



the
Golden
Candlestick

SPIRITUAL FRUITFULNESS

Part 2

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SO GREAT SALVATION

Reading: Heb. 1:1-14; 2:1-4.

There is a sense in which that clause “so great salvation” is the key to the whole of this letter, for undoubtedly this letter was written with the object of bringing very definitely and clearly before the minds of its readers how great the salvation is which is in Christ; to remind them of the greatness of the salvation. And all that is said in the letter is just an exposition of the greatness of this salvation. It seems that the greatness is opened up along two lines; one is the transcendent greatness of Christ; the other is the wonderful fulness of His own divine Person.

The transcendent greatness of Christ

His transcendent greatness is revealed by placing Him alongside of the greatest others ever known, or at least some of them. Many of the great ones of history are mentioned in this letter, many who have occupied positions of tremendous importance in relation to God on behalf of men, but they are mentioned and brought into view in this letter for the special purpose of showing just how far transcendent the Lord Jesus Christ is.

Transcendent to angels

The first of these great ones to be mentioned is not a human order at all; it is a celestial, heavenly order — the angels. As we read these passages we note the comparison, the contrast between Christ and the angels. Angels are superior to men. They will not be superior to men when God has man as He intends man to be, but angels are now superior, and we have a wonderful collection of incidents with which angels were connected in the history of this world. We are shown by the Word of God how great is the power committed to them, when it is possible for one angel to go out from the presence of God and smite an army of tens of thousands, so that by the

activity of one angel in a night the whole host of Senacharib were slain, the whole battlefield covered with corpses, the men who laid down to sleep overnight and never rose again, for an angel of the Lord went out and smote the whole host, the host which had dared to put itself against the Lord and the Lord's people. We have wonderful stories of angelic activity and power in the book of the prophet Daniel.

It is not our intention to go over the Bible stories concerning angels, but it is made perfectly clear that angels are no insignificant force to be reckoned with, and that they are employed by God in an administrative capacity in relation to this world and men, though often unseen; mighty angels, executing the purposes of God. And yet, with all their glory, with all their power, with all their great heavenly vocation, they are shown here in this letter to be much inferior to the Lord Jesus. "Unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?"; "Who makes His angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire: but of the Son he says, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." You see how infinitely transcendent Christ is to the angels.

Then a number of men of great name and exploits are mentioned.

Greater than Moses

The next one mentioned in this letter is Moses. Now Moses was a great man. There is no doubt about it that Moses ranks in the history of this world as one of its greatest, not only as in Israel among the Jews, but recognised everywhere in all nations as being a mighty man. See how much of the law of our own country is based upon the law of Moses. Where does capital punishment come from? It comes from the Bible, the law of Moses: "Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." That is the law. We know it is not grace, but that is the law; and the whole system of law is founded upon Moses, and much more than that. Moses has a tremendous influence, not only in his own day but throughout the ages. He brought a great mob of hundreds of thousands of people out of bondage in Egypt, and shaped them into a nation, a nation whose history has gone on and on, and goes on today. It does not matter where you move about the world there is always the distinctiveness associated with that nation. It does not matter where you go, the Jew is known every nation. Balaam prophesied about the Jew, and about Israel, that they should not be reckoned among the nations. Well, they have absolute distinctiveness, they are not absorbed at all, they stand clear. Moses shaped that nation, so that it has left this impress upon the history of the world. We know of the exploits.

Moses was a great man, a great leader, a great organiser, a great law-giver, perhaps above all a great man of God, a great saint. But in this letter to the Hebrews the Lord Jesus is brought in alongside of Moses, and, incidentally you see how insignificant Moses is. It says about Moses that he was a servant in God's House, but the Lord Jesus is a Son over God's House. There is all the difference between the Son over the House and the servant in the House, and that is the difference between Christ and Moses.

Exceeds and excels Joshua

The next one in order mentioned is Joshua. Joshua took up the work of Moses and took the people over Jordan into the Land of Promise. Joshua conquered the seven kings and the seven nations in the Land of Promise, and substituted them and set Israel in the land by mighty exploits. And yet with all the great conquests of Joshua the whole thing fell short at one point, the people never came to fulness of rest. The Word here is that if Joshua had given them rest, then no mention would have been made of a rest to come, but because Joshua did not give them rest there remains a rest, and that is where the Lord Jesus comes in. Immediately He is brought in He is shown to be the One who goes far beyond what Joshua in his greatest and best could do. Joshua could not give fulness and finality of rest, but the Lord Jesus can. He who said: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" has given fulness of rest to the heart of every man and woman who has accepted Him by faith as their Saviour. It is "rest unto your souls". That is where the Lord Jesus exceeds and excels Joshua as giving rest.

Greater than Aaron

The next one mentioned is Aaron, the greatest of Israel's priests, the one man in the midst of all (not only that nation, but all the nations) who was allowed to go into the immediate presence of God; Aaron, who stood as the mediator between God and man. The glorious garments which were made for him, with all their magnificence; and the jewel-bestudded breastplate which he wore were just symbols of the greatness of the office which he occupied. He was among men a man of tremendous importance, because he stood to represent man in the presence of God, and he stood to represent God in the presence of men. That is no small thing. He offered the sacrifices for the sins of men. And yet the Lord Jesus, when He is brought in and is compared with

Aaron, is seen to go far beyond him. We are told how much Aaron could do, and then just how much Aaron could not do. We are told that, while Aaron did all this, and was all this, he never made anything perfect. Why? For one thing it is not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sins. That at best was only a type, a symbol, an illustration. And then, if you are going to remove sin, you are dealing with the whole question of death, because the wages of sin is death; and a man has not only to be able to deal with sin, but he has to be able to deal with death. And it says that Aaron died; therefore Aaron, with all that he was, fell a prey to the very thing that he stood against. Death overcame him; therefore he was not able to make anything perfect, because he was subject to death.

