to get her husband, Uriah, in the forefront of the battle and then told the other fighters to retire and leave him alone to the enemy, which they did. For Uriah was

left and slain according to David's pre-calculated designs. And they came back to David and told him, 'It succeeded. Uriah is dead.' And David sent for Bathsheba, and took her. And the child born of that iniquitous union was stricken by God, languished for some days and then died. And Nathan the prophet went to David with a message from God and wrapped it up in a parable about something that happened in the city. And he painted it in such lurid pictures that David arose in anger, in wrath, and said, "The man who has done such a thing shall die!" Nathan turned and said this, "Thou art the man." Nathan brought home the accusation, the judgement of God in smashing, crushing blows. "But David, thou shalt not die." You will see the point of that in a moment. "But thou shalt not die." The depth and the greatness of David's sin is seen in those terrible confessions, heartbrokenness and sorrow.

You have to look at the Psalms that are touched here and there with this. Take Psalm 32, where we see something of this, in verse 5: "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity did I not hide: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord."

Psalm 38 verse 18: "For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin." And then a whole psalm, Psalm 51, one of the most terrible bits of literature in existence: "Have mercy". This is what is the heading of this psalm—"A psalm of David when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone into Bathsheba." "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight." So the whole psalm goes on, which we will not read, except one fragment: "Deliver me, O God, from blood-guiltiness." Here we are, broken-hearted, penitent, standing at God's tribunal, pleading for mercy; this is pure self-condemnation, because of a conscience stained, stained with iniquity. And God says, "Turn away from your sin." A situation of desolation.

There is a heart cry, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." "Have mercy upon me." And he had sinned the sin which put him beyond the pale of the virtue of all the Levitical sacrifices. You read the sacrifices and their conditions; they do not cover this thing. They make no provision for this. Even the cities of refuge, provided for the manslayer, would not take in David, because a manslayer who found refuge there was a man who had caused someone to die inadvertently, without premeditation, by accident.

There was provision for him, a man who had *not* premeditated. But David was an outlaw. The city of refuge has no place for him. No sacrifices are provided for him. Therefore, in this Psalm 51, David says, “Sacrifice and offerings, and burnt offerings Thou desirest not” (verse 16). There are no sacrifices that cover blood-guiltiness by premeditation. Oh, how far this man has gone! How great was his accountability! No wonder his conscience makes him cry out like this. Uriah’s death, which is murder, lies at David’s door. A little innocent babe’s death lies at his door. What are you going to do with that? What are you going to do with a man like that? It is outside the pale of all God’s prescribing. What answer have we got to this? How can this man escape? How can glory be the end of that? Only one answer and there is an answer: grace. Grace: it goes beyond all things. Grace.

David is the greatest Old Testament example of pardon through grace. Remember that. That is why he is brought into view so much and that is the meaning of the sure mercies of David ... of *David*. The unsearchable riches of His grace. And Solomon gathered into himself all that meaning of divine grace — what grace can do in relation to a situation like that and how glory can follow grace. The glory of His grace is a phrase in Ephesians. It is glory; it is deep. My, how deep, how deep! You ask, Can there be anything greater, a greater demonstration of grace than that towards David, represented in a temporal way in Solomon? — and underline that word temporal — Can there be anything greater than that? Is there greater grace than that represented by Solomon? Oh yes, a greater than Solomon is here. As Son of Man, God came, God’s Son came into the inky darkness and blackness of the sin of the whole race. Now that one Man bore the judgement of that sin upon the whole race and brought God’s infinite grace to the world. Look again at that cross on Calvary’s Hill. Take another look and listen to that bitter heartbroken cry, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, (My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?)”, the words embracing all time and eternity: forsaken, *forsaken*. David may have tasted something of that, of one man.

Dear friends, when you look at that cross and hear that cry, you touch the deepest, deepest depth of human tragedy. That is, that the race, but for the grace of God, is God-forsaken, eternally. If you have ever tasted a deep, deep sorrow within the compass of human capacity you know that in that hour of darkness it is like an eternity. It is only a moment literally. It is like an eternity. It seems that everything for ever has been touched. In the moment when Jesus cried out, He touched the eternity of man’s destiny in or outside of God: forsaken. That cry with that word ‘forsaken’ is the measure of human depravity. We have yet to feel the tremendous impact of

the cross in this sense and if Jesus had not done it there for us we are eternally forsaken of God; the face of God is turned away. The blackness and darkness of eternal doom rests upon the race but for the cross of Jesus Christ and what He has done there: forsaken, forsaken! — Have you ever tasted even the slightest drop of that? Oh yes, it is possible, even in our Christian life, our spiritual life.

