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"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:16-17).

"...it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10).

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." - "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old things are passed away: behold, they are become new. But all things are of God..." (Gen. 1:1 - 2 Cor. 5:17-18).

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." - "Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (Gen. 1:3 - 2 Cor. 4:6).

"And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness." - "Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love." (Gen. 1:4 - Col. 1:13).

"And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." - "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Gen. 1:6 - Col. 3:1-3).

**The New Creation in Christ**

We have read together in Matthew 3 of the baptism and descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Lord Jesus, because it is just there that we have the new creation in Christ introduced. I want you to take particular note of this quite simple thing, that the new creation is in Christ; or, in other words, Christ is God's new creation, and everything that is a part of God's creative activity and method is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. So that, when He emerges from that typical death in Jordan and the Spirit comes upon Him, it is God by His Spirit typically bringing a new order of things into being, as represented by Christ and as embodied in Christ, and from that moment, by the Spirit of God - Who was the executive of the Divine purposes at the beginning, brooding over the darkness and the chaos - from that moment by the Spirit governing the life of Jesus, everything will be a progressive development and unveiling of what the new creation is. Then, of course, comes the inclusive statement that it is when we are in Christ that there is a new creation; that is, the new creation has its rise, so far as we are concerned, by that experience of coming into Christ, being made one in union with Christ, having now our place and our life and everything in Christ. It is there that all the meaning of God's new universe in a spiritual way becomes a part of us. Those are just simple basic facts with which most of us are familiar.

Now, we just come to take up the matter in these corresponding words in the Old and the New Testaments.

"In the beginning God..."

I do not think there is any great mystery about that word "beginning". A very great deal has been made of it. The simple fact is this, that right at the inception of something called "the creation" there was God. Everything took its rise from Him, sprang from Him. The beginning is the beginning of a new universe, and new order, and there it is with God. I am being exceedingly simple in the statement of truth in this meditation. It may not be all so simple as we go on, but I do want to get this thing quite clearly before you at the outset. It is God intervening in a state of things which is chaotic, and the key to everything, the secret of everything, is the Lord Himself in a living, personal, active way, coming into that scene.

What is true here in the material universe and creation is just as true in the spiritual experience. It is that God comes into the scene, into the situation, that there is a living, personal, active God breaking in upon things as they are: and most of us know that is true from experience. What is the remedy for everything, what is the key to all the problems, the solution of every difficulty. It is the coming in of God Himself into experience in an active, personal way.

Now, in the New Testament where we are dealing with the new creation, the whole weight of revelation bears down upon this, that it is God in Christ intervening in the life and state of things in a living, personal way,

coming right in in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him is that which will answer the situation at every point in all its forms, and the knowledge of Him coming in is the way to that perfect order, that glorious order, that universe which expresses at every point the glory of God.

You see, the statement in 2 Cor. 4:6 is this - "...the light of the knowledge of the glory of God": the knowledge of the glory of God. Break the statement up into its parts - The glory of God; the knowledge of the glory of God; the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. That is what is in view. It is God desiring to make Himself known in terms of glory - over against the situation as we find it typically in Gen. 1:2. "The earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep". This, as we know, was but typical of a yet deeper spiritual darkness that had overtaken the creation. So that this awful chaos and darkness and disorder, this state of things which we know to be true of the human heart, of the broken down creation of human nature, shall be resolved into, or give place to, a revelation of the glory of God: and we shall know the glory of God - how? By what He does. You never can know anyone really apart from what they do. It may be the most able, clever person in this world, but if that person should happen to be away in some remote place out of touch with the rest of the world, you would never know anything about their ability. It is only as they come into touch with the world and express their ability in their actions that you know what they are. And God desires that the glory which is true of Him, which He has, should be known, should be displayed, and that by what He does as over against the situation that exists.

