

HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 1

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KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART ONE

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THE TWELVE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC DEPICTING GOD'S PLAN AND PROCESS OF REDEMPTION

Our Creator is a God of super-abundant generosity. Look at the universe and the world around you. His generosity is evident. He has given us more than enough air to breathe. He has given us water to waste. He has given us an earth with resources vast and unlimited. We have the moon to stimulate our romantic impulses and to decorate the night sky. In addition to the sun and moon, God has provided the dazzling planets for our wonder. Then He unselfishly filled the shimmering heavens with myriad's and multitudes of countless twinkling stars. He could have given only a few hundred stars, but our super-abundant God MORE than filled the vast entities of space with them.

From time immemorial, man has been fascinated by the beautiful and awesome spectacle of the stars of heaven and has sensed that they tell a tale of might and power far beyond the scope of human reason. Centuries before the birth of Jesus, the sweet singer of Israel penned these words of inspiration and truth: "[The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork.](#)" (Ps. 19:1) "Listen," he says with eyes upraised, "the stars are talking!" Can you not picture him now as he gazed upward and watched Orion, the hunter, climb over the hills of Moab on the eastern horizon, followed soon after by his dog, in which shone brilliant Sirius, the most luminous star in the heavens. Poet and plowman, astronomer and artisan, civilized and savage have alike agreed that there is a testimony in the fact of the heavens that reason cannot refute.

Long millenniums ago, God said, "Let there be light!" With that command a universe of raging infernos called stars came into existence, and have been transferring their energies into limitless energy-containing systems ever since. Even today, the seeming myriad's of stars and nebulae continue to be a breathtaking and inspiring panoply. When you go out and look up to the sky on a clear dark night, when the heavens look like dark blue velvet, and the stars like diamonds, it seems as though there were no end to the number of twinkling points of light. You would think that it was quite impossible to count the starry hosts, and that it would be just about as easy to count the grains of sand on the seashore. Really, however, there are not really so many stars to be seen with the unaided eye as you would imagine. They have often been counted, and the result is that the number of stars that an ordinary eye can see at any one time is somewhere about 2,000. If you have very keen eyes, you may be able to see another 500 or so; but there are not many people who can see 2,500 stars, and if you can see 2,000 you do fairly well.

By contrast, the Bible states in **Jer. 33:22** that "[the host of heaven CANNOT BE NUMBERED.](#)" During the thousand's of years before Galileo's invention of the telescope, such a statement was considered to be either false or at least a gross exaggeration. The stars uncountable? The universe, they said, was too small to contain that many stars! However, using such giant telescopes as the "200 inch" on Mount Palomar in California, astronomers have estimated that there are billions of billions of stars in the visible universe. More specifically, astronomers estimate that their number is equal to 1,000, 000,000,000,000,000 or one sextillion. Is this an uncountable number? That is the number that can be seen through the telescopes! But as far as man can see the universe stretches on and on into infinity he has never discovered its outer perimeter. We therefore conclude that the term "uncountable" is indeed a very appropriate description of the number of stars in the universe. Yet in **Ps. 147:4** we read that "[GOD telleth the number of the stars; HE calleth them all by their names.](#)" God is not only able to number the stars- these billions of billions of blazing suns- but He calls each of them by name--He has ascribed a nature, a power, a purpose to each!

To get some idea of the vastness of the universe... the star known as "Alpha Hercules" is more than 2,400,000,000 miles across. It is so huge that our own sun, together with the earth (at its distance of about 93 million miles from the sun) could be placed 25 times IN A ROW across the middle of this super giant star. To fly through-this star from one end to the other (if it were possible!) at 25,000 miles per hour your rocket would take 11 years! What distances! What a GOD! Psalm 19 well says, "The heavens declare the glory of God." The stars shine on in their glory as in the beginning. Millenniums and cycles have gone by; kingdoms have arisen and slowly passed away. Yet the stars' brightness is not dimmed, nor their force abated. The dew of youth still seems fresh upon them. No faltering motion reveals the decrepitude of age. These shine on in undiminished glory through all the ages of time.

THE HEAVENS SPEAK

During those star-studded nights above the plains of Judea, David looked into the heavens and there beheld the vast glittering band of stars making up our Milky Way. He was awed and knew there had to be boundless power, intelligence, and purpose behind it all He was transfixed. He so identified with that purpose that it became his passion. Everywhere he looked he could see the stamp of the divine Creator. He exclaimed in words of inspiration that sprang up from within his spirit: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world." (Ps. 19:1-4)

The italicized words "there is" and "where" in verse three are not in the original manuscripts. While the King James Version says, "There is no speech nor language where ' their voice is not heard," the translators added these words supposedly to improve the meaning of the text. The marginal reference reads, "Without these their voice is heard." In other words, although there is no audible voice or sound, the message is so clear that all may recognize it. Rotherham correctly translates the passage, "There is no speech, and there are no words-unheard is their voice! Yet through all the earth hath gone forth their voice, and to the ends of the world their sayings."

What did David know of the heavens and how they express the glory of God? What does David mean when he says that every day speaks to him and to us? What does he mean when he declares that every night is a showing forth of knowledge? To whom does he refer when he says that there is no place on earth where the language or speech of man is spoken that "their voice is not heard"? Surely there is something more indicated here than a mere wonder on David's part evoked by the immensity and grandeur of the star-lit sky When we read the whole passage and mark its structure, and note the words employed, we are emphatically told that the heavens contain a revelation from God; they prophesy, they teach knowledge, they tell of God's glory, and set forth His purposes and counsels. The heavens do not speak English, yet they speak to every Englishman and every American. The heavens do not speak French, but they speak to every Frenchman. They do not speak Spanish, yet they speak to every Spaniard. They speak in every language to every people. And they speak and reveal the majesty of God's great plan and purposes to His creation. Upon the blue sapphire of the firmament is spread a sheet of royal paper written all over with the wisdom and power of God. This book of creation is not sold in bookstores, but it is to be read by everyone who lifts his eyes up to heaven.

The Companion Bible tells us that all the verbs in the second half of Ps. 19 are ASTRONOMICAL in nature. Furthermore, it points out that "declare" means to "rehearse" and the Hebrew verb implies repetition, thus indicating to "continually rehearse." "Uttereth" means to "continually pour forth, to tell forth, or PROPHECY." "Line" means "rule or direction." "Words" is from a Hebrew word used most often in the book of Job and means "instruction." A free translation goes like this: "The heavens continually rehearse the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day pours forth, tells forth, and prophesies, and night unto night shows, imparts and teaches knowledge. There is no speech, and there are no words- their voice is unheard-yet their rule and direction is gone out through all of the earth, and their words, their teaching, their instruction to the end of the world." Yes, precious friend of mine, the starry heavens are constantly telling and prophesying their message to man. They reveal marvelous knowledge, and their testimony is universally heard, yet without

a spoken word. All this indicates something far beyond the simple wonder of the stars as dazzling objects twinkling majestically against the inky blackness of the night sky.

May God almighty grant the spirit of wisdom and revelation unto all who read these lines. PICTURES speak in every language, and this significant fact was recognized by the Psalmist as in spirit he stated that the heavens declare a Divine meaning, in universal language, to all people, everywhere. Almighty Lord! in whom dwelleth the wisdom and knowledge of the universe, may our hearts be filled with the holy assurance that the starry hosts shining in the night skies above us are like a glorious PICTURE BOOK which God has placed wide open above us. It is full of wonderful things, glorious beyond words, for us to see and learn about Himself and His great and stupendous plan for us. Truly we are "made in His image and likeness (Gen. 1: 27), and are destined to "grow up into Him in all things" (Eph. 4:15), developing the same qualities of character and the same capacity of wisdom and knowledge and power as He Himself possesses. The star-studded heavens at night and the blazing sun shining by day are in fact GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY visible from every land and nation over the world. Over the whole earth and from ships on the far-flung seas people can peer at this marvelous book and seek to discover the lost meanings now almost forgotten by mankind. Day by day and night by night they beam down upon us from the Father of lights- our heavenly Father's Lesson Book-describing His character and the unspeakably glorious plan of creation and redemption which from the dawn of history He has ordained for the world.

THE SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS

Important perspectives are founded in the starry host of heaven, and, scripturally rooted in Gen. 1:14. Some years ago our daughter took an aptitude test to discover her career abilities, or what she is best at. She came across questions that were expressed in this way: "A group of four things are set before you; three of them have something in common and one of them seems out of place. Find the one that does not belong." How about a little test right now. In the first chapter of the Bible we read, "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also" (Gen. 1:16). Again, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years' (Gen. 1:14). Of the four things set before us in this verse did not one of them seem strangely out of place? Some one is asking, "What four?" Notice again: "...and let them be for SIGNS, and for SEASONS, and for DAYS, and YEARS." Does one of them seem out of place? It would be obvious to everyone with even an elementary knowledge of astronomy that the heavenly bodies have a great deal to say about our YEARS, our DAYS and our SEASONS. But what about the relationship of the celestial bodies to that word SIGNS? How are they SIGNS? What is a SIGN? Perhaps the best way to answer our question is by answering another question first. What precisely is the purpose of a "sign"? Is it not to bear a message? To give information? To tell a story which is of importance to the one who put up the sign? If so, then let us observe that this verse is saying that God placed the sun, moon, and stars in the heavens to tell a story, to declare a word of utmost importance.

The word for "signs" as found in Gen. 1:14 is OTH in the Hebrew. A sign is a mark to indicate something greater than the mark itself. Musical notes are symbols, or signs, to the pianist sitting at his instrument. If the pianist interprets the notes together in proper sequence, then the audience hears what the creator of the music intended when he wrote the composition. Likewise, the heavens are signs, as notes on a sheet of music. If we interpret the signs in the heavens correctly, then we can understand and appreciate the symphony of God's creation from the beginning to the end. Signs in the heavens can also be compared to notes of music in another way. As the pianist plays a concerto, the music, like a constant revelation, is heard in its proper sequence. Similarly, "signs" in Gen. 1:14 mean that the heavens are the unfurling of God's revelation to man. In other words, the heavens tell the story of things to come--they PROPHECY!

To SPIRITUALLY comprehend the creative record, we must admit that God intended these orbs of light as expressions of some special teaching; something different and higher far than what is naturally deductible from them. Stop there for just a minute. Ask yourself what the inspired Psalmist means when he says that every day SPEAKS to him and to us. What does he mean when he declares that every night is a showing forth of KNOWLEDGE? From the dawn of the ages God almighty, omniscient, and immutable, charted the course of ALL THINGS. The heavens in their grandeur and majestic purposes were all designed as a fiery script by the

moving finger of God. The increasing light and revelation of each one was planned with infinite care to display its own part in the spectrum of eternal truth that heaven and earth and things under the earth might rejoice together in the ENDS OF THE AGES BECAUSE OF THE EVERLASTING FULLNESS OF HIM who everywhere fills the universe with Himself. Glory to His name!

THE PICTURES IN THE HEAVENS

It is my deep conviction that these "signs" were designed as a pictorial presentation of the great plan and processes of God in creation and redemption--a symbolic portrayal of the grand drama of history as it unfolds through the dealings of God with mankind throughout the vast ages of time. Are there indeed "pictures" in the heavens? There exists in the ancient writings of virtually all nations on earth a description of the major stars or constellations in the heavens which are known as the "signs of the Zodiac," of which there are twelve. Historians have delved into the history and origin of the Zodiac and none has discovered its beginning. Whatever source we go to--whether it be Indian, Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Persian, Arabic, Chaldean--the same signs were held throughout the world--and the farther back we go, they are always there! It predates all other sciences, all political systems, and all religions. It is older than the Flood, the Great Wall of China, the Egyptian Pyramids, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Law of Moses, the temples of Greece, the tablets of ancient Babylon, or the Ark of the Covenant. Regardless of how far you go back, there is a remarkable phenomenon: All nations had the same twelve signs, representing the same twelve things, placed in the same order. Archaeologists, historians and antiquarians have searched the dustiest libraries, uncovered the oldest tablets, ciphered the most difficult hieroglyphics, and have failed to discover how it is that in nations all over the world the same signs exist. The Persian and Arabian traditions all ascribe the Zodiac to Adam, Seth and Enoch. Josephus in his writings asserts that the Zodiac originated in the family of Seth, the righteous line from Adam to Noah. He also writes that Adam, Seth and Enoch made two pillars of stone on which they described the whole prophecy of the stars. This they did to preserve this revelation from being destroyed in the flood (Book 1, Chap. 1-3).

Just what is the Zodiac? It is a band of stars that appears to encircle the earth. These stars are clustered in groups called CONSTELLATIONS. The Zodiac consists of 12 divisions--12 constellations or groups of stars--and each group is perceived in the shape of men, women, animals, monsters, objects, etc. Each group bears a name and is called a "sign". These constellations change their positions in the heavens with the change of the seasons. If the stars could be seen in the daytime the sun would appear to move through a series of constellations, entering a new one each month. This "highway" through the sky is called the Zodiac. Modern atlases list them in the following order: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces.

Kenneth Fleming has written: "The word 'zodiac' comes from the Greek 'zodiakos,' meaning A CIRCLE. It is often assumed that the connection is with animals (living creatures, from the Greek 'zoe', to live, and in English 'zoo', etc.). However, the root meaning of 'zodiakos' has nothing to do with living creatures, but instead comes from a primitive root 'zoad', denoting A WAY or A PATH or GOING BY STEPS. In this connection it is used of the way along which the sun appears to move through the stars in the course of twelve months. This course is repeated every year as the apparent position of the sun returns to almost the exact spot that it occupied on the same date a year before. So the path through the sky in which the sun travels (or appears to travel) is called the zodiac and is divided into twelve segments" --end quote.

GOD AND THE ZODIAC

Let's turn our attention to a little cluster of stars in our own galaxy sometimes called the Seven Sisters, or the Pleiades. If you have a good pair of binoculars, you will see not seven stars, but dozens and with an average telescope, hundreds of stars. Now, some groupings or constellations of stars are actually vast distances apart, but appear as a group because they are located in a common direction of the sky. But there are other star groupings which are actual star clusters, and the Pleiades form such a cluster. Now notice a very interesting text in the Bible. It is a remarkable fact that it is in the book of Job, which is the oldest book in the Bible, going back to approximately 2150 B.C., which is before the Patriarch Abraham was called; 650 years before Moses and the Law; over 1,100 years before Homer wrote his Odyssey and Iliad it is in the book of Job that we have

reference to this Stellar Revelation. In chapter 38 God finally breaks in and speaks to Job and his false comforters. He says to them, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?" (Job 38:31.-33)

We see here a reference to the constellations of Orion, Pleiades, and Arcturus. Also in the book of Job there is reference to Cetus, the sea monster (Leviathan), and to Draco, the great dragon. And remember--this ~s GOD speaking! And the almighty Creator speaks of the "sweet influences" of Pleiades, the "bands" of Orion, the "seasons" of Mazzaroth, the "ordinances" of the heavens, and the "dominion" of these constellations ~n the earth! Each of these powers and influences of the constellations over the earth are indicated by Cod Himself as FACT! I would draw your attention to Job 38:32 wherein we have one of the most unusual key words in all of scripture. The word itself is found only in Job 38:32 where Yahweh asks His upright servant, "Canst thou bring forth MAZZA-ROTH in his season?" Mazzaroth is a Hebrew word which means THE CONSTELLATIONS OF THE ZODIAC! Blessed be God! the scriptures are not silent concerning the antiquity and authenticity of the Zodiac and its constellations. And God did not leave it to others to speak for Him--He authenticated them Himself. Long before the mysteries of Babylon, the myths of ancient Greece, or the gods and goddesses of the pagans, God almighty, omniscient and immutable acknowledged His glorious plan and power set forth in the heavens! The Amplified Bible reads, "Can you bind the chains of the cluster of stars called Pleiades, or loose the cords of the constellations of Orion? Can you lead forth the SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC in their season? Or can you guide the stars of the Bear with her young? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish THEIR RULE upon the earth?" The constellations of the Zodiac are also mentioned in Job 9:9, Isa. 13:10. Amos 5:8, etc.

The Zodiac is the earliest revelation to mankind from his Creator. Each of the twelve signs pictorially represents a prophetic event--an aspect of the progressive unfolding of the dealings, plan and purpose of God in the grand scheme of creation and redemption. Each sign portrays a dimension of SPIRITUAL REALITY wrought out, first of all, in the life of our blessed Forerunner and Head, Jesus Christ; secondly, in the life of each individual believer; and finally, collectively and corporately in the people of God.

For example, the first sign is Virgo. This group of stars is associated with the picture of a young woman with an ear of wheat in one hand and a branch in the other hand. In Hebrew she is called BETHULAH, which means "virgin," just as VIRGO, from Latin, means "the virgin." The wheat and the branch in her hands denote fruitfulness- offspring. It will not be difficult for any man to see that this is a picture right out of the Bible--A VIRGIN BRINGING FORTH A SEED! In that long ago Eden the almighty Father spoke the first promise of a Redeemer to the erring man and his wife when He-gave the blessed assurance, "And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between THY SEED and HER SEED; IT shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." (Gen. 3:15) This "seed of the woman" is the first prophecy of the coming into the world of the Saviour who would "bruise the head of the serpent." Historically this is Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, living, dying, and rising again in triumph over death, hell and the grave, opening up the wellspring of eternal salvation to all who would believe. Spiritually it is the Son of God birthed in us, brought forth unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ out of our own "virgin" relationship with God.

"For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present YOU as a CHASTE VIRGIN to Christ." (II Cor. 11:2) To be a virgin means to be pure, undefiled and separated unto our Lord. God is creating the desire in a people in this hour to be truly VIRGIN in their desires toward Him. We have known what it is to be conformed to the course of THIS WORLD. Then we have known what it is to trust Christ as Saviour while remaining entangled in all the wretched defilement of a corrupt babylonish church system. But God is calling forth in these days a glorious body of Christ who, because of the quickening of the Holy Spirit, is desiring to be VIRGIN--separated only and completely unto her glorious Lord, unto intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Him. How lightly we sometimes take the purposes of God in us! It is one thing to be washed in the blood, freed from all our past sins, and quite another thing to truly be VIRGIN in our desires to keep ourselves only unto the Lord for union with Him. As we follow on to know Him separation comes from everything of the flesh, the world, and the devil, and from every vestige of entanglement with the harlot system of religious Babylon, the abomination of the earth.

Glorious indeed and full of wisdom and creative design is the fact that your relationship to Christ as a "virgin" is ordained to forerun your manifestation to the world as a "son". As in the natural, so in the spiritual; the virgin relationship bears the feminine characteristics of modesty, gentleness, tenderness, love, sensitiveness, dependence and obedience, whereas the sonship relationship bears the characteristics of the masculine nature Aggressiveness, boldness, strength, valor, authority, power and dominion are among the traits of the masculine sex. Hence the Lord calls the CHURCH a virgin, but to the OVERCOMER He says, **"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My SON. To HIM will I give POWER over the nations: and he shall RULE them with a rod of iron. To him that OVERCOMETH will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with MY FATHER in His throne."** (Rev. 21:7; 2:26-27; 3:21) The mighty, eternal and indisputable truth is that THE S-O-N IS ALWAYS BORN OF THE V-I-R-G-I-N! Just as the blessed firstborn Son was born of a virgin, so is it through the vehicle of a PURE AND UNDEFILED SOUL (virgin) that the MIGHT AND DOMINION OF THE SPIRIT (son) is manifested, expressed and revealed unto creation. This is a true principle in God that I hope no earnest saint of God who reads these lines will miss! I cannot emphasize too forcefully, or too carefully, that the power and glory of SONSHIP will never come forth from the man or woman of God who has not first become truly VIRGIN in their soul life.

Now since we have seen that HISTORICALLY the virgin bringing forth the Son is Jesus born of Mary, the virgin of Nazareth; and SPIRITUALLY it is the Son of God (spirit) birthed (brought into manifestation) out of the transformed life through the virgin soul; let us also see that PROPHETICALLY it points to the manchild of Revelation 12, that glorious company of the corporate, many-membered Christ, the MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD for whom all creation is in travail and who shall deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption.

The risen and ascended Lord descended in a vision of glory on the lonely isle of Patmos, and there meeting His startled disciple, John, gave him a communication concerning the Church, commanding him to write it in a scroll and send it to the seven Churches in Asia. With wondering eyes John stood transfixed as in spirit he saw a great wonder in heaven, **"A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne."** (Rev. 12:1-2, 5)

As John beheld and pondered this divine mystery, soon thereafter he beheld another wonder altogether as startling as the first. **"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy...and the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."** (Rev. 17: 1-5)

"Come hither; I will show unto thee..." These words take on new depth of meaning when we understand that in the book of Revelation the word "come" always signifies AN INVITATION TO REVELATION. The whore and the sun-clad woman are two women; the invitation goes forth to come and see by the spirit what they mean; and I do not hesitate to tell you that it requires a REVELATION FROM GOD to see either! The Church of Christ is called a MYSTERY. She is presented as a virgin. She is called a bride. Finally, she is presented as a city, the New Jerusalem, the city of peace and righteousness and divine order. This scarlet clad woman is called a MYSTERY. She is not a virgin, she is an harlot. She is not a promised wife, she is the paramour and mistress of the kings of the earth. Finally, she is that great city which is called Babylon, the city of confusion and filthiness and the denial of divine order. As to Babylon, John adds, **"When I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I WILL TELL THEE THE MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN...the seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. The waters are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues...and the woman which thou sawest is that great city (a corporate people), which reigneth over the kings of the earth."** (Rev. 17:7)

These prophecies present two broadly contrasted WOMEN, identified with two broadly contrasted CITIES, one reality being in each case, doubly represented, as a WOMAN, and as a CITY; the harlot and Babylon are one; the glorious sun-clad woman and the heavenly Jerusalem are one. May the Spirit of the living God enlighten the eyes of all who read and give understanding, giving abundantly of the spirit of wisdom and revelation that each may be enabled to discern and easily differentiate between that VIRGIN CHURCH without spot or wrinkle, which Jesus Christ is preparing for Himself, and that filthy HARLOT SYSTEM, full of names of blasphemy, with her multiplied sects and denominations, who seduces the inhabitants of the world with the unspeakable lie that she is, herself, the bride of Christ. One would certainly think that God's people would respond to the invitation to revelation whereby the Spirit says, "COME HITHER, and I will show you," and that they would look with anointed eyes and readily see the difference between the virgin and the harlot, but such is not the case. Would God that all men could now see the hidden mystery of Christ and the Church! Would God that all men could see the hidden mystery of the virgin sun-clad woman who delivers the man child! Would God that all men could see that this hidden mystery has nothing to do with that tradition-ridden system which all men everywhere believe to be THE CHURCH.

Three are three companies. The Scarlet-Clad Woman (harlot), the Sun-Clad Woman (virgin) and the Manchild (sons of God). Some precious people, because they have separated from some Babylonish denomination and come out of the church systems SUPPOSE that this was the "mother church" birthing them into sonship. This, my beloved, is WRONG! The "mother" of the manchild is NOT THE HARLOT CHURCH SYSTEM but that VIRGIN CHURCH made up exclusively of a people clothed with the glory of Christ (sun), crowned with the stars of God's governmental authority, and having the cold, imitative, reflective light (moon) of ceremony, ritual, tradition and doctrine put under foot. When the Spirit calls, "Come out of her, My people" this is not His call to sons. This is His call urging a people to come out of the defilement's of Babylon and be CLEANSED--that they might by the washing of regeneration become a VIRGIN unto Christ. And it is this VIRGIN COMPANY that shall deliver to this sin-cursed world a MANCHILD, a MALE CHILD, a full redemption company of saints, overcomers, partakers of the divine nature, grown up into the fullness of Christ, filled with His pure and holy nature, embued with His glorious mind, invested with His omnipotent authority and power, the many-membered "seed" of the many-membered "woman" which shall "bruise the head of the serpent" as he conquers death, dethrones Satan, blesses and rules the nations and liberates the whole vast groaning creation from the bondage of sin, sorrow, corruption and death. And should some unenlightened reader still entertain the mistaken notion that Jesus Christ alone is the "seed of the woman" who "bruises the head of the serpent" I would point you to the wonderful promise of the Lord Jesus Himself through His apostle Paul, **"And the God of peace shall BRUISE SATAN UNDER Y-O-U-R FEET shortly."** (Rom. 16:20) Jesus is the Head of that promised seed, even as we are the body.

Aratus, in 270 B.C., in one of the lines of his poem says, "Beneath Bootes' feet the virgin seek." This is a reference to the constellation Virgo, and everywhere in every language, it is very clear that is not merely a woman, but a virgin. On the Zodiac she is bound beneath the feet of the constellation Bootes. In one hand she holds a branch and in the other hand a sheaf of wheat. As the spirit of revelation and understanding floods our minds, we are left without question as to the meaning of all of this. Our Lord Jesus said, **"I am the vine, YE are the BRANCHES: He that abideth in me and I in him, the same BRINGETH FORTH MUCH FRUIT."** (Jn. 15:5) A number of times in the scripture the many-membered body of Christ is called "the Branch": **"Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH."** (Zech. 6:12) So we have a two-fold testimony: the virgin is going to bring forth the Branch which will be the Seed of the woman; and also, I think, a confirmatory of this, that the brightest star in Virgo is called A1 Zimach, which means in Arabic, "the branch"--a picture of the coming of Christ and the sons of God!

It is a most blessed thing that the word "seed" is used of the Redeemer. Why did the Lord tell the ancient serpent that the SEED of the woman would bruise his head? Why did He use the word seed? Why did He not say simply that the man who should come from the woman would bruise the serpent's head? But it was to be "the seed," the seed of the woman. The truth is that seed is not only the product of some other life before it, but seed is also that which REPRODUCES ITSELF and its kind many fold from generation to generation. What the Lord was really saying is this: When men would see Jesus the Saviour come forth into the world from the body of the virgin Mary, at that time they would see only Jesus the Christ, but there would be more, MUCH MORE to Christ than what men would see in that day. A multitude as the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven was to

follow in His likeness, born of the same seed, matured into the same image and stature, who would be the "sons of God" even as He is a Son of God, and these would not be merely many sons, but many sons to form ONE CHRIST, each one having the seed of life in himself. Jesus Himself prophesied of this "**many-membered seed**" when He said, "**Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.**" (Jn. 12:24)

My hope is that as you go out and look at the starry skies above, you will be impressed anew and afresh. As we proceed with this series, you will become amazed at the Cod who hath writ on high these things for all the world to see. For surely His voice hath gone unto the ends of the earth, and the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are plainly seen, as God has placed these constellations which He brings forth with His own hand in its season, pictures of the great creative and redemptive plan of God wrought out through the ages. Can we not see by the Holy Spirit that God has given from the very beginning, the story of His salvation from which all ancient mythologies and ancient traditions have come. They are describing the salvation that would be wrought by Christ Jesus and ministered through His body of sons, which was given by God to Adam in the Garden of Eden. The very beginning of the revelation of Jesus Christ to the world is called the PROTO EVANGELIUM, or the first evangel, the first Gospel, which was that the Seed of the woman would destroy the seed of the serpent. "**For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.**" (Rom. 1:20) Yes, the heavens declare the glory of God! Their words, their teaching, their instruction, their message go into all the message that is found in the star-pictures, the gallery of the heavens which God gave.

Someone says, "But isn't the Zodiac PAGAN? Isn't it the basis of heathen astrology and associated with the false gods and goddesses of Babylon and Greece?" My brother and sister, the Zodiac indeed BECAME corrupted, as the hand of sinful man ever corrupts every blessed thing that comes forth from the hand of God pure, holy and undefiled. As I have pointed out, the Zodiac pre-dates Babylon and Greece and all the gods and mythologies of the pagans. There can be no question but that the Gospel glows in these heavenly constellations with all the glory of the stars themselves. Every sign and symbol, with the progressive unfolding of their wisdom and truth, is deeply rooted in the pages of God's other divine witness- the Holy Scriptures. It is evident that after the original meaning of the constellations became lost, the nations in their ignorance invented stories and meanings from their imaginations. The heathen, in their blindness, could not understand the celestial story and did not know how to interpret the foreshadowing. But in the light of God's revelation in the scriptures, and through Christ and the quickening of the Holy Spirit of Truth, we are now able to understand the meaning of it all.

It is true that astrology uses the signs of the Zodiac in a corrupted form and on a lower plane, but it is not true that astrology invented them or originated them. Most of the error in the religious realms is merely the high and holy truth of God brought down to a lower level, understood carnally rather than spiritually. The failures and sins of men do not disannul the truth of God, neither do their misuses and perversions of His gifts disprove their divine source or holy intent. The perversion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the blinding darkness of static creeds, dogmas, ritual, ceremony, and tradition comprising the abominations of the harlot church system does not prove Jesus of Nazareth an imposter nor the testimony of His holy apostles and prophets undivine or untrue. And if the ancients in like manner have perverted these primeval records in the stars, and turned their portrayal of God's beautiful plan of redemption into an instrument of damning superstition, and developed a bloody paganism out of a primitive revelation, what is it except the depravity of the carnal mind, but by no means discrediting the wisdom and love and glory of God in the divine original?

The MAZZAROTH--the signs of the Zodiac--are bought forth each night by the skillful hand of God. These constellations were sprinkled by His hand across the sky as He garnished the heavens and created the figures which we now know as the figures of the Zodiac. They tell a glorious tale of creation and redemption, a glorious revelation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He has written this with His own hand; He has created the stars; He has named and numbered and ordered them. As there are twelve Patriarchs and twelve tribes of Israel and twelve apostles of the Lamb and twelve gates and foundations in the New Jerusalem, so there are twelve chapters in the celestial story-book. The WORD which begins in SPIRIT, in the invisible realm, was spoken to create the "things which are made" and to leave these created things as a visible testimony that the natural

man may find God, and to call men, as the prophets did, to the knowledge of God and the abundance of life, glory, and victory in Him. The reality that lies behind what is commonly known today as horoscopes and behind the common signs of the Zodiac is an original revelation designed by God --a revelation not of pagan mythology or superstitious powers, but of the wonderful truths of God's grand and glorious plan of the ages through His anointed Christ, written in the very stars of heaven. In these twelve celestial signs we have enshrined for us like jewels in a precious display, the twelve great heavenly laws or principles which we are to pass through and master while we walk 'our fore-ordained path on this planet. Each one of the twelve signs embodies a Kingdom of Heaven principle taught in symbol and ritual under the Old Testament administration. It points to a wonderful progression as we begin in Genesis with the promised seed of the woman (Virgo) and end in the book's Revelation with LEO, the conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah! Just as the sun passes through each of the twelve signs in the course of a year, so must we experientially partake of the reality of each sign in our progressive transformation into His likeness.

Do you know that one reason God's children do not hunger and thirst after righteousness and follow on to be conformed into the image of the Son, is because they have not taken the steps that went before? With the things of God, there is a progression just as there is in any school; and if we do not take the first steps, we shall not take the last steps. Every lesson we skip or neglect, we shall have to go back and learn before we shall be able to go on; for every advance step is a foundation for the next advance step. The reason that many of God's children have never advanced into higher realms in the Spirit is because they have not taken the steps as they came to them. They have not perfectly endured or appropriated that which God called them to pass through, in order that they might reach this place of perfection and glory and power in Him. Some of God's people try to leap into the full strength and dominion of Leo; but if they have this experience granted them, it is only when they have taken the first steps of cleansing, death to self, judgment, obedience, overcoming, praise, etc. set forth under the signs that go before. Ah, this is the Zodiac- the WAY, the PATH, the journey into the fullness of God BY STEPS!

We have often chuckled over the humorous predicament of the captain of a small sailing vessel who made a voyage with one green hand. Alert and willing, this embryonic sailor was induced to steer the schooner the first night at sea. Before retiring to his cabin below, the captain pointed to a star and said to his amateur helper, "Keep that star right in front of your mast and you will be on the course. If anything happens call me." Some time later he was awakened by a pounding on the deck and he hastily arose to see what the trouble might be. As he thrust his head up the companionway, the inexperienced sailor called buoyantly, "I say, captain, pick me out another star, we passed that one!"

