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A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange and yellow glow across the sky. There are scattered clouds, and a single bird is visible in flight in the upper left portion of the sky. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the light from the sky.

**The Crisis of Pentecost
and the Significance of
the Holy Spirit's Coming**

T. Austin-Sparks



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The Crisis of Pentecost and the Significance of the Holy Spirit's Coming

by T. Austin-Sparks

Transcribed from messages given at an Easter conference in May 1959. The spoken form has been retained verbatim.

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Chapter 1 - The Great Meaning of Pentecost

I would like to lay a foundation for our meditation in the Word of God by turning you to several passages. Firstly, in the letter to the Galatians. The letter to the Galatians chapter 3, at verse 13: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. For it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; *that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*".

Let us abbreviate that statement - "Christ *redeemed* us from the curse of the law... that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham *in* Christ Jesus; that we might *receive* the promise of the Spirit through faith". Verse 26: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, *in* Christ Jesus".

Chapter 4, at verse 5: "That He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God".

The first letter of John, first letter of John and chapter 3: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is".

Then the letter to the Romans, chapter 8, verse 16: "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God..." 21: "The creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God..." Chapter 9 and verse 8: "It is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed. For this is a word of promise, According to this season will I come, and Sarah shall have a son".

It's sometimes helpful right at the outset to state precisely what it is we are going to think about and talk about, and be occupied with; not because it is fitting to the season, but I believe because the Lord has so led, we are going to be occupied with the great crisis of Pentecost and the immense significance of the Holy Spirit.

It would be difficult to over-emphasise the importance of the Holy Spirit. We have heard so much, perhaps we know so much, that the mention of this matter may fail to stir us as it ought to on every fresh remembrance. What we need, perhaps as much as anything, is a sense of the *freshness* of everything with which we are so familiar - that particular and peculiar joy that comes with a sense of freshness in old and familiar scenes. I expect many of you know what I mean when I say that we may be very familiar with certain scenes, certain places, certain associations, and we may have been familiar with them perhaps all our lives, or for many years. And then we take someone who has never before seen them, we take a friend, and as we point out this and that, describe this and that, tell the story of this and that, and we see the freshness of appreciation in the friend, how the old thing becomes new to us! And yes, we begin to see things that we have never seen before, as we point them out *and* under the inspiration of their enjoyment of something quite new. That's true, isn't it?

Some of us have been over ground so many, many times, and then we have taken someone who has

never gone that way and in their enjoyment and pleasure, or almost ecstasy, we have been surprised and perhaps a little ashamed that we never saw it quite like that, or that it had lost its real attraction for us. And yet, it's something quite old. Don't you feel, dear friends, that it's something like that that we need to recover in relation to the familiar things of the Word of God?

Let me put it like this: if you and I were complete strangers to Christianity and to the Bible and were really very anxious to know the meaning of Christianity and the meaning of the Bible, we really were concerned to know, so that we sat down and with all diligence, earnestness, and thoughtfulness began to read the New Testament... (And here, as a parenthesis, I may suggest to you that it is a very useful thing to do, to try to forget that you know it and make yourself imagine that you have never read that before. Come to it as though it were for the first time. You try it; you'll find there is a real value in that.) Well, supposing that you were really doing that for the first time, what do you think would be the thing that would press itself upon your notice, perhaps more than anything else? If you took up this New Testament, and thoughtfully, carefully, read... read through the Gospels, found yourself in all that vivid life and movement of the book of the Acts, and then on into the remainder of the letters and the consummation. Seeking to get one distinct impression, what do you think that would be? I suggest to you, dear friends, that it would be this: this, of course, this book is all about one Person, and that Person is called Jesus, that Jesus lived on the earth for a time, talked and worked, and then was put to death. But this book everywhere declares that God raised Him from the dead. That is the outstanding thing everywhere: God raised Him from the dead, but that is not all.

This book is just *alive* because that raising of Jesus from the dead has become a living experience *in* the people concerned, by the power of the Spirit of God. Don't you agree that that would be the thing that would impress you most as a stranger to the story and to the book? God raised Jesus from the dead, and the Spirit of God has made that a living reality in the life of a whole multitude, and an ever-growing multitude of men and women. The Holy Spirit, for them, was not a theme, and a subject, a doctrine, and a truth to be discussed and argued about, but an *experience*, and an experience of Jesus being alive after having died. When you have really put your hand upon that (and I can see that it makes very little impression upon you... it doesn't strike you as anything very wonderful, because you are so familiar with it) but there you are, having put your finger upon that, you have put your finger upon the whole key, secret; the wonderful significance of the Holy Spirit. There is far more, of course, bound up with that than I have indicated.

Christianity is built upon these two things: God raised Jesus from the dead, and the Holy Spirit makes that a reality in the lives of believers.

Jesus Risen, The Holy Spirit Given

The two great foundations of Christianity, but it carries you into a very large realm. You will see that this has its backward aspect. The Holy Spirit throws full light upon Jesus from His birth to His Cross and explains everything in His life. You will never come into the good and the value of the life of the Lord Jesus from His birth to His Cross without the Holy Spirit interpreting, explaining, and making live. You will only have an earthly story, a bit of history and biography, you will have no Life out of those years and all that was in them, until the Holy Spirit takes up the incarnation, the walk, the teaching, the working and the dying, and makes them live. We require the Holy Spirit - He is *indispensable* to the understanding of the coming of the Lord Jesus and His being here on this earth at all.

Now take one inclusive factor in that: why did He come? Why did He come? Why was He here? For what did He live and work and teach and die? Only one thing, you might answer it in many ways, but

the one inclusive thing was to bring man back into a *living, conscious union* with God. That sums up the whole meaning of the life of the Lord Jesus on this earth, and His death. Let me repeat: To bring man into a living and conscious union with God. Do you recognise that that is a feature, *the* feature of Christianity, which distinguishes it from all other religions in this world? A *living, conscious union and fellowship with God*. But if that is true, if that is why He came, lived, worked, taught, and died, it was all in vain until the Holy Spirit came and *made* it real and live. He came in vain, He lived in vain, He taught in vain, He worked in vain, He died in vain, until the Holy Spirit came. Therefore He puts this *tremendous* importance upon the Holy Spirit: "It is *expedient* for you that I go away; if I go not away, the Comforter will not come, even the Spirit of truth".

There is no effecting of the meaning of the Life of Christ apart from the gift and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And the very first thing that the Holy Spirit does is to make all that for which Christ has come, instantly *real*, "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we *are* children of God", if that doesn't mean living, conscious relationship with God, what does it mean? "The Spirit Himself *beareth* witness with our spirit." All the meaning of Christ's coming is made good *immediately* we receive the Holy Spirit, or it begins to be made good, it is taken up and made real. And what is true of the life of the Lord Jesus here is true of everything else, which we need not pursue. There is no real knowing, or living, until the Holy Spirit comes and comes in.

In our readings this afternoon, we have underlined one word (I trust that you did it as we were reading) the common factor of all that we were reading, all those passages, and there are many more that can be added. In John's statement, for instance: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God" - 'children of God'. "Now are we the children of God." And you know that it is a basic statement in relation to the coming of the Lord Jesus into this world, that through faith in Him, believing on Him, we should have the *right* to be called children of God; the *right* to be called children of God! That is why He came... that is why He came: to constitute this heavenly, spiritual family... children of God and sons of God. That is the end in view. Now, having just made that statement, dear friends, we are going to allow the book of the Advent of the Holy Spirit, the Day of Pentecost, to take us a long way back.

You know that the Bible is a book of crises, that is, of turning points which contain different features. "Crisis" and "critic" are from the same root. And a critic is someone who takes up a matter at a certain point, and indicates the differences - how differences of view and interpretation are to be seen at that point. And that is a crisis, it is a point reached where things are going to change, and there is going to be a difference and you are going to see a difference from what has been, and what is going to be. Now the Bible is a book of crises.

There are four major crises in the Bible, with a great many minor ones between. The first great crisis is that of creation. Indeed, it was a crisis. It was the intervention of God in relation to purpose - God's reaction to vanity, to what is void, to what is without purpose and meaning, serving no real end. "Now the earth was without form and void..." God intervened, and that was a crisis, and the difference, of course, is quite plain.

The second great crisis was that of redemption, God intervening to recover. The third crisis was that of Pentecost - the intervention of spiritual fullness as against mere figures and representations and fragments - now to bring in the real and the full, for the word "full", or "fullness" is always associated with the Holy Spirit. By Pentecost heaven intervened unto spiritual fullness. I could enlarge upon that, no doubt very much comes to you in relation to the Holy Spirit. If I only hint at the number seven in relation to the Spirit, you know that it signifies spiritual fullness. There was a great intervention of heavenly fullness on the Day of Pentecost. Then the fourth great crisis, of course, is

that of the coming again of the Lord; the intervention for universal restoration and restitution - with many aspects, but that is what it is, and for that crisis we wait.

Now note that every one of these major crises, the Holy Spirit is very distinctly in view. "The Spirit of God brooded over the face of the deep", was the agent and the energy of creation. Everything to do with the crisis of redemption is in the hands of the Holy Spirit. The Redeemer is born of the Holy Spirit, the Redeemer is anointed of the Spirit, the Redeemer offered Himself without spot unto God through the Eternal Spirit. All the way through the work of redemption, the Holy Spirit was the energy, and power, the agent, the custodian.

It goes without saying that the third great crisis of Pentecost was in the hands of the Holy Spirit. He took over everything at that point. Even the Lord Jesus very, very strongly stipulated that *nothing was to be done*, no attempt made even to preach, until the Spirit was come. He gave commandment and Luke says, "After that, by *commandment*..." What was His command? "Tarry ye until ye be endued." That was the commandment - no movement, no attempt at anything. The Holy Spirit came and *He* took over the whole programme. Will it be less in the final crisis of His coming again?

The coming again, dear friends, will be but the consummation of the Spirit's work in this age. Then He will have done His work, He will have brought to birth the sons for manifestation, He will have effected their spiritual growth and perfection. He will, like Abraham's servant, bring the Bride and present the Bride to the Bridegroom. So, the end of the book of the Revelation is, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!" He is in evidence in every connection of the whole outworking of Divine purpose. But when you have said that about the four major crises, and the many minor ones between, what is it that is there in the foreground all the time? There are many other intelligences and created beings in the background looking on, sometimes being agents and instruments in the great drama, but in the foreground, or right in the centre of the stage is a creation called 'Man'. A unique creation, a particular creation, the crown of creation; he stands right there as the centre of all attention, interest and activity, through all the ages. He holds heaven's attention.

The Bible is the story, from one standpoint, of heaven's interest in man, heaven's concern over man - an active interest, a great interest. From time to time we see heaven and heaven's agents breaking in for men, but they are the incidents. It is one great story of man standing there in the centre of the stage and all heaven looking on, all heaven concerned, all heaven active. Look through your Bible again with that thought in mind.

God has created an order called "man". There is no other order called "man".

An Order Called "Man"

God is seen from the beginning as the centre of heaven, concerned with man all the way through. And all heaven is with God in that concern: angels and archangels, and heavenly counsels... they're all concerned with man. He holds heaven's attention. It is a great, great statement, that statement of the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews: "Not unto angels hath He subjected the inhabited earth to come, but one in a certain place hath said, What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" Not unto angels... but unto man. Heaven is concerned and all hell, all hell is focussed upon this particular order of creation. He holds the attention of the whole system of evil; it is focussed upon man. It is a kingdom, but it's a divided kingdom.

It is well that we do remember that the kingdom of Satan is a *divided* kingdom, divided in itself. Jesus said it. He said it was divided. He didn't put an 'if' about it, He said, "A kingdom divided

against itself..." "A house divided against itself..." it is. And you can see how, in a contradictory way, that kingdom of evil works in relation to man. On the one side, it gives itself with such application, determination, and subtlety to degrade man, to make man less than he really is, to lower him, to dishonour him. Evolution can have that effect; robbing man of his dignity in the mind and thought of God.

All the terrible history of war... what is it? What is it if it is not the result of a *lost sense of the sacredness of human life*? The *sacredness* of humanity... gun fodder! Food for the sword and the cannon. And you see where evil is most prominent, and God is most rejected, human life is cheapest. The liquidation of man as though he didn't matter. The *cheapness* of human life... to degrade, dishonour, and make cheap this great creation with its destiny bound up with it, is one side of the activity of this divided house.

On the other side, in its contradiction, to make man without God, something *more* than he is; man without God something more than is true of him. There you get all that goes to make *self*-importance, *self*-sufficiency, arrogance - to arrogate to *himself* rights and abilities and authority, independence, pride... A whole host of things to make man without God more than is true of him without God.

The destruction of man, dear friends, the destruction of man, spiritually, morally, and finally physically, is the object of that great system of wickedness. God has a great judgment, the Word says, in store for those who destroy, those who destroy - which means *undervalue* His creation.

Now, what is all that to do with the Holy Spirit? Well, we can never understand Pentecost, the advent of the Holy Spirit, until we recognise that it is *by* the coming in of the Holy Spirit, and only so, that God gets the "man" that He has ever intended to have. The purpose of man's creation was that he should be a child of God, that men should become sons of God. As Paul says: "foreordained unto the *adoption* as sons, to be conformed to the image of His Son". Pentecost, therefore, takes us right back to the *original thought and purpose of God* in the creation of man and brings that right up to date. So that when you and I, or any believing man or woman, receives the Holy Spirit within, *all* that God intended in creation starts up; comes into the first phase of its realisation. It can never be until then. And you can see, as we perhaps shall see later as we go on, the *tremendous* change in the *kind* of person that resulted from the Day of Pentecost.

You will not tell me that those men and women before Pentecost, although so closely associated with the Lord Jesus in His walk and work, answered to God's thought originally. But look now: the Holy Spirit has come on and in. They are different creatures. You might say that they are a different *order* of being, the change is so great in so many respects, that they pass from one kingdom to another. Here indeed are the manifestations of sonship because the Son Himself, by the Spirit of sonship, has entered in.

I repeat: we cannot understand the meaning of Pentecost until we recognise God's intention in making man. And immediately you recognise that, then you see the key to the coming of the Holy Spirit. Everything has been pointing toward that. In touches and activities of the Holy Spirit through the old dispensation, there are some eighty-eight references, direct references, to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. You notice that they are partial, they're indicative, they're symbolic, they're representations, they're pointing on to something.

Now do you see something more in that fragment from Galatians: "that upon the Gentiles might come the promise to Abraham"? The *promise* to Abraham! What was the promise to Abraham? *Universal sonship in Jesus Christ*. Wasn't it? All that said perfectly in the letter to the Galatians.

Universal sonship by faith in Jesus Christ. We're all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ. It was a universal thing. "Thy seed, thy seed... as the stars of heaven... as the sand..." vast, vast! But Paul brings it all down and says, "the seed is not many seeds, it is One Seed, it's Christ!" It's Christ! The promise to Abraham was sonship to men in Jesus Christ. And now, says the apostle, that is made good by the gift of the Holy Spirit - the promise - that we might receive the Spirit.

