



the
Golden
Candlestick

**THE THRONE OF GOD
AND OF THE LAMB**

Part 2

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Volume 159

THE KINGDOM AND THE LAMB

“And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues; and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev. 21:9-11).

“And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no curse any more; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein; and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:1-5).

“One of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof. And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth” (Rev. 5:5-6).

God’s purpose — the reign of incorruptible life

In our previous meditations we have seen that part of the Word which brings into view that towards which God has been working from the beginning. Such a state as is represented there of life and fulness was ever

God's thought for His creation; incorruptible life reigning throughout His universe. That is what God has as the object of all His activities, but inasmuch as there has come in, through sin, death and corruption, a fight has been set up. The realization of God's thought has been and is still a matter of terrific and continuous conflict, spiritual warfare, and it is in that realm that we have introduced all that is bound up with this term, this name, for the Lord Jesus — the Lamb, and the blood of the Lamb.

The passage we have read in Revelation 5 is fundamental to everything. What is set forth there is the basis upon which God proceeds to the reaching of His end, the attainment of that glorious state brought out in chapters 21 and 22. That state, with all that it means, is the kingdom of God realized through the Lamb of God. Its realization is the greatest victory that this world or this universe has ever seen. It is the victory of the Lamb. But we need to see a little more clearly and definitely what that means.

You know that the gospel by Matthew is the gospel of the King and the kingdom. The message of the kingdom begins, but as soon as the King is introduced and the message of the kingdom goes forth, another kingdom rises up in opposition. The end of the introduction of the King and the message of the kingdom is the King crucified and apparently the kingdom silenced. But the book of the Revelation gives us another side to that altogether, and shows us that the death of the King on the cross and this opposing of the gospel of the kingdom did not mean defeat or disaster; it was the most glorious victory. The Lamb *did* overcome and then in virtue of that mighty single-handed victory of the Lamb, the church is brought in. Immediately triumphant over death and hell, Satan and the world, the Lamb is caught up to the throne; the church is projected. Its mission begins, and like its nature, its mission takes its rise from the victory of the Lamb. Its testimony is that it also is to come to the throne where the Lamb is, to overcome because of the blood of the Lamb and the word of its testimony.

Now the point is this, that the realization of the kingdom, this glorious state which is most surely coming because it is already secured in the Lamb in the throne (He is in the throne, He is not coming to the throne, He is there now), the realization of that universal condition for the creation is marked by the application of the meaning of that cross in every realm. For our purpose now, the first realm of the application of the cross — that is, the significance of the Lamb, the blood of the Lamb — is to the church. The church, we have said, takes its rise out of the victory of

the Lamb. The church starts on its way with its testimony. The Lamb has overcome and the church meets all the forces of antagonism in this universe on the ground of the victory through the blood of the Lamb, but that is not something which is just objective to the church. That is, it is not something outside, to be looked at, to be observed, to be taken account of, to be believed in as something somewhere, perhaps in heaven, forming the creed of the church, the statement of doctrine to which the church subscribes. No, it is nothing like that. It is something which has to have its immediate working right in the very centre of the life of every member of the Body of Christ, which is His church. My feeling is that there is fresh need for us to get to our foundations. There are still many of the Lord's people for whom the foundations have not been really laid, and I am convinced that we need to get back to the foundation because it is the secret of victory. I do not mean that the foundations of your faith in the Lord Jesus are not laid, but there is something that we have to see which constitutes our foundations, which is something very much more than the average Christian recognizes and understands.

So, while it is a wonderful thing to talk about the kingdom, the coming kingdom which we are going to inherit; to pray 'Thy kingdom come', to have a great mental conception of the kingdom and the coming day of the kingdom — the Lord Jesus said, "The kingdom is within you". It starts there, and we have got to know what the kingdom within us means in order to be quite assured of inheriting the kingdom presently. The kingdom within us is the establishment of a mighty victory. Have you seen the significance of those words in the familiar twelfth chapter of this book? "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night" (Rev. 12:7-10).

Now is come the kingdom; now is come the authority of God's Christ. Matthew, the gospel of the kingdom, closes with this — "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore ...". Now is come the authority of God's Christ; now is come the kingdom. When? When the church enters into that victory, when the Lord's people come into the good

of what is true in the case of the Lamb. Here in Revelation 12, the Man-child, that representative company, is seen caught up to the throne. Now is come the kingdom! The kingdom is not realized just by the Lamb being in the throne. The kingdom is realized by the church also being in the throne. It is then that the kingdom in fulness is come, and that is why the gospel of the kingdom was entrusted to the church, but that gospel of the kingdom, as we have seen, immediately sets up terrific warfare.