In the beginning God - and now, in New Testament terms, In the beginning God in Christ. You may think that does not get you very far, but I want you to be quite sure of my point, which is this, that the coming in of the Lord Jesus upon the scene is the full embodiment of everything that is going to end in a new universe for us expressive of the glory of God. Beloved, if the Lord Jesus is in us and if we are in Christ, there is the sum total of all Divine glory. Now it is a matter of progressive working out, discovering and knowing; but it is all there. God was no bigger on the sixth or seventh day than He was on the first. May I put it like that? It was all there in Him before He started, and the Lord Jesus, God in Christ, being on the scene, existing in the midst of a situation, means that all the fulness of Divine possibility is there present and the glorious end is already here. The Lord Jesus will be no greater when this whole universe is transfigured into His likeness than He is today, no bigger than He is in your heart. If He is there, you have a new universe and my desire at this point in emphasizing this is to point out that it is all a matter of having the Lord Himself and not things. We want this and that and something else which we think to be parts of the new creation. We are wanting sanctification, holiness and all sorts of things, and so we are reaching out for things which to us are things which make up the new creation, and there are any number of things after which people go. Let me say that if you have the Lord Jesus, you have all the things, and what is necessary now is to discover what Christ is, what is in Christ, and it is all a matter, not of making new discovery of things, but of making progressive discovery of the Lord.

You see, the first day represents a revelation of the Lord. The second day - why, it is some fuller revelation of the Lord, a discovery of the Lord in a fuller way; not things, but the Lord. It is all coming back to the Lord, and, as you make progress through the days right on to the end of the creation, what is happening is this - "Oh, what a wonderful Lord this is! On the first, day, I thought He was wonderful, but on the second day, I thought he was more wonderful; and, as the days have gone on, I have found He is infinitely more wonderful than I knew He was." That is the point, and that is all true in the case of the Lord Jesus: wherefore Peter says, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18); and Paul also says that we grow up thus unto God, and for us now that is God in Christ - "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

"In the beginning God created..." - "If any man be in Christ there is a new creation." God's intention and thought and idea in creation was specifically and entirely with a view to having Himself in universal expression, that, by reason of what He brought into being, the result of His activity, He should be seen. "The invisible things of him", says the Apostle, "are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made", showing God's idea that things which otherwise would be altogether hidden from His intelligent universe should be seen by His creative activity; God putting Himself out to be known along the line of creation. If that be the case in the material creation, how very much more is it so in the new creation. If the new creation is in Christ Jesus, then all that God is which cannot be known otherwise is to be known in Christ. God has brought the sum total of what He is in Himself within the range of our spiritual knowledge by breaking in upon the scene in the form of Jesus Christ. A new creation! "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father". But how few have seen Him. Hence the importance of seeing Him, and with other than natural eyes. What a difference it makes!

#### Some Features of the New Creation

##### (1) Light

"God said, Let there be light: and there was light" - "God who said, Light shall shine out of darkness" (or God who said, Let there be light) "hath shined into our hearts". It is the same creative activity. God said, Let there be light! God hath shined. In the matter of light, the new creation is in Christ. "I am the light of the world", said He: "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." You see, God brings in light in order that what He is going to do may be done in the light, may be carried on and seen. There may be a sense in which God works in the dark. God often does work in secret, in a hidden way, but really all God's works are in the light. He carries on His works, His purposes, in the light. Now, with regard to the new creation in Christ, the first feature in the movement forward is light. The Lord Jesus is the Light in which, or in whom, God proceeds with the unfolding of His purposes. A knowledge of the Lord Jesus by revelation of the Holy Spirit is a knowledge in the light of which God is able to fulfil all that is in His mind. That is not very well put. I will try to put it more clearly.

God has a great, an extensive, a many-sided thing on hand, but God cannot realize all that is in His heart save as there is light in which to do it; and you and I, beloved, who are a part of His creation, need light, need illumination, need revelation, need the darkness to be dismissed, in order that God shall reach His full end in us. Therefore you have so much in the New Testament, both in the Gospels by way of illustration, and in the Epistles by way of direct teaching, which points out that, in order to reach God's full end, you have to have light, you have to have revelation. There must be a state of illumination, a state of enlightenment. We are not talking about specific illumination now, but there must be an enlightenment of the eyes. Now, what does this mean? It just means, beloved, that God will not go on with His work apart from illumination. God cannot. You cannot take it for granted that you are going to come into all that is in God's mind willy nilly, drift into it just automatically, or mechanically come to it. It is not done that way. The very first step in new creation is a matter of the eyes being opened, and every successive step has to be the outcome of illumination. God must work on the basis of illumination, and all true experience bears that out. You and I do make progress immediately we see something, and we do not make progress until we see. Is that not true? For a long time maybe we are held up about something and we are conscious that we are not moving, not making progress, and there is something we need to know; and then, under the Spirit's operation, there is illumination, and as soon as we get that illumination, we are free, we are released, we move on, we gain ground: and it must be like that, and it is always like that. It is a fresh revelation of the Lord Jesus which is the basis of progress towards God's full end.