This universe is eventually to be peopled with sons of God. "The creation groaneth and travaileth... is subject to vanity, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God". Peopled with the sons of God. "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, *and such we are!*" "It is not yet, it is not yet manifested what we shall be, but we *know* that when He shall be manifested we shall be like Him" that's John. And Paul just butts in there and says, "Yes, foreordained to be conformed to His image... the image of His Son... we shall be like Him". The consummation of the Spirit's work is in sons conformed to the image of God's Son. That is what He is doing now, bringing in the sons, bringing them to birth, born of the Spirit, training them as sons, "God dealeth with us as with sons..." perfecting sonship.

I do wish, dear friends, that this could come to you with due force; that you could really get hold of this. This is not just teaching and truth, it is the most wonderful thing that has ever been revealed in God's universe. This is grace, this is mercy, this is power, this is wisdom: everything of God, All-Wise, All-Knowing, All-Gracious, is centred in this *bringing many sons to glory*. It holds the centre of the stage of this universe. Presently I shall say something more about that from another angle, but this afternoon, it is just to get in view the object: the great meaning of Pentecost.

Oh, how we have limited Pentecost... how we have put the emphasis in the wrong place! Yes, with the best of motives, seeing the great importance of the Holy Spirit, rightly seeing the great importance, we have put our emphasis all in one place, all along certain exclusive lines. *All* the lines, *all* the lines and *all* the emphases focus here: the Holy Spirit of God from creation to consummation is occupied with one thing - making for God a family of sons conformed to the image of His Son. That explains everything and all His dealings with us. The Lord write the object deeply in our hearts.

Chapter 2 - The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Sonship

Today we are giving our attention to the great crisis of Pentecost, the advent of the Holy Spirit, and the supreme significance of the Holy Spirit's coming.

From the several passages which we read earlier, I want to just take out for the moment that paragraph in the eighth chapter of the Letter to the Romans, a profound and inexhaustible passage. Romans 8 at verse 15:

"Ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body... And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity... the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

This passage, amongst other things, says this main thing: that there is in the whole creation a groaning as of travail, but that there is a particular groaning in the children of God - we ourselves who have the first-fruits of the Spirit. And that is why we groan; groan within ourselves, and the Spirit is groaning. Three groanings: creation; the children of God; the Holy Spirit. And what is it all about? What does it mean? It is all centred in one thing: the manifestation of the children of God. That is, the bringing right out from limitation, and bondage, and frustration, into full revelation and emancipation of sonship.

We said this afternoon that the end of all things from the creation through the redemption and the advent of the Holy Spirit, and the coming again of the Lord, the end is that which God designed and determined concerning man:

Sons of God in Full Expression.

The Holy Spirit is here in the Word shown to be the Spirit of Sonship - "the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God". We receive *the Spirit of adoption* whereby we cry "Father". That is the all-governing and dominating thing in creation, in salvation, and in ultimate restitution.

That is a statement; it is a wonderful statement, it is a tremendous statement. But it is very important, dear friends, that you and I and the Lord's people should be able to grasp something of the implications and the significance of such a statement. It is, if *really* grasped, calculated to make some tremendous revolutions in our whole way of thinking, and perhaps acting; to completely turn upside down and inside out, our conceptions. For a few minutes I want to give myself to that very thing.

Let us again say it: the end which God set in the creation of man, toward which He has been working through all the ages, for which He sent His Son into the world (that is, for which God came Himself *in* Sonship, in Sonship - a peculiar conception) for which the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost is here and at work in the world, the object of it all is that there shall be eventually and ultimately a peopling of God's created universe with children of God, sons of God, in that essential nature and character and relationship to Himself. Have you got that? If we really do grasp it, it will help us a lot in many things. It will correct us in many things. Of course, it will make its own demands upon us, and they will not be easy to meet. The thing that matters to God, *the* thing, the *only* thing that matters to God, is the measure of sonship in believers.

Man puts a tremendous amount of weight upon means; means. God puts all the weight upon the end served. The means, for Him, will be acceptable, blessed, used, *only* in the measure in which they are *really* contributing to that end. Make no mistake about it.

Man thinks in terms of big movements, of many institutions, organisations, of wonderful machinery, of the outward framework of things, and if a thing is big, man's conception is that it's successful. If it spreads and spreads, and becomes very impressive to men in this world, man calls that a success! God looks at things altogether in the other way.

Now, I am keeping very close to the book in what I am saying, for I see in the consummation of all things in the book of the Revelation, the one test of everything, churches and everything else, is the measure of Christ, of Sonship.

The Real Spiritual Measure

And when we speak of "spiritual measure" we just mean this: Sonship, the measure of the *Son* of God. That's where the book of the Revelation opens, and everything is brought to judgment on that; not that you have a name, not that you are wealthy, not that there is this and that and so many churches, it is: how much of intrinsic, spiritual value, is there... for God? He is quite prepared to ignore, pass over, leave, or abandon a thing which has *ceased to serve* that original and all-governing purpose of producing sons, and increasing sons, and increasing the measure of Sonship. That is the purpose of everything with God from creation onward; the whole Bible bears down upon this.

And so it is not the number of churches, or institutions, or the "movement", or any of the *things*. The thing which governs with God is this essential, spiritual Sonship and how much of it - the *reproducing of His Son*. For "at the end of the times, God has spoken Sonwise", *Sonwise...* and He is speaking Sonwise. In your experience He is speaking Sonwise, He is handling you Sonwise, He is dealing with us Sonwise. With all our works He is dealing Sonwise. What a lot this explains.

Look at Paul, look at John, at the end. At the end... Paul has been used to bring into being these many companies of God's people all over Asia and beyond. There they are, many of them; some very large, some very small. And here is Paul now in prison, his liberty of movement taken from him, unable to continue his active missionary work or apostolic work among the churches. And he writes that "all they that be in Asia be turned from me, only Luke is with me". Then this is the failure of a man's life-work! It has closed down on him, it says that he has spent his life, his time, and strength and everything, for nought. Things have become so small. That is how man looks at it, and that is how man judges. Any man with a worldly mind, looking at a situation like that, would pronounce the verdict: "His life is a failure! His work is a failure! The whole thing has ended in, well, ignominy." Is it true? Is it true? What does God think of it?

There is an essential and intrinsic value that is *infinitely* more than all the range of distances and number of communities, and worldly judgment as to success or failure. There is something that is going to appear in eternity as *altogether outweighing* that, and giving the lie to this "failure". Failure? No failure there! There has been produced Sonship through that ministry, and Sonship is an eternal thing because it's a work of the Holy Spirit, a work of heaven. And though all the frameworks and outward forms, the *means*, the means employed may break down, may even disappear, may seem as nothing, and the world passes its judgment of "failure"... wait for eternity, wait for eternity! You and I, dear friends, in this hall today, are very largely the fruit of that ministry, and it has been so all through the centuries.

Or John. Now John was very much bound up with the church in Ephesus. John was its leading elder. John lived and gave himself for Ephesus, amongst other things. John is in Patmos, a prisoner in exile, writing at the dictate of the Risen Lord, to his beloved Ephesus, and saying to the church for which he gave his life, "I have this against thee; thou hast left thy first love". Think of a man who had given his life for a people, having to pass on *that* from the Lord. Ah, and worse than that, "You are going to lose your place and your function as a lampstand in this world, unless you repent". Failure? Yes, written on John in Patmos, written on the church in Ephesus. Is that all? If that were all, God is unjust. It is not true! It is written, "God is not unrighteous that He should forget your work and labour of love for the saints". If that's all, God is unrighteous. Not at all! Let the framework go. Let the churches, as such, go. Let the *means*, the vehicles, the channels, the institutions go! That is not all, where God is concerned. You can have them, and you can have them in immense numbers and in great measure, so that everybody says, "That is a success that work!" and God may think very little of it indeed, very little indeed. His standpoint is ever, and always, *intrinsic* value, or the *essence* of Sonship.

Dear friends, if the Lord had His way, I believe that He would have a *minimum* of means and a *maximum* of spiritual value. A *minimum* of means! It is sometimes a *dangerous* thing to help a means and make a means easy. I mean, you can give money, money to support, build up, and enlarge a means that *does not really serve this ultimate purpose*, and you are making it easy for something to become big that is missing God's end. You may be passing through an *extremely difficult time*... God has stripped you down. It might be a very dangerous thing for somebody to come and make it easy for you. That is why all our help of whatever kind it should be, all our help, should be guided by the Holy Spirit and not on the impulse of compassion, not because we are sorry and sympathetic, but by the Holy Spirit.

The Lord, if *He* is in charge of a thing, will keep all means very closely related to spiritual ends. The means: the building, or any kind of instrumentality, it is not going to be something in itself, if the Lord is concerned, you are going to have a *real* discipline on every step of development, every *fragment* of progress; you are going to take that step in conflict, in travail, in groaning.

Well, when you come to think about it, you say, "Well, that's a very painful way... it's a very difficult way". But would we have it otherwise? Do we want big empty shells, or do we want, whatever the shell is, let it be what is necessary, just what is necessary... what we really want is the content, that *spiritual* content of Sonship. This will interpret a great deal of the difficulty of the way. Perhaps every penny that you get will come through travail, because the Lord is keeping every *thing* so closely related to spiritual Life, spiritual growth. And He is not going (if you really, really mean business with Him, to have the Lord in) He is not going to let you get on easily into something that is *merely* outward and a framework. He is going to fill it, and fill it, and fill it with His Son. But it's coming through travail and groaning.

Now, let us spend a few minutes with:

This Groaning.

What is it? What is it? There is one thing, dear friends, which I think is unmistakable to all who are a bit interested in the Psalmist's question, "What is man?" What is man? That thing that is so unmistakable about man is that there is *something in him* which is a sense of significance - *a sense of significance* - as to himself; that he means something, or was meant for something, that he is not just a thing coming and going... there's a significance attached to him. He has that sense in him. It is manifested in many ways. Take alone the will to live, the *will* to live. You have to go a very long way indeed before you come to the place where you lose the will to live. Isn't that true? What will a man give for his life? And it is an evidence that man has lost all sense of life when he loses the sense of meaning in his being alive. The will to live... what a strong force that is! We revolt naturally against the idea of death; even the death of a criminal is repugnant to people of the world. They revolt against it: death, death! No! We cannot accept it!

The will to success. There is a driving force in man naturally toward success: to *achieve* something, and to *be*, just to be. Ambition... the expression of this sense that a man is meant for something. Isn't that true, speaking quite generally, of man? What is man? He is the embodiment of the sense of meaning, of purpose, of significance, that he has his being *for* something. It's true.

I have been reading *The Life of Sir Alexander Flemming*, the discoverer of Penicillin. And in that, the biographer says that Sir Alexander Flemming was perhaps, next to Lord Roberts, the most humble man of the past century. But presently the biographer goes on to say that Flemming was governed by a *deep-rooted ambition* to reach the top, *and* he was ever so pleased when honour came his way. The humblest of men! It sounds like a contradiction, doesn't it? But you see, it's there! It's there in man. The humblest of men naturally has this.

Let us put it in another way: a sense of frustration is the most terrible thing that can come to us. Abandon to wickedness is so often, more often than not, the result of a sense of frustration. It's this instinct for achievement working in the reverse along evil lines. No one (or I haven't found the person yet) who takes kindly to being insignificant, and being allowed to feel that they're insignificant. This thing that we now call an "inferiority complex" is only the defeat of this sense that we ought to be something, isn't it? Well, we could enlarge upon that very much, but it is all so much bound up with our subject. Oh, what people will do to be noticed! What they will do to be noticed, or to make an impression! The world is like that, isn't it? It wouldn't be safe or kind to explore that very far; we are all more or less like that.

Humility, or meekness, is the most precious, because it is the most *costly* virtue. What a commentary all this is upon that Bible word "vanity" that we have read in this passage. Vanity. What is vanity? Well, it has two complexions: one is all is vain, all is empty, all is nothing... we say we have laboured in vain... nothing for it. But there is the other complexion of vanity: make-believe, pretence, artificiality... vanity! That word is placed right at the heart of the groaning, do you notice that? Or right alongside of this groaning in every realm. And the Bible opens that word "vanity" out along three lines: firstly, God's original purpose and intention for man. The Bible reveals very fully what that was, and is. And it comes out in a very clear way through the apostle Paul, "whom He foreknew, them He foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son", Sonship; God's thought and purpose for man. Man's fall from the way of its realisation, and in that fall, the change of his nature, so that as such a being, he could no longer arrive at sonship. No natural man, fallen in Adam, can ever be a son of God, or a child of God. The fall has carried that hope away. But then God *intervenes*

in His Son and in terms of Sonship, to bring about, by new birth, by new birth what He originally intended: children of God, born from above, born of the Spirit.

So the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost with this whole thing in view:

God's Intention and Thought Concerning Man in Terms of Sonship.

"Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, 'Father'". By whom? "The Spirit... we cry, 'Father'". That dates right back to the beginning. In introducing into this penitent and believing child the Spirit of Sonship, that is the ground and the basis of all the Holy Spirit's work to the end. He is working in us on the basis of the Spirit of Sonship to develop that Sonship, in conforming us to the image of God's Son. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God, and such we are, *but* it doth not yet appear what we shall be..." It was there, in the Divine mind, it was begun by the action of the Holy Spirit now, but it has a future: "it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but if He shall be manifested, we know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is". *Conformed* - that is the end - the beginning, the middle and the end, all with the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Sonship - explaining everything.

Go back to your lonely place, with your little handful of believers, and while seeking to find more, being devoted to what building and increase is possible, remember this: that *smallness* of means and framework need never mean smallness of spiritual measure! And that's what weighs with God. Go to your prison, where an erstwhile great servant of God who has been used over great areas to bring into being many, many churches, is now incapable of doing anything, shut in his prison year after year; and ask: "Is it all for nothing? Is everything lost? What waste! What loss! What a tragedy! If *only* he were loose and out, how much more it would mean..." If, dear friends, it is true that God is set more upon the intrinsic measure for eternity, than upon the means, the outward ways of work, there is your explanation. It's the mystery of God's ways! I see no other answer to the multitude of our problems than this. What is God after in the end? What is He after? The manifestation of the sons of God. The groaning is that.

Now, to step back for a moment. That groaning... what is it? It is this groaning for something that God meant, which has been lost in the fall and yet the very instinct of which remains in man: "*I was meant for something...* what, I don't know, but it's in my being that I'm not *just* here for nothing. I *must* do something. I *must* be something... if it can't be good, it must be bad!" It's an amazing thing, that, isn't it? An amazing thing, this expression. What distortions there are as the result of this instinct of purpose. What people will *do* rather than capitulate to nothingness - all the wicked things as well as all the grand things. It's there.

That's the groaning, but note, the unregenerate man does not know what it is all about; he cannot explain himself, he does not understand himself, he has no interpretation of himself, *but* the Spirit of Sonship in the believer explains it all. *He* knows. The mind of the Spirit. The mind of the Spirit is just this: He *knows* exactly what we were meant for. And is it not true, that when we are born again, we *begin* to sense a newness of purpose in our being alive; a new kind of urge in another direction. It's taken up, and poised, and directed toward what God wants. It's taken up by the Holy Spirit, and renewed and strengthened. And you and I, with all our discouragements, and all our sufferings, and all our agonies, somehow or other are still carried on by this urge. We just cannot let go and give up, though we might often decide to do so. We are kept going by an *urge* of the Spirit, and not allowed to give up. What is it? It is nothing other than the Spirit of Sonship moving toward Sonship to the full; personal, and corporate, in the church.

