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Golden
Candlestick*

**THE SECOND MAN ...
THE LAST ADAM**

THE ANOINTING

T. Austin-Sparks

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THE SECOND MAN ... THE LAST ADAM

CHAPTER 1

THE HUMAN HISTORY OF TRAGEDY

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you” (1 Cor. 15:1,2).

With these words the greatest apostle that Jesus Christ ever had draws his mantle together over his shoulders and sets himself to gather everything that he has been saying into a climax and a consummation. We can almost hear him breathe a sigh of relief that he has got through all the unpleasant business that was imposed upon him in the writing of this letter, and, having got through it, he says: “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you.”

The conditions at Corinth

He had been compelled to write about a whole lot of unpleasant and difficult matters. He was at the time in Ephesus, about to conclude a very wonderful time of ministry there. Then his fellow-labourer, Apollos, had arrived and told him of the state of things at Corinth, and three other people, probably slaves of the household of Chloe in Corinth, had also arrived and had poured out the story of a very deplorable state of things in the church there. It was a sad story of divisions, schisms, quarrels,

disorders, moral evils, social wrongs, spiritual immaturity, of Christian unkindness one to another, and so on; it is all here. By either Apollos or these others they had sent a letter to Paul, asking him to answer a number of questions on a lot of matters about which they were troubled, and, as you know, this letter is his answer to that whole situation and of all those aspects of it.

A laborious thing! You cannot read it without feeling how the apostle was labouring with this situation. Well he might be! Troubled, heart-broken, deeply moved, he passed on from point to point, covering the whole, and then, with what is the end of chapter fourteen, he finished it, and finished it gladly. And he said in effect, "Having dealt with all that, I am not prepared just to leave it there. Let me take you back, brethren, right to the beginning of your life and history as a company of the people of God, and remind you of that basis upon which you came to be a church and a company of God's people; what I preached unto you and you then believed, and upon which you stand, the basis of your very existence and by which you are saved." Having written all the rest, with a sick heart, he concluded that he must restate the 'gospel', as he called it, which he had preached and which was the ground of their existence as a church.

Now, while all the conditions at Corinth may not obtain today in many churches — thank God! — there are some things that persist and are, at least, the abiding peril of companies of God's people. In any case, there is something that comes out of this final resolve of the apostle which is of inestimable value to the church, and the church in all ages. We are not glad that the Corinthians were what they were, but here is the wonderful sovereignty of God: He takes hold of a most deplorable situation and makes it the means of drawing out some of the most sublime things in divine revelation. And who would be without what we call the fifteenth chapter of the first letter to the Corinthians? Thank God for His power to use the darkest background to bring forward the most glorious revelation!

Well, you notice that this chapter, or this section, is a summary, and is a consummate restatement and a climax. Paul uses this word 'preach', as you see, several times, in verses 1, 11, 12, 14; the thing 'preached'. And if you look to see what was the heart, the essence of that preaching, you have only got to underline one word: 'Christ'. You will find yourselves right at the beginning, in the presence of a mention of Christ no fewer than thirteen times! I say 'at the beginning' to show what the foundation really is, what the preaching really is. Now into this consummate restatement

the apostle gathers a revelation which is wellnigh unparalleled in Holy Scripture.

If I may make this parenthesis: you read through this long chapter and you are amazed. You hold your breath and you say, ‘Where did the apostle get that? How did he come by that?’ The things that he is telling you here about glory, and the differences in glory, and the resurrection body, and what it will be like, and so on! You say: ‘Well, this is something that no man ever concocted. This never arose in a man’s brain. There is something here of unparalleled revelation.’

Christ, the second man ... the last Adam

The apostle gathers up all this wonderful unveiling and unfolding into a designation of Christ. It is summed up by him in a title, a double title: “So also it is written, The first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45). “The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47). There is your title, your designation: “The second man ... the last Adam”.

And in itself that double title of the Lord Jesus is a summary of human history from the beginning. In the immediate context it is a summary of human history on both sides: that of the first Adam, the human history of tragedy, and that of the last Adam, the story of human history in recovery and glory. Christ Jesus, the second man, the last Adam! Always be correct in how you put that. Even such a scholar as John Henry Newman has slipped up on it in his hymn. It is not a second *Adam*; it is a *last* Adam. It may be a second *man*, but it is a *last* Adam. Finality is reached in Christ in human history.

In the first place, that is an explanation of Jesus. And it is quite right to say that the whole of the New Testament is a combined operation to declare and explain Jesus Christ and it should never be used, in part or as a whole, for any other purpose. Because it has been used for all sorts of things — for anyone who has some particular bee in his bonnet will quote something in the New Testament to support his view — it has lost its mighty authority. The New Testament may be used for one thing and one thing alone, and that is to explain Jesus Christ: to explain why there ever was a Jesus Christ; why Jesus Christ ever came into this world; why He lived, thought and worked; why He died and rose again and why He is in heaven. One question should always govern our reading, in part or in whole, whenever or wherever we read in this Book, and that question

should be: ‘What has this to say about Jesus Christ? What light does this throw upon Him, either by direct statement or by right and true implication or inference? What does it say about Him?’

Now these words in verses 45 and 47 are a very important instance of this very thing, the explanation of Jesus Christ. How is He explained by the words, “the second man ... the last Adam”?