The conflict against the kingdom of incorruptible life

But what is the nature of this warfare? It may be general spiritual pressure and conflict, and we know much about that. It may be persecution and suffering from the outside, (and the church has known much of that), but when you open the book of the Revelation, you find that the risen Lord is dealing with the church as represented here on the earth, and the effect of His coming to the church as here represented in the seven churches is to challenge concerning that which means defeat for the church and victory for Satan. When you ask: What is it that reverses victory, what is it that gives Satan his power to overcome, what is it that means that the church, the Lord's people, are defeated in any one case or any number of cases? When you ask those questions, you have got to look inside, not outside. Remember that Satan has absolutely no power over the people of God only in so far as they give him that power; that is, only in so far as there is that in them which is of Satan himself, and that is exactly where the application of the cross has to be made, and, in a word, it is this. We are not going to get very far towards the realization of all God's fulness of purpose now as well as hereafter; we are not going to come into the place of power, victory, life, glory, effectiveness or spiritual fulness until a basic thing has been done, a foundational thing. That is that the cross of the Lord Jesus has to be planted right at the very heart of our old nature, the old creation, and all that that means. It is going to take us a whole lifetime to discover what that means. You and I do not know what the old creation means, only in some things, but right on to the end of our lives, under the eye that is as a flame of fire, we shall be making further discoveries of what the old creation is. But, although we can never know it all at once, although the discovery will take us all our lives, there has to be a real definite crisis, a crisis of the cross in which we do not only accept something that we believe about the cross, are taught about the cross as teaching, but in which there is something done in us which represents the

snapping, the breaking in two, of the very backbone of the old creation.

The old creation destroyed by the cross

You know what a broken limb means, don't you? Well, if you really have got a broken limb, what can you do? You have no power over it, no control over it. Whatever you may want to do with it, you cannot do it. You have lost all power to direct it, to govern it, to use it. The power has gone. Now, apply that to the backbone, to the spinal column, upon which your whole frame depends, your whole man — a fractured spine! What can you do in any part with that? It is broken. That does not mean that all your bones are broken. You discover that you still have a lot of whole bones, but the mainstay is broken, the main strength is dealt with and you know that, right at the very centre of your being something has happened. Although there may be many bones yet to be broken (and the Lord is going to break all our bones; He is going to fracture every bone of that old creation and make it helpless, incapable of functioning), God has laid His finger upon the central strength of our old creation life and touched it. The one thing by which we know that He has done that is that there is a realm in which we cannot move; there is a realm we dare not touch; there is a resource upon which we dare not draw; there are ways which we dare not take; there is a life which we dare not, if we could, live. We cannot. It is like Jacob's thigh. The Lord touched the sinew of the thigh of Jacob in the hour of his strength, in the hour of his self-assurance. It was only the finger of God, not the mighty power of God; just a touch, but it was enough. Jews, from that day to this, if they are orthodox, never eat of that portion. It has come under the forbidding of God. The thigh is a symbol of strength, natural strength, old creation strength. God has put His finger upon it, and Jacob, from that day to the day of his death, went leaning on a staff, and we are told that, on the day of his death when he blessed his sons, he blessed them leaning on the top of his staff. Here is a man who is lame to his deathbed because God touched his thigh, his strength.

And that is the old creation — it is Jacob. By nature we are all Jacobs. The cross means that the strength of our natural life has been touched. Oh, I do not say the strength of sin! While I mean that, if I were to say that you would begin to think of sins. Oh yes, it is sin and it is sins, but inclusively and comprehensively, it is us, ourselves. It is using our own natural powers in divine things.

You see, you come to this foundation passage and you have that

presented in the symbolism so vividly. Here is a book of judgment, the judgment of all the nations, sealed with seven seals. That book has to be opened, the nations have to be judged, but who is worthy to open that book? Who has the right, who is morally worthy to judge the nations? And the seer says that he wept much because no one was found worthy to open the book, to deal with all this state of things in the universe, this corruption, this iniquity, this sin, this wickedness. Oh, get the force of that! God is not going to deal with things because He is sovereign God. No, the dealing with sin and iniquity demands a moral condition and it is a question of who is worthy to do it; who is morally in the position to say to every man in the creation, Now then, come to judgment! “I wept much because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon; and one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof” (Rev. 5:4,5).

The seer heard those words — “The Lion that is of the tribe of Judah!” This is power! This is might! This is force! This is greatness! This is majesty! Verse 6: “And I turned and I saw ...” — can I believe my eyes? A Lion of the tribe of Judah? — “and I saw ... a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain”!

The Lord Jesus — the Overcomer

This deliberate change in imagery by the Spirit of God is for one purpose, one object. What is the secret of power, what is the nature of power, what is the resource by which to overcome? What is it that is to be our life, our overcoming life, our triumphant life, our life of glory and fulness? Feeling like a lion, approaching everything like a lion? No, it is knowing the meaning of the cross as to the destruction of all natural strength and resource, and the Lord Jesus Himself being in us the Overcomer. Believe me, you and I will never be overcomers. The Lord Jesus is the only Overcomer and all the rest will overcome because He, the Overcomer, is within them.

That means that if the Lord Jesus is really to be in us and in the church what He is here set forth as being, the same thing has to happen in us. He emptied Himself, became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross, and, while you and I will never have that which He had of which to empty ourselves, nevertheless there has to be a very real emptying, an emptying of all self-strength, of all self-will, of all self-esteem, of all self-

interest, of all self-desire, of all self-reasoning. Self, the sum total of the old creation, is Satan's strength, and where Satan finds in you or in me this self, he is the victor. For Satan to be defeated and cast down and the kingdom to come within, self has to be broken — the very backbone of self. Oh, the many other limbs of self will be touched as we go on, but there has to be this breaking of the backbone of self. I want to ask you, not, Are you saved? not, Do you believe in the Lord Jesus? Do you know your sins forgiven? Do you know your acceptance with God? No, we may all be rejoicing in that, but there is something infinitely more in the purpose of God than just to have us saved from sin and hell and to have our sins forgiven. There is another great purpose. It is the kingdom. You and I have not yet learned what it means — the kingdom. "They shall reign for ever and ever."