I trust that this does throw some light on some of your difficulties and problems and situations. I say, it's not easy to accept this - the way of outward reduction in order to have inward increase; it's not easy. It is not easy to be deprived of many helps that would make it so much easier for us, because the Lord is not going to allow us to lose any degree of what He meant and of what He has called us to and started in us by His Spirit. It's a difficult way... the way of Sonship. And so, Paul links this: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory*..." with the glory... what is it? "The liberty of the glory of the children of God", sons in manifestation. The Lord give us understanding and the Lord give us help.

Chapter 3 - "Grieve Not the Holy Spirit"

We ask again, Oh Lord, that in this very time, that same Holy Spirit may be to us the Spirit of revelation, opening the eyes of our hearts anew, and more widely, and showing us Christ... Let it be so, even now, we ask in His Name, amen.

The Lord has led us, dear friends, in this season to occupy ourselves again with something of the significance of the Holy Spirit. We have seen that the Day of Pentecost was one of the four great crises in the history of God's purpose and it was indeed a great turning point. Now, in the very brief time that we have this morning, we are going to look at but a fragment of this Holy Spirit's significance. And I turn you to the Letter to the Ephesians, chapter 1, at verse 13:

"In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession".

Chapter 4, at verse 13 also: "Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

At verse 30 of that chapter, chapter 4: "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption".

In these words of the apostle we have a great depth of meaning as to the Holy Spirit. You will notice that there are three major words in the passage that we read: "who is an earnest" the Spirit is an *earnest* of our *inheritance*. *Sealed* by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of promise. The three words are *earnest*, *sealed*, and *inheritance*. They are interesting words with a very significant background.

Having believed, you receive the Spirit as an *earnest* of the inheritance. Today we call that a *deposit*. The earnest was just something in advance betokening that all the rest would surely follow. It was the guarantee of a completing of the transaction. It was in itself a representation of *all* that was promised. "The Spirit of *promise*" the Holy Spirit is called. We have already seen what that means, from the Letter to the Galatians; the promise made to Abraham, the promise of the Spirit in Christ.

The promise to Abraham, as we have seen, was Sonship in Christ, to be made good in the Holy Spirit, or by the Holy Spirit. That is the inheritance. We are told that we are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. The Spirit is the Spirit of that inheritance, of that promise. But it is not just a promise, He is the *Earnest* of the promise; He is given as a present deposit, in which deposit there resides *all* the potentialities, *all* the meaning, *all* the values of the final fullness of what God is yet going to do for those who believe: an earnest of the inheritance.

Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... another business word. In those days, as in our own, a transaction was *sealed*. It might be a document, when the business was concluded, it was sealed. It might be a consignment; something to be sent away as an earnest of what was to follow. It was sealed as it was sent and the seal was the seal of the one to which it belonged. The seal said: "This belongs to So-and-So. His name, his sign is upon it; it is his. You must not interfere with that, it's not your property, it's his. It's *sealed* unto him." The Holy Spirit is said to be the Seal, declaring that we belong to the Lord. The Lord has put *the Seal* upon us in giving us the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God". So the Spirit is here seen in two

of His functions or meanings: He is an Earnest, or the Earnest of all that is yet to be; and He is the *Seal* by which we are *secured* unto all that. And then you notice, "unto the redemption of the *purchased possession*" - that is an aspect of redemption that is future. It is not that aspect which is in the past, "we were redeemed, not with corruptible things as silver and gold", that's the beginning of redemption; but this redemption is that to which Paul refers in his letter to the Romans, the complete redemption of the whole creation, and of ourselves included, the *full* redemption of all things. That has been purchased, that has been sealed, that has been betokened in the Holy Spirit - wonderful meaning of the gift of the Spirit.

The gift of the Spirit then, is the *authentication* of Sonship. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts" the authentication of Sonship, the seal and the earnest of all that that Sonship is going to mean, as says John, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be children of God, and such we are". But, "it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that if He shall be made manifest, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is". What better and greater inheritance does anybody want than that! The Spirit given is the earnest of that - the Spirit of Sonship. The Spirit given is the *seal* of that. Now, right alongside of that we have this exhortation and injunction, "*Grieve not* the Holy Spirit whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption", the full realisation of that which was given to you in token when you believed.

"Grieve Not the Holy Spirit"

There are two things that very clearly emerge in any consideration of the Holy Spirit. The first is that *nothing is possible* apart from and without the Holy Spirit. That is made abundantly and unmistakably clear. The Lord Jesus Himself made that clear; nothing possible until the Spirit was come and would not allow any attempt at anything even after His resurrection, until they had received the Spirit. *Everything, everything* depends upon the Holy Spirit. He has taken over, indeed He has always been in charge from the creation, but in a new way on the Day of Pentecost He took over. He took over the commission to preach the Gospel in the whole creation. He took over everything on that day, and He is wholly and alone in charge of everything. *Nothing can be without the Holy Spirit.*

And the other thing is the Holy Spirit is always positive in His attitude, in His mind, in purpose and object. That is, He is what we may call "The *Going* Spirit", we borrow that from Ezekiel, the "going" of the wheels and the cherubim, because the Spirit was in them: *going*. The Holy Spirit, in His very disposition, is the Spirit of going, of energy, of movement. And there can be nothing more fatal than that the Spirit should stop going in any life, in any place, anywhere. When the Spirit stops going, then nothing more can be, just nothing more at all. It is only as the Spirit is going that there will be anything at all. Hence, "Grieve not the Spirit, the Holy Spirit"; that could be put in another way: Do not arrest the *going* of the Spirit. Do not allow anything to come up or come in that will *impede* the movement of the Spirit. Do not allow the Spirit, by any means or in any way, to be obstructed. He is a going Spirit, and it is fatal if He should be stayed.

And grieving the Spirit is just hindering the Spirit, obstructing the Spirit, arresting the Spirit, delaying the Spirit. That is what they did in the Wilderness. And as you know from the Letter to the Hebrews, it is said, "Forty years was I grieved with that nation... I was grieved..." - the Spirit who is ever a going Spirit. There was a time when they could say, "We are marching unto the Land which the Lord hath given us", but they *grieved* His Holy Spirit it says. "I was *grieved* with that nation for forty years." The result? The Spirit could not go through and on, and death came in, as you know... just *grieving* the Spirit.

We have, dear friends, no time this morning for trying to indicate *how* the Holy Spirit is grieved. We can only warn ourselves of the possibility and take to heart the injunction: "Grieve not..." but were I to try to encompass this in one way, I would put it like this. Grieving the Holy Spirit is just allowing anything that is contrary to the nature and the purpose of the Holy Spirit. If we just were to take account of His nature, and of His functions, we should immediately see what grieving the Spirit means.

First of all,

He is the *Holy* Spirit.

And to grieve Him is to allow, or persist in, some *unholiness*, some unholy way, some unholy thing, in our lives, in our home, in our business, anywhere. Something for which we have responsibility, where, if we only applied ourselves with diligence, we could make a difference. Something not holy. All unholiness grieves the Holy Spirit - that which is contrary to His very nature.

He is the Spirit of Truth.

Wherever there is anything that is not *true*, not true, that is false, that is a lie, that is an exaggeration... all the forms of untruth... wherever there is anything like that, it is contrary to His nature and it grieves Him. Anything *untrue* will grieve Him, and He will stop, and say, "I can't go on, I can't go on."

He is the Spirit of Unity.

That has been touched on this morning, it will be touched on more fully probably later, the Spirit of unity in this very letter from which we have read. There are the words, "Give diligence to keep, *keep* the unity". Give diligence to keep the unity! It seems that many people give diligence to break it, to spoil it. Give *diligence to keep it!* Are you sure you are doing that? Giving diligence to keep? Not seeking out, or taking up the things which divide and making a lot of them; where you don't agree. Why not be positive and concentrate upon the grounds of oneness and enlarge them? And so we will get over the other. He is the Spirit of unity. The unity of the Spirit... and where there is disunity and division, He is grieved. And mark you, He'll say, "I can't go on. I am stopped. I am arrested." He *must* have that which answers to His own nature.

He is here in this letter called

The Spirit of Revelation.

Illumination: if the Holy Spirit shows something, gives some light, gives some truth, gives some knowledge, and you and I do not apply ourselves to it, to obey it, and to walk in it, the Spirit is grieved; the Spirit of revelation. And He will say, "I can give no more. I must stop giving; no more until what I have given has been obeyed." He is grieved where He has given light and it is not obeyed.

He is the Spirit of Grace.

I would like to enlarge that word, because it does mean this - He is the Spirit of *graciousness*. It is true to the Word. For, after all, is not the grace of God His graciousness? How we lack graciousness, don't we? How gracious the Spirit is! All those elements of long-suffering, and patience, and forbearance... what we owe to the Spirit of grace! Brothers and sisters, we shall reveal how much of

the Spirit there really is in us by our graciousness.

Make no mistake about it, a Holy Spirit adorned life and governed life, will be a gracious life; patient, forbearing, longsuffering, kindly, and courteous. And courteous... you know, that's a New Testament word, it's not just a word in the book of etiquette, it is a word in the New Testament. Be courteous! It's an aspect of graciousness, being courteous. You must think about what that means. Yes, there are such things as Holy Spirit good manners, good taste, *fitness* in behaviour and in attitude. He is the Spirit of *grace* and where there is not graciousness or any of these things that are meant by 'grace', He is grieved. He's grieved! If you and I should be ungracious, discourteous, rude, the Spirit is grieved. You may have got very big, high ideas of what it means to be baptised with the Holy Spirit, but it means that, it means that! It may mean power in service; it *may* be in being able to give addresses, it may be in many of these public ways, *but* these you ought to attend to, but not neglect the others. And the others are these: kindly thoughtfulness, and courtesy. They are marks of the Holy Spirit and where they are lacking, He is grieved.

He is the Spirit of Meekness.

Meekness... if we want another word for "meekness", we could well employ the word "brokenness", because there is no meekness without brokenness. It is in brokenness that our pride ebbs away. It is through the brokenness that our conceits and our arrogance and our self-importance go into the sand. It's in brokenness that meekness is revealed. You may be very clever, you may be very able in many ways, but the mark of the Spirit undoubtedly is in the *meekness of brokenness*. Have you been really *broken* by the Cross, *really* broken by the Cross? Are you a broken spirit? Is there a fundamental brokenness in you as a brother or sister in Christ? Really? A brokenness?

Remember: there is no Pentecost until there is a Calvary. There is no Holy Spirit until there has been a Cross, and if the Cross speaks of one thing, it does speak of brokenness, doesn't it? He was broken. He was broken! These men of the New Testament were broken men, broken vessels and meekness adorned them because of that. And the Spirit is the Spirit of meekness. Peter speaks about being adorned with a meek and quiet spirit. Well, so we could go on, but this is enough, surely, to indicate that grieving the Spirit is just contradicting what He is in Himself, and in so doing, putting something in His way so that He can't go on.

Grieve not the Spirit of God, whereby you were sealed unto all that Sonship means. And Sonship means all these things that I have mentioned in their *full* development. Sonship sounds a technical word, I know, and a very theological word, but if you think about it, after all it is only all that Christ is in His fullness. And this creation yet to be, when redeemed from the bondage of corruption, is thus to be filled to the exclusion of all else, filled with what Christ is, reproduced by the Holy Spirit in you and in me. That's Sonship.

May we not put anything in the way of the Holy Spirit, grieve Him. Give Him a way, a clear way, a full way, to remain in us individually, and in us together. The "going" Spirit - always going.

Chapter 4 - The Spirit of Power

In continuing our occupation with this great matter of the significance of the Holy Spirit, there is a fragment familiar (as familiar as any other perhaps, in the New Testament) which we are going to take this evening, to lead us a little further in this matter. It is in the first chapter of the Book of the Acts, at verse 8. Acts 1 verse 8: "Ye shall receive power *when* the Holy Spirit is come upon you."

"Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." I want to place alongside of that some other not so simple, but perhaps almost equally well-known words, from the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Lifting out of verses 17, 18 and 19, these words... Ephesians 1:17,18,19 and I'd like you to keep your finger in that place until later: "*That ye may know* what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand."

"Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you" ... "that ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe". There is a sense in which the whole book of the Acts is gathered into that one word: "*power*". The entire narrative of events in that book (and it is a very full, and comprehensive, and detailed one) is just the story of the working of that power promised by the Lord Jesus, having come with the Holy Spirit. We could rename the book, "The Book of the Power of the Holy Spirit". That's the word that interprets it and explains it.

I have passed you on to those words in the Letter to the Ephesians for two reasons. Firstly, the man who wrote those words was one of the examples of the working of that power in the book of the Acts. Nothing less or other than the exceeding greatness of His power could account for Paul the apostle after Paul the persecutor. Indeed, he is a sample and an example of the exceeding greatness of His power. It's just wonderful to see in his own case the mighty working of that power in his arrest - "apprehension" as he called it - and conversion. It is one amongst many, perhaps outstanding amongst many, of those examples of this great power at work, which leads us to wonder and to worship.

We have said (and you will find it in the next issue of the "A Witness and A Testimony" [["According to Christ" Part 4](#)]) that just at that point, you stand back and almost gasp with wonder as you recognise the *tremendous significance* of the young man, Stephen. We have never yet discerned the *tremendous* significance of that young man. *He* was the one through whom this same Holy Spirit introduced the meaning of the great change in the dispensations. In that marvellous discourse before the Jewish rulers he takes us right back over the old dispensation; the history of that people, right the way back, and traces it step by step and stage by stage, defining and describing, and brings it right up to Jerusalem there and then. And with a few mighty, deft, touches, says, "That's all finished and a new order has come in, which is altogether different. It is the order of the heavenly and of the spiritual, as over against the earthly and the temporal. That's finished! The temple is finished!" he says. And think of it: in Jerusalem, under the shadow of that temple, with all those so devoted to the temple and its service; right there under its shadow he says, "But God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Say that outside St. Peter's, Rome, or even St. Paul's, London, declare that and see what the rulers of the church will say!

"God dwelleth not in temples made with hands". He indicated a change in dispensations, the whole character of things. No wonder they gnashed upon him with their teeth. And they stoned Stephen,

calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus, and said, "We will have none of that! We will finish that!" And as they cast their deadly stones upon the young man... seeing the heavens opened and Jesus the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God... they thought they had done with that. And in that self-same moment the Holy Ghost came with conviction upon another young man consenting to his death who was taken up very soon afterward, to carry on that great revelation to its fullness all over the world. I say you gasp with wonder as you see the wonderful power and the *infinite ingenuity* of the Holy Spirit.

That young man is the young man who, so soon after that event, came into an experience of the discovery of the exceeding greatness of His power, and here wrote upon it, or said that he prayed that the whole church might know it. When we allow that man, that man, that example of that power to present to us what it meant to him, as recorded in this whole statement in the Letter to the Ephesians, and to note that he is attributing it to the same Holy Spirit: "That He would grant unto you a Spirit of revelation that you may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power... ye shall receive power... the Holy Spirit coming upon you", by the same Spirit.

When we, I say, allow Him to speak to us about this power, the first thing that meets us, or that we meet, is something that completely disconcerts us.