There have perhaps been other people both before this man and since, who thought that they had gone beyond the signs and portents that God had set for their guidance, but like this simple fellow, they were merely off their course. If men do follow the stars, they have guides that never waver. They mark the highway back to Father's house, back to the throne room from whence we came, onward and upward into God. Praise His wonderful name!

THE TWELVE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC DEPICTING GOD'S PLAN AND PROCESS OF REDEMPTION

1. VIRGO, the Virgin: A young woman bearing a branch in her right hand and an ear of corn in her left. The "seed" of the woman is to bring the Saviour. Christ (spirit) birthed out of the virgin soul. The sons of God brought forth from the sun-clad woman, the virgin bride of Christ. As Mary brought forth her first-born Son while still a virgin, so the virgin bride brings forth the manchild company before her ultimate consummation of marriage.

2. LIBRA, the Scales: the figure of a pair of balances, with one side up and the other down, as in the act of weighing. All creation is deficient, lowered, subjected to vanity, lacking a little from Elohim. The ministry of reconciliation restores all things into balance (harmony, oneness) in Christ.

3. SCORPIO, the Scorpion: the figure of a gigantic, poisonous, and deadly insect, with its tail and sting uplifted in anger, as if striking. The sting of sin and death via the carnal mind that infects every man.

4. **SAGITTARIUS, the Archer:** the figure of a horse with the head of a man with a drawn bow and arrow pointed at the Scorpion. Christ coming into the life as Warrior, conquering and to conquer. The commencement of the process of overcoming.

5. **CAPRICORNUS, the Goat:** the figure of a goat sinking down in death, with the hinder part of its body terminating in the vigorous tail of a fish. Redemption through death and resurrection. Life out of death. The fellowship of His suffering leading to the power of His resurrection.

6. **AQUARIUS, the Water-bearer:** the figure of a man with a large urn, the contents of which he is in the act of pouring out in a great stream from the sky. The Sent One who would pour out waters of blessing, the life of the Spirit on the earth in the former and latter rain. Rivers of Living Water from the innermost part of our being. The outflow of His life.

7- **PISCES, the Fishes:** the figures of two large fish in the act of swimming. Christ, Head and body, the two fish that would be multiplied, a symbol of God's grace going out to all the world.

8. **ARIES, the Ram or Lamb:** the figure of a strong sheep, with powerful curved horns, lying down in easy composure, and looking out in conscious strength over the field around it. The Lamb in the midst of the throne; the nature of the Lamb perfected in the enChristed, overcoming all things.

9. **TAURUS, the Bull:** the figure of a powerful bull, in the attitude of rushing and pushing forward with great energy. Christ coming in judgment, as a refiner's fire. The righteous judgments of God committed to the saints of the Most High.

10. **GEMINI, the Twins:** two human figures closely united. The Son and the sons. The King of kings and Lord of lords. The lords of the Lord and the kings of the King. Christ reigning in and through His body.

11. **CANCER, the Crab:** the figure of a crab, in the act of taking and holding on with its strong pincer claws. The power of the Kingdom of God. The glory of being "in Christ." The little flock secure in Him attaining the goal of His fullness.

12. **LEO, the Lion:** the figure of a great rampant lion, leaping forth to rend, with his feet over the writhing body of Hydra, the Serpent, which is in the act of fleeing. The Lion of the tribe of Judah prevails. The Serpent defeated. Christ in us is Victor. The Serpent flees. The battle ends. Victory is secure!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 2

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES "Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TWO

ASTROLOGY AND HOROSCOPES

During those star-studded nights above the plains of Judea, David looked into the heavens and there beheld the vast glittering band of stars making up our Milky Way. He was awed and knew there had to be boundless power, intelligence, and purpose behind it all. He was transfixed. He so identified with that purpose that it became his passion. Everywhere he looked he could see the stamp of the divine Creator. He exclaimed in words of inspiration that sprang up from within his spirit: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." (Ps. 19:1-4)

What did David know of the heavens and how they express the glory of God? What does David mean when he says that every day speaks to him and to us? What does he mean when he declares that every night is a showing forth of knowledge? To whom does he refer when he says that there is no place on earth where the language or speech of man is spoken that "their voice is not heard"? Surely there is something more indicated here than a mere wonder on David's part evoked by the immensity and grandeur of the star-lit sky! They speak in every language to every people. And they speak and reveal the majesty of God's great plan and purposes to His creation. Upon the blue sapphire of the firmament is spread a sheet of royal paper written all over with the wisdom and power of God. This book of creation is not sold in bookstores, but it is to be read by everyone who lifts his eyes up to heaven.

The names of the constellations with their stars reveal the divine truth that was later written in the Bible. The written scriptures began with Job some forty-one centuries ago, but the truth of God was recorded in the starry heavens from the distant dawn of creation, untold ages before Abram journeyed from Ur of the Chaldees or Moses trod the burning sands of the Sinai. This is the great truth of Psalm 19. The first six verses speak of the truth recorded in the heavens, while the next five concern the truth written in the scriptures. The star-studded heavens at night and the blazing sun shining by day are in fact GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY visible from every land and nation over the world. Over the whole earth and from ships on the far-flung seas people can peer at this marvelous book and seek to discover the lost meanings now almost forgotten by mankind. Day by day and night by night they beam down upon us from the Father of lights --our heavenly Father's Lesson Book--describing His character and the unspeakably glorious plan of creation and redemption which from the dawn of history He has ordained for the world.

Paul illustrated this wonderful truth of God revealed in the heavens when he wrote, "The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." (Rom. 1:20) Here we are told that the invisible truths of God have been before us and visible for us since the foundation of the world, because they are seen, or illustrated, in the things that are made. Invisible truths are pictured in visible things. Or invisible, spiritual truths or laws of God are set before us in the image of the natural and visible laws. When God created the heavens and the earth, He made everything that is visible a symbol of spiritual truth. Everything that is natural, a type of that which is spiritual. This is why the Bible uses seed, for instance, as a symbol of the Word of God, water as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, serpent as a symbol of the devil, sowing as a symbol of the preaching of the Word of the Kingdom, and the stars as symbols of the rule of the heavens accomplishing God's great plan of creation and redemption. Not just because the Holy Spirit decided at some point in time that these would make good symbols, but because the omniscient mind of God created them from the beginning as the object lesson about the truths of God and His Kingdom.

Tell me! Did you ever get quiet enough to sit alone for an hour with God on a clear starlight night, and look up into the stars? Did the silence of those mighty orbs that are rolling in space at an inconceivable rate of speed, a

rapidity that is breathless, ever get into your soul? Did you ever look at them and see how your earth was rolling around, and star after star, and constellation after constellation, was appearing and disappearing? Tell me, have you ever been alone with God and the stars? Have you any knowledge of the wonderful planets that revolve around this central sun? Do you know that these other stars are suns and have planets which are invisible revolving around them? Did you ever get the calm silence of God into your heart? The great majority of men cannot bear to sit down for an hour of Divine inspection, and be still, and let the light of God shine into their hearts, and listen to what God says.

The prophet Amos pointed to the constellations and beyond to the God who ordained them and designed their revelation when he said, "Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion." (**Amos 5:8**) The book of Job is the oldest book in the Bible, older even than Abraham or Moses. It is in this book of Job that we first have reference to this Stellar Revelation. In chapter 38 God finally breaks in and speaks to Job and his false comforters. He says to them, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?" (**Job 38:31-33**)

The power and rule of the Pleiades, Orion, and all the stars and planets of the heavens extend far beyond a mere announcement of the seasons. The awesome influence of these heavenly constellations is set forth in scripture in connection with the rushing serpent, the fugitive snake, or Leviathan the sea monster (Isa. 27:1; Job 41:1; Job 26:13; Ps. 104:25-26); Venus (Isa. 14:12); Saturn (Amos 5:26); the Pleiades (Job 9:9; 38:31; Amos 5:8); Orion (Job 38:31; Amos 5:8); Arcturus (Job 9:9; 38:32); and the twelve signs of the Zodiac (Job 38:32-33; Isa. 13:10; Judges 5:20).

There was a day in the times of the Judges when Deborah the judge, filled with the spirit of wisdom and courage from the Lord, and Barak the general took the army of Israel to war against the leader of the Canaanite armies, Sisera, and his mighty forces. The inspired record of that extraordinary battle states, "And they showed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. And the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left." (**Judges 4:12-16**)

God fought on the side of Israel, and gave them the victory. Josephus relates that, just as the battle began, a violent tempest came on with a great downfall of rain, and a hailstorm, which, driving full in the faces of the Canaanites, so blinded and benumbed them with cold, that they could neither use their bows with effect nor even hold their swords. As soon as the battle was concluded victoriously, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Deborah and Barak and they began to sing the song of the Lord, that majestic Ode recorded in chapter five of the book of Judges. A portion of it describes the triumph of Barak's army over Sisera and his forces in these words:

"Because the elders took the lead in Israel,
Because the people offered themselves willingly,
Bless ye the Lord.
Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, even I, will sing unto the Lord;
I will sing praise to the Lord, the God of Israel.
The kings came and fought.
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo. Gain of booty they did not take.
FROM THE HEAVENS THE STARS FOUGHT,
FROM THEIR COURSES THEY FOUGHT AGAINST SISERA.
The river Kishon swept them away,

That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, march on with strength.
So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord;
But let them that love Him be as the sun,
When he goeth forth in his might."

It is time to stop, look, and listen. Hear it! ye sons of the Most high. "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." (Judges 4:20) Can any read these significant words uttered in the spirit of prophecy and wisdom of the Holy Ghost, and still doubt that the constellations of the heavens RULE in the affairs of men and nations? Would it not seem to be divine sense, human sense, and common sense that Sisera's fate that day in the long ago was "written in the stars" and there was no hope for him when the natural forces allied themselves with Israel under the guiding hand of the Almighty to assure his defeat? Someone may respond that the stars in this case are symbolic, and I doubt not that they are on some plane, however I am constrained to point out that not one other thing in Deborah's song is used figuratively- the battle was a very real battle, the horses were actual horses, the chariots were real chariots of iron, the plain is to this day an existing geographical location, Mount Tabor is a literal mountain just east of Nazareth, and the river Kishon was an actual river winding its way through the plain. Deborah and Barak and Sisera were real people. With all emphasis I must conclude that it was the LITERAL STARS AND CONSTELLATIONS OF THE HEAVENS IN THEIR COURSES which were arrayed against Sisera and significantly contributed by their cosmic influence and decree to his overwhelming defeat. The triumph of Israel was by the design of the Lord God of Israel of whom are all things, by whom are all thing and unto whom are all things, blessed be His wonderful name.

ASTROLOGY AND HOROSCOPES

Are you "Capricorn" or "Scorpio"? Should you make a trip today? Should you marry Richard, or Joe, or Sam? Is this a bad day to start a new job? Should you hold an important meeting in the morning or afternoon? What do the stars and planets indicate? Millions of people daily check their horoscopes to find out. Contracts are signed, employees hired, business ventures started, life-styles changed, occupations chosen, friendships altered, diets formulated, bets made, trips planned, babies named--yes, as we now know, sometimes, even government policies and political decisions arrived at--all based on various astrological readings. Even if you yourself do not believe in astrology, you may still be directly or indirectly affected because of the decisions others in all walks of life make under the influence of Zodiac charts. What is astrology? Briefly put, adherents claim astrology is a method of anticipating or foretelling events by calculating the effect the sun, moon, stars and planets have on human activities. Supposedly, the relative positions of the heavenly bodies at the moment of a child's birth influence the child's character and personality. Plotting the movements of those heavenly bodies, it is thought, reveals an individual's destiny.

Astrology is the study of the relative positions of the planets and stars in order to predict the future. The Greek word HOROSKOPOS literally means observer of the hour of one's birth. Thus a horoscope is a chart correlating the time of a person's birth with the position of the planets. This practice supposedly reveals the future and is used as a way to make decisions. Many people who do not seriously believe in astrology, nevertheless, read their daily horoscope and think it is harmless fun. "It is the stars, the stars above us, govern our conditions," are the words Shakespeare put in the mouth of Kent in KING LEAR. In ancient times no king in his right mind would think of venturing out into battle without first consulting his court astrologer. No maiden would set the date of her marriage until she had discovered which date would be the most auspicious for that happy event. Mortals dared not make decisions without the help of these guardian gods of the heavens.

Joseph Goodavage wrote, "Science has now begun to demonstrate direct linkages between celestial movements and the behavior of animals and men. Biologist Mr. Frank Brown of Northwestern University showed that oysters sense the position of the moon and regulate their activities by it. Ordinarily, oysters open and close their shells in phase with ocean tides. Dr. Brown wanted to see what oysters would do if there were NO tides. He hauled some out of the sea off New Haven, Connecticut, shipped them to Evanston, Illinois, and put them indoors in a tank of sea water at even temperature under a steady, dim light. For two weeks they continued to open and close their shells in phase with the tides at their old ocean home. Then abruptly they changed their rhythm. Their shell-opening cycle slipped into phase with the tides that would have existed if

there had been an ocean covering Illinois! Dr. Brown's oysters were obviously responding to the location of the moon which triggered some mysterious reaction inside their 'biological clocks' Here was an entirely new mystery for scientists. No one knows what the connecting link is between stars and planets and the earthly events with which they so often correlate. Men and women aren't oysters, but celestial forces have definitely been shown to affect human behavior. The American Institute of Medical Climatology in Philadelphia, working with the police and fire departments, major hospitals and the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, conducted a three-year study of human reactions to the phases of the moon. Conclusions: cases of murder, rape, aggravated assault and arson are, most common during Full Moon periods. Much of human life, if not most of it, seems to be governed...influenced by these forces science is now beginning to detect, the forces on which astrologers base their predictions" --end quote. In addition to these remarks it is also interesting to note that modern physiologists now realize that man is a completely responsive element in the cosmos that he interacts with his environment, both terrestrial and celestial. Astrology is the study and application of the effect on man of the forces reaching earth from surrounding space--his celestial environment.

Many years ago a friend who was deep into astrology made a "professional" horoscope for me based on the exact hour of my birth. It was incredible (uncanny! to be exact) how accurately descriptive it was of my nature, personality traits, abilities, ambitions, life-style, etc. Some characteristics revealed existed only in the form of inward thoughts, desires, propensities, intents, motives, purposes, etc. not fully discerned even by those closest to me. In all honesty I must admit that even the prophets of God in most cases have not prophesied my character more precisely than did this horoscope! In understanding the influence of the stars and celestial bodies upon our physical being, influencing our moods, emotions, actions, etc. --which also are being dealt with by the Lord for our OVERCOMING--it is clear that the children of the world are in this area wiser than the children of light, for they see, while the children of light grope about without understanding of these things, often ignorantly hostile to the very idea that the heavenly constellations have any influence over the earth and earthly things at all. But the sure word of prophecy asked the penetrating question: "[Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth \(the twelve signs of the Zodiac\) in his season? KNOWEST THOU THE ORDINANCES OF THE HEAVEN...?](#)" (**Job 38:31-33**) DO we know? Can we see the truth in these things? Can we acknowledge that GOD is the almighty Ordainer of all cosmic powers and laws, and that His own Word authenticates their reality? Or do we naively relegate it all to ancient superstitions and pagan mythology, summarily dismissing such things from our enlightened consideration?

The highest truth of God is gloriously recorded in the blazing constellations of the heavens; yet on a lower plane, these same constellations exert a mundane influence over every created thing on earth. In the same way that the scriptures marvelously reveal the glory of God, the majesty of His Christ, the wisdom of His purposes and His wondrous gift of life, while on a lower level the very same scriptures, in the form of the letter of the law, minister condemnation and death; just as the scriptures on one level are anointed to "make us wise unto salvation" (II Tim. 3:15), while on the lower plane they judge, condemn, and minister death; SO the signs of the Zodiac proclaim on a higher dimension the wisdom of God's creative and redemptive plan of the ages, while on the lower level of natural cosmic energy they influence the carnal man in his earthly and temporal sphere of life.

BEYOND THE STARS

If there be indeed a truth in the rule of the natural heavens (and there must be, else the physical heavens could not in scripture serve as the TYPE of the rule of the spiritual heavens), the question follows: What is really wrong, then, with casting horoscopes or consulting astrologers? Let us now acquaint ourselves with the truth as it is in Jesus, for when we learn the truth I now affirm, many things which heretofore have been an inscrutable mystery will begin to come clear to our understanding. Let us then stand assured of this marvelous fact: THERE IS A POWER B-E-Y-O-N-D THE STARS! I must here emphasize the great truth that above everything that exists and behind it all standeth GOD, omniscient, omnipotent, immutable. The great God made and controls everything on earth and throughout the unbounded heavens and His omnipotent hand stretches forth high above and far beyond the vaunted powers of the heavens, for He is the great Cause, while they are the effect; He is the almighty Creator, whereas they are but the creation, the work of His hands.

I do not hesitate to tell you that the vast majority of astrologers and those who adhere to astrology have changed the truth of God into a lie and worship and serve the CREATION more than the CREATOR, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Rom. 1:25). The carnal mind is the great deceiver who has deceived people into trusting in the SIGN rather than the thing God has signified by the sign--the revelation of Jesus Christ. In the same way God created the Church to proclaim the gospel. However, millions of people trust in the Church for their salvation! They want to find the "right" Church, one which will save them. But the simple truth is that NO Church will save anyone! The Church points to Jesus Christ who is the only Saviour of man. Likewise, God from the beginning of the creation displayed the gospel in the stars. Instead of trusting in the Christ to which they point so gloriously, these people trust in the stars themselves.

Furthermore, there is no doubt whatever that astrology can inform you of the cosmic influences and instruct you concerning the earthly conditions marked out by the stars. But it can never in a million years EMPOWER you to OVERCOME those influences, or teach you how to be TRANSFORMED. Astrology is a rigidly fatalistic science, pointing you to the problem, revealing the circumstances, but possessing absolutely no power to CHANGE the situation or one iota of authority to ENABLE you to rise above it. That, my beloved, is just the difference between astrology and Christ--Christ delivers, changes, empowers, quickens, transforms and perfects! Truly the glorious Christ of God has ALL POWER in heaven and in earth, whereas astrology has SOME POWER, and only on earth, and not redeeming power at that.

Astrology can analyze your case, but is impotent to save or deliver you. The world today is filled with confusion and trouble. Any system which claims to look into the future gathers adherents by the millions. Astrology numbers its followers by multitudes and its financial income in the billions of dollars and more. People are investing heavily in tomorrow. They are eager to pierce the veil of the future and gaze into the strange land where mysterious science reigns. Someone may say: "But they told me many things which came true." This is doubtless true. But listen to some startling words from God's prophet, Jeremiah. "Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the SIGNS OF THE HEAVEN; for the heathen are dismayed at them." (Jer. 10:2) For "the signs of heaven," the margin read, "signs of the Zodiac." In other words, do not be dismayed, disturbed, concerned about the omens portended by your horoscope! The prophet Isaiah proclaimed the sure word of the Lord to the ancient kingdom of Babylon which was ruled by astrology: "Persist then with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries in which you have labored from your youth, and see if perhaps you will be able to profit, if you may prevail and strike terror! You are wearied with your many counsels and plans. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and make known to you and save you from the things that shall come upon you. Behold, they are like stubble, the fire consumes them; they cannot even deliver themselves from the power of the flame. This is no coal for warming, or fire before which to sit!" (Isa. 47:12-14) (Amplified) Take heed astrologers and monthly prognosticators! Take heed Jeanne Dixon, and all the rest! The word of the Lord makes it very clear that these shall not be able to deliver even themselves in the day of calamity, much less those who harken to their words.

It may come as a shock to some who read these lines, but the Holy Spirit declares with divine certainty that YOUR fortune and future are NOT astrologically determined. I mean by this that even though most people's fortunes can be traced to astrological influences, YOURS CANNOT. You belong to a special category of people to whom NONE of the known laws of the universe apply. The laws that govern other people do not apply to you. You are in a class all by yourself. One of the greatest truths ever kept hidden from the eyes of the natural man is this: "If any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATION." (I Cor. 5:17) It should be plain to anyone having eyes to see that the physical and psychical influences exerted by the constellations of the Zodiac are part and parcel of the OLD CREATION. The destiny of most people, of all natural and fallen men, is linked to the stars; try as they will they cannot escape it. If the star under which they were born says they should be poor, they will be poor. If it says they should be rich, they will be rich. If it says they are high-strung and naive, they will be nervous and unsuspecting. If it says they are charming, confident, and successful, they will be just that.

This is the case for most human beings, all human beings, in fact, who live and have their being in the OLD CREATION MAN. But, blessed be God! AN EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE EXISTS. The Master Architect of the universe saw fit to create a special category of people who are of an entirely NEW CREATION. New creation people are blessed with the ability to live their lives without having to pass through the stars or planets.

Bypassing all physical barriers they receive directly from the Source. There exists a higher power than the stars- and it is that higher power that has touched the life of every re-generated man and woman on the face of the earth. Indeed, dear elect saints of God; it is this higher power that has been guiding your footsteps all along. No longer do you need to look to the stars for an answer. You have found the answer that will unlock all the mysteries of Being--or the answer has found you--right here--right now!

So many people are taken up with astrology today and the question is often asked, "What sign were you born under?" One person, when asked what sign he was born under said, "I was born under the sign of the cross." Now, that is a good sign to be born under. But an answer that would be much closer to the truth and which might elicit a more interesting conversation is this, "I have a slight problem when you ask me what sign I was born under --because I was born twice!" Ah, my beloved, all who have been BORN OF GOD have been born again under the star-sign of the MORNING STAR! Those born of the Spirit are, one and all, born under the star-sign of the DAY STAR which now arises in their hearts! You will never understand the power and glory of the new birth until you thoroughly understand that it is indeed a birth from ABOVE.

Let all who read these lines clearly understand that God's heaven is not the inexhaustible universe of stars and suns and planets- swirling nebulae. Heaven has nothing whatever to do with the time-space continuum or matter in any form. The true heaven is beyond it all, above it all, before it all. Heaven is that high and holy and invisible realm of SPIRIT, the pure and divine and eternal and incorruptible realm of GOD HIMSELF, which existed before ever a star or a planet appeared. Heaven, therefore, can only be entered BY THAT WHICH IS SPIRIT. Let every man know for a certainty that heaven is not a geographical or astral location with their limitations, but a dimension, a sphere of existence, a state of being- that spiritual existence, being and habitation in which God eternally lives. Natural eyes cannot pierce the invisible realm of spirit. Natural minds know nothing of that realm, for we perceive only those physical things recognizable by the senses. Natural ears are unable to hear that which is spoken in the realm of spirit, for spirit vibrates on a frequency higher than and superior to the low vibrations of earth. Heaven is all around us but we must be raised out of our natural consciousness in order to touch it. But the dimension of heaven is ten thousand times MORE REAL than this gross material realm to which our mortal form has been subjected.

The highest realm known to man is called HEAVEN, and all who have been born again from above by the Spirit of God have had opened to them a realm higher far than the heavens perceived by astronomers and astrologers. These know nothing of heaven at all! Paul tells us that we are to "seek those things which are ABOVE, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things ABOVE, not on things on the earth." (Col. 3: 1-2) The man or woman who is born from that bright glory world above becomes an entirely new creation in Christ Jesus. And from that time forward, He lives for God. His chief delight is in spiritual things. His affections are set above and not on things below. His citizenship is in heaven. Before his eyes there is opened up a kingdom which is beyond his full articulation or expression. He has only glimpsed some of the ineffable glories that God has, is, and will reveal to him. He is now part of a kingdom so vast in scope and so enduring in quality that the things of this world seem tawdry, mean, narrow, and insignificant by comparison.

Have you ever thought of the meaning of the name ascribed to God, the MOST HIGH?

Why the Most High? Does this not indicate that there are other high authorities in existence, and that He is the Most High: the highest of them all? We often talk about Jesus, his death on the cross, His resurrection, and His ascension. We say that after He was raised from the dead He ascended up to heaven. What do we think of when we make such a statement? Do we visualize Him going somewhere away beyond the stars, millions of miles out into space, to a place we call Heaven? The scriptures say that when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. He ascended up ON HIGH. What does this mean? High above what?

I want to draw your attention to a few scriptures that will make the truth crystal clear. In Heb. 7:26 we read these words concerning Jesus: "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made HIGHER THAN THE HEAVENS." This doesn't say that He merely ascended up to heaven, but that He was made HIGHER than the HEAVENS. Here we have the word heavens in the

plural. What does it mean, "Made higher than the heavens"? Let us look at some other passages along this line. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS" (Eph. 4:10). Now this language is somewhat different than saying that He ascended up to heaven. He is made higher than the heavens, and ascended up far above all heavens. We can be certain that such terminology indicates that there is not just one heaven as many think, but there are many heavens, and Jesus was raised and made higher than them all. Wonderful statements like this are also found in the Psalms. "Be thou exalted O God, ABOVE THE HEAVENS; let Thy glory be above all the earth." (Ps. 57:5, 11) "Let God be exalted ABOVE THE HEAVENS" (Ps. 108:5). Not just in heaven, but exalted ABOVE ALL HEAVENS.

Paul tells us something about this high and exalted realm. "I...cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the HEAVENLY PLACES, F-A-R A-B-O-V-E ALL PRINCIPALITY, AND POWER, AND MIGHT, AND DOMINION, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (Eph. 1:16-21)

In verse 20 of this beautiful passage we have the Greek phrase "en eois epouraniois," translated into English as "in heavenly places." "...He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES." The word for heaven in the Greek New Testament is OURANOUS, only in this passage we have something added to it. And the compound word thus formed is of such great import to us that we must consider it very, very carefully. We have the Greek word EPI, which means SUPERIMPOSITION, or in plain speech, ABOVE, HIGHER THAN, OVER. And when joined to OURANOUS, it becomes EPOURANIOIS. These two words joined together mean ABOVE HEAVEN or THE HIGHEST HEAVEN or HIGHER THAN ALL HEAVENS--SUPERIMPOSITION! This word is found twenty times in the New Testament.

Our Lord and Saviour when on earth, even though He had humbled Himself and had descended to the depths of the realm of death and had borne our sins, was still the exalted One. He was still in heaven (Jn. 3:13). But then He arose the conquering Christ! And not only that, but He ASCENDED victor over all the powers of darkness, having brought in eternal redemption for a lost world and redeemed all things unto God. "Wherefore God hath HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, and given Him a name which is ABOVE EVERY NAME." Or as Paul tells us in Eph. 4:10, "He...ascended up FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS." Or, let us note carefully, God has set Him "at His own right hand IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES." And the word which is mistranslated here as "heavenly places" is EPOURANIOIS, meaning HIGHER THAN HEAVENLY. It is ABOVE HEAVEN, HIGHER THAN HEAVEN, FAR ABOVE A-L-L HEAVENS! Thus we read, "He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand IN EPOURANIOIS--FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY - AND POWER, AND MIGHT, AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED...and has put ALL THINGS under His feet." (Eph. 1:20-22)

So the heavens He has been raised far above are the Principalities and Powers, and Might and Dominion that inhabit and dwell in all the heavens. God has given Jesus an exalted position, far above all other Principality and Power, good and bad, and given Him a name (nature) that is above every name that is named throughout the vastnesses of infinity. He has put all other Power and Authority everywhere under His feet, and made them all His footstool, that before His glorious name, that wonderful name of Jesus, every knee should bow, yes, every knee, of the inhabitants of the heavens as well as those on the earth and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess, the tongues of those in the heavens, of those on the earth, and those in the underworld; every one of them shall proclaim Him Lord, to the glory of God the Father. It should be plain to even the simplest mind that this authority and power over all the powers of the heavens certainly includes the "sweet influences" of Pleiades, the "bands" of Orion, the "ordinances" of the heavens and their "dominion" in the earth (Job 38:31-33). It is a realm far above and beyond the beggarly influences of the stars and planets- of Capricorn and Scorpio and Jupiter and Mars! And let demons rage. Let fools and unbelievers hang their heads in shame. We quote once more from the incomparable Word of God. "BUT GOD...HATH raised US up together, AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS." (Eph. 2:4-6) And this "heavenly places" where WE NOW SIT with the firstborn Son is this same super-heaven, or epour-aniois, the same position which He holds "far above all heavens!" Ah, we who have come the way of the cross, we whose

spirits have been quickened by His Spirit, we in whom the mighty power is working which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand far above all heavens- are enthroned with Him in this su-per-eminence N-O-W. Christ is enthroned in the higher-than-all-heavens and WE HAVE BEEN QUICKENED AND RAISED UP AND GIVEN JOINT-SEATING WITH HIM IN THE UNION OF HIS DIVINE LIFE! And yet Christians in ignorance sing, "When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be!" Heaven for those who have been born from above is not a future hope. It is a PRESENT REALITY. It is the realm far above all other forms of natural and spiritual life that inhabit God's vast universe and far above all power and might and dominion of any order; not above them geographically, but above them in HANK, in QUALITY OF LIFE, in EMINENCE and POWER and AUTHORITY and NATURE and GLORY! All the elect sons of God must find their existence and experience enthroned with Christ in the higher than all heavens. They must find all their source and reality of being IN SPIRIT. Oh! Sons of God--let us arise and live the heavenly life! Let our ministry be one that will lift people out of an earthly consciousness into a heavenly (spiritual) consciousness. Truly all creation has been lowered into the bondage of corruption, the consciousness of the earthly and temporal, but not without a hope of restoration into a full God-consciousness and state of being again. This is what salvation is about. This is why God's purpose in this hour is to perfect, to raise us and bring us into the consciousness of God which is the full awareness of the realm of the SPIRIT--the power and substance of life within OUR SPIRIT!

The new creation people are those who fulfill the injunction of the prophet Amos, "Seek HIM that maketh the seven stars and Orion" (Amos 5:8). Because you are seated in Christ in the higher-than-all-heavens, you draw energy from a realm much farther up than the natural man. While others are meted out the tiniest morsels from the stars, you supersede that level and receive directly from HIM that MADE the constellations! If you have touched the wisdom that is higher than the heavens, you don't need to be wasting precious time making star charts. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ, and your life is hid with Christ in God far above all heavens. Astrology might be interesting, there may be truth in cold, hard facts about the influence of the stars upon the earth realm and the men who dwell therein, but there is nothing so refreshing as to step into the breathless stillness of the night and lift up our spirit in rapturous communion with the One who formed it all. There the heavenly architect in accents rare begins to reveal to the inner heart that it was from those realms of glory that we came, and our coming to this world was by reason of God's great intention, that we should be prepared to reign in Christ's image over all the marvelous works of His hands from galaxy to galaxy unto the uttermost reaches of the vastnesses of infinity. Why settle for less than the best? Astrology, even in the time of Babylon, couldn't hold a candle to the wisdom of God by the Spirit. It still can't. As sons of the Most High you have direct access to knowledge and power which transcends the stars. There is nothing in the starry skies that holds anything for us anymore. The following words of truth are taken from a prophecy which came to my desk some time ago, and which I believe to be inspired by the Spirit of God. "Know thou, that regardless of what comes upon the earth, THOU ART NOT OF THE EARTH, nor of the night. For thou art of the Spirit, and of the day. Fear thou not what comes upon the earth, and upon the earth man, but look thou unto the Lord thy God. For in Him is thy safety, and in Him is thy joy. And thy joy, even the joy of the Lord, shall be thy strength."

Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Son-ship comes about by dwelling and abiding in the overshadowing presence of the Holy Spirit, walking, living, and breathing IN HIM. Astrology, on the other hand, is concerned only with EARTHLY THINGS. One astrologer said, "I discovered that all the 'in-depth' psychological studies, all the psychiatric know-how and all the aptitude testing ever devised can't compare with the answers a good astrologer can obtain from an exact horoscope. I learned about people with wasted talents (some of them potential millionaires) who lead a humdrum 9-to-5 life because they have never investigated their true 'birthright' I saw people who considered themselves failures at lower echelon jobs but who could have been magnificently successful at the head of an important enterprise. I've written articles about people who have used the advice of astrologers in timing their key moves--people who became rich by working in harmony with cosmic tides!" (Joseph A. Goodavage in ASTROLOGY: THE SPACE AGE SCIENCE).