What is the kingdom? Let us pause a moment. In the letter to the Ephesians, we are distinctly and clearly shown that over and around this present earth in the space between the earth and the upper heavens, spiritual forces of evil have their habitation, that this whole world is divided up by them into principalities, sections, governed by a prince of evil under whom there are sub-princes and then innumerable hosts of evil spirits. Paul puts it, "principalities and powers, world rulers of this darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies". That is the kingdom of Satan around this world, and no one will question the reality of that, in view of what is going on in this world. Oh, it is a very real thing, the spiritual background of what is taking place on the earth. It is not just evil, wicked men doing as they please. There is a power behind it. You cannot explain the rise to power of certain men and a world domination by their word on merely natural grounds. It is phenomenal and supernatural. It is the spirit and power of Antichrist, and we are seeing it sweeping down in confederation from the north, according to the Word of God. It is Satan-motivated, generated and maintained, and the most extraordinary, unexpected, unlikely things happen. All the wit and wisdom of all the statesmen in the world is as naught. No, there is a cunning and iniquity behind this which comes from hell itself. That is the kingdom of Satan. It rules in the kingdom of ungodly men in an old creation world. The day is coming when another kingdom is to be set up to rule in that same world. It is *rule*, not just being saved, not just belonging to the Lord. It is having the kingdom, the place of government, coming to the throne. Interpret that spiritually, it is spiritual dominion; that is the kingdom.

The Lamb's nature

Now then, to reach that intention and thought of God, it is by way of the Lamb, and the Lamb is just a contradiction of all natural strength. Now the lion — what do you expect when you talk about lions? Something terrific, ferocious, mighty, that demonstrates power. Oh yes, that is the natural way of looking at things, but God's thought is this, that God's Lion is the Lamb, and that as though it had been slain. It is victory by the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and His death was our death. His death was your death. His death was my death. It is not only that Jesus died for you and for me. Remember that the Word teaches so clearly that He died *for* us, on our behalf, but also that He died *as* us. When He died, in God's thought we died. We must never move away from this or take it for granted, however much we know it. There has to be in us that work of the cross which really has broken all the strength of our natural life, so that using our natural life in spiritual things cannot be. We know it. If we essay to do it, we know the Spirit puts His veto on that. We know it is death; we have a bad time and have to ask the Lord sooner or later to forgive that and to cleanse. We have touched an old realm which lies behind the cross and God says, No! Have you had that break, that real break, at the centre of your being? Do you know what I am talking about? If you do not, I ask you to have dealings with the Lord on this matter. The enemy will continue to make his mess of things, he will be strutting about holding his own everywhere until this is done. Every one of us must know that veto of God which is represented by the cross of the Lord Jesus which says to the life of nature — No, never!

The Spirit of God brings that up every time we begin to argue according to our own ideas, every time we begin to project our own desires and manipulate things to have them as we want them. We seek to project our wills to get things, to have things, to direct things, to govern things. It is death and we know it. Oh, these things are very real! We know what death is spiritually. This is the education of the people of God to know in this inward way what is under the ban of God.

It is that crisis, it is that breaking, that snapping of the very centre of our natural life, our old creation, which makes it possible for the Lord to bring us right on to all His will. It is from then that we know the meaning of an opened heaven. It was when the Lamb of God went down into Jordan, the waters of baptism, and there in type declared His going to the cross and dying and rising again. It was then that the heavens were opened

and the Spirit lighted upon Him, and everything so far as the kingdom of God was concerned commenced then. He was already through in Spirit to the heavenlies.

When we are baptized, we are saying, “I accept all that the cross of the Lord Jesus means from God’s standpoint so far as I am concerned, and I understand that to mean: ‘I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I’, no longer what *I* want, what *I* like, what *I* dislike. It is now Christ, and my attitude, my spirit, my demeanour, is the Lamb, yielding to the will of God.” “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter”, but do you think it was men who made Him the Lamb? Do you think that He was a Lamb to Satan? Oh, not at all! He was the Lion to Satan; He was the Lamb of God. What does that mean? Yieldedness to the will of God. Oh, there was no hammer, nails or Roman soldiers powerful enough to put Him on the cross. It was the will of God that put Him on the cross. No Roman legions could have put Christ on the cross. Never! “Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and He shall even now send Me more than twelve legions of angels?” When you remember what one angel did to the army of Sennacherib, you can imagine what twelve legions could do! There is no power in this universe capable of putting Jesus Christ on the cross, only that of the will of God; that is the Lamb — yielded to the will of God.

May the Lord bring His word to our hearts in a new way. Come right back there, recognize the foundation of everything. The foundation of the throne and the kingdom is the Lamb.

THE CHURCH AND THE LAMB

“And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues; and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God; her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev. 21:9-11).