I confess that there have been times when I have wondered if the Lord had gone out of my universe. Of course He really was alive, yes, and He had not forgotten me. But I have cried, “Has the Lord forgotten to be gracious?”, as though the Lord has gone. I prayed, but I felt the Lord was gone and a little experience like that is not God-forsakenness. Thank God, it never is, for He said, “I never will forsake you”, but a little consciousness of the remoteness of the Lord from us is the last experience of tragedy in our lives. Oh, it is the most awful thing to have to live without the realisation of the Lord even for a little while. We are groping for the Lord and not finding him, like Job, the righteous man, “If I go on the right hand He is not there, or on the left, He is not there. I go forward, He’s not there. Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!” Have you had an experience like that at all? Well, I don’t want you to have it. If you haven’t, don’t covet it. But some of you may just know a day, or a few days or more when— we say, ‘Oh, where is the Lord, where is the Lord?’ It may be the Lord lets us experience something like that to bring us into the fellowship of His sufferings, to make us understand how great a thing He has done for us. For the Lord does not believe in theories and doctrines. The Lord is very practical; experience is His tool. He will teach us in that ‘forsaken’ experience.

Yes, a greater than Solomon or David is here. That’s it. He is. He came, He touched the deepest depth of human depravity we can find in that word ‘forsaken’. Anybody who doesn’t believe in the depravity of human nature, and a total depravity, has not yet seen the cross of the Lord Jesus, and us there, forsaken of God, on the one side. Yes, grace reaches the deepest point of human tragedy. That is: man forsaken of God but for Christ. That is what grace is. What a word this is! Solomon, in all his glory, is born out of that inherent iniquity, judgement, outside of the pale of Levitical position, all his glory coming out of that. Now, grace. What are you going to say about it? What word is there to explain?— only this word: grace. And you can go round that word for all time and all eternity. J. H. Jowett, who was one of the greatest speakers of the last century, said this: “There is a word I have wrestled with so much, no word with which I have wrestled more than this word, ‘grace’. It is like expressing a great American forest in a word. No

phrase can express the meaning of grace. Grace is more than mercy. It is more than tender mercy. It is more than a multitude of tender mercies. Grace is more than love. It is more than innocent love. Grace is holy love. But it is holy love in spontaneous going out in eager quest for the unholy and the unlovely. It is the ministry of a great sacrifice to redeem the unholy and the unlovely into the beauty of God. The grace of God is holy love on the move, to you and to me and the like of me and you. It is God, unmerited, unrewarded going out for the children of men that He might win them into the glory and brightness of His own likeness.”

Well, that is an attempt to define this word, ‘grace’. Was Paul not right in speaking of the unsearchable riches of grace? And Paul knew what he was talking about, as we were reminded in chapter one of the background of this man’s life. I am not worthy, said he, to be called an apostle. I persecuted the church and I will repent before the Lord. And the Lord was showing him His grace and His mercy. He said, “Lord, when your servant, Stephen, was martyred, I was there giving my consent. What ground have I for apostleship? What ground have I to be anything at all? My hands are stained with bloodguiltiness, all premeditated, designed. How dare I either be a disciple, a child of God, let alone an apostle. But unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach among the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ.” If you can’t comprehend it, may the Lord register the impression of it.

Prayer

Let’s bow our heads. How easily with inadequate words do we repeat the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh Lord, challenge us with that word, lift us with that word, save us with that word. Can we dare, can we dare to say, Glorify that word? Oh, if all the words are forgotten and our human efforts to convey it entirely fail, the grace of God is still the greatest thing in this universe for humans such as we are. We commit it to Thee. Oh, give us to glory in Thy grace. For Thy Name’s sake. Amen.

THE RICHES OF CHRIST IN HIS PEOPLE (1) INHERITANCE

Prayer

Lord, this is your time, not ours; this is your ministry, not ours. We are prepared to speak or not to speak, to hear more or not to hear more, just according to your own desire. If it is thy mind that we spend a little more time here in thy presence with the Holy Spirit to pursue His work with us, we ask for the renewing of our spirits and of our minds, a fresh quickening, a breath of new life, a very real experience of the anointing, the anointed lips, the anointed ears. The Lord be Lord in everything, working to His own end, His own glory and pleasure. We ask it in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

We continue, with the Lord's enablement, in our quest for spiritual understanding in that vast realm of the unsearchable riches of Christ. We have to find out how varied is the context of that word "riches", and we have made a very earnest attack upon one word: "The riches of His grace". But the word is the victor still, and we are the casualties. It has beaten us, and it stands over our impotence and we know already that it is unsearchable.