Now, the Lord Jesus is the light, the full light, and it is only in Him, in His light, in the light of what He is, that you and I can come to know the glory of God. Oh, how true this is to the Word! "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" There is nothing more blinding than unbelief, and there is nothing more illuminating than faith. Poor Tennyson was very wide of the mark when he said,

"We have but faith, we cannot know,  
For knowledge is of things we see."

We are outside of the New Testament when we begin to make poetry like that. No, there is nothing which is more the key to knowing than faith, and the Lord has established that quite definitely. Believest thou that I am able to do this thing? It is always the Lord's challenge before opening eyes, before doing a work which is to result in a new fulness of spiritual life. It is the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It is light in Christ you and I need for spiritual growth, for spiritual fulness, and so we must ask the Lord to maintain us in the way of continuous and progressive revelation; for immediately that ceases, our growth ceases. We do not mean we should seek revelation to come in a direct way apart from what He has given us in the Scriptures. We are not talking of extra-Biblical revelation, but the revelation of God's fulness which lies within what He has already given us in His Word. We know quite well, any fragment of the Word of God, under the Holy Spirit's illumining, can reveal things ever new and ever fresh and ever more wonderful. We today are using the Scriptures which have been in use for long centuries and still there is fresh light to break forth from them. To be kept in that way is new creation, and that is spiritual growth, that is moving on to fulness. That is how it should be in the new creation. Just for the moment, our point is this, that there is no progress in God's purposes where we are concerned apart from light, spiritual light by the Holy Spirit.

## (2) Discernment

"And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."

God made a distinction, and said, This is darkness and this is light; and in the later covenant, you remember, it was said that, as long as the earth remained, there should be day and night, summer and winter, seedtime and harvest; these things should be divided up and put in their place under an irrevocable covenant or ordinance of

God. These things stand apart; light and darkness stand apart: and that points on so much to the new creation. We quoted Col. 1:13 - "hath translated us out of the kingdom of darkness (or the power of darkness) into the kingdom of the Son of his love": and, says the Apostle, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day": we are not of the night, nor of darkness. The distinction is made.

Now, you see, God is not satisfied with the simple bringing in of light in order to go on with His great work and purpose. God makes an ordinance of this; that light is light and darkness is darkness. You have to discriminate between the two, and a feature of progress, whether in the progressive activity of God in the creation or in the new creation, is that there is a distinction which is to be observed, to be noted, to be taken account of, and that we are not to go on as though this thing did not exist. In nature, for instance, if you violate that distinction, you are going to suffer. The turning of day into night and night into day is costing the race a good deal. You have not, after a time, the same stored up energies. Your energies are not repaired in the same way as if you were working by day and resting by night; for night sees a suspension of certain vital forces in nature so that you should rest, whereas there are energies let loose in the day in order to enable you to work. While there are natural forces that are at work to vitalize unto labour during the day, you have, in contrast, that terrible zero hour in the very early hours before daybreak - sick people know it, sufferers know it - the zero hour, that desperately perilous hour for someone who is very low in vitality. You see, God has ordered His creation with principles and laws, and these obtain with even greater force in the spiritual and new creation; and God says, "You must not ignore a distinction that I have made. This is darkness and this is light, and you belong to the light and to the day. You do not belong to the night and the darkness. You have been translated, and you must have intelligence to discriminate between what belongs to the darkness and what belongs to the light, and to keep these things apart". It is a mark of spiritual growth to be able to do that; it is spiritual progress.

By reason of being now in the new creation, you have a faculty given to you for appreciating the differences, appreciating what is of the Lord and what is not of the Lord; what is of the light and what is of the darkness; what is of the day and what is of the night. You have a power of discerning in the new creation, and you have to use it. This is exactly what the Apostle meant when, writing to the Hebrews, he said that strong meat was for fully grown men who, by reason of exercise, have their senses developed. That is maturity, that is growth, that is the attaining of a point of spiritual advancement, that you have your senses exercised to discern. It is a mark of growth when you can discern what belongs to this realm and what to that.