The Disconcerting Effect of this Revelation

Look at it again, I will just lift out one fragment of this whole statement. We're not dealing with Ephesians 1 and the great prayer of Paul, but just extract this clause, "That you may know what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints". The riches of the glory of *His inheritance in the saints*. Now, if he had only put it the other way round, we would have no difficulty at all, "the riches of the glory of our inheritance in Him", that presents no problem at all, we can stand up to that! But when a man dares to speak of "the riches of the glory of His inheritance..." in *me*? In *you*? Supposing that was said to you, really, personally, those words were used to you, addressed to you personally, "that you may know the *riches of the glory of His inheritance in you*". What would you say? You'd say, "Oh, look here, look here, what are you talking about? What are you talking about? You don't know me. If you knew me, you wouldn't talk to me like that. You go and tell someone else that! There are some people, perhaps, to whom you might tell it, but don't you talk to me like that. You don't know my depravity, the depravity of my nature. You don't know what I know about myself, my own heart, my sinfulness. If you only knew a little, you would shut the book and go away, and say, 'Now, that doesn't apply there! The riches of the glory of His inheritance... in him, in her...' You don't know all my defeat in the battle, and in the work... how I have striven and failed... how again and again... the forces of evil have got the mastery... and I have been a pathetic casualty in this warfare. You don't know of my secret history of defeats, or you couldn't talk like that to me if you did. You don't know my penury, my poverty of spiritual life. To know only a little of such things about me would send you off in quest for someone else to talk to like that: 'the riches of the glory of His inheritance' in this?"

The apostle deals in superlatives. He says some *tremendous* things, *immense* things, that you just cannot cope with... you cannot stand up to them. You have to say: "Yes, that may be true, if it is, it will be true of better stuff than I am, better people than I. It cannot possibly be true of me. I cannot obtain unto that. That's *far* too high for me... altogether beyond possibility where I am concerned. 'The *riches*...' and I am so poor. I am a beggar and you are talking about the riches of His inheritance in me? 'Glory' for Him, in me? I'm daily ashamed of myself. My more common attitude about myself is 'Wherefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes'. No feigned meekness; real, genuine expression of a heart that knows itself at all, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner'. And *you* talk to me about the riches

of the glory of His inheritance?"

You see, it's, it's over-powering, it's disconcerting, it is almost paralysing. But he said it! He said it, it is here in the Holy Writ. It's Scripture. But you see, you've got to go on, that only prepares you for something, that only leads you to the next thing: "What is the exceeding greatness of *His power to us-ward...*" To that-ward, the exceeding greatness of His power to that poverty, to that shame, to all that! "The exceeding greatness of His power... that you may know *that!* That changes the picture, doesn't it?

We will all admit that nothing short of the *exceeding* greatness of His power will do it, but that's it: "You *shall* receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you". And as we have read this evening, and this was the purpose of that reading, the Lord Jesus said that, "When He, the Spirit is come, He will guide you into all the truth". He will *reveal*. The Holy Spirit coming upon you will *make you know*. Make you know; that's what the Lord Jesus was saying, He'll make you *know* what you don't know now, He'll make you know. And so Paul prays, "That you may *know* what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward". Then, if that, if that exists, if that is available, if that is true, the picture changes from one of hopelessness to marvellous hope. Then it's possible that out of this rubbish-heap, out of these ashes: riches... glory... of His inheritance can come. How, I don't know. But here it is: there is the power sent from God to do that in you and in me.

It's not my intention to follow that through, to try and show how it works out, but this man, this man, this example of it, you may think he was a very wonderful man before his conversion. From some standpoints, he may have been a very fine fellow. But you cannot read Paul intelligently after his conversion without discovering that he had a very poor opinion of himself. He spoke of himself as "the least of all saints", and as one who ought never to be called an apostle: "Unworthy to be called an apostle... the least of all saints... because I persecuted the church". Paul never got away from it, he never got away from it. It was something that was like a thorn in him to his death, this that he had done, the kind of fellow he was, and what came from him. He never forgave himself, he never got over it. It was a wound ever open in his soul. You read him again, and I repeat: he had a very poor opinion of himself, indeed he had. "The least of all saints". Do you hear that? That is not pretence, that is not just mock meekness and humility... "the *least* of all saints". Now, put over against that "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in...", yes, "the *least* of all saints". How? "The exceeding greatness of His power toward us". Toward us!

Paul is praying out of some experience of that power in such as he knew himself to be, that all saints might know that. Know it, "That you might know" he says. And dear friends, there is one thing about power, that is that you can never know it other than in experience. You can talk about power, you can have all your ideas of power, but you can never really *know* it only in experience, in an inward way. We have the theory of power, but that is not:

Knowing Power.

Some long time ago, when I returned from my last visit to America, I told you a story. I'm going to repeat that again, you may have forgotten it, but it is very, I think, apropos of what I am trying to say now. I was at a conference and one of the other speakers was the son of a very well known servant of God in America, a man whose name I had known, of whom I had read much, and I was very glad to meet his son and to ask, like the king asked Gehazi about the works of Elisha, to ask for first-hand information about this great servant of God. He told me quite a lot of things, amongst them was this. His father was very interested in the American Indians in a certain settlement, and the government were very anxious that that Indian settlement should be developed and modernised, and provided

with all the up-to-date accessories of civilisation, modern life. And they asked this man what he thought would be the best way of introducing these things to these people who were ignorant, and very suspicious, and unbelieving, not prepared to accept anything at its face value. They wanted to be very sure of everything.

The man said, "Well, I think the only way in which you'll do it will be to get one or two of the most influential and intelligent of the Indians, and bring them *out into* city life here and let them see it."

"All right," they said, "Well, you go and find the men."

So he went back to the Indian settlement, and stayed there a little while, watching and talking, until he found a man who had more influence than anyone else, and seemed to have more intelligence and was at least willing to come and have a look for himself. So he took him away up country to one great city, took him into a hotel, a modern American hotel. And it was night, late in the evening, and getting dark quickly. And as they went into their room, the man who was conducting the Indian put his finger on the electric light switch and on came the light.

And the Indian was startled, "How did that happen? What did you do?"

"Oh," he said, "I simply put my finger on that little button there."

"I don't believe it. I don't believe it. Do you mean to tell me that all that is just in that little button? You have only just got to touch that little thing and all this comes on? I don't believe it!"

"Very well," said the man. Switch off. He switched it off. "Stand on that table." And he took out the bulb.

He said, "Put your thumb up inside that socket."

And he went to the door and the next moment the Indian was picking himself up from the corner of the room, very shaken and very bruised.

The man said, "Do you believe it now?"

"Oh yes, I believe it now, I believe it now!"

Now, perhaps there's some humour in that, but you see the point. You don't know power, only in experience. This power is not a doctrine, a theory, a subject, or theme; it's a Person! The Holy Spirit is not a topic in the Bible, or a doctrine of the church; the Holy Spirit is a Living Person, and an experience. Now, the difference, of course, in the truth, or a large degree of the truth of our experience and that of the Indian's is just this: it doesn't always work like that with us.

This power doesn't suddenly come upon, or take hold, and rend us and throw us about and do that sort of thing so that we *feel* it. But, dear friends, dear friends, if you live long enough, and some of you have lived long enough, to know the *immense* forces that are set against the Christian life, the forces of this world, the forces of the powers of darkness. How, and it is not an exaggerated word, how *terrific* are the forces that are set against what is of Christ in this universe. If you have any knowledge of that, it is nothing short of the miracle of the exceeding greatness of His power that you're a Christian today, and that you have *continued* in the way thus far. Paul put it like this, "having received the help which comes from God I continue unto this day". He would have put it the other way: "But for the help that comes from God I would not be here today." Do you know

something about that? What is it that has kept? What is it that is behind your going on in spite of yourself? For it is in spite of ourselves, it is in spite of ourselves. Left to ourselves what should we have done? It will not bear thinking about. In spite of all the forces of evil in this universe concentrated upon the smallest fragment of Jesus Christ, we go on! We don't feel it, indeed, more often than otherwise, we feel the weakness, we feel our own unworthiness and helplessness, perhaps wonder if ever we *shall* be able to continue. But there you are, there is the fact. This power is not like the power that that man met, coming suddenly with a shock; it is a mighty, mighty working power day by day that keeps us on the road.

"That you may know the exceeding greatness of His power." But there's a bridge... there is a bridge between all that which we are and that which we are not, and that which makes us hear such words with consternation, amazement, and even doubt. There's a bridge between that and the exceeding greatness of His power. What is it?

"To Us-ward Who Believe"

The two are brought together and joined by that word "believe". Believe. We have been very interested recently in that marvellous feat of engineering, the great St. Lawrence River by which the mighty ocean and the Great Lakes (and I don't know whether you all realise how great they are, you could take out the British Isles and drop them in and not know where they'd gone) the linking of the mighty ocean and these Great Lakes with this canal was all effected, made real, actual, brought into operation, by the breaking down of a little gap. There's the ocean, there's the mighty lake, there's a channel between the two. They have had to keep for a time, while they made the channel and the canal, keep just a barrier to keep those apart while the work was going on. And then the day came to blow it up, get rid of that gap, that hold-up and when it was gone, the mighty fullness at both ends met. We may have the barriers that are keeping this fullness unexperienced, unknown, unrealised, ineffective: the barrier of unbelief, the barrier of unfaith. It's to us-ward, but it is to us-ward who *believe* - who believe. All that, listen again: "That you may know what is the hope of His calling" and you'll dwell upon that for all eternity, for all eternity is going to be required to show what that is; the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward. Vast oceans, *mighty* fulnesses, all held up because we do not believe, waiting for release. It is to us-ward who believe.

I can say no more. We can only say, "Lord, help our unbelief, help our unbelief." But the answer of the Lord: "Ye *shall* receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you". How important it is that we *receive* the Holy Spirit, give the Holy Spirit His place, for His place is that of *Lordship*. Paul says: "The Spirit is Lord, and where the Spirit is Lord, there is liberty". Release!

Well, may we be granted this opening up faith, this releasing faith, this apprehending faith. It's not in sensation, or in conscious power, there's the paradox ever and always in this connection, that the man could speak like this, again and again refer to it, "The exceeding greatness of His power", "according to the power that worketh in us" and so on and the same man to be talking just as much about his weakness, his weakness, his dependence, his conscious weakness. It's a paradox. No, this power works deeper than our consciousness, deeper than our consciousness. It's at work when we are least conscious of it. The Holy Spirit goes on with His work even when we are in the grip of fears about ourselves. And when you and I at last are in the Lord's presence, like Him, because we see Him as He is, there will be nothing to say but, "This is the exceeding greatness of *His* power", His power!

Chapter 5 - The New and Spiritual Creation

In the book of the Acts, chapter 2, and the first verse: "And when the day of Pentecost was in the course of fulfilment" or, "being fulfilled". We are, in these gatherings, having our attention taken up with the crisis of Pentecost and the significance of the Holy Spirit; we continue with that this morning.

Now, when we take up the Bible we find that there are two books which are the seed plot from which many succeeding generations take their character and their explanation. They are the two books of genesis, one in the Old Testament (which in the English Version goes by that name) the other in the New Testament which goes by the name of the Acts. You must remember that the writer of this second book never gave to it the title of "The Acts of the Apostles". To him it was simply The Acts. Others have appended definitions. In that very fact you have the first similarity of beginnings, genesis: the books of the acts of the Lord.

Both of these books, one in the Old Testament and the other in the New, are books of the beginnings of creation. The first, the beginnings of the material creation. The second, the beginnings of the new and spiritual creation. That is a very simple statement, but it is one to keep in mind always, because, especially this book of the Acts is so often taken up on its fragments, its parts, its components, and looked at, and handled, and dealt with, as things in themselves. We preach on the various incidents; spend a lot of time with the details of the book, the chapters and their contents, the movements and the happenings. That is quite right and we shall continue to do so more and more, but we shall be particularly helped if we always keep this in mind: that this whole book is a book of genesis, as truly a book of genesis in the New Creation, as the other is the book of genesis in the material creation.

No one would take one part of the Old Testament book and look upon it (I refer to the first chapters particularly) as something in itself. We look upon all that we have there in the first two chapters of Genesis as of one piece; *all* making up the creation. We have to do that with the book of the Acts... to see that everything here belongs to this *new order* which has been introduced on the Day of Pentecost.

Both of these books follow a certain clearly defined line, the same line. The one in material things, but the other exactly the same line in spiritual things, the spiritual principles are the same in both books. In the one those principles are perhaps hidden, enshrined, embodied in temporal things, in material things, in earthly things. In the other they are *manifestly spiritual* things; we might say, *nakedly* spiritual things, but in principle they are identical. That is for one simple reason, and yet profound reason: that they both come from One Mind. They both emanate from a single Mind with a single purpose. There is not one purpose in the material creation and another in the new creation. Behind them both is the one thought, and one purpose, as I think we shall see.

Now, if you just make a summary of some of the major features of the beginnings in the Old Testament, it is not difficult to make your transition to the New. That we shall do. In the Old Testament book you have these seven beginnings, the beginning of the revelation of God. The fact of God, and the knowledge of God. Begin there. Secondly, the fact and the layout, or constitution, or order of the universe. Thirdly, the fact of the nature of man. Fourthly, the fact of corporate life and its nature. Fifthly, the fact and nature of sin. Sixthly, the cause and the occasion of nations. And lastly, the promise and the principles of salvation. All those seven things are at their beginning in the book of Genesis in the Old Testament.

In our thought, then, we pass over to the book of the Acts, and here we are confronted with that first and primary fact of the Bible, unmistakable:

"In the Beginning God"

"In the beginning... God..." that's where the Bible begins, that's where the old creation begins, with the primary fact of God. You will remember that when the apostle Paul made his so-rich, full statement that, "In Christ Jesus there is a new creation; the old things have passed away, and all have become new", he was careful to add: "*but* all things are of God". As truly in the New Creation as in the old, it begins with God. It all comes out of God and when we come to this book of the Acts, we are encountering God at every point and at every turn. It is God with whom we have to do, in this book. In the days of these happenings, these many wonderful happenings, that *was* the thing that was being brought home more and more to everybody, the encounter with God.

And we might just pause to remember that in the Old Testament statement, "In the beginning God", the word is "Elohim" the Triune God. The Triune God, it is the plural term for God. You come to the book of the Acts there is no doubt about it that you are dealing with the Triune God and They are so one, and yet so distinct, that sometimes you don't know which of the Trinity you are dealing with. There's no doubt you're dealing with God the Father here, for the book begins with the ascension, or receiving up of the Lord Jesus. And all the teaching about that is that "God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand". The position in which you find the Lord Jesus throughout this book, is the direct act of God. And to take the words of the writer of the Hebrew letter, "And of the Son he saith, Thy throne, oh God". And it was just at least the possibility that it might be so that brought that pause when Gamaliel warned, warned and said: "Let these men alone. If this thing be of God, you might be found fighting against God!" We would like to think that it was not just a philosophical statement, a bit of human wisdom, but that Gamaliel was seeing, or discerning, or sensing something in this movement that was more than human, but whether that was so or not, the fact remained and remains, that what we have here is the encounter with God and God's encounter with man. On the one side, it did prove to be fighting against God and there are few people in this record who found that that is, at least, a precarious thing to do. Herod, outstandingly, found that: "The Lord smote him". Ananias and Sapphira discovered that. Simon, the sorcerer, discovered this fact: that here it is not just God's representatives, not apostles, not a new teaching, not a new religious system, not a new cult, but *God*. Immediately, directly: *God!*

Dear friends, we do not hurry on just to accumulate truth and material. I'm sure you agree that the need today, above all needs, is that men should encounter God in the church, encounter God in the preaching, that it should be the bringing of God into the scene and the situation; the impact of *God*, the Triune God. We need to recover that sense when we meet together, for when they met together, that was *the* dominating consciousness, and when others came in, they fell down and said: "*God* is in the midst of you!" *In the beginning, God...*" out of that everything takes its rise and its character.