I will now bring you to the second of the relationships of this word: "The unsearchable riches of Christ", which is found in the letter to the Ephesians 1:18: "Having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, (and) what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Earlier in the chapter the apostle has referred to our inheritance in Him. Now he is speaking of His inheritance in the saints. Through this letter, again and again, the focus is upon what the Lord has to get: "Unto the glory of His grace", "unto the praise of His glory", "the riches of His glory", "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might present it to Himself a glorious church". I believe that here we reach the heart and root of everything in the whole Bible from start to finish. The aspect is always Himself; His, Him, Himself. That is the governing aspect of the whole Bible. The apostle, as you know, sums it all up in that wonderful phrase: "Now unto Him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus unto all ages for ever and ever", and you cannot get beyond that. The end is: Unto *Him*.

We have been allowing Solomon to be our interpreter, and we shall

continue to do so in this other aspect. We have reminded ourselves of the excellency of Solomon, the glory, the majesty, the wealth and the wisdom that God gave to him with His sovereign fore-view of His Son, Jesus Christ. We also pointed out that Solomon was not someone in himself, but that he took up the whole life of his father, David, and was really the full expression of what was in David's heart as that dominating interest and concern of his life.

I think we might just look at one or two fragments of Scripture. Suppose we just look at Psalm 132: "Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions: How he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of My house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mind eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the mighty God of Jacob. Lo, we heard of it in Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood. We will go into His tabernacles: we will worship at His footstool. Arise, O Lord, into thy resting-place; Thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed" (verses 1-10).

Then just let us look at a big fragment in 1 Kings 3:4-13: "The king went up to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great loving-kindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great loving-kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself (underline "thyself") long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself (underline "thyself"), nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice; behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither

after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days.”

Solomon came into the inheritance of his father. That is what is stated there and Solomon acknowledged that it was so. He inherited his father’s lifelong, all-dominating ambition and passion to find a place for the Lord.

You notice that the Lord gave him all the wisdom that he had, that renowned wisdom, and all the rest, riches, honour and the kingdom, because Solomon turned outward from himself and said: ‘For the Lord — *for the Lord*’. That is a principle throughout the Word of God which we shall notice as we go along. For the Lord, but for the Lord in the Lord’s people! This people is the Lord’s people, the Lord’s interest is in this people, the Lord’s portion is His people, the Lord’s inheritance is His people. We can have, as we think, a very great concern for the Lord and His interests and His purpose without realising that that is all bound up with His people, and that if we are really going to serve the interest of the Lord, we shall find it in this one and in that one. That is where His inheritance is. Let us leave that for the moment.

The greatness of the Lord’s people immediately looms into view: what they are to the Lord; what Israel in type, but supremely the church, is to the Lord. Perhaps we have to get a new apprehension of what believers really are to the Lord, and ourselves, of course, included. You say: ‘Well, that is beyond me and beyond my comprehension that it should be true that I should be, even though the smallest fragment of the whole, nevertheless, a fragment of His inheritance, containing His inheritance.’ Of course, we prepared the way for this by considering the riches of His grace. Grace is the way to this, and it has to be. This could not be otherwise. But grace is not an end in itself, and was never intended to be so. Through grace it is to glory, and the glory is in the church by Christ Jesus unto all ages for ever and ever. God’s portion in His people. Now Israel is the grand Old Testament, historic example of this. God said (and here again we are out of our bounds of understanding) of Israel: “I have chosen you from among all the peoples of the earth.” Can you ever explain God’s selectiveness? No, you never will.

When we have read our Old Testament and into our New Testament about this people Israel, what they were capable of, and what in the end they did, we are amazed that God deliberately selected them. God knew it all from the beginning — knew them, their nature, their constitution, their disposition, their possibilities, all that would be. He knew how they would tax His patience, (it would almost seem to the limit), and He would say to

Moses: “Stand aside and let Me destroy this people and I will make of you another nation.” He knew what a drain they would be upon Him and His resources of patience and forbearance. You would never have selected them. Would you have chosen yourself if you had had a little bit of knowledge? I venture to say that the pathway of the true Christian life is the pathway of such a self-exposure and uncovering that more and more we cry: ‘God, be merciful!’ If ever I get to glory it will be the greatest miracle that ever God wrought. God’s selectiveness! You cannot explain it, but there it is, and when He has selected there is His love. “I have loved thee”, He said to Israel, “with an everlasting love” ... “You are graven upon the palms of My hands”. In His love, unfathomable, inexplicable, He committed Himself to them, His honour, His name, His glory, His interest in the earth. Hear Him sobbing through the prophets as they weep bitter tears, and they are the tears of God, heartbroken over Israel. We could take up many of their utterances because of this people, and God’s disappointed love.