It does not require profound scholarship or great intellectual ability to see that such a title puts the One referred to into a position of unique relationship to the whole human race. A “second” implies a first. A “last” implies an original. And by the two everything in human life and history is compassed. You cannot get before the first. There is no such thing as ‘before the first’ in anything, anywhere. And you certainly cannot get behind the last. There is nothing beyond the last. And so, here we have human history, for that is the subject compassed by this title.

But what does it imply? Clearly, the conclusion is that *two* different humanities stem from *two* different racial heads. One humanity stems from the first man, Adam. Another, and quite another — and that is the theme of the New Testament — stems from the second Man, the last Adam. Two distinct lines, two distinct kinds. But mark again in this very connection, the teaching of Scripture is that the second Man, the last Adam, stepped into humanity in order to supplant and displace the first and the original, to set aside all the damage which the first had brought into humanity by his sin, by his wrongdoing. The second, and the last, was a necessity because of the utter breakdown of the first and the original.

Paul has, as you know, a corresponding paragraph on this very thing in his letter to the Romans, in chapter five, from verse twelve to verse twenty-one. He dwells on this: “Just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin ... For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:12,17). It is a good, strong section on the function of the two racial heads. You can read it. But in that chapter Paul, in referring to the first Adam, says, “Adam was a type of Him that was to come.” Adam’s typological position was just this: in his being the first and the progenitor of a kind. And I think that is where it ended. Before his fall he was the first of a race; he was the progenitor of a race. And in that sense he was a type of Him that was to come. There may be other features of that type, but that is the significance of Adam being a type.

But there was a gap in his history, the gap of probation and testing. He was placed with the intention to become all that he was meant for, made for, but between the placing and the fulfilment there was this gap of probation when he was put to the test. Oh, the immense potentialities which were crammed into that gap, that probation! That is what we are going to see, I trust, now: the immense potentialities that were there, in the balances of that gap, that probation. What tremendous things hung upon one thing ... how *he* would use the great trust of free will!

On the one side, all that God meant, intended and hoped for in the creation of man demanded that man should be a free agent; not compelled, not forced, not just a piece of machinery going without its own volition, desire or thought. You would never be satisfied with anyone giving you anything on those terms! You would only be satisfied if by the choice of their own heart, reason and *desire*, they gave it to you. So God made this great trust in the man and gave him — at the same time — the trust and responsibility of free will. Everything was in the balance as to how he would use that trust. There was a law governing. Not the law of compulsion at all, but the law of dependence upon God: whether he would use that trust of free will in dependence upon God, or whether he would use it in independence of God. What immense things, unspeakably great things were bound up with that test! All heaven might have been holding its breath at that time. We know all too well what happened. We will now see what is involved for us in this.

We know the story, how he used that trust, how he broke that line of dependence upon God. He severed that link and took his trust into his own hands, to realise all his potentialities out of relation to God, in independence of God. And because of that and all the terrible consequences of that, a second Man, a last Adam became necessary if the world and humanity were to be saved.

Now, look at some of the essential facts about this last, this final Adam, this second Man. In order really to undo all the tragic consequences (which we have not yet touched upon), He himself must be the negation of the violated law. If the law was everything by dependence upon God, and that law was broken (and Adam said, 'Everything without dependence upon God', for that was the issue and the upshot), the Redeemer must Himself be the embodiment of that law of absolute dependence upon God and upon nothing else. Nothing to help, in himself, humanly; in the world; anywhere, of any kind; nothing but God. To the very last breath ... only God.

The first of a new type

Do you tell me that that is the Adam race? Not a bit of it! Not as you know yourself and I know myself. It is not like that, is it? This is another order of being, which is like that, and will go that way, even unto death — and the most ignominious death — where, by deliberate choice, He refuses any kind of deliverance that could come to Him, because He is a committed Man to the will of God. He, then, as such a last one, such a second one, is the progenitor of a race which is to be like Himself in this very respect. It is a race of people who, on this very principle of His life, will be constituted on the basis that *everything*, to the last fraction, is by dependence upon God.

Does not that in itself open up the first letter to the Corinthians? Read from the beginning again and see these Corinthians and all their self-sufficiency, self-strength, self-glorying, glorying in worldly wisdom, and what not. That is an aspect of the whole that we must leave for the moment. I just mention it to let in light on why Paul preached Christ and said, “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). What does that mean? Does it not mean crucifixion of all that independence of God which came in through the first Adam, all that taking into his own hands, all that seeking for himself, drawing to himself, that acquisitiveness, that possessiveness, that assertiveness, that pride, that is characteristic of all who have come from that first one? But there is none of it in Him. And as the second, in this new movement of God, He must reproduce after His own kind.

Now that is only introductory. But it is very important that we get our foundation well laid.

That brings us right to our present point. There are some things that every seriously-minded person will be concerned with (and sooner or later everyone will be seriously-minded about life), but Christians are *supposed* to be seriously-minded people who are really concerned about this matter of life. And there are four things that comprise that concern.

Human history

One is the meaning of human history. (Have you ever sat down with your Bible to seek from it the explanation of human history?) The second is the meaning of Christianity. The third is the meaning of spiritual experience. And the fourth is the meaning of the Christian life.