We are dealing with God. It is a very solemn thing, a very solemn thing. Should it be less real now than it was then? Is this another dispensation? Have we moved out of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, of the book of the Acts? No, we are still in that age. We are still under that aegis, but, oh, for this recovery, this restoration, of the tremendous solemnity of the personal Presence of God in everything.

Of course we believe these things, but we take so much for granted, don't we? We assume so much... If we had the consciousness that they had of God, the presence of God, the Spirit of God... if our belief was a *living* belief, which means that the thing was *real* to us, how much more careful we

should be, we would take the warnings from these tragedies of this book and walk softly before God. That's on the one side, there's a warning in this. Any company of people, be they but one hundred and twenty (for that was all in that room at that time, just one hundred and twenty; might be even fewer) you don't have to have one hundred and twenty, you can have a dozen or less, but any company anointed with the Holy Spirit has to be regarded as having the presence of God, as *meaning* that God is there. And as it worked out in this book, not only in the company and the companies, but in the individuals, the individuals! And they were not all apostles of the twelve; that is why you dare not call this book "The Acts of the Apostles", because the apostles are hardly mentioned; only one or two of them figure in this book. People who *do* figure here in outstanding service were not apostles, but they were filled with the Holy Spirit; they were anointed and what resulted was that when men met them, they met God, and had to reckon with God. To touch them was to touch God! Pentecost means that, you see, right at the beginning. It is the *beginning* of things, it's the beginning of things and you get nowhere until this is recognised, for all comes out of this - the beginning is God.

Let us pray earnestly for a recovery and restoration of the sense, and power, and holiness of *God*... in our own personal lives, in our personal lives: "Know ye not that your bodies are a temple of God?" That's personal or individual. To the same people the apostle addressed a word as to them corporate: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of the Holy Ghost?" That's corporate, a company in Corinth. Now, in the Old Testament, we do know especially at the beginning, before the great apostasy, what the Tabernacle and the Temple meant in this respect: the Presence of God. It was glorious! It was joyous, but it was terrible - it was terrible! Now, we speak about that side, because it is very important, dear friends, that we have a *new sense of God*, but on the other side, the presence of the Lord, in His presence... in His presence... there is joy, there is gladness. When the Lord filled the Sanctuary, the song began, the Song of the Lord began.

Well, I need not, and I am not going to enlarge upon this, the first of these many features of beginnings, out of which everything else comes, but notice first, the primary factor in the New Creation, is God. There is nothing cheap about this; nothing common-place about God; nothing ordinary about God. Perhaps our God is too small. Perhaps we have made Him like ourselves, and we do! We do think of the Lord as being according to our own minds. I so often have to remind people who come to me, and tell me of their deplorable state: that they have done this, and done that or they have failed to do this and that, and therefore they have fallen out of the favour of God, and they have lost their salvation. And when I come to say, "What is it you've done?" They focus it all down on to some fault, some mistake, some thing. And I have to say, "Is that the size of your God? Is He no bigger than that? Is He not capable to deal with a thing like that? To handle a matter like that? He has been handling tens of millions of things like that all through the centuries, and clearing them up. Is He so small as your one delinquency? Is that the size of your God?" And I know in many other respects, dear friends, we need to get the true dimensions of God as the background of everything. We will not get through unless He is an adequate Lord, unless He is God over all. And that's what this book has as its background.

The second characteristic or feature of the creation, of the two creations, is:

The Brooding Spirit.

"The Spirit of God *brooded* over the face of the deep..." that's the Old Testament statement. When you come to the book of the Acts, you cannot but, if you are entering into the spirit of it, the atmosphere of it, dwelling with it, not just reading on to read a book, or a story, a narrative - if you're quietly thinking and feeling your way from the beginning, giving time, you cannot but feel that in chapter one of this book (and there were no chapters when Luke wrote it, it just moves quietly from

phase to phase in one unbroken narrative) that in what is in our arrangement "chapter one", there is a pause... but a very pregnant pause. There is... something suspended and something going to happen. I think if you had been with the one hundred and twenty there, that would have been the thing that you would have felt: we are in a kind of parenthesis, we are in a pause. We are holding our breath; something is going to happen... there's something, as we would say, "in the air".

It is only in the book of the Acts, remember, that we know anything about the forty days after the resurrection. Although Luke wrote his Gospel, and brought us to the time of the Lord's ascension, he never said anything about the forty days, plus ten. When he wrote the "Acts", he put that in - a period between two periods; a parenthesis, but a waiting, an expectation, a wondering... a sense of something going to happen. I am quite sure that that is exactly what obtained in the Old Testament when, over the chaos the Spirit brooded. It was just not negative, nebulous, abstract, there was something of a tension, something there with a meaning, something positive in its way - something's going to happen! Whether that was so or not, there is no doubt about it here.

This waiting, this waiting, this tarrying commanded by the Lord - tarrying in Jerusalem - was a tarrying which had a positive element in it. You see, if you're waiting for something, that you have been told it is going to happen, you might go out shopping while you are waiting. You might take a walk around in the country while you're waiting. Well, we have got to wait, see you're just waiting, that's all, and so you occupy the time. But they were not like that. They were on poise. They were together, it says; they were altogether. They are under the government of something that is about to take place, "the brooding Spirit", creating this sense of suspense, if you like, even tension. But note again the correspondence in the Old Testament in the first material creation, the Spirit brooded over a state of chaos, of *un-order* (forgive me creating a word, I prefer it to "disorder") *un-order*. If you look at everything from the moment that the Lord Jesus was crucified, died, you find something akin to chaos. All integration has been lost. Things have gone to pieces! No one knows what to do, where to go, how to behave. There is no pattern, no plan, no ability to do anything. Everybody is governed by one big question: "What does it all mean? Where is it leading?" Well, in mind and heart they were truly in chaos. You can see it, all of them like that. No order, no system; no assurance, certainty, confidence; all at a loss to know what to do. The Spirit brooding over it all... So it was as this New Creation is about to be brought into being.

I wonder what was happening during that pause of fifty days. Of course, from the Old Testament we have some indications from the types, that is, the presenting of the first-fruits to God before the harvest. We have all that, but have we not something more than that? I trust this is not imagination, I think there is Scripture for this. There is that statement made by the writer of the Hebrew letter about the Lord Jesus (and you know that that letter is about Him, and particularly in its beginnings, about the Son, the Son) "And having tasted death, and been made perfect through suffering, was crowned with glory and honour..." there is this statement: "Whom He appointed heir of all things". "Whom He appointed heir of all things..." that appointment may have been made before the first creation, but it would seem to be like this: that, before God came out in creative activity in the first creation, before He began what we have in that first book of the Bible and its first chapters, He had appointed His Son Heir of all things. Then, "through whom He made the worlds." The creation demanded and required that the Son should be in the Divinely appointed place. Nothing can be done until that happens. He was the Heir! A usurper came in and stole the inheritance, but the Son came forth and cast out the usurper, and recovered the inheritance in His cross, and now takes His place, Divinely appointed place, as Heir of all things. And from *that* the Spirit of God proceeds to secure unto Him a new creation in Christ Jesus. What was happening during those ten days, in particular? We have intimations that even during the forty days He was appearing in the Presence of the Father, but we'll not make everything of that. During the ten days after He had gone, was He taking His place,

Divinely appointed from all eternity? Was He being given the place of God's right hand, which was His by right - the *Heir* of all things? I think that's what the Word teaches very clearly, that's what is happening. And when He is in His place, as the heir of the whole created universe, the Spirit begins the New Creation in Christ Jesus. The rest of this book is the Spirit *proceeding* to give to the Son His rights in this universe.

The Appointing of the Heir of All Things...

From eternity, through redemption, now installed forever... We will have more to say about that probably, later on, but note: so soon as the Son, the Heir, is in His place established, where Stephen saw Him, the Son of *Man*... (wonderful thing... that is the only time, after Jesus used that title of Himself, that it is used in the New Testament: Son of Man), standing at the right hand of God. Where Paul saw Him, seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. When He is there, the Heir in His place, the suspense is ended, the parenthesis is blotted out, the Spirit comes. And what a breaking of suspense it must have been! What shattering of tension! It is as though *everything* in the universe said: "*This* is what we have been waiting for!" And when we say that, what an abundance of Scripture rushes in: "the *promise* of the Father", "the *promise* made to Abraham", "the *promise* made to David"... all fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, the promise was the promise of the Spirit. "The promise made to Abraham, that we might receive..." or "that upon the Gentiles might come the promise..." that we might receive the Spirit.

When He is there, the suspense is broken. Our brother was saying something to us yesterday afternoon about this. It's still true; it's still true in spiritual experience, your life and my life may be in a state of suspense. The Lord may have purpose... the Lord may be wanting... the Lord may be, on His side, prepared... but the Son is not in His place and everything is in suspense. *How much* is held up on this one thing: that Jesus is not yet absolutely Lord! He is Saviour... ah, yes, but that's what *we* get! We're quite happy about Him being Saviour, because that's for us! *Lord* means what *He* gets. And it isn't always so pleasant. Do you notice this book is just the book of the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ? As they went down before Him, as they proclaimed *Him* - Jesus Christ as Lord - something broke. Something broke. It's a principle, dear friends of the spiritual life, the individual spiritual life.

The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the key to so much release... so much release. And what is true of the individual may be true of a company of the Lord's people anywhere. In the company together, as a whole, without one of its parts standing out, resisting, rebelling, acting contrary... where there's a company with Jesus as Lord completely, you will find release. But where it is not so, there's suspense; there's suspense. The Lord just cannot find His way, He cannot go on, He is bound by this is the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ. He's bound to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He's committed to that. He *will not* depart from it and He will have it utter, and He will say, "Yes, on seven points you acknowledge it and accept it, but there are three points where you don't. Or nine points, but there is one point where you don't."

Many of you, if you did not know him, know of him, when I speak of Dr. F. B. Meyer - a man greatly used of God, undoubtedly. And those of us who knew him personally, knew the fragrance of Christ in that life. Do you know how he came to be such a fragrant life, and such a used servant? He tells his own story, indeed, he was never tired of telling his own story, giving his own testimony, and it's on record now. And I heard him tell it personally. He said, "Up to a point in my life as a minister, I was very earnest, I was very sincere. I gave myself with *all* my might to preaching, and to working for God... And there was a considerable amount of blessing. *But* I knew that it was not all well; in my own heart I knew there was something that was standing in the way of what I felt ought to be the

fullness of the Spirit. I longed for the fullness of the Spirit, I prayed for the fullness of the Spirit, and this great craving and longing steadily brought me lower and lower until the day came when I cast myself at the feet of the Master, and said, 'Lord, I hand up the keys of my life, and put them into Your hands.'" He said, "The Lord looked at the bunch of keys, and said, "There is one missing!" One missing! He said, "I thought I was getting away with it with the Lord. I thought that I was going to get through, and I knew about that one key in my life that I hadn't included, that I had kept back, that I had taken off the bunch and was holding in reserve. And the Lord knew it as well, and the Lord said, 'We're not going to get any further until you bring that key. Oh, there is a large bunch of keys, all this you offer Me... all these things you will do for Me, and be for Me, but... but.... And the *whole* is held up for the one thing. We're not going to get through until it is a *complete* surrender.'"

Now, I happen to know what that one key was, I'm not going to mention it because it might not be your key at all. It might just divert the point and you'd say, "Oh well, that's not my trouble!" Ah, but it might be something else. But Meyer let go... he broke there and he said, "Lord, here it is. You take it. I give it. I have nothing more in reserve." That day the blessing came into his life, and a wonderful blessing it was, for he got a new lease of life for twenty years - twenty years. And some of us saw the *tremendous* change that took place at that point, and what was afterward of fruitfulness.

Now, I am not concentrating upon the matter of an experience like that, but I am simply concentrating upon the *principle* of the old and the new creation. It is the heir of *ALL* things - not nine-tenths, but *all* things in His place as Heir. "Whom He appointed heir of..." not this and that, and a few things, or many things, or most things, but *all* things. When that is so, the Spirit proceeds as He did at that time. Jesus was Lord.

And I may not stay with too much detail, but you, if you will just look into it, will see that there were two sides to this matter. There was what took place in heaven in the exalting and the instating of Jesus as Lord. But you know, there had been quite a lot of things amongst these very people, the hundred and twenty, even the twelve, that they were not prepared to let go of. Some had said: "Um, Lord, we have forsaken all for Thy sake, what shall we have? What shall we have? What are we going to get out of it?" There had been an enquiry for the top place in the Kingdom, a quest for that, you see. There were jealousies and rivalries and it all amounted to personal interest, didn't it? Personal interest, even in the Kingdom of God. The Lordship of Jesus had to come upon all that, come upon all that. When that was settled, the Spirit went on.

If we would take one further feature this morning, and it is quite clear that we are not going to get through this morning... when you are dealing with a universe you want more than an hour or so! But the next, the third feature in these creations, is what we may call the "Divine fiat".

The Divine Fiat

And God said, "Let light be! And there was light". That is in the old material creation, the starting point of real activity down here. When things are right in the presence of God, the Son is in His place, in His appointment, then down here things begin. And there was this Divine fiat: "And God said, Let light be, and there was light". We can leave the Old Testament, and see the correspondence to this in Acts.

There is no mistaking this, that the Day of Pentecost was a day of revelation, of *marvellous illumination*. Why, immediately Peter stood up with the eleven, he said: "Men of Israel, be it known unto you..." That's a new movement for Peter, "Be it known unto you..." the day of the beginning of a new revelation. And then you go through his discourse, his discourse; what a revelation is in it! He's

taking up the Old Testament.

If Peter had really seen all this before Calvary, he would never have denied his Lord, but it's broken upon him now, and he begins to use the Old Testament in an all together new way. The book has become alive and alight! "These are not drunken as ye suppose, but *this is that* which was spoken by the prophet Joel." This is that! That's something new to Peter; he knew Joel, but he had never "seen" Joel. And he goes on, goes on with David. What a large section in that discourse there is about David, David; what David said, and what the Lord said to David, leading right up to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. David saying, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption" and Peter says, "All this is before you now fulfilled!" His Bible has leapt into life and light. God had said, "Let light be!" - the Spirit of revelation had come! His eyes were opened and how profound is his insight when he says that the things which had happened at Jerusalem were all according to... what? "The determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." "Oh, Peter! Peter! You denied the Lord Jesus because you were afraid that you might be involved in the trouble. Peter! Is it you speaking? That all that which caused you the utmost consternation, and made you go to the utmost limits to save yourself from being involved in it, is it *you* speaking, Peter? 'This was according to the foreknowledge, pre-determinate counsel of God...' this was all planned and met long, long before it happened, in the counsels of God?" Yes, truly, this was the day of the breaking of the light for a new creation.

