

Foundations of the Spiritual Life (3) Continued

The Correct Vision

A. Correct vision of God

III. The Person of the Son

Jesus, as one of the Persons of the Trinity, is both a mystery and a revelation.

He is the mystery of the Father¹; He is in the bosom of the Father² and is united with Him.

Yet, the Son came out of this bosom to reveal to us the Father and help us understand who the Father is.

This mystery is eternally with the Father and has been revealed in the fullness of time³ so that we may know who the Father is; He was incarnated and became our salvation and redemption. Therefore, He is the mystery who revealed the Father and who also revealed our salvation and redemption⁴.

To talk about the Person of Christ, we need to go through the books of the Scripture, the word of God. As we know, Jesus is the Word of God, the “Logos”. Therefore, the Bible is Christ in the pages of the Scripture; and at the same times, these pages tell us about a mystery, the mystery of the incarnated Christ.

¹ Colossians 2:2

² John.1:18

³ Romans 16:25, 26

⁴ Ephesians 1:7

In other words, Jesus was revealed in the Bible; and the bible comprises lines and pages about an incarnated Person, Christ. Therefore, in order to speak about Christ, we need to go through the books of Scripture.

In the books of Moses, Christ is *the word of God* who completed the act of Creation⁵. God created the world through His word. He said: *'Let there be...and there was'*. Therefore, the word coming out of the mouth of the Father is the mystery of Christ, the Word. He is in the bosom of the Father and is united with Him, and when the Father speaks, every word that proceeds from His mouth is Life and power because these words are Christ Himself, going out to humanity and directed towards it.

Christ is a mystery and a revelation.

The first revelation is that He is the Word proceeding from the mouth of God creating the world. God created us through the hand of Christ; we are the work of Christ's hand. God is the Creator and the *Word* is the act of creation by which we have been created.

In the book of Proverbs we read:

'Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, Rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men' (Proverbs 8: 30, 31).

Here Christ is speaking in the incarnated form as the Wisdom (Wisdom Incarnate). So, Christ is the Wisdom⁶. There is no separation between the Word of God and the Wisdom of God because every time God speaks,

⁵ Colossians 1:16

⁶ 1Corinthians 1:30

Wisdom comes out of His mouth, filling the mind with amazement and power, and performing acts.

Thus, Christ is the *Word of God* and He is also the *Wisdom of God*.

Christ is also the *power of God*⁷ who performed all God's will and plans. God's plan on earth was made possible by the Second Person of the Trinity through His Redemptive work. He is the power of God who performed and completed God's plan and will on earth.

Christ who is the Word, Wisdom and Power of God made Creation, made the plans for it, and came to save it.

If anyone wants to discover God's plan for his life, the only key to enter into this will or plan is through Christ, the Word and Wisdom of God.

Christ has all the divine plans because He is the divine Wisdom and the divine Word. He *is* the One who made human beings and prepared for them their plans: *'For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them'* (Ephesians 2: 10).

In the **book of Psalms**, we read about Christ the Saviour and Redeemer, even before this manifestation in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, we read about the Messiah, the Redeemer and Saviour. He was a Saviour not only of sins and spiritual weaknesses but He also saves and delivers from difficult circumstances, problems, and tribulations⁸. He is the One who delivers and releases us from all the evil plans of the devil. He redeems us by taking our condemned place and giving us His righteous place. He

⁷ 1Corinthians 1:24

⁸ Psalm 103:4

delivers us from any problems we face. This is how they viewed Him in the Old Testament.

He is the Messiah that all the generations awaited and to whom they sung their Psalms and praises. The first one who spoke about the Messiah was Hannah, Samuel's mother, in her praise⁹. It is remarkable that in her praise Virgin Mary took parts of Hannah's praise. Hannah was the first one to speak about the Messiah; then, Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Messiah took parts of Hannah's praise and added them to her praise¹⁰.