The meaning of those four things is gathered into one Person, Jesus Christ, and He as the second Man, the last Adam. As such, He explains human history. As such, He explains spiritual experience. As such, He explains Christianity, and as such, He explains the church.

Now I don't propose to try and cover all that ground! But I am tremendously concerned and burdened. This is no mere subject that I am interested in or occupied with. If you are a seriously-minded person, this really *does* concern you. And are you not ... are we not being forced in our time to have a serious question about human history? The human race, mankind, and all the history of mankind — what does it all mean? You know, we are being confronted with that question today.

Leave that for the moment. As a Christian, are you not increasingly confronted with the question as to the meaning of Christianity? After all, what is this thing? As we view it in general or in particular, what does it mean?

Further, if that is too objective, are we not being forced more and more to face the question of the meaning of spiritual experience? Is there not in our hearts a recurrent question, 'Why?' 'Why are we going the way we are going? Why is God taking us this way and through this? Why is this being allowed? Why is this happening to the children of God?' If that is not a really pressing question in your heart, I am not giving very much for your spiritual life, dear friends. Anyone who is really alive to ultimate things is very concerned about what our spiritual experience in the hands of God really means. What is God after? What is God explaining? What is He doing?

Now, on the one side, then, human history. We must see that God has taken all time — human history embraces ten thousand years, at least — to demonstrate the meaning of the results of the wrong use that man made of his trust of free will, when he took that trust into his own hands and it became self-will instead of God's will.

It is here that we come to a point which is very full of the most important instruction. What was God left to do? You say: 'Why, when man did that, broke that law of dependence, took his will into his own hands and out of God's hands and violated his trust, why did God not destroy him once for all and start again there and then?' Of course, it is easy to talk like that. Perhaps that is what you would do. Perhaps that is what you think He ought to have done in view of all that we know. Do you not see that if God had done that, it would have been to have simply said that He never did give man free will? It would have nullified the whole

principle of option. He would have destroyed at once the primary thing — free will. It is never free will if, when you use it, you are destroyed for doing so. That is not free will. But what did God do? Ah, that is history.

The Lord's way has been, and still is to let the choice have full course and destroy itself, bring its own judgment upon itself. It is a long-term business, and long-drawn-out business. And now let me just say a very intimate thing to you and to my own heart. There are some prayers that God answers which we wish He had never answered! It is because man would not take a 'no' or an alternative. There is a little fragment about Israel when, after much stiff-neckedness and hardness of heart, "He gave them their request, but sent a wasting disease among them" (Ps. 106:15). Have you ever prayed, and insisted, and refused to take a 'no' or an alternative, and then wished He had never answered your prayer? That is possible, it depends upon where your will is, on your own side or on His side. There is a lot of spiritual history bound up with that.

We were saying that the Lord has taken all time to demonstrate the folly, the madness, the iniquity of a wrong use of a sacred trust. Note, then, the development of this. All the immense potentialities to which we have referred in man have been allowed to express themselves, have been drawn out by history, and today we are amazed and marvel at the potentialities of man! Make no mistake about it. In five hundred years we have moved from the making of iron cannon balls to the atomic bomb. You call that progress, do you? But look at what has happened, what man can do, what is in man to do! We are all wondering what he is going to do next. If things go on for another fifty years as they have gone for the last fifty, where shall we be? This is no Jules Verne imagination, is it? These things are realities. And all this is in the man that God made.

But do you recognise that, with the acceleration and intensification of this process, man has never yet either made a discovery or made an invention but what there has come along a parallel curse with it and a new problem that almost, if not altogether, bedevils the discovery? It is true in any realm you like. Oh, that we were here long enough to survey the ground adequately! These potentialities which were in the man that God created have been given full play by God through all time to express themselves, *but* always with a curse. What is a curse? I could put the curse into one word — fear! The further man goes the more fearful he becomes. It is fear that is alive to the greatest discoveries and inventions of man. It is fear that is ruling men's hearts today. They are conscious of insecurity. They are striving for some kind of security in order to overcome this fear.

The Bible is right, you know. It always is, but it is right on this — that a mark of the end time will be “men fainting from fear” (Luke 21:26).

You only have to read some of the books that have been produced by the discoverers of the nuclear, and they will tell you in unvarnished language that it only wants the touch of a finger to end the whole human race by this very thing that they have discovered and are exploiting. It would be the end of the human race — and an awful end! If you have read the story of Hiroshima, spread that over the whole human race! Now, I don't want to be a sensationalist, but these are facts. We are informed about them by the men who are mostly associated with this very matter. Men are afraid. This fear is accentuated and intensified the further men go in their inventions and discoveries and in the development of the potentialities in their own beings. That is the end. It is coming very near.

God has taken all history — and what a lot that word ‘history’ covers — past, present and future, if it is not a contradiction to speak of the future as history. But there is history that is being made for the future. History is on the one side, demonstrating, beyond any question or doubt, that man has made a mistake somewhere! He has gone wrong somewhere! He has defaulted somewhere — no, worse than that — he has done something infinitely evil, and it has come out of himself by the wrong use of his own will.

Do we not see? Are we blind? Are we not taking account? I said that seriously-minded people are concerned about history. Are you not taking account of this, that where this state of things in development, intensification, discovery, invention, is *most* pronounced, you have the most awful strength of human will against God? Is not that true? It is soul-strength, a strength of human soul.