Then the Lord Jesus is brought in as God's great High Priest, not offering bulls and goats as sacrifices, not taking their blood, but His own Blood, offering Himself without spot to God; and then, in offering Himself and dying for our sins, conquering death in the very act, vanquishing death, so that He was not overcome of death, but lives for ever to make intercession. The sentence in the letter to the Hebrews is: "He is able therefore to save to the uttermost ...". "Uttermost" means that He is able to save right on to the end. Aaron could not do that because he died; but Christ, because He lives, can save right on for ever. Aaron at best could only go so far and then had to give up his work as imperfect, unfinished, but Christ can go on in the power of an endless life saving, saving, every day.

Who is your saviour, yourself or your Christ? Christ, because He lives for ever and has conquered death, can carry on your salvation for eternity; not for a week, a fortnight, three weeks, a month, and then break down. How much greater is Christ than Aaron! He lives for ever; He can save, therefore, right on to the end.

We dare not go on with the comparisons. We have mentioned these four things: angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron. They are great names, great powers, but nothing compared with Christ. And because Christ is so infinitely greater as a Deliverer than Moses; as a Rest-giver than Joshua: as a Saviour from sin than Aaron; as a Power from heaven than angels; so infinitely greater; then we are beginning to see what the meaning of this word is: "so great salvation" in Christ.

The fulness of His divine Person

There are many other things said here along the other line, the second line. You have only to look at the first chapter again and see what is said about the Lord Jesus and His Person.

God has spoken in Him as His Son

Chapter 1 verse 2: “God ... has at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son ...”. God spoke by the prophets once, but now He has spoken in Him as His Son. God has spoken in Christ on a higher level than ever God spoke before, as His Son.

God has spoken in Him in a supreme way

The second thing in the same verse is that God has not only spoken in Him as His Son, but He has spoken in Him in a supreme way: “God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions ...”. God spread His speech over many generations, many manners, many portions, by many individuals; and each individual only had a bit of God’s speech. The prophets just had a fragment of God’s speech to men, and God was speaking over a long stretch of years through a whole host of men, and each man only had a bit. But now: “at the end of these days”, God has spoken in completeness in His Son. He has gathered it all up in His Son. It is a fulness of God’s speech in Christ. When you come to the Lord Jesus you do not come to a fragment, you come to the fulness; you do not come to one of the divers manners or divers portions, you come to the fulness of God’s speech. How infinitely greater He is than the prophets, who only had a little bit. He has it all.

See what the prophets were able to do. Elijah was one of the divers portions, the divers manners, but what mighty things happened through Elijah. Kings went down before Elijah. The nation was shaken to its foundations by the word of Elijah. The heavens were closed by the space of three years and six months by the word of Elijah, and then the heavens were opened because Elijah prayed. Mighty things were done by that one man, who was just one of the many portions and manners of God. If one man can do all that, and all the others had a measure, and you gather it all up in Christ, you see how infinitely greater Christ is. How great salvation!

He is the Heir of all things

Look again at this word: “... whom He (God) appointed heir of all things ...”. Christ is the heir of all things. Then salvation comes to us in the heir of all things. All things are the heritage, the inheritance of Christ. That is a big “all things”. That “all things” means heaven and earth and all that is in them, for ever and for ever, are the appointed inheritance of God’s Son,

Jesus Christ, and as such a One He brings salvation to us.

If the Crown Prince of the greatest nation on this earth were to come to us and offer us deliverance from our poor estate, we should say: This man is able to do it: he has the resources, he has much influence and power, he is a great man, we can trust him! But here is the Heir of all things, who is to be King of kings and Lord of lords, to inherit all things, heaven and earth and all things in the coming age, and He comes and offers salvation. He can do it; therefore how great He is, and how great a salvation this must be if it is in the Heir of all things.

God made the worlds through Him

The next thing, in the same verse, is: “through whom He made the worlds”. God made the worlds through His Son. Think of that! The Lord Jesus was the Instrument, the Agent in the creation of the worlds. The very existence of these worlds is the result of His activity. The One who created it is the One who comes to offer Himself as the Saviour. Surely He can do it! He has not sent one of His servants; He has come Himself, as the Creator of all things, to be the Saviour. He who created can surely save! How great salvation!

He is the express image of God’s Person

He is the full representation of God: “the express image”, the effulgence of God. This is God coming in the Person of the Lord Jesus, God being represented in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. It is God come near in Jesus Christ.

He sustains all things

In verse 3 it says that He upholds all things by the Word of His power. He is not only the Creator; He is the sustainer. Christ sustains all things. Does it not amaze you that the One who was the Creator, and who was the Heir of all things, and the very One who upholds all things in this universe by His own power, let Himself be taken by men and spat upon, stripped, mocked, smitten, ridiculed, despised and then nailed on a cross? Amazing! How great a salvation, that He should have gone all that way for us! It is not that He was helpless in the hands of men. He was the Creator and Sustainer of all things. It was not that He was too weak to do anything for His own deliverance. He said He had only to ask His Father and He would send Him twelve legions

of angels. We have thought of one angel smiting a mighty army. What will twelve legions of angels do? And yet He did not ask! He was working out your salvation and my salvation, and the angels must not interfere with that. How great salvation! God was doing that. The Creator and the Upholder of all things was doing that. How great salvation!

He accomplished purification of sins

Has ever any other being done that? “When He had made purification of sins”. Oh! yes, He has done it, and those who put faith in Him come to know it; those who enter into the good of it, that know what it is to be purged, cleansed and saved from sin, when they accept Christ as Saviour by faith. He did it in His cross. It is made good to those who trust Him, who accept Him, who believe on Him.

