

# THE ULTIMATE ISSUE OF THE UNIVERSE

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A Conference Message (as spoken)

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## Chapter One

### THE SETTING AND BACKGROUND OF THE ISSUE

Reading: Matthew 4:8-10; 1 Corinthians 15:28; Revelation 21:22; 22:3.

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

"... That God may be all in all."

"... The Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof."

These closing words of the New Testament in the book of the Revelation, from which we have read the small fragment, contain those factors which sum up the spiritual history of this universe. It is helpful and instructive to go right to the end of things as we have them in the Word of God, and just to note what the end is, to see what is the last word in it all. There is a sense in which Revelation 21:22 is a final utterance. There will be other things said before the book closes, but up to this everything, the history of this universe, has been heading right through the ages. And how does it terminate, what is the end of it all? As I have said, in a sense, it is this - "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof." This contains the great factors in summing up spiritual history. First, the Lord God the Almighty; second, the Lamb; and in connection with that the third thing is said - "no more curse" (Revelation 22:3). (1) and (2), the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb, are, as you note, linked into the Temple, they are the Temple. (2) and (3), the Lamb and the curse, are connected in that they signify the challenge to the Lord God the Almighty, and its answer. The curse suggests the entering in of something which was a challenge to God's place of unreserved Lordship; the Lamb is the answer to that challenge. So we have these three factors here which lie back of this long and terrible history.

By the way, there is a finality here in the matter of interpretation. It is that the spiritual is the right and the essential interpretation, not the temporal or the sentient. So far as the Temple is concerned, ultimately it turns out to be God and the Lamb. You have reached finality in the whole history of temples and lambs, sacrifices, priesthood and every such thing. When all is said, and all is done, and all that could be seen through history is passed, it all turns out to be a spiritual matter. This temple matter, what is it all about? This lamb matter, what is it all about? It is God the Almighty and the Lamb. With what has it got to do? - a curse, a challenge, a false thing entering into God's universe which has to be eliminated in order that actually, not only positionally, but actually, God may be all in all.

### Worship - The Ultimate Issue

What we have to see is, firstly, the ultimate issue in this universe; secondly, the relatedness of all else to it; and thirdly, the way of its attainment.

Firstly, then, the ultimate issue in this universe. It is summed up in one word, a very comprehensive word including many things, an all-embracing word. It is the word "worship." That is the ultimate issue in this universe to which all else is related, and which governs all that has been revealed in the Word of God as God's way of reaching His end. As we approach this matter of worship, standing back from the detail and from all the form, the means used temporally to set it forth, we recognize that it is set in a realm far bigger than this earth. It embraces other realms, its setting is super-earthly. You have no need that I remind you of

Scriptures in that connection, but perhaps it is as well for us to keep the Scriptures well in view. You will call to mind those extraordinary passages such as in Ezekiel 28.

"Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyre, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thy heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art man, and not God, though thou didst set thy heart as the heart of God; behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that is hidden from thee; by thy wisdom and by thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures; by thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thy heart is lifted up because of thy riches.... Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre" (note the change - not the *PRINCE* of Tyre now) "and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou wast in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was in thee; in the day that thou wast created they were prepared. Thou wast the anointed cherub that covereth: and I set thee, so that thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee. By the abundance of thy traffic they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore have I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I have destroyed thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I have cast thee to the ground; I have laid thee before kings, that they may behold thee.... All they that know thee among the peoples shall be astonished at thee: thou art become a terror, and thou shalt nevermore have any being."

That is one; you are familiar with another in Isaiah 14.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O daystar, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations! And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to Sheol, to the uttermost parts of the pit. They that see thee shall gaze at thee, they shall consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and overthrew the cities thereof; that let not loose his prisoners to their home? All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre like an abominable branch, clothed with the slain, that are thrust through with the sword..."

If we wanted more, we could go to the book of Daniel, to which we may refer again. You remember those extraordinary statements about Daniel praying for three weeks, and that from the first day that he set his heart, archangels were set in motion to fulfil his prayer, and they were withstood by world rulers of this darkness, principalities in the heavens. Or we might just put in the whole book of Job - which is not fiction. It is all of a piece with this great drama in the realm of things spiritual. Again, we should come to our Lord, and find that immediately He moved into the realm of spiritual things, full of the Holy Ghost, which constituted Him one to fulfil essentially spiritual purposes - that is the object of the gift of the

Holy Spirit, to constitute for spiritual work - endued with the Holy Ghost, immediately He met the prince of spiritual realms. But the point for the moment is this. In Matthew's record, that spiritual foe, the Devil, started through His body, where he started with the first Adam. Failing there, he moved to his soul, and was defeated there; but fully and finally the object comes to light as he tried to get in through His spirit, and the one word connected with spirit is worship, always. "... If thou wilt fall down and worship me." He has got right to the citadel of man - worship in the spirit. So he assailed finally His spirit, showing that that was, after all, the object of the whole campaign; worship in the spirit, or by the spirit. We might do well to stay and think quietly about that. It is not part of our subject for the moment, but just keep it pigeon-holed. How the Devil tries to get at the ultimate thing through other channels, through the body, through the soul, to capture the spirit with a view to installing himself as God, to be worshiped!

Or we might again pass on to Paul, and listen to those familiar words about principalities and powers, world rulers of this darkness, hosts of wicked spirits in the heavenlies; all this, with all that the book of the Revelation holds on the matter, indicates the setting of this issue, this ultimate, consummate issue. It is in the realm of things spiritual. It is in a far bigger realm than the mere earthly. It embraces a vast range, goes right out to the heavens; that is where it is set - worship in the universe, and it is essentially spiritual. "God is spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). "Such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers." "I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof." This is what it is all heading up to, "that God may be all in all." That statement in 1 Corinthians 15 is a very enlightening statement. It speaks about the Son having all things put in subjection under Him, and it says, that when all things are put in subjection under Him, it must exclude the One Who puts them in subjection under Him. They must be put by somebody, and therefore that somebody must be excluded, remain outside, alone. So the complete statement is - "When all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all."