We were thinking, in our previous meditation, about the kingdom in relation to the Lamb; that is, the victory of the Lord expressed in a life full and triumphant in His creation and that in virtue of what is signified by the title ‘The Lamb’. In this meditation, my constraint is to say a word concerning the church and the Lamb. “I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb”. Simple again in foundation matters, but of the utmost importance is this matter of the church, the church here called the bride, the wife of the Lamb, and the holy city Jerusalem.

We have been repeatedly emphasizing that what comes into view here in Revelation 21 and 22 represents that end and object which God has ever had before Him and towards which He has ever been, and is ever now, working. What we must really see with the eyes of our hearts not just as truth, not as something of objective interest, but as something which concerns us very deeply in relation to God’s thought and God’s will for us is that, when God reaches His end, when God really does come to possess that for which He has been working all through the ages, that is presented to us in the symbolic terms of the holy city, new Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb’s wife. Without spending many words on it, what that amounts to is this. What God is aiming at is a corporate life of His people presented in a term, a designation, so intimate and so utter in its oneness, in itself, and in its relationship to Him, as a wife, a bride. This is something more than a

number of Christians, something more than so many people saved. This is not just a number of saved people coming together as a congregation; it is something very much deeper than that. You may take a chain, for example a watch-chain. Well, in a sense it is a whole, and it may be very good, it may be gold, of real value, but its relationship is that of separate links interlinked with one another. You can take one of those links out and put another in its place without destroying the chain in any way. But that is not the church. If you were to take the stem of a living flower and cut a piece out of it, you have done something more than in taking a link out of a chain. You have cut right across the life, you have severed the very arteries of that organism. You cannot put something back in the place of that cut-out section and make that a living whole again. The church, the bride, the Lamb's wife, is not like the chain — so many Christians linked together. It is an *organic* whole, sharing, partaking of one organic life, the life of the Lamb Himself. The bride is the Lamb's wife because she partakes of His very life. She is constituted out of His very being, as was Eve from Adam.

God is very true to His laws and principles. It would have been quite easy for Him to have made another separate being as He made Adam, and handed that separate being over to Adam, and said, 'Here is a companion for you!' But no, in the presentation of divine truth, Eve, the wife, must be a part of him, taken right out from him, sharing his very life and substance as man.

That is the end to which God is working, and what we said about the kingdom in our previous meditation, is true about the church. The kingdom is a mighty victory. It is a reigning in life resultant from a mighty triumph of the Lamb over death. And all that we see in this book of Revelation of the uprising of the enemy's forces of iniquity, of Satan fully arrayed to hinder that new creation, is true of the church because the city is, after all, only the representation of the whole. It represents God's thought for the whole. The church is representative of the whole thought of God, and it is against the church that the gates of Hades are bent upon prevailing. The very first reference to the church by the Lord Jesus in the New Testament, suggests warfare: "I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it". Blessed be God, in the Lamb that has proven to be true, for, as the Head of the church, He comes to His church at the beginning of the book of the Revelation, and says, "I am He that liveth: and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." He has stormed the citadel of death,

the great adversary of the church, and taken the authority from the devil, the keys being a symbol of that authority.

The Lamb's nature in the church

But now, what is true in Him as the Head of the church, the Bridegroom, has to be true in the members, in the bride, in the wife. There has to be a coming into the good of that mighty victory of the Lamb on the part of the church, and that victory is especially related to corporate life — remember that! The existence of the bride, the wife of the Lamb, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city at last having the glory of God, characterized by all these divine features, is a mighty triumph. What is it a triumph over? It is over the power, malice and persistent effort of the enemy to divide the Lord's people. If the enemy can get the corporate life of the people of God upset and destroyed, he has defeated God's end concerning the church. That is why he has never ceased to work to that end. Now God is working with all His heart to get His people to understand and to live according to the law of corporate organic life, the oneness of life in expression, and that life in its highest expression is love.

Notice that those two things go together in the city, which is the Lamb's wife. The symbolism is very beautiful. It says in Revelation 21 that the street of the city was pure gold. There is only one street in the new Jerusalem, only one way, only one thoroughfare. It is pure gold. In chapter 22 it says — in the midst of the street, the river of water of life. What is the gold? Oh, it is the love of God; it is the divine nature. God is love. It is the love of God made perfect in us. The simile is changed by Paul. He speaks about the Body building itself up in love. John uses the figure of a city. A different figure, but the same principle — something constituted by love. And in the midst of it, the river of the water of life, and on either side the tree of life. Life and love — the central, basic features of the bride, the wife of the Lamb, the city, the church.

God has that before Him — not to have so many saved people, even like a chain, linked on to one another by some external method. There are many things that join Christians together externally. There are such things as what are called 'Fellowships'! The Lord have mercy upon all the 'Fellowships' which are only external, that only have to do with outside things, a place or a teaching. There are many things which bring Christians together and form them into a kind of chain, but that is not it. That is not adequate. No, it is inward, it is an organic life, and God is not

satisfied in having just so many Christians as individuals, saved people, even if they are linked together by something here on this earth. The Lord wants to see among His people an expression of the one life working itself out in love, in true fellowship. That is God's end, God's aim. But remember, that is the thing upon which the dragon, the serpent, Satan, the devil, is all the time focussing for its undoing.

