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the
Golden
Candlestick

FOUNDATIONS

Part 2

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CHAPTER THREE

Reading: Psalm 11:3; Ephesians 4:7,8,11-16.

Building and Battle

We shall now proceed with a further aspect of the important matter of foundations. In that eleventh Psalm from which we started our meditation there is one feature which is common to the whole subject of foundations and building in the Word of God. When we considered that Psalm more fully you will remember that David was, at the time of writing the psalm, in the midst of great active treachery, opposition and antagonism. The wicked were drawing their bow in the dark to shoot under cover at the righteous, and in the midst of that hostility the Psalmist refers to the foundations, and then he also says: "Jehovah is in his holy temple"; so that you get two things which comprise one whole, that is, building and battle. The temple, the foundations, the Adversary and the atmosphere of conflict. You will find that throughout the Word of God these two things are always found together.

If it is Nehemiah building the wall of Jerusalem, the sword and the trowel are found accompanying one another; the building and the battle are together. If it is the building of the temple of Solomon, David has reduced all the surrounding enemies to subjection to make that building possible. The building was not possible until the battle had accomplished its work. When you come into the spiritual interpretation of the Old Testament illustrations in the New Testament, you find those things always together. Wherever you have to do with the building you will always have to do with the battle.

When we look into the first letter to the Corinthians there surely is there a very conspicuous example of this truth. The building in that letter is alongside of tremendous battling. The battling is associated with the building. Now, when you come to the letter to the Ephesians you see the same thing again. Here is the House, the "habitation of God through the Spirit", here is the church which is Christ's body, and here you have much said about the building up of the body; but you will find in this letter that all that is in the presence of the enemy, principalities and powers, the world rulers of this darkness. The building goes on in battle, in conflict, and this fourth chapter contains in itself those elements. If you were reading those verses just now thoughtfully, you were discerning that the apostle in what he was saying about the building up of the body and all connected therewith was in the presence of antagonisms, perils, dangers, spiritual opposition. What is this about sleight and cunning craftiness, the wiles of error, the winds of doctrine, the waves of falsehood? These are the elements of

the battle, the conflict, these are the opposing forces to the church, the body of Christ. These are the things with which the development, perfecting, consummating of God's purpose in the church are associated, and with which that progress has to contend. And the apostle is saying in more words that the important thing here is that the saints should be well grounded; that the saints should come to a place of being established, and established in fulness where everyone of them is a responsible, trustworthy member of the body of Christ. That is the force of this whole paragraph.

Why the foundations should be soundly laid

Now then, let us immediately bring before our view the end, the object, and then we shall see what goes toward the realisation of that object. What is the object in view here? It is that every one member of Christ's body shall be a functioning, responsible, effective member, in a position where they are able, with the ability of Christ to stand against the wiles, the craftiness and falsehood of the Evil One, the winds and the waves of error. But, beloved, surely you and I are alive in these days to the necessity for every member of Christ to be in that position. The conditions with which the apostle Paul was contending at that time are conditions which abound today just as much as then. Of course, it came in his day through those who were Gnostics, people who claimed to have wisdom, to be in possession of knowledge. Of the Gnostics, who claimed to have religious knowledge and wisdom, Paul said their gnosticism operated in these ways: craftiness, wiles, winds and waves of error, false doctrine, false teaching. Whoever may be the counterpart of the Gnostics today, gnosticism is widespread. That is, there are waves and winds of error sweeping over the earth, and so subtle that no natural mind can see through, no ordinary judgment or discernment can detect the flaw, the error. It is so wrapped up in biblical forms and scriptural phraseology that the infants, the children to whom Paul speaks, will be easily carried away, those who are spiritually children in a wrong sense. It is not wrong to be a child of God, to be a new-born babe, but it is wrong to be a child when you ought to be a man, and that is what the apostle is speaking about. In the presence of these things, and in the expectation warranted by the Word of God that these things will increase, develop and become more and more subtle, with the very miracles which will accompany them, the necessity the apostle saw then, and which is made clear to us through the Word of the Spirit by him is that every member of Christ should be in the position to stand against those wiles, should have their foundations so soundly laid, and should themselves be so rooted and grounded that they will not be carried away. The ministry that is needed today is ministry in that direction. Give heed

to this word, you will need it. If you have not already done so, it will not be long before all of you are confronted with some of these wiles of error, this craftiness of false teaching, these waves and these winds of doctrine, and unless you are grounded and established and know, you will be carried away, you will lose your footing and will be swept off.