And the significance is this; you have there, in that small fragment, the whole conception and idea and meaning of sonship. Here I am not going back again over those words "child" and "son"; you know the difference by now. The word "son" in the Scriptures is a full thought, a much bigger thought than "child"; it is a child full-grown. Recognizing that, what is the object of sonship? Here it is. It says quite plainly that the whole object of sonship is to secure God's universal rights unto Him in man. Sonship has fulfilled its purpose when God is all in all. In sonship all God's universal rights are secured to Him in man, and that not only positionally but actually. Positionally, God is all in all, but actually He is not yet that in you and me, in the creation. The Spirit of sonship is seeking to bring that about; we are called unto the adoption of sons with a view to God's securing all His universal rights in worship. We are in a tremendous business when we become possessors of the Holy Spirit. Linked up with receiving the Holy Spirit is the ultimate purpose of this universe, and we, of course, come into that immense conflict which has raged since that undated time when God's place of supreme and undivided worship was challenged by this one of whom we read. At that time, conflict entered into God's universe and it came down on to this earth. At that moment, the question arose - Who is going to be worshiped? Who is going to be the *ALONE OBJECT* of worship, to whom alone is everything to come?

### **The Cosmic Conflict**

That is a far more acute question than it sounds to be. Of course we worship God! Ah, but do we? That is pressed right down to the innermost secrets of our being.

That will have to be looked at more closely when we come to see how everything is related to this issue. It is the issue of the book of Job, to which we have referred. The one question standing out in that book, over all that is taking place, is this, Who is going to be worshiped? Is there any way or means at all open to Satan, by which he can turn a man away from God? Then he will exploit it. So all Job's domestic affairs come into the realm of a great cosmic conflict; all his physical, bodily affairs move right out of the mere significance of a man on this earth; all his relationships and friendships become involved in this terrific battle. Oh, the darts and arrows, satanic assaults striking upon his soul; doubts, questions, fears, all about this one thing - Is God going to come out supreme in this man's spirit or is the Devil? Who is going to be the alone object of worship? "In all this Job sinned not" (Job 1:22) is the verdict. You read many things; you say, Surely that is wrong, he ought not to have said that! Listen to God - "In all this Job sinned not." These pious friends said many things, lovely things, so true philosophically - "Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath" (Job 42:7) was God's verdict. It is not what we say under stress, it is not the doubts and the fears that rack our souls at times of terrific pressure: it is down in our spirit - do we hold on to God, do we believe God, can we curse God? "There shall be no more curse." "The Lord God is the temple." Worship and the curse cannot go together. When you come to the final issue, the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple, there is no more curse. Perhaps you do not follow that, it sounds a remote thought, but it is principalities we are dealing with and this is the thing we are in. I am only dealing with the background of things in this meditation. We come very near in practical life later on.

You can embrace everything and gather it up into this one question; it is the one thing that runs right through the spiritual history of this universe; it is the one thing which lies behind all that is taking place on this earth. There is only one thing. There is nothing here of two realms that you might call secular and spiritual, no two realms in this universe, it is spiritual altogether. If you have not recognized, even in the blatant history of the past six years, that spiritual factors have been predominant, you have missed the whole thing. It has been a most remarkable display of spiritual principalities during these years. God is going to uncover the meaning of this world's history and in the end it will be more patent than ever that it was spiritual. It is a spiritual thing that is happening. You cannot touch anything in this universe and get outside of spiritual issues. There is a spiritual issue bound up with anything and everything. You cannot put these things in water-tight compartments. The simple issue is this - worship. Do not just have narrow ideas of worship. Worship is not merely singing hymns, bowing heads, saying prayers, coming together in "public worship." Get behind all that. It is the question which arises with us continually, all the way through our lives, in every connection. What place has God in this, where does God come in? How does Satan stand to get an advantage here? It only needs two Christians divided against one another to raise this whole issue. How much is Satan getting out of this? A lot! Then it is my worship to see that this thing ends; ending this is worship to God and giving God His place. It touches everything. What I feel so much in my heart needs to come home to you and to me is the tremendous significance of our lives, as being in this universe. They are not little things, they are not unrelated things. They are bound up with the one thing for which the universe exists and which is governing the whole course of the spiritual history of this universe. Who is going to be worshiped alone, without reserve, without dividedness, without question, without rival and without grudging? - whole-hearted, unquestioning worship! It is an attitude of heart, it is a position of life, and all that is in the Bible is simply gathered into this.

Oh, this question of worship is such a battle, is such a conflict, and anything that has to do with things being brought God-ward, and more God-ward, is going to

be withstood and fought up to the hilt. The whole course of this opposing activity is to draw away from God; and God plants something right down in the midst, the course of "away-ness" from God is challenged, and upon that this storm breaks. That is saying, No, not away from God, but unto God. "Now unto him." That is what we are in this universe for as God's people, and it is standing against something, very often against something in ourselves as well as outside. If the Lord's people only recognized this more fully, were more alive to it, how much greater would be the meaning in things. Take our hymn singing. Why do we sing hymns? Just to open the service? "Let us open our meeting by singing," "let us begin our service by singing" - a part of the program? Would it not be better to say, "Now, let us challenge the Devil and put God in His place by singing"? If it were like that we would not sing many things that we do sing, and we would sing some things with very much more meaning. Our spirit would come in it, we should worship in spirit. So it would be in every other part; especially in that central act of the Church's life, the Table of the Lord. It is worship! What meaning would come into it! What value there would be in it if it were taken out of the realm of "Holy Communion" as an ordinance, a part of the Church's calendar! This Table stands in the midst of this universe in relation to the ultimate thing. In the light of what we are doing today, we are standing across the whole course of drawing away from God on the part of the evil powers and saying, No! - the other way, unto Him!