Is it not incredible that there is no spiritual life --but everything is viewed, like the preacher in Ecclesiastes, as man sees it "under the sun" and not as God sees it from ABOVE THE HEAVENS. The influences of the stars are upon the earthly things, but those who have been raised up and made to sit with Christ in the higher-than-all-heavens do not set their affection on things on the earth, nor do they gaze up into the stars.

THEY LOOK DOWN UPON THE STARS. Practically we have to learn what the frigate bird does. When a storm comes on it gets above the region of storms, above the clouds, where there is none, and there it stays even for days until the storm is over. I am placed beyond the reach of storms; I am a frigate bird, for I am with Christ in a scene where there is no storm and no clouds. I am united to an ascended Christ. The Lord says, "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them." A person might say, I cannot attain this now. I answer, I belong to the glory now; I possess His life now in glory, and I am changed into the same image by the Spirit. I belong to the glory.

Sundar Singh, the Indian prophet, told of an occasion when he was traveling in the Himalayas, and there was a storm, with violent thunder and lightning. He got frightened that the lightning might fall upon him and he would be killed. So he moved higher and higher upon the peaks of the mountain until the lightning was down below where it could not jump up to reach him. Thank God! there is a realm HIGH ABOVE THE STARS where none of their influences reach, where all is peace, joy, and righteousness in the Holy Ghost and power and victory and stability.

Hannah Hurnard relates the transformation that came to her life at the discovery of this higher reality. "Little by little everything in my circumstances altered. It was as though I had really moved into another country--a heavenly one, where I was surrounded by things that I found more delightful than anything that I had experienced in the past. Even more wonderful than that, I actually began to feel as though there were angels and heavenly beings coming and going all the time, and, for a very matter-of-fact and practical person like myself, this was a most wonderful and awesome experience. All sorts of spiritual influences and inspirations were given to me which seemed to 'open the eyes of my understanding', so that I seemed to have been born into a new world and universe altogether, or to have escaped from the prison-house world of what my physical senses alone could perceive, into a vast and glorious world perceivable only through newly developing spiritual senses. Not through psychic senses, which enable people to see what is going on elsewhere in the world, or what is going to happen in the future, but through spiritual understanding of truths which had been hidden from me up till then--and which now began to reveal a world of REALITIES and experiences and contact with higher powers, such as I had never before envisaged" --end quote.

I am constrained to share a couple more quotations with you from precious saints to whom God has granted wisdom and understanding. Norene Nicholls wrote, "The moon plays such a significant part in our lives. We know it regulates the tides of the oceans by its gravitational pull, but science is now finding out that its gravitational pull affects the liquids of our bodies even as it affects the oceans. This means that the fluids, such as, blood, lymph, bile, urine, etc., are pulled upon by the phases of the moon. This is particularly so at full moon and new moon, and more so when these particular phases coincide with the equinoxes and the solstices, which are the turning points of the year and the beginning of the seasons. Full moon and new moon exert such a gravitational pull upon the fluids of the body, that irritableness, nervousness, physical disabilities and even mental problems show up at this time. The term LUNACY even comes from the word LUNA meaning MOON, so those in olden days recognized such possibilities of the moon's power. Ten years ago when I was going through some very strange experiences, the scripture kept coming to me, "The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the MOON by night." pondered it often, wondering what was involved in this, and then began to realize that the phases of the moon were affecting me drastically. Then it was that I began to withstand its power by the truth of the Word that it could not SMITE me, and the word SMITE even means to KILL. Every force is trying to kill us, but we believe that it cannot, for we are called to an everlasting priesthood" --end quote.

And finally, from the ready pen of Dora Van Assen, "'Who gave Himself for our sins that He might extricate (rescue) us out of this present wicked (evil) eon (world order) according to the will of God.' (Gal. 1:4) Notice this word EVIL spells LIVE backwards. The whole course of this evil world is running in reverse, thus bringing death and decay instead of life. Peter calls it an 'untoward generation.' (Acts 2:40) That is, a generation turned away from (untoward) God. And Paul declares we are to shine as lights in this 'crooked and perverse (turned around) nation' (Phil. 2:15). We cannot resist these negative influences (of the heavens) in our own strength. Even if we could keep the whole law of God, it would not give IMMORTAL LIFE. We would still grow old and die. We need the LIFE OF CHRIST WITHIN to overcome the law of sin and death operating in our body which

brings age, decay and final' dissolution to this natural man. Only the Christ within can destroy and reverse this natural. That is why we must be born again! In our complete man, spirit, soul and body! O wonderful plan of God! Jesus Christ has come to deliver us out of this evil world order, both within and without, our total being set free. He told His disciples, 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (cosmos' (In. 16:33). Since He has overcome, we shall also overcome. Because He lives free from all the negative influences of this universe, we now can live in this glorious realm also. All we do is believe and apply His deliverance in our lives!" --end quote.

Dearly beloved saints of God. the future of God's elect will not be decided by prognostications of our horoscope. It will be determined by the faith of God in our heart imparted by the sovereign and infinite purpose of OUR FATHER. Never mind about Aires or Taurus or Gemini. Fret not about Cancer or Leo or Virgo. Forget about Libra,-and Scorpio and Saggitarius. For neither these nor Capricorn nor Aquarius nor Pisces nor any other principality or power or dominion influence one whet the destiny of the man or woman or child whose life is hid with Christ in God. Look upward...yes...but not to the stars. Look BEYOND THE STARS. By the light that the Spirit brings look into the .glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and you will find yourself being wondrously changed into the same image from glory to glory. And there the stars have no control. And what about the future? Must I listen to Jeanne Dixon or some dark psychic interpret the{TM pale flicker of distant stars? Is this the light I want? Who needs horoscopes? THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN QUICKENED BY THE POWER OF THE LIVING CHRIST OF GOD, for He, and HE alone is the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (Jn. 1:9)

The regenerated spirit becomes a component factor in the sweet harmony of God's spiritual Kingdom. And what a Kingdom! And what a harmony! In duration it is from everlasting to everlasting. The granite hills shall melt away; the earth shall leave its orbit and fall into the chaos of crashing worlds; Orion, Arcturus, and Pleiades shall ,cease to travel the holy aisles of heaven; the sun shall be turned into darkness; the heavens hall be rolled back as a scroll, and as a vesture they shall be folded up; but beneath the scepter of the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Father, the Kingdom of Heaven shall still remain and move on in sweetest harmony with His holy will. For in this high and holy Kingdom no forces ever clash, no laws ever fail, no truth ever goes astray, no beauty ever fades, no light ever loses its luster, no good ever grows less, no life ever gets old. no love ever becomes cold, no joy ever ceases, no harmony ever has a discord. From the time when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God first shouted for joy rhythm and rapture have rolled upward and onward through all the boundless and eternal spiritual universe as the sweet expression of the mind and will of almighty God. This universe, this higher-than-the-heavens universe, this Kingdom of Heaven, is the home and heritage of every son of God. He belongs to it, and it belongs to him. He is in it, and it is in him. He holds himself in harmony with it, and it fills his soul with its songs. He apprehends its truth, enjoys its beauties, and partakes of its holiness. There is no place in it where he may not feel at home--no place where he has not a right to be; for it has been the Father' s good pleasure to give him the Kingdom. His life is not measured by years, but by its possibilities and expansiveness. Divinity and eternity are born within him. Now he is a child of God, but it doth not yet appear what he shall be.

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 3

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART THREE

THE HEAVENS RULE A TABERNACLE FOR THE SUN

In the first chapter of the Bible we read, "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also." (Gen. 1:16) Again, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for SIGNS, and for SEASONS, and for DAYS, and for YEARS." (Gen. 1:14) It should be obvious to everyone with even an elementary knowledge of astronomy that the heavenly bodies have a great deal to say about our YEARS, our DAYS and our SEASONS. But what about the relationship of the celestial bodies to that word SIGNS? How are they SIGNS? What is a SIGN? Perhaps the best way to answer our question is by answering another question first. What precisely is the purpose of a "sign"? Is it not to bear a message? To give information? To tell a story which is of importance to the one who put up the sign? If so, then let us observe that this verse is saying that God placed the sun, moon, and stars in the heavens to tell a story, to declare a word of utmost importance. The heavens are the unfurling of God's revelation to man, the heavens tell the story of things to come--they PROPHECY!

It is in the book of Job that we first have reference to this Stellar Revelation. In chapter 38 God speaks to Job and his false comforters. He says to them, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth (the twelve signs of the Zodiac) in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of the heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?" (Job 38:31-33) The MAZZAROTH--the signs of the Zodiac--are brought forth each night by the skillful hand of God. These constellations were sprinkled by His hand across the sky as He garnished the heavens and created the figures which we now know as the figures of the Zodiac. He has written this with His own hand; He has created the stars; He has named and numbered and arranged and ordered them. Remember--this is GOD speaking! And the almighty Creator speaks of the "sweet influences" of Pleiades, the "bands" of Orion, the "seasons" of Mazzaroth, the "ordinances" of the heavens, and the "dominion" of these constellations in the earth! Each of these powers and influences of the constellations over the earth is indicated by God Himself as FACT!

THE HEAVENS RULE Throughout history, there have been those anointed of God who have seen some connection between stars and angels- the messengers of God. This connection can easily be made because both the stars (Deut. 4:19; II Kings 21:3; Isa. 34:4; Jer. 8:2; 33:22; Zeph. 1:5) and the ministering spirits (I Kings 22:19-22; Lk. 2:13) are called "the host of heaven" in the Bible. There are several beautiful passages which provide the indisputable link between the two, of which I will cite only one. "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the HEAVENS: praise ye Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, all His ANGELS: praise ye Him, all His HOSTS. Praise ye Him, SUN and MOON: praise ye Him, all ye STARS OF LIGHT. Praise Him, all ye HEAVENS OF HEAVENS." (Ps. 148: 1-4)

A person who speaks only the English language can take a book, written in French, and while he may not be able to read it, except with much hesitation and mispronunciation, still he can struggle through it, after a fashion. Occasionally he will come to a word which closely resembles the English, with which he is familiar. But, because he knows nothing of the meaning of French words, no matter how well he can read the text, it means nothing to him until he learns what each individual French word means. Even so, Christians who read Bible prophecy, or study God's Bible in the sky--the signs of the Zodiac, if they do not understand prophetic language, are confronted with a similar problem. Prophecy is invariably written in spiritual and prophetic terms, and unless one understands the meaning of each individual term, though he may be able to read the text fluently, yet he has no understanding of what he reads. So, before one can understand prophecy, he first must receive a revelation of the prophetic language. Fortunately, the Word furnishes us with the KEYS to prophetic terms by which we may, through consistent study, and the illumination of the blessed Spirit of

Truth, become proficient in the prophetic language. In **Mat. 24:29** we read, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." In this significant passage Jesus sets forth several prophetic terms. Some of the prophetic terms are: SUN, MOON, STARS, and HEAVEN. Let us take a look at these!

The natural sun is the brightest luminary in the natural heavens. And to help us in correctly interpreting the meaning of the prophetic sun, Gen. 1:16 informs us that God made "the greater light to RULE the day, and the lesser light to RULE the night." Here we first have the idea expressed of both the sun and the moon being RULERS. Then we find that God, the supreme Ruler, is called in the Word a "Sun." "For the Lord thy God is a SUN and a shield." (**Ps. 84: 11**) Also, our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, is in Mal. 4:2 called "the Sun of Righteousness." He rules. Furthermore, we find, in reference to men, that II Sam. 23:3-4 reads: "He that RULETH over men...shall be as the light of the morning, when the SUN ariseth." And in II Sam. 21:17 we find David the king called "the LIGHT of Israel." This same meaning is found in II Kings 8:19 where wt, read: "Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David His servant's sake, as He promised him to give him always A LIGHT." This is exactly the same promise that we find in **Jer. 33:17** where the Lord says: "David shall never want a man to SIT UPON THE THRONE of the house of Israel." David's offspring were to be the "suns," or RULERS of Israel, the source of light, influence, and direction. In Mat. 13:43 we find, concerning saints who are to be Kings and Priests and rule with Christ (Rev. 3:21; 5:9-10), that they are compared to the sun: "Then shall the righteous SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the Kingdom of their Father." Of these same ruling saints Jesus says, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations and he shall RULE them with a rod of iron..." Then He hastily adds: "And I will give him the MORNING STAR." (**Rev. 2:26-28**) That is, "I will give him power over the nations -- rulership --and I will give him the POSITION AS THE MORNING STAR to give direction to mankind." Now consider these meaningful words of Daniel the prophet wherein he foretells the manifestation of the sons of God in the end of the age: "And they that be wise shall SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; and they that turn many to righteousness as the STARS forever." (**Dan. 12: 3**)

Then we find in **Dan. 4:26**, "the HEAVENS DO RULE." God's heaven is His throne. "Heaven I-S M-Y T-H-R-O-N-E" (**Isa. 66:1**). Heaven in the spiritual terminology of prophecy is the seat where the SUN, the mighty God sits and RULES. And as God's heaven is His throne, so the prophetic heavens include all the governmental realm THROUGH WHICH GOD RULES, and He is LORD OF ALL. That the prophetic "heaven" is the governmental realm, including the thrones of men through which God rules over men, is demonstrated quite clearly in **Dan. 4:22**, where Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar, "thy greatness is grown, and REACHED UNTO HEAVEN." He had just become the most exalted monarch of earth: the sun. And in Isa. 5:30, describing the casting down of earthly kings from their thrones, the prophet says, "THE LIGHT IS DARKENED IN THE HEAVENS THEREOF." This statement is most meaningful when compared with all the foregoing scriptures, and finally compared with the statement in **Mat. 24:2**: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the SUN BE DARKENED, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of t~ e heavens shall be shaken."

The sun in prophecy is the most exalted ruler of any order, the moon second, while the stars are other governmental authorities. The heavens are the thrones which these rulers occupy. The earth is that which is ruled by the heavens that which looks to the sun, the moon, and the stars for its light and direction. There is an order of human government now, but all these are soon to pass away, be darkened, fall from heaven, and a new order shall be inaugurated. In the Kingdom of God the SONS OF GOD shall constitute the heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars) that shall RULE THE EARTH. When we read of the stars falling from heaven, we are simply reading that the so-called "big shots" are coming down! We are being made to know that all that has been giving light in the past, and that has ruled in the past, is going out and is darkened forever. But in Matt. 24:27 we read that God's Christ shall come "as the lightning (sun) cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west." The glorious CHRIST COMPANY shall TAKE THE PLACE of all the former sun, moon, and stars. A NEW HEAVENS and a NEW EARTH--hallelujah!

The truth of the constellations of the heavens includes many wonderful examples of that which is taking place in the realm of the Spirit. The stars of the heavens exist in a realm where God is absolute Sovereign and Lord, where His life prevails. Therefore, in their highest meaning, in their spiritual meaning, the stars are used to

represent HEAVENLY, SPIRITUAL RULE AND DOMINION. Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to behold the wondrous truth that God's elect sons ARE THE CONSTELLATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL HEAVENS, THE LUMINARIES AND RULERS IN GOD'S SKY! As the glory of the Lord arises upon His chosen ones they pierce the gloom of the dark night of sin and sorrow and bring deliverance, life and order out of the chaos of man's failure and despair. In the light of Daniel's startling prophecy (Dan. 12:3) I am compelled to say to the elect of the Lord: Y-O-U ARE THE TRUE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC IN GOD'S SPIRITUAL HEAVENS!

In that long ago primordial beginning the sun, moon and stars were given as SIGNS. A sign is something that points to something else. The sign itself can be a reality. But as a SIGN, it is a reality that points to A REALITY THAT IS BEYOND AND GREATER THAN ITSELF. If you see a sign in a building that reads, "EXIT," you do not for a moment think that the sign itself is the way out. You know that it is an indicator pointing you in the direction of a door or opening nearby. The scriptures declare that our Lord Jesus Christ was just such a reality, for it is written that He was a SIGN. "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a SIGN. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a SON and ye shall call HIS name IMMANUEL (God with us)." (Isa. 7:14) It was not the virgin birth that was to be the sign. It was THE SON THAT WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN that was the sign. Therefore when the infant Jesus was brought to Simeon and Anna in the temple, again it was prophesied that the SON was a SIGN, for Simeon said, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many...and FOR A SIGN which shall be spoken against." (Lk. 2:34)

Jesus was a SIGN! He was also a "stumbling block". People stumbled over the sign because they could not comprehend its meaning! They spoke against it because it was beyond their understanding. They resisted it because they perceived it with carnal, rather than spiritual, eyes. But Jesus was a Sign, a fact that He Himself told us when He said, "The things concerning Me have an END." (Lk. 22:37) That word "end" is in the Greek TELOS, meaning "consummation." In other words, Jesus was something to be FULFILLED. He was a reality in and of Himself, but He was also a reality that pointed to a reality greater than Himself. What reality was that? As the FIRSTBORN among MANY BRETHREN, He was the SIGN that pointed to a many-membered Christ, a whole company of Saviours (Ob. 21), who shall be HIM revealed in His many-splendored glory!

Here I would share a most illuminating and instructive word from the pen of George Hawtin. "One of the greatest truths ever kept hidden from the eyes of man is this: that JESUS CHRIST, THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD, was from His birth to His resurrection the greatest SIGN that God has ever given to the world. Everything about His life and His ministry, His birth, His death, His resurrection was a clear distinct SIGN of things that are to come. We may have overlooked the fact that no less an authority than Jesus Christ Himself made the clear definite statement that 'as Jonah was a SIGN to the Ninevites, so also shall the SON OF MAN be to this generation' (Lk. 11:29-30). This passage tells us that Jesus was a sign to this generation in the same way that Jonah was to his generation. When I meditate upon the experience of Jonah as he went into the whale's belly and felt the bars of hell close about him, then to come forth from that hell to experience the glory of a resurrection, it seems small wonder that his preaching so mightily affected the Ninevites that in forty days one hundred twenty thousand souls turned to the Lord. Jonah's experience was a sign to the Ninevites of wonderful things to come when Christ would go into death and hell and then lead forth in triumph an innumerable company of captives from the pit itself (Eph.4:7-10). But we dare not stop here. The glorious victory of Christ in descending to hell and leading forth a host of captives is in itself a sign of the day when the sons of God will unlock the gates of hell, for the gates of hell shall not prevail against them" --end quote.

May God grant unto all who peruse this message eyes to see that this glorious first-born Son of God, begotten of the Father by the Holy Ghost, was a SIGN SON. He was a sign of a great COMPANY OF SONS who would also be born of the Spirit and nurtured unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ through the centuries stretching between Bethlehem and the end of this age. This is the truth that illumined Paul's mind as he exultantly wrote, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the IMAGE OF HIS SON, that HE might be the eldest in a VAST FAMILY OF BROTHERS." (Rom. 8: 29) Well, if He was a sign, those who are joined to Him in spirit - truly joined to Him in spirit, of His mind, of His attitude, of His thought - WILL ALSO BE SIGNS! That is why it is written in another place, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given Me are for SIGNS AND WONDERS in Israel from the Lord of hosts." (Isa. 8:18; Heb. 2:13) "I and the children..." That is Christ and His members!

Jesus was a sign and you and I, my beloved, are given for signs. The sun, moon and stars were set in the diamond-studded heavens to be for signs and to rule over the earth. Jesus was a sign, and He is the Sun of righteousness set in the heavens of God's vast spiritual universe, and He is the Creator of the world, and its Ruler. The bride of Christ is the moon in God's spiritual and governmental heavens, for as the sun represents the positive, masculine, life-giving principle, so the moon symbolizes the passive, feminine, receptive side. The elect sons of God are for signs and they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the STARS forever. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may become blameless and harmless, sons of God, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and darkened generation, AMONG WHOM YE SHINE AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD." (Phil. 2:15) This word here translated "lights" is the Greek word PHOSTER, and it means luminary, light container, or simply star. The sons of God, then, are the stars of God to shine in this darkened world.

To what purpose is this beautiful figure given? Let us recall that Moses said of the stars that they were for SIGNS. Many a weary wanderer, lost in the blackness of a darkened night, has thanked God when the storm was lifted, so that he might see the stars, and find his way back home to safety and to peace. The stars are for signs, and that tells the whole tale of God's expectation of us. Christ Jesus our Lord is a sign and He is a sun and Christ is King, He rules, and not another. He has been given power over "ALL flesh" (Jn. 17: 2). Before He ascended He stated, "ALL power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." (Mat.28:18) "All power" means "all power" and leaves no room for Satan to have some power. And this unbounded power is not a mere recent acquisition, for in Jn. 17:5 we read that before ascending Jesus petitioned the Father to glorify Him with the glory which He had before the world was. So the glory and power which He now possesses, He also possessed in Old Testament times, and even before time began. And by the wisdom of God and the revelation of His Spirit, we have come to understand that our spirits, too, were with God in the beginning of the creation. Long before we existed in this form of dust, or of flesh and blood, we were with the Father. To those who can receive it there is a blessed and divine answer in the New Testament to the question put by the Almighty to Job in that long ago: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth...when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4, 7) O that men might see that there was a day in which God established in the heavens His great plan of creation and redemption. In that moment of the early councils of the Elohim there erupted such an harmonious symphony of rejoicing and praise and the morning stars formed a celestial choir which broke forth into a rhapsody of song while all the sons of God filled the unlimited vastnesses of infinity with their shouts of joy and expectation as they with wonder beheld the end of Father's glorious plan.

There is a chord far away in the depths of my spirit today that still vibrates to that wondrous shout of joy. There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that in that long forgotten past we were there with Him in spirit, and there is an inward sense of assurance that much of the truth we now possess was known to our spirits since that early beginning. The call to sonship was placed within our spirits at that time, for the scripture with divine certainty testifies that it was those whom the Father FOREKNEW that He also predestinated to be conformed into the image of His Son (Rom. 8: 29), according as He hath chosen us in Him BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to Himself. (Eph. 1:4-5) Paul Mueller wrote some time ago that all that has taken place in our lives, from the cradle to the grave, was at that time programmed into our spirits, and we are now walking out the path that Father ordained for us in that pre-dawn hour. To which my spirit shouts a hearty "Amen!"

Jesus Christ is Himself the "bright and the morning star," but this assurance I have from the Spirit of Truth within, that a vast company of MORNING S-T-A-R-S intoned that glorious celestial song of creation and redemption on that primeval occasion ere the foundations of the earth were laid. And just as Jesus Christ came into this world as a Sign-Son, so all the sons of God are given for signs and wonders in Israel. In the same wonderful way that the heavenly constellations of the signs of the Zodiac rule by cosmic energy the men of earth, so do the heavenly, spiritual sun, moon and stars rule over the earth realm by the spiritual authority and power of the Kingdom of God. The physical Zodiac in the natural heavens of the material universe is but a faint shadow of the true and spiritual and heavenly Zodiac composed of the blessed Sun of righteousness, and the moon, which is the bride of Christ and the Queen of heaven, and the brightness of the stars constituting that vast family of the sons and daughters of the Most High. Some teach that the "morning stars" represent only the

daughters of God, but it is my deep conviction that we must bear in mind that Jesus Christ, the SON of the living God is Himself T-H-E BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the S-I-G-N OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Mat. 24:29-30) I have quoted this portion of our Lord's teaching that we might be assured that by using the symbols of the sun, moon, stars, and the powers of the heavens, Jesus reveals the total and complete collapse and destruction of this present World-order. Then He shows that after all the lights of the human governmental systems go out, when one would expect only darkness and anarchy, A VERY IMPORTANT EVENT OCCURS. The SIGN of the Son of man will appear in THE HEAVEN.

"And THEN shall appear the SIGN of the Son of man in heaven." In examining this statement we must first note a grievous error that is made by most people who study it. The unthinking masses skip over it lightly, misinterpreting it as "the COMING of the Son of man in heaven." That is not what the text says at all. We need to pay particular attention to all the words. They all mean something. The verse does not say that the Son of man will appear in heaven, rather, "the sign" will appear: the SIGN of the Son of man. A sign is a far different reality from that which it points to. You cannot ride in a road sign advertising a certain make of automobile. The sign merely tells you where to find the man who sells that car. So the SIGN of the Son of man is not the Son of man. But going to the Greek we find the word for sign is SEMEION which means a miracle, sign, wonder or signal. And the text also tells us where this wonder or signal will appear. In the previous verse we saw the sun, moon, and stars fall from heaven: from their thrones. And then we saw these heavenly or exalted powers themselves pass away and go into oblivion. They are no more. And the Word of God tells us that upon the burning of the Babylonian heavens, there will arise a new system, a new governmental arrangement, a new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Pet. 3:12-13)- And that is where we find this "sign" or wonder or signal of the Son of man. It appears "IN HEAVEN." And heaven in prophecy means thrones, the governmental realm, that which is established for rulership. The sun, moon and stars of Mat. 24:29 "fall from heaven," from their place of dominion, and in verse 30 we see the sign or signal of the Christ ascending the SAME THRONES or taking away their place. The old order passes away. This is a new day. And Christ is King. He reigns. And His will shall be done in earth as it is done in heaven!

Let us turn now to chapter 12 of Revelation, that most wonderful, symbolic unfoldment of God's plan for the time now present and the days just ahead. The chapter opens with this cryptic statement: "And there appeared a great WONDER IN HEAVEN." It is necessary to pause here and note that the word "wonder" in this passage is the same Greek word SEMEION which, in Mat. 24:30 is translated "sign". In other words, "there appeared a great SIGN IN HEAVEN." Now compare this with the statement of our Lord in **Mat. 24:30 "And then shall appear the SIGN of the Son of man IN HEAVEN."** This comparison makes it crystal clear that what Jesus spoke of, and that which John saw, are indeed ONE AND THE SAME THING! So --what is the SIGN that John saw "in heaven?"

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered...and she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne." (Rev. 12:1-2,5) Some tell us that the woman in this chapter is Mary, or Israel, and that the man-child is Jesus. But we do a serious discredit to the Word of God when we ignore the fact that John the Revelator was being shown things which "must be hereafter" (Rev. 4:1) and not events which had transpired many years before he trod the burning rocks of Patmos. It should not be difficult for any to understand that just as Mary, the typical woman, brought forth the first-born Son, the SIGN-SON, so the Bride of Christ is here pictured as a symbolic woman in the closing days of this dispensation. Some tell us that the sons come forth in this age, and the bride is perfected in the next age; but who ever heard of a son being born without a mother! That would indeed be a "wonder" far greater than what John was shown on Patmos! Just as Mary was a virgin, and brought forth her Son before her marriage was consummated, so is the bride of Christ a virgin, and brings forth her many-membered son before her marriage is consummated.

This glorious sun-clad woman is the same woman of whom Paul spoke in **II Cor. 11:2**, "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Paul again speaks of this woman in **Eph. 5:31-32**, "for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND T-H-E C-H-U-R-C-H." Nothing in all the pages of God's blessed Book can be plainer than the fact that THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. If it is not, we will have to tear the above quoted verses from our Bibles and cast them into the fire. It is the end-time Church, not the wanton harlot who calls herself the Church, but the true Church of the living God in the end of this age which as a virgin people is clothed with the sun, even the Sun of righteousness, the glory and splendor of the Lord Jesus Christ; she shall be crowned, brought under the submission to the divine authority of God, for twelve is the number of divine government, this government being symbolized by the stars of the twelve Patriarchs of the Old Testament and the twelve apostles of the Lamb in the New Testament. Since the primary figure in this instance is the woman, the moon, in this case, bears a different connotation, representing that this spirit-filled and spirit-led woman has put the cold, reflective light of ritual and ceremony under her feet, to walk in the brilliance of the glory of the living Son of God. And it is from this virgin company, this espoused bride, this sun-clad woman that the man-child, the manifested sons of God shall be birthed. This CORPORATE SON is destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and shall be caught up to God and to His throne. This should help us to understand the fathomless depths of meaning in the words of Jesus, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to HIM will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS: and he shall RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON" (**Rev. 2:26-27**) This overcoming company, my beloved, is the man-child who is caught up to God and to His throne, who rules all nations with a rod of iron.

With the foregoing truths in mind, let us see with divine clarity that the "sign" of the Son of man in heaven, and the "wonder" John saw in heaven both portray the very same reality. That "sign" is simply the coming forth in the earth of a company of fully overcoming, victorious SONS OF GOD who are to take the reins of the government of this world and OF ALL NATIONS in the blessed age to come. When these sons of God begin to come forth in the earth in the GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY of the Spirit of God, then shall the SIGN of the Son of man be seen--for these sons ARE THE SIGN! Methinks that I have stood in God's bright today, as John stood in vision in that long ago, and with my eyes have beheld this SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN. In my brief span of years upon this fair planet I have been privileged to be a firsthand witness to this woman heavy with child, and pained to be delivered. Within the depths of my own soul I have experienced the piercing pain of her travail for the dominion of the Christ Spirit to come forth into manifestation and ascend the throne of my own being to rule in life and victory and authority over every vestige of sin, carnality and death. I have beheld with my own eyes the wonder of the incorruptible nature of God's pure and holy Son being formed in a people that have embraced the Cross of Christ. I have the assurance of the Holy Spirit that in due time these shall be raised to the incorruptible, heavenly sphere to reign in absolute righteousness, perfection and incorruptibleness, free forever from sin, limitation, and the curse.

This present time is, therefore, the most important of all the periods of earth. It is the time to which patriarch and prophet looked forward with longing to see. We are truly a privileged people, in that we have been favored to live to see this day. It is the great day of the Lord, bringing in the Sabbath, the day of rest, when God's saints will have rest and rejoicing, and deliverance from all the bondage of the past. And it is the day of defeat, and darkness, and bondage, and humiliation for all our enemies (Amos 5:18-20). It is the day when the first shall be last, and the last first: when those who have been despised and reproached for the truth's sake, out of all the ages, will be brought to honor and glory, and all the proud and haughty who now reign will be abased and brought low.

Therefore, my beloved, if you desire to see a "sign" of the coming of the Lord, look not to the depressing, negative, corrupted conditions in the earth today. Wickedness, licentiousness, violence, war, and ever-increasing sorrows are NOT signs of the Lord's appearing, as the ministers of Babylon mistakenly proclaim. Those negative conditions are merely signs that we have reached the crisis, the turning point in the long night of man's rebellion and misrule. But the "sign" of the SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN is the sign of the birth of God's manchild, the maturity of the enChristed, the coming upon the scene of the overcoming sons of God who hold within their experience the answer, the solution to the ills and despair of sin-cursed humanity. Keep your eye on GOD'S ELECT, my friend. As full maturity, perfection, strength, and the Glory of the Lord arise upon them--a GREAT WONDER SHALL APPEAR IN HEAVEN. A new RULING GOVERNMENT of Christ IN HIS BODY

shall appear on the scene, authority and power in the prophetic "heavens". "The saints of the Most High shall TAKE THE KINGDOM, and possess the Kingdom for ever...and the Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to THE PEOPLE OF THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH...and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. Hitherto is the END of the matter." (Dan. 7:18, 27-28)

This earth is but a proving ground for those who shall reign with their Lord over the endless vastnesses of infinity. They have proven faithful over few things. In due time they will be made ruler over many things: over all His possessions (Mat. 24:45-47). And these possessions are beyond number. We are able to see a few of them in the starry heavens above, but there are others besides these, and they all belong to our King. And as He has given us His glory (Jn. 17:22), because we are brethren, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. We are of common parentage, brothers by birth: to be like Him in nature, name and being. We are all "out of ONE: for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2:6). Hence, we belong on His throne. And the place which He has been preparing for each one is not only a world, and a Kingdom of life and light, but a position, a place of eminence at His side, ruling with Him from the throne of His heaven, over all the endlessness of His unbounded dominions. AMEN!