Now with the consciousness of so solemn and serious a situation and need, this word is, I believe, given to us by the Lord, and we must lay it to heart. Every member of Christ, without an exception, must be a responsible, intelligent, functioning member, and inasmuch as that is not true of any one member, that member is in a perilous position. But you are not surprised that the coming along of these winds and these waves carry away multitudes of Christians. Sooner or later they are landed high and dry and do not know where they are because, in spite of having the New Testament, and in spite of having the letter to the Ephesians, which itself is enough for this purpose, so many of the Lord's children are not taught, instructed, and established in Christ, to be able to discern, to understand, judge, and to remain firm in a perilous day.

The saints as builders

Now then, let us look at this passage of the Word a little more closely. "He ... gave gifts unto men", that is, "He gave some apostles." He gave apostles unto men. "... some prophets." He gave prophets unto men. "... some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." These are the gifts which He gave to men. "Men" here, of course, represents the whole company of the elect. The evangelists to bring in the elect, the others mainly to do with those who have been brought in. So that the church which is the body of Christ is in view, and it is in relation to the church as the body of Christ that these gifts were given by the Lord in His ascension. These are the gifts — but note, they were given for an express purpose and with an express object. They were given for "the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ, till we all attain unto the unity of the faith ..." Do not break in with punctuation there. There ought not to be a break. "For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering", as though the work of the ministry there related to the apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists. It does not relate to that. The work of the ministry there relates to the saints as they are perfected through the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers. The work of these gifts is to result in the saints being in a position to minister, and it is only as the saints are in a position to minister (that is what I mean by functioning) that the saints are safe. It is not alone the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers who are in the ministry, it is all the saints who are called to be in the

ministry. All the saints, every member of Christ's body is a minister according to the divine intention. And only as they are in that position to minister, in a state which qualifies them to minister, is the church safe. The ministries may be as varied, as numerous as there are members of the body of Christ. "For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering."

Let us be quite clear in our terms. That word "perfecting". You may say: Well, of course, if we were perfect we could minister. Surely that is a long way ahead, that is something toward which we have got to move, to which we have to come. But that word perfecting there does not mean that. It is used as a medical term very often, and a more literal translation would be "mending", for the mending of the saints. If you have an accident and get broken and are taken to a hospital you get mended, and that is exactly what this word means. The mending of the saints, making them whole. Sometimes the word is used for the furnishing of a house. You would not like to live in an unfurnished house. We must furnish it before we can live in it. The word is used in Matthew concerning the nets, when the Lord saw certain men mending their nets. This is the same word. There were holes in their nets, and those nets had to be made good so that they were complete, suitable for their work. They might not have been in that higher sense the most perfect nets you could find, but they were whole nets, complete nets. And what the apostle is pointing out here is just that. Not a state of divine perfection in us but a state of completeness in Christ. "For the mending of the saints unto the work of the ministry." The mending of the nets was unto some hope of catching fish. The trouble with so many, and the reason why so many are carried away with these winds and waves of doctrine, is that there are gaps, gaping gaps in their apprehension of Christ, in their knowledge of Christ, in their understanding of the truth; gaps, breaks, openings through which the error comes, and they want mending. And these gifts are given just to mend the saints that the saints may fulfil the ministry. It is so different from the traditional order to which we are accustomed, that the ministry is something we sit under so many times a week, from a pulpit or platform. And having sat under it, and either enjoyed it or endured it, that is the end so far as we are concerned; we have done what is incumbent upon us, we have done our duty, we have "sat under the ministry". That is not the ministry here at all. The ministry is the result in your practical functioning of what the pastor, the teacher, or the evangelist does, what you do as the outcome. That is the ministry: the resultant exercise in the heart of every member of Christ. If we really did get that we should be a long way on, we would be much further on than we are. Just think where we would be if that had always been the case. The evangelists, prophets, pastors, teachers, would have fulfilled their function in our midst and we would have gone away and got before the Lord on that and said: Now Lord, that has to be wrought in me, I am going to make that mine, and work in the strength of it.