We have one prophet like Hosea and his story, or Ezekiel and the tragedy in his life: his young wife taken suddenly overnight from him, his life and his heart left desolate in the midst of the people, and the Lord said to him in the morning: “Anoint your face as at other times and go forth just as though nothing has happened.” And he went forth as at other times with his face anointed, but his heart broken. He did not let it be seen. As at other times he went on with his job, and the men around him said: “This is scandalous! This is contrary to every recognised principle of good behaviour and conduct. What a despicable man, with his wife lying dead there, awaiting burial, and he has made his face to shine!” And then the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel: “Speak unto them: I love you. I loved you like a husband to a wife, with all my heart, and you mean everything to Me. But you have gone from Me, you have deprived Me of all My rights, My expectations and all My hopes and yet you go on as though nothing had happened. You just go on. It does not come home to your heart.” The parable, you see, was the tragedy in a life to show how deep God’s love was and how pained His heart was when that love was spurned. Ezekiel, the prophet, shared fully in the broken-hearted cry and sob of God over this people. The prophets wept for Jerusalem. Jesus came there and lived there among them, moved amongst them, and reached out both hands to them: “All day long have I stretched forth My hands.” At last, with no response but that of enmity and falsehood Jesus stood aside in a place above the city, looked over it and wept: “Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered thee as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but ye would not.”

You pass to Paul, who said he shed bitter tears for this people Israel: “I wish that I myself were accursed for my people Israel’s sake.” Why this? Were they so lovable? God knows, no more than you and I are. We are asking the biggest question, are we not? But the Word of God stands: “To present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” It is going to be! He has vested His eternal interest in this, and He will have His deposit.

I have to confess to you that I have gone around this world from the far east to the far west, touching companies of Christians, and I do not know where that ideal church is on this earth. Yet the Word stands: “His inheritance in the saints”.

Well, you see, that brings us to the motive. It is the motive, and the holiness and purity of the motive that takes us right back to the beginning in the Garden. God created all things for Himself and for His own pleasure, and pronounced upon His work: “It is very good.” He committed it to the man of His creation, and that evil one, who had split the heavenly domain and drew away a great company of “angels who kept not their first estate” through personal ambition, self-centred interest, came into that thing where everything was for the Lord and insinuated this selfhood principle. What it amounts to was just this: ‘Don’t have it in dependence upon God. Depend on yourself. Help yourself. You can be as God and can be the centre of things.’ It was just that. That is the fall. And from that moment the poison of the serpent, the poison of that evil thing called ‘self’, the enemy of all that is good and of God, entered into man’s nature. That was bitten, so to speak, into the very bloodstream of the human race, and it has developed to the present dimensions. It is the cause of all the world’s troubles: self! self!

Well, here it is, you see. It is the motive. It was the motive of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea, and the motive of Israel when Christ was crucified. Their attitude was: ‘If we let this go on, the Romans will take away from us’. That was the spirit; jealousy, envy, self-interest. The result? Two thousand years of Israel in the outer darkness, weeping, wailing, gnashing their teeth. Is that true? The millions in recent years ... oh, it is a dark story, and all because self was put into the place of the Lord.

Well, here it is. This is the motive of the incarnation of God’s Son. The motive behind it is self-emptying, “being found in fashion as a man”, the capacity of a bond-slave, becoming obedient. Why? To empty of self and destroy the self-principle in humanity. The emptying did not finish in heaven. All the time He was here He was emptying. Satan found nothing in Him. He emptied Himself. All the way along He was emptying Himself,

right up to the cross. He has come to destroy this awful thing: selfhood in humanity. The incarnation was the incarnation of this very motive: 'Not unto myself'. "He counted it not something to be held on to, to be equal with God, but emptied Himself" ... 'I have come, not to serve Mine own interest or to serve Mine own name. It is My Father.' This was the constant language of the Son here in humility: the Father ... the Father. The cross was the consummation of that, the final emptying of the last bit of man's self-interest in the judgment into which He had voluntarily entered. The desolation of the cross was God's verdict upon the selfhood of man and of the devil.