The Messiah they awaited and praised saves and delivers from all problems. In fact, the spiritual problems and sins result in the problems and difficult circumstances that we face in the world. The devil and our fallen nature are the reason behind both kinds of problems. Inasmuch as we receive from the work of redemption in our inner life, our outside circumstances get resolved –no matter how difficult our surrounding may be. A certain spiritual sphere or realm where there are angels and divine presence would surround us. Therefore, even if we face difficult circumstances, it will not be easy for them to invade us or enter in. Because of this, the people were able to see that the Messiah saves both from inside and from outside. He sets them both right as there is coloration between the two.

The prophets also spoke about Christ in various ways; each prophet saw Him in a way different from the other.

⁹ 1Samuel 2:10

¹⁰ Luke 1:46 – 55

Zechariah saw Him in a very gentle and tender way as *wine* and *grain*:
'*Grain will make the young men thrive, and new wine the young women*'
(Zechariah 9: 17).

There is a deep divine truth in these words. Adam was created to be the power of God that performs and carries out God's plans on earth. Eve was created to be the delight of God on earth and absorb Adam's hardships and renew his energy and power. Yet, when sin entered, Adam became a god who wants to dominate and Eve became a stumbling block on earth.

Therefore, Zechariah is here saying that the redeemer will restore creation to its first beauty and glory; He will offer Himself as grain that nourishes the new Adam, the inner redeemed man; and so this new Adam would eat Christ and nourish on Him because He is the grain that will make this new inner man grow and will strengthen him to be able to carry out God's plan on earth. Christ is also the wine that Eve will drink and be filled with joy and delight and so would become the delight of earth, lifting up its hardships¹¹.

Micah saw Christ as the Ruler, whose goings forth are from of old:

'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting' (Micah 5: 2).

He plans everything and has an economy for everything; no one is greater than Him. There is no wisdom above His wisdom; He has an economy for the life of each person which is like a tune, a symphony. As a result, man's life becomes a symphony on earth.

¹¹ John 6:55 – 58

Not only did Micah see Him as the Ruler, who has an economy and plan for a person's life, but He is also the Ruler of the nations; He is the King of all the kings of the earth. Through Him, the rulers can receive wisdom to help them govern their nations.

Jacob saw Him as *'Shiloh'* which means *'the One who has all our matters in His hands'*:

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff between his feet, until Shiloh comes. And to him shall be the obedience of nations' (Genesis 49: 10).

Our matters are in His hands not in the hands of those at work or our managers or superiors. Our matters are only in the hands of Jesus Christ who is our Head.

Haggai saw Him as *'the Desire of All Nations'*¹². Any time He is mentioned, He is desired. The more we draw close to Him, we desire Him more and love Him more.

Solomon saw Him as the Bridegroom for whom the bride is being prepared.

Solomon described Him using the most wonderful descriptions saying:

'My beloved is white and ruddy, Chief among ten thousand' (Song of Solomon 5: 10).

'While the king is at his table, my spikenard sends forth its fragrance' (Song of Solomon 1: 12).

¹² Haggai 2:7

He is the Bridegroom who pours out love to His bride (whether each individual or the Church), a love which is not of this world. It is a love that purifies the emotions from all fake love, granting the true love that satisfies.

He is the One who made us and so He knows that our emotions can only be filled and satisfied with love which is of a certain kind. He Himself is Love; He is the incarnated Love. He is the One who pours love in our hearts, a love that purifies us from the love of the world. It is a bridal love of a special kind that satisfies our emotions.

The Father offers us a special kind of fatherly love that satisfies our deep inner needs from birth, including the need to belong, be looked after and receive tenderness. Jesus offers bridal love that satisfies our emotions, feelings, and affections. These emotions need to be filled with love; otherwise, it will beg for love from various sources. The more she begs love, she gets hurt and exposed. The love of Jesus is bridal, rich and satisfying.

This brings us to **the New Testament**. First, we see how the four evangelists saw Christ. They saw Him in different ways. They saw Him as a lion, as an eagle, as a King, and as a man.

He was seen as a *King* with great reverence.