A TABERNACLE FOR THE SUN

From the finger tips of our almighty heavenly Father worlds glide forth in their orbits, and mighty stars as numerous as the sands of the sea circle for incalculable ages in their courses with the sweet precision of a diamond watch. The inspired Psalmist penned these words of beauty and truth: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. IN THEM HATH HE SET A TABERNACLE FOR THE SUN. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." (Ps. 19:1,4-6)

In the days when David wrote these expressive words the word "tabernacle" carried an altogether different connotation than it does in our modern usage. When we were in Israel we saw dotting the landscape the black "tents of Kedar" mentioned in the Song of Solomon, the goat-skin tent habitations of the nomadic tribes which follow their flocks over the hills of Judea. We are accustomed to think of a tabernacle in terms of a temple or other grand and imposing edifice, whereas in the east where the books of the scriptures were written, tabernacles were tents, and so was the House of God, the Tabernacle of God in the wilderness. We view our sturdy houses as places of security and protection from the blazing sun, the chilling cold, the ravaging winds, and the treachery of men; but in the east the tent was the place of habitation, the position of dwelling.

In God's tabernacle or habitation it was not a matter of protecting God from the influences of the external elements, but a matter of a place to draw attention to the fact that He was there. It was the place of His abode, His manifestation, His activity, that His people might behold Him and know that He dwelt amongst them. He inhabited the tabernacle in order to presence Himself with them, not in order to have a shelter for Himself. This concept of the tabernacle as being a DISPLAY to EXHIBIT the glory of God is the thought of the Holy Spirit in Psalm 19. The sun is not contained within the strong walls of some celestial fortress--if it were it would be hidden. It is not concealed; it is put on display for all creation to behold in all of its brilliance and majesty. "In them (the heavens) hath He set a tabernacle for the sun."

There is no truth within the pages of God's blessed Book more certain than the fact that God is creating new heavens and a new earth, and the constellations of the new heavens are not made up of the physical stars which comprise the signs of the Zodiac, but of living stars of God's sons formed and fashioned into an order and image through which to influence creation and rule over all things. Beyond question this is the allegory proclaimed by the Lord to the prophet Isaiah, "And I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, THAT I HAY PLANT THE HEAVENS, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, THOU ART MY PEOPLE." (Isa. 51:16) In commenting on this instructive passage Ray Prinzing wrote: "When God has thoroughly planted His people in the heavenlies, they will be in a settled place, firmly secured by His grace, to DWELL IN HIM, established in His love and grace, no more to be lost or wandering in the emptiness of selfhood. 'But God...hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show (display) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.' (Eph. 2:4-7)

"Andrew Jukes brings out that this expanse above us is called 'heaven,' that is THE ARRANGER, so called, because this heaven, in ways above our thoughts, is the great agent in arranging everything, and that the word comes from the root 'to set or place.' And there is reference made to the effects ascribed to attraction, gravitation, etc. along with the repulsion, electricity, evaporation, and so on. While we are more acquainted with the effects, than understanding the underlying forces or power which cause these effects. Might also point out how the ancient Greeks derived their word THEOS for 'God,' from the word TO SET OR PLACE, for the same reasons. That HE is the DIVINE ARRANGER, PLACER. In His planting the heavens, God has purposed to bring into ONENESS WITH HIMSELF a people that shall become 'arrangers, placers,' that with Him they might establish His righteousness upon the earth. To be, as Paul brings out so very clearly, 'laborers together with God.' (I Cor. 3:9)

"Furthermore, as Paul pointed out, we are made to 'SIT TOGETHER,' or, literally, TO SIT DOWN WITH HIM in the heavenlies. There is a DIVINE PLACEMENT where we are FIXED in Him. Not running or wandering all over the heavens, roaming about here and there or causing havoc by the exercising of spiritual power where it ought not to be placed. We are not to be 'wandering stars' blazing across the sky in some brilliant display attracting attention, but we are to be placed in our fixed orbit, to be SEATED IN HIM--abiding in the calling wherewith we are called, to fulfill that for which we have been apprehended. God has a place for every one in His great purpose.

"Thus saith the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretcheth them out.' (Isa. 42:5) Note the word 'created' from the Hebrew BARA with a threefold meaning: to form, fashion, prepare. It covers the whole realm of processing from the initial forming, through the development, until it is fully prepared, brought forth a newly made finished product. Begun, continued, climaxed. And He does it all, as well as totally controlling the time element. That which we read of the vast cosmic order about us, is also applicable for this new spiritual order which is being prepared. 'The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; BY UNDERSTANDING hath He established (prepared) the heavens' (Prov. 3:19). Understanding, from the Hebrew TEBUNAH meaning: skillfulness, discretion, wisdom, understanding. What tremendous wisdom and care, what skill and glorious handiwork is revealed as He marks out, chooses, plans and prepares His elect to be PLANTED IN THE HEAVENLIES. Furthermore, we read, 'I, even MY HANDS, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.' (Isa. 45:12)

"He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. And the HEAVENS SHALL DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: for God is judge Himself.' (Ps. 50:4-6) Declare,--here we have a different Hebrew word from that used in 'The heavens declare the glory of God,' which is meant to recount, to tell with praise, or to celebrate. But now it is the Hebrew word NAGAD meaning: to be in front, thus, TO MANIFEST, by bringing to light, to declare, i.e. to solve, to explain an enigma. All the hidden secrets of His righteousness will be revealed through those whom HE has planted in the heavens. What a union, what a oneness with Him, that HE shares the mysteries of His righteousness with these processed ones, and then places them in position to declare that righteousness. Not just by words, not just by some form of preaching or teaching, but by their OWN TRUE STATE OF BEING. They, themselves, shall be all righteous, and thus become a living declaration of His righteousness. Words fail us to express the wonder of this glorious truth which begins to gleam in our spirit with hope and joy" --end quote.

Again I would emphasize the fact that the Psalmist establishes the position of the sun in the heavens. Of the heavens He says, "IN THEM hath He set A TABERNACLE FOR THE SUN." In the Old Testament as well as in the New, the glorious sun that lights our day is set as a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God. This fact is evidenced clearly by the prophet Malachi, who writes: "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." (Mal. 4:2) The sixtieth chapter of Isaiah contains some of the grandest poetry that was ever written in any tongue. The song of Israel's redemption and triumph in this chapter reaches its climax in these beautiful words: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God shall be thy glory. The sun shall no more go down, neither shall the moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." (Isa. 60:19-20) In exquisite words of wondrous promise, the beautiful future of the Lord's people is portrayed. In language surpassing mere human

vocabulary, the Lord, who is Jesus the Christ, is portrayed as the sun and the light of His people, and the everlasting light of His radiance is to shine upon the path of the nation, as they behold Christ in His unveiling. This thought is continued in John's description of the New Jerusalem, where the revelator says: "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23). How sublime is this truth of which we speak, and wondrous beyond articulation the knowledge that this mighty Sun, this glorious Christ is found WITHIN OUR SPIRIT. On the individual plane, is it not within the heavens of our own redeemed mind that God has set a tabernacle for the sun!

The shining constellations spreading across the enormous expanse of the heavens represent the Lord's dwelling place in the Kingdom of His new creation people. God has set a tabernacle for the Sun (Christ) in the heavens--in the midst of His star-sons. Other passages confirm this truth, such as Isa. 40:22, which states that the Lord "stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out AS A TENT TO DWELL IN." In the constellation of Sagittarius we find the Sign of Ara, which is the altar of the heavenly tabernacle. In fact, all of the symbolism of Israel's Tabernacle in the wilderness are found pictured in the signs of the Zodiac. Therefore, the heavens represent the Lord's spiritual tabernacle symbolically displayed. Travel back in our ancestral history, to that awesome day when Moses was given precise and explicit instructions by the Lord regarding the design and construction of the Tabernacle of His presence in the midst of His people. This "centerpiece" of the encampments of Israel was a tent, and it was within this tent that Jehovah made His presence known. It was this tent, this tabernacle in the midst of the congregation that the Most High filled with His glory. We are informed that "the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." (Ex. 40:38) How wonderful, how blessed this must have been! God arranged the order, the encampments of His people, and in the midst of them HE SET A TABERNACLE FOR HIS PRESENCE AND GLORY!

God has set a tabernacle or tent in the heavens in which the sun runs its course, a tabernacle speaking of a particular order and the sun's course denoting certain prescribed limits. Furthermore, the Lord states that its geometrical form is a CIRCUIT or circle, and this is further clarified in likening the sun to a strong man running a race which historically was normally done on a race track in the shape of a circle. "His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his CIRCUIT unto the ends of it." (Ps. 19:6) It is now concluded by leading astronomers that the sun, with the entire solar system, actually DOES move through space--it races, in fact, through the heavens at the tremendous speed of 600,000 miles per hour- and not in a straight path, but in such a gigantic circuit, or circle, that it requires over two million centuries to complete it. The sun's circuit IS from one end of the heavens to the other! What a wonderful book is the Bible! Long before astronomers discovered these things they were revealed to God's holy prophets by the Spirit.

God has set a circular tabernacle or circuit for the sun, indicating a certain work is to be accomplished within those prescribed limits. This is but a faint shadow of the reality established in the spiritual heavens, typified also in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. For example, the Tabernacle in the wilderness was of a certain size and shape for a specific work, carried forth by the priestly ministry appointed to it. As the High Priest made his ceremonial "rounds" in the tabernacle, moving in priestly function from the Outer Court to the Holy Place and finally into the Holiest of all and out again, so the sun in its heavenly tabernacle makes its circuit from one end of heaven to the other, all the while fulfilling day by day its illuminating and life-giving service.

Around the tabernacle were twelve tribes, each had a standard or ensign. If you walked around the tabernacle, passing through each of the twelve tribes, you would pass through twelve standards or ensigns. This parallels the twelve signs of the Zodiac, for the twelve ensigns of the twelve tribes of Israel correspond to the configurations of the twelve signs of the Zodiac in the heavens. The signs of the Zodiac are the circuit the sun passes through as it moves through the skies. "Tabernacle" means tent or house, hence the signs of the Zodiac are called the "houses" of the sun, because in them He moves, dwells, and fulfills all His circuit. Hear me! The sun, moon and stars are for SIGNS; Jesus the Sun of righteousness is a SIGN; and the sons of God are likened unto the stars and are for SIGNS and wonders. YOU ARE THE PEOPLE THE SUN (SON) OF GOD PASSES THROUGH UNTIL HIS DAY IS ACCOMPLISHED AND HIS PURPOSES FULFILLED IN ALL CREATION. The heavens are the people of the Spirit. The study of the Zodiac is the study of the "house" in the heavens. The sun goes through each of the signs of the Zodiac AND THE SAINTS ARE THOSE SIGNS. This spiritual race is the circuit, and HE is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the goal and the

prize. As the Lord arises upon His people and completes His circuit in the heavens, so He accomplishes His plans and purposes concerning ourselves and the universe. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, but is always moving ahead through His circuit, working and moving toward His ultimate purpose, the redemption and restoration of all back into Himself again. And just as "there is nothing hid from the heat" (Ps. 19:6) of the sun, so the Lord ministers to His people in compassion, faithfulness, and all-sufficiency. The sun of heaven is the Lord. The light of heaven is the divine truth, and its heat the divine love; both proceeding from the Lord as a sun. Our omniscient Father sees ALL of your circumstance and need, precious friend of mine, and He will not pass you by without tenderly touching your life with His redeeming, delivering, healing, quickening, restoring rays.

By observing the course of the sun through the signs of the Zodiac, we can understand our current, daily walk, with the outworking of God's processing's in us and in creation. There are various "houses" in God's great house into which and through which the Sun moves on its circuit. Is it not true that there are many mansions, many levels of spiritual life and attainment in God's great Kingdom? Have we not identified with various of these spiritual realms in our forward walk in God? Some of us have camped for a season in the "salvation" house, then in the "deliverance" house, the "grace" house, the "faith" house, the "Holy Spirit" house, the "gifts" house, the "New Testament Church Order" house, the "death to self" house, the "sonship" house, the "reconciliation" house, etc. The Sun (Son) ascended and moved forward in its circuit through each of these houses! We experienced the glory of His arising there, the symbolism of the sign was fulfilled within us spiritually, and there followed a true and glorious ministration of His life from each of these realms to creation--and there still is! He is running His race as a strong man, starting from the distant skies and racing through all the expanse of the heavens, just as we are experiencing Him in this world. Thank God for the tabernacle for the Sun, praise Him for each and every "house" of this tabernacle, how we rejoice in His progressive circuit through the heavens of OUR EXPERIENCE!

The reality that lies behind what is commonly known today as horoscopes and behind the common signs of the Zodiac is an original revelation designed by God -- a revelation not of pagan mythology or superstitious powers., but of the wonderful truths of God's grand and glorious plan of the ages through His anointed Christ, written in the very stars of heaven--this fact being attested to by the faithful testimony of the scriptures "**which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.**" (II Tim. 3:15)

In these twelve celestial signs we have enshrined for us like jewels in a velvet case. the twelve great heavenly laws or principles which we are to pass through and master while we walk our foreordained path on this planet. Each one of the twelve signs embodies a Kingdom of Heaven principle taught in symbol and ritual under the Old Testament administration. It points to a wonderful progression as we begin in Genesis with the promised seed of the woman (Virgo) and end in the book of Revelation with LEO, the conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah! just as the sun passes through each of the twelve signs of the Zodiac in the course of a year, so must we experientially partake of the reality pictured by each sign in our progressive transformation... into HIS likeness.

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 4

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART FOUR

THE DWELLERS IN THE HEAVENS
REIGNING FROM THE HEAVENS

The natural sun is the brightest luminary in the natural heavens. And to help us in correctly interpreting the meaning of the prophetic sun, Gen. 1:16 informs us that God made "the greater light to RULE the day, and the lesser light to RULE the night: He made the stars also." Here we first have the idea expressed of both the sun and the moon being RULERS. Then we find that God, the supreme Ruler, is called in the Word a "Sun." "For the Lord thy God is a SUN and a shield" (Ps. 84:11). Also, our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, is in Mal. 4:2 called "the SUN of righteousness." He rules. Furthermore we find, in reference to men, that **II Sam. 23:3-4** reads, "He that RULETH over men...shall be as the light of the morning, when the SUN riseth." And in **II Sam. 21:17** we find David the king called "the LIGHT of Israel." This same meaning is found in Kings 8:19 where we read: "Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David His servant's sake as He promised him to give him always A LIGHT." This is exactly the same promise that we find in **Jer. 33:17** where the Lord says, "David shall never want a man to SIT UPON THE THRONE of the house of Israel." David's offspring were to be the "suns" or RULERS of Israel, the source of light, influence, and direction for the nation. In Mat. 13:43 we find, concerning saints who are to be Kings and Priests and rule with Christ (Rev. 3:21; 5:9-10), that they are compared to the sun: "Then shall the righteous SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the Kingdom of their Father." Of these same ruling saints Jesus says, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations and he shall RULE them with a rod of iron..." Then He hastily adds: "And I will give him the MORNING STAR" (Rev. 2: 26-28). That is, "I will give him power over the nation's rulership and I will give him the POSITION AS THE MORNING STAR to give direction to mankind." Now consider these meaningful words of Daniel the prophet wherein he foretells the manifestation of the sons of God in the end of the age: "And they that be wise shall SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; and they that turn many to righteousness as the STARS forever" (Dan. 12:3). Then we find in Dan. 4:26, "the HEAVENS DO RULE." God's heaven is HIS throne. "Heaven I-S M-Y T-H-R-O-N-E" (Isa. 66:1). Heaven in the spiritual terminology of prophecy is the seat where the SUN, the mighty God sits and RULES. And as God's heaven is His throne, so the prophetic heavens include all the governmental realm THROUGH WHICH GOD RULES, and He is LORD OF ALL. Individually, the SPIRIT WITHIN YOU is God's SUN of dominion in your personal universe.

Earthly tongues and natural images can but dimly describe things that belong to heavenly realms, but this great truth of the stars being RULERS is also set forth in Job 38:31-33. "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth (the twelve signs of the Zodiac) in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of the heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?" Here the almighty Creator speaks of the "sweet influences" of Pleiades, the "bands" of Orion, the "seasons" of Mazzaroth the "ordinances" of the heavens, and the "dominion" of these constellations in the earth! Each of these powers and influences of the constellations over the earth is indicated by God Himself as FACT! The truth of the constellations of the heavens includes many wonderful examples of that which is taking place in the realm of the Spirit. The stars of the heavens exist in a realm where God is absolute Sovereign and Lord, where His life prevails. Therefore, in their highest meaning, in their spiritual meaning, the stars are used to represent HEAVENLY, SPIRITUAL RULE AND DOMINION. Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to behold the wondrous truth that God's elect sons ARE THE CONSTELLATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL HEAVENS, THE LUMINARIES AND RULERS IN GOD'S SKY, of which the signs of the Zodiac, sprinkled by the hand of God across the night sky are but the dim type.

There is no truth within the pages of God's blessed Book more certain than the fact that God is creating a new heavens and a new earth, and the constellations of the new heavens are not made up of the physical stars which comprise the signs of the Zodiac, but of living stars of God's sons formed and fashioned into an order

and image through which to influence creation and rule all things. Beyond question this is the allegory proclaimed by the Lord to the prophet Isaiah, "And I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, THAT I MAY PLANT THE HEAVENS, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, THOU ART MY PEOPLE" (Isa. 51: 16). The sons of God are the promised STAR-SEED of the Kingdom. "Do all things without murmuring and disputing," Says the apostle, "that ye may become blameless and harmless, SONS OF GOD, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and darkened generation, AMONG WHOM YE SHINE AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD" (Phil. 2: 15). The word here translated "lights" is the Greek word PHOSTER, meaning luminary, light container, or simply star. The sons of God, then, are the STARS of God to shine in this darkened world. In the same wonderful way that the heavenly constellations of the signs of the Zodiac rule by cosmic energy the men of earth, so do the heavenly, spiritual sun, moon and stars rule over the earth realm by the spiritual authority and power of the Kingdom of God. The physical Zodiac in the natural heavens of the material universe is but a faint shadow of the true and spiritual and heavenly Zodiac composed of the blessed Sun of righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ; and the moon, which is the bride of Christ and the Queen of heaven; and the brightness of the stars constituting that vast family of the sons and daughters of the Most High.

The inspired Psalmist penned these words of beauty and truth: "The heavens declare the glory of Cod; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. IN THEM HATH HE SET A TABERNACLE FOR THE SUN. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof" (Ps. 19:1, 4-6). The shining constellations spreading across the enormous expanse of the heavens represent the Lord's dwelling place in the Kingdom of His new creation people. Cod has set a tabernacle for the, Sun (Christ, Spirit) in the heavens- in the midst of His star-sons. The position of the sons of God among the stars is revealed in the fact that they are declared to be citizens of heaven, or as Moffat so beautifully translates, "We are a colony of heaven" (Phil. 3:20); their home center or citizenship havens been moved there from the earth. Their names would, therefore, appear only among the celestial beings, in any true census of the universe. These are the same morning stars which sang and the sons of God who shouted for joy in that long ago when the foundations of the earth were laid (Job 38:4-7).

All the' signs of the Zodiac are placed in a massive circle in the hemisphere. The path of the sun passes through one of these signs (houses) each month. This shows forth His glorious plan of redemption as the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH HEALING IN Ills WINGS passes through the heavens. The sun is but a type of the true Son of God. He, as THE HEAD of this GLORIOUS SONSHIP COMPANY, is coming out of His chamber in the bosom of the Father to run a race on the great race-track of the heavens. He passes through every sign (house), seeking His elect from the four winds of heaven, heralding the rise, of their influence and rule in the heavenly Kingdom of God. I hear a Voice, my brother, my sister, bidding me to distinguish between the "dwellers on earth" and the "dwellers in heaven." "Therefore rejoice, YE HEAVENS, and YE THAT DWELL IN THEM. Woe to the INHABITERS OF THE EARTH... for the devil is come down unto you..." (Rev. 12:12). In the thirteenth chapter of Revelation we are told that the "dwellers in heaven" are, the, TABERNACLE OF GOD, which is the tabernacle for the Sun. The tabernacle of God is that blessed company of the overcomers- the sons of God. Ah, YOU, precious saints of God, ARE THE PEOPLE THE SUN (SON) OF GOD PASSES THROUGH UNTIL HIS DAY IS ACCOMPLISHED AND HIS PURPOSES FULFILLED IN ALL CREATION.

Twinkle, twinkle little star,
How I wonder what you are;
Far above the earth so high,
Like a diamond in the sky...

Ah- you are a son of God,
Once to walk on earthen sod;
Now transformed by His great hand
To reign forever o'er the land.

THE DWELLERS IN THE HEAVENS

The revelation of Mazzaroth (Job 38:31-33) is the revelation of the power and glory of the heavens--God's spiritual Zodiac, His sons and daughters of LIGHT, REVELATION AND POWER. Heaven does not have a present significance in the mind and spirit and understanding of vast numbers of God's people. Somehow the churches relegate heaven as an aftermath, something beyond this life, the category that awaits us after death. And that is to the great detriment of the church. The church is, by definition, a heavenly institution on earth and in time--NOW. Those who dwell in heaven (spirit) are required to bring the dimension of heaven into their present experience and expression. So if we save the word heaven for the future we are striking a death-blow at the very nature and character of the Kingdom of Heaven and God's purpose in His people as a heavenly people presently in time. We need to become alive to heaven; heaven needs to become vital; it must be made real; it needs to have substance within our hearts, our lives, our speech, our thoughts, our convictions, and our manifestation. In a word, we need to be made HEAVENLY MINDED!

Everything in the world militates against this kind of consciousness in the world. Everything in modern civilization, everything in the scientific, educational, medical, industrial and social institutions of the world is calculated against heaven, against eternity, against SPIRIT. They want to delude the masses of mankind to believe that this is it--this temporal, spacial, physical and visible world is the sum and substance of REALITY. That is the wisdom of the world, the wisdom of this age that undergirds and permeates the entire kingdom of corruption and death. The world operates on the supposition and premise that everything of value is now, in time, material, the things that are seen, tangible, felt and held, and that when this life passes it is over. Therefore, eat, drink and be merry; therefore fornicate; therefore aggrandize; therefore grasp; therefore get all you can get and enjoy all you can enjoy, for this is all there is. And that is a LIE! The world is living in a lie. And the church world is living in another (and just as serious) LIE. The churches tell us that heaven is a future hope--beyond the grave. They understand not that heaven and spirit are synonymous--you cannot have SPIRIT without having HEAVEN. And the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS W-I-T-H-I-N Y-O-U!

What is wanting is a people that are in consciousness so in the heavenly dimension now, presently, are so alive to the things that are eternal, the things that are SPIRIT, that even without them speaking this explicitly, their very presence exudes the atmosphere of life and the fragrance of eternity. God is after a people, a heavenly and celestial race, set in time. "...and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show..." (Eph. 2:6-7). This is meaningless prattle unless the Spirit opens our understanding. We have been warned by the carnal minded of this age about the danger of being so "heavenly minded" until we are "no earthly good." That is what the world says, and what should you expect from the world but to controvert and to take the wisdom of God and so distort and pervert it until it appears ridiculous and absurd to have mankind believe exactly the reverse! But these words are being written to show that we have no choice, no option as to whether we will be heavenly minded or not; for the truth is, IF WE ARE NOT HEAVENLY MINDED IT IS I-M-P-O-S-S-I-B-L-E TO BE OF ANY EARTHLY GOOD! It is only as a power from above reaches down and touches earth that it can be raised and quickened, transformed from the image of the earthly into the image of the heavenly. And Paul, the apostle of apostles, through whom the sacred secrets of God were revealed by the grace of God, defying the empty and inane cavillings of men and their fruitless doctrines and meaningless traditions, admonished those who would be the sons and daughters of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the HEAVENLY CALLING... if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are ABOVE, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things ABOVE, NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Heb. 3: 1; Col.3: 1-3).

It is when we are quickened to the realm of SPIRIT, to the heavenly and celestial, to that bright glory world where alone can be perceived eternal truth and reality, that we hear our heavenly Father speaking from the throne of eternity, long before the ages were formed and before cosmos appeared out of the wastes of chaos, there in the glory and wonder of His presence, from out of the depths of His omniscient mind, His purpose for the ages, the dispensations, the worlds, and for eternity itself was laid down upon the infinite blue-print, plan by plan, purpose by purpose, age by age, so that each eonian purpose and every divine decree shall be guided and controlled by His omnipotent hand to grow and mature from glory to glory until His vast family of beloved sons shall deliver up to Him all things in perfection that God Himself might be all in all. The very idea that one could in some way become so "heavenly minded" that he would be "no earthly good" reveals the incredible darkness and deluded stupidity of the carnal mind and its pitiful inability to comprehend things that belong to heavenly realms. Oh that the wisdom of man which is foolishness with God might be torn from our hearts that

we might see beyond the mists and theories of time and tradition right into the very heart of the eternal where is found the infinite wisdom that teaches us how it is that until one becomes truly HEAVENLY MINDED he CANNOT be of any EARTHLY GOOD! The fact is, the only reality in the universe is S-P-I-R-I-T. The things which are seen are TEMPORAL, says the Lord, and the things which are not seen are ETERNAL. This is '~ wisdom of God in a mystery. Until one learns how to live and have his being OUT OF SPIRIT, out of the invisible realm, out of his very innermost being, he will continue to be held captive by the corruption of the flesh and dwell in the shadow of death.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES in Christ," the inspired apostle wrote. In the Old Testament the blessings of the people of God were temporal and physical in nature. They were seen in financial prosperity, the multiplication of the herds and the sheep and the goats, in many children, in servants and in wealth. That was because they were a people of another age and God had to make His blessings visible to their eyes so that their faith could comprehend and grasp it. In the New Testament we move to a higher plane and see that our blessings that God bestows upon us are primarily spiritual blessings in heavenly places. We might have physical blessings in this world, and God does pour them out upon us in the overflow--He does help with many physical needs of finances, healing, and answers to prayer, but all these things have a problem. They are like that gourd on the vine under which Jonah sat in Nineveh! A worm came up and ate the gourd and it rotted and corrupted. So it is with all the physical blessings of the physical life. They all have a worm in them and when the day of withering is at hand, soon they shall have corrupted. When we face the blasts of eternity, if we have nothing but the temporal blessings of this world, we shall face those blasts naked.

He who writes these lines testifies to those who read them that all who live after the flesh, out of the flesh, and for the flesh are earth dwellers, and woe! unto them that dwell upon the earth, for the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abideth forever. All who by faith live after the spirit, out of the spirit, and for the spirit have now become PART OF THE ETERNAL. Neither can they die anymore. Death's cruel sting, filled with its venom of sin, has passed away, and victory has been snatched from the yawning jaws of the tomb. We have passed from the realm where all is death to the realm where all is life. Our citizenship in this present age has been revoked and we have had a new citizenship conferred upon us from the eternal and undying realm. And just as the stars influence and control the destinies of earth, so does the power of the SPIRIT quicken and metamorphose all natural things and even our mortal bodies as we live out of the high and eternal realm of the Spirit. We are not citizens of earth; we are the true SPACE PEOPLE. Neither are we to be governed by the laws of earth. We are to be governed by the laws of heaven, for we are citizens of that realm. In the realm of heaven there is life more abundant, incorruption and immortality. There is fullness of joy, peace, love and righteousness. There is no lack of anything, for all is out of God (spirit) and GOD IS ALL IN ALL. Even the natural world is blessed and made fruitful and quickened and raised when it comes under the rule of the heavens. Jesus was showing us this principle when He fed the five thousand from five loaves and two small fish, when He turned the water into wine, when He sent Peter to catch a fish in whose mouth was clenched the money to pay their taxes, and when He healed the sick and raised the dead to life again. Jesus lived out of spirit, He knew God the Spirit as the source and substance of all things, He knew the power and reality of the Father who dwelt within Him, and all supply came out of the realm of spirit rather than from the limited and perishable capacity of the flesh.

When the day of Pentecost was fully come, and the Spirit was shed forth, Peter stood up with the eleven. Consider the scene that day! There was Peter, a fisherman, a little man, an uncouth and apparently inconsequential man. But on that day of the outpouring of the Spirit, when he rose to testify and proclaim that Jesus was resurrected and ascended to the heavens, this little man was in a position higher far than the most exalted rank of earth. The greatest and highest on this earth could not compare with Peter and those standing with him. Why were they so high? How could such as them be so exalted? it was because at the very moment their spirits were quickened by HIS SPIRIT they were in the ascended Christ. They were not men on this earth; they were men in the heavens. By the power of the Spirit these disciples were resurrected people, new creation people, and people in the heavens. They transcended everything on this earth. The high priest, the rulers, the kings and the emperor were all under their feet. They surpassed the highest rank of man because they were seated in the heavens in God's Christ. They were living in Him, walking in Him, talking in Him, manifesting out of Him. They were living on this high plane and in this exalted realm of the Spirit.

Living, experiencing, and expressing out of the heavenlies is not a matter of geo-graphics, not a question of physical location at all. It is a matter of experience and consciousness. Our citizenship IS in heaven. We do not move in and out of heavenly realms at our whim. But according to the positive declaration of the scripture, we exist constantly in the heavenlies. This is a state of constant spiritual existence, but because our outer man is still in this flesh realm, we are not always AWARE or CONSCIOUS of the greater privileges of our heavenly existence. We must continually heed the admonition of scripture: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the RENEWING OF YOUR MIND" (Rom. 12:2). Transformed by the renewing of the mind! Almighty Father! what words are these which instruct us to be transformed by the way we THINK and PERCEIVE! I am sure that as the Holy Spirit illumines these significant words to your understanding you will find them among the most revealing and deeply meaningful and most powerful and life changing of all inspirations. In the beautiful words of the chorus, the Lord bids us...

**Come into this place--Ascension,
Where no death can enter in.
My own life through resurrection,
Qualifies this Corporate Man.**

**AM ready now to speak as
I am righteous evermore--
New Ascension brings authority,
And I've opened up your door.**

-- Charlotte Torango

REIGNING FROM THE HEAVENS

The heavens are the realms of spirit where the Lord now rules with absolute authority and dominion. How do we know this to be true? Because of the words of Jesus, when He taught us to pray, "Our Father...Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN." These words lead us to the certainty that GOD'S WILL IS DONE IN THE HEAVENS; and, if you can discover a realm or a person anywhere where God's will is perfectly done; such is a heavenly place and a heavenly person. The will of the Father is being done in heaven, in the realm of spirit, and it is our expressed desire that His will shall also be done in earth, the realm of the physical, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. There is no sin in heaven, for the will of God is done in heaven, and where the will of God is done there is no sin. There is no foul, loathsome disease in heaven eating away at the vitals, weakening, crippling and destroying the life, for the will of God is done in heaven, and where the will of God is done there is no sickness. There is no sorrow nor pain in heaven, for the will of God is done in heaven, and where the will of God is done there is no grief. There is no death in heaven, no crepe on the door-knob, no winding funeral processions, no weeping and wailing of heartbroken, disconsolate mothers, fathers, and children, no silent, waxen forms lowered into the cold stillness of earth, for the will of God is done in heaven, and where the will of God is done there is no death. My Father and my God! Guide me to that place where Thy will shall be done in me upon this earth, as Thy will is done in heaven! The heavens declare the GLORY of God, for the heavens are His eternal domain. His throne occupies the heavens, and the earth is His footstool (Acts 7:49). Our Lord Jesus Christ rules all the heavens having ascended "far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. 4:10). Throughout the vast and boundless expanse of the heavens, the will of God is expressed and fulfilled. How our hearts cry, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven!"

God rules and God speaks from heaven. If you will but listen, you can hear (God speaking from heaven, even the Kingdom of Heaven that is within you). There is a secret to hearing His voice. It will not be heard above the excited babble of the multitude. He will not boom and thunder to drown out other voices that clamor to be heard. He waits until all other voices are hushed and you have put away from your heart and mind all your own striving, and the uproar of the throng that shouts for your attention has completely died away.

You must become insensible to the demands of all other voices and hear only the Voice of the Holy Spirit speaking out of your spirit. "Be still and know that I am God." When your soul is agitated to turmoil and your flesh demands with insatiable desire that its claims be met, and the outer world evokes utter confusion and

despair with its myriad exasperating problems, it is time for silence, repentance, and listening to the voice of Christ.