It is not only in the Church's life, in meetings, and so on. It is our life individually in every sphere. That is why we are there. I do not want to go further now with that side because it will have to be looked at more closely a little later. All that occupies us at this time is the setting of this ultimate issue. I come back here to the passage which governs all, which from the end throws its meaning and value right back over all that has been - "And I saw no temple therein." To be without a temple is a terrible omission! No, not at all, "for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof." Everything at last is gathered up in the Lord by way of the Cross, through the Lamb, Who has dealt with the curse coming in through the challenge of the enemy. There is no more curse, because the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple. I think it is very beautiful to come to the end like that. The Lord God the Almighty is the temple; worship is centred in Him, not in things. He is the sum of worship, it is all in Him, and that has been brought about because of the Blood of the Lamb, the mighty work of the Cross.

Shall we leave it there for the present? It is not in the amount that is said in words, it is in the thing that is said that we shall find the real value. Recognize this, then, as one thing that governs everything else. It simplifies the Bible. Go back to your Bible, and you find one thing, after all, one thing embracing, covering everything that you can think of, one issue - Who is going to have the "worth-ship" without question, without reserve? And the answering of that question involves us in the conflict. You know, or you ought to know by now, that if you are the Lord's, and you have any spiritual perception as to why you are the Lord's, and why you are here on the earth as the Lord's, you ought to know quite well that you are a marked man or a marked woman. Before you have said anything about it, you are marked. The more utter you are going to be for the Lord, the more you are marked, without asking for it or saying anything about it. Satan has real spiritual discernment. He is able, without weighing up the pros and cons, to jump to very right conclusions very quickly as to the significance of an individual. He can foresee what you are going to count for in this one issue. Therefore you are marked out as an object to be by any possible means subverted, turned away, destroyed, got out of the way, nullified. If you are going to contribute to God's being worshiped in the sense of which I have been speaking, you are involved; and remember that you never do count for the Lord

in this matter, nor against the enemy, until you have received the Holy Spirit. The Devil does not mind how many people go to "public worship." It is of no account to him, in the ultimate sense, how many go to "public worship." You begin to count spiritually in this matter of really drawing toward God only when you receive the Holy Spirit. Therein is your salvation. We have the Holy Spirit Who is the Spirit of worship, Who is the power of accomplishing His end. Oh, thank God, He has determined to have the unquestioned place at last, and He has sent His Son to secure it. It will be by His Spirit that we are fulfilling this holy vocation. The power of the Holy Ghost is our salvation. The shield will be anointed and the battle will be in the power of the Holy Spirit. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). So we need not be frightened, scared at the outlook and prospect. What has been said is in order that we may really see we are in something immense. Sooner or later every Christian, every young Christian, will find that he or she is in something more than just having signed a decision card to become Christ's. They will find they are in something for which they need resources beyond their own to get through. It is a great thing to understand the nature of what we are in, to have some light on this matter.



## Chapter Two

### THE RELATEDNESS OF ALL ELSE

Reading: Revelation 21:22; 22:3; Matthew 4:8-10; 1 Corinthians 15:28.

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

"... That God may be all in all."

"... The Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof."

In our previous meditation, we first of all pointed out that the words in the closing chapters of the Revelation contained the three factors which sum up the spiritual history of this universe - the three factors, The Lord God the Almighty, the Lamb, no more curse. We pointed out that the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are linked into the temple; they are the temple, and in being so linked, they represent the ultimate issue of this universe, which is worship. Then after that, the curse and the Lamb are connected in that they respectively signify the challenge to the Lord God the Almighty, and the answer to that challenge - the Lamb. The curse is the consequence of the challenge to the unquestioned and unreserved worship of God. The Lamb has taken up that challenge of the curse and answered it, with the result that the curse at length is gone forever. The Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple; that is, worship is gathered up, centred in them.

We said then that the things that we have to recognize are these –

Firstly, the ultimate issue in this universe.

Secondly, the relatedness of all else thereto.

Thirdly, the way of its attainment.

In our previous meditation, we considered the first, the ultimate issue, which is worship. We sought to see that this matter of worship is set in a realm far greater than this earth, in a supernatural realm. Back in a dateless time and unspecified place, there arose through one a challenge to God's unique, undivided, unquestioned supremacy as the sole object of worship. We saw the result of that both in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14. Then from that time we saw what we may call the cosmic conflict, that is, the super-earthly conflict in relation to the worship of God.

#### The Relatedness of the Bible

Now we go on with this second aspect - relatedness of all else to this issue. We are getting down now away from the broad expanses, the vast ranges, to practical details. We can only indicate some of the things related to this issue, and to begin with, of course, the Bible. The Bible has a great deal of detail. There are almost countless matters with which it deals, but you can sum the whole Bible up in this one question, this one all-inclusive matter. All the separate and particular things are to be seen in the light of this worship; that is, the outgoing of everything to God, the reversing of that whole course of things which came in with Satan's activity to draw to himself. That covers the Bible and, of course, all these details and these particular things in the Bible can only be seen in their full value, as they are set in their relatedness to this one governing reality.

We just stand back from our Bible and ask the question, What is it all about? What is *THE* issue involved in it all? The answer is - worship; if we understand what worship is. The tendency of godly people has always been to take things in the Bible in themselves, and to take them apart from their ultimate relationship. For instance, doctrines have been taken as things in themselves. Salvation as something in itself; prophecy has been detached and made something in itself; Christian work is in the Bible, but again it is made something in itself; the great revelation of the Church - yes, it is true, it is Scriptural, it is in the Bible, but again it has been made something in itself; or further, the churches, that *THEY* should be *THE* things in view, something in themselves. So we might go on. The result of that tendency has been confusion, limitation, weakness and arrest. What we are saying is, that everything must be kept in line with its object. It must be kept as on a main thoroughfare to some goal, to some end; it must not be in a side street as something in itself; this company of people circling round the doctrine of sanctification, with nothing else to talk about; that company of people round the Church; the other company about something else; and they are all living up side streets. Well, all these things are really, in God's thought, a chain with an ultimate clasp, an end, an object, and that object is worship, and what God means by worship. There is nothing in God's Word which is something in itself, ends with itself, or ends with the time in which it is uttered. It may have a specific application to a specific time, but there is something more in it than a time factor. Everything that comes from God carries with it an eternal law, the essence of God Himself, timeless and universal. It is related to God, and the one thing that links everything that has come from God with God is this matter of worship.