Now, that is not all words, friends, it's not all words. Believe me, it is true. It is true to principle. It is! There is such a thing as the Bible leaping into life, which was a closed book. And because it was a closed book, it never led you, it never saved you, it never meant very much to you. But something happens, something happens, God said, "Let there be light!" and the Bible becomes a new book, what we call "an open heaven". It lives. It lives, it throbs. Many things still we don't understand, *but* the thing is living. Our understanding is growing. There is light.

I bid you read this discourse of Peter again, and see, the *light* that this man has got from the Bible, and in the Bible! It is just wonderful, just wonderful! There it is: the Spirit brooding. The Heir in His place. The Divine fiat, "Let there be light" and there was light. The effects...

The Effects

The very first effect of the Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost over this scene and in this realm of, to begin with, the one hundred and twenty, and then moving out. The first effect was to change all their sense of disorder or un-order, and chaos, into a mighty sense of purpose and plan. They're now an integrated people. They are now a one people. I want to dwell more fully upon that at some time, but they are not all fragments, bits scattered here and there. They are not only gathered in one upper room, they are gathered now under one mighty Spirit making them *inwardly* a unit. And what is it that does it? By the Spirit they have become possessed of this consciousness: "We are in a mighty movement God, in a mighty going of God, in a mighty plan of God. There's *meaning* in life; there's *meaning* in things." Very simple, but there it is.

You don't get anywhere until you have this sense, this strong sense, that you are *called according to purpose*. And you *never* have that sense until the Holy Spirit comes in. And the Holy Spirit never comes in until Jesus is Lord. That's the sequence of things.

The sense that we are now, we are *now* saved from a state of disruption, and disintegration, and emptiness, and void - meaninglessness - we are now in something, we are in something! Oh, that every life, and every young life here this morning might come under this, this *tremendous effect* of

the Holy Spirit, that *you* become governed by a sense that God has called you for something, laid hold of you for something, that there's a *meaning* in things; that you're in a movement and a purpose of God. Have you got that? It's an early thing, where Jesus is Lord. It's an early thing where the Holy Spirit is in possession.

Meaning and purpose, then *order*. I am following, mark you, the Old Testament line. After the meaningfulness came in to that erstwhile, meaningless creation, or state, then a new order began to emerge - a wonderful order, a beautiful order... what the prophet calls, "the ordinances of the heavens, and the ordinances of the earth". A beautiful order about everything, isn't there? It's an ordered creation. And when you get order you always get *growth*. Order and growth come together.

We do know that disorder is a very paralysing thing. Disorder... well, if it means growth at all, it means the growth of more disorder, and confusion, and regrets. But a real Divine order produces a wonderful development, increase. So it was in the natural creation, so it is in the spiritual. Look at Acts... not through this second chapter, so-called, before you find it: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers". Lovely order introduced and it goes on. And growth... and growth. So it should be under the aegis of the Holy Spirit: *fruitfulness and reproduction*. Surely they are characteristics of the book of the Acts, aren't they? Spontaneous fruitfulness and reproduction. There's a striking absence of a lot of things from this book that men today think necessary to get results and fruit reproduced - no mention of any organised campaigns, no mention of any machinery set up, no mention of any committees or boards; no mention of all these things - it happened! It came about... spontaneous fruitfulness and spontaneous reproduction. Very beautiful and very simple, and not very costly in terms of material things. Tremendous expenditure there is to get a little result, but here it is. Oh, for recovery of this!

We will have to pray again, very much and earnestly about this whole matter, and seek from the Lord whether this is right doctrine or not, I don't know and I don't care, but let us seek from the Lord a renewed fiat from heaven, a renewed act of God to bring this new creation on to the basis and ground that it was on at the beginning, and make it possible for us really and honestly and truly to say "As it was in the beginning, is now... and ever shall be". We must break off there, not half-way through that section, but it is enough for the present.

Chapter 6 - The Separation of Heaven and Earth

The crisis of Pentecost and the significance of the Holy Spirit. We are much too far advanced now, and have covered much too much ground to do anything adequate in the nature of review and synopsis. But, for the sake of friends who have joined us now for the first time, I will as quickly as possible indicate where we are today; not going back further than this morning.

Today we are seeing that what the book which goes by the name of "Genesis" in the Old Testament is to the material creation - as the book of beginnings and a multiplicity of beginnings - the book of "Acts" in the New Testament is to the *new* creation in Christ Jesus. In the former, spiritual principles are wrapped up in natural ways and means. In the latter, those principles are brought out nakedly; here we have the spiritual principles of all God's works and God's purpose, laid bare. The new creation follows along the line of the old in principle, from step to step, stage to stage, and this morning we considered three of those movements in the old as illustrating and representing those in the new creation in Christ.

We began with the first words: "In the beginning God...". And we spent some time with that in the book of the Acts. The book of the Acts is a new intervention of God in the history of this world, and what we have there is the encounter with God, not just in material things, symbols, and representations and figures, but in direct spiritual reality in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our emphasis in that connection was laid upon this: that the coming of the Holy Spirit, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the advent of the Holy Spirit, the meaning of Pentecost, is to bring a new and mighty registration of God upon this world. And that is not only a statement of truth, it is a test of life; a test of whether we, individually and collectively, both locally and universally, are really living in the good of the advent of the Holy Spirit. Is the impact, the registration, the effect, the influence, the *sense* that God is present, God is here, God is with us? So it was in this "second Genesis". Men thought they were dealing with men, and so they threw them into prison. They martyred them, they persecuted them. They thought they were dealing with a new movement, religion, system, and cult; they treated it as such, and then they encountered God, and found, as Gamaliel said, that they were not fighting men, and not fighting a system of truth, they were fighting against God.

The very first significance, then, of the new creation in Christ, is: God is here - not in forms, not just in instrumentalities as of the Old Testament - but is here personally, actually, directly, immediately. God is here. And we have to reckon with God, but we also have to enjoy God - it works both ways. That is the first thing in both creations: "In the beginning God".

The second thing we noted and dwelt upon was the brooding Spirit. "The Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the water." We pointed out that it was not just an abstract, indefinite brooding... it was in purpose, in anticipation, in what we might call a tension, that something had got to happen, something must be done with this situation, this is not what God intended... this state of things is contrary to the mind of God and the Spirit is there in that mood, brooding, hovering over something that can never satisfy God.

We come to the book of the Acts, we have a period - it may seem a brief one, ten days, the end of the forty - when there was a kind of parenthesis. The atmosphere is full of expectation. Something's

going to happen, something *must* happen, we are tarrying for it to happen... not just being told that something would happen and going for a walk, waiting for it to happen, but tense, concentrated. The Spirit is brooding. There is going to be something. We spent quite a time with that and what it meant and then we went on to the third thing: the Divine fiat, "And God said, Let light be. And there was light".

And coming over to the book of the Acts we saw how, with the Day of Pentecost and the Advent of the Holy Spirit, the darkness fled, the darkness even over the minds of those present. For indeed they had been fumbling in the dark, in the mystery, in the perplexity, wondering what all this meant: this crucifixion, and death, and resurrection. It was all so strange. It needed an explanation, a mighty explanation. They needed to come into the real meaning of it all and there they were. The Spirit came, and immediately, the first thing that happened was that the Bible flew open with new light. Peter standing up with the eleven took up his Bible, it was a new book. He had never seen before, he never could have behaved as he had behaved, if he had seen the meaning of the Cross, that "by the foreknowledge and predeterminate counsel of God" all that had happened. Now he says it! He has got the inner side of the Cross which he had never seen, or he could never have denied his Lord if he had known and seen that. So he takes up his Bible with Joel and with David, and in that wonderful discourse, he opens up the Scriptures as the Lord had opened them to the disciples, he is doing that now under the rays of this new light which had broken... God had said, "Let light be!" and light was! Well, that carries very much more with it than we are now repeating, I am only indicating the lines we have taken.

Now, this afternoon we will go as far as we can with more of this. We come to the fourth great fact in this parallel movement. The fourth fact was

The Separation of Heaven and Earth.

That was one of the first acts of God. Heaven and earth had lost their distinctiveness, they were all mixed up in the chaos. You could not tell which was which. Heaven had come down and enshrouded the earth, and the earth had become beclouded, and it is all there: one indefinite mass. And the Lord said: "We must separate these two things. We must clearly define these two realms, and we must put each in its place. What belongs to heaven must be put there, and what belongs to earth must be put there, and there must be a firmament between; a dividing sphere or realm, a division between heaven and earth.

We come over to the book of the Acts and to the New Testament. May I just here say, by way of getting your minds clear on a matter, that the four Gospels which are bound into our volume of the New Testament before Acts, were not written before Acts. The point is that we have a lot in the Gospels which is illustrative in the life of the Lord Jesus of the spiritual things in the book of the Acts. Now you're going to see that, at least in one connection, in a moment.

Here, then, with this movement, this act, this defining act of God, the door opens and there comes in all the teaching that we have in the New Testament on the difference between the heavenly and the earthly; if you like, between the natural and the spiritual mind. And you, my dear friends, I am quite sure realise to some degree a great, great deal of trouble for want of discrimination between those two things: the putting of those two things apart and into the place to which they belong and knowing what belongs to this realm, and what belongs to that realm. There must be, in the ordaining and ordering and act of God, a firmament or an expanse between heaven and earth. Until that is so, it's still confusion... it's still confusion.

The inability to distinguish and to discriminate here is the cause of almost untold trouble and difficulty. A great example is in the third chapter of the Gospel by John; a wonderful illustration of this very thing: Nicodemus. Nicodemus... what was the final summing up by the Lord of His talk with Nicodemus? In what way did it all head up? What was the verdict that the Lord passed finally upon Nicodemus? "If I have told you earthly things, and you have not understood, what if I shall tell you heavenly?" That is a summing up of everything. Here is a man with a great deal of intelligence, a great deal of education, a great deal of influence in the earth, even religiously. A man who would know his Bible, the Old Testament, very thoroughly; would be fully acquainted with all the movements of history, especially the history of his own people, Israel. A man who is a representative of the fullest of what is earthly in a religious way, fumbling in the dark... wandering in the shadows, feeling out and groping for something like a blind man.

Jesus, in speaking to him about being born from above as the fundamental necessity for the beginning of understanding of heavenly things, says, in effect: "These are two realms and you've got them all mixed up. You're all mixed up; all in a muddle. You're in the dark, Nicodemus, until there takes place something in you from *heaven*, a new birth. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit; until that latter takes place, you will not have a glimpse or a glimmer of the meaning of heavenly things." There's an example. There are, of course, many others. Many others, and when you come into the book of the Acts, you've got them: case after case of men who had inherited and been brought up in the *fullness* of the old order and the old teaching who are completely in the dark!

The Ethiopian eunuch had been up to Jerusalem to the temple, to the very headquarters of all that; been up. No doubt, as he quite evidently was a seeker, a seeker... a man in quest of something, and leaving Jerusalem and returning, having not found what he went for, still a man in the dark... the Spirit takes action. That's the focal point: *the Spirit takes action*, the Holy Spirit, "The Spirit said unto Philip, Go, join yourself to this chariot". Now, note what happened. The man was reading in the prophecies of Isaiah, chapter 53. He has got it, he has got the Bible, he has got what you might call "the very heart of things", so far as the letter is concerned. Philip, by the Spirit, says, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" - that's the point.

There's all the difference between reading the Bible and understanding what you are reading in the *light*, the *illumination* of the Holy Spirit - they're two different things, two different worlds. You may read the Bible and be in one world and then you may read it again and be in another world altogether. And the poor fellow in the dark says, "How can I, except somebody teach me?" Taking up the same Scriptures, Philip preached unto him *Jesus*. And the Holy Spirit shot in and created the space between, put things where they belonged, gave this *wonderful* revelation. Philip must have taken him a long way, must have taken him a long way with Isaiah 53. I doubt whether ever you have heard a sermon on believers' baptism preached on Isaiah 53. Philip evidently did that, for spontaneously the man said, without any reference in the narrative to baptism, "Here's water; what doth hinder me to be baptised?" Philip had evidently instructed him that that One of Isaiah 53 had died for him, and as him, representing him in death and in burial, under the judgment of God. He must have taken him a long way and the man evidently, although it is not said, must have said, "Oh, I see, I see! I have been all mixed up over this thing. I have been all in a fog over this, now I see! It is clear; heavenly things have become real." The things of heaven now were clear to him. Do you see the point, without my dwelling long upon it?

The condition of Nicodemus, or this man, or any other, and perhaps a more outstanding example of this very thing was Saul of Tarsus... any man, if any man knew the earthly side of things religious, he did. He did. He is a man in the dark, isn't he? He afterward repeatedly said things which clearly

indicated how he knew that until heaven broke in, he was a man in the dark. He said, "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me, it pleased God to reveal His Son in me." It is only another way of saying: "When God broke in, when Christ broke in, He put things in their right place and showed me that all that, all that was simply, after all, earthly knowledge. Religious it might be, it was all earthly knowledge. It was simply my *natural ability* to handle and deal with the Word of God, and what a mess I made of it all!" But now, by cutting in between the natural and the spiritual, and putting them in their place, what a tremendous difference it makes! One is lifeless, the other is living.

Now, what does this mean? Well, just this: that a mark of true spirituality (which is only saying of a life governed by the Holy Spirit) is this ability to *discriminate* between things that are earthly and of man, and things which are heavenly and of God. And having said that, dear friends, I have said a momentous thing, if I may say it; a far more important thing than I fear you may recognise, because it's just here that there is so much of the trouble. There is, (listen!) there is as big a difference here amongst Christians, as there is between non-Christians and Christians.

Christianity today is very largely divided between what is called "liberals" and "conservatives", "modernists" and "fundamentalists", they claim that these two are poles asunder. Well, maybe! But what I am saying is this: that there is *just as big a difference* between many evangelical or fundamentalist Christians, and *spiritual* people. Because you believe in the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, the atoning death, the bodily resurrection, the coming again personally, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and so on, that does not make you a spiritual man or woman. You can have all that, and be a most *unspiritual* person in life and in behaviour.

Yes, you may be a... to use the term "fundamentalist" of the most rabid kind, and still be an unsanctified and unspiritual man or woman. There is a big, big gap even there between the earthly and the heavenly. And one of the things that makes for a *spiritual* person, or characterises a spiritual person, is the ability to discriminate between the things that differ. That's a Pauline phrase, isn't it? "The things that differ". And his whole first letter to the Corinthians is based upon that. What chaos! What a mess at Corinth! What confusion! What contradiction! What ineffectiveness! What weakness! What shame! Why? The natural mind had come into the church and had taken hold of things spiritual and brought them down there to that level. The whole effort of the apostle is to bring the Cross in to cut *clean between the natural mind and the spiritual mind*. And he says, "He that is spiritual discerneth all things". Have you grasped this? Really, this is what happened on the Day of Pentecost with these men. They were very earthly up to that point although very devoted religiously, but the Holy Spirit cleft a way between soul and spirit, between the earthly and the heavenly, between the natural and the spiritual. And if you will take this as a key, you will find so much in your New Testament.