He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High

This Christ, who accomplished the purging of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. He is at the right hand now. The right hand is the place of honour and of power, and He is in that place; and the salvation is related to such a One. Salvation is in such a One; not now a Man walking about this earth, despised and rejected of men; but salvation now is in the One who is at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

He has inherited a title more excellent than the angels

“He has inherited a more excellent name than they.” That means the *title* of Christ. It is not just bearing a name, it is a title — which represents position — more excellent than the title of the angels. It is the Name which represents power and glory far above the power and the glory of the angels. He has inherited it! That is, it has been conferred upon Him. Paul says elsewhere: “God has given unto Him the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, things in earth, things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord ...”. He has inherited that Name by the work of His cross.

All this wonderful revelation of the Person of the Lord Jesus gives us just a little idea of the greatness of the salvation which has come, if *He* is the Saviour. Need anyone despair? Need anyone fear? Need anyone for a moment feel that theirs is a hopeless case? No! Not if He is the Saviour! If it were a man, even a great man, we might have some doubts, but it is this

One, such a One as this, who is the Saviour. No case is hopeless when you put it into the hands of One like this. No case is too difficult for Him. No life too great a problem. No power of sin and evil too great and mighty in its mastery of a life for Him. He is Master, and more than Master of the greatest situation that you can present to Him.

The finality of things in Christ

The last word is concerning the finality of things in Christ. This Word says that it is at the end that God has spoken in Him. Now the end has come. God's final speech is in Christ. There is no more after that, and that is why it is such a hopeless outlook if we neglect so great salvation. There is no more salvation to come; the end of it is in Christ. This is the last phase of God's dealings with men; it is in His Son, the Lord Jesus. How shall we escape? How can we? If God is not going, after this, to do anything for man's salvation. He has finished it in Christ, and Christ is the last speech to man, it is all full and complete in Christ and there is no more to be done; if that is so, if we neglect, where is our chance? There is no chance after this life if once we have been brought face to face with the Lord Jesus here. The mercy to us is that He lets us stay here long enough to have Christ presented to us, even perhaps twice, thrice, a dozen times. But the time comes when Christ is no longer offered to us as Saviour. The end comes; God closes the door. There is no more salvation and we may be lost through a long eternity, having neglected the so great salvation.

We do not like turning to the dark side. We always like to dwell upon the bright side. Why should men be coerced, almost driven? Is not the presenting of the greatness of the Saviour enough? If it is not it is a desperate thing that men and women should have to be argued with, pleaded with, constrained in the presence of so great a salvation. But there is the dark side: "Now is the day of salvation", says God's Word; and it is the day of the so great salvation. But it is a day, and every day closes. It is just possible to go beyond the time where it is possible to be saved. No one can decide when they can be saved. God has appointed a limit. God says, "Now ...". Salvation's day may close suddenly, but "now" the great salvation is presented.

Let us keep the greatness of the salvation always in view; the greatness of the Saviour; and let us not neglect, because of the greatness.

HOW EVERYTHING BECOMES INWARD

Heb. 1:1-2: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets ... has at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son ...".

Gal. 4:6: "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts ...".

These two passages put together give us the light which we need in this connection. One says that God has at length fully and finally spoken in His Son. The other says that, being sons, the Spirit of His Son has been sent into our hearts. It is a well-known thing that in that clause in the second verse of Hebrews chapter 1 there is no article: "... has spoken unto us in Son". First of all let us get the tense. The more exact translation would be: God did speak. It is stronger, more definite than: "God ... has ... spoken." It is the final and full revelation which has come. The absence of the article gives the absolute sense to the Person. It is not merely what Jesus said, but what He is. It is not that God sent His Son and said certain things — however full those things may have been — through His Son as an extra One to all the prophets who had been sent. That is not the meaning here. It is what is meant by "Son". The absence of the article has quite a definite significance. It is important to get that. It is a tone, a note, that the ear must catch, something for which you have to listen carefully. What is that? It sounds strange! We feel that we have immediately something more definite and can go away with it when we read: Has spoken in His Son. But when you say, "has spoken 'in Son' ", you have to stop, you cannot walk away with that immediately. That draws your attention, not to a messenger, not to someone entrusted with a message to deliver; that immediately holds you to the Someone, and you find that it is the Someone who is the message, rather than has the message.

Christ is not entrusted with a message from God. Christ is God's Message, and God's Message in fulness and finality. The revelation is not the revelation of a doctrine, a system, a truth; it is "Son" revelation. Difficult as that may seem to the mind, and technical as it may sound, until we have really grasped that we shall always be missing the mark, going astray,

wandering round. Once we really do grasp what that means we are anchored, or at least we have our feet upon the way to the answer to every problem, the meeting of every need. "God ... has ... in Son"; what He is, and not just what He says.

Christ Himself is the sum total of all God's thoughts, God's desires and God's intentions. He does not come just to express God's thoughts in word, to make known God's desires, to tell of God's intention. He comes to personify and embody in His own very Being those thoughts, desires and intentions. He is those. When you see *Him* by the Holy Spirit you see God.

Those thoughts, desires and intentions are now embodied in a human form. Christ's mind was one with the Father's in the thoughts; Christ's heart was one with the Father's in the desires; Christ's will was one with the Father's in the intentions. But that now is represented! In human form, and that is subjected to testing on this earth, in this world. The action of all other contrary, antagonistic thoughts, desires, intentions is brought to bear upon that in human form: "Tempted in *all* points like as we", therefore tempted along the line of other thoughts than God's thoughts, along the line of other desires and feelings than God's, tempted along the line of other intentions. Tested, tried in human form, with a view to those thoughts, desires and intentions of God being established in humanity.