God is always speaking. In the February, 1990 issue of THE LIVING WORD Paul Mueller wrote the following words which carry this truth home powerfully to the heart. "The heavens declare the glory of God because God speaks from that realm and sends forth His word which is heard through all the earth, and to the ends of the world. Within the last few months, God spoke words of freedom, liberty and deliverance from His heavenly sanctuary. Those words of liberty and freedom were sent into the hearts of millions of East Europeans, causing them to send up a shout and demand for freedom that is bringing down the whole communistic system. And what did God do to bring an end to the oppressive governments of Soviet domination? He simply sent a word out of His heavenly sanctuary, and the work was done. The Lord accomplished this unbelievable task without the help of man and with the simplicity of the power of His Spirit. When God speaks from His heavenly sanctuary, that message goes out to find lodging in the hearts of those to whom the message was directed. Thus, when the Psalmist described this heavenly, spiritual activity, he said, 'Day unto day pours forth speech, and night unto night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes forth through all the earth and their words to the ends of the world (Ps. 19:2-4, Smith Goodspeed). The Lord's message of liberty and freedom shall accomplish the will of God, according to His omnipotent purpose. There is no speech, nor words, nor voice of man, yet His message is received to the ends of the world. The Lord thus bypasses all human instruments to fulfill His word. Just as His word cannot fail, so the heavens cannot fail to send forth that word with all the life and energy of the realm of the Spirit.

"God's word, sent forth from His heavenly sanctuary, cannot fail to accomplish His purpose. If He wants to eliminate the whole communistic society, He will do so by simply sending a word of liberty into the hearts of the multitudes, just as He has done. Mighty armies of hundreds of thousands could not have accomplished what the Lord has done in a few months, though they might have fought for many years in constant struggle and intense warfare. The blood of multiplied thousands of men has been spilled over the world in two bitter world wars for far less than this. Instead of bringing deliverance, those wars resulted in greater oppression and bondage. The very fact that the communistic empire is falling should cause every child of God to renew their faith and trust in God, and to believe for the fulfillment of the remainder of all His holy word of truth.

"These are truly exciting days. This is a day like no other in the history of the world. God has taken to Himself His great power and is reigning in all the universe. This is the day of the Lord. It is the very day of which the prophet prophesied, when he said, '**For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come**' (Isa. 63:4). It is the day of the Lord's vengeance upon all disobedience and unrighteousness, and it is also the time designated as 'the year of My redeemed.' Just as the Lord spoke a word of liberty and freedom from His heavenly sanctuary, and sent that word to the oppressed peoples of Eastern Europe, so He will speak a word from His heavenly sanctuary that will impart new life to His elect, thus raising us up in resurrection life to be transformed thereby. All He needs to do is speak a word, and it will be done. This truth is being demonstrated now before our very eyes as He dismantles the communist system. And when He speaks that word of Life to His elect that word will not fail to accomplish the divine purpose, so that all of us shall be changed.

"I hereby charge all who read these lines to remember what our omnipotent Lord has already done in Eastern Europe. Remember that He has sent a word out of His heavenly temple that has reverberated throughout the world, and has brought down a portion of the Soviet empire. The fact that the Lord has begun to dismantle man's kingdoms should encourage us to believe for this complete dominion over all things everywhere in the fullness of time, including His dominion over death. 'The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. HE SHALL CALL TO THE HEAVENS FROM ABOVE, AND TO THE EARTH, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. AND THE HEAVENS SHALL DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: for God is judge Himself. Selah. (Ps. 50: 1-6).

"We will learn a great truth when we learn, with full understanding, that the Lord accomplishes His purposes by speaking a word from His heavenly temple. He spoke from heaven, 'and called the earth from the rising of the

sun unto the going down thereof.'

The Lord shall shine out of Zion. How shall He shine out of Zion? By the effulgent glory of the manifestation of His Spirit. When the Lord chooses to judge His people, He sends forth the spirit of judgment by calling 'to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.' When He has concluded His purpose in the judgment of His saints, 'the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is judge Himself.' Thus, we are righteous, not because of our good works, but because the Lord spoke forth His righteousness into our hearts to make us righteous. Just a word from His heavenly sanctuary is all it takes to make us righteous or to accomplish anything else" --end quote.

In 1983 the Lord spoke to me in a dream. In the dream I was standing on a wide boulevard at a busy intersection in a large city in the Soviet Union. In my consciousness I presumed the city to be Moscow. At this intersection was a large vacant lot, and erected on this lot was a tall pole at the top of which were affixed crucifixes and religious emblems of the type used by the Russian Orthodox Church. I stood in transfixed wonder, astonished that in a nation ruled by an atheistic government which harshly suppressed outward expressions of religion; this religious symbol should be planted in such a prominent place with no connection to any nearby church edifice. As I marveled, I turned and saw to my left a vast throng of people coming--marching down the boulevard. The street was completely flooded with this crowd of demonstrators, and those at the head of the parade held out in front of them a great number of crucifixes and religious emblems identical with those on the pole. Again I was amazed that in an atheistic nation where public demonstrations of religion were forbidden, this multitude of people should be uninhibitedly parading their religious symbols through the thoroughfares. At that moment I started across the side street, but the demonstrators turned toward me and I found it necessary to run in order to keep from being trampled.

Immediately the scene changed. I was in the same city, but found myself in a store-front building. There was nothing in the large room where I stood except a number of folding chairs. I was aware that this building was used by certain believers who met for prayer, counsel, preparation and planning; for from this place teams of ministry were sent forth through out the length and breadth of the Soviet Union. Suddenly I was transferred to a small room at the back of the building. The room was furnished with only a single cot with a small table at its head, upon which lay a book with a dark purple cover, and embossed across the front in gold letters was this title: THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY. The next scene was back in the larger room where several people had congregated. I knew that a meeting was soon to begin, with prayer and a strategy session for sending out the ministry teams. In connection with this activity I was shown a massive intervention of God's power accompanied by a dramatic move of the Holy Spirit across the Soviet Union, by which the nation would be stirred with the manifestation of the glory of God. With this electrifying knowledge planted within my consciousness, I awoke upon awaking the interpretation of the dream flooded my spirit. It was clear that a new condition of RELIGIOUS LIBERTY was to come to the people of the Soviet Union. Remember- this was 1983. At that time Yuri Andropov was in power and Mikhail Gorbachev was unknown to the Western world. We had not yet heard the words GLASNOST and PERESTROIKA. The Spirit revealed to me that the advent of religious liberty would be followed by an unprecedented move of the Holy Spirit which would shake the nation to its very foundations. It seemed to me a thing neither incredible nor impossible--though not explicitly revealed- that this move of God would effect the demise of Marxism in Russia and that! breaking up of the atheistic communist malignancy. I was made to understand that the book -- THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY- indicated that American ministries were destined to play a pivotal role in the move of the Spirit in Russia, in terms of ministry, and the impact of the Kingdom of God.

In 1984, first at a Convention in Daytona Beach, Florida, I commenced to proclaim the word the Lord had given me; following that in meetings in El Paso, Texas and in other parts of the country. Beginning in March, 1985 with the ascendancy of Gorbachev to power, reports began to come, and continue to come, to us of actual changes taking place in the Soviet Union involving increased religious freedoms, release of most religious prisoners, public harassment relaxed, thousands of new churches opening, the Lord has opened doors--- tremendous avenues for the Gospel. Teaching services in Soviet churches are now diverted to evangelistic messages in deference to the masses of unbelievers (most first-time attendees) flooding the meetings. Invited by friends or attracted by a printed invitation, many Soviet people come to churches seeking an answer to their great spiritual hunger. Evangelical churches in the Soviet Union are filled with new inquirers, and many newcomers are converted to Christ. Most have dramatic and emotional salvation experiences- all are life-

changing. Excitement permeates Soviet churches as believers have the joy of leading unbelievers --people who have never prayed before in their lives- to the Lord. And there is a very significant revival in the cities, especially among the young.

Late in 1989 as I watched the NBC Evening News, suddenly- THERE IT WAS! The reporter was giving a report from Moscow. Down the broad Avenue I saw them coming...a vast throng, literally hundreds of Christian believers marching on foot...and at the forefront of the crowd strode the Russian Orthodox Priests holding out the crucifixes and icons- the exact scene I had witnessed in my dream six years prior! I shouted through the house to my wife, "Honey, come, look! That's it! There is the procession I saw in my dream!" But--much that is happening in Russia today is taking place within the precincts of Babylon. The sovereign move of God in miracle working power that the Lord showed me in 1983 HAS NOT YET BEGUN- but it looms on the horizon. Without a doubt, strange, unforeseen events are taking place in that land. The groundwork is being laid. The preparation is in progress. The stage is being set. And regardless of what events, positive or negative, may yet transpire, the mighty God, in due time, will send His word from the heavens and great shall be the sound of abundance of rain. The truth is- throughout the ages, just when the opposition seemed too formidable--when all seemed hopeless- GOD stepped in! God has stepped in the Soviet Union. Daniel prophesied of an hour such as this when he interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream. He saw the final collapse of all world governments- CRUSHED BY A STONE CUT OUT OF A MOUNTAIN WITHOUT HANDS- rolling out of the eternal cosmos- crushing the clay feet and toes of the great image, and becoming a Kingdom which fills the whole earth. Our God is rolling as this great stone over Eastern Europe and Russia. The Russian leader is but a pawn in God's hand- he is doing what the mighty God is making him do, just as God stirred the tent of king Cyrus (Ezra 1:1). God is crushing the governments into powder. The clay is crumbling! God is opening the doors, pulling down all the walls, crushing the curtain- in preparation for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon ALL FLESH. The word of the Lord is being fulfilled before our very eyes, **"And the Lamb SHALL OVERCOME THEM" (Rev. 17: 14).**

The sons of God are soon to arise on the world scene. It will be MORE than revival this time, my beloved, IT WILL BE THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITH POWER! There is yet another move of the Spirit and work of God that transcends by far anything that has ever been seen or known. We are nearing the hour of the manifestation of the sons of God. The long, long awaited liberation from the bondage of sin, sorrow and decay is near at hand. The greater works which Jesus, our elder brother, told us of are soon to begin on the earth. The hour is at hand when the GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDER and the enduring Kingdom of God which shall never be destroyed shall consume and destroy forever all other kingdoms. The sons shall reign in the power and authority of the Spirit over all dominions from pole to pole and from sea to sea, and all nations shall know and serve the Lord. There shall be peace on earth and goodwill to men, with justice and judgment and equity and LIFE ABUNDANT FOR ALL.

Even now God's apprehended ones, His heavenly and spiritual constellations of star-sons, are reigning from the heavens of the Spirit. Through prayer and the spoken word the satanic influence over men and nations has been broken and the heavens opened and the Spirit poured out from on high. How we cry out to be participators in the outflow of HIS LIFE! The celestial influence of God's star-sons over affairs on earth is graphically illustrated in an experience shared some years ago by Ralph Mahoney. He related that "a missionary friend of mine was carrying on a ministry of literature evangelism in a little town situated on the border of Uruguay and Brazil. He had been ministering in Uruguay for some time and was much concerned that the people had been so unresponsive to the Gospel. His experience and ministry in Brazil had been quite limited but he heard the stories from other missionaries of thousands of people turning to Christ each month. Sweeping revival had transformed many cities of Brazil. He was puzzled why he wasn't having similar results in Uruguay. The main street of this little town sat right on the border of the two countries with the international boundary cutting right through the center of the main street. No one paid much attention to the border as this was a rather insignificant rural area. Neither country restrained the people from crossing back and forth.

"My missionary friend was on the Uruguayan side of the main street offering attractive gospel leaflets to the Saturday morning shoppers. As usual, they would refuse or, if accepting the literature, might discard it a few steps down the street. Mid-morning he crossed over to the Brazilian side of the main street and began offering the same literature to the shoppers there. To his amazement, the people eagerly accepted the gospel leaflets and would often pause to start reading them before moving on down the boardwalk. Thinking that perhaps his

mind was "playing tricks" on him, he passed back to the Uruguayan side of the street. The people still showed little or no interest. With a non-committal attitude they might accept the literature to discard it a short time later.

"He thought, 'I am going to test this.' He offered literature to a woman who refused the tract. Immediately after, she crossed to the Brazilian side of the street and began walking slowly past the windows of the stores casually observing the items for sale. The missionary, noticing this, walked a half block ahead in the direction she was moving and to his amazement, when he offered the same gospel leaflet, the woman eagerly took it and thanked him with several enthusiastic 'Gracias! Gracias!' This process was repeated several times with the same results each time it was tested. As the missionary pondered and prayed about this phenomenon, the Lord brought back to his mind an incident that had taken place in Argentina some years before when, as a teacher at a Bible School, he was part of an extended intercessory prayer ministry that had resulted in the spiritual release of that nation. The weeks of intense crying and intercessory tears culminated in a prophetic proclamation, 'Weep no more, the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed. The STRONG MAN of Argentina hath been BOUND. In this country you shall know that your God reigns. '"

Through faith and prayer and prophetic decree the STRONG MAN'S influence over Argentina had been broken, and the nation was released for a massive response to the Gospel and the power of God. Ralph Mahoney continues, "Great healing and miracle crusades packed the largest stadium in the country (seating capacity over 200,000) and in the cities everywhere people were responding by the thousands to the invitation to receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour. But Uruguay had not known this 'purging of the heavens' of the covering of darkness. Here, ten years after the great Argentine revival, people were still unresponsive to the Gospel. Meantime Brazil had also had mighty sweeping visitations of the Holy Spirit with God's power and glory displayed in almost every sector of the nation. The heavens over Brazil had been opened. Under the release from the covering of darkness the people in Brazil found themselves responsive to the good news about Jesus. This, concluded the missionary, was the reason for the great difference in the people on one side of the street from the other. In crossing that street they were passing out from under the covering of darkness in Uruguay into a country which had experienced, in part, the removing of this covering." --end quote.

Can you comprehend, dear reader of these lines, what effect you can have upon creation by REIGNING FROM THE HEAVENS? There is no need to board a great airliner and fly to far-away nations with strange-sounding names and quaint customs in order to bless the world. I have never set foot on the soil of the Soviet Union, yet I do not doubt for one instant that the declarations of God's word through my mouth aided in some mysterious and divine way the amazing events that are unfolding in that land. The apostle Paul instructed the young Timothy, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, SUPPLICATIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, AND GIVING OF THANKS be made for A-L-L M-E-N... for this is good and acceptable ~n the sight of God our Saviour; who WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a RANSOM FOR A-L-L, to be testified (proven, demonstrated, fulfilled) IN DUE TIME" (I Tim. 2:1-6).

You will note that the command to pray for all men is rooted in the fact that God W-I-L-L HAVE A-L-L MEN TO BE SAVED. The prayers of the saints! Prayer, precious friend of mine, is not a useless exercise; it is part of God's cosmic purpose. I don't pretend to understand it, but when Jesus was going away He said, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name, from now on you will ask the Father in My name, and whatever you ask the Father I will do it." Ah, we have missed the importance of prayer in the redemptive and reconstructive and restorative purposes of God! Our prayers ARE important! Don't ask me to explain the mystery of the apparatus, but they are important. You'll find yourself praying, you'll find yourself desiring to pray, and that's the Holy Spirit urging you to do what is necessary to enable things to happen the way they are supposed to happen. There is a relationship between the decrees of God and the response of God's people! God created all things by a Word. God SAID, "Let there be...and it was so." That's a CREATIVE WORD! Prayer is a participation in the creative Word of God, speaking the new creation into existence. It's a mystery I don't fully understand, but there are times when I have to pray, there are times when the altar of my soul is full of clouds of holy incense as I send up to God petitions, as I decree a Word, not for myself, but for others, and when I can't articulate them in English I send them up in an unknown tongue. And there is that deep inner consciousness that somehow I am participating in a great tableau and drama of history.

What power pertains to those who are seated with Christ in the spiritual constellations of the heavens! And you, dear saint of God, are seated with Christ in the highest of the heavens! And you are not seated there to sing and shout and dance all over God's heaven. You have been placed there in the heavenly constellations to RULE, to REIGN OVER THE EARTH. "...Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God **KINGS AND PRIESTS: and we shall REIGN ON THE EARTH**" (Rev. 5:9-10).

Simply speaking, to reign is to exercise authority for God- to rule all things. God's one intention from the beginning has been that He may make man in His image and likeness and GIVE HIM DOMINION- that he may reign for Him in the universe. Although this matter of reigning will not be completely realized until the manifestation of the sons of God, yet today God wants it to have a beginning on earth. If any believer has not yet reached the degree of reigning for God, he has missed God's purpose in creating man. There must be such people prepared by God that through them the authority of God can be executed and the Kingdom of God can come upon earth.

"The Lord says, Behold, I have given you **AUTHORITY to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the POWER of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you**" (Lk. 10:19). True, the King James Version states that Christ has given us "power" to tread on serpents and scorpions, but the Greek word is "exousia" meaning AUTHORITY or JURISDICTION. When Jesus speaks of the "power" of the enemy, however, He uses a different word, "dunamis," meaning POWER. Our English words dynamite and dynamo come from that Greek word. Praise God, all that the adversaries of this present age have is POWER- but what the Lord gives us is AUTHORITY. This shows that authority is over power and can control power; therefore authority is greater than power. The Lord gives us authority in order to deal with all the power of the enemy. We may illustrate this by an automobile moving along the road. Although it is full of power, yet a traffic policeman has authority over it. When he blows his whistle the mighty engine must slow to a whisper and the car must stop. Again, it is like an army. Although it has great power with its men, guns, tanks, airplanes, and bombs, yet the General has the authority. When he gives an order, the army must obey. He has authority over the power. Authority is over power and can control power, therefore authority is greater than power. The Son of God has given us AUTHORITY over all the POWER of the enemy! Rejoice, YE STARS! Exult and shout, YE CONSTELLATIONS OF THE HEAVENS!

As the "sweet influences" of Pleiades, how sweet shall be the influence of God's beloved sons! How precious the positive force of God's spiritual energy--Holy Ghost nature and Holy Ghost power r, ministering His life His love, his joy, His peace righteousness, His victory unto creation.

These shall not only declare His Word, but have authority and ability to see it established in the earth. When the power of God arises {n all fullness in His body of sons, and He is exalted in the people He has prepared, how unspeakably glorious and honorable He will be in the eyes of His creation!

Truly, "The heavens declare the GLORY of God!"

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 5

VIRGO-THE VIRGIN

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KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART FIVE

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"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (**Ps. 19:1-4**). "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth (the signs of the Zodiac) in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?" (**Job 38:31-33**).

The names of the constellations with their stars reveal the divine truth that was later written in the Bible. The written scriptures began with Job some forty-one centuries ago, but the truth of God was recorded in the starry heavens from the distant dawn of creation, untold ages before Abram journeyed from Ur of the Chaldees or Moses trod the burning sands of the Sinai. This is the great truth of Psalm 19. The first six verses speak of the truth recorded in the heavens, while the next five concern the truth written in the scriptures. The star-studded heavens at night and the blazing sun shining by day are in fact GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY visible from every land and nation over the world. Over the whole earth and from ships on the far-flung seas people can peer at this marvelous book and seek to discover the lost meanings now almost forgotten by mankind. Day by day and night by night they beam down upon us from the Father of lights--our heavenly Father's Lesson Book--describing His character and the unspeakably glorious plan of creation and redemption which from the dawn of history He has ordained for the world.

As Kenneth Fleming has pointed out in his book GOD'S VOICE IN THE STARS, the word Zodiac comes from a primitive Greek root "zoad," denoting A WAY or A PATH or GOING BY STEPS. In this connection it is used of the way along which the sun appears to move through the stars in the course of twelve months. This course is repeated every year as the apparent position of the sun returns to almost the exact spot that it occupied on the same date a year before. So the path through the sky in which the sun travels (or appears to travel) is called the Zodiac and is divided into twelve segments.

The reality that lies behind what is commonly known today as horoscopes and behind the common signs of the Zodiac is an original revelation designed by God- a revelation not of pagan mythology or superstitious powers, but of the wonderful truths of God's grand and glorious plan of the ages through His anointed Christ, written in the very stars of heaven- this fact being attested to by the faithful testimony of the scriptures "which are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (**II Tim. 3:15**).

In these twelve celestial signs we have enshrined for us like jewels in a velvet case, the twelve great heavenly laws or principles which we are to pass through and master while we walk our foreordained path on this planet. Each one of the twelve signs embodies a Kingdom of Heaven principle taught in symbol and ritual under the Old Testament administration, and now fulfilled spiritually in God's elect. It points to a wonderful progression as we begin in Genesis with the promised Seed of the woman (Virgo) and end in the book of Revelation with LEO, the conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah! Just as the sun passes through each of the twelve signs of the Zodiac in the course of a year, so must we experientially partake of the reality pictured by each sign in our progressive transformation into HIS likeness.

It is a blessed day for any man when he discovers that what the Bible calls "heaven" is in fact and in truth the REALM OF THE SPIRIT. It is not a place on some far-away planet, or a figment of man's imagination, but a

realm of reality where saints of God may dwell here and now. These things are hard to utter, because the vast majority of Christians cling tenaciously to the dark understanding of the carnal mind, and it is almost impossible for them to believe that heaven is an abiding and eternal reality. It is even harder for them to comprehend that the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS W-I-T-H-I-N M-A-N, and that in spirit we possess the fullness of its more excellent glory. To most of the Lord's people the outer, physical, and natural realm, including the supposed golden streets of that great "city in the sky," is the realm of REALITY while the spiritual realm, the unseen Kingdom within, is the realm of shadows, mists, visions, dreams and UNREALITY. But just the opposite is the truth. The natural man (and most believers are pathetically natural) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.

If you would understand the scope and magnificence of the mighty working of God in your life, my beloved, consider the message of the radiant constellations of the illimitable heavens above and know that all the power and glory and wisdom and working so marvelously illustrated in their shining configurations is in fact and in truth wrought out in the deepest recesses of your own being. If you will give prayerful consideration to the statement of our Lord that the Kingdom of the Heavens is within you, you cannot avoid the conclusion that man is a copy in miniature of the universe, and everything that exists or takes place in the vast expanses of the cosmos, also exists and takes place in the inner constitution of man. The powers and forces and laws that make up the nature and constitution of man are the same as the powers and forces and laws that on an infinitely larger scale are called the universe, and every reality in the heavens expresses itself in the consciousness of man, and reflects itself in the experience of man, enabling man to know the universe by himself, and himself by the universe.

Scientists are probing into two unseen worlds. One is a world too vast and far away to be seen by the eye and the other is a world too small to be observed by the eye. I want to give you three words in this connection, together with their meanings. First, we find the word MICROCOSM. This word means a little world: anything regarded as a world in miniature: man, viewed as an epitome of the universe. This word comes from two words in the Greek. One is MIKROS which means little or miniature. The other is KOSMOS meaning world. Thus we have the meaning of LITTLE WORLD. The word MACROCOSM, on the other hand, means the great world, or the universe. It also comes from two words. One is MACROS meaning great and the other is KOSMOS meaning the world. We noted above that the word MIKROS carried the meaning of "man viewed as an epitome of the universe." This word EPITOME means, among other things, A CONDENSED REPRESENTATION of something. The word MICROCOSM then gives us the meaning that man is a CONDENSED REPRESENTATION OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE! Thus, man is the CONDENSED REPRESENTATION of all the universe or man is all the universe in miniature. After the original creation, God then began to move to bring the whole vast creation into fellowship and harmony with Himself. In order to accomplish this God made man in the image of the creation, but also in the image of Himself. Man is therefore the bridge or connecting link between God in His spiritual existence and the creation in its visible and material constitution. God put both Himself and the whole universe into man in miniature--a microcosm of the macrocosm! His purpose is that by and through man all things shall be brought into subjection to the mind of the Lord. We read in Hebrews that we do not as yet see all things put into subjection to man, but WE DO SEE JESUS who was, we may safely say, as the second man and the last Adam, a CONDENSED REPRESENTATION of God, the universe, and all mankind. In other words, what was done in and through the singular Man, Jesus the Christ, will also be done in and through corporate man, but on an enlarged scale, for Jesus said we would do even greater works than He did. There is no stagnation in God, for He continually moves ahead. And as He moves we move with Him, advancing according to His pre-determined plan. What wonders lie ahead of us in this majestic pathway!

The seventeenth century German mystic, the simple shoe cobbler from Golitz, Jacob Boehme, penned the following words which are just as revolutionary and up-to-date as the space age. "Now, dear reader, observe: If you want to know about Heaven and what Heaven is and where it is, you do not need to cast your thoughts many thousands of miles off, for that place, that heaven thousands of miles away, is not your Heaven. The true Heaven is not a created place but an uncreated place, and it is not found in a particular place but everywhere, even in the very place where you are standing and going. For when your spirit within yourself is able to penetrate inward through and beyond your own flesh and life, and is able to catch hold of the innermost moving of God, then you are clearly in Heaven. Moreover, if your eyes were but opened, you should see God everywhere in His Heaven, for Heaven is found everywhere. For instance, when Stephen saw Heaven open

and the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, his spirit did not suddenly transport itself into outer space, but rather Stephen's spirit had moved inward, within, into the innermost place where Heaven is found everywhere. So you must realize that this world with all its physical properties is in union with the vast vistas of the heavenly spaces above the earth. There is only one Heart, one Being, one Will, one God, All in all.

"I urge you to open the eyes of your spirits and your hearts, for I want earnestly to Show to you the true and proper way to the gates of God's Heaven. Behold! God is the True, the One, the only Being out of whom you yourselves were created, and within whose Life you are living even now. Therefore, Oh child of man, when you behold in your flesh the depths of the universe, the stars and the complexity of the earth, and all that is in heaven and earth, you are in fact truly in the presence of God. For He is All, and in Him you live and have your being; and that same God reigns and rules over you as well, because He is your King and Creator It is from this God that you receive even your senses and your ability to have consciousness and to know and think and express yourself. Don't you see? You are a part of Him, and your entire being is a derivative of Him. You are His offspring, you came from Him, and you truly exist in Him. If this were not true, you would never have been.

"And so little children, if you now want and desire to draw near by faith to the Life of God, Listen! You must enter inward to the depths within yourselves wherein Christ dwells- not without. For within you there exists an eternity, even as there is an eternity within Him. So you must go in to the depths of the hidden secret place within you, to the very depths of the Eternal Willing in the Father. For it is within this Will or Desire that Wrath and Love eternally struggle against each other, and in which Love is the eternal victor out of the fiery dark wheel of selfishness, through the eternal cross in God's Heart, into regeneration bursting forth as the eternal glorious light of God's nature. His nature is Light, Gentleness, Mercy, Wisdom and Love forever, and it is expressed to us by His Voice, the Word, the Son, our Lord, Saviour, and God. And out of this eternally immense depth of God's Desire, there forever streams forth the Light and Love which is the uncreated glory. And this is the true Heaven.

"For in this depth within you, God eternally rules in Holiness in His uncreated Heaven. And His Willing within you expresses itself as the willing to all goodness, not wrath, and this willing ever reigns in everlasting dominion, the Sovereign God of Love in victory through the eternal cross on which was slain the Lamb of God before ever a single atom was created. And when you comprehend this, that is, the tragedy which forever occurs in the eternal depths of the Heart of God, and when you know that our God is safe forever, True forever, Merciful forever, and the Being of Love forever (because He forever dies to Himself on the cross in His own heart to all wrath and selfish desire), then my brothers and sisters, you will have crossed through and penetrated into the very and holy heart of God.

"And when you comprehend this, you shall know that within this Heaven within you, you are in Christ Jesus, always in union with God. And since you are in oneness with Him, you also shall experience in your flesh, soul, and spirit the same eternal struggle in which you shall forever die to wrath and to self, and through the cross, always being crucified with Him, you shall eternally flash brilliantly with the fire of new Life and Love, as you by faith, hope, and love replace wrath with love, evil with good, and the negative with the positive in all aspects of your life. You too shall, as He did, surely fill the gap and take up the office of High Priest with Him ever living to make intercession for others; and then you shall walk on this earth bringing peace into the midst of the storms that shall always come in this life as long as the present world remains. And when this is done, then God, whose very being is for others and who has now forever made you to be His Sons for others, shall truly reign and control in oneness with you in your regenerated being. Then my friend, you shall be as God is who Himself is heaven, earth, stars, the molecules and atoms. All in all, and for all. Hallelujah! Amen!" --end quote.

In Andrew Jukes' book, THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, he says, "And when I think of the change which can be wrought in us, --when I see that man contains all worlds, and is indeed the hieroglyphic of the universe,- that not only the seen and unseen matter and spirit, time and eternity, but hell and heaven, and the life of each, as well as the life of earth, ALL ARE IN HIM (MAN)..." What a powerful statement! Hieroglyphic writing was an early form of Egyptian writing, consisting of pictographic inscriptions in the form of symbolic characters. According to Webster hieroglyphic also means a figure or symbol having a hidden meaning. Man is a figure or a symbol CONTAINING A HIDDEN MEANING. Therefore all that God is, is in man, and all that the

universe is and is to be is in man. In other words, God has put His complete self IN THE NEW CREATION MAN, and in Himself lies the destiny and development of the universe.

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

The twelve signs of the Zodiac as originally ordained by God were a prophetic outline of the progressive unfolding purpose of God in creation and redemption. In order to decipher this wondrous Heavenly Scroll, we must discover just where to begin reading the names of the constellations and their starry hosts, for God is said to have both NAMED AND NUMBERED them. This means that there is a divine order as well as naming. These signs are in the form of a circle. Now a circle has no beginning and no ending. Where is the beginning and where is the end of this circle through which the sun is constantly moving? When we endeavor to read the story of the signs, obviously, if we begin at the wrong place, our efforts must yield a meaningless result. Where are we to break into this circle and say, "This is the commencement," and at what point are we to say, "This is the end, the conclusion." Modern astrology begins with Aires, the ram or lamb. But how do we know that that is the place to begin? Since everything else about the Zodiac has been corrupted by pagan mythology perhaps this is corrupted also. The fact is, it is! So how are we to know where to begin?

What I am about to say may surprise you, but the ancient Sphinx in Egypt actually holds the key to the riddle and unlocks the mystery of the Zodiac. All have heard of the Sphinx. Most people know that it was a figure with the head of a woman and the body of a lion. But what this creature actually stood for, or was intended to represent, has been lost from history and has always been an open question. It is what is spoken of as the unknown and insoluble mystery-- "the riddle of the Sphinx." Neither the ancient religion of Egypt, nor mythology, nor yet astrology has the answer to the riddle of the Sphinx. When Napoleon was in Egypt he was told that if he could solve the riddle of the Sphinx he would know the way to eternal life. After the nations had lost the original meaning of the signs of the Zodiac, they invented a mythological meaning out of the carnal imagination of the thoughts of their own hearts. How clear that just as the truth of the Zodiac antedated the mythological interpretations of those signs, just so the truth contained in the great Sphinx lies far back beyond even the knowledge of ancient Egypt! And it is intricately connected with the truth of the Zodiac. Confirmation of this is found in one of the very old Zodiacs dating back to 2000 B.C. or before. It is called the Zodiac of Denderah and was found on the ceiling of an ancient portico in Egypt. In this Zodiac there is placed between the signs of Virgo and Leo a picture of the Sphinx. Its woman-like face gazes upon the sign of Virgo, and its lion-like body and tail point to Leo, telling us that we begin with the Virgin and end with the Lion. Furthermore, by the very formation of the Sphinx with its woman's head and lion's body --IT BINDS TOGETHER IN ITSELF THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF THE GREAT CIRCLE OF SIGNS. The head of the Sphinx, the woman, is Virgo the virgin, whereas the body and tail of the Sphinx, the lion, is Leo the lion. The circle is thus seen to begin at the woman (Virgo) and to end with the lion (Leo). The word "sphinx" is taken from the Greek word SPHUNGO which means "to bind closely together." It is, therefore, designed to show where the two ends of the Zodiac were to be joined together and where the great circle of the heavens begins and ends.