And how we fail to see that the one thing that history has revealed is this contradiction, this strange but so patent paradox: the greatness of man and, at the same time, his smallness. The greater he seems to be, the less he seems to be able to cope with his own dreams. Is that true? He has wrought it out, and now he is a mere puppet, a mere plaything of his own greatness. How little he is at his greatest!

Well, that is the way of history, and that is what is happening, dear friends. The greatness of man — yes ... as God made him! But now, because of this one thing, a greatness that is cancerous. There is no other word to explain and define it. What is cancer? Well, I cannot answer all the research on that matter, but I will tell you what is known: that cancer exists because of the loss of one central governing and regulating

authority. It is something that has broken away from authority and ignores controlling and regulating authority in the organism, and becomes an authority in itself, becomes some *thing* that is something in itself, and has absolutely refused that central authority regulating and governing within the organism. It has taken things into its own hands. It is cancer, the scourge! This greatness of man is like that. Look at it! It has broken right away from the great controlling authority of God and God's will. The result is a scourge on humanity!

Now at that point, were it possible, I could put in a tremendous section, by way of illustration. I only have to mention the things without any additional words. What about international relationships? Oh, the tentacles of this cancerous human life, in humanity! Why, you cut one off and half a dozen more spring up at once! Is it not like that in international relationships? Why, you think you have just got the problem nicely settled and it breaks out in more than one other place. You cannot cope with it. You have got all the potential of a prosperous and happy world. It is all there, but in reality there is curse and destruction instead. All the instruments and the institutions for peace, and yet there was never so much loss of peace in human history as there is today. Think of all your gadgets to save work and of all the inventions to make life easier! There were never so many amenities and facilities for rest and leisure — and never in history so much discontent! There is something wrong with this humanity, this world. We might look at industry, we might look at science and we might even look at religion ... but I must leave it there for the moment. That is one side.

But we are not talking just objectively. That is you, that is me, by nature. The deepest, truest thing about you and about me naturally is self-will, pride, possessiveness and the desire for power. You don't agree with me? All right! If you allow the Holy Spirit to take you any way at all, you will discover that that is true. That is the first man. That is the old Adam. And you will see at once how that opens the door for the second Man and the last Adam to start things all over again on another basis, to be the racial Firstborn and Head, and progenitor of another kind. And you will see a lot more when once you have seen that.

I am very well aware that all that I have said may be oppressive. It may be the heavy side, but you and I have got to understand what history, and present history mean. What are the forces, and what are the things that are producing this wonderful, startling, *terrible* world? And where is it leading? Well, God has said: 'All right, you have made your choice. You

have decided this and you would not have it otherwise. Very well! The history of a kind of person or race like that will lead on until the final verdict of *sin* is wrought out.' It is sin.

There is something that you will do well to store up. You know, one of the things that is going to amaze us, perhaps more than most other things — and a few things will amaze us when we get to heaven! — will be this: our discovery of how much more, infinitely more, there was in any one statement of God than ever we imagined. Oh, when God speaks, He does not speak just platitudes; He does not speak just observations and make casual remarks. In anything that God says there is the infinitude of His knowledge and His wisdom. And if any life comes into the hands of the Holy Spirit, you will discover that there is an unfathomable depth of meaning in anything that God has said and you will never exhaust it. Preach on the same thing all your long life, and you have not exhausted that same thing if it has come from God. There is still something more. And I say that we are going to be amazed when we get to heaven to see the infinitude that was in some things that were almost commonplace with us. Oh, if God uses the words sin, disobedience, rebellion, self-will, there is all of time gathered into that in tragedy! You will never fathom that ... *the last Adam did!* He went to the bottom of it, drained it in His cross.

But that is where the other side opens up.

THE HUMAN HISTORY IN RECOVERY AND GLORY

“So also it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit ... The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:45,47).

With these words before us we now turn to the other side of this whole matter of the place and meaning of Jesus Christ as the second Man, the last Adam.

We have taken a lot of time to see the divine necessity for a second Man, a last Adam. And out of that consideration of God’s demonstrating to all the generations of history the terrible entail of one basic and inclusive choice in the wrong use of a great trust, that of free will, demonstrating how deep and terrible a thing it is to move out of the will of God into self-will, we are led to this one quite clear conclusion: that God, when He does anything, has very good reason for doing it, whatever it is. God never acts on any flimsy and unsubstantial ground. In this matter God has given us this terrible story, which is not all told yet, to let us know that when He did act in answer to Adam’s rebellion and disobedience, He acted with a full knowledge of what was involved in that act. He has shown by history, and is continuing to show by history what He knew was to be involved in that single act of disobedience. As Paul says, “Through the one man’s disobedience ... through one trespass” (Rom. 5:19,18). What a story!

But there is another thing to which all this brings us. When God sends His Son into the world as the second Man, the last Adam, there is an unspeakably great thing bound up with that.

We have just passed through a season of a vast amount of sentimentality, prettiness and a good deal of childishness. That is all right — but, dear friends, in the coming into this world of God’s Son, no less and no smaller thing was involved than the overwhelming reality of the consequences of the first Adam’s one act of disobedience!