Supposing we had done that with every message we had received, don't you think the church would have been in a solid place of establishment? A very different history would have been written in the presence of the wiles of the devil and the cunning craftiness, if that had been the case. We will not look abroad too much, we will look within our own hearts, and say, Now this is for me. We have to look into our hearts and say: Now what is the practical result and abiding value in my life as a functioning member of Christ of that ministry to which I have listened, of that work of the gifts of the Lord, the apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, evangelist. Where am I as the result? Have I heard it, regarded it as the ministry, left it there and let them get on with their ministry? Or am I as a result, a minister of Christ? That is a distinct question is it not? Oh, for the strength in the people of God, in the church His body, which would be the sure result of our so apprehending the Word of the Lord. We are badly in need of that strength today, that assurance, that establishment.

Individual responsibility for building

Now notice: "For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." Then the work of ministering, which is the work of each member of Christ is to result in the building up of the body of Christ. Now let us test it again backwards. How much are you and I contributing toward the building up of the body of Christ? How much are we functioning with that result, the building up of the body? That is our business, every one of us. That is our ministry. Are you prepared to accept that responsibility, to take, by the grace of God, that work on your heart, not to be an adherent, a follower, a passenger, an attendant, but a live, functioning member whose very presence in the body of Christ means its building up?

Later you notice the apostle puts his finger upon this very matter in a specific way. He says: "... through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." Each several part working in measure, resulting in the building up of the body in love. He has the physical body at the back of his mind. How much Paul knew about the physical body as we understand it today I do not know, but the Holy Spirit knew all about it, and when you remember those minute organisms of the human body, the cells of the human body, and how the entire growth of the physical body hangs upon the functioning of each minute cell, and the body is only built up, increased as each minute cell functions and does its work, you have a wonderful illustration and perfectly true one of how the spiritual body of Christ is built up and increased. You say: "I am only a minute part, I do not count." Well, try and count the cells

in your body, how many cells can you pack into a square inch of your physical body? — almost countless. You may be in your own mind like one of those, lost in the crowd, but there is a mighty responsibility for the whole body resting upon you. The point is not how big you are but whether you are contributing your measure. Each several part working in measure. The sense is that every part must do its measure, come up to its measure, toward the building of the body of Christ. That is our function and our ministry.

Oh, beloved, we shall have to regard this as an ordination service, and go out regarding ourselves as in the ministry and responsible for the whole body of Christ in our measure. We cannot understand that; we never shall understand it; we are in the presence of a mystery. Who can understand the physical body to the full? There are mysteries about it which have never yet been fathomed, and I doubt whether they ever will be fathomed. We have often illustrated that mystery of the human body in this way, that the oration of a Demosthenes should be the result of a Demosthenes having had his breakfast. You have read some of those orations which swayed crowds and made men do what they had no intention of doing, the power of reasoning and of human language. If the orator had stopped eating he would have stopped giving orations and therefore his orations were in some way the outcome of his having his food, but how you translate bacon and eggs into orations I don't know. But it is true! You see what I mean. And how you and I, being the atoms that we are, the cells which may be so small as humanly to be beyond recognition, can affect the whole body of Christ for good or ill I do not know, but there it is. It is a truth definitely and positively in the Word of God: "And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it." And if you and I are not contributing in our measure then the whole body is suffering, is weak.

Here, then, is the call, the challenge, that every member of Christ should be a responsible functioning and intelligent member, fulfilling the ministry. Yes, but there is something more, "... till we all attain unto the unity of the faith ...". Well, now we have got our finger upon something which is very vital. We are very much concerned about unity, oneness. We pray for it, we agonise for the lack of it in manifestation, we long for it. How will it come about? What is the principle of coming to the unity of the faith? Every member fulfilling his ministry, a functioning member. What is the cause of discord, division, schism? Well, look again at our first Corinthian letter: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ ... for ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men? For when one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not men?" There are divisions among you resultant from your being carnal, your carnality means spiritual im-

maturity, no unity of the faith. When everyone comes into full functioning that is a mighty factor in bringing about the unity of the faith. The enemy is out to split the body of Christ on earth into as many fragments as he can. How does he do it? Very largely by the ignorance of the Lord's people. Very largely by their delay in spiritual development, very largely because they are in a passive state instead of an active state spiritually. You will find these things lie behind most of the activities of the enemy along the line of schism. The unity of the faith, says the Word quite clearly, is through every member functioning, and making their contribution, livingly, to the whole. There was a day when certain men went to Moses and complained that there were certain people in the camp who were prophesying, and they thought it was a movement toward sectarianism or division or something like that, they thought this was a break in fellowship, but Moses said: "Would to God all the Lord's people were prophets." The positive line is the better one. When some are fulfilling the ministry and some are not it is quite impossible to come to the unity of the faith. We have all to be in it.