God fulfilled all these things in the creation at the beginning through the executive instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit of God who is dividing and setting things in their place. In the new creation the Spirit of God becomes the intelligence within us, to make us know what belongs to light and what belongs to darkness and where the divide comes. That is what life in the Spirit means. It is very practical. Thus we are told about the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and we have experience of the Spirit of God through the Word, saying, in effect, Now this belongs to that realm and that belongs to that realm; and you must take account of the different realms and these two things must not be confused. A life in the Spirit means that we come to be able to discern what belongs to soul and what belongs to spirit, or that which is natural and that which is Spirit. It is a real creation, it is a living creation, it is an intelligent creation. God has not designed a creation of chairs and tables without sense, just things which He has made. He has made men and women to form His new creation, and they are to have sense and intelligently understand God. Mark that it is the knowledge of God that is spoken of, the knowledge of the glory of God, and the knowledge of the glory of God means knowing how to discern what is of God and what is not of God, and, as we know what is of God and keep to it, so we move on in the glory of God. But when you and I fail to discern what is of God and come into something that is not of God, the glory of God fades from our hearts. We know there is no glory. "God divided the light from the darkness".

### (3) Heaviness

"And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."  
(More literally, the waters above from the waters beneath).

Let there be a firmament between the waters above and the waters below. In other words, Let there be that which determines what belongs above and what belongs below. This is only an extension of what we have just been saying, but it is a phase with a particular point because it brings in the whole matter of where rule and government are to be seated. The government, is to be above. There is a distinction and a gap, and the New Testament passage which we have used to correspond to this is Col. 3:1-3.

"If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died,

and your life is hid with Christ in God."

To what did you die? You died to your old creation which as we pointed out in our previous meditation, belonged to the first man who was of the earth, earthy, and you rose to the last Adam, the second Man, who is from heaven or of heaven.

"As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:48).

Two men, two orders. Now then, there is to be a space between, and we are to be governed entirely by what is above the firmament. That opens up a tremendous field. It carries us right into Ezekiel at once. We see that the whole of Ezekiel is the outworking of one statement, that above the firmament was the Throne and the likeness of a Man. All the rest that follows is the result of that - A Man in the Throne above the firmament. Is that not true in the new creation, exactly where the new creation commenced in the second chapter of the Book of the Acts? The mighty coming in of the new creation, so far as the Church is concerned, is because there is a Man above the firmament. All is governed out from heaven and by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven: all is of heaven now. God has made a divide, and here is another step forward, a big step forward, toward God's full end, and progress, development and fulness is a matter of our being heavenly in life and government and interest, and being separate from what is merely earthy. Here is the principle of progress, God going on with His work.

But how does God go on with His work? What are the principles of His being able to go right through to make a full end in His new creation? It is that there are these differences, and that we who are of and in the new creation are governed by these differences; that is, that we are now in the place where there is a divide between what is earthy and what is heavenly as governing our lives. What is influencing you, what is governing you, controlling you, directing you? What is it that is affecting you in your life? Are earthly interests the controlling things or are heavenly things? Is there a distinction and definite space between these things where you are concerned, so that everything is not a jumble, earthly things all mixed up with heavenly things. That is a way of spiritual progress.

So, then, we have to know by the Holy Spirit in us that there is a firmament. Has the Holy Spirit definitely constituted a firmament within you? Can you say that in your heart, in your spirit, there is a firmament; that is, God has put a space between what is heavenly and what is earthy, and you know it, and that space is there as a real thing? It means that your interests, your resources, your well-springs are all above. Your life is hid with Christ in God. It is a way of spiritual fulness, moving unto God's end.

#### (4) Fruitfulness

"And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so."

You see, up to this point, there was no distinguishing between the land and the sea. Waters were general, waters were all pervading: and when you look for the symbolic meaning of waters, you find that they are the lawless elements in the universe. Of course, if you have been to sea when the waters are stirring themselves up, you know that to be a very good simile; lawless elements indeed they are! Here is the thought of something that has got the law into its own hands and is all pervading. Now God says, we are going to break in upon that universal reign of lawlessness, that anarchy, and we are going to bring all that within a limit and bind it to a fixed compass, to a place and a space of its own, and, in so doing, we shall make possible the bringing up and out from it of that upon which we are going to develop the revelation of the glory of God. Thus the next thing is the dry land, and then all that comes on the dry land; the verdure, the beauty, the fruitfulness. But you can never have dry land, you can never have that beauty and fruitfulness which comes on the dry land, until you have broken the reign of lawlessness. There is no prospect of trees and shrubs and fruits, the earth bringing forth its splendour for us and for God, a revelation of the glory of God; there is no prospect of that until lawlessness has been harnessed, its reign broken, and it has been brought within limits and bounds.