He was seen as the *Lion* who has all power and authority and so can conquer the devil. Though the devil '*walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*' (1Peter 5: 8), the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5: 5) has all the power and the authority to defeat the devil.

He was also seen as a *man* who is tender and full of sweetness and compassion, caring for all His creation. He cared for the children. He also cared for the women at a time when women were not respected or well

treated (before the coming of Christ). When the gospels mention the miracles of Christ, we see that half of them were done for men and half were done for women. We see the same thing in the parables that Jesus mentioned where half of them included men and the other half included women. We often do not notice this, but this is important because Jesus meant to restore to women their dignity and honour and highlight that there is no difference between male and female in honour. Paul highlighted this later in his epistle where he wrote: *'there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus'* (Galatians 3: 28).

In Genesis 1: 27 we read: *'So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them'*. God has fatherhood and motherhood and so when He wanted to reflect Himself in human beings, He created the two forms: male and female; yet, both are equal and the same.

When Christ came to earth to show us who God is (for Christ is the image of God –as Paul wrote in Hebrews and Colossians), He showed us that God has created us in His image and that the man and the woman are both equal. Therefore, He performed miracles with men and women and with children both boys and girls. He healed the epileptic son (Matthew 17:14-18) and the daughter of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:16-28). In His parables, He spoke about men and woman. He likened the Kingdom of God to yeast that a woman took and hid in three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened (Luke 13: 21). He came to the whole of creation.

The evangelists saw Christ as the Priest who offers sacrifices. Apostle Paul also said that He is in the heavenly places interceding on our behalf and offering unseen sacrifices on our behalf (Hebrews 7:25; 8: 1 – 3).

Apostle John saw Him as the hovering *eagle*, the incarnated divinity¹³. He is very high in His divinity, and at the same time he is very close to man in His incarnation.

When we read the gospel of John, we clearly see the divinity of Christ, that He is God. At the same time, if we read any part of this gospel, we can put ourselves in the place of Christ and say the same words or pray the same prayers. For example, Jesus said: *'For this reason I was born, and for this reason I have come into the world'* (John 18: 37). Any one of us can say this prayer after discovering his/her purpose in life. Jesus also said: *'I have finished the work which You have given Me to do'* (John 17: 4). Each one of us should know the work which has been given to him/her and continue to do it until he completes it and enters into his rest.

We can say the same words that Jesus said and apply them to our lives because Apostle John presented Christ as the incarnated divinity and the Son who is sent forth at the same time. The Son made each one of us become a son of the heavenly Father; and that is why we can pray the same prayers of Christ and follow in His footsteps. Therefore, in the opening chapter of the gospel of John, we read: *'But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God'* (John 1: 12).

Apostle John wanted to highlight that His gospel reveals that Christ is God; yet, He is the incarnated divinity, the God-Man. He is God, the Son, who came to show us how a son of God should live. He made each one of us a child of God; so, we can follow in His footsteps, pray His same prayers, and take our place in the heavenly Father like the Son.

¹³ John 1:1 – 5

The **book of Acts** speaks about the Church. At the beginning of this book we read: *'for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved'* (Acts 4: 12).

When we come to the book of Acts, we suddenly realise that Christ has become a message which we proclaim and preach *'Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus'* (Colossians 1: 28). In Romans 1: 5, Apostle Paul writes: *'Through Him we have received grace and apostleship'*.

Christ has become a message that should be proclaimed. He is a message of redemption, salvation, life, mercy, truth, and the way, for He is the way the truth and the life (John 14: 6). He is a message that we should be proud of.

The epistles speak about the Church. Reading the epistles, we start to understand what Moses had said about the tabernacle. The tabernacle is actually Christ in shadows and symbols. Jesus is the manna, the Ark of the Covenant, the table for the Showbread, the bronze altar with all the mysteries of His redemption, the gold altar of incense with all the mysteries of His prayers and intercessions. In the New Testament, after these shadows and symbols were revealed, Christ became the Head of the Church¹⁴ and the constant food that nourishes the Church.