Now turn the picture around: John 3:16! We can quote it, recite it, but do we know it? "God so loved — so loved the world. God so loved the world" ... He emptied Himself of His dearest possession and "gave His only begotten Son". Why? That is the governing question. Move on to Matthew 13 and you begin to have the answer in parabolic form: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man has found, he hides, and for joy thereof goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field." And Jesus later said; "The field is the world." God so loved the world because He had an investment in it, a treasure. Do you want the explanation of that? Well, of course, it is in this letter to the Ephesians: "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it (the treasure in the field) that he might present it unto Himself a glorious church." There it is, and I must hasten to cut this short by reminding you that this is the motive in all God's dealings with us, for He does discipline us. I will have more to say about that in another one of these 'unsearchables' later on, but His dealings with us are along the line of discipline. If you would like to call it chastening you can, for it is the same thing.

What is all this about, this way in which the Lord deals with us, handles us and empties us, disappoints us, and all the rest of it? The motive of God is that this selfhood shall be completely undercut and He will find His inheritance in the saints. If you look at what God is doing you will see that He is undercutting our selfhood. He is bringing us down, breaking us, emptying us, weakening us, destroying all our self-sufficiency, self-confidence, and we have come to an end of ourselves, even to despair. It is all in order to deal with this motive of self. You know that the plague of our hearts is ourselves. If only I could get rid of myself! That is the Buddhist's answer to this great problem. What does the Buddhist believe is the basic principle? Self-annihilation: the cessation of desire. Of course, it does not work. They burn themselves to death to make a demonstration of themselves, but, nevertheless, there is this consciousness in humanity; the

real curse is selfhood. God is dealing with us, undercutting this, bringing it to naught, to get that which is pure motive for Himself. It is going to be utterly the Lord in the end and not anything that we get. How we have grown up to try and use the Lord for our own ends and to believe in Him just for what He can do for us! None of us has attained, neither are we already complete in this matter, but God is working in us to bring us to the place where it is the Lord, and just the Lord.

We shall come into the riches like Solomon when, not in our ideas and imaginations or beliefs, but when the Lord knows that we have come to the place of saying: ‘Now, Lord, everything in my life has got to be arranged for your satisfaction. You arrange all the things in my life for your pleasure and for your satisfaction.’ And if we allow Him to do that, and seek grace when He does it, we shall come into the riches. It will be: “The joy of the Lord is our strength.” The Lord is glad because He has got what He is after, and that will be our strength.

Yes, this sanctified, purified, blood-purged motive in life. I say ‘sanctified’ because it is possible for us to think that our motives are very pure. David made a great mistake in this matter of motive when he sent and fetched the ark on the new Philistine cart to bring it up to Jerusalem, and the Lord smote Uzza, and David was thrown into consternation, and was angry with the Lord. His motive was alright. He could have said: ‘But, Lord, my motive was so pure, so good. I meant it so well for your glory and your satisfaction.’ ‘Oh, yes, but David, your motive was not illuminated and enlightened by My Word. Go back to your Bible and see about this thing.’ David went back to the Scriptures and found that you can do a right thing in a wrong way because your motive was not an illuminated motive. Well, I will leave that, but we need purged motives, purged hearts, blood-sprinkled hearts, so that our motive is purified in fire and it is only what the Lord wants and not what we want, the Lord’s glory, the Lord’s interests. Our New Testament is built upon what is for the Lord.

The parable of the vineyard: “And at the season He sent His servant for His fruit, His rights, His vested rights, and they slew the servant. He sent another and they treated him the same way, and another, and. at last He said: ‘I will send my son. They will reverence him’, and they said: ‘This is the heir. Come let us kill him and the inheritance shall be ours.’ What will the Lord do with those wicked servants?” This parable is built upon this principle of whether it is for the Lord or for ourselves. The vine, the branches, the fruit — it is the Lord’s fruit. “And herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit” — for the Lord. He is fastening upon His rights in the life of

His people. And so we could go on, but I think you see that all comes back to the riches of His inheritance in the saints. Will you hold your life in the light of that? Will you hold your local fellowships in the light of that? Not what place you have, not how it affects you, good or bad, but always in your relationships in the local companies and your individual position let this govern: We are here for the Lord, not for ourselves. Does this really please the Lord? Is this situation of division or strife, or bitterness, really pleasing to the Lord? Can the Lord have glory? If not, then anything — whatever the cost — to get this right. Oh, if only we took that attitude, if only that were the dominating thing in all, there would be such wealth, such glory and such dominion as with Solomon over all the enemies round about. The enemy will be spoiled when his own ground is taken from him, and that ground is the ground of selfhood.

Prayer:

Now, Lord, it is for Thee to keep alive what has been of Thee in this much speaking. Oh, Lord, we must commit it to Thee. It is too much for us, but bring home to us those things that really do matter, that are going to be the issues of these messages, those which are going to be found abiding, living and governing. Do set Thy seal upon those things in our hearts, for Thy Name's sake. Amen.

To be continued.