It is a fact, and one of the realities of life, peculiarly real to the child of God, that no divine thought or desire or purpose which comes to us becomes a part of us until we have been subjected to trial and testing along that line. The thing is not established in us because we have apprehended it, seen it, felt it, or committed ourselves to it. We know quite well that every bit of divine revelation, in order to be established in a permanent form of life and power, indestructibly, has to be subjected to the fires of trial. We have a way of saying that certain people have got the truth, the idea, but they have not yet gone through the fires with it; and therefore it still remains in a realm of unfruitfulness though it is there. We say that they have not gone down into death with it.

Now in the Lord Jesus, while there was a difference between Him and ourselves, the principle is clearly seen to hold good, that He in His humanity was bringing about an establishment in humanity, in human life, of all that which related to God, and He was doing it through testing. As to His moral nature there was and is no room for any question as to perfection. The perfection of His moral nature is settled absolutely. In Him was no sin. And yet the Word quite expressly declares that He was made perfect through suffering, and that He, though a Son, learned obedience

by the things which He suffered. This shows that He was subjected to ordeals, to trials, which did not relate to His own perfect and sinless nature, but which related to the establishment of something of God in human life. Thus the divine thoughts, desires and intentions were subjected to testing, to trial, in human life.

There had to be a battle fought over this whole ground, and on every point victory had to be won in human life for God, and only through victory was all this made perfect and established, and in the victory, full and final, this was taken to glory. What was taken to glory was the establishment in absolute victory of God's thoughts, desires and intentions in a human form of expression; that God should have one representative Man in whom the entire battle of God's mind, heart and will had been fought and won. In the Man, Christ Jesus, at the right hand of God, God has that Humanity perfected according to His own thought, desire and intention; therefore glorified.

The Holy Spirit sent as the power and the virtue of all that

The next step in the divine course is the Holy Spirit being sent as the power and the virtue of all that, to introduce *that* sonship into believers. 'Sonship' as we know, is a word which carries with it fulness, finality, God's end reached and that is why there is a special declaration connected with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is in His resurrection that there is a specific proclamation made: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." That statement is definitely connected in the Word with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We know it does not mean that only in His resurrection was He the Son of God. He was declared Son of God from the beginning in His birth, in His baptism, but here you have something which is a declaration of Sonship connected with resurrection. That represents and signifies that here in His representative capacity as Man there has been brought to perfection in Him the divine thoughts, desires and intentions; and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is just the divine seal upon the perfection of His Humanity. The Holy Spirit, therefore, comes — not before the resurrection but after, not before the ascension but after — as the power of that perfected Sonship in its fulness, its completeness, that Sonship which exists upon the ground of God's thoughts, desires and intentions having been brought to completeness and finality in Him. And the Holy Spirit comes as the power of that to introduce that — and not less than that sonship — into the believer: "God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts ...".

The Spirit of sonship the basis and key to everything

How different that is from the imitation of Christ. We do not mean for one moment to cast a shadow over Thomas à Kempis. At the same time it is a false idea to think or talk about imitating Christ until you have recognised and come to know that there is no hope or possibility whatever of ever becoming Christ-like until the Spirit of God's Son is established in the heart.

This represents an entirely different system of Christianity from what has become most generally accepted in the Christian era. It is here that Satan has undercut the whole of God's purpose. It is impossible to be a Christian — if the New Testament is to be the revelation of what a Christian is — apart from that definite act of birth from above, in which the Lord Jesus in the Person of the Holy Spirit takes up residence within the life. To talk about being a Christian without regeneration is nonsense; it is talking about a thing which does not exist. To fail to recognise the supreme importance of a divine act by which the Holy Spirit from heaven comes and enters into the life is to fail to recognise the meaning of what a Christian is. There are all kinds of substitutes for this, which go by its name, but they are all substitutes.

There is a fairly general pagan conception of God related to the human spirit, and the human spirit related to God in the whole race. Upon that a whole structure of religion has been built, but it is false. It is not according to the Word of God.

Then there is the mystical system, which makes everything of the divine spark, with something of God in everyone which has only to be cultured, cared for, cherished, brought into a right atmosphere and environment, have gathered around it religious and artistic influences, and all that, and there will be development so that finally it will emerge into God-likeness. Again it is false! It is a substitute, and it is a lie!

There is also what we may call the ritualistic substitute, which sees in sacraments and the partaking of sacraments that which represents God, and you imbibe God through the sacraments, and in the sacraments there is a fellowship with God, a partaking of God. Again, it is a lie! It does not work out.

None of these things work out to the realisation of God's thought, God's intention. When you look over the world you find that the three things mentioned (and there are others) represent the position of perhaps nine-tenths, and more than that, of the people of this world. So Satan has blinded, misled, deceived, robbed and undercut the truth.

It is in this definite, precise act, only upon the ground of what Christ is in glory, and what He is in glory *through* His suffering and death, the Holy Spirit definitely taking up residence in the life, that there is any possibility whatever of being what the New Testament calls a Christian, and coming to God's end.

We said, then, that the basis and key to everything is the Spirit of Sonship in us. That makes everything inward, as differing from the objective. There is all the difference between an imitation and a conception. One is outwardly presented, the other is inwardly born.

The Spirit of sonship must within us teach us Christ

There is no revelation that is extra to or apart from Christ. We have in mind things which are thought to be specific revelations, and which perhaps sometimes we have spoken of as specific revelations, but which in reality are not separate revelations. We mean the revelation of the church, for instance. We have spoken about Paul having a special revelation of the church. There is a sense in which that is not true, that what Paul had as a special revelation was a special revelation of Christ. If we think of such matters as what is called "the church", or any other thing, as a revelation in itself, we are in grave danger of becoming occupied with a thing. We must recognise that what Paul saw by special revelation was the church as the body of Christ, and he spoke always of the church as Christ; that is, Christ expressed, manifested, revealed in a corporate form; not losing His own identity, but expressing Himself in a corporate vessel. So that that vessel, in the full revelation, is seen to be *the* embodiment of that which Christ is. There is no difference between what Christ is, and what that is when God reaches His end; though different in Person, not different in nature and content: conformed to His image. Christ is said to be the express image of the Father's Person. The church is to be the express image of Christ's Person. Do you want to know what the church is? Do not ask the Lord to reveal to you church truth; ask Him to reveal Christ to you.