The epistles talk about the Church of Christ. He is her Head and the author and finisher of her faith (Hebrews 12: 2); He goes before the Church in her sojourning in the world until she completes her role and mission on earth. Then, when He comes again, He will be her proclaimed and revealed

¹⁴ Colossians 2:19

Bridegroom and she will be His glorified Bride. This will be the marriage supper of the Lamb¹⁵.

Jesus will be the proclaimed King on earth and the full power of His redemption and glory will be revealed. He will present us to the Father as His bride who is united with Him, of His flesh and of His bones, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5: 27, 30); holy like Him because He is holy.

At this point, God becomes all in all and the story ends as it had started, exactly as God was revealed as all in all. His Trinity was revealed to us; His plans were revealed; but when the enemy interfered through the fall, Redemption was then manifested. God's plans and purposes will be carried out and completed and the Kingdom of God will be proclaimed. In this Kingdom, the bride, who is united with the Bridegroom, is revealed and presented to the Father so that God may be all in all, as Apostle Paul explains in 1Corinthians 15: 28 –Christ being united to His Church and presenting her to the Father is different from Christ being united to the Father because He is One with the Father and equal with Him in essence.

This was a brief overview about Christ in the books of the Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation.

When we understand Christ as such and seek Him, we will find Him. He will not be found if I am not ready to receive Him as the mystery of life. In Colossians 2: 2, we read that He is the mystery of the Father. He is the mystery of life that fills the heart and revives us. The whole life becomes His because He bought us with His blood. Life would become meaningful

¹⁵ Revelation 19:7

when we follow Him and enter into fellowship with Him. He is the Head and the author and finisher of our salvation.

The Person & the Work of Christ:

Finally, I want to highlight that in reading the New Testament, we need to pay attention to two things: the Person of Christ and the work of Christ.

The New Testament presents the Person and Character of Christ in various ways; so that we may follow in His footsteps, He becomes our example and the living image into which we should be transformed: *'to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren'* (Romans 8: 29).

In the meantime, the New Testament tells us about His work, the work of His redemption because the more this work of redemption enters to our inner man, the more it enables us to be transformed into this image and to follow Him.

The gospels speak about the Person of Christ while the epistles talk about the work of Christ.

The gospels portray to us the Person, the Character of the Son, from various angles; so that, we may absorb this image inside us. He is the reason of our life and our redemption. We are a fallen humanity and our only hope is in Christ, the hope of Glory (Colossians 1: 27). Through him we know our heavenly Father and experience the company of the Holy Spirit. He is the beginning and the end: *'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End'* (Revelation 1: 8).

Christ alone gives us life and makes us the children of God, our Father. He grants that the Holy Spirit would be our companion and Comforter who dwells in us.

Therefore, the four gospels present to us Christ from various angles, outline His footsteps and show us how He lived His days on earth. We should read this, meditate on it, absorb it, eat it and drink it, talk of it when we lie down and when we rise up (Deuteronomy 6: 7). Then, the Holy Spirit would gradually open our minds and understanding to the Person of Christ. The more the eyes of our minds are opened to His Person, the more we can be transformed and understand everything.

Jesus is the key and door to understanding the Father and enjoying His fellowship. Similarly, we can only enjoy the fellowship of the Holy Spirit through Christ who has redeemed us. The manifestation of the redemptive work of Christ in us allows the coming of the Holy Spirit to us and His dwelling in us. In the Old Testament, we see that the oil was poured after shedding the blood of the sacrifices. Therefore, after the Crucifixion and Christ saying '*it is finished*', the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. We can only have the right to the fellowship with the Holy Spirit through Christ and the work of His redemption. We can only have the right to the fellowship with the Father through Christ and the adoption granted to us by Him. Therefore, Christ is the door; He is the beginning and the end; He is all in all.