There is yet another point of utmost importance. A comparison of the prophecies in the heavens with that which was afterwards written in the scriptures clearly shows that Virgo is the starting point in the divine promise concerning the Seed of the woman in Gen. 3:15, and Leo is the only point at which we can logically conclude with the climax of scripture in the triumph of the Lion of the tribe of Judah in Rev. 5:5. The great drama of redemption started with the sign of Virgo in the promise of the Seed of the woman in the first book of the Bible. In the promise of the triumphant Lion in the last book of the Bible we reach the final scene in the last act in the great tableau of history. Oh, the wonder of it!

VIRGO--THE VIRGIN

The first sign, as we have noted, is Virgo. The sun occupies Virgo for forty-three days, passing through it from September 14th to October 29th. This group of stars is associated with the picture of a young woman with an ear of wheat in one hand and a branch in the other hand. In Hebrew she is called BETHULAH, which means "virgin," just as VIR-GO, from Latin, means "the virgin." Everywhere her name is the same. However, you can study the stars in Virgo until you turn blue and they would never look like a woman! But the picture which has gone with them down through the ages, in every nation and culture of the world, is the picture of a woman. The

fact that the signs of the Zodiac bear little resemblance to the pictures associated with them should mightily confirm the faith of all who know the living God. The fact that every single ancient culture which had any knowledge or tradition concerning the stars recognizes the same twelve star groups and the same names and pictures! Cultures as far away and diverse as China, Egypt and the Indians of Central America ALL gave the same pictorial meanings to the constellations. There is only one explanation to such an incredible phenomena--there was one original Source who identified the constellations with their meanings BEFORE THE DISPERSION OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH. And GOD, my friend, is that Source!

The greater wonder is that MOTHERHOOD attends the virginity of this glorious woman. The wheat and the branch in her hands denote fruitfulness --offspring. It will not be difficult for any man to see that this is a picture right out of the Bible--A VIRGIN BRINGING FORTH A SEED! In that long ago Eden the almighty Father spoke the first promise of a Redeemer to the erring man and his wife when He gave the blessed assurance, "And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between THY SEED and HER SEED; IT shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (**Gen. 3:15**). This "seed of the woman" is the first prophecy of the coming into the world of the Saviour who would "bruise the head of the serpent." Historically this is Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, living, dying, and rising again in triumph over death, hell and the grave, opening up the wellspring of eternal salvation to all who would believe. Spiritually it is the Son of God birthed in us, brought forth unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ out of our own "virgin" relationship with God.

"For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present YOU as a CHASTE VIRGIN to Christ" (**II Cor. 11:2**). To be a virgin means to be pure, undefiled and separated unto our Lord. God is creating the desire in a people in this hour to be truly VIRGIN in their desires toward Him. We have known what it is to be conformed to the course of THIS WORLD. Then we have known what it is to trust Christ as Saviour while remaining entangled in all the wretched defilement of a corrupt babylonish church system. But God is calling forth in these days a glorious body of Christ who, because of the quickening of the Holy Spirit, is desiring to be VIRGIN- reserved only and completely for her glorious Lord, unto intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Him. How lightly we sometimes take the purposes of God in us! It is one thing to be washed in the blood, freed from all our past sins, and quite another thing to truly be VIRGIN in our desires to keep ourselves only unto Christ in the spirit, purged from all the aspirations and dictates of the carnal mind and the outward sense realm. As we follow on to know Him separation comes from everything of the flesh, the world, and the devil, and from every vestige of entanglement with that vile harlot system of religious Babylon, the abomination of the earth.

Glorious indeed and full of wisdom and creative design is the fact that your relationship to Christ as a "virgin" is ordained to forerun your manifestation to the world as a "son." As in the natural, so in the spiritual; the virgin relationship bears the feminine characteristics of modesty, gentleness, tenderness, love, sensitiveness, dependence and obedience, whereas the sonship relationship bears the characteristics of the masculine nature. Aggressiveness, boldness, strength, valor, authority, power and dominion are among the traits of the masculine sex. Hence the Lord calls the CHURCH a virgin, but to the OVERCOMER He says, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My SON. To HIM will I give POWER over the nations: and he shall RULE them with a rod of iron. To him that OVERCOMETH will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with MY FATHER in His throne" (**Rev. 21:7; 2:26-27; 3:21**). The mighty, eternal and indisputable truth is that THE S-O-N IS ALWAYS BORN OF THE V-I-R-G-I-N! Just as the blessed firstborn Son was born of a virgin, so is it through the vehicle of a PURE AND UNDEFILED SOUL (virgin) that the MIGHT AND DOMINION OF THE SPIRIT (son) is manifested, expressed and revealed. This is a true principle in God that I hope no earnest saint of God who reads these lines will miss! I cannot emphasize too forcefully, or too carefully, that the power and glory of SONSHIP will never come forth from the man or woman of God who has not first become truly VIRGIN in their soul life.

Now since we have seen that HISTORICALLY the virgin bringing forth the Son is Jesus born of Mary, the virgin of Nazareth; and SPIRITUALLY it is the Son of God (spirit) birthed (brought into manifestation) out of the transformed life through the virgin soul; let us go on to see that PROPHETICALLY it points to the manchild of Revelation 12, that glorious company of the many-membered Christ, the MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD, birthed out of the mother Church, the pure virgin bride of Jesus Christ, for whom all creation is in deepest travail and who shall deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption.

Hannah Hurnard relates how in the Jewish religious writings there is a tradition from earliest times that the twelve tribes of Israel represented, down here on earth, the twelve signs of the Zodiac in the great Bible in the Sky. Each tribe had the privilege and challenge to manifest one of the heavenly lessons in a special way. The names of the twelve sons of Jacob show which sign each son represents. The name Reuben means, "Behold a son." In **Gen. 49:3-4** we find the tribe of Reuben does seem especially to represent the **FIRSTBORN SONS OF GOD** who have been aroused from the sleep of death. Jacob said of the tribe of Reuben, "**Reuben, thou art my first born, my might and the beginning of my strength and the excellency of power.**" What an overwhelmingly awesome fact this is! We are, in Jesus Christ, first-born sons, God's first-fruit company, destined to assist all the younger brothers and sisters in God's vast creation to grow up into the full stature of Jesus Christ, restoring all into God again. This is the fullness of the **SEED OF THE WOMAN** who shall bruise the very head of the serpent!

THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

A hundred years before Christ an altar was found in Gaul with this inscription: **TO THE VIRGIN WHO IS TO BRING FORTH**. According to the first promise of God in Gen. 3:15 there is coming the "seed of the woman." This is an unusual term. Always elsewhere in the scripture we are told that someone is the "seed of a man"--that it is a man that brings forth and begets. All through the record we are told that a person was the son or daughter of this man or that man. But in Genesis we have this unique and singular example of someone who is to be the seed of a woman. This is clearly **VIRGIN MOTHERHOOD**, and hence one born of a miracle, one begotten of divine power, the Son of God. His great task is to be bruised in the heel by the seed of the serpent, and yet He is to bruise the serpent's seed in the head and thus destroy him. That was the original revelation.

The seed of the woman has been generally accepted as fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ, as conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, triumphing over death, satan, hell and the grave by His death and resurrection, which is surely correct beyond a shadow of a doubt. Yet there is always in God's economy a larger fulfillment or a further fulfillment, the harvest from the original seed planted, and there is a constant unfolding of the many-faceted wisdom and truth of God until it becomes resplendent with the glory of its eternal increase and revelation. We do not belittle the fact that Jesus Christ fulfilled this promise of Gen. 3:15, but let us not stop there and fail to see the further unfoldings of fulfillings, for the truth is like a pebble dropped into the ocean of knowledge that begins with a small ripple but continues with ever-widening waves until it reaches the vast shores of infinite wisdom.

The Virgin holds a sheaf of wheat and that seed of wheat Christ appropriates as a symbol of Himself. It seems a most singular thing that in that long ago Eden the Lord God told the serpent that **THE SEED** of the woman would bruise his head. Why did He not say that the **MAN** that should come from the woman would bruise the serpent's head? Why did He refer to that man as **HER SEED**, the seed of the woman? It will be a great blessing to your heart to understand the vital truth that "seed" is not only the product of some other life before it but seed is also that which possesses the power to **REPRODUCE ITSELF** and its kind many thousand fold from generation to generation. Seed is thus that which stands for **INCREASE**.

On a certain day some Greeks approached the disciples of Jesus with the request, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." This request was promptly carried to Jesus by Andrew and Philip, to which our Lord gave this strange and very remarkable reply: "**The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn (grain) of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit**" (**Jn. 12:23-24**). In this cryptic statement Jesus likened Himself to a seed, a grain of wheat, which was to fall into the ground and die. He would be sown as a seed into the earth and be raised again. Not only would He be raised in glorification, but in centuries yet to come **THIS SEED**, which was Jesus Christ, would produce a vast harvest of many sons of God in His exact image and likeness. **NO SEED** is raised from the earth as just a singular seed, there is always an increase, the natural law of progression being "first the blade, then the ear, then the **FULL CORN IN THE EAR**." Only one seed was planted in the earth, and the Christ who came out of that Palestinian tomb was not the harvest--merely the blade breaking the ground. The multitude that will appear in the time of harvest will be **THE SEED OF THE SEED**, the increase, every one bearing the image and likeness of that **CHRIST SEED** which was planted in death.

I am certain that the Lord's reply was an enigma to those men to whom He spoke. The Greeks looking for Jesus could hardly be expected to comprehend a mystery so deep and eternal. They made their earnest request, "Sirs, we would see Jesus," and He responded with His mysterious dissertation. We are not told whether Jesus ever consented to have these Greeks interview Him, but in answer to their request He gave the oblique reply, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." His message to them was simply this: If they saw Jesus at that time they would see only one seed, one grain in the image of God--the man Christ Jesus. But there would be more, much more to CHRIST than appeared to them that day! A whole universal field of ripened grain was to follow in His likeness, born of that original seed, imbued with the very same life, raised in the same resurrection, who would be the "sons of God" and "the Christ" even as He is a Son of God and the Christ of God. The many sons would form ONE CHRIST, Head and body, each having the seed of life in himself.

THE SUN-CLAD WOMAN

The risen and ascended Lord descended in a vision of glory on the lonely isle of Patmos, and there meeting His startled disciple John, gave him a communication concerning the Church, commanding him to write it in a scroll and send it to the seven Churches in Asia. With wondering eyes John stood transfixed as in spirit he saw a great wonder in heaven, "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne" (Rev. 12:1-2, 5).

In the book of Revelation there are three great wonders mentioned- the great wonder of the sun-clothed woman (Rev. 12:1), the great wonder of the great dragon who stands before the woman (Rev. 12:3), and the great sign or wonder of the seven angels with the seven last plagues (Rev. 15: 1). The word "wonder" or "sign" comes from the Greek word SEMEION which means an "indication" or "mark" or a "signification." A wonder is something that arrests, and surprises, and astonishes. A wonder is something unexpected, unprepared for, unprecedented, and surpassing all our experience. The whole world is full of wonder to a child. But a wonder is more than that. It is a symbol, a prophecy of the reality that it represents. The purpose of a wonder is to call attention to a person or thing as special or supernatural, to so get the attention as to declare something important and special as indicative of a particular circumstance or time and as confirmation of truth.

The "great wonder" that John saw in heaven was not heaven itself, wonderful as heaven itself was. It was a WOMAN--a glorious woman--giving birth to a remarkable man-child. Who is this woman, and where is she today? Some have said that she signifies Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus. Others have said that she stands for the nation of Israel. But according to the scriptures this woman can neither be Mary, the mother of the Lord, nor can she be the fleshly nation of Israel. This is a vision of things destined to transpire after John's experience on Patmos (Rev. 4:1), not a history of events which had already taken place. So it cannot be Mary bringing forth Jesus, her firstborn Son. Furthermore, there is nothing in the history of Mary corresponding to the other events in the drama- the persecution of the woman by the dragon; her flight into the wilderness after the ascension of her Son; the flood of water cast out by the serpent to destroy her; and the war made upon "the remnant of her seed." The woman in Genesis is destined to bring forth the "seed" that will crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15); the woman in the New Testament is the body of Christ, the Church (II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-32); and now this woman in Rev. 12 reveals the things at the end time.

John the Revelator, in his marvelous vision on the isle of Patmos long ago, saw the ultimate seed coming forth, when he saw a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, a crown of twelve stars upon her head, and she brought forth a manchild who was caught up to the throne of God to rule all nations with a rod of iron. In order to fully understand this awesome scene, one needs to understand the mysteries of the heavenlies that is in the Word of God. When understood by the spirit of wisdom and revelation, the Bible reveals that the physical heavens in their every aspect are only a type of a revelation of God's spiritual heavens here in the earth, which spiritual heavens We are.

The sun is a type of Jesus. Just as the sun is the light of the world, so Jesus is the light of God's Kingdom. In the light of HIS GLORY we enter the DAY of the Lord. "At midday, O king, I (Saul of Tarsus) saw in the way a

light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me...and I said, Who art thou, Lord? And He said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 26: 13-15)**. "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST" (Phil. 1:6). "Ye are all the children of LIGHT, and the children of the DAY: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (I Thes. 5:5). We are children of THE DAY and not of the night! We are of the Day because the light of Christ, the blessed "Sun of righteousness" has dawned upon us and risen in our hearts. Therefore anytime you find the term sun in the New Testament it is never talking about the literal sun, but Christ the light of life. When John saw this woman clothed with the sun, his vision indicated that this woman is clothed with all the light and truth and glory that her husband Jesus had while He was here. Nothing is clearer in the book of Revelation than the fact that the OVERCOMERS who are to rule the nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:26-27) are birthed out of the CHURCH to whom the letter is addressed and unto whom it was sent (Rev. 1:4, 19-20; 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14).

Norene Nichols has shared some interesting and edifying insights into this important theme. "The garbling of the woman of Rev. 12 is unusual in that she is CLOTHED WITH THE SUN. On the surface one might refer to this as being clothed in light or understanding which it is, but there is much more meaning lying under the surface of these words than most of us realize. With the help of the Lord may we ponder this matter a little further and see some of what is involved. In the Greek there are two words used for CLOTHED, one is ENDUO and the other is PERIBALLO. In this particular case the word PERIBALLO, is used, and realizing that every word is important in respect to where and how it is used by the Spirit of God in the scriptures, we know that PERIBALLO is distinctly illuminative. ENDUO means to GO INTO CLOTHING which infers that the clothing is of a certain size and specification into which a person must fit. In other words, a person up to a particular size could fit into a certain garment, but over that size it would be impossible to get into it. On the other hand, PERIBALLO means to CAST AROUND ABOUT which would infer some sort of a garment that can be put on and cast around a person and made to fit the person rather than the person fit the garment. "For instance, Lk. 24:49 speaks about 'being ENDUED (endue--clothed) with power from on high' referring to the infilling of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Here the word used means to be CLOTHED with power in the sense of GOING INTO CLOTHING, or having the garment of a particular size into which the person must fit. We have seen much in times past of people who claimed so much because of the enduing of power, when in reality they fitted as best they could into that garment. Thus · have seen many trying to do great wonders and signs in a garment they are in but which is too big for them, into which they have not grown up, and which drags in the dust realm (carnality), bringing a reproach and criticism from many looking on.

"On the other hand, the word PERIBALLO used of the sun-clothed woman infers that this full-grown woman has a covering of the sun that is CAST ABOUT her in such a manner that the garment fits her rather than her trying to fit into the garment. This woman is a mature woman--matured in God, matured in love, matured in understanding--and God grants her the clothing that fits her maturity. Her clothing is comprised of one thing: the sun. The sun is the light and warmth of our solar system and rises upon the just and the unjust alike. It is no respecter of persons. The planets revolve around it and are benefited thereby. Thus this woman is clothed with the light (understanding, revelation) and warmth (effect, blessing) of Him who is 'the Sun of Righteousness.' She does not withhold her light and warmth from anyone either just or unjust, but beams alike upon all. In other words, her light of understanding is dispersed abroad, not by words, but by BEING, EVEN AS THE SUN SPEAKS NOT BUT IS WHAT IT IS BY VIRTUE OF ITS NATURE. She claims nothing for herself--no position, no gifts, no power, no ministry--but simply IS what she IS by the grace of God. The sun does not have to say, 'I am the sun!' It is that by reason of its being, and this woman is what she is by reason of her being who she is, and as a result, her light and warmth are shed abroad without stint" --end quote.

Not only is this woman clothed with the sun, but she has the moon under her feet. The moon is a type of the fleshly Israel under the law. Just as the moon has no light of its own, but only reflects a small portion of the light of the sun in the earth, so the fleshly people of God under law had no light of their own, but reflected by their laws, self-effort and carnal works, ceremonies, rituals, sacrifices, ordinances, feast days, tabernacles, temples, priesthood, etc. a faint glimmer of the glory of Christ in the earth. Any time you find the word moon in the New Testament it is never talking about the literal moon, but it is talking about the realm of reflected spiritual light cast back by types, shadows, symbols, rituals, external ordinances, commandments, etc. None of those things possess any light of their own, they merely figure in a feeble way the life and reality of the SPIRIT.

When John saw this woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, his vision indicated that this woman is being clothed, not with the dim light or revelation that the fleshly Israel had, or that the old-order carnal church system has even to this day, which stands in carnal programs, static creeds, empty rituals, lifeless ceremonies, and outward ordinances, but she is being clothed with all the blazing spiritual light and truth of her husband, Christ. Having the moon under her feet means that she has come through all the types and shadows of the law, and the external ordinances religion imposes on the outer flesh man, with all their reflected glory. She is lifted up to a higher plane of light and truth, of experience and being, of reality, life and glory!

There is yet another remarkable feature about this sun-clad woman--she wears a crown composed of a certain number of stars upon her head--TWELVE. Twelve is the number of DIVINE GOVERNMENT, and wonder of wonders! the true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has much to do with the establishment of divine government in the earth, and otherwise. This may seem like a strong and exalted position for a woman, for we often think of divine government only in terms of the masculine, the promised kings and priests who shall rule and reign with Christ. Nevertheless, what is a King without a Queen? So in the eventuality of God's plan this woman becomes that Queen that is described in Psalm 45 who stands on His right hand, the place of power and authority, attired in gold of Ophir. Ah--she is the true QUEEN OF HEAVEN! She brings to that dominion the feminine characteristics of tenderness, gentleness, sensitiveness, concern, nourishment and love, counterbalancing the masculine qualities of boldness, strength, valor, authority, power and dominion exerted by the sons of God. What a Kingdom!

This crown of twelve stars, as nothing else, positively identifies this woman as Virgo, the virgin of the Zodiac. The astronomer, Professor Thorley, has shown that there are exactly TWELVE STARS surrounding the head of Virgo as we view them from the earth. [If one will look at Norton's Star Atlas, twelve visible stars will be seen around Virgo's head. They are, according to astronomical terminology: \(1\) Pi, \(2\) Nu, \(3\) Beta, \(4\) Sigma, \(5\) Chi, \(6\) Iota--these six stars form the southern hemisphere around the head of Virgo. Then there are \(7\) Theta, \(8\) Star 60, \(9\) Delta, \(10\) Star 93, \(11\) Beta, \(12\) Omicron--these last six form the northern hemisphere around the head of Virgo.](#) The apostle John saw the scene when the sun "clothes" or "adorns" the woman. This surely indicates that the position of the sun in the vision was located somewhere mid-bodied of the woman- between the neck and the knees. The sun could hardly be said to clothe her if it were situated in her face or near her feet. This "clothing" of the woman by the sun in the heavenly constellation of Virgo occurs for a twenty-day period each year. And here is a fact of surpassing wonder- at the time of the new moon at the feast of trumpets (John's vision of the sun-clad woman appears under the seventh ~ in the book of Revelation) THE SUN, IN ITS RELATION TO VIRGO, IS IN THE UTERINE POSITION AND THE MOON IS SEEN UNDER HER FEET! Coincidence? NO WAY! Thus, the description of this wondrous woman in heaven by John on Patmos is graphically confirmed to be the very same woman portrayed from antiquity in GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY --Virgo, the virgin!

The woman with a crown of twelve stars is a great WONDER IN HEAVEN. In other words, the manifestation of the glory and power of God upon this virgin bride of Christ PRECEDES THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD, for the woman is manifested to the heavenly sphere, though it is quite evident that she is right here on earth at the time. Paul spoke of this wonder of the woman in heaven in these words, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be known BY THE CHURCH the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). We have rejoiced to see that she is clothed with the sun and has conquered the moon, but let us take into further consideration that her head is crowned with twelve stars and she is crowned BEFORE the manchild is ever born, not afterwards. She has authority given her BEFORE he comes to birth, and she is a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, and her dominion is not given because her child is born as the manifested sons of God, but is given her of God BEFORE the sons are manifested, while they are still hidden in the womb. There shall be manifested great anointing, power and glory upon God's true virgin end-time Church ere the sons of God arise to reign and restore all things back into the life of God again.

Again I would share some beautiful insights from the pen of the late Norene Nichols. "Before considering the crown of stars, let us delve a bit into the meaning of the word 'head' upon which the crown rests. It comes from the Greek word KAPHALE which comes from the root KAPTO which means TO SEIZE, or that the head is the part most readily taken hold of. How apt! Is it not the head or the MIND that satan seeks to captivate and take

hold of? By the same token, it is the head or mind that the Spirit of God wants to seize and lay hold of that the mind of Christ might be fully manifest therein. There can be no spiritual nor bodily changes in anyone without there being a changing of the mind and thought patterns (consciousness). Have you not read that we are TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF THE M-I-N-D??? What a battle has been waged to keep the mind in subjection to bondage and darkness and ignorance, but contrariwise, there is also a battle whereby liberty comes to the mind to bring it enlightenment and renewal. It is thus upon a renewed mind that the crown rests.

"Furthermore, from this same Greek word we get another form--KEPHALIS, which is translated as VOLUME, 'Then said I, Lo, I come (in the VOLUME of the book it is written of me,) to do Thy will, O God' (Heb. 10:7). The word VOLUME means a HEAD or KNOB which is placed on the end of the roll upon which the scroll is rolled. Is not this interesting? In other words, the inference is that the head, or mind, is to be inscribed and ingrained with truth. Has He not promised that He would write His laws in our hearts and MINDS? Therefore the crowning can only take place upon the head that is girdled with truth, filled with truth, open to the Word of God, a mind that is a channel for HIS THINKING and His inscribings.

"Another form of this same Greek word is KAPHALAION which! .means SUM, especially a sum of money, though it also means a sum of knowledge. How does this fit into the fact that it is upon the woman's head that the crown rests? If the head or mind is renewed and ruled by the mind of God (truth), then it also stands to reason that the head is the SUM. A sum of money in the natural is a medium of exchange, and its spiritual counterpart is FAITH which is the spiritual medium of exchange. Not only is the Head to be filled with truth, but that truth generates faith which looks not at the things which are seen (sense realm) but at the things which are not seen (spirit) and CALLS THEM INTO EXISTENCE. Therefore this woman is a woman of faith, and her faith tops or heads all impossibilities. Here is a mind of faith! And furthermore, KEPRALAION not only means a sum of money, but it means also the SUM OF KNOWLEDGE. 'Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the SUM...' (Heb. 8:1). Paul proceeds then to sum up the vast knowledge he has been giving regarding our High Priest, as related to Melchizedek, which priesthood has been so misunderstood and therefore not-understood. He brings that knowledge to a head, to an understandable amalgamation of truth and revelation" --end quote. My beloved, God is in these days SUMMING UP or CROWNING His divine truth and revelation upon the HEAD or MIND of His elect, in consciousness and in faith. What a work!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 6
VIRGO-THE VIRGIN [Cont'd]
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
“Studies in end-time Revelation”

PART SIX

THE MANCHILD
ULTIMATE FAITH

The reality that lies behind what is commonly known today as horoscopes and behind the common signs of the Zodiac is an original revelation designed by God -- a revelation not of pagan mythology or superstitious powers, but of the wonderful truths of God's grand and glorious plan of the ages through His anointed Christ, written in the very stars of heaven--this fact being attested to by the faithful testimony of the scriptures **"which are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (II Tim. 3:15)**. In these twelve celestial signs we have enshrined for us like jewels in a velvet case, the twelve great heavenly laws or principles which we are to pass through and master while we walk our foreordained path on this planet. Each one of the twelve signs embodies a Kingdom of Heaven principle taught in symbol and ritual under the Old Testament administration, and now fulfilled spiritually in God's elect. It points to a wonderful progression as we begin in Genesis with the promised Seed of the woman (Virgo) and end in the book of Revelation with LEO, the conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah! Just as the sun passes through each of the twelve signs of the Zodiac in the course of a year, so must we experientially partake of the reality pictured by each sign in our progressive transformation into HIS likeness.

The first sign, as we pointed out in our last Study, is Virgo. The sun occupies Virgo for forty-three days, passing through it from September 14th to October 29th. This group of stars is associated with the picture of a young woman with an ear of wheat in one hand and a branch in the other. In Hebrew she is called BETHULAH, which means "virgin," just as VIRGO, from Latin, means "the virgin." Everywhere her name is the same. The wheat and the branch in her hands denote fruitfulness --offspring, motherhood. It will not be difficult for any man to see that this is a picture right out of the Bible --A VIRGIN BRINGING FORTH A SEED! In that long ago Eden the almighty Father spoke the first promise of a Redeemer to the erring man and his wife when He gave the blessed assurance, **"And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between THY SEED and HER SEED; IT shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Gen. 3:15)**. HISTORICALLY this is Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, living, dying, and rising again in triumph over death, hell and the grave, opening up the wellspring of eternal salvation to all who would believe. SPIRITUALLY it is the Son of God birthed in us, brought forth unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ out of our own "virgin" relationship with God, conquering the sin, sickness, sorrow and death in us. PROPHETICALLY it points to the manchild of Revelation 12, that glorious company of the many-membered firstfruits Christ, the MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD, birthed out of the mother Church, the pure virgin bride of Jesus Christ, for whom all creation is in deepest travail and who shall deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption.

VIRGO means the VIRGIN, or the untouched one, the one of undefiled soul. Mary the mother of Jesus, was a virgin when she conceived and bore her divine Son, although she was betrothed (espoused, engaged) to Joseph and under the law of those times was considered his wife. Of the true Church Paul said, **"I have espoused (engaged) you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste VIRGIN to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2)**. Why was Paul so jealous that this little virgin keeps herself pure? Ah--Paul had a revelation that from this woman, or virgin Church, the Lord was going to bring forth His seed. Even in the natural a man cannot bring forth a child apart from a woman, so also in the spiritual. God must have a woman that He can plant His life in. She is going to bring forth in these last days, a many-membered manchild that will grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, and shall be caught up to the throne. And during that blessed age of the Kingdom of God these sons shall be manifested as that ultimate promised seed that God told Abraham would come forth, who would rule and reign in the earth, solve all the world's problems and bring perfect blessing and life abundant to all the families of the earth

Just as Jesus was born of a betrothed virgin, so will the manchild company of the manifested sons of God be birthed out of the betrothed, yet virgin, Church. This Church is the pristine bride without spot or wrinkle, not some conglomeration of all so called churches and all believers. May the Spirit of the living God enlighten the eyes of all who read and give understanding that each may be enabled to discern and easily differentiate between that VIRGIN BRIDE without spot or wrinkle, which Jesus Christ is preparing for Himself, and that filthy HARLOT SYSTEM, full of names of blasphemy, with her multiplied sects and denominations, who seduces the inhabitants of the world with the unspeakable lie that she is, herself, the very bride of the Lamb. Such cannot be, for the Bridegroom says of this little virgin bride, "Thou art all fair, My love: there is no spot in thee...thou hast ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse...how fair is thy love, My sister, My spouse! How much better is thy love than wine! And the smell of thine ointments is like the smell of Lebanon (S. of S. 4.7 11).

In the book of Revelation we have two women described, one is the glorious sun-clad woman of whom we now write and the other is Mystery Babylon riding upon a beast, gorgeously decked with all manner of precious jewels, with rich gaudy apparel and precious stones, having a golden cup in her hand full of "The Wine of Babylon." She has a name on her forehead, "Mystery Babylon, the Great." Notice the difference between these two women in the vision of John. One is clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head. See how closely she is associated with heaven, and those things of heaven that bless, guide, and quicken mankind. Clothed with the sun, representing light, illumination, understanding, revelation, truth, vision, warmth, life, reality, growth, transformation and blessing of every kind! The wanton harlot, on the other hand, is decorated with worldly apparel, the things that attract those who love earthly things, temporal things, external things of the sense realm, the treasures of the carnal mind. She is decked with unreality's, riding upon the beast of the carnal nature, the antithesis of the righteousness, peace and joy of the Kingdom of God.

When John was shown the great city, Mystery Babylon, we read, "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" (Rev. 17:1). Again, when John was shown the New Jerusalem Bride we find, "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials...and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:9). In each instance the very same angel came and delivered the very same challenge to the astonished Seer of Patmos, "Come hither; I will show unto thee..." These words take on new depth of meaning when we understand that in the book of Revelation the word "come" always signifies AN INVITATION TO REVELATION. The whore and the sun-clad woman are two women; the invitation goes forth to come and see by the Spirit what they mean; and I do not hesitate to tell you that it requires a REVELATION FROM GOD to see either!

One would certainly think that God's people would respond to this invitation to revelation whereby the Spirit says, "COME HITHER, and I will show you," and that they would look with anointed eyes and readily see the difference between the virgin and the harlot, but such is not the case. Would God that all men could now see the hidden mystery of Christ and the Church! Would God that all men could see the hidden mystery of the virgin sun-clad woman who delivers the manchild! Would God that all men could see that this hidden mystery has nothing to do with that tradition-ridden system which everywhere calls itself THE CHURCH and CHRISTIANITY! The glory of the sun-clad woman represents the pure, unadulterated TRUTH of God permeating and overwhelming the soul. When the soul is truly overwhelmed and subdued by TRUTH, the seed of Christ (spirit) begins to take form within. Think of this, dear reader, for it will lift the sackcloth from your eyes, and you will behold the white-winged dove of SPIRITUAL REALITY descending upon you. Come hither! Arise from the lowlands of ignorance, false consciousness, and mistaken identity; from the harlot Babylon, the soul encumbered with lies, misconceptions, misrepresentations, falsehoods, error, sense-knowledge, tradition, and static creeds and doctrines of men. Arise until you become conscious of THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS, THE ETERNAL REALITY OF THE SPIRIT, THE OMNISCIENCE AND OMNIPOTENCE OF THE CHRIST WITHIN, and are caught away IN SPIRIT where you can see the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, the city of TRUTH and LIFE and REALITY built into a living form and expression through a people who live out of the heavenlies of the SPIRIT. When one ceases to live out of the blindness of the carnal mind and commences to live and move and have his being in the reality of THE SPIRIT he has been transported, as was John, from the glitter of Babylon to the glory of the

City of God. Oh glorious City of God! City of Celestial Reality! The description of the city as "foursquare" has a profound meaning. The four sides of our city are: Life, Light, Love and Truth, "and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." All who would bring forth the manchild, the manifestation of the Son of God, must dwell there, and walk in this light. Its gates open towards light and glory both within and without, for nothing can enter that city, which "defileth...or maketh a lie." The sons of God shall be born of a chaste, virgin Church, without contradiction, the greatest mother that God has planted on the face of the earth, the Jerusalem which is from above. This Church is not going out with a whimper or a limp. It shall conclude this age victorious, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and riding a river of peace and blessing and life and power. It shall arise in freedom from all bondage and limitation, with its feet on the neck of every enemy, and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. The tempter's power shall be broken. God's people shall be holy, strong, anointed, transformed and glorious. Yes--she will be a great WONDER IN HEAVEN! Virgo the Virgin shall be seen exalted in her magnificent splendor by all the inhabitants of the earth! The heavens declare it!