Now we have said something that we shall all take a lifetime to prove. There is nothing in the Bible which is an end in itself. You may take anything you like in the Bible; pick it up at random. The Ten Commandments - well, of course, the Ten Commandments belong to Israel, they are Jewish, they are the law, and that is past. Not a bit of it! "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Does that belong to Jews only, to a certain time in the past? "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image... thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them." You have got outside the law of Israel, you are touching the rock-bottom principle; you compass Genesis to Revelation, and beyond, in that. All the other fragments of the Law, not only the Decalogue but the Law, all contain something which has to do with this ultimate question.

Marriage laws - you say, of course they are Divine arrangements for social life. Not a bit! There are the laws of business, weights and measures; there are laws of the field, agriculture. "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together" (Deuteronomy 22:10). Laws concerning what you wear - "Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together" (Deuteronomy 22:11). You can go on anywhere you like - just weights and measures, not two kinds of weights and measures; no two kinds of beasts working under one yoke; no two kinds of material in your garments. God does not have, in any place of His universe, room for mixture. Mixture is the hallmark of Satan's interference, and it touches this question of utter, and absolute, and unquestioned purity; worship in the beauty of holiness, no mixture, no contradiction, no confusing, no inconsistency; only one thing is in God's mind, utter, absolute, full, final, unquestioned, undivided, unreserved worship, without a doubt about it. That is the basic law of worship; and it runs through everything.

The law of marriage - no mixture. The whole law of marriage was carried right through in the life of God's people. Adultery is mixing things up. There is a whole history of that with Israel. That is the trouble, and the issue of it all was idolatry.

What about Balaam mixing things up? "Who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat *things sacrificed to idols*, and to commit *fornication*" (Revelation 2:14). It is the end of it. What is the sinister deep-down movement? It is touching idolatry, it has affected the whole question of worship. Two worships in God's universe, and He will not have it.

Well you see, I have said that you can pick up the Bible anywhere and you are touching eternal principle. All leads you to this one question of worship.

Take up the Tabernacle. Everything that you can touch in that Tabernacle contains the principle of what is unto God. It is so with the temple, the priesthood, the kingdom, the monarchy, the prophets - study them. Why did Saul go out, cast off by God? Mixture! The climax of Saul's doubtful career was "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears?" "The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen" - the best of that which belonged to the Amalekites. God will not have it, it is mixture. Out that king must go. "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do *ALL MY WILL*" (Acts 13:22). The principle of kingship is abandonment to the will of God. So the very king who is God's king, is a man who is more marked by worship than anyone else. Look at the Psalms. David had his faults, great faults, but the truth about David was that he was for the Lord, wholly unto the Lord. The Lord looked upon his heart, and saw that he had no reservation. He made mistakes, but it was not because he was in revolt against God and wanted something for himself; his heart was not divided over the interests of God.

Well, how much shall we touch and how much shall we leave? All the covenants, the covenant of the Sabbaths, the seventh day, the seventh year, the seven sevens of years, all bear down upon this matter of giving God His place, bringing God into His place, and God having His rights. I will not go further with that, we have so much ground to cover.

Satan, who is termed "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), is active all through the Bible deceiving and, by deceit, corrupting: taking sides - afflicting where his godship and worship are not acknowledged, murdering Abel; supporting wherever he finds that he is going to get what his heart is set upon. Tempting, accusing, oppressing - what is it all about? One thing only. All Satan's antagonistic activity all his work, is with one object in view, and that object is the turning of the heart of man away from God unto himself. He will even tempt you to wrong, seduce you, and when he has done it, accuse you and, in accusing you, malign God; bring a charge against God of unfaithfulness and un-love; draw away from God; put God in a wrong light. You know how he does that under duress, strain, suffering, pressure - questioning God's love and faithfulness, and so on. He is always there on the spot at a weak moment. Well, everything we are saying is bound up with this one question and issue - the worship of God. That is the Bible.

### **The Relatedness of Christian Life**

Let us come to the matter of Christian life. Christian life begins with what we call, comprehensively, salvation, being saved. We look at that more closely, and we speak about justification by faith, or righteousness through faith, the righteousness which is of God through faith. That spiritual truth throws us back to the Old Testament, the spotless lamb, the lamb without spot, without blemish. That is very blessed as our experience, as our joy, our salvation. But let us get deeper. What does it mean? Well, first of all, quite simply, it means that Satan's ground has been taken away; a situation has been brought about in which Satan has no standing. The spotless Lamb has been presented, and by faith hands have

been laid upon its head, and that spotlessness has been attributed to that faith as the spotlessness of the believer, and his sin has been removed. He believes that, and enters into life and salvation. It is a tremendous thing that has been done. The real basis of the salvation of the believer is that God has got His rights, and Satan has been robbed of them all. Now lay hold of that. That is simple as a statement. God has got His rights. What are they? Absolute incorruptibility, holiness, righteousness, purity. Satan's ground, the ground of his power, authority, which is unholiness, unrighteousness, evil, sin, has been dealt with. God has provided Himself a Lamb, and in that Lamb Satan has no place, no power, God's rights are secured in the Lamb, and Satan's rights are ruled out. That is the basic fact, but we know well enough that Satan never ceases to try to make it as though it were not so. To the end of our time, he is always seeking to bring us back on to the same ground as before, our own ground; the ground of what we are in ourselves, our own sinfulness and corruption; to have ourselves in view, and, bringing ourselves into view, to accuse our consciences, and thus to nullify the great fact of justification and righteousness through faith, to counter it; and whenever we cede him one little bit of that ground, recognize it, acknowledge it, accept it, what have we done? We have taken God's rights from Him and given the rights back to Satan. This whole question of worship comes into the realm of suspense, there is no way through. While the question remains as to our justification by faith, our righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ, Satan is in the place of power, and we are in the place of defeat, and God is being robbed. It is something much more than just a personal matter between ourselves and the Lord, between ourselves and the devil. It is touching this ultimate question of God's rights, and all worship gets right down there. We must settle this thing, and we must not open up the matter as a matter for questioning; it must never arise as a matter of question that through faith in Jesus Christ we are justified, and righteous before God. Satan can keep his battle going in us, continual conflict between ourselves and God, while we allow a question to arise in this matter. He is getting at the ultimate thing. When you come to the end, where this question of worship is fully and finally settled, it is this - "The Lord God the Almighty, *AND THE LAMB*, are the temple thereof." Worship unquestioning toward God is related to the Lamb. God gets everything through the Lamb; Satan loses everything through the Lamb.