You come to the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the temple, and you see here you have a representation of the church. Ah! But more truly you have a representation of Christ. In what way? Christ as a wonderful, comprehensive order; if you like, a heavenly system; everything so precisely appointed, so divinely governed. That is Christ, but Christ in a collective way. What is it that your heart desires? What is it that you seek? You will find the answer in a fresh unveiling of the Lord Jesus, no matter what it is, on any detail, you will find it in Him. Now the Holy

Spirit's work is not to reveal to us things, truths, but to reveal Christ, and Christ in relation to all the matters that have any place whatever in our relationship to God. It is the Spirit of His Son. What is the church? It is His body. What is His body? It is a whole set of members, functions, faculties, energised and governed by His life. It is Christ.

The difficulty arises there in explaining, defining, making clear; and all that we are able to say beyond that point is that we have to recognise the fact, and seek to have the expression of the fact that in every direction and connection, both in life and in service, there has got to be some expression of Christ, some coming out of Christ. Even in business affairs there has to be some coming out of Christ to meet that position. It is not: Lord, give me the judgement, the counsel! It is: Just show me where Christ touches that, and how Christ meets that, what it is that is Christ that fits in there. That is the effect of it. You will find, if you have not already done so, that as you go on with the Lord, and your life becomes more and more under the immediate (when we say 'immediate' we mean the instantly and growingly conscious, and not the altogether unconscious and indirect) government of the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit is always seeking to lead you to Christ, to a fresh discovery of Him. He will check your ideas, your thoughts about things, such as Christian truths, doctrines, systems, orders and methods, and so on; and He will be emphasising Christ all the time. He will be seeking to show that there is a way in which Christ just fits into that situation, meets that need; that Christ is a comprehensive business system, if you like. In matters of business there is that in Christ which most wonderfully fits into that situation, to solve that problem. It is as though God had gone over the ground to the last detail, and left nothing out of consideration. Most comprehensively He had summed up every situation, every requirement of a life to be lived according to His mind, and had met everything, to the smallest detail in His Son. He then had sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts to show us how Christ fits in all the way along, and meets the need. So that we are learning Christ. Paul said: "Ye did not so learn Christ", meaning that there was a learning of Christ.

We can afford to drop all our terrible, strenuous mental activities in relation to truth. We can let go of our efforts of mind to get through to light, and we can and must recognise that Christ is the all and in all for everything, and that, if the Holy Spirit gives us a fresh illumination of Christ, we shall find that He just fits in there and answers that need, whatever it may be. There is something of Christ to meet that.

We have often thought that if we had such a comprehensive, and such a detailed, microscopic grasp of the Bible, and that it were always present in every fragment to our conscious minds, there is not a situation into which

we are capable of entering but what we should find in the Bible that which just touched that, some fragment that fitted in there. I knew a man once who was able to quote Scripture for everything that he did. I am not saying that he was always right, but whenever he wanted to do a thing he could quote Scripture for what he did. He had formed the habit of quoting the Scripture first before he went to do a thing. The point is this, that if we knew where it was, and where to find it, there is something in the Word of God, though it be but a fragment, which would relate to and govern any kind of experience into which we could possibly come in our human life.

Of course, we have found again and again the Lord has given us an extraordinarily fitting word for a certain situation. And I believe it is possible for that to be true in anything and everything in our lives.

That is an illustration, that God in Christ has (may I use something that is hardly in keeping in this realm?) boxed the compass of human need in relation to Himself, and that there is not a point in our lives but what Christ is able, in something that is in Him, to meet just that. Perhaps that hardly needs labouring, but the point is this, that the Spirit of Sonship is in us to teach us Christ in relation to everything in life and in service. It is the basis and key to everything. It is making everything inward.

We are required to let the Word of God dwell in us richly; that is required by the Holy Spirit as His material. The Word is that by which the Holy Spirit reveals and makes Christ known to us. We are required to have a life in continual prayer fellowship with the Lord. Christ will not be made known to us otherwise. When given those things, and a life of obedience to the light which has been given us, the Holy Spirit can illumine Christ to our hearts so that we have all things in Him.

The point of special value is that it is something which is going on inside, and because it is going on inside it means that Christ is related to us at the very centre of our being, and that we are, therefore, in the innermost, deepest reality of our being one with Christ, joined to the Lord one spirit. That means that we are that in fact, and becoming that, rather than just seeing that and doing it as something presented. It is something which represents the development of our inner being according to Christ. What has happened is this, that, although we do not yet recognise it and enjoy it, it is not the Spirit of the Child Jesus in us, it is the Spirit of God's Son. We mean by that, that it is not the undeveloped, immature Christ in us, but Christ perfected. We are not enjoying it, we are not recognising it, but the fact is that Christ in us is final. We have everything when we have Christ by the Holy Spirit. There is nothing to be added to Christ. Christ is full and complete, and our course is to learn that.

Receiving the Holy Spirit we receive Christ in finality, utterness, fulness

That is a wonderful thing to contemplate. It is not that we have received a partial Christ, an imperfect Christ; it is now that we have to learn how great and full is the Christ we have received. The glory of a true spiritual life, led by the Holy Spirit, is the glory of discovering daily what a wonderful Christ you have, far more wonderful than you knew. But that should not be something extraordinary; that is how it should be. You have received that, but you never knew the value of what you received until the Holy Spirit, who alone knows the value, reveals that to you.