THE MANCHILD

"And she was with child; and she cried out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered" (Rev. 12:2). What does it mean to be with child? It means that a child is in the mother's womb, and the child and the mother are united in one body. When the mother eats, the child is nourished. What the mother eats, good or bad, is transferred to the child. The condition of the mother is the condition of the child. On the other hand, however, this child is different from the mother; it is another being. If you say that they are one, it is truth, for the child receives life from the mother. Yet, as far as his future is concerned, he is different. His future is entirely distinct from that of his mother. Immediately after he is delivered, he is caught up to the throne of God, while his mother flees into the wilderness for testing and proving, as was Job who was declared by God to be a PERFECT MAN, yet was untried and unproven. While the woman is with the child, all that can be seen is the mother; the child is hidden. Outwardly, it appears that there is only the mother. The child assuredly does exist, but he is hidden ¶ with the mother; he is included in the mother. While the individual application of this truth is precious, pointing to the Son, the Spirit, concealed within the womb of the soul, ultimately coming forth in power and glory to reign even over the soul and all things, yet it is to the corporate truth that I would now draw your reverent attention. For many years God's end-time body has been in preparation. There is people that has come to the Kingdom for such a time as this. And hidden within this body is a group of people among them. This group is a portion of the whole, a part of the many chosen for this hour. This is the manchild to be brought forth by the woman. This means that the manchild 'is not a single individual, but a composition of many saints. In comparison with the mother, this manchild appears to be small. When this group is compared with the whole, their number is in the minority. But God's plan is fulfilled in them and His purpose rests upon them. As the mother is the final glory of the Church age, the manchild is the firstfruits--the glory and power of the greater and more glorious age to come. The woman gathers within her the harvest of this age at the end of the age, whereas the sons of God inaugurate and establish the new order of the Kingdom of God for the coming age.

This is the revelation of Jesus Christ--that God be manifested in the totality of His divine nature, wisdom and power in a company of sons born from this virgin Church, into the measure of the stature of the FULLNESS of the Christ. The Church will come to perfection in its realm. God will see to it that the Holy Spirit brings her to perfection. There is approaching the day when she comes into her glory and fulfills her perfect work, but she will never be the sonship company nor do his work. In spite of the fact that she will finally be brought to perfection, she is not God's final revelation of Jesus Christ. A sonship company must be born out of this Church. Then in the union of the masculine and the feminine nature of God shall be seen the full revelation of Godhood. Great is the mystery!

The woman is "clothed" with the sun, the blazing glory of Jesus--divine Truth. But notice, precious friend of mine, the manchild does not "wear" the glory of Jesus as a garment--he IS by very nature and being the glory of Jesus, caught up to His throne! This one has discovered the ALL-SUFFICIENT SPIRIT WITHIN to constitute the sum and substance of his reality and has ceased to see reality as something apart from or without himself, thus developing to live completely in and by the plenitude of God within. These have life within themselves even as the Father has life in Himself. THESE ARE THE SONS OF GOD! Oh, that the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God may enable all who read these lines to comprehend the difference! Can we not see by this

that the virgin Church realm is the SOUL CLOTHED UPON WITH CHRIST (TRUTH), SUBMITTED TO CHRIST, OBEDIENT TO CHRIST, YET THE SOUL OPERATING IN ITS OWN PERSONALITY UNDER THE ANOINTING AND HEADSHIP OF THE CHRIST. BUT THE MANCHILD IS THE S-P-I-R-I-T I-T-S-E-L-F BURSTING OUT OF THE WOMB OF THE SOUL TO BECOME THE O-N-L-Y LIFE, WISDOM, TRUTH, REALITY AND PERSONALITY!

I would say to you that the life of Christ, the life of sonship, is not something outside ourselves. The idea is not that Christ is in heaven, or standing by us, or worn as a garment, so that we stretch out some mysterious faculty and touch Him there. This is the vague form in which babes in Christ conceive the truth, but it is contrary to Christ's teaching and to the analogy of nature. Vegetable life is not contained in a reservoir somewhere in the skies, and measured out spasmodically at certain seasons. Animal life is not bottled up somewhere in the blue beyond and dropped down to earth now and then when it is time for an embryo to be formed. The life is IN every plant and tree, every animal and fish and fowl, inside its own tissue and cells, and works there as a mighty power to form even that which is contained within the life. The life is permanently fixed and rooted in the organism. Life is not one of the homeless forces which promiscuously inhabit space, or which can be gathered like electricity from the clouds and dissipated back again into space. Life is definite and resident; the Spiritual Life is not a visit from a force, but a resident tenant of Being. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a...seed, which a man took, and SOWED IN HIS FIELD." The life of son-ship is not derived from the occasional touch of Jesus as He "passes this way," nor from the weekly refreshing that comes to our weary souls as we gather in our Church meetings.

Thank God for the fellowship and encouragement of those of "like precious faith," but I declare to you that the life of sonship can only be known as we turn INWARD, to discover and know the living and eternal REALITY OF THE CHRIST WITHIN, conscious of His voice speaking, His hand guiding, His power generating, His life producing, from within, ALL THAT YOU NEED, and the image of God. With my poor and puny ability I cannot make the potential of GOD'S INDWELLING LIFE to be a living, transforming, all-sufficient reality to your heart. None but the Spirit of God can perform this wonderful and divine act of illumination. He alone can take the things of God and show them unto you.

There was a day in which Jesus and His disciples had made it to Jacob's well in Sychar and decided to stop for lunch. Jesus sat in the shade of the well's shelter while His disciples went into the nearby town for food. Through the shimmering heat haze, a woman with a water pot on her shoulder approached the well. She came to where Jesus was sitting, and He asked her for a drink. Her response was brittle with the hatred between the two peoples: "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (Jn. 4:9). Jesus was unruffled, offering her the gift He had come to give all men: "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water" (Jn. 4:10).

You see, Jesus is saying, "You're the one that needs the water, don't you know that?" She responded by saying in so many words, "You don't have a water pot. How are you going to get water? Why, this well is deep, and how are you going to draw from this well? Have you got some water that doesn't come from this well? Are you greater than our father Jacob who dug this well?" She's a little provoked with this Jew that is speaking to her. Then Jesus tells her a principle that she understands all too well in the natural. He said, "You've been drinking this water all your life, and YOU HAVE TO KEEP COMING BACK EVERY DAY. You know what a wearisome thing it is to walk back and forth through the heat and the dust with that water pot on your head. I do have some water, and if you drink of the water that I give you, you'll never thirst again. Take a drink of this water and it will BECOME IN YOU AS A WELL, a never-ending INTERNAL SOURCE!

Jesus spoke to this woman of a truth more wonderful and glorious than the vast majority of Christians have ever grasped. How many of the Lord's people STILL COME TO THE WELL! How many of us still have our well, our water, our supply, our source of life, ON THE OUTSIDE! We are still trying to pray something down from heaven, or work something up in a meeting, or always looking for some ministry, some prophet, some healer, and some experience from which we can DRAW LIFE! And after all our running to and fro, from well to well, from water pot to water pot, we're still thirsty! We're still singing, "Fill my cup, Lord!" We're still conscious

of our need! So we keep looking for a well from which to draw to quench our thirst and meet our need. Some even think it is NORMAL to always be thirsty, to ever be coming to the well, drinking again and again.

Jesus shared with the Samaritan woman one of the most profound and blessed truths of the ages. He said that He has water to give you, and if you once drink this water, you can throw away your water pots, because this water becomes a mighty artesian well WITHIN YOU. As long as the well is on the outside, as long as our source of life is without, then we have to go to the well and get water to satisfy our thirst. And any time you have to go to the well to drink you are going to be thirsty again! And if you stay away from the well very long you will become famished! Is this not a spiritual thermometer by which one can determine just how mature he is? So Jesus asked the woman, "How would you like to have the well on the inside? No more water pots, no more drawing, no more walking back and forth, no more thirst, no more effort and sweat." Let me ask you, dear reader, What would you think if you had the well on the INSIDE? This is what this thing of sonship is all about! It is the well on the inside: "Christ IN YOU the hope of glory. Sonship, maturity, overcoming, perfection, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, life and immortality--all this is found in that blessed realm where we finally know that we do indeed HAVE LIFE IN OURSELVES even as the Father has life in Himself. This is the well on the inside! And it is high time that we drink until we get the well on the inside! It should be clear to every thinking heart that once you have the well on the inside, not only do you not need to draw from a well without, but you BECOME A SOURCE of life for all about. THIS is sonship!

What an exciting hour in which to live! For some years now the Holy Ghost has witnessed in every city and hamlet across the length and breadth of the land that the manifestation of the sons of God is at hand--the next order of business on God's schedule of things. Great things are happening! God is moving in a wonderful way among His people. The night is far spent, THE DAY is at hand. This is not just another day; it is THE DAY of the Lord. It is the day when the sons of God are going to be manifest; those whom God has been working with; trying them, testing them, taking them through the fire of His dealings; making them perfect through sufferings; changing them from natural beings into spiritual ones; bringing forth the image of Christ, the reality of SPIRIT. The time is at hand for God to remove the veil and reveal His sons. The great day of the restoration is at hand. What anticipation this evokes within! It is the day all creation has been travailing for, and even now "the whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own" (Rom. 8:19, Phillips).

ULTIMATE FAITH

I pray that the Holy Spirit will impress upon the minds of all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship two important factors about the birth of this manchild seed that need to be burned deeply into our hearts. The first is that this manchild is going to be birthed supernaturally, and the second is that it is going to be through faith. First I want to state with the greatest possible clarity and authority that this manchild is going to be born supernaturally, therefore naturalism cannot and will not have anything to do with the manifestation of the sons of God. One of the most subtle tricks the carnal mind- ever since that fateful day in long ago Eden--is continually playing on God's people is injecting naturalism--carnal means and methods- into their vision, their revelation, their worship, and their walk in God. Because of their lack of faith and patience, the carnal mind (serpent) is continually convincing them that God is going to fulfill His promises somehow through the normal processes of nature, through natural law, natural wisdom, natural knowledge, natural means and formulas. The Word of God clearly teaches that the manifestation of the sons of God at the close of this age brings FULL SALVATION, which, of course, includes the BODY OF INCORRUPTION- salvation for spirit, soul and body. The purpose of this manifestation is twofold: first, to bring full redemption to God's elect; second, to bring deliverance to all peoples, kindreds, tongues and nations, to those now living as well as to the vast multitudes who have lived and died throughout the ages, until sin, sickness, sorrow, darkness, pain and death shall exist no more anywhere in God's unbounded universe, worlds without end. Let us notice how the apostle Paul reveals this purpose of God in the following words: "For even the whole creation waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known--waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship. For the creation was subjected to frailty--to futility, condemned to frustration -- not because of some intentional fault on its part, but by the will of Him who so subjected it. Yet with the hope that creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption and gain an entrance into the glorious freedom of God's children. We know that the whole creation has been moaning together in the pains of labor until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves too, who have and enjoy the first fruits of the Holy Spirit -- a foretaste of the blissful things to

come --groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies from sensuality and the grave, WHICH WILL REVEAL OUR ADOPTION, OUR MANIFESTATION AS GOD'S SONS" (Rom. 8: 19-23) (Amplified).

When Paul by inspiration penned these blessed words of hope he did not have in mind another great "revival" of the kinds we have experienced in many localities and nations throughout this age of grace. The creation is not groaning for another evangelistic campaign, nor for another healing service, nor for more gifts of the Spirit, nor for more apostles and prophets and teachers, nor for more signs, wonders and miracles, nor yet for 144,000 flaming evangelists just like Jesus when He walked the shores of blue Galilee. In two thousand years none of these things have ever produced a perfect Church, nor have they ever brought the fullness of the Kingdom of God, and not even one of them or all of them put together ever delivered the creation from its bondage to corruption! It is not just another "patch-up" job we want, but a full and complete and eternal deliverance from the whole dreadful realm of corruption in spirit, soul and body!

How we praise God and bless Him unceasingly for every blessing so lavishly bestowed by His bountiful grace. We rejoice exceedingly in His provision of our daily need, for those healings which have preserved alive these mortal bodies unto this day, for each sign and wonder that has quickened our faith and given assurance of His wonderful love, faithful care and gracious presence. We would not minimize the blessedness of any of these things, yet are aware that none of these are that for which creation, with ourselves, groans and travails. We cannot --dare not- be satisfied until we AWAKE IN HIS LIKENESS! Christ shall minister the fullness of HIS ETERNAL AND INCORRUPTIBLE LIFE to a firstfruits company of sons who shall in turn in part that same life and glory to the creation. These SONS are alive and in the world today. They may at this present time be fathers, and mothers, and sons, and daughters...they may be carpenters, or plumbers, or nurses, or technicians, or truck drivers, or housewives, or store clerks...or they may be apostles, or prophets, or elders, or deacons. But it is in their ultimate fashioning as SONS that they shall become the LIBERATORS that God has in mind for a world in darkness and bondage.

I stated earlier that this manchild shall be born supernaturally and through faith, and naturalism cannot and will not have anything to do with the birthing of this man-child. The scriptures make very clear, using the experience of Abraham and Sarah, who birthed Isaac, the first manchild of promise that was to come into this world, completely by-passing the processes of nature, and who was a type of not only Jesus, the manchild that was born two thousand years ago, but also a type of this many-membered manchild that is going to come forth from us in these last days, that naturalism is not going to have anything to do with it. It is very important that all of God's people who are in the flow of God's dealings and revelation today have this truth deeply implanted into their minds and hearts. For, wherever people are moving in the revelatory Word and present truth, the Kingdom message, sooner or later they are going to be visited by so-called "Kingdom Ministry," who will begin presenting to them natural, fleshly, legalistic, letter of the law means by which they can go on to perfection in Christ, and this man-child can be brought forth from within them.

Many of us who have contact with God's elect across the land and around the world, already have run into these so-called apostles who are teaching these things. They will come into your midst with their juice blenders advising you that the way God has provided to heal everybody's diseases and perfect everybody's health and bring the sons of God into longevity and eternal life is by eating health foods. They will come with their vitamin pills and whole wheat bread, and wheat germ and herbs and all kinds of things grown out of the earth and the water, bought from the health food stores, and teach you that the way into health and longevity and sonship is by ceasing to eat anything that can be bought from the local supermarket, and going on to eat only those foods that can be bought from the health food stores.

They will tell you that the only way that we can go on to perfection is by keeping perfectly the legalistic letter of the Old Testament dietary laws: touch not, taste not, handle not, don't eat pork, don't eat meat, if there is a literal animal that chews the cud, but doesn't divide the hoof, then that meat is unclean to you before God. And before they are finished they will bring you into a bondage of legalism and naturalism that will separate you completely from the leadership of the Spirit of God, and God's new creation life, and make you in the end to bring forth an Ishmael, a child of the flesh, through the processes of nature just as Hagar did long ago. Hear me! Any minis- try which teaches you that God's means for you fulfilling His will perfectly is to fulfill the letter of God's Word, by keeping typical law of it, particularly the laws and statutes of the Old Testament, is deceived by

deceiving spirits, ministering in a deceiving spirit, and bringing you under bondage to a deceiving spirit. Every law and every statute that God gave in the Old Testament has a spiritual fulfillment in this New Testament age that is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. It is that spiritual fulfillment in reality that God wants to bring forth in us.

Now, don't misunderstand me! I do not mean that it is healthy to put any and every kind of food into your body. I am by no means opposed to health foods, proper nutrition, or obeying the natural laws of God established in the physical realm. In fact, I am personally supportive of these things. I have learned experientially that the human body is the most amazing and marvelously constructed mechanism in God's physical universe. It is completely self-constructing, self-preserving, self-defending, and through the mighty power and intelligence put into it by the almighty Creator, it is totally self-cleansing, self-repairing, self-restoring and self-healing. The body is designed to MAINTAIN ITSELF in perfect health, completely free of disease, if its needs are correctly met, and it is not polluted and clogged with all kinds of poisons and contaminating debris. Foremost among these needs are fresh air, pure water, rest and sleep, and a diet to which our bodies are biologically and constitutionally adapted, namely, fresh raw fruits and vegetables with some raw nuts and seeds. Volumes could be written on this subject, were that the call of God upon my life. I have personally been speedily and dramatically healed of seven different physical ailments simply by converting to the diet our bodies were designed for. And I know for a fact that thousands of people have been delivered from practically every disease known to mankind simply by fasting and adapting to the diet to which humans are creatively adapted-fresh, raw, natural foods. But I can also tell you without fear of contradiction that all the fruitarians and vegetarians of all previous generations now lie silent in their graves, for no NATURAL SUBSTANCE possesses one iota of power to impart to spirit, soul or body the elements of spiritual or ETERNAL LIFE. How can corruption minister incorruption? Proper nutrition will enhance the performance and extend the life-span of the earthly, mortal organism, but it has absolutely nothing to do with the nature of God, spiritual life, divine power, the mind of Christ, perfection, incorruption or sonship!

Beloved, no natural formulas, no natural foods, no laws of nature, and no teaching that God is going to use the natural things to produce this supernatural manchild is going to have anything to do with the birthing of this manchild. It is going to be done supernaturally by the operation of the Spirit just as Isaac was birthed supernaturally by the operation of the Spirit, and the only thing that this manchild can eat that is going to enable him to come forth is the Word of God, which produces faith, for he is going to be born and brought forth and manifested by faith.

Another delusion that the carnal mind has foisted upon many who seek after sonship is the notion that divine enlightenment and incorruptible life comes by the quickening and re-activation of the PINEAL GLAND, a small cone-shaped gland located at the base of the brain, having no proven function, but believed to be a vestigial sense or endocrine organ. Some teach that this gland ceased to function at the time of Adam's transgression in Eden, thus cutting him off from the flow of wisdom and life from God, resulting in darkness and death. Today God is supposed to be re-activating the pineal gland which stores energy in tiny crystals which compose the gland, so that it acts as a receiver and transmitter, receiving electromagnetically messages from the Spirit of God, and transmitting these through the nervous system into the mind and body of those apprehended to sonship, thus effecting their transformation into life and immortality. I must speak a word against that. I testify to all who read these lines that any "gland" is merely a PHYSICAL BODY ORGAN by which certain constituents are separated from the blood for use in the body or for ejection from it, or by which certain natural changes are produced by the blood or lymph. There is no such thing as a NATURAL, PHYSICAL GLAND infusing the mind with spiritual enlightenment or the body with the properties of eternal life! The only elements affected by a natural and physical gland secreting natural and physical hormones etc. are the physical, temporal and mortal constituents of the flesh-body. Revelation is by THE SPIRIT and God speaks FROM SPIRIT TO SPIRIT. **"The SPIRIT ITSELF bears witness with OUR SPIRIT, that we are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:16).** The Word cannot be broken: **"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the TREE OF LIFE WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD" (Rev. 2:7).** Let me present this Tree of Life, this one and only Tree of Life: Christ, risen, glorified and exalted above all heavens! Christ enthroned in the glory He had with the Father before the world was! Christ dwelling IN YOUR HEART (spirit) by faith! HE is the Tree of Life in the paradise of the Kingdom of Heaven within you! And you, dearly beloved, have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness (ignorance, carnal mind, material consciousness) into the Kingdom of God's dear Son!

The leaves (truths) of this Tree of the SPIRIT OF YOUR SONSHIP are for the healing of the nations. With ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD RESIDENT WITHIN Y-O-U-R S-P-I-R-I-T- who needs a PINEAL GLAND?

As we have previously pointed out, the birthing of the first supernatural child of promise, Isaac makes this very clear to us. When God came to Abraham and Sarah, and gave them a promise saying, Behold Sarah shall have a son, there was no possible way that this child could be born through the laws of nature or any natural process. Sarah was already so old that her womb was dead. She had passed the time of women; there was no possible way that this manchild could be born from her through the natural processes of nature according to the manner of natural women. There was no natural means by which Abraham could help Sarah to bring forth this manchild. He had no pill, no doctor, and no scientist to give him some foolish promise by which Sarah's dead womb could be restored to life. He had no juice blenders, no natural health foods, God didn't give him any dietary laws by which if Sarah kept on the right diet, this manchild could be born. There was only one thing that Abraham could do to help Sarah bring forth this manchild, and that was to BELIEVE THE PROMISE OF GOD.

The inspired record in Gen. 21 tells us that when, after twenty-five years of waiting in faith, the promised manchild was finally born, it was not because nine or ten months before the birth God suddenly livened up Sarah's womb, or re-activated her pineal gland, and through the natural processes, and according to the laws of nature, Sarah finally birthed the child. But Genesis 21 tells us that at the set time GOD VISITED SARAH ... the manchild was born, not through the natural processes of women, but by the sovereign visitation of the Spirit of God. A sovereign anointing came upon Sarah and she was enabled to birth a supernatural child of promise. And so it is going to be with this little Virgin Woman, the Bride of Christ that is being clothed with the light of the sun, and prepared to bring forth a manchild. NATURALISM IS NOT GOING TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT! You can count on that. It isn't going to come through any naturalistic formulas preached by preachers, including baptisms, confessions, or any of the rest, but it shall happen supernaturally by faith.

At the Father's set time when our faith has been tried and proven, there will come the sovereign operation of God by His Spirit upon this Virgin Bride, and through that sovereign operation of the Spirit of God there shall come an anointing upon us, a sovereign anointing of God, that will bring forth and manifest this incorruptible manchild.

The second thing that we need to have impregnated deeply into our consciousness is that not only is this thing going to be done supernaturally, but it is going to be done by faith, and through faith, yea, by and through nothing else. The scriptures make it very clear that there was absolutely nothing Abraham could do in the natural to help Sarah bring forth this son, except believe the promise of God. It was through twenty-five years of believing God's promise and firmly embracing and clinging to God's promise, and through much testing that this manchild was finally born.

In that wonderful fourth chapter of Romans is revealed to us the great faith that Abraham had when it proclaims that HE STAGGERED NOT AT THE PROMISE OF GOD, but was STRONG IN FAITH, giving glory to God, and the Lord imputed his faith to him for righteousness and the manchild was born. The divine record states that Abraham staggered not at the promise of God. This is the problem with many saints today; they stagger at the promises of God. The promises seem so high and glorious that they do not have the faith to take hold of them. Particularly as God is speaking to His elect in this day, that there is coming an hour when right here as we stand upon our two feet many of us shall be suddenly and gloriously changed from corruptible to incorruptible. This promise is not only in the written Word, but is quickened to us by the Spirit of God, that it shall be fulfilled in a people in these days at the close of the age. It is so high and so glorious that it staggers the mind of those who try to grasp the things of God with their intellect instead of by the spirit. But Abraham staggered not at the promise of God, and was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Even during his whole twenty-five year period of testing, he simply went about as we are today, praising and glorifying God for the wonderful promise, saying, Thank you Lord, I know you are going to do it; praise God! I know your promise will not fail. And for no other reason than this manifested faith, the sovereign visitation of God came and the manchild was born.

I would earnestly exhort the elect of God in this momentous hour that the faith of yesterday and yesteryear is not sufficient for today. The admonition of the inspired apostle is especially meaningful for God's apprehended

ones at this time, wherein he says, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Heb. 6:1-2).

The King James Version here instructs us to leave the "principles" of the doctrine of Christ. The Moffat translation says, "Let us pass on then to what is mature, leaving ELEMENTARY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE BEHIND..." The Weymouth version reads, "Therefore leaving ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION ABOUT the Christ, let us advance to mature manhood..." The Amplified Bible renders, "Therefore let us go on and GET PAST THE ELEMENTARY STAGE in the teachings and doctrine of Christ ... advancing steadily toward completeness and perfection that belongs to spiritual maturity." So what we are instructed to leave behind is the FIRST ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES of the doctrine of Christ and these are enumerated to us as: (1) Repentance from dead works (2) Faith toward God (3) Baptisms (4) Laying on of hands (5) Resurrection of the dead (6) Eternal (eonian) judgment.

In spite of such a plain admonition the sad fact is that not one believer in a million ever gets beyond these first stepping stones- these elementary rudiments of the doctrine of Christ. The Spirit declares that ALL these elementary rudiments of the doctrine of Christ pertain to the realm of LITTLE CHILDREN- babes in Christ. In the verses immediately preceding the passage under consideration the apostle says, "For every one who continues to feed on milk is obviously inexperienced and unskilled in the doctrine of righteousness, that is, of conforming to the divine will in purpose, thought, and action, for he is a MERE INFANT --NOT ABLE TO TALK YET! But solid food is for full-grown men, for those whose senses are trained..." (Heb. 5:13-14) (Amplified Bible). It is very easy to spot a spiritual babe, for he will always be dwelling around one or more of these ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES...laying and re-laying that foundation. It is one of the great marvels of the universe, and perhaps the eighth wonder of the world, that the family of God has not completely disappeared from the face of the earth, for it is crystal clear to any who have eyes to see that the preachers and leaders of the church world today are altogether as INFANTILE as the church members! They are one and all, according to the criterion of our text, merely spiritual infants. These slobbering, sputtering, dribbling infants are in charge of the care and feeding of the whole congregation of infants. Truly it is the phenomenon of the ages that they have not all starved to death or died in their own purulence.

Now there is nothing wrong with laying these elementary foundations for those that need them, but the immature babes in Christ will always be known by the fact that they will continue to minister these things over and over to God's people who should long ago have passed on to higher things. But those believers sit there in those meetings week after week and service after service drinking that same diet of MILK. And those same preachers, day after day, and year after year, continue to USE MILK and minister milk to the people of God. No wonder they NEVER GO ON TO PERFECTION! And these babes, from the pulpit to the pew, are busily engaged in defending these "fundamental" and ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES of the doctrine of Christ. That's all they know. Start to talk about perfection, sonship, immortality, the Melchizedek Order, the army of God, bringing in the Kingdom and other things related to God's great Kingdom purposes and you are as a Barbarian to them--they have not the foggiest notion what in the world you are talking about !

Oh! that once and for all we might clearly see that for us too, NEARLY EVERYTHING WE HAVE EXPERIENCED UP TO NOW has its existence in that realm of elementaries! And it is from HERE that we are exhorted to GO ON TO PERFECTION. You don't go into the first principles in order to go on to perfection. You leave them! The fullness of God in Christ lies beyond all these. If you choose to remain there you simply will never arrive at spiritual maturity in God. The elementary principles are just GRAMMAR SCHOOL for those who would be sons indeed. They constitute the "in part" realm in which we move before that which is PERFECT is come. LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION is the present call of the Spirit.

In Hebrews 6:1-2 the Holy Spirit lists FAITH among the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ. But let us note that it is not simply FAITH of which the Spirit speaks, but FAITH TOWARD GOD. This distinction is important. The word "toward" is the translation of the Greek word EPI which means "upon," "to," or "toward." The Greek Interlinear New Testament which I have at hand renders this as "faith upon God." The thought is of a faith which turns one in a specific direction and THRUSTS HIM UPON GOD. This faith is directed totally

TOWARD God and bears along the one identified with it so that he in turn is directed toward and cast upon God. The Amplified Bible comes very close to expressing the correct thought from the Greek: "Let us not again be laying the foundation of...the faith BY WHICH YOU TURNED TO GOD." Thus, this elementary faith, this faith toward God, is that first ministration of faith to our hearts which turns us around from our stumbling in ignorance and blindness, causing us to trust in the living who is the Saviour of all men. If you lay again and again that foundation you will in the consciousness of your weakness and sin, continually turning again and again, repentance, getting "saved" over and over, never overcoming the flesh, the world, or the devil, but ever "turning" again and again to the Lord for mercy and salvation. Elementary faith is first and foremost the faith that reconciles and saves us --which also appropriates the many elementary blessings and benefits of our redemption such as forgiveness, healing, material provision, gifts of the Spirit, answers to prayer, etc.

We must not, however, dwell here in this realm of elementary faith for it is the faith of our babyhood walk in God. We are commanded to LEAVE this dimension of faiths and go on to perfection, even PERFECT FAITH. It is required, therefore, that we press on to a HIGHER AND GREATER FAITH which will lay hold upon BETTER THINGS...embracing BETTER PROMISES...revealing the ULTIMATE PURPOSES of God...a faith that will bring the body of Christ into the completion and perfection of God's eternal purpose in the elect. This is why the Spirit is sounding the trumpet across the land, thundering the Kingdom message from one end of the earth to the other! There are those who hear the trumpet sounding for the next great move of God in the earth, and they pull up their tent stakes, get their eyes on the forward moving cloud of His presence and glory, and faith is being evoked in them to literally WALK OUT each and every dealing of God in their lives until they fully and completely qualify to receive a Kingdom and Glory that far transcends any glory yet revealed unto the sons of men.

There is a most significant passage of scripture in **Rom. 1:17**: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." The full import of this verse is beautifully brought out in the Amplified Bible: "For in the gospel a righteousness which God ascribes is revealed, both SPRINGING FROM faith and LEADING TO faith --disclosed through the WAY OF FAITH which AROUSES TO MORE FAITH. As it is written, The man who through faith is just and upright SHALL LIVE AND SHALL LIVE by faith!" Ah, the gospel reveals a righteousness which both SPRINGS FROM FAITH and LEADS TO FAITH. The righteousness of God in us springs from the elementary faith God ministers to us when we are saved, turned toward God, reconciled. But once the work of God has commenced within us His objective is to cause His inworking in us to LEAD US ON TO FAITH--that is, from one degree of faith to another! This is the "WAY OF FAITH, that AROUSES TO MORE FAITH." The unfolding of God's revelatory truth in this hour is leading the body of Christ into an understanding of God's ULTIMATE PURPOSE in them--GOD MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH. And in keeping with this expanded vision the Spirit is INCREASING OUR FAITH FROM ONE REALM OF FAITH TO ANOTHER until finally that PERFECT FAITH, yea that ULTIMATE FAITH shall have been evoked within and we shall apprehend that ultimate purpose of God.

It is ULTIMATE FAITH realized in God's ULTIMATE PEOPLE that shall bring to pass in the earth God's ULTIMATE PURPOSE. Let us go on to perfection!

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VIRGO-THE VIRGIN [Cont'd]
BY: J. PRESTON EBY**

**KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"**

PART SEVEN

**THE DECANS
COMA
CENTAURUS
THE FOOLISH FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY**

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for SIGNS, and for seasons, and for days, and years" (Gen. 1:14).

The word for "signs" as found in the passage above is OTH in the Hebrew. A sign is a mark to indicate something greater than the mark itself. Musical notes are symbols, or signs, to the pianist sitting at his instrument. If the pianist interprets the notes together in proper sequence, then the audience hears what the creator of the music intended when he wrote the composition. Likewise, the heavens are signs, as notes on a sheet of music. If we interpret the signs in the heavens correctly, then we can understand and appreciate the symphony of God's creation from the beginning to the end. Signs in the heavens can also be compared to notes of music in another way. As the pianist plays a concerto, the music, like a constant revelation, is heard in its proper sequence. Similarly, "signs" in Gen. 1:14 mean that the heavens are the unfurling of God's revelation to man. In other words, the heavens tell the story of things to come--they PROPHESEY!

PICTURES speak in every language, and this significant fact was recognized by the psalmist in Psalm 19 as in spirit he stated that the heavens declare a Divine meaning, in universal language, to all people, everywhere. Almighty Lord! in whom dwelleth the wisdom and knowledge of the universe, may our hearts be filled with the holy assurance that the starry hosts shining in the night skies above us are like a glorious PICTURE BOOK which God has placed wide open above us. It is full of wonderful things, glorious beyond words, for us to see and learn about Himself, our selves, and His great and stupendous plan for us. They speak in every language to every people. And they speak and reveal the majesty of God's great plan and purposes to His creation. Upon the blue sapphire of the firmament is spread a sheet of royal paper written all over with the wisdom and power of God. This Book of Creation is not sold in stores, but it is to be read by everyone who lifts his eyes up to heaven.