Some of you may have wondered why we took all that time on that sorry and sordid story, that dark side of history. Perhaps you saw little point in it. Certainly you felt little comfort in it! But, you know, you can never understand or recognise the greatness of Christ unless you see the immensity of the background against which He stands. And that is not our conclusion, and that is not the conclusion of this platform. That is what God has done. He has, in effect, said: 'Do you want to know how great My Son is? Then I will show you by at least ten thousand years of history which He has to clear up.' If you can comprehend that, then you will get near to an appreciation of how great He and His work really are. Our object is not to tell the miserable story of human failure. That is only a means to an end.

Christ replaces the first Adam

So we turn over now to this other side of the coming of the second Man, the last Adam, into humanity to supplant the first, the original. We have seen that certain phrases describe the state into which the first man, the first Adam, brought the race. There is the utter loss of human peace; the strivings for peace. Everything is being done that man can conceive of to bring about a reign of peace and the older the world becomes and the longer the shadow of human life, the less peace there is! There is less peace in human life today than at any time in human history.

Man has been striving, and is striving with all his resource, (which is not small, as we have seen), for rest, for relief from tensions and stresses, for leisure. And the longer history draws out, so the more dissatisfied, discontented and restless man is!

Man has striven for security. Today the human race is shot through with fear born of a sense of insecurity and the defeat of every effort to bring about a state of security.

Man has striven for ascendancy, for victory, and today, more than ever in his history, he is conscious of the defeat of all his efforts. Indeed, only within these past few days the question has arisen, out of this sense of frustration and inability to cope with the world situation, as to whether, after all, the United Nations Organisation is worth retaining!

Man has striven, and is striving, for liberty, and his greatest inventions are his prison, in a figurative sense.

Peace

What about the second Man, the last Adam? Are these not the very words that come in with Him? Yes! Of a different kind, it is true. Of a quality, and of a nature, and in a realm that is altogether different: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives” (John 14:27). Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ... and when you have said that, have you not gone right back behind the first man, the original Adam, who broke that peace with God? You have got right back behind and undercut all that Adam No. 1 let in. It is of a different kind, a different realm. It is in the heart, but isn’t that the place to have it? What you can stand up to in the world if you have the peace of God in your heart! And how much can you stand up to if you haven’t?

Jesus said, “Come ... I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). We know what that means! No, it is not what the world sees — release from responsibility, escape from labour, from work — but there is a rest that “remains ... for the people of God” (Heb. 4:9), into which we are brought in Christ Jesus. This is a rest which can be rest in labour and even in conflict. It is something spiritual, inward.

Security

What about security? This apostle gives us a long list of the things which, to the world, speak of insecurity: “Death ... life ... things present ... things to come ... height ... depth ... principalities” (Rom. 8:38,39), and all the rest. Then, finding his stock exhausted, he has to lump all the rest together in this: “nor any other created thing” (Rom. 8:39). He is persuaded that none of these things will “be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:39). Is not that security? Life can be a formidable thing, and death can be a formidable thing. And all these other things may be very disconcerting things, ‘But’, says the apostle, ‘the whole lot put together, and anything else you like to mention and add, cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.’ Is that not security? And so we could go on with all that which comes in with the last Adam, as He is. But what a difference!

Dominion

You see, with the Lord Jesus is undercut that thing of which we have said much, which pursues every effort of man to realise his destiny. For it is stated that man was made to have dominion, but he was made to have it in relation to God, but he decided to have it without that relationship. He lost

it, and history is one long story of man's efforts to get it without God. And there is running alongside of every effort of man a pursuing thing. He takes a step forward and something comes up either to make him take two steps back, or to frustrate the full realisation of his efforts so that his most advanced step, as we are seeing it today, has running alongside of it the most terrible threat which takes the very heart out of it and makes it, after all, a very doubtful thing. We think it would be better if we had never found that out, if we had never discovered that. That is what is meant by the curse, which pursues man's steps and runs alongside, until the end is what we can so clearly visualise now — a wonderful development ending in the most ghastly tragedy! But for the intervention of Another, where would this world end? Well, we know.

The curse is taken hold of, like a sting in the tail, and is plucked out by the last Adam. The *curse* is taken out and that element of neutralisation is destroyed in the cross of the Lord Jesus. He undercuts all the nature and history produced by the defection of the first Adam. Now, how does He do this? What is the strength of this, the law of this, the secret of this that He does? For He does it — there is no doubt about that. Well, He does it by completely reversing and contradicting the way that the first Adam took which led to all this disaster. What was the motive by which the first Adam acted and opened the door to this history? The motive was, 'My will'. The motive of the last Adam was, "Not my will, but Yours" (Luke 22:42). That sounds a very simple way of putting it. It does not take many words, but there is an infinitude of meaning in that. The law and the watchword of the last Adam was from the inception to the last breath: "Yet not my will, but Yours be done." And on that basis see whether He as man, representative man, is great! See the greatness, His greatness; a greatness that man today, at his best, just covets with all his might.

See His greatness in the physical realm! He comes into this world, into this physical consequence of the first Adam's act, and finds a state of physical defeat, sickness, infirmity. It is a terrible physical state! Now be patient with me. You can spend your whole lifetime training (and many generations have spent all their strength and all their energies and thank God for them and for what they have done to help!) in order to do what He did in a moment! In a moment, by a word ... and a lifelong disease yielded in an instant. All the entail of sin in the physical body was cancelled out with a word from His lips. Don't you doctors wish that you had that greatness? This is the last Adam.