My point is this, that salvation, in its initial sense as well as in its continuous enjoyment, justification, righteousness by faith, is bound up with this ultimate issue of God having an unquestioned place, getting all His rights. Salvation is not an end in itself, getting people saved, converted, signing cards and so on. That is small; it is good, it is right, it works, but it is so small in the light of the immense issue that is involved. You understand why souls are so hardly won, why such a battle rages around the securing of one true believer. Satan will do anything to put them in a false position, in a false faith, in an assumed conversion, and he will fight tremendously against the reality of a real, downright, central regeneration, because he stands to lose all his ground, and God to get all His. It is a big thing that is bound up with the salvation of a single soul. This is a conflict. We are drawn into it when we have a concern for men's souls. They are not just going to be handed over by asking, if they are worth anything to the Lord.

And what is true of salvation is true in the matter of sanctification, or its alternative word - consecration. What is it? It is being set apart for the Lord and it is connected with worship; consecrated, sanctified, set apart *FOR THE LORD*. You know quite well that in the Old Testament, worship and service always went together. It is everything for the Lord, the whole for the Lord. Why preach sanctification, why be concerned about consecration to the Lord? For this very reason, that the ultimate issue of the universe is bound up with that. The opposite of real consecration, real sanctification, is a defeated life, Satan having a

part and God having a part, things belonging to one kingdom and things belonging to the other being mixed up, and God says you cannot. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13). "Ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons" (1 Corinthians 10:21). It cannot be done. It is not just the things, it is what lies behind, the god of this world holding away from God by the things of the world. That is obvious, too obvious even to mention.

### **The Relatedness of Christian Experience**

Come to the matter of Christian experience; being in the hands of the Lord, under the government of the Holy Spirit; being trained, being educated; through training, discipline, spiritual education, being perfected; being brought to the place of cooperation with God. What lies behind spiritual education? Look at every fragment and phase of your spiritual education, the way the Lord deals with you, and leads you; the history that there is with God lying behind. What is the outcome of it all? Suffering, trial, perplexity, adversity, and all that which goes to make up our Christian experience - and there is so much of it - what is the outcome of it all - God has His way? Let us look at ourselves, the way we have with God, the way He has taken us through the depths; through suffering, affliction, trial and difficulty, sometimes to the point almost of despair, like Paul, despairing of life, having the sentence of death. But what is the result? If the Lord has His way, is it not that He has a larger place, and the enemy a much smaller place through it all? That is the marvel of it all. Sometimes when you are going through it, you come to a rock-bottom experience, as you think, and you feel the devil is going to gain, the Lord is losing. But when you come up out of it, the Lord has much more ground, He has something more that He can work upon. What He has done is to get rid of a lot that was in His way. Suffering is a great purger. Christian experience is all with one object in view, where the Lord is concerned, in His dealing with us as He does. It is worship, worship in this sense, that God is coming into His own and Satan is losing ground. We have often feared that it would be just the opposite, while we were going through it, but God is faithful and it does work out to a larger measure of the Lord.

### **The Relatedness of Christian Service**

I must close on one final note - the matter of Christian service. We have already said that in the Old Testament service and worship were synonymous. "Let my people go, that they may serve me" (Exodus 7:16). That statement, as you know, was linked up with the demand that they took their cattle for sacrifices, that they might worship the Lord. Worship was the service, and what I am concerned about is just this, that we recast our whole idea and conception of Christian work or service.

We have the idea that doing a lot of things in this way, that way, and another way, is the service of the Lord, and I want to say with strength and emphasis that all service to the Lord is determined, in its value, by how much more the Lord really gets of a place *FOR HIMSELF* in spiritual reality, and not how many things we do, both in number and kind. The heart, the very core of service is worship; which means that God gets an enlarged place and Satan loses ground. Judge all service by that - not by the things done, but by the spiritual issue, that there is something more coming to the Lord. I know that sounds so simple as to hardly warrant the emphasis. But get into the places of service. Evangelization; what is the object of evangelization? Ultimately, with God, the object of evangelization is that there shall be more of God in this universe and more for Him. It is not just something in itself, to get people saved. Are we quite sure that all that is being done along this line of evangelization is really and truly bringing God into the situation, that there is something there that is so much of God that Satan has to

reckon with God? That is how it was in the New Testament. Strangers coming in fell down and said, God is among you! Ananias and Sapphira found that they could not deceive God; they were dealing with the living God, and it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God; God is here. That is the essence of worship, that is the nature of service. Evangelization - bringing God in and securing unto God His place and His rights. The testimony is for that; both individual and corporate testimony is for that.