The Lord Jesus used the parabolic method because of this very thing. He said to His disciples: "Unto *you* it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to the rest it is not given." Insight, discernment, understanding, discrimination - a faculty, Holy Spirit given, to know really what is heavenly and what is not heavenly, what is earthly. Today Christianity is an awful mix-up of the world with religious things, with Christian things. The two things have over-shadowed one another, and most Christians don't know the difference.

Have I said enough on that matter? You see, the great principle enunciated at the beginning in the material is here laid bare and enforced in the spiritual, in the dispensation of the Spirit. Under the aegis of the Spirit, the government of the Spirit, there is always a clear distinction, discrimination, and division between what is heavenly and what is earthly. And if you haven't got it in your life, you've no testimony. If you are mixed up with what is here as a Christian, you know quite well there

is no *impact* from your life upon your surroundings. You are neutralised, as things were before God separated between heaven and earth.

Now, that may be all very mysterious to some of you, especially younger ones, but if you can't understand it and grasp it, don't just dismiss it as of no meaning, if you are going on in a life in the Spirit, you will learn. The Spirit will tell you in your own heart: "Look here; that belongs to a realm to which you don't belong as a child of God. Leave it alone! Leave it alone." He will also say: "Look here, *this* is the thing that is to your good, to your profit, this is where you should go, where you should be, what you should do, for your spiritual well-being." He will be making the difference for you in your own heart. Oh, for lives and churches, so governed by the Spirit that there is no mixture and confusion, and thereby, neutralising of real effectiveness.

Well, that's too long on one thing, isn't it? Let's come to the next. And I think I will just have to mention this and pass on, because I want to say much more about it, probably in the evening.

The next thing that comes in the order, the all-governing fact:

The Placing of Man in His Position.

I will just mention it, you will recall that man was the crown and the centre of everything in the creative intention of God. In the New Testament it is like that. May I leave it for the time being so as not to spoil it for want of time, because it is of such primary importance, while I go on to the next thing in this movement.

We have got so far: man is in his place, and the Man in His place is the key to everything. The next:

The Adversary.

Now you see, it's very difficult not to stay with that other thing in the book of the Acts, but it's perfectly clear that the Man is in His place when you come into the book of the Acts - *the* Man is in His place - the Centre and the key of everything is there. We will leave Him there for the moment.

Then, the adversary. The Adversary, as his name implies: the *adverse* person. Adverse to all this of God, to God; to God. Adverse to light. Adverse to order - the god of confusion. Adverse to everything, and concentrating his adversity upon the Man. Well, that's perfectly clear. The Man is in His place, the Holy Spirit comes and constitutes, in the beginning, this one hundred and twenty, a corporate expression of the Man - Christ in corporate representation and expression. As Paul puts it, "one new Man".

The next movement is against the Man in heaven and the Man here, as represented in the corporate company. A move to destroy, a move to spoil, the move to *ruin* the new creation as he did the old. And what a move! The book of the Acts is, as you well know, just one long and very full account of the many-sided and malicious activities of the adversary. It is almost fascinating to watch the serpent and his movements. Sometimes subtle, coming round as an angel of light, sometimes poisoning to strike with his venom. But there he is, watch him! Right up to this beautiful, beautiful point: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers". And the Adversary says, "I will destroy that! I'll ruin that! I'll spoil that!" And Ananias and Sapphira become his tools. We have the terrible story of the breaking into that circle, that fellowship, that organic life, of something calculated to disrupt and disintegrate, and bring in death, death, death. The striking of death right into the heart of it.

And I am not going to take you through the book, you know it, but you think again: you see the Adversary at work on this New Creation, to bring it to ruin. He seems to stop at nothing. All right, but what *do* we see? What do we see? You see, as we've said, here's the encounter with God! Oh, thank God, dear friends, that in this dispensation God has committed Himself, involved Himself, and has come into His church to meet this force of evil. And although the church will feel the blows, believers will know the pressure of this spiritual antagonism, the upshot of every onslaught, the upshot of every onslaught is that the Lord has the situation and the issue in His hands. He does! I am tempted to take up instances of it - the book is full of it. Through, through that satanically energised and inspired Herod, satan struck at the church, and struck at a very, very vital point in the church when he struck at Peter. But heaven is interested in this and Herod, and the one who inspires and energises him, has got to reckon with God. The issue is all the worse for Herod!

But the book resolves itself into this: God moves, satan countermoves, and God makes the final move, every time. That is because God is *involved* in this matter with His people; God has *committed* Himself to His church. Pentecost means that! The coming of the Spirit just means God has committed Himself, God has come out, and God has, in effect and in act, said, "This is My business. This is My affair. Touch this, you touch Me; fight this, you fight Me."

And who shall say, difficult as it may be viewing the whole, nevertheless, who shall say that that initial, that original interference of satan in the garden was not taken hold of by God to bring in something greater than ever would have been perhaps, and that something greater is grace. Grace! If man had never fallen to satan, grace would never have been in the dictionary. I say it's difficult to say that in the light of all that grace means, and all that there is that demands grace. Nevertheless, grace is the most wonderful thing that has ever been revealed to man, and it could only come by satan's interference. It's a way of putting things, but it's the key to so much in this book of the Acts. Suffering, yes. Satan made them suffer, but they learned marvellous heavenly lessons through their sufferings, and they grew wonderfully spiritually through satan's activities. The apostle who was one of those in this book who was an outstanding instance himself of this very thing, could write later on: "I would have you know that the things which befell me have fallen out for the furtherance of the Gospel". When you consider the things that befell him, you can see satan's hand very clearly at work for his undoing, for his destruction, but they have fallen out for the furtherance of the Gospel. It's all right, the Holy Spirit is in charge.

Now, dear friends, with one brief word on one other thing, we will leave it for this afternoon. The next thing in this movement was:

The Great Fact of Expansion.

You see it's a movement. The next thing in the Genesis record is that satan has interfered and has done his evil work, but he has not defeated God's end. A wonderful expansion is going to take place over the earth, the horizon presses back - you can see here far distances, things open up which are far beyond the limits of that garden and its wall or its hedge. And out from that concentration of Divine work the whole earth will be filled, replenished, provided for; its fruit will expand, increase, and will grow unto the ends of the earth. If it was from one standpoint, a kind of breakdown, from another it was a breaking open. When you come to the book of the Acts, you can see that so clearly in spiritual reality.

Here is Jerusalem and here is satan's onslaught upon the disciples in the killing of Stephen. It seems that his venom was most poisonous against Stephen through those whom the Lord Jesus Himself said were of their father the devil, "Ye are of your father the devil... he was a murderer from the

beginning" here he is, through them, his children, showing his awful animosity, his spleen, his hatred. "And they gnashed upon him with their teeth and stopped their ears, and ran upon him!" What a picture of hatred, of malice, devilish, satanic. Yes, does it look like calamity, a tragedy, an end? "Then they that were scattered abroad upon the death of Stephen, went everywhere preaching the Word". Jerusalem smashed, but Jerusalem scattered! It's just wonderful, it's almost romantic.

Even the apostles were putting limits upon things. Poor James had proposed his covenant of the Nazarite vow, to hold things within certain limits. They had themselves no intention of breaking down the wall of Israel; the Holy Spirit had and precipitated it, firstly by the very death of Stephen. He scattered them all abroad. And then, through Peter himself, away up to Caesarea in the house of Cornelius. Poor Peter was in the most embarrassed position over that, but he said: "Who was I? Who was I to resist the Holy Ghost?" The Holy Spirit has got this matter in hand despite everything. "Unto the ends of the earth" the Lord had said. Not Jerusalem alone, not Samaria in addition, and not even all Judea; but "unto the uttermost parts of the earth". The Lord had said that. They were tardy and Satan was opposed, but the Holy Spirit had got the matter in hand, and so it was.

The book of the Acts is divided into two main sections. Up to chapter 12, it is the establishment of the church in Palestine, Jerusalem and throughout. From chapter 12 on, it's "the uttermost parts of the earth" right to Rome. This is the Acts of the Holy Spirit!

Now, dear friends, you see the application and the implication. The significance of the Holy Spirit... you can never be merely local, parochial, narrow, small in your view, and vision, and interest, and concern, if you're a man of the Spirit. No less a range and narrower horizon than the *whole of that for which God appointed His Son as heir of all things!* No less than that can be your concern if you're under the government of the Holy Spirit. And if you are really like that; if we are *really* like that, things will happen. We will not have to try and make them happen, organise to get them to happen - they will happen.

The Lord has this thing in hand. All that He needs is to have *us* in hand, and utterly in hand. We need not worry. All our problems, all our difficulties, everything giving us trouble, will be solved when the Holy Spirit really has full charge of us and of everything. The work will go on!

Well, we'll leave it there for the present.

Chapter 7 - The Man in His Place

In our occupation with the crisis of Pentecost and the significance of the Holy Spirit, we have been following the movements of progress in the new creation and seeing that those movements follow, in a spiritual way, the movements in the material creation. We are not going to even make the briefest survey of the ground covered, we are going to focus upon one feature this evening, the central feature in it all.

I want to read two or three fragments of Scripture. Leaving the Old Testament passage about the creation of man, we just turn to the New Testament and have these fragments, and as we are much in the book of the Acts, we look at two passages there.

In chapter 2 and verses 32 and 33: "This Jesus, this Jesus did God raise up, whereof (or, of whom) we are witnesses. Being therefore at the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath poured forth this which ye see and hear." Being at the right hand of God exalted... He hath poured forth this....

In chapter 7 at verse 55: "But he (Stephen, that is) being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said: Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God".

In the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 2 at verse 5: "For not unto angels did He subject the world to come, whereof we speak. But one has somewhere testified saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the Son of Man, that Thou visitest Him? Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst Him with glory and honour, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands: Thou didst put all things in subjection under His feet. We see not yet all things subjected to Him, but we behold Him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, Jesus, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man. For it became Him for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren".

Finally in the first letter to the Corinthians and chapter 15. 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 45: "The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a life-giving spirit".

In the earthly creation the crown, the centre of all was the creation and the instating of man. We might say that he was the occasion of everything. That is, everything that had gone before led up to him, and everything that followed afterward, came from him. He is the key. The same is true, transcendently true, in the new creation. Man presented, and the Man instated; everything before leading to Him and everything after and since, moving from Him, coming from Him. Man is the key to both creations.

Man is a special thought of God, but there is this that we have to be very clear about, that in the first creation man we have never had God's full thought about man, only God's intention as to man, not its realisation. God's beginning with man in the new creation is otherwise. We have in the Last Adam the *full* thought of God about man: perfected, completed, nothing more to be added as to Himself as the personal expression and embodiment of God's full thought concerning man. And having

perfected Him, "He was made perfect through suffering", having completed Him, having finalised Him, He could glorify Him, and instate Him to be the first of a whole race like Him.

There's a great movement of God in China, a large company of dear believers who, whether in the full apprehension of this or not I don't know, but they took for their name "The Jesus Family". Well, that may only relate to a part of the family so far as they're concerned, but that is what it is. That's what it is, this whole new creation is the Jesus Family, "Wherefore He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I and the children which God hath given Me". It's only in a spiritual family that your child is your brother! We know what that means. Timothy was Paul's child in the faith, but Timothy was Paul's brother in the work (that by the way).

But there are two things with which we must be content this evening, and they are quite enough. We must be very clear about this. On the one side, Jesus (we are using the name now just by itself, as it's used here in these passages) Jesus is God's perfected representation of what He intends where man is concerned. And He is instated at God's right hand as the Model, the Pattern for man and to which man is foreordained to be conformed, to which image man is foreordained (says Paul) to be conformed. That is, to come to His image, not as God, but as the Son, as Man. That is the one thing that you and I must be very clear about.

On the other side, the Holy Spirit's business in this dispensation, His real business for which He has come, to which He is committed, and which explains all His dealings with us; *His business is to reproduce that Man* in the Family, if you like, in the race, in the children of God. That is *the* business of the Holy Spirit. Unto that He may do many things: He may inspire unto evangelisation; soul-winning; He may lead to various forms of activity; but none of these must be taken as things in themselves. If they are, they will surely fall short of the purpose of God in them. The tragedy is that that is done.

Every Holy Spirit inspired activity and concern, whether it be in evangelisation for the salvation of the unsaved, or right through all other means and ways, the building up, and instructing... every Holy Spirit activity has but one object in view: bringing many sons to glory. That is, the reproducing of the Son in sons. Reproducing Christ in a mankind called, chosen, elected by God. We must be very clear about this. It will perhaps correct some of our preponderances, and our mistakes, and our deficiencies, to see exactly what it is the Holy Spirit is doing. It will explain a great deal. It is the only explanation of many things, for some of the greatest evangelists have had their evangelisation ministries cut short, and they themselves have been shut up and confined; for years unable to do any of it. It looks, on the surface, as though there's a breakdown somewhere. Where is the Holy Spirit? Where is the sovereignty of God? And so on. The answer is: God is more concerned for the increase of His Son in those concerned than He is for all their activities. We come to that as we go on, but these are the things that we must see: Christ installed, as the full embodiment of this original thought of God about man; perfected.

The Holy Spirit had come to make Christ, in what He is, real and increasingly full in men and women, to bring them to be one great corporate Man in Christ. Now, you are so familiar with statements like that, but we can't get anywhere until we get the whole thing set. And you will notice that it was with the setting of that that everything commenced and proceeded in the New Testament. It was not until the Man, perfected, glorified and instated at the right hand of God, was in His place, His *right* place, that anything could go on at all.

There is a deeper, deeper meaning in the forbidding of the Lord Jesus to go and preach and begin the work until the Holy Spirit was come. When He gave commandment, and Luke said, "After He had

given commandment by the Holy Ghost", and His commandment was "Tarry in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high". The deeper meaning was this: the commandment was *not* only that they should receive the Holy Spirit, and in so doing, receive power, but He linked with that, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me". *Unto* whom and what were they to witness? Well, listen to Peter. He started it, he starts this witnessing in Jerusalem, and then it spreads. What is the great note of the witness? "Being at the right hand of God exalted". Everything links up with that. "Tarry ye" not only until the Spirit comes, and you receive power, but "tarry ye" because when the Spirit comes, it will be because Jesus is glorified! I trust that impresses you enough.

Well, *the* Last Adam - the *Last* Adam (don't misquote Scripture and call Him the "Second Adam", He's not. He's the second Man, but He's the Last Adam; no need for any more, no place for any more, finality is reached in Him) the Last Adam is installed, instated, because perfected and glorified. "And being at the right hand of God exalted He hath poured forth this." The Spirit of Jesus glorified. "The Spirit of Jesus..." the Holy Spirit is called that, that is one of His titles: the Spirit of Jesus. The Spirit of the perfected, glorified and instated Jesus, as the *breath* of the new creation, coming into the new creation man corporately; that's what happened on the Day of Pentecost. It was the fulfilment of that word in which the Lord Jesus reserved these men unto that day, "And He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit". They did not receive the Holy Spirit then, it was a symbolic act. It was an act by which He, so to speak, put them in reserve for it and said: "I have put you apart for that. The actual receiving of the breath, corresponding to God *breathing* into the first Adam, took place on the Day of Pentecost and the church's lungs were filled. The whole mechanism of this new spiritual Body, started up in action when the breath came in. It doesn't need much argument to see that they were pretty helpless before that happened. It all started then; the breath of the new creation entered in. Remember that, it's not just history; we're not just looking back into the New Testament. The Holy Spirit, dear friends, is the very breath of the new creation in us; by that *inbreathing* of Christ we become organic parts of Christ, the Body of Christ, members of Christ, the one New Man.