Now, let us see the significance of the term: the bride, the wife of the Lamb. You see the Lamb slain, you see the Lamb making war, you see the Lamb overcoming, you see the Lamb victorious in the throne. What is all this work of the Lamb unto? Why slain? Why making war? Why overcoming? It is to get this oneness. The great work of Satan is division, is schism, is strife, is war, conflict, setting elements against each other, disruption, anarchy, chaos, discord. All these things are Satan's work. Wars come from him, strife comes from him. The history of the church on earth is a painful story — the history of Satan's work in that direction.

Unity in the church

The Lamb means all that Calvary stands for, all that the giving of Himself in sacrifice and death means. Yes, everything that is seen in the Lamb as slain, with His blood shed, is directed towards this end — the bride, the Lamb's wife, a corporate existence of the Christ; that He should not have a lonely existence but a corporate existence. The figure is true again for Adam. "It is not good that man should be alone", said the Lord, and you remember the word is that Adam was a figure of Him that was to come, and when you come to the antitype, the Christ, it is as though the Father said, "It is not good that Man should be alone". 'Let us make Him a wife, a bride, that He might have a corporate existence', and heaven is never represented as being more jubilant than on that day when, filled with song, it says, "Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad (excellent gladness) ... for the marriage of the Lamb is come". Incidentally, that is why you cannot read the book of the Revelation chronologically. For you have the Lamb's wife as not yet married in the last part of the book. Then, much earlier, you have the marriage of the Lamb. That is only by the way, but the point is that it cost all that Calvary means to get this oneness. Calvary is the price of the corporate life, and this corporate life will be the result of that mighty work of the cross and that mighty victory which was accomplished there by the Lamb.

I do want this to come to you as a message from the Lord really to

your hearts; not as a further bit of teaching, but a real message. Oh, let us always remember that anything that makes for division, schism, conflict, discord, or isolation, is contrary to Calvary, is contrary to the Lamb, and contrary to what God has in view. Let us remember that. We cannot isolate ourselves; we cannot ignore or overlook the laws of the Body of Christ. We cannot refuse to come into line with the principles of corporate existence without working against God and against Christ. If you or I do something other than come right into line with the corporate law of the Body of Christ in every form of its expression, we are working against God's end and we are making nothing of the blood of the Lamb; we are setting it at naught. Let this govern you, let it come as a real interrogation to our hearts. Is there any way in which I am not recognizing the truth, the reality, of corporate life, the Body of Christ? Am I a law to myself? Am I taking my own way? Am I following my own judgment? Am I setting at naught the judgment of the saints? Am I refusing to recognize that the Lord speaks in His church? Oh, the ways in which corporate life works! How many they are! But if, in any way, you and I violate that law, then this end towards which God is working, upon which He has set His heart, is being worked against by us; and this, which is the fruit of Calvary, which is the cherished thing of the Lamb, is being set at naught in that measure. It is a very solemn word, but it is a very important, very necessary word. I feel the Lord just wants us to recognize that, because this thing is so subtle. It is not always a definite, deliberate open violation of the laws of corporate life. Sometimes it just creeps in under the guise of — oh! all sorts of things which seem to be 'good'. Let us look at the effect of it and test everything by its effect. Is this working against our oneness of life and our love? If so, let us label it: 'Here is Satan as an angel of light!'

The laying on of hands is our testimony to the great and glorious fact that the Body is one. This oneness is the fruit of the cross. Baptism and the water of baptism is a type of Calvary, death, burial and resurrection. What follows? Ever and always the church is the next thing. So, after the testimony to the death, burial and resurrection, the triumph of the Lord Jesus over that whole old creation in its disruption and its corruption, then the new creation comes in, the church which is His Body, which is just the opposite of that old creation. Here there is no disruption, no discord. Here no strife, no chaos, no anarchy, no lawlessness. You say that is not true to history. Yet it *is* true in the spiritual realm! The Body is one in the spiritual realm. Christ is undivided in Himself. We are one, all one in

Christ Jesus. We are standing for that testimony, and when we testify to the oneness of the Body, we are testifying to the victory of Calvary.

Let this come to your heart as a fresh appeal made by the Lamb. “Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it ... that He might present the church to Himself a glorious church (having the glory of God), not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing” (Eph. 5:25-27). That is the church. May the Lord give us grace to stand and to fight for the bride, the corporate organic life expressed even here on this earth. May it be so!

THE SEVEN EYES AND SEVEN HORNS OF THE LAMB

“And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have seen, and, behold, a candlestick all of gold, with its bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps thereon” (Zech. 4:1-2).

“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands” (Rev. 1:12).

“For, behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; upon one stone are seven eyes” (Zech. 3:9).

“For who hath despised the day of small things? For these seven shall rejoice ...” (Zech. 4:10).

“And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God” (Rev. 4:5).

“And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth” (Rev. 5:6).

“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it” (Zech. 4:6-7).

I only want to gather up the definite and direct truths which are contained in these various portions, that which lies behind these symbols. It is not difficult, indeed it is quite simple, if we just quietly meditate on them.