Why companies? Why the churches? Because it is the New Testament order? That is not it, that is superficial. The churches are here as meaning in very reality, in spiritual intent, that God is here. God has not been put out of His universe, He is here. He can be met here; He can be known here; He is here, for or against. A local church, a corporate testimony, is essentially for that. All its activities are unto making that effective. Is mutual edification something in itself? Not at all; it is for building up a larger measure of the Lord. All its activities are for that - the increase of the Lord, the increase of God in Christ. The whole question of fellowship is that; not just to have a good, social, Christian time, a happy time together with those who are of like mind. Fellowship is a terrific thing in the spiritual realm. I use that word advisedly. Spiritual fellowship is a terrific thing amongst the unseen forces. Unto God it is a wonderful thing, a glorious thing. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). But it is an object of Satan's most bitter hatred. Through the ages, one thing upon which he has concentrated has been to destroy the fellowship of the people of God, because it is in that fellowship that God is found so richly, so livingly. Fellowship is not just a nice thing that you can bring about by discussion and agreement. It is something that has to be wrought by the Holy Ghost, something so wrought by the Holy Ghost that Satan cannot undo it. It stands the test, it goes through the storms, it is a marvellous thing, and, in the end, it is a miracle when brothers and sisters are, through all the testing and the assailing and all the working of the devil, found still together in the love of the Spirit. It is a mighty testimony to the Lord, and it is worship. There is something of worship in the real spiritual fellowship of God's people; not in what we say, but in our love, our mutual love, there is worship to God, things are coming to the Lord.

Well, there we are going to stop for the present. I trust we are able to see one thing at the back of all the details, all the things, one tremendous issue which has to govern; we have to allow it to govern, we have to make it to govern. When we meet things, we have to ask this question - Is Satan going to get something out of this, is this calculated to serve him, to yield to him what he is after? Then, by the grace of God, we will deny him that. What can the Lord get out of this, how much can the Lord get? Oh, that we might have grace always to have that as a governing thing - What can the Lord get out of this? - and take it up in the light of that question, not what we stand to gain or lose, but what does the Lord stand to gain or lose? That is the spirit of worship, and in the end, blessed be God, because of the work of the Lamb, there will be no more curse, but God Himself, the Almighty, and the Lamb, will be the temple, and there will be no question as to who is the object of the worship of this universe.

## Chapter Three

### THE WAY OF ITS ATTAINMENT

Reading: Revelation 4:8-11; 5:1-14; 7:9-17.

Without attempting to go back over the ground which we have covered in these studies, I want to try, for a few moments, to indicate to you what it is that I feel the Lord has brought for our attention at this time. I think it can be best gathered up in this way. We have been occupied with the great fact that everything is set in relation to a great spiritual drama, which God is working out in the Unseen. By certain Scriptures, we were taken back and shown the commencement of that drama; in some place unspecified, some time unmentioned, a big issue arose between loyal and disloyal intelligences, involving the great question, the ultimate question of the supreme and unrivalled Lordship of this universe. Then we followed out from that initiation of the question and contest into this world, its repercussions in this creation, the crisis which made it a part of everything here in this world. Then we saw how all through the spiritual history of the universe, and of this world in particular, that issue has been to the fore, and has been governing everything. Who is going to be worshiped without question and reserve? So we saw that *THE* issue which bounds the universe, and governs everything in it, is the issue of worship, that worship is something which comes down to the very minutiae, the smallest details of life. Who is going to have the supreme place, who is going to be Lord, who is going to have the worth-ship? We have seen this whole question set in the super-earthly realm; and we have seen that, with the very commencement of Christ's spiritual ministry, it was set there. "If thou wilt fall down and worship me," said the Adversary to our Lord in the wilderness. The thing is unveiled, uncovered, exposed, again and again, in the Word of God. In the book of the Revelation, it stands stark naked. The end, as revealed in that book, is - "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof." "And there shall be no curse any more." The issue is settled, the matter of worship is finished, summed up in God and the Lamb.

In some few practical ways in our previous meditation, we sought to see that everything with which we have to do is set in that realm, that unseen but most real of all realms. We saw what it means to be a Christian - not just that we come to believe certain doctrines or truths, assent to them, and are marked as those who believe these stated things; not just that we have decided, even by the grace of God, to live a good life, to refrain from a lot of things that are wrong, and do a lot of things that are right; that we change our form of behaviour, conduct and procedure. No, not these things. But the Christian life means that we have entered actively, directly, immediately into that realm where the ultimate issue of this universe becomes the primary thing in our very existence. We are a part of something immense, going on out of sight. Everything that belongs to our Christian life has to be seen in that light. We are at a loss, altogether at a loss, until we are fully aware of that - that things are not just happenings. There is a background of immense spiritual significance and meaning to everything; when we become livingly related to the Lord, we then become livingly related to the thing which He is doing. The thing that He is doing is answering that challenge, and securing its full and final answer for eternity, and that *IN* us first, and then *THROUGH* us. "Now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God." We are set in a very large realm with a very large meaning. That has been the import of our previous meditations.

I want now to bring that down to one or two more very practical matters, the first of which is the significance or meaning of the Incarnation.

### **The Significance of the Incarnation**

Firstly, the Incarnation, of course, of God in Christ. The question is, why the Incarnation? Why God manifest in the flesh? Why Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Man? In other words. why sonship? - for it is with Him that the whole principle and meaning of sonship is introduced. Why all this in the Gospels about Father and Son, Son and Father? The question will be transferred to ourselves later. Why the Incarnation?

"When all things have been subjected unto him" - that is, the Son - "then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28). That is a word of finality, and that is also a word of transition. It sees a purpose fulfilled, an end reached. In a word, it says that sonship had a purpose, and that purpose would be fulfilled. I am saying that this passage of Scripture indicates an object achieved by a certain means, and therefore that means changing its place from fulfilling to fulfilled purpose; and the end is "God... all in all." Sonship, therefore, or the Incarnation, was and is with a view to securing all God's universal rights unto Himself. It throws a lot of light, beautiful light I think, upon the whole matter of sonship, the relationship of son and father, father and son. It lifts the earthly, human conception on to a very high level, as one of the things of which we were speaking in our previous meditation, all the things in the Bible, which have back of them something so much greater than themselves, something of God. Human relationships are intended to be indications of Divine things. Oh, that they were more truly that! - human relationships real indications, representations, of Divine things. That is what they were intended for, and here amongst the human relationships is father and son, son and father, and it shows why the firstborn in Israel was of such consequence, such value, import, significance, honour; the firstborn in whom all sonship was summed up. The father might say. These are my sons, but this is my son, my firstborn. And why, when God ordered the family life of His people as in Israel, why did the firstborn son have such a place of honour and importance? Because bound up with him were all the father's rights and honour and glory and purpose. The father, with all the meaning of his fatherhood as a true father, was gathered up into that son. If that son failed, the dishonour fell upon the father. If he went wrong, the father came under that shadow. If that son died, the father's heart went with that son. The father was wrapped up in his firstborn. He was the heir; the best that the father had was his. Vested in him was everything of value and concern to the father. He was supposed to stand for the absolute honour, glory, satisfaction of his father. We know the principle holds good throughout. As we said in our previous meditation, pick up Scripture anywhere at random, if you look close enough you will find behind it something of God that is immense, endowed with the measure of God.