Now what we have to do, as quickly as possible, is to look at

This Man Being Reproduced.

And it's a far bigger study than we can handle this evening, but it is perfectly clear, (and on these things we must be perfectly clear indeed) it's perfectly clear that when the Holy Spirit came *into* them, a tremendous change took place as to an *order* of mankind. To say that they became different creatures is hardly enough. I would like you to study closely and fully what happened to them, and the change that did take place. I will indicate quickly a few of the things.

You know from reading the Gospels (I think this is one of the values of the Gospels being bound before the Acts, although they were not written before it) you know in reading the Gospels how *earth-bound* these men were. Their horizon was no further than the earth and than they could see with their natural eyes. Their idea, for instance, of the kingdom of God was an earth-bound thing horizoned by what was temporal and earthly. Their ambitions, their expectations and their hopes, and their interests and activities, were all within that so-small compass. They were *little* men, because they had such a little horizon. If you live all your days in a little village, you will be a little person. Begin to move over the world and you get wonderfully enlarged.

These people saw nothing beyond Israel, nothing beyond Israel, little beyond their own native land and their own city; that was the compass. They were earth-bound men. Look again: Jesus, Jesus is in heaven. He belongs to heaven. I don't know where heaven is, but I know that it's a mighty big place, capable of tremendously enlarging your conceptions of space, distance, range. Jesus is in heaven.

The Holy Spirit comes down from heaven and enters into these people and *immediately* they are changed, or they begin to be changed; radically changed from being earthly people to being heavenly people. For them the centre of everything is in heaven, at the right hand of God. They become in their very constitution, nature, and consciousness, heavenly people.

From that time onward, although right up to the last minute it would seem, before the Holy Spirit came, they were saying, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" and up to the last minute that was their horizon. It's *gone* when the Holy Spirit comes. The horizon is being pressed back further and further, yes, through crises, and sometimes embarrassing and painful crises, nevertheless, it's extending, expanding. Heaven has become their range! They're heavenly people.

I could, of course, spend hours on that, in the Word itself. You know how much these people of the book of Acts spoke later about this very matter. I dare not even touch it. Look at this, this man, Paul. Of *all* men, his horizon was Israel and Jerusalem. And afterward: "and hath made us to sit in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus..." he's talking about the heavenlies all the time. And I *do* think that he had a big place in the writing of that letter to the Hebrews. Whether he did it or not, he's there somehow all the time insinuated, and it's all about this, isn't it? The heavenly side of things: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partners in a *heavenly* calling..." so he goes on.

The fact is that whether they were born in Jerusalem, or in Galilee, or anywhere on this earth, when the Holy Spirit came they were born in heaven, or from heaven; born from above. You can have an argument with me, if you like, I don't mind, I hold to it, that these men were *not* born again until the Day of Pentecost. They were disciples, they were followers, they were given deputed powers and authorities, but they were not born again until the Day of Pentecost, but then they *were*. By their birth they were born from *above*, as Jesus said every man *must* be, must be. The heavenly kingdom demands heavenly people. They were not only born from above, but they were *enfranchised* above: citizens, "You are come unto the heavenly Jerusalem... the Jerusalem which is *above* is the mother of us all". The apostles, after they came back from one of those deputations under authority, and were full of exuberance and started to talk to the Lord Jesus about what had happened, and they said, "Even the demons are subject unto us!" Jesus said, "Steady, steady. Be careful." If you begin to gloat over the devil you are on dangerous ground, you're on dangerous ground. You'll meet something. "Rejoice not in this, rejoice that your names are enrolled in heaven", that is a safe place for you, to be citizens above, to be *enrolled* in heaven, to have the franchise of the heavenly city; that's your safety. It's not safe to glory in anything that you're able to do against the powers of darkness. Your only safety and glory is that you have a heavenly citizenship and your names are enrolled in heaven. You know that that is a New Testament idea, isn't it? In the Book of the Revelation it is just that, "Whose names are in the Lamb's book of Life..." Enrolled in heaven, born there, citizens of heaven. The apostle states it, "Our citizenship is in heaven from whence we look for a Saviour". Not only born, not only enfranchised, but supported from heaven.

This book of Acts is a wonderful record of heaven's support of its own citizens and countrymen, isn't it? Yes, heaven looked after them, provided for them, sustained them, carried them through, came to their help - put it how you will. Heaven was true to its own people. Heaven was their resource and had all their resources and when those of earth failed, and everything here ceased to provide them with any hope, with any strength, they went to heaven in prayer and got their resources renewed. There is that, I find, dear friends, at least. I don't know whether you find it. I don't find all my prayers answered, I ask the Lord for a lot of things that He doesn't give, but I do find this: invariably, if I go and have a time of prayer I am refreshed, I feel better for it. It's not imagination, you don't just change in a few minutes from utter jadedness, weariness, strain, where it's impossible to go any further... you come back rested, refreshed, renewed. Ten minutes in the presence of the Lord,

drawing on heavenly resources. I do find that at any rate, and that is something in this world, try it! Their resources were in heaven, in every way, heavenly. But then note:

The Beginning and the Development of Heavenly Character.

That is an amazing thing: the change in the character of these men. It was not just psychological, it was radical. It was constitutional. We could, of course, take that up and look at it for a long time, but there's one point in this which I think we might just lift out, because I feel that where I'm concerned, and no doubt where many of you are concerned, this is a point that needs attention. Here is the most prominent man of this whole group, of the whole one hundred and twenty gathered there in that upper room on the Day of Pentecost, the most prominent is Peter. Now just glance back. He has been called the "big fisherman". I don't know what stature Peter had physically, I know he was a great talker, I know that he was always pushing in; aggressive. And you don't have to be a very little person physically to be a coward, and there is no doubt about it that Peter was a terrible coward. And when it came to the real test, it only wanted a serving maid in the hall downstairs to point a finger at him, and say, "You are one of them!" to draw out of Peter, with vehemence, a denial of that.

Well, I am not making light of what was involved for Peter if he confessed, but there is no doubt about it that moral courage was really not one of Peter's strong points. It wasn't! The Lord Jesus challenged him after His resurrection you know, very thoroughly about this. "I will follow Thee even unto death... though all men forsake Thee, yet I will not forsake Thee..." "Simon, do you love Me more than all men? More than all these? Do you?" He is being taxed on this very thing, where he has so ignominiously broken down in testimony to the Lord Jesus: public testimony to the Lord Jesus. It is a real test, you know, in the presence of people who have it in their power to do something with you, not perhaps to crucify you, but to deprive you of advancement in your job, or other things. That's it.

Now look at Peter when the Holy Spirit has come. Jesus bore a good confession before Pontius Pilate, we are told. He stood up to it. It was not Jesus who cringed before His judges; it was the judges who cringed before Him. The moral courage of Jesus astounded Pilate and vexed the others. The Spirit of Jesus came into Peter on the Day of Pentecost, and look: he has changed in *this* respect - many others, but in this - "When they beheld the *boldness* of Peter and John", "When they beheld the *boldness*!" And you can hear him speaking, "We ought to obey God rather than men. I submit it to you. Are we right? Ought we to obey man rather than God? You judge!" He's arguing this thing out; he's having no nonsense. It is *tremendous*, this stand up of Peter after the Holy Spirit came on him. Jesus knew what would happen and He said, "When the Holy Spirit is come, you will be witnesses, not before! It will *require* the Holy Spirit to make, such as you, Peter, a witness!"

Now, friends, it is a simple matter, but I do feel that you and I need the Holy Spirit over this matter. We are not the witnesses to men that we ought to be. When it really comes to it, we shirk. We don't do it. We will produce any kind of argument to get out of it. Now, I am not suggesting that you rush out from this meeting and get hold of everybody and begin to talk to them. But you know, a lot of people say, "You'll only make a lot of trouble, unnecessary trouble, if you begin to do that sort of thing!" Are you quite sure, are you quite sure that you are not making that a cover? What do those with whom you do business know about Jesus where you are concerned, with whom you have transacted your business affairs? What do those who live around you know about Jesus where you are concerned? You see here, everybody knew, and they couldn't help knowing when the Holy Spirit came into these men. In ever widening circles, people *knew*! And I believe that the real value in all this, is not that we know that people know; it's that they know, even when we don't know that they are knowing. But there it is: the Holy Spirit is like that.

Now I could, or I wish that I could, take up in far greater fullness this whole matter of the change in these people - the *change in these people* after the Holy Spirit came, in their character. Yes, the Spirit of Jesus has come, and they are already beginning to be conformed to His image. His moral courage, His spiritual virtues, much more, and it goes on. There are crises in this, that doesn't matter, the thing is they are on the way; on the way. And I like to read those letters of Peter, written so many years afterward, and see what grace has done in that man, the measure of Christ to be met in him. That's the Holy Spirit's work.

May I put my finger upon one other thing here. You notice the change corporately, not only individually, personally, but:

The Change Corporately.

Well, it's a simple statement; I believe it signifies quite a lot, "And Peter, standing up with the eleven..." There were a hundred and twenty of them gathered in that upper room (it must have been a fairly large upper room) a hundred and twenty of them gathered into it, men and women. In the synagogue they would have been segregated, the men would have had to sit on one side, and the women on the other. I don't believe that was true in the upper room; they were all mixed up together... a beautiful representation that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female - it is one New Man. Don't misunderstand that statement. I know a lot of sisters who are like that! I'm not going to stop to explain what I mean, but in Christ Jesus it's one New Man.

And here is the beginning, they're together, they are together. And from that moment of the Spirit's coming, you find a *togetherness* moving and working and developing, "And they had all things common, and not any of them said that the things that he possessed were his own..." see? You wouldn't have got that in the old days. They would have said: "Look here, what is mine is my own; hands off!" Every man for himself. It was true; even of the disciples it was true. It's a horrible suggestion, but there it is. They were all for their own position and place in the kingdom and quarrelling, quarrelling as they went along with the Master, and the Master sensed it, and discerned it that they were discussing who should be greatest in the kingdom - rivalries and jealousies and ambitions - all personal, self-centred. It has gone, from the Day of Pentecost, it has gone! They are welded into a corporate One. It has begun, at least, in a very wonderful way. That is what the Holy Spirit *does* when He really does get hold. Don't we need that? Do we not *need* the Holy Spirit in greater fullness and power? You know, all this tremendous activity and organisation, and all the talk about reunion of the churches, and what not - oh, the *immensity* of this propaganda and machinery - the whole thing would go out of the window if the Holy Spirit came in! It would *all* cease; unnecessary, vain, nonsense, if the Holy Spirit got His place. You would have all the unity that ever heaven requires. And that's the only unity worth having, isn't it?

I must close reluctantly, on two other touches. One is, you notice that these people were always gravitating heavenward. Always gravitating heavenward. Heaven was not only the place of their origin from which they had come; heaven was not only their support in a foreign and alien country, but heaven was their objective and their goal. One thing that governed them was this ultimate, this ultimate, of being with Him in glory. Heaven... their spirits were gravitating heavenward. They had lost the magnetism of this world, it was broken and nullified, it no longer pulled them. They were moving further and further away from this earth. See them! See it happening!

The temple was an earthly thing, and you can see, quietly and steadily how they are gravitating away from the temple at Jerusalem; it ceases to hold them. You can never put your finger upon the actual day and point in which they broke with that system and that centre; but it happened. You find them

eventually they are out of it, the whole thing. They are moving away from every earthly tie. It's a wonderful thing. It's a law of the Holy Spirit - that happens if you and I are Holy Spirit governed men and women, we are spoiled for this world; this world is losing, if it hasn't already completely lost, any kind of interest for us. This is not our life. This is not our place. We have *got* to be here; we have just *got* to be here until the Lord says otherwise, but we don't like it; our spirits don't like it. No, so far as any kind of liking this world is concerned, it's the other way: we are becoming more and more to feel how out of it all we are - not a part of it, it's irksome to us. It's true, isn't it? You go to your business, but oh, how much more you would like to remain in the fellowship of the heavenly people... but you have *got* to go; the Lord has called you there. They were like that, like that; always gravitating toward heaven and *moving* inwardly; inwardly moving away from the world.

One other thing, and I close for the present. You notice the wonderful enlargement that began to take place on the Day of Pentecost in this further sense, what we have so often called "the universality of Christ". The universality of Christ! You *cannot*, you cannot fasten Christ Jesus down to *anything* that relates to this earth and to this world. You cannot fix Him into any nationality; He fits into all of them, and is a part of none of them. You cannot fix Him into one language; He can be understood in every language, and He understands every language. And so we could go on. This marvellous universality!

Look here, here's the Day of Pentecost, and what happened? This: "And they were all amazed and marvelled saying, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans, and how hear we every man in his own language, wherein we were born: Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia; in Pontus and Asia; in Phrygia and Pamphylia; in Egypt and in the parts of Libya and Cyrene, sojourners from Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans, and Arabians." A perfect Noah's ark! Something of every kind! The universality of Christ.

The strategy of the Holy Spirit: to make Christ meet the need of *every* kind of creature in *every* nation and language, fitting in. I don't know how many of the three thousand were represented in all those departments of humanity after Pentecost, but I think that alone is a marvellous exhibition of the universality of Christ, the Holy Spirit making it known how great Christ is.

Oh, dear friends, the Holy Spirit does that sort of thing, *He* breaks down the barriers of what is merely national and temperamental. He constitutes this New Man on the heavenly, universal principle. The old wine skins of a mere restricted nationalism have burst when the new wine comes in and it flows out, spills over, into all the nations.

Paul pleaded with the Corinthians: "Be ye enlarged... Our hearts are enlarged: be ye also enlarged". How? Well, the only effective way of extricating us from our littlenesses, our pettinesses, our exclusivenesses, and enlarging us to the dimensions of the heavenly Man, is a mighty filling with the Holy Spirit. That *is* what He does! That *will* be an effect. If you have any experience, any *real* experience of the Holy Spirit, you'll have had a crisis in your life at a point where before it you were in those straitnesses and limitations, and bondages of the old natural life, and afterward, afterward, this crisis where the Spirit of God came into your life. You know this quite well, that the church ceased to be something sectarian, comprised of so many sects, and departments (I will not use the other word) it ceased to be like that and your horizon ceased to be something local. It became enlarged to the great dimensions of Christ, and this church which is His body, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek - *neither*, not both; *neither*! But there is only one New Man, a people taken out of *every* nation for His Name, to be called by *His* Name, the Jesus Family. We are not going to adopt that name, but that's what it means. Now, you see how we are launched into a tremendous realm.

The Lord take hold of some of this, and really challenge us with it. It's not a statement of truth only, it is a challenge. Am I like that? Really, has the Spirit of God done something of that in me? Is He doing it? Is He going on with it? That's the challenge. The Lord make it true.