To establish the message of God's Bible in the sky, the Lord selected three of the most godly and eminent of men at the beginning of history--Adam, Seth and Enoch. It is not our purpose to go into the wearisome trail of historical evidence in support of the fact I have just stated--but it does exist. According to Arabic tradition the signs came from Seth and from Enoch. This is the same tradition that the Greeks have; only they knew Enoch as "Atlas." This is the same tradition the Egyptians have; only they knew Enoch as "Hermes." But all these go back to the grandson of Adam and say that Enoch and his father Seth were the founders of this ancient understanding of the heavens. In the divine record of the fourth creative day the sun, moon, and stars were arranged as lights in the sky and these lights were designated to be for SIGNS, so that night after night, year after year, in the purple depths of the midnight sky, those burning suns show forth and silently but ceaselessly proclaim the Great Revelation. There is only one system in the universe where STARS and SIGNS are united together and that is in the SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC, also called the Celestial Signs and the Twelve Signs. Ancient and modern civilized nations have called them Signs. The renowned Jewish historian, Josephus, mentions Seth as the first astronomer, or arranger of the Zodiac. The ancient Egyptians said SET (Seth) was the inventor of astronomy--and astronomy in ancient times was not by the study of the Signs of the Zodiac. And according to Gen. 4:25-26 it was directly through the ministry of Seth that MEN BEGAN TO CALL upon THE NAME OF YAHWEH. The method by which Seth taught the knowledge of God was by the stars of heaven, for there was no written scripture in that early time. Seth gave a name to each star group, designating them by the attributes of Jehovah and the characters and events involved in the great scheme of redemption.

He named the first sign VIRGO--for the Redeemer of the world would come forth as a child, born of a Virgin. The last sign he named LEO--the figure of a great rampant lion, leaping forth to rend, with his feet over the writhing body of Hydra, the Serpent, which is in the act of fleeing. The Lion of the tribe of Judah prevails. The Serpent of that long ago Eden is defeated. Christ IN US is Victor. The conflict ends, the warfare is b[rought to a successful conclusion, all strife ceases. Sin, error, sickness, pain, sorrow and death forever flee away. Victory is secure! All things are restored! Man lives again tall and magnificent in the image of God!

At the time of the building of the tower of Babel, under the rebellion and apostasy of Nimrod, who introduced idolatry into the world, this glorious truth of God was corrupted into pagan mythology, whereby instead of these being signs of God and His salvation, by which men should know the Lord, and understand His wonderful plan of the ages, they were changed into deities themselves and people began to worship the host of heaven: the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars. These became the great gods of Babylon, Assyria, Greece and Rome. How plain it is--even a child can understand!--all false religion, even from the distant dawn of history, is but a PERVERSION OF THE TRUTH!

THE DECANS

In ancient times there were more constellations recognized than the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Each of the twelve signs has three other constellations grouped around it. Thus, altogether there are twelve Zodiacal signs with 36 additional constellations. These secondary constellations are called "Decans," from the Shemitic term DEK, meaning a "part" or "piece." The Decans are therefore "sidepieces," indicating that they belong to the sign and that their message is a part of that sign's message. As previously pointed out, each Zodiacal sign has three Decans, or three secondary constellations grouped about it. These three additional constellations are a part of that sign's revelation. Therefore, to fully comprehend the significance of each sign we must examine not only the major sign, but also its three Decans. The sign of VIRGO has its three Decans: the constellations of Coma, Centaurus, and Bootes. Before proceeding to the next major sign let us consider the three Decans or other pieces of Virgo's house.

COMA

The first is called Coma. It depicts a woman sitting in a chair holding a child in her arms, which she is contemplating and admiring. The name Coma means "the desired" or "the longed for"--the very word which Haggai the prophet uses where he speaks of the coming Messiah as "THE DESIRE of all nations." "And I will shake all nations, and THE DESIRE of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. 2:7). The ancient Egyptian name for this constellation was SHES-NU, meaning THE DESIRED SON! The woman in Virgo, and the woman in this first De-can of Virgo, as well as the sun-clad woman in Rev. 12 are one and the same; and the infant here is everywhere identified with the Seed and the Branch. Historically this is Jesus the Christ. But prophetically it is the manchild of the manifested sons of God--the complete Christ, Head and body. Oh, the mystery of it! How this precious child is DESIRED!

"For even the whole creation waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known--waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship. For...the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption and gain an entrance into the glorious freedom of God's children" (Rom. 8:19,21). When Paul by inspiration penned these blessed words of hope he did not have in mind a manifestation of God's sons after the order of which Jesus was manifested while on earth. Jesus glorified the Father on the earth plane, and so do we; but this is not the glory yet to be revealed that we anticipate, neither is it the hope for which the whole creation is in travail. The glory to which we are called as sons of God is not the glory Jesus had on earth, but the glory for which He prayed when His earth-walk was completed: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Paul wrote, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall YE also appear WITH HIM IN GLORY" (Co]. 3:4). And Peter declared, "But the God of all grace...hath called us unto HIS ETERNAL GLORY by Christ Jesus" (I Pet. 5:10).

I can assure you, precious friend of mine, that this resurrection glory, this incorruptible glory, this eternal glory is the HOPE OF ALL CREATION. We rejoice in the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit, in prophecies, visions, healings, miracles, temporal blessings and provisions, but I must confess that I am saddened to see

the Lord's people continually following after mere TEMPORAL SIGNS and PHYSICAL, MATERIAL, MORTAL BLESSINGS. It is a distress to my soul to see my precious sick brethren (as well as myself) healed by the power of God, only to behold them smitten later by some other debilitating disease. What sorrow it brings to the human heart to see the precious men and women of God who have walked in the Spirit, and proclaimed the revelation of God, and have so mightily blessed God's people finally grow old or be struck down by some loathsome disease and pass from our midst into the silence of the grave. I grow tired of healing the sick only to see them sick again. It is frustrating to pray for the same saints over and over again for the same problems and weaknesses. I say it reverently, but I am weary of seeing the dead raised just to watch them aging and weakening on their way into death again. I tire of signs and wonders which cater only to the flesh, and minister solely to the physical man on the plane of mortality: food, raiment, money, and all the rest of the corruptible things of earth. I am deeply discontented with that which blesses men in the natural but then leaves them to carry on their lives in corruptible bodies and natures. There is NO ETERNAL GLORY nor is there any release from THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION in any of these things. How expressive the word which the Spirit selected when He inspired the apostle to write: "For in this (our earthly house) we groan, EARNESTLY DESIRING to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven... that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (II Cor. 5:1-5). Paul says that the whole creation GROANS and EARNESTLY AWAITS the manifestation of the sons of God, and we ourselves ALSO GROAN, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. This incorruptible race of the manifested sons of God is the "desired son"--COMA! The "greater works" of which Jesus spoke will appear when thus corruptible has fully put on incorruption and the sons of God are put on display in the fullness of His divine life and Glory. When we consider the transcendent majesty and power of the glory of a ministry beyond limitation, death, and the curse, it seems but little wonder that such deliverance and reality is indeed THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS. With what anticipation do we wait for this glorious manifestation!

CENTAURUS

The second constellation of Virgo is Centaurus. It is depicted as a centaur, which in ancient times was a creature having the head and torso of a man, with the body and legs of a horse, and thus a dual-natured being. Centaurs were believed to be heaven-be-gotten. They were born of the clouds; they were sons of the gods. But they were despised, hated and abhorred by both gods and men. They were fought, driven to the mountains, and finally exterminated. The Centaur in the Decan of Virgo is pictured going forth as a hunter, with a spear he is slaying a beast which is called the VICTIM, and the whole scene appears in the heavens against the back-ground of the Southern Cross or Crux. The name of this constellation in Arabic, Chaldaic and Hebrew was BEZEH, meaning "the despised one"--just the opposite of Coma, "the desired." Yet--they are one and the same! This title BEZEH, meaning "the despised one," is found several times in Hebrew Old Testament. Most commonly known of the passages in which it is to be discovered is Isa. 53:3 where it appears twice in one verse. Referring to the rejection of Israel's Messiah by that nation, the prophet cries, "He is DESPISED (BEZEH) and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from Him; and He was DESPISED (BEZEH) and we esteemed Him not."

Let us summarize the scene. Here is a double-natured being, out of the heavens, yet in the likeness of men, who, to men is repulsive and despised, yet really great, powerful and beneficent, pushing with his spear at the heart of some victim, and moving all the while over the constellation of the Cross. What a picture! Historically this is Jesus, the man who is the Lord from heaven, but made in the likeness of sinful flesh, humbling Himself to be despised and rejected of men, yet great, powerful and glorious with words divine attended by signs, wonders, miracles, and authority and grace such as men had never witnessed, yet laying down His life, slaying Himself, as a Victim, over a cross, as a sacrifice, a sweet smelling savour unto God.

The message which beams from this awe-inspiring picture like the blazing rays of the noon-day sun is one of SACRIFICIAL LOVE--REDEEMING LOVE. The truth of love in Jesus Christ was that He loved without retaliation for evil, a love that suffered long, even to the agonies of the cross, and then was kind enough to pray: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34). And I declare to you that regardless of what other sins those wicked men may come into judgment for, they will never stand in the judgment condemned for killing the Son of God, for HE AND HIS FATHER FORGAVE THEM! This truth of the love of God in Jesus Christ must also be true in us, the younger sons of God. Jesus did not love people because He

loved Himself, as it was under the law. It was the Father's unconditional and all-surpassing love flowing through Him, surging as a mighty river out to humanity, overflowing redemptively, so that He could say, "Let your love for others not be based on love for yourself, but on what was true in Me: If the Father could love Judas through Me, and love Peter through Me, and the people that crucified Me, then let the Father's love so find expression through you."

In years past we have sung a chorus that goes like this: "His love has no limits, His grace has no measure, His power has no boundaries known unto man; for out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again." This is a lovely chorus and I love to sing it and I say it is true. In Jesus Christ, there is NO LIMIT to His love, NO MEASURE to His grace, and NO BOUNDARIES to His power for He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and His mercy endureth FOREVER. If I say that there is one sin, one condition, one creature, one place, one age or group of ages unto which His love and His grace shall not reach then I LIE and know not the truth. Jesus loved His friends, His enemies, the man who betrayed Him, the man who denied Him, the men who nailed Him to the cross. There just was no limit to His love! You could never find a place where you could say, "So far would He love, but no farther." Is that love true in us? Or do we say, "Well, I will only stand so much, I will only forgive so long, I will only trust so far, and that is the end of it." It is God's purpose that His love should find no limit in us, His grace no measure in us and His power no boundary in us.

God is preparing a people who, when they stand up and say, "God is love," are not talking about God's love in heaven, or God's love in Jesus; no, they will be expressing the love of God in their own person. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (Jn. 3:16). Everyone likes a verse like that. But how many would like a verse like this: "God still loves the world so much that He would like to give His sons, right now." We do not like that. We like to be sons if God will keep us, if He will bless us, if He will take us to His bosom and not let us go. But what does God do with His sons? Why, He GIVES THEM! Jesus said, "As the Father has sent Me, even so send I you." What did Jesus also say? "This is My flesh, My B-O-D-Y, which I GIVE for the life of the world." If we are His body, then will He not give us for the life of the world? "Oh," someone says, "I do not like the kind of religion where I do not get something." Well, my brother, my sister, that is how it starts, by receiving, but it must not end there. We must come to the place where God can give us, where we can lie down and become a channel, a river--the River of Life poured out into humanity!

This is the high drama of the double-natured Centaur carrying the spear and slaying the Victim--for those elect sons of God represented by this Centaur are both human and divine, earthly and heavenly, and they are both Centaur and Victim. It means the laying down of the life for the world. It is the receiving of heaven's life into earthen vessels, but not for our sakes, but for creation's sake, that there shall be an out-flowing of God into men's lives. If you have been trying to prove something out of the Bible, let it be proved out of your life instead. Let us say, "Father, make your truth to be reality and life in me and through me." This is sonship! This, beloved, is the Victim dying, not in the place of mankind, but FOR or ON BEHALF of mankind, universally pouring out his life unto all. This is God IN us, God AS us, God LIVING TH~OUGH us, God FLOWING OUT of us, loving through us, redeeming through us, reconciling and restoring all by us. Amen. So be it!

THE FOOLISH FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY

There is a truth enunciated by the apostle Paul in I Cor. 1:26-29 that should hold us spellbound once we grasp its meaning. The statement is very simple and, like so many profound truths, it is easily missed, going completely unnoticed. But you, O people of God, partakers of the heavenly calling and sharers together with Christ Jesus in the sonship for which all creation groans, should give continual meditation and consideration to these words. Paul, having stated that Christ is both the wisdom and power of God, and that the FOOLISHNESS OF GOD is wiser than men and the WEAKNESS OF GOD stronger than men, says, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the FOOLISH THINGS of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the WEAK things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and BASE things of the world, and things which are DESPISED, hath God chosen, yea, and things which ARE NOT, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence."

There are five powerful ministries listed in this remarkable passage--a FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY. Many men have aspired to be a part of God's great five-fold ministry set forth in Eph. 4:11. Who wouldn't covet the ministry of

an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor or teacher? The world has been turned up-side down by such ministries! But the five-fold ministry revealed in I Cor. 1:27-28 has nothing to do with these ministries at all. Rather, it is what I have termed GOD'S FOOLISH FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY. These five ministries are just as real and far more powerful, effective and far-reaching than the more popular five-fold ministry. The five ministries mentioned in Eph. 4:11 are exclusively for the body of Christ, for the perfecting of the saints, but the five superlative ministries set forth in I Cor. 1:27-28 are universal in scope, Kingdom in character, subduing all things unto God. This powerful and effective five-fold ministry shakes empires off their hinges, subdues kingdoms, confounds the wisdom of the mighty, and brings to nought all the things that are. All those blessed ones apprehended to sonship will share in this invincible ministry. In spite of their surpassing glory and irresistible power we do not desire them, but they come to us just as surely as day follows night. They come to us unannounced and unsolicited. None of us would invite these God-ordained ministries to come our way! But God in His great wisdom and unsearchable ways sends them to us that we may know Him as He is and learn the strange but wonderful WAYS OF HIS KINGDOM. Now that we see how important and powerful these ministries are, let me present them to you:

- (1) foolish things
- (2) weak things
- (3) base things
- (4) despised things
- (5) things which are not

We need not look to the great men of this age or yet to the esteemed religious leaders of this age, nor the wise men after the corrupt wisdom of this age to be the ones who will bear the government of the Kingdom of God in the age and ages to come. It remains then, for us to see that "GOD HATH CHOSEN the FOOLISH things of the world to confound the wise (that is, the things which the WORLD CALLS FOOLISH); and God hath chosen the WEAK things of the world to confound the things that are mighty (that is, the things that the world deems weak); and the BASE things of the world, and the things which ARE DESPISED, hath God chosen, yea, and the things which ARE NOT to bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence."

Seeing, then, that God has rejected the wisdom and power and honor of this world and its vain system and has chosen instead a people that the wisdom of the-world considers foolish, stupid, weak and of no account, we should readily see that divine wisdom has chosen those who for His name are despised, who glory not in the wisdom of men, but who glory in the hidden wisdom of God revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, according as it is written, "**He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:31).**

It is interesting to note that the word FOOLISH is from the Greek word MOROS meaning "dull, stupid, heedless, blockhead, absurd." Furthermore, this Greek word is the word from which we get our English word MORON. Ah--God has chosen a company of dull, stupid, nit-witted, heedless, absurd, moronic blockheads (by this world's standards!) to confound the irrational wise ones of this world's system! The word CONFOUND means "to put to shame or disgrace." Well did Ray Prinzing write: "God hath chosen what the world calls foolish, to confound the world's wisdom. Among all the descriptive phrases used by Paul, one especially stands out, when he says, 'and base things...' The Greek word for 'base' used here is: AGENES. The letter 'a' when placed in front of a word reverses its meaning, either from negative to positive, or from positive to negative. Here it is in the latter case, and it provides for us this thought: God is going to have the ones who have boasted in their 'genes' as of royal lineage, to be confounded by those of ignoble, or common birth. Not many mighty, not many noble, are called. Thank God for those that are--but they soon learn that they have nothing to boast of in the natural, for it is only HIS LIFE IN US that is of real value. And HE can take the weakest, and the basest, and use them to BRING TO NOUGHT, to make useless, to down-idle, the things wherein men once trusted" --end quote.

There is absolutely no need for any of us to try to search out the ways, means and methods that God employs to bring His purposes to pass. For God has declared and written that He will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will even bring to nothing the wisdom of the prudent. And, as we have seen, the FOOLISHNESS of God is WISER than men. Or this thing that appears to be so foolish to the carnal mind (the Christ and His work) is

actually the WISDOM OF GOD. Not a great many wise men, after the flesh, are called of God. They are left to follow the plan prescribed for them, and in God's due time and according to His plan, they will be brought to a knowledge of God. Their wisdom, which is nothing but foolishness, will drop from them, light will shine upon their path and they will be brought to understand at last what true wisdom is.

"For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God" (II Cor. 13:4). "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). In becoming WEAK IN HIM, brought to obedience unto the death of His cross, we are also brought to the end of our self-life, in its carnality, perverted consciousness, distorted understanding, and deceptive illusion. But rather than being destroyed by this process, there is a new and glorious living by the power of God out of our own reality of SPIRIT-LIFE. There is a revelation in weakness that few have comprehended. The purpose is to magnify the supremacy of the SPIRIT, the power of the divine life released through us, while discouraging completely the strength, wisdom, and reality of the OUTER MAN. Again I would share an enlightening insight from the able pen of Ray Prinzing: "Regardless of Paul's natural stature, be he a short man, or otherwise, I do envision him standing before men and speaking with power and authority because of the revelation of God which he possessed, and because of the anointing upon his message. His boldness, his free-spokenness was IN GOD, not as the result of being psyched up by his own ego. The natural world today relies heavily upon this self-psyched state. Athletes will win or lose a game according to the degree they mentally 'jack themselves up' until they feel themselves to be superior to all the athletes in contest with them. On the energy-force of this mental state, combined with a physical body that has been toned and prepared for this hour, they emit a self-confidence that is used to intimidate their opponent. However this self-induced state cannot be maintained, and they will 'peak out,' burn up their resources, and afterwards have a 'let down' and be unable to continue any immediately stressful conflict. How OPPOSITE is the way of the child of God, who knows that 'in himself he is nothing,' and then, relying solely upon the power of God, can move forth in divine confidence. Thus, at the same time Paul was speaking forth the truth by the power of the Spirit, yet he was conscious of his own weakness, that in his flesh (outer man) dwelt no good thing (Rom. 7:18). Be there any sufficiency at all, it would have to be BY THE POWER OF GOD. Nor did Paul desire that people put their trust in him--this would be building a kingdom of man, which man would have to maintain. There must be a BALANCE, for while we have a 'consciousness of our weakness,' we must not develop a WEAKNESS COMPLEX. For though it is true, I AM WEAK, yet it is also true, I CAN DO ALL THINGS! Thank God when He imparts to us a real understanding and comprehension of our own weakness--we should not despair because of it, because it becomes the arena wherein He can show forth HIS POWER. 'Out of weakness were made strong...' (Heb. 11:34)" --end quote.

In the physical universe we have the example of the atom. The tremendous power which we fear in our world is not the flow of great rivers or the floods which they cause. It is not the might of the tide as it pushes the millions of tons of water forward and then draws them back again. It is not the flash of the lightning or the crack of the thunder. It is something so small that we cannot see it. It is the atom which we fear, and it is the atom which has the unlimited power to blow the world apart. What would seem to be the weakest thing in the world is in reality an unbelievably powerful force. So it is that God in His dealing with humanity uses, not the great spectacular things which worldly rulers use, but the insignificant things which men despise

One of the unique workings of God in the earth is that He has always delighted to use small instances to launch mighty movements. Divine wisdom has never been particular about the condition or position from which He selects His privileged sons who were to change the ages. God has His failures. His Kingdom cannot do without them. These failures are His men and women of promise, weak in themselves and the wisdom of this world, often walking the way of defeat, failure, humiliation, and resignation--unto glory. Did God choose ancient Israel because they were more or better or stronger than anybody else? If you had to choose a people to lead the rest of the world you probably would select the greatest and strongest on earth. But that is not how God works. Almighty God, in His infinite wisdom, works JUST THE OPPOSITE. God is the great miracle worker. He makes something out of nothing, and somebody's out of nobodies.

Pharaoh thought that by slaying all the Hebrew male infants in Egypt that he could further oppress the people of God, but the very edict he sent forth opened the door for little Moses to slip right into his own house and be raised as his own son, finally overthrowing his throne and scattering the Egyptian tyrant and his armies upon

the rocky depths of the Red Sea. Thus was the wisdom of Egypt confounded. Ah, the weak things! What was weaker than Moses' rod? God sent Moses against the mightiest empire of the world. Egypt then ruled the world. When Moses was wanted for God's service he was found on the back side of a mountain feeding sheep. God found him with just a shepherd's stick, and said, "What is that thou hast in thy hand?" and he answered, "A rod," and God said, "Throw it on the ground," and when he had done so it became a serpent, and Moses was afraid of it, but God said, "Take it by the tail," and he trusted God and took it by the tail, and it became a rod again. He stretched that rod over Egypt ten times, and ten times the heavens parted and God sent judgment on that people. With that rod he smote the waters of the Red Sea and they parted. With that rod he struck Jacob's rock at Horeb, and a vast Mississippi River sprang forth, enough for three and a half million famished souls, and all with flocks and herds. God chose the WEAK THINGS.

God chooses the foolish things. It must have seemed very foolish to the people of Jericho for the army of God, 600,000 men, to march around Jericho with no weapons but ram's horns! Think of it. What artillery! What cannonading can they do? To the military wiseacres this was worse than nonsense; but still the 600,000 men marched and did nothing but blow ram's horns until the time came to shout, and when they shouted the echo of their shout was answered by the roar and crash of the falling walls of the doomed city. The thing that seemed foolish proved the greatest triumph possible.

The Lord spoke to, and dealt with Gideon so encouragingly, when he was hidden in the winepress beating out wheat. The angel saluted him with: "Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Gideon did not appear to be either a mighty man or a man of valor, for he was hidden away for fear of the enemy. But it was not anything in Gideon that made him mighty; it was because of the Mighty One in the midst of him. And the Lord led him on until His gentleness made Gideon great, and he really became a mighty man of valor. How precious God woos us on; and as we yield that He may work in us, He ascribes to us the fruit of His own working upon and within us, for HE IS MIGHTY IN US. What could be weaker than Gideon's three hundred, and what were their weapons? Nothing but lamps and pitchers, and the lamps would not shine until the pitchers were broken. The earthen pitcher represents the majority of believers today whose consciousness of their identity in the outer flesh-life has never been smashed to pieces by the inward power of the Holy Spirit. But when the pitchers were broken the inner light shone out with such brilliance that three hundred men with NOTHING BUT LIGHT were enough to scatter the hosts of the enemy and give victory. If our military generals are going to fight a battle they would want more men than that. But when God wants to fight a battle He delights in getting hold of the SMALLEST THING HE CAN FIND. He knew how to tumble a cake of barley-meal down into the camp of the Midianites, and have it confuse them so that they fell to slaying themselves, and the victory was the Lord's. In like manner ONE WORD from the realm of SPIRIT is enough to confuse and put to flight all the forces of sin, sickness, sorrow and death from the carnal mind.

What was weaker than David's sling? It was just such a sling as any boy could make. David slipped down to the brook and picked up five stones, and gained a victory for God that all the army of Israel had failed to gain. Oh yes, God not only uses the foolish things, and the despised things, He also uses the ARE NOTS to bring to nought the things that are. Years after the slaying of Goliath David gathered around him 400 men who have been called DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN. But just who were these "mighty men"? These were the men out of Israel who were in distress, in debt, misfits, and discontented. They were a motley crew of FAILURES! But David under the leadership of the Holy Spirit took that weak and base and despised army and made them expert in war.

Note how rare it is that a prophet ever comes forth from the ranks of privilege in either Church or State. Your mighty Elisha comes from the plough; it is seldom that he comes from the conventional school of the prophets. It seemed very foolish for Jesus in choosing disciples to ignore Jerusalem with the Sanhedrin and all its culture. There was no shortage of trained religious professionals to choose from--priests, scribes, lawyers, Pharisees, and Sadducees --but Jesus bypassed them all for a group of nobodies. How strange--to the natural man--that He ignored Rome--Rome that ruled the world, and was in the height of her splendor! The Son of God goes down to the shores of Galilee and gets twelve men. Here comes a young, unheard-of itinerant preacher from Nazareth, the "place of no good thing." He has only a collection of bedraggled, uneducated, untutored, unschooled, unlettered, unsophisticated men around Him who smell of fish. This is His corporate board of directors. Yet He claims it. It is going to triumph over Rome! When the hour arrives for Jesus to inaugurate His

Church, the Pastor (Jesus Himself) was being executed between two thieves. The chairman of the board (Peter) was out cursing and swearing that he had never even met the Master. The treasurer (Judas) was committing suicide after embezzling funds. Most of the rest of the board members (the apostles) had run away. A few ladies from the Women's Fellowship were about the only ones who showed much faithfulness. Talk about a bunch of "ARE NOTS"! Shortly thereafter He leaves His followers with an assignment to preach the Word of His Kingdom in the uttermost parts of the earth. Little did those simple fishermen know that their work would one day extend to Hong Kong, Rio de Janeiro, Lagos, London, and even Moscow! But when He had chosen them and filled them with fire out of the skies, the wisdom of this world was not able to resist the power with which they spoke. "Foolish things" hath God chosen! "It pleased God," Augustine beautifully says, "in His infinite mercy, to save philosophers by means of fishermen, and not fishermen by means of philosophers."

What was ever so weak as Christ? "**He was crucified through weakness**" (II Cor. 13:4). When God said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness, and let them have dominion," it seems that God made a mistake. When He lowered that man into this gross material realm, made of dirt, of the dust of the ground, and formed him with the kind of human body we have, flesh and blood, soul and body, with all the appetites, desires and weaknesses we have, all the frailty, all the ability for twisting, warping, and spoiling things, when He created us like that and then thought that in such a physical, human, natural, earth-made body HIS IMAGE COULD BE MANIFESTED, it seems that God was mistaken. Could that human creature limited like us, rule the world, and judge angels, and subdue and control all the unbounded heavens unto the unlimited vastnesses of infinity? So God said, I will invade humanity and come down in the person of My Son, limit Myself to a human, physical body just like man has, with all its appetites, hunger, weakness, sorrow and death, and I will demonstrate the character, the life, the love, and the power of God on the human level. THE INCARNATION WAS GOD MANIFESTING HIMSELF WITHIN THE LIMITATION OF A HUMAN BODY. Christ could not fly like a bird, He could not see further than anybody else, He could not run faster than the other young men in His day, He got as tired as anybody else, He got hungry and thirsty, fell asleep, they could spit on Him and finally kill Him. Yet in Jesus Christ you have the perfect expression of God and the demonstration of the ultimate triumph of THE SPIRIT over all the weakness of the flesh.

What is the importance of God in Christ Jesus? It means that the Spirit of God, the Son of God, the inner man, God Himself, can live and express Himself in a physical human body. When God invaded humanity in the body of Jesus Christ, took upon Himself human nature and limitation, was made in the likeness, not of glorified flesh, but of sinful flesh, and for thirty-three and a half years lived, walked, slept, and died in that body, manifesting God in the scope of humanity, it meant that God can by His Spirit of life within you, my beloved, live in these human bodies of ours, living in us, loving in us, reigning in us, speaking in us, blessing in us, and manifesting Himself in the absolute fullness of His Godhead. Being mocked, God was living in Him. Asleep in the back of a boat, God was living in Him. He goes to a tree and finds nothing on it, and God is living in Him. When He was weary, persecuted, hated, spit upon, nailed to the cross, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.

Do you see what God did? He made it possible for Himself to be at home in human bodies. "**The tabernacle of God is with MAN**" (Rev. 21:3). Not with angels, with man. "**We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth**" (Jn. 1:14). The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you," is the inspired admonition (Col. 3:16). This is not God in Jesus, this is God in YOU! That is not just a figure of speech; in your physical body is the tabernacle, the dwelling place of the eternal God. In man dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. "**That you might be filled with ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD**" (Eph. 3:19). God demonstrated this will of God for all mankind in the person of Jesus Christ, GOD manifest in the flesh. "**The Father and I will...make our abode--be at home--with you**" (Jn. 14:23). "Abode" means not to be a visitor but to settle down, without conflict. The SPIRIT will abide with you forever, so that the mind of the Spirit flows through your mind normally and naturally. The word of God shall flow out of your mouth normally and naturally. It seems some so-called prophecy cannot come forth unless the speaker starts to shake or change his tone of voice. Don't you know that God was speaking through Jesus all the time?

It is a wonder when we think of the method that God used to accomplish the redemption. It was not that He appeared as some blazing flame of fire from the heavens. No! He came as "a little tiny baby thing that made His mother cry." God in swaddling clothes! A wonder indeed to behold! God as a teenager, God as a carpenter God as the wandering peasant preacher who proclaimed a new message which startled men. Everywhere He

went He caused people to wonder, "What manner of man is this?" In one moment He is wearily lying in the back of a ship and in the next He says, "Peace, be still," and the waves cease their roaring and the winds die at His command. "What manner of man is this?" "Whence hath He these things, seeing that He never learned?" Here the wisest man that ever lived astounds the doctors and the lawyers and the theologians with the depth and profundity of His wisdom. It is a wonder by the principle on which it operates, a principle which is so foreign to anything we know in this world. It is a principle which most people have never even dimly grasped--that God is Spirit, that God tabernacles in human flesh, that man is basically spiritual, not physical, that we can live out of the Spirit so that out of the greatest weakness is revealed the greatest strength, God manifest in the flesh! It is the principle that GOD HATH CHOSEN THE FOOLISH, WEAK, BASE, AND DESPISED THINGS of the world to confound the wisdom of the wise and the power of the mighty.

The meaning of the incarnation is that God could drink out of a bottle if Jesus drank out of a bottle, God in Him learned to crawl before He learned to walk, God learned a language and stumbled over the words before He got it straight, for God limited Himself to the limitation of man that He might increase in man to the unlimited capacity of the Spirit. When God dwells in us and Christ is living in us, it is not something foreign that has invaded us. Paul did not say, "For me to be spiritual and shake and fall out under the power is Christ." He said, "For me to LIVE is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). Living for Paul did not mean those supernatural moments when he was seeing visions and hearing voices and being caught up into the third heaven. It meant for Paul to walk from one town to another on the dusty streets with Christ walking in him and as him. It was for Paul to sew tents, with Christ making tents through him. It was speaking to people and manifesting the love of God, with Christ manifesting that love through him. THE LIVING OF HIS LIFE WAS CHRIST. So now God can be at home in us, without any strangeness or abnormality. God can live in us, manifest His life in us in the office, in the shop, in the home, in every relationship of life. At all times, in all places, under all circumstances it is God manifest in the flesh, the Spirit living out through the soul and body. As one brother said, "I drive my car in the Spirit--if you don't believe it you should see the spirit some people drive their cars in!"

As great as was the mighty apostle Paul, yet he said that he was the "chief of sinners," the "offscouring of all things," "contemptible" in the eyes of so many, "for they say, His letters are weighty and impressive and forceful and telling, but his personality and bodily presence are weak, and his speech and delivery are utterly contemptible of no account" (II Cor. 10:10). It should not surprise us that those whom the Lord has chosen and is preparing to PROMOTE to the highest rank for His own pre-determined purposes will be those that seem most unlikely and unfit for such a "high calling" according to human estimates and values. And it should not seem strange to us that God has deliberately chosen for the firstfruits company of the sons of God, those typified by Jacob the schemer and trickster, by Joseph misunderstood, hated, sold into slavery and condemned to years of misery and oblivion in an Egyptian dungeon, by David the young shepherd boy, who was the least likely candidate for becoming king amongst his seven brothers, by the dark-skinned Shulamite maiden (a native shepherdess) of the Song of Solomon, who was so dark and uncomely and common, of peasantry rather than royalty! I do not hesitate to tell you that those precious saints who walk in the Spirit, love the truth and embrace the promises--who by any religious standards would be voted the most UNLIKELY TO SUCCEED in any