"Honour thy father" (Exodus 20:12). What is that? - just something to govern social conduct, make us behave ourselves? Oh no, it involves this immense thing. God the Father is wrapped up in the Son, and the Son has no less than all His Father's rights, honour, influence, in His hands. That is a Divine truth. That lies behind the Incarnation. Something has happened. God's place has been challenged, God's rights have been challenged, God's honour has been challenged. Something has happened in this universe affecting God, and has been taken up by the Son. The Son will answer that, the Son will meet that, the Son will finally settle that issue. Sonship is that which brings everything back to God. It is the very meaning of the Incarnation to bring everything back to God, to answer all disputes.



Do you see this challenge affecting God's creation, and in the creation, man? Man is one; a race, a son-race. God's rights in man have been disputed and challenged, and it is in man that God's rights have to be secured so it requires Incarnation and Sonship. Why Incarnation, why Sonship? That! and when He shall have subjected all things unto the Son, then the Son Himself shall be subject, that God may be all in all. Sonship has done its work, brought everything back to God.

That is perfectly clear so far as the Lord Jesus is concerned, though there is a great deal more in it than that. I simply state the fact, the principle, the law. You will have to look it up, to think about it, to bring the Scriptures in. You will understand then why the Son says, "Lo, I am come... to do thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). "Thy will, O God" - that is the essence of worship. And when He draws His disciples to prayer, He gives them the principle of worship - "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." That is answering the great universal challenge. It is not just a prayer to be recited every so often. It is an immense thing. The Lord Jesus was not concerned with ritual; He was concerned with the immense principles which govern this universe. Thy will, O My God, Thy will! That is worship. We get to the place of most utter worship when at last, after some conflict, some battle over some issue, we go down before the Lord and say, Thy will, Lord; not resignedly, but, Thy will shall be done! It shall be Thy will! That is worship, the Lord is getting His rights. The will of God in this universe is worship.

There is so much more as to the Son's relationship with the Father. You read John's Gospel, anew perhaps, in the light of this. Our space does not allow of the detail.

### **The Spirit of Sonship in Us**

We are chosen unto the adoption of sons. "Foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:5). "... in bringing many sons unto glory" (Hebrews 2:10). So the Scriptures could be gathered. I am only trying to show that you and I, in the thought and intent of God, are bound up with this tremendous question of sonship, and the same object governs, and is at work. The incarnation principle is pursued when Christ, by the Holy Spirit, takes up residence within; our bodies become the temple of the Holy Ghost, the sanctuary of God; that is the individual: then the Church. The spirit of sonship has entered in, we have received the Spirit of sonship, the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father (Romans 8:15). I am not saying that we, in the same full sense as Jesus Christ, are sons of God, but we come into this relationship by receiving the Spirit of His Son; we are sons with the same object; the same process at once begins. The issue is now bound up - with the Church of the firstborn sons, to bring everything back to God. The honour, and the glory, and the rights of God now become bound up with believers and with the Church. The battle is carried out into the heavenlies, our lives are set in this great spiritual background and the one issue all the time for us, day by day, year in and year out, is, Who is going to get the worship from our lives? How far, by means of us, is this great question going to be furthered toward its consummation, when God shall be all in all? It is a practical one, not a doctrinal one, not a theoretical one. It is a practical one - we know it every day of our lives. There is hardly an hour in the life of any of us when this great, eternal question may not be the very basis and issue of the situation. Who is going to have the worth-ship? Who is going to get glory out of that, the good from this? Satan or God? You see why it is that at length the Church is to come into oneness with Him in His glory. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory *IN THE CHURCH* and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever (Ephesians 3:20). You only need

those hints. Sonship is our point at the moment. We are called to sonship, which means we are called into the fellowship of God's Son, for the settling of this issue in a practical way. God is not a God of theories; He is a God of practicalities: and what I want you to realize, especially the younger ones, is that your lives, when you have come into a vital oneness with Jesus Christ, are not just things of hap or chance. Everything in your life has a spiritual setting, a background which is so vast as to involve this great question of the Incarnation, why God was manifest in the flesh, why sonship.

Take it into your business life, all the difficulties, the adversities, the trials, the testings; your home life; anywhere. Do not take things as natural things that happen. There are two kingdoms looking on and very interested in the life of every one of us; two whole hierarchies of intelligences are watching and actively connected with the life of every one, each seeking to get from our lives and through our lives the good, the worth-ship. Sonship is a tremendous thing; to be sons of God is a glorious thing, but what a vocation is bound up with it, what a calling, and what an issue! I leave that there because of space, and pass on. My difficulty is to keep all sorts of matter out; we should be overwhelmed if I let it in. We could have seen what we might call this super-earthly interest in the Incarnation. What does Bethlehem represent really? Does not the birth of the Lord Jesus uncover the other world's interest in this? Heaven is interested, coming in, most evidently coming in. All earth is represented; and hell is there, watching with sinister purpose; to destroy that life and that Man. That Son of man has not gone this earthly road without much attention from the spiritual realm. I leave you to follow that.