Men strive and struggle to get the mastery of the natural forces, the

forces of nature, and they think they have gone a long way in doing that and then something happens. There is some disruption, some disturbance in the heavenly bodies, some terrific storm, a hurricane or something in the realm of nature where man is rendered utterly helpless and impotent. He can do nothing about it. There is a mighty, threatening storm of wind and sea; a word from His mouth and the whole thing subsides. “Be still”, said He, “and it became perfectly calm” (Mark 4:39). Natural forces yield to Him. How great He is!

Men ... women ... torn, distracted, bewildered by evil forces. You read of one woman out of whom He had cast seven demons. There was a man tortured by evil powers and the people, trying to tame them, put the poor fellow in chains, but he plucked the chains off. No one, it says, could tame him. These evil forces ... and with a word *out they go!* The poor victim sits “at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind” (Luke 8:35).

And what shall we say about sin? Vice? The grip of evil habits? Sin! That awful thing, soul distress. “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matt. 9:13) — and here they are, plenty of them about Him: the distressed of soul, the harassed of soul, mastered by evil habits and an evil nature. And with a word: “Son, your sins are forgiven” (Matt. 9:2), and it is not only a word; something happens, and he goes away with heart rest, forgiven and delivered.

Reconciliation

We know something today about social or family disruptions, factions and broken homes. All the efforts of social institutions utterly fail, but when He comes onto the scene there is reconciliation and there are mended relationships. How great He is, this last Adam! Without any of the organisation, the institution, the paraphernalia, the effort, the expenditure, He is great enough with just a word to undercut the whole entail of the first Adam’s sin.

Sense of purpose

One of the greatest things that the last Adam recovers and restores is that vital factor of a sense of purpose in life, in being. If you think of that, that goes to the heart of a great deal. A well-known psychiatrist and psychologist has put it on record that a third of the people who go to consult him are plagued and distraught by the malady of having no sense of purpose in life. Frustrated is only another way of saying ‘No purpose for living’. And what a door that opens, doesn’t it? How much rushes in

through that door if you are robbed of a sense of purpose in life. And do you not see that this is a growing malady today? It is spreading like a disease. Everywhere men are asking, ‘What is the purpose of it all? What is the meaning of life?’ There is a lost sense of a great purpose in existing.

And I repeat that it is just there, this root thing in human life and history, that the last Adam comes in. When a person really comes to surrender to God in Jesus Christ and accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her own Saviour, the very first thing in their consciousness is: ‘I have something to live for that I did not have before.’ They may not be able to explain what that is. They could not tell you now what this great purpose is, *but* there has been born, like a newborn child, a sense within their consciousness that life was meant for something; they have a being for something. There is a purpose for which to live. That grows, if there is a normal spiritual growth, and becomes stronger and deeper, and becomes clarified. But, you know, the last Adam brings that. There was a great purpose, but only in relation to God, and it was lost when that relationship was broken. The Lord Jesus recovers it and gives the sense of purpose.

Spiritual experience

Earlier I said that among those things which every person who takes life seriously — and that means especially every Christian — wants to know, must know, and seeks to know, is the meaning of spiritual experience. Well, if you can read your own spiritual experience, can you not read these parallel columns? On the one side the Holy Spirit has got hold of you and is making you know what you are in yourself, in the old Adam. No one knows what old Adam really is like except a true Christian. Does that sound terrible? Yes, but that is just it, because a true Christian is one who is really going to appreciate the grace of God, and you never appreciate the grace of God unless you see the necessity for it. So spiritual history along one line is the discovery of our own utter worthlessness. A stronger word is ‘our rottenness’. If you feel you are a very respectable, nice person — forgive me. I don’t want to insult you, but I don’t think that is too strong a word. The depravity of this old Adam life! It is unfathomable. And it has got to be shown in order that God’s Son may be really understood and appreciated. He must be set over against that background.

But, thank God, spiritual history runs along another line although it is all too slow. Nevertheless, by the grace of God, by the work of the Holy Spirit, there is the inculcation of the life and nature of the second Man, the

last Adam. We have nothing to boast about. We can never say anything about our attainment in that matter; God only knows where we would be but for Jesus Christ! Where would I be today if it had not been for Jesus Christ, knowing now what I did not know formerly of the depths of this nature and the awful possibilities that are in it? But the Holy Spirit gets hold of a Christian life, a truly committed Christian, and He works into that life this disposition of the last Adam — and what is that disposition? Ah, it may be your battlefield! Thank God for the measure of victory, but is it not here: “Yet not my will, but Yours be done”? Is it not that? Are we not being brought more and more by the Spirit of Jesus Christ to that place where this will of ours becomes subject to the will of God, where we are discovering the need for — and, thank God, being more and more enabled to accept — absolute dependence upon God for everything? Where all that resource in ourselves, that self-resource, is being undercut and removed, and our resource is found to be in God — truly in God, but only in God? And then we are put on to a very wonderful basis. Oh, dear friends, if you are a truly born-again child of God, you are put on to a marvellous basis!