That is the new creation; that is the work of the Spirit of God in the new creation. How much Scripture we could cite at once about that. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). That is only one of a large number of passages which bear upon this thing, that spiritual progress under the government of the Holy Spirit toward God's end means that all that running riot of our fallen nature has been brought under arrest and put within limits. It may still make itself known; but there is the check of the Spirit of God at a point which says, So far, and no further! to the sea. You and I know there are still those wild, lawless elements in regions of our humanity. We know it, and those things do trouble us. It is part of the infirmity of our

broken down creation. You have only to suffer from a nervous complaint to know the awful distress that comes to you through irritability. It is in our broken down humanity. But, blessed be God, that is not all, that is not universal.

What is it that makes you and me to some very real extent amazed at the way men are going on today? Do you not often feel that you would like to get into touch with some of these men and reason with them and seek to persuade them along the line of sweet reasonableness, and really to put before them a higher, better way. What makes you feel like that? You see, perhaps once you would have done the same thing. If you had been provoked or if you had been mastered by a great ambition, you would have stood at nothing, you would have gone fiercely on, riding rough-shod, to gain your end. That is our nature; but something has happened and there is another side of things which brings forth the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. That is the dry land bringing forth. In Christ, we all have something of that. You may think it is too little, but in that realm this riotous thing does not hold the day. No, we know that in Christ God has broken in and put back into a certain place that old creation lawlessness of evil nature, and has brought up something else, and that something else makes us constantly react against the thing that is still there somewhere and that makes itself felt from time to time. Every reaction of ours, every bit of suffering when there is an uprising of that old thing, declares there is something else. If it were universal, we should have no reaction in sorrow, no pain over failure. Blessed be God, He has - we say it to His glory - He has made a difference in our natures and constitution, and He has drawn the line between the waters and the dry land; the riotous elements of our old nature and the beautiful elements of His Divine creation. There is a difference. Well, you see, this is a mark of progress. God is getting on with His work, and to know that difference is something for which to thank God. We cannot boast and we cannot talk about our virtues and goodness, but we do secretly thank God that a change has come about. Whereas at one time we were far more governed by self-interest and passions than by Divine interests, it is becoming more and more the other way round. The new creation is growing apace. It is the increase of Christ and what is happening is that it is more of Christ now and less of the old Adam in lawlessness against God.

#### (5) Resurrection

"And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit-tree bearing fruit after its kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so."

Now, in order to get the full value of that, you have to come over to verses 29 and 30, and 31.

"And God said, Behold I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food: and to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food: and it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

Do you see the difference? To man God has given that which has seed in it for food. To the beast, the birds, the living creatures, He has given the herbs without the seed. What is the meaning of that? Well, I must go over to John 12:24.

"Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

We are speaking about the knowledge of the glory of God. "Said I not unto thee that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" Do you remember the connection of those words? Lazarus has died and fallen into the ground, and the knowledge of the glory of God is going to come about by resurrection; and you can only have resurrection when you have seed that falls into the ground and dies. You and I are controlled in our knowledge of God by this law. We only know the glory of God on the principle of resurrection. That is progress. You are, we are moving on. Yes, the way to know the Lord in ever growing fulness is on the principle of resurrection. You will remember that we are shown the supreme instance of this in the letter to the Ephesians.

"...that ye, may know... the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named."

## The Knowledge of the Glory of God

There you have a very full knowledge, but it is by way of the power of His resurrection. Well then, you and I must know more and more on the one side of that dying to live, that going down to be released, that breaking up which means enlargement, that grave for what is not of heaven in order that what is of heaven may know emancipation into fulness. That is the law, the law of the seed.

Is not the Holy Spirit's way of keeping to spiritual principles wonderful? The Lord marvellously indicated this very thing away back there in Genesis 1:11,29-31 - 'You are to come as the new creation to be a revelation of Myself in fulness. There shall be a knowledge of Me, My glory, and, in order that it might be so, you have to feed on resurrection. Your very sustenance and maintenance has to be by resurrection, and that is to be the law of your maintenance'. Resurrection! The whole Bible gathers round that, does it not?

There is much more. Ask the Lord to keep it alive and make it of value. These are not just theories, but very practical and important things. They are the real things of the new creation. The Lord teach us in our hearts what they mean.