Then again: "... and of the knowledge of the Son of God." The Greek there is literally: to the full knowledge of the Son of God: "... unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." All that is bound up with his active life of all the members of Christ. We will not stay with it in its fragments but read it again more carefully.

The apostle has in view these things which are circling round: "... that we be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error." If only we could stop with the apostle's language it would throw so much light on this matter. "... by the sleight of men." Literally, in the deceit, but the Greek words refer to the throw of the dice and the element of cheating, it is something like the loaded dice by which there is a fraud, a cheating, and that is what is here in the language. The wiles of error. The throw of the dice which is always so arranged that it comes out to the good of the one who is using it. This error that is going round is to cheat the saints of their advantage in Christ, to cheat them of their place. Is not that the effect of error in the long run?

Yes, believers who are carried away like this wake up to the fact that they have been cheated of the reality by a fraud, they have lost the food by something that pretended to be to their advantage. "... in craftiness", that is literally, in their clever trickiness. The words are very rich. He uses the word here which is "in every deed, or every work, in craftiness". Every deed of theirs has some subtle craftiness in it, some trickiness in it. And oh, the trickiness of the devil in his false doctrine. The thing seems so right, so thoroughly good, according to the Word, but there is something hidden in it, a trick, a snare. The Lord's people need to be alive to that and it is only as we are out on full stretch, active, positive in our spiritual life that we come to the place where our senses are so

exercised that we can discern the good from the evil, and discern the trick. What a great thing it would be if every real child of God who ought, by reason of time to be in such a position, was really able to see in these wiles, these waves and these winds of falsehood, an error, just where the flaw is, just where the trick is, and be in a position to warn those who are children in a right sense, who have not yet come to the time when they ought to be mature; to be a safeguard to them. These foundations are very important. This is all foundation work, and we must, without exhausting all that is in these verses, just leave the main emphasis and indication of the apostle to take hold of us, grip us. When everything is said that could be said, however much we might add to it, it is just this, that you and I, every one of us without an exception should be so reaching out and moving on with the Lord in an active and positive way, as over against a passive way, so that our spiritual life and our spiritual senses are being developed, brought to maturity, that no matter what the wiles are, what the winds are, what the waves are which sweep like a hurricane or tornado, or even like gentle summer breezes over the earth, we are never moved, never carried away, we are alive to the subtle secret snare, and we stand. We are in the battle. The building is in the battle. There is no realm in which the battle is more real, more furious, more relentless than in the realm of the perfecting of the saints, the building of the body of Christ. That is why this one letter outstandingly brings those two things together. On the one hand there is the church, His body, to be built and perfected, on the other hand the raging and the subtle working of the enemy. The enemy is out to deceive the saints, to destroy the church, and the only way in which he can be defeated is by you and I being stretched out for the fulness of Christ, to go on in an active way, not being satisfied that we are saved, but wholly given to all that fulness which is possible in Christ. With all the saints in fellowship till we come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The Lord impress His Word upon our hearts.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reading: Hebrews 5:11-14; 6:1-3.

That portion which could be accompanied by a very great deal more from the letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and from Peter's letters, brings one very foundational thing into view. Foundational because it is addressed in this case to very religious people, and to those who inherited the whole of that system which God Himself produced. It brings into view the fact that with Christ, and a true relationship to Christ, everything begins over anew. Everything else, it does not matter what it is, comes to an end. It makes clear what Paul was so fond of saying, that with the death of Christ everything finished, everything! The central thing religiously, so far as the old order was concerned, in type, was the veil of the temple; everything met in that veil. With the death of Christ, from heaven that thing was ripped and split in twain by the hand of God. The old order was struck right at its centre. The death of the Lord Jesus did bring an end to everything — religiously and otherwise — of the old order and system and creation. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was God's starting all over again right from zero. And not one fragment or fraction of the old creation was carried over into the new.