You might have a jewel given to you, and you might be told that it is a very precious jewel, but you have no knowledge of jewels and you do not know the value of jewels, and so you take other people's word for it. While you can see certain things about it that make it witness to your consciousness that it is precious, you do not understand its full value. But then a man who has the most comprehensive knowledge of jewels comes along and looks at it and says: Let me tell you something about this. And then he begins to tell you something about that, and you see there is something you never knew before. Then he comes back tomorrow and tells you something more, and the next day. That man is never tired of telling you of the new wonders that are in this jewel, and all the time your wonder is growing. You say: 'I have had that all the time; all this that this man has been telling me day after day for months, perhaps for years. I had it all at the beginning; he has not added anything to the intrinsic value of that jewel by what he has told me; he has only made me know what is there.' That is what the Holy Spirit is doing with Christ. We have all that from God when we have Christ, and the Holy Spirit has come to show us the things of Christ. He is giving us Christ from every angle, in ever-deepening depths. It should be like that. That is inward. The people who live on that basis at least are living upon a very different level from those who simply live upon a religious external system. Oh, that we might live there more!

Let us drop our quest to know about truths as truths, and let us concentrate entirely upon this, knowing Him. All that Paul ever knew about the church, the body, or anything else came to him by the unveiling of Jesus Christ; not the thing, but Christ.

This gets to the root of things, and today there is so much lacking lustre and glory because of occupation with doctrines, truths, interpretations, traditions — things that have been handed down in some crystallised form, and so on; instead of the abiding occupation with Christ. One is death; the other is life. It is not what such-and-such a great man did fifty, a hundred,

two hundred years ago, and because of what he did there were certain eventualities which took a certain form, and we believe that he was right, and we adhere to that. Because of what he taught we believe it to be right, and we follow his teachings. Why? It may have been quite right, but I cannot inherit anything from that man; that thing must become as living a revelation in my heart as ever it was to that man, before I can enter into it. I cannot follow that simply because it is something heard. I cannot even take the New Testament and conform my life to the New Testament, because there is such a thing as the New Testament. Believing as I do that it is God's Word, it still remains a Book until the Holy Spirit comes and reproduces that in me. Much as I believe that is right, and God's will, what can I do? I can do nothing until there is an inward something, and that is, that the Christ that is in that Book comes into me, and the two become one. That is the key to everything. Once that happens the Book lives. Why does the Book live? I do not mean the fascination, that it becomes a realm of fascinating study. I mean this thing lives in the sense that it becomes power, strength, peace, rest, satisfaction in the heart. How is that? Only because the same Spirit who wrote that Book is in me interpreting, revealing.

These are very simple things, and we have used a great many words just to emphasise one central thing: "God ... has at the end of these days spoken unto us in Son", and Son is the essence of everything. Now, because we are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son, the essence of everything, into our hearts. (If that word 'essence' offends you, please recognise in what sense it is used.) Christ in our hearts is the sum total of everything in the mind, heart and will of God, in us by the Holy Spirit, and now we have to learn Christ. We shall not go wrong in our lives if that is the basis upon which we are living.

SONSHIP

The way in which everything becomes inward is that God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. Now: “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” That is, the Spirit of Sonship dwelling within our hearts. It is how it works out, and there is a good deal more involved in sonship after that kind than appears on the surface. It says quite clearly that relationship to the Lord (for sonship is a relationship) is firstly inward, right at the centre of our being, and then it is a matter of having our entire lives governed by what is inward. To be led by the Spirit does not merely relate, and is not merely confined, to crises in our lives, and special occasions when we need leading. It is to have our entire lives under the government of the Holy Spirit from the inside.

The Lord, in speaking about the day of the Holy Spirit’s coming, said: “He shall guide you (or lead you) into all the truth.” That is not just spasmodic, something which is occasional; that is continuous; that is the unbroken course of the life of the child of God. The Lord has not arranged our lives so that, according to a divine timetable or programme, the Holy Spirit will lead us into this truth at one period and into that truth at another period, and into a further truth at another period still. Our coming into the fulness of truth, the full revelation of Christ, is not a matter of divine arrangement as to time, it is a matter of our obedience to what has already been revealed; that we progress in the revelation according to our spirit response to what we have. Some people enter into a fulness of truth much more quickly than others. They get a large measure of revelation while others are going on with but a fragment for years, and their entering in is much belated. That is not because God appointed in the one case the earlier entering in, and in the other case a later entering in. That is not the Lord’s way. That has to do with the spirit of the individual concerned, as to how much that one is walking in the Spirit. So that everything in coming into the fulness of divine thought and desire is bound up with the continuous, and not just the periodic or spasmodic leading of the Spirit. This being led of the Spirit, then, is not something which relates to particular points, times, crises, emergencies in our lives, but it is

having our life continuously under the government of the Holy Spirit from the inside.

That is where the emphasis must be placed. The Holy Spirit would govern us, if we would let Him, from the inside, and slowness in progress in the way of the Lord is simply because we *will* so long be governed from the outside. People who are governed from the outside in their spiritual lives do not develop very quickly. Their maturity is much delayed. They very rarely reach a depth and a height of spiritual life which is more than a very elementary thing. It is the people who walk inwardly in the Spirit who come swiftly to maturity, and enter into the greater fulnesses of the Lord. So then, let us repeat, the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Sonship is in our hearts, and therefore from the centre of our being, and not from the circumference, He would govern our lives.

Sooner or later, if progress is to be made, we are brought back there. If we are not to remain to the end in an elementary state, an infant condition, the Lord, true and faithful to His own laws, will bring us back there.