I have spoken of this last Adam’s greatness. What is the word that sums all that up? ‘Supernatural’, is it not? It is not natural! Do you not realise that your very new birth itself is a supernatural thing? That is the truth, isn’t it? Do you not realise that your continuance and endurance is a supernatural thing? If you don’t, well, I don’t know what is the matter with you. We are put into those positions where for endurance, going on, there is no possible hope, or ground, or way but for *God Himself* to carry us on. That is supernatural history; that is not natural.

So, you see, what was true of Him, in a spiritual way, mark you, is being made true in us. I say again, it happens all too slowly, all too meagrely, and yet it is happening. We are put on to a supernatural basis.

I believe that there is a very much larger need for us to prove this, to know this. If I might carry this into the Body of Christ, the church — wherever it may be represented in local companies — you know, the supernatural elements ought to be far more in evidence. I believe that a great deal of our physical troubles ought to yield to prayer. And our family disturbances and upheavals ought to yield to prayer, and these other things, they ought to yield supernaturally. We are brought into much of this in Christ, to be known now. What a helpless, weak thing the church is! Ought it to be like that with the last Adam resident within with all this meaning?

Well, here is this second Man, this last Adam, who has come in on the

one side to expose the old, to condemn the old, and to put away the old by His cross, in which the whole of that old Adam was crucified. And on the other side, to bring in, establish, and extend a race of men and women who are partaking of His own potentialities. These are given His own gifts, spiritually and morally. They learn by His working and His grace, in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit that, after all, there is a dominion which God meant for man, and that dominion, that ascendancy, that victory, is found in Christ, in real measure now. The end is that race, of which He is the first and the last, reigning and glorified. It is the complete reversal of all that came in with the first man. When you read at the end, “There will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain” (Rev. 21:4), but everything to the contrary, you see the triumph in the second Man, the last Adam, and that is what remains when all the other is no more.

THE ANOINTING

“Now He that establishes us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor. 1:21,22).

“And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all the things.

And as for you, the anointing which ye received of Him abides in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true ...” (1 John 2:20,27).

“Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38).

The subject of the anointing may be especially appropriate to a time when many are reaching out in the interests of other lives and seeking, in one way or another, to influence them in relation to the Lord Jesus. But the matter of the anointing applies to *all* the Lord’s people. I think it unnecessary to spend much time in pointing out or emphasising the necessity of the anointing with the Holy Spirit. It should be fully and clearly understood and realised that nothing is possible of an eternal character without the anointing of the Holy Spirit. That surely does go without saying. No efforts of ours, however sincere and earnest and well-meant, can ever accomplish anything in the interests of the eternal well-being of others apart from and without the definite operation of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The Lord has shut up everything now to the Holy Spirit, in this world, in this dispensation. But, on the other side, great things are possible by that anointing.

The meaning of the anointing

So we will not spend time over the necessity. Let us take that as settled and spend a few minutes on the meaning of the anointing. And here is something about which we all need to be quite clear. There is a

difference between having the Holy Spirit within us and the anointing. And you must be quite clear as to what that difference is, because it is a very big difference.

The anointing is the *active* aspect of the Spirit's presence with us and in us. Of course, they are not two different things. It is one Holy Spirit. The two are one in a sense — the anointing and the Spirit, because it is the anointing of, or with, the Spirit, but there are two aspects to this matter. Let us put it like this: the Holy Spirit has come and is here with definite, clear and positive purpose. He is the Spirit of purpose, purposefulness is the character of the Holy Spirit. He is always represented as being active, energetic, in the way of doing something. That is His nature and His character. The Holy Spirit has not come just to be here and He has not come into us just to be in us. But He has come with purpose, to fulfil purpose, not only *in* us, but through us. Now it is possible for us to have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us and for the Holy Spirit within us to be latent. The Holy Spirit is in numerous children of God, but He is latent; He is not active. There are few, if any, marks of the Holy Spirit, signs of the energy of the Holy Spirit, features of the working of the Holy Spirit, in many Christians. Theirs is a latent life, though they are born-again and have received the Spirit. It is strange, is it not, that such a Holy Spirit can be present and still be passive and latent? Now that is the aspect of having the Spirit.

But when you look through the Bible, and there is a very great deal about this in both Testaments, you will find that the word 'anointing' always relates to activity, to ministry, to service, to warfare, to some phase or aspect of action. Priests were anointed to serve, kings anointed to rule, the prophets to proclaim and so on. Jesus was anointed to preach the Good Tidings, and to go about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil. God anointed Him. You see, when you touch the point of anointing, you touch the very active aspect of the Holy Spirit. Now you must see that this works two ways. The Holy Spirit is there; He is of that disposition, and yet He does not become active and positive until *you* do. Until you get into line with the Holy Spirit in purpose, the Holy Spirit does not express Himself as the anointing. This is a very important thing to realise. The Spirit would be active, energetic, but He is not going to do anything apart from you and apart from us. It is when we begin to be active that we discover the *energy* of the Holy Spirit. Some of us were really Christians, yes, we were the Lord's, for years, but while the Spirit was within us through new birth, He was latent, until that day came when we began

publicly to testify and we leapt at once into an altogether new experience of the Holy Spirit. And we found that the Lord was with us, and we began to experience the Lord. It was not at that point that the Lord came in; it was not at that point that our Christian life started. But, while it ought to have been right at the beginning, there had been this latent thing of the Christian life until we moved out with the Lord and we discovered that the Holy Spirit meant much more than we had ever known Him to mean. He was there, but it was as though He sprang into action immediately we did, confirming this, that the anointing relates to action. It is the active aspect of the Holy Spirit.