Resurrection more than elevation

I think that a good many people have the idea, even if they have not thought it out and put it into positive shape, they have a mentality that to become a believer, a child of God, a christian, is to come to a certain point in one's history where you, metaphorically speaking, go up in an escalator on to a higher platform and proceed. It is in the nature of continuing life on a higher storey. That is, that now you have interests, religious interests, christian interests, which you did not have before, your activities and your energies are directed along lines in relation to Christ, which did not obtain before. You are simply going on now on a different level of life, and thus they confuse resurrection with elevation, and elevation with resurrection. Now it is tremendously important (and I am not careful about being too elementary) that we should recognise that when we become children of God we have come to the place where we have not gone up on to a higher storey as in an elevator, but where we have tumbled into a grave and been buried, and so far as God is concerned, never again to be seen as we were before. You say: Here we are, it is the same old I, the same old ego, the same old personality. That may be from your standpoint,

but from God's standpoint, No! What you and I have to do is to accept God's standpoint. That is what Paul means by: "... reckon ye also yourselves to be dead ...". That is, accept God's standpoint. Once you have accepted that intelligently and deliberately you are destined to come continually, progressively, increasingly to know that God's standpoint is a real one. That is, that God had reckoned you dead, and does reckon you dead, and He does not want to have anything to do with you on that old level; and inasmuch as you bring anything in from the natural, you have a bad time, and find God is up against you. You come to these crises, and you say: What is the matter, Lord? And the Lord says: That was ruled out in the beginning! You see it is an accepting of God's standpoint once and for all, and discovering it is not a theory, not a doctrine, but a reality.

When did you die?

I picked up a little book this week. The title on the cover rather struck me. Probably many of you know it. "When did you die?" I have only seen the first few words of it, and the writer says: "A strange question to ask any one", and then a little while and he says: "You died as long ago as the Lord Jesus died on the Cross." I know, of course, what he will have to say about that, I know what will follow, but that is the truth which the Lord requires that we shall accept. The Lord's standpoint is that you and I died before we were born, before we came literally into this world. So far as the old creation is concerned, we died, we died with Christ, and the Lord has nothing whatever to say to us or do with us until we have accepted that position. The first word to any man from the Lord is "repentance from dead works." Everything is dead until you know resurrection union with Christ, no matter what it is, religion or anything else. Everything is dead until you know union with Christ in resurrection life.

That is God's position, and the Cross of the Lord Jesus presented to any man or woman represents so far as that man or woman is concerned an absolute end, and on the other side a beginning of an entirely new order. Paul calls the different order: "... the newness of spirit." That is not the newness of the Holy Spirit, that is the newness of our spirit, that our spirit has become a new thing and out from that everything else works. You can see it in his own case. If ever there was an illustration of what newness of the spirit means, Paul was such. Why, it came about swiftly with him. One day he is breathing out threatenings and slaughters against members of Christ, and on his way with a passionate burning determination to destroy these Christians, and in a few hours he is humbled, before a little assembly in Damascus, which he was going to destroy, taking his instructions for the rest of his life.

That is a change of spirit, is it not? That is newness of spirit. And you find that tremendous change manifested in all kinds of directions. Think of this Pharisee of the Pharisees and his attitude toward gentile “dogs”, as he would call them (anybody that was not a Jew was a “dog” in the eyes of a Jew). See this man in whose very blood that was, now putting gentiles at least upon an equal footing with Jews, and giving his life in continuous suffering that those gentiles might come into the enjoyment of Christ. Something has happened inside, a new spirit! That only comes through the crises of a death in one realm and a resurrection into another realm; something that only God can do. And all that is not of that newness of spirit is of the old creation and it means the impassable barrier of the Cross of the Lord Jesus whenever it arises. Let any of our old man, whether of our old temper, our old way of judging, our old disposition, any of it come up at all. If we are children of God, we know quite well that at that point a barrier is set up and we cannot get past, we are held up in our spiritual life and we have to go back and have that thing cleared up. It is as real as any other thing in the universe to us. At that moment we stand still spiritually, and the flaming sword is across our path. There is no way for that here. Bring that here and you will be judged. You will meet the judgment of God. You will be broken. It is coming up against the fact that God finished with all that long ago and we have to accept God’s standpoint. When we have accepted it then the thing works out, it continually works out. We take that position, we accept the truth. We cannot bring an actual end to the old creation ourselves, but we say in a positive way: I reckon as God reckons. Well then we shall find as we go on that God having put all that under death, death rests upon it, and if ever it shows its head again the sentence of death is met. If we begin to work for the Lord with our own natural strength we meet death and before long our natural strength will come under death. If we begin to use our natural judgment in the things of God we shall meet an arrest and before long we shall come to a deadlock, unable to get through. Anything which we bring of nature into the things of God will bring us up against — not some new issue but — the old issue, death which was made to rest upon the old creation. In so far as we move in the newness of life, work by the Spirit of God, walk after the Spirit, death is done away and we are in life and we can go on and can get through, no matter how much there may be of handicap and weakness in nature, we can get through as we go on in the Spirit. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death”. We are free!