Let us illustrate. You may have two kinds of call in relation to the Lord. We take for our purpose now the call to service. The call to service in relation to the Lord (we are not saying that it is the true call, but it is a call) may come to us from the outside. We may get it by the impact of an appeal, by the strong force of a presentation of need, by the powerful urge of a situation which demands our service, by an outward application to our hearts of the whole question of service, either in general or in particular. Multitudes have had a call come to them in that way, and have responded, and they have gone out in the strength of that. Now one of two things has happened with all such people, where that only has been the nature of the call. Either they have gone on to the end of their lives in a system of Christian work, which is very largely external, and have spent their lives in that realm of work and activities and an arranged programme. Or else in the course of time they have come up against a situation which raises the big question for them as to whether they really had been called of God, and then they are turned into the vortex of a great enquiry. Things have so operated, so come about, as to precipitate for them the most serious of all questions. Was that the call of God? Was I really called? Or was it the presentation of a need, a situation, an appeal made, and under the stress of the atmosphere I, in my emotions and my enthusiasms, responded? Multitudes have come that way, and they have reconsidered the whole position and opened the door to an enquiry before the Lord as to whether He had really called, or whether they were in something that was not His call. It is a very serious position.

One of those two things happens. In the case of someone who is really

a child of God, and is seeking from their heart to be wholly the Lord's, and wholly under the Lord's government, sooner or later that question will arise, if their lives have been governed in their movements by something outside. That is the infinite peril of an external appeal.

Now we are not saying that God never can, and never does, call through those means, but we are saying that there has got to be something more, and there has got to be a call or the call heard in the realm where the natural ear ceases to function, and all natural emotions and sensations cease to control. Away back, where nature ends, the call of God has got to begin. The call has to be heard in the spirit if we are children of God. Sooner or later that will have to be. How much better that it should be so at the beginning. The call is heard in the spirit by the child of God. Until it is so there will be weakness. There will be weakness after this kind, that there is all the room for the setting up of the biggest questionings and doubtings possible in our lives. It only requires circumstances and certain experiences to throw up the whole of the ultimate question as to whether we are where we are because God has put us there, or because of a response to something which was presented. That is a tremendous question.

You see the importance of government from the interior. Our thought all the way through has been that of fruitfulness. The measure of fruitfulness will be proportionate to the inwardness of the government, or what Paul calls being "led by the spirit". Being led by the Spirit determines the fruitfulness of the life, more or less. Action may be the result of inner hearing, and if through the voice of man as God's messenger God's voice is heard, another Voice more than man's voice, which does not register itself merely upon our reason and convince it by an argument, upon our emotions and stir them by a pathos, upon our wills and capture them by a drive, but registers itself upon our spirits, so that we know — deeper than emotion, deeper than argument, deeper than the impact of human personality — God has spoken. Action which is going to be a hundredfold fruitful must be upon that basis.

This determines the measure of Christ, and therefore it determines the method of fruitfulness, for nothing will be fruitful but what is Christ. Christ is the source and the stream of fruitfulness. It is only what is Christ that will be fruitful, nothing else can be fruitful. The measure of Christ is the measure of that which is the result of the Spirit's operation and activity in our spirit.

This makes some very serious distinctions. These are revolutionary things, and we may as well face them. We are really getting behind a lot of history and explaining it, a lot of tragic history on the one hand, and it makes some of these distinctions which are not pleasant to make, and certainly very difficult to face.

It makes a big distinction between a whole range and realm, and an immense amount of work for the Lord which is not essentially the work of the Lord, and therefore only gets just so far, and attains to just that measure of fruitfulness, if any. This spiritual truth is illustrated for us in the Word of God quite a good deal.

Take up the spiritual principle of sonship, and trace it, and see what a distinction it always draws and what a contrast it always makes. Take Abraham, who represents and expresses the true spirit of sonship; that is, an inner relationship to the Lord. Abraham's relationship to the Lord was inward, so much so that not only was he unique, differing from all the others, but no one else understood him.

Here is Abraham, then, who, because of the inwardness of his relationship to the Lord, expresses the true spirit and principle of sonship. Alongside of Abraham there is another, Lot. While these two are walking side by side they are two, they are not one; and there is an immense difference. The difference is this, that Lot is simply going with Abraham because Abraham goes that way; he is not going that way because God is leading him that way. It is not that God is not able to lead Lot from the inside. But Abraham is going that way, and Lot accompanies him; he is adhering to something else which has the Lord in it, but he is not that something else.

You can have association with something which is of God, and work from the outside, but how far do you get? Just about as far as Lot did! He was full of contradictions in the long run, not really possessing the heavenly vision at all, but simply going that way because he recognised that here was something which was of God, and he joined himself to it. But he had not got the inwardness of that himself.

Take another illustration, that of Joseph and his brethren. Joseph is not the eldest son, Joseph is one among his brethren, but he is distinguished from them, and that which distinguishes him is a purely spiritual thing. It is that spiritual thing which makes him different. It is the inwardness of relationship to the Lord, it is the directness of his relationship to the Lord. All his brethren worshipped the same God, were of the same stock religiously, but this man had not an historic, traditional, inherited relationship, but a *vital* relationship with God. That is what he represents, and he, therefore, had the inward revelations of God. When the writer of the letter to the Hebrews says: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke unto the fathers in the prophets ...", the divers manners will embrace dreams and visions and a good many other ways of God speaking. God spoke to Joseph in dreams. There was the inwardness of his relationship to God represented which was direct, not merely inherited, handed down to him. What is the thing that

makes that difference? It is this, that the natural order is altogether set aside. Joseph comes to *the* place in relation to God above all his brethren, *the* place in union with the heavens governed under the hand of God. And Joseph is a man to reckon with in the Bible. His name represents something in the Scriptures. Joseph is one of the sublime types of the Lord Jesus throughout his life. How is he a type? On what principle is he a type? Not merely because of the outward incidents of his life, which are typical incidents, but because of the central principle, sonship. Sonship is that which directly relates us with God inwardly, and has nothing whatever to do with the natural order, but rather sets it aside, ignores it. If the natural order had been followed, then the eldest son of the family would have occupied the place that Joseph occupied.