God's building

Firstly, there is a foundation stone, or a chief cornerstone, for the building in which God is interested, the house of God; and it is said about this stone that it has seven eyes. We know from other scriptures that the seven eyes represented the Holy Spirit in fulness in two particular respects. What we have is the One who is the chief cornerstone brought into His place by God in the fulness of the Spirit, and that is the fulness of spiritual vision and the fulness of spiritual power. The whole building is to take its character from the chief cornerstone; the building will be according to that.

Then there are a great many difficulties represented in Zechariah by the great mountain. There are mountainous difficulties in the way of the completion of this building, this divine purpose. The mountain may mean anything that stands in opposition to God's intention. It may mean anything or everything of that which has come to challenge, and, if possible, to frustrate God's purpose in the building of this house.

But then there is a top stone which is brought forth and put on the completed building, or as the completion of the building, with shoutings of grace, grace unto it, and there are two things connected with that. One is that the seven eyes rejoice. "These seven shall rejoice", that is, the eyes of vision are satisfied at last. And the other thing is — "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." That corresponds with what we saw in a previous meditation, the change in the imagery from the Lion to the Lamb. Not by might, as man thinks of might, nor by power, as man speaks of power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

We must begin with the Lord Jesus as God's chief cornerstone in whom God's full vision is set forth. In simple words, the Lord Jesus is the beginning of God's purpose. God's vision in fulness is found in Him. Seven eyes on this cornerstone simply say that the Lord Jesus is God's beginning and God's beginning in Him is a full revelation, a full intelligence, a full spiritual vision. Then the Lord Jesus is the top stone and when the top stone is brought forth, all that vision is realized, all that spiritual intelligence is satisfied, all that God meant and looked for is attained in the Lord Jesus. In between you have, on the one hand, all the obstacles, all the difficulties, the great mountain; and, on the other hand, "My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts". So the seemingly difficult symbolism is very simple, after all. In the book of the Revelation, we notice that the seven eyes belong to the Lamb: "a Lamb as it had been slain, having

seven horns and seven eyes”, so that God’s full revelation in the Lord Jesus realized by the fulness of the power of the Holy Spirit is by way of the cross, the Lamb slain. Now, all that is to be resolved into one or two things for immediate application to ourselves.

Fulness of vision

The seven eyes, we have said, speak of fulness of vision, and that is where the Lord begins His building. The building begins with that, and it is a law that there is no spiritual increase, no building up, no progress towards God’s full end, except by spiritual vision. Spiritual vision is essential. Usually people put spiritual power first. The Lord does not put power first; the Lord puts vision first. The Lord took great pains with His disciples that there should be the ground of intelligence, spiritual vision, as to Himself, before He gave power. The Lord does not want us to have power without understanding. It is a dangerous thing. We go in quest of power first; we want power with which to do the work of God. What work? Oh, what we think ought to be done for the Lord, what we are convinced is the work of the Lord. But that is not good enough. The Lord wants intelligence before power. Power without intelligence is both dangerous and wasteful. During forty days after His resurrection He was seeking to lay the foundation in those disciples of a true understanding of what He is in resurrection. His final three and a half years had closed with a state of appalling ignorance. On the way to Emmaus it was made perfectly clear that, after all that He had said, all that He had done, all that they had heard and seen as they had companied with Him, they really had not seen. Everything crashed with His death. “We trusted that it was He who should redeem Israel. Yea, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass” (everything gone!) “... And their eyes were opened.” Then He opened their understanding. This was during the forty days and that is what He was doing, and then came Pentecost!

We often begin with the point, “Ye shall receive power ...”. We always want to begin there. We must remember that the Lord wants a good foundation for power, and that is spiritual vision. I am not saying that you can have spiritual vision apart from the Holy Spirit; I am saying that the seven eyes are perfect vision and they represent the Holy Spirit. That is the first aspect of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit of life has come, His next movement is light. Power is subsequent. So what is needed first is light. Let there be light!

Now, it is a very important thing in relation to God's purpose for a "House" (and that is His supreme and inclusive purpose — "whose house are we"), that we, by the Holy Spirit, have vision. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). "My people perish (are destroyed AV) for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). The Lord said that. Oh, we have such a ground of appeal to the Lord concerning the power if we have caught a vision of His purpose, because the power works in relation to the purpose. It is not just general power for all kinds of good things that we might feel inclined or drawn to do for the Lord. It is related to the purpose. May I urge upon you, without multiplying words in this connection, that you really do seek the Lord about this matter, that the Lord, by the fullness of the Spirit, will be to you a Spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Him. Some of us do know that, after years of seeking the Lord for power. We sought the Lord through the night hours, we rose before daybreak; for years we were in quest of power. This word 'spiritual power' was always on our lips before the Lord, and nothing happened until the day when there broke upon us a revelation of God's purpose. We saw the purpose of God and from that time we knew something more of the Spirit working, the accompanying work of the Spirit — I am not going to say, the fullness of the power of the Spirit. Things began to happen; there was movement. Lives were changed; people began to seek; they recognized something. Lives were turned inside out. From the day that we began to see the purpose of God the power of God came like that.