Death — God’s starting-place

Now that is all old familiar ground to many, and yet something which we have continually to remember. It is the foundation. Unless we have the founda-

tion thoroughly well laid, we shall come to a hitch. We know of many children of God who have been the Lord's children for years and they have been working for the Lord many of them, and yet they have come to a standstill, they have come under an arrest. Why? Well in some way, at some point, somehow, something of themselves, their old self has come up, has come into evidence, has come into the way. It may be some of their old mind, some of their old will, some of their old affections, desires and feelings. They are in their own way somehow. They are in the Lord's way. What is needed is not that they should die again, but that they should come to accept their once-for-all death in Christ in relation to whatever that may be that has come up, and let it go and be set free from that law of sin and death. "Repentance from dead works." That is exactly what the apostle is saying to these Hebrews: You have come to a standstill. You simply ceased to go on. You went so far, now you have got to a certain point and for years you have not budged a bit from that position. You have never got past foundations, you are not going on to full growth. You have not settled it once and for all that you died when Christ died. You ended the whole system and order of the old creation religiously and otherwise when you came to Christ. Christ is the end of the law and Christ is the end of the old creation, and He is the beginning of everything new. Do not be wearied at repetition of old truths, they are very important as foundations, and this is foundational.

We are destined, whether we now accept it or not, whether we like it or not, we are destined to discover that God's foundation stands. This is true, and no one will ever get through in relation to God and His things while still bound by the old creation, on the old creation level. This new way of life is so narrow that we cannot take ourselves into it, we have to leave ourselves behind.

Well, now, that is a position taken up, and what those who are being baptised are doing is to declare in the practical way that that is the position they have taken. What they are going to discover is that they have not just obeyed a form of doctrine, but that they have entered into a very live situation and from henceforth the Lord is going to make good the implications of this. He is going to say: That died, you cannot bring that along, don't bring that out of the grave, put it back. And they will find all the way along that the Lord just puts His finger upon things which He reckons as ended in the death of His Son. But, of course, whenever there is acceptance of the Lord's attitude and position to those things on the death side, we get more of Christ as we get rid of ourselves.

I do want you to recognise that every one of us from the wisest to the most foolish, as we judge, every one of us when we really come into Christ, has got to learn everything all over again. It is true that we may have a tremendous amount of knowledge and information as this world can give it, and yet the wisest, the wealthiest in knowledge or in any other way, coming into Christ has got to learn the ABC in spiritual things. They will discover that. Everything has

got to be learned from the infant class, from the cradle roll of the spiritual life. It is no use our coming unto the Lord and thinking we know something. It will not be long before we are made to know that we do not know anything. The Lord said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" I think if He had been in another world from the one in which He was at the time, if He had been in the Western world He would probably have said: How hardly shall they that have knowledge enter the Kingdom. The boasted knowledge, wisdom, intellect of the Western world is the great obstruction to the Kingdom. It is not prepared to know anything. When Paul got outside of the Jewish world that was the kind of thing he was saying all the time, that the wisdom of this world was the great hindrance. With the Jews, gain along the line of wealth; to the gentiles, gain along the line of knowledge was the hindrance, and anything that appertains to nature has to be set aside. It is a hindrance to our coming into the Kingdom. The longer we live in relationship to the Lord the more we know that we know nothing. One piece of knowledge we have is that we do not know anything at all, and we are just longing all the time to get some knowledge. There is no royal road to spiritual knowledge, we have to start right at the beginning and learn the things of the Lord as we go along. When we start as young Christians we do think that we know something. But, of course, that is the folly of youth. We are learning everything all over anew. With all the knowledge that we might have naturally, if it should be anything, it does not count here. Spiritual knowledge is a different thing. We have started all over again, but when we accept that place: Now I have everything to learn, I am open and eager to learn, I know nothing, then the Lord can teach. It is the proud one that never learns anything. The Lord show us what it means to begin, what the meaning of the Cross is in our end to the old and beginning to the new.