The same truth holds good in the case of David. All the sons of Jesse are made to pass before Samuel the prophet, and they are all rejected of the Lord. Then David is found, not considered along the line of nature, not taken into account, but God said of David:

“I have found David, a man after my own heart, who will do all my pleasure.” David is always a representation of the spirit of sonship. “The son of Jesse”. Sonship, you see, is a term linked with David. What was it that made the distinction between David and his brethren? It was that inner relationship to God, and there again the same thing holds good as in the case of Joseph. The natural order is set aside; it has nothing to do with that. Nature has to retire; it must not govern here. We see what the natural order was. When David went to carry greetings from his father and bread for his brethren, we see the spirit of the natural man, what nature is, what nature’s judgements and capacities are. God has simply ruled nature out in this matter, and says nature never enters here or puts a hand upon this matter, nature must stand back; this is something other.

The same thing follows on with Solomon, and it is most obvious that Solomon is always a type or a representation of sonship: “He shall be my son and I will be his Father”, God said about Solomon. The two things obtain again. Firstly it is a matter of specific relationship to the Lord that is represented by Solomon, not because of what Solomon was but in the sovereignty of God. And then again the setting aside of the natural order. David had many sons, and Solomon was not in the natural order the heir, but he ascended the throne.

Are we seeing that all this says that something external as governing life may just, after all, only represent what is natural and not what is spiritual; and therefore, before we can *truly* hear the Voice, before we can *truly* have our lives governed inwardly by the Lord, all natural arguments, all natural orders, have got to stand back, everything that is external as represented by

what is natural has got to be set aside. Because it is done, because it is the accepted thing, because it is the recognised thing, because it is the established thing, because it has been for so long the way, does not mean that we are to capitulate to it, and be governed by it. Not at all! It is, after all, what God says in our hearts by His Spirit. These are the sons of God, even they that are led by the Spirit of God. The fact that a thing has been used of God and blessed of God, perhaps for many years, and even for centuries, does not constitute that thing automatically the governing thing of our lives.

That is where Saul of Tarsus made his greatest mistake. Israel, Judaism, raised up by God, used and honoured of God, blessed of God, that with which God had associated Himself. Therefore it must be right, and we must abandon ourselves to it! No! That is no argument. There comes a time when even that which God raised up, used and associated Himself with, ceases to be the thing *in* which God is.

This great distinction involves some of the big questions in our lives. It raises the whole question of

Spiritual leadership

Not leadership in an enterprise, not leadership in a great organised movement, but spiritual leadership; that leadership by which others are brought into the living fulnesses of Christ, and into the living activities of God. What is leadership according to God? It is just that which issues from our walking with God Himself, and not being governed in the first instance by anything merely external. Are you prepared to go on with God, and all that that involves? If you are, you will become, in the very course and order of things, a spiritual leader. Leadership is a matter of spiritual responsibility, and who can take *spiritual* responsibility who has no deep life in God, knowing the Lord within?

A price to be paid

Spiritual leadership, constituted by walking with God, and not with men, and not with orders or systems, inevitably involves loneliness. It did with Abraham; it did with Joseph; it did with David; above all it did with Christ. The natural mind can never go that way, can never grasp things, can never see things. The measure in which the natural mind is there is the measure in which it is impossible to have fellowship with that which is walking wholly in the Spirit. Therefore, this leadership means intense loneliness. The very loneliness often becomes the ground of the enemy's activities. You are alone;

no one else sees as you do! See how few there are who can go with you, who agree with you! Thus the enemy argues.

There are dangers surrounding what we are saying. You can be cranky and be alone; you can be fanatical and be alone. It is not crankiness or fanaticism that we are talking about. It is a true walk with God, knowing the Lord. It is not that inclination to separateness, the freelance line of things, and a lack of the fellowship spirit. That is not what we are talking about. All those things can bring about a loneliness, and people can make martyrs of themselves by bringing that kind of isolation upon themselves for those reasons, but we are not referring to that. But even when your whole heart may be moving out for fellowship — it may be your greatest desire, and you may be working for it and laying yourself open for it — even while you may be shunning everything that is extreme as an emphasis and seeking to keep the balance of things (not by compromise but by maintaining all sides in even emphasis) you may find yourself desperately alone.

No man had a greater genius for friendship and fellowship than did the apostle Paul. No man had a greater universality of ministry and message than he. No man laboured to maintain relationships as he did, and no man was more lonely in this New Testament age than Paul: “At my first defence no man stood with me”; “All they in Asia turned away from me.” Why? They could not agree with him. They could not see what he saw. Peter could not see all he saw, though Peter saw some of it. John could not see it all. But Paul saw, and he had to go on alone. What about the value of Paul? What about the fruitfulness? Has anyone approached him in the measure of fruitfulness? Has anyone left a deeper impress upon the history of the things of God than Paul? I am sure we agree that Paul stands alone in more ways than one. If Paul stands alone, so that others are unable to go on with him, he also stands alone in the measure of abiding fruitfulness in this age.

We cannot all be Pauls. We are not suggesting that we are all called to be Pauls, but the laws hold good, the truths abide, that the measure of fruitfulness is the measure in which we go on with the Lord, and are prepared to pay the price of not going on with nature in the sense of what is external, even religiously so.

That is sonship. It is the Spirit of God’s Son. It is the way He went. The Spirit of God’s Son in us will lead us the same way. It is just a question of utter capitulation to the Spirit within in a full and complete willingness to pay the price. Upon that rests the measure of fruitfulness. The Lord interpret these things to us.

Concluded.