I do want to urge this upon you, that you are not going to get very far without seeing. We ought to realize that the first work of the Spirit of Life is vision. It is true in John's gospel. When He in whom is the life has come as the life, it is the light which begins to work and then there is a dividing between light and darkness. Some men loved darkness rather than light, but those who want the light come to Him and go on with Him. He is the light; He opens the eyes of the blind. Now, for spiritual growth, for spiritual fullness in ourselves as far as that can be in individuals, in the church locally and universally, life is always first, there must be life and light, not in a general sense, but vision as to God's purpose. We cannot put too much emphasis upon this need among the Lord's people for revelation, spiritual vision, seeing the purpose of God — what a tremendous thing it is! Vision works wonders. See what it did with Paul. At the beginning of his Christian life when in natural blindness because of that light, the eyes of his heart were enlightened, and God revealed His Son in Him. That revelation of the Lord Jesus and who He was and God's

purpose concerning Him did what nothing else could possibly have done in the case of Saul of Tarsus. I venture to think that there was nothing in this universe that could have lifted Saul of Tarsus clear of his fanatical Judaism but an inward revelation. It did that and many other things too. We need vision by the Holy Spirit, but let us remember that that is the object for which the Spirit has come. He has come because of the work of the Lamb, the cross; upon that basis He has come to give revelation of God's purpose.

That brings us once more to recognize the simple, fundamental fact that the fulness of the Spirit working in spiritual revelation and vision demands a work of the Lamb in us; it demands the cross in us. The obstruction to spiritual vision and revelation with so many is their own reason. That is in the way. They cannot see God's thoughts because of their own. I need not pursue that very minutely. We can say inclusively that if we are going to see God's purpose, something has to happen to us. And so it is true to the experience of all of us who have gone this way that, first of all, something very drastic was done concerning us and the cross of the Lord Jesus. The Lord brought us to see first of all Romans 6; and if you see Romans 6, something is going to happen and something does happen. Seeing is the act. We can preach Romans 6, lecture on Romans 6, know all about Romans 6 as a passage in the Bible, and not *see* Romans 6. Romans 6 revealed to us is a terrific thing. When Christ died, we died; and — forgive the old form of expression so familiar to many — when we died as sinners, we died as men and women. Most of us are quite willing to die as sinners, very glad to get out of the way as sinners, but to die as men and women is quite another thing. Not only is it someone who is not sinning as they used to, but it is no one at all but Jesus. Romans 6 reveals the foundational fact of our death with and in Christ, something which has come about in our experience as a basic thing. The Lord has to do a great deal of preparatory work to get us there very often. Oh yes, none of us has such a position, such a knowledge, that we can set up as a model, but some of us do know something about this in measure.

For your own comfort and encouragement, I tell you that, so far as I am concerned, I preached Romans and Ephesians for many years as well as all the rest. But then the Lord began to work towards the crisis which meant this: 'We can go on no longer; we can go on preaching no longer; we can go on working for the Lord no longer. It is doubtful whether we can go on professing to be Christians any longer' (not that we were not born again, but the Lord had something more than our being born again in

mind). The day came when it seemed that everything had come to an end. It was in that day that Romans 6 was revealed inwardly and it explained these strange dealings of the Lord. He had a lot to do to make a revelation of Romans 6 possible of being fruitful. For we, being what we are, do not really profit by anything that we do not desperately need. Unless we are right up against it, we are not really in a state to get the good of it, and the Lord has to work like that until that is the only thing that will save us. We do not know what it is but He reveals it. He has been working towards that; it is done in that hour — the cross really brought home over a background of the dealings of God with us in a deep and desperate way. What can we say in that hour? All we can say is, ‘Well, Lord, the only logical thing in the light of what You have been doing with me is that I accept Romans 6. Being what I am, how I am, where I am, in the light of Your dealings with me, can I stand up against the fact that You have done with me, You finished with me two thousand years ago?’ This is no new situation. God had that situation when Christ died. That this occurs in us is a necessary thing in order that the power of the Spirit might come in fulness along the line, first of all, of revelation. When the Lord accomplishes that and gets us there, a new vision breaks upon us, a new revelation. Then, in spiritual experience, as in the Word, the order is a revelation of the church following the cross; a revelation of the House of God or, if you like, a revelation of God’s purpose. That is the order: something done to make way for that revelation, and then the revelation given, and then a new power coming in to work in relation to the purpose.

These are facts and I would urge upon you to have dealings with the Lord in this matter. If you feel that you have taken that position long since or not so long since, you hold the Lord to it, that the right which is yours on the ground of your having accepted all that identification with Christ in death, burial and resurrection means, is to have a new revelation of His purpose. That is your right. Stand for it! Hold on to the Lord — new light, new revelation, not in a general way, but in a definite way, as to what God is after. Well, all this has to do with perfect vision by the fulness of the Spirit.