### **The Significance of the Cross**

Come to the Cross. We have asked, Why the Incarnation? Now, Why the Cross? The answer is found in the same spiritual realm, set there ultimately. Historic, and in a certain place on this earth, on a certain date? On "a green hill far away, outside a city wall"? Yes, true, but that is as nothing in comparison. Set it in its right place. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up..." (John 12:31-32). "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out"; and when He died, all creation registered it, and responded. "Darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour" (Luke 23:44). The tombs were rent, and there was a great earthquake (Matthew 27:51-52). Paul tells us more: Paul tells us what was going on. "Having put off from himself the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (His Cross) (Colossians 2:15). That is the setting. That is where the Cross touches the greatest range and the greatest depth. It is set amongst the great forces of this universe, the ultimate things. It touches us here, but if it had not touched there, it could not help us here: it is out there.

Why the Cross? Because this challenge of God's place and God's rights had brought in pollution, and corruption, and a false reign, and a false order and nature of things. The whole realm had been touched by that uncleanness, which was first in the heavens, and then came to the earth, corrupting, distorting, and twisting, and making things altogether different, and no longer acceptable to God. Now both source and river must be dealt with; the spring and its outflow had to be destroyed. Christ crucified goes to the very spring, the Evil One himself, and judicially deals with the situation there, and then touches the consequence of the Evil One, our sin, our sinfulness, our state, our nature, our twisted, distorted humanity, morally and spiritually. His resurrection is a triumph over two things, firstly over Satan, arch-adversary, and then, over the humanity which he has touched to corruption and distortion; add in His risen Self, you have One Who is

absolutely Lord of Satan and Lord of righteousness. Why the Cross? Well, that, briefly, comprehensively!

We must remember - it is just a little technical point - we must keep a line between the judicial and the actual work of Christ on His Cross. Satan still is, sin still is, a distorted humanity still is. In many ways, things are just as they were before Calvary; but judicially they are no longer that. He has entered into judgment, into the state of judgment. He has borne the judgment, He has died under the judgment, and He has judicially removed the ground from Satan. The judicial side is finished, the practical side is being carried out. That is Christian experience; that is where the Cross comes in, has abiding efficacy for us. What is happening? He has come to dwell within, and now He begins at the centre, at our spirit, bringing it to new birth with His own indestructible and incorruptible life. We have eternal life; *A KIND* of life, not only of duration. We have it in Christ in our spirit. From our spirit, He works out to our soul, our mind. The Holy Spirit is dealing with our minds; and, praise God, the day is coming when it will work out to the body. "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality.... Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54). He has started that. From the judicial He is moving to the practical. Why the Cross? To remove Satan's rights in us, Satan's ground in us, to make the judicial the actual where we are concerned. It is the process of the Cross. Do not despise or reject the subjective side of the Cross. Do not become too subjective yourself, but remember that the Lord is doing something inside, on the ground of what He has done by His Cross. That is the answer. Why the Cross? To deal with this ultimate thing in His universe. He is not just going to take us as we are, and, in a moment, make us like Himself. He takes us, and He begins to work in us, and He works and He works, by every means, Satan himself and Satan's work so often being employed. He is following on the trail of the Serpent, and making seeming misfortunes, mishaps, everything that seems so commonplace and ordinary, to turn to spiritual account, all to remove the ground of this other one, this Evil One, to remove his ground from us, and get His own ground in us. Herein is one of the wonders of grace, one of the great triumphs of the Lord. Is it not true that, very often, those who have suffered most for their Lord, have been the most worshipping people the Lord ever had? Is that not true, and is that not strange? Those who really love the Lord, and know the Lord, and worship the Lord most fully, are those who have suffered most with their Lord. That is the triumph.

Well, I am not going to pursue this matter any further. What I have said is indicative of many other things. We are enunciating a great truth. We are set in a great spiritual background, with an immense question being answered. We know, as we have already seen, that is just what the book of Job means, why it is in the Bible. It is set there by Divine order, and it is set there with this object - to sum up this whole drama of the ages, and show God working out an answer to an antagonist, in the very soul and body of a man. "Doth Job serve God for nought?" That is not human nature! No man ever does that, no man serves anybody for nought. You may take it if Job serves God, it is to his advantage to do so! All right, says God, I will answer that question in the very soul and body of this man; all that makes up a man's life, what a man lives for, works for, take everything from him, strip him! If a man loses his health and is in perfect physical misery, he has not much more to lose. God answers Satan in that man's soul and body, and Satan's ground of argument is simply wiped out. That is Job. I am saying, while we are not Jobs, we are not going to claim to be Jobs, we are to some little extent in the succession. That is why we read Revelation 4, 5, and 7. Is it not a glorious picture and prospect? They are worshipping, they are bringing all back to Him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb. Satan is not getting a look in there.

I would like you to read again the story of Daniel in the light of this - I merely mention it in closing - and you see the working out of all the principles that I have enunciated, and more. Daniel purposes in his heart that he will not defile himself with the king's meat. He is having none of it. Why? Turn to Chapter 3 and put your pencil underneath one word, and you find your answer. That word is worship. The king sets up an image which all must fall down and worship. When it comes to these other friends of Daniel - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego - what is the thing said about them? These men "yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God." "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1). Sanctification means having no contact with that other realm of worship, keeping ourselves wholly for the Lord. "I saw... one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14). You see the way to the Throne. It is the way of the Cross, the way of the yielding to God rather than to Satan, at any cost, presenting your bodies living sacrifices. At the end, a Kingdom, a Throne, and it is said to Daniel, "And thou... shalt stand in thy lot, at the end of the days" (Daniel 12:13). The book of Revelation shows us what it means to stand in our lot at the end; a great multitude, worshipping the Lamb, standing at the end in our lot.

If it is true that all the distress, disruption, discord, and misery through the ages is to be attributed to this divided worship, then the new creation, the new and joyous order prophesied in the Scriptures, will come about, or will be realized, on the sole basis of God being "all in all." This has its rise in every individual in whom divided allegiance is ended. It takes its larger and corporate form in the Church "which he purchased [for this purpose] with his own blood." This, again, is the motive and dynamic of every Holy Spirit-initiated and energized movement of the Evangel and it gives meaning to all His urges to holy living, loving fellowship, patient enduring, and spiritual warfare.

All that we have said is but a hint at very great realities. May the Lord find in us those who are utter and of an undivided heart.