We need to read the gospels in a different way. We should not think of them as stories that we have read so many times and that we already know where there is nothing new, just miracles and parables. In fact they are not as such; they convey to us a living divine and human example who has

entered into our fallen world to light it and to give life to the dead. In the gospels we see a divine incarnated Person walking in our world. He emptied Himself and took our human form; and so, we can look at Him and see how we can be when we are freed from the fall, knowing that He is the One who gives us this ability. We need to see how His day went, how any work He did looked like, and what His conduct was like. He is the Person whom we desire to gaze upon and meditate on as we read the chapters; and go on our knees asking Him to pour in our lives the mystery of His life so that we can live on earth in the same way He lived because we are children of God; Christ is the One who granted us this gift. We should do on earth as the Son did so that the Father may be pleased with us and so that we may proclaim His will that it would be on earth as it is in heaven. This is how we should read the four gospels.

Each time we read, we need to pray asking Him to help us see Him in order to walk as He walked¹⁶ because we are called for this and He desires to grant us the ability. In Christ, we see how the complete humanity walks on earth fulfilling the will of the Father. We can then do the same. Our humanity will not be perfect like His, but, it will be redeemed through His redemption. We will then be able to do as He did, not out of our own ability as He did, but through the strengthening of His grace and the work of His Spirit in us.

The book of Acts tells us how the Church was established and how she lived, so that we can live in the same way. The Church was established in Act 2, then in the chapters that follow, we see how the Church moved,

¹⁶ 1John 2:6

ministered, was persecuted, suffered, overcame Satan, and spread light and life on earth.

The epistles tell us about the work of Christ, His redemption.

The gospels reflect the life of Christ, His Person, and the epistles speak about His redemptive work.

In between them is the book of Acts which is about the Church that is established by the redemption. She then proclaims this redemption. The Church is responsible to tell people that they are not born to eat and drink but to do the will of God. The Church is Christ on earth. She is His body. She should do what He likes to do. The Church should tell the humanity which is living in darkness, sin and death: *'arise, shine; there is life and light'*. This is the message of the Church. She should carry out this message not by mottos nor by fighting; but by a holy life full of humility and ready to sacrifice to the point of death for the sake of others. *'And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death'* (Revelation 12: 11).

If we desire that the mystery of Christ would reach the people, we have no other way apart from the way He walked; as He died, we should be ready to die. We can die through pain, love, humility, humbleness, and even blood shed if necessary. In this way, we would be the Church of Christ that can change the face of the earth.

In the epistles, we read about the work of redemption and how the Church can live as described above through the work of redemption. Redemption changes each person; and then brings these people together, unites them and makes them a true body united with the Head. This would be *'a perfect*

man' (Ephesians 4: 13). This perfect man can walk on earth as if he is Christ on earth.

Our problem is that we are a Church that is not united with our Head. We should be members who are united together in order to be a body because the body is what can be united with the Head. In order for us to be united members, each member should be experiencing the work of redemption. The Holy Spirit would then be able to connect these members together. The Holy Spirit connects the redeemed members, making them a body ready to be united with the Head. Life would then flow abundantly. *'It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments'* (Psalm 133: 2). These garments extend to the world to proclaim to it the message of Christ.

Therefore, when we read the epistles we need to look for the work of Christ, the work of the Cross, the work of the blood of Jesus, the work of the resurrection of Christ, the work of the ascension of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit that He poured in us, the work of redemption; and we need to see how to benefit from this great divine work.

We read the gospels focusing on the Person of Christ desiring to see Him. Similarly, when we read the epistles we focus on what He has done for us and how to benefit from it in order to be redeemed humans, redeemed members in the body that the Holy Spirit can unite together forming a living body that is connected to the Head.

This perfect man, the Church, would be Christ on earth fulfilling all what Christ desires; and exactly as He has done in the body of His flesh, He can do through us. He came to redeem us and His Church should be the One to proclaim this redemption so that redemption may be manifested in every

person everywhere; so that, the earth would be a Kingdom and the King would come. This would be the Kingdom of God in our midst: *'Your Kingdom come'* (Matthew 6: 10).