It may be that some of you are in the latent state and stage. There is nothing happening. You are praying that the Holy Spirit will do this in you and through you, you are praying that you may be used. But you are waiting for something to happen, waiting until the Holy Spirit moves you. And *He* is waiting for you all the time. He is there, waiting until you do something, and you will find that to your surprise that it is not you doing it after all. Somehow or other you become one with the Holy Spirit and His energies move in and take charge. Beware of the prolonged loss that may come by that inactive aspect.

I once knew a dear man in the Navy who was an out-and-out Christian and he visited many ports round the world. He said that in one port he happened to be there on the Lord's Day and he looked round the city — I think it was in Singapore — for some place where he could meet with the Lord's people. He hadn't very much time to find a place, and so he found himself in a Quaker meeting. And he said, "Now you know, the Quakers always sit silent and wait for the Spirit to move, but", he said, "strangely enough, the Holy Spirit always does move me, and I couldn't keep quiet!" Now he was an energetic and forceful person. I think you see the point. The Holy Spirit is the active, energetic Spirit and He waits for us. Nothing happens until we gird up the loins of our minds, until we move and commit ourselves. This is very simple and elementary, but it is so possible to have this passive and unsatisfactory life when there is so much more of joy and satisfaction in life, if only we would launch out into the deep, commit ourselves, we would discover that the Holy Spirit has not still to come. He is there, just waiting. That is all I am going to say for the moment as to the meaning of the anointing. You see, the Spirit's presence and the anointing may be two different things, as they very often are.

The basis of the anointing

What is the basis of the anointing? This is a very important word for all, and especially for those of you who may be committed to this work, or any work of the Lord. Remember that the basis of the anointing is deep, inward separation. It is, with all that it does mean, the inward separation from Satan's kingdom. Now Satan is referred to in the Scriptures, as to the position which he held before his fall, "the anointed cherub which covers". He was anointed in high and holy responsible heavenly ministry. It is a very profound and altogether incomprehensible thing, the anointing before this world was, but it is true that the Spirit of God was active before this world order came into being. But here is one who was anointed for ministry. He lost his anointing, he lost his position and he lost his ministry through pride working out in jealousy. He lost it all. Deep inward separation from anything which in its nature belongs to Satan's kingdom, especially pride, is necessary. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth, which is the name of humiliation. Here is the empty One, the self-emptied One who says "I am meek and lowly in heart." That is how we must approach the service of the Lord, any ministry, in deep self-emptiness, inward separation from any ground that Satan could hold, that is His own deep humility, meekness, deeply conscious dependence upon the Lord. That is the ground, the basis of the anointing.

Meekness is the greatest essential in the activity of the Holy Spirit, "Quench not the Spirit". That surely relates to the activity of the Spirit, not the Spirit as passive. You don't have to quench a fire if it is latent; you only quench it when it is flaming, if you are going to quench it at all. The Holy Spirit is active. "Quench not the Spirit", says the Word. We need to be very watchful, not only when we are engaged in this ministry, but at all times, against quenching the Spirit. There are so many ways of quenching the Spirit, and I do feel that this is a word that needs to be taken to heart. I say there are many ways. I may indicate two. You see, we can quench the active work of the Spirit by, on the one side, frivolity, talkativeness, lack of circumspection. How often the Spirit has been quenched and a great opportunity has been lost because of excitableness, unholy lightness in talk and behaviour, streams of empty words, the Spirit so often grieved Himself and grieved in others by that. On the other hand, it is equally possible to quench the Spirit by an artificial sombreness and heaviness. Some dear children of God seem to think that anything in the nature of joy is dangerous to the Spirit and to the spiritual life.

Now you see, between these two there has got to be a balance. And so the Spirit is the Spirit of self-control, if you like to use that word, the Spirit of balance, keeping the balance. Joy and seriousness kept in equal measure, well-balanced. And all that just means watchfulness, or sensitiveness to the Spirit. The anointing is being sensitive. The Holy Spirit is not going on with His work if there is something that is grieving Him. The way therefore for effective and fruitful service under the anointing is to be sensitive to the Spirit. We cannot be too sensitive to the Holy Spirit. There are so many things to take the keen edge off sensitiveness. And you will need that if you should at any time, this week or at any other, be seeking to help another in their spiritual life. You will need to be in an attitude of leaning hard on the Spirit, not to your own understanding, a silent but earnest prayer going on in your heart all the time as to the manner of your influence, the wisdom of your words, the Holy Spirit giving it to you in that hour.

Of course, we could move into the case of the Lord Jesus, the Anointed One, who was not sombre and heavy, and artificially serious, but very natural, balanced, and even capable of touching things sometimes with a really humorous touch. But how sensitive He was all the time to the Father and to the Spirit, how apt and how fitting in His behaviour, how wise. The same Spirit (our passage in 2 Cor. 1.21), as was upon Him is said to be upon us, "And has anointed us in Christ". The same Spirit is with us to do the work, if He has the workman adjusted to Himself. May the Lord make our lives characteristic of the anointing in a very real way, where it is all the Spirit's work, although perhaps by us.