Now you are asking perhaps, or have asked, for the fulness of the Spirit. Remember that is not a mere abstract or indefinite thing. The fulness of the Spirit relates, in the first instance, to the knowledge of God’s purpose, to spiritual intelligence, spiritual vision. Then, of course, when you have seen what God is after, when you have vision and revelation, you meet the mountain. When you have seen God’s full

thought concerning His people, God's full thought as bound up with the church, oh, the mountain — a range of mountains — will appear! How, in all the world, can this purpose be realized? That will be one mountain to get over. How is it possible? And because that question has arisen, all sorts of people have resorted to all sorts of theories which somehow or other just cause the vision to fade. 'Oh, everything is hopelessly in ruins! We must not expect to have anything better! We must take things as we find them!' Why? — because of that great mountain. How? — in view of the situation? The enemy sees to it that the mountain comes up.

When there is a report of the land by Joshua and Caleb, some people only see high walls and giants and that does it; it is finished! The whole purpose of God is abandoned. There are high walls and there are giants! That is the last word in the argument for some people. Do remember that Satan is really out with all his power and all his arts to see that that vision is not realized if he can prevent it. There is nothing which is more fraught with Satanic antagonism than spiritual vision. Where there is real spiritual light among the Lord's people, there you have real spiritual conflict. There Satan works persistently by every means. Why is that? It is a tremendous thing to have seen, and Satan is the god of this age to blind the mind. His work is blinding, and if your eyes are open, he is undone. So he would ever keep God's people from having spiritual vision. Revelation is a realm of conflict. Don't forget that!

That is the real force of the overcomer in the book of the Revelation. What really is the clearly defined issue with the overcomer? Why, the general thing has lost its vision; the general thing has ceased to be occupied with God's full thought; it is occupied with many things for the Lord, and many good things. The Lord says, 'They are alright in their place as things.' And those people would say, 'Well, things being as they are, it is no use our aiming at something better. It is useless for us to hope for or seek after anything better. We must make the best of what there is. We must do what we can.' That is the church in general today, and if you are going out for anything more than the general, you will be told you are an idealist, or you are trying to be different from others — all sorts of things; but that is the overcomer.

The overcomer is this in effect. The majority of the Lord's people may be satisfied with something less than God's full thought; they are perhaps having a good time, more or less; they are not meeting the cost, not having to pay the price, of anything more. They are free from many of the things which come upon those who are going on with God in fulness

of purpose. What am I going to do about it? Am I going to accept that position? Am I going to surrender to what is more or less general? Or am I going to take the place of an isolated and ostracized minority, and go right on with God for His fullest mind? That is the overcomer; that is what it means to overcome. You can sum it all up there. The overcomer is the one who will not be content with anything short of the full purpose of God and is prepared to pay the price, and the price will be exacted largely by the Lord's people themselves — that is where the difficulty is. Well, that is where the cross applies more deeply.

Fulness of power

There is this other side which is fulness of power. Fulness of vision is essential, but there are seven horns as well as seven eyes, and, while there is a great mountain, there is this word: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." There is, in the same Spirit who gives the vision, the power for its realization. In the same Christ who is the chief cornerstone, there is the top stone, and to complete it, the bringing forth of the top stone with shoutings of grace, grace unto it, sees Him as the Omega as well as the Alpha, the end as well as the beginning. "By my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." It is all in the energy of the Spirit of God that it is done. It would be a poor lookout if we were trying to do something on our own in relation to God's full thought. If it were left to us, it would be a poor lookout indeed! But, blessed be God, it is not. We may take it that, if we are in line with God's full mind, we are on the way of the fulness of the Spirit in power. We may not realize that. We may say, 'But surely we must be conscious of something, if that is true. Surely no man, no assembly, can have the fulness of the Holy Spirit in power without feeling something!' 'I looked to see this wonderful Lion and it was a Lamb as it had been slain', and do you know what it feels like to be slain? Well, the word says that is the way of overcoming, and, when you see what has to be overcome, that is the way of infinite power. It is the Lamb that overcomes, but what does the Lamb overcome? You can truly be in the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit in an incorruptible life, and never be conscious of that power at all. That is where so many people make a mistake and lose their faith. It is true to our experience and true to principle, that very often God does His biggest things in the hour when the instrument is at its weakest, and consciously so. Our worst times are very often God's best times, and when we think we are having a good time,

God is not always having such a good time. His strength is made perfect in weakness. Do not interpret that to mean that the weakness is turned into His strength. It means that the weakness is there, and His strength is working in perfection while the weakness is still there. The consciousness of the one concerned is of the weakness, but the consciousness out beyond that is of His strength. Do not think that we must feel the mighty power of the Spirit in order that that power may be at work.

What we have to give to the Lord is a crucified life, a crucified man, and a faith in Him, and through our weakness His strength will work. His glory will never be given to any flesh — never! The Spirit of glory rests upon that which is at a discount in its nature. This is hard teaching, it is hard to receive. Will you go away offended, saying, ‘These are hard things. Who can receive them?’ Well, whether we receive them or not, the fact remains that, when it is all done and we reach the glorious accomplishment of God, we will say, “Thou art worthy! Thou art worthy!” That only means, ‘Marvellous, never would I have thought it possible!’ Why? Look at that through which it has been done! It will not be a galaxy of mighty, wonderful people in themselves. It will just be through those who in themselves counted for nothing, and the Lord saw they counted for nothing, and all the glory is due to Him. Remember, the ascription of praise is not to the Lion, after all. It is to the Lamb. The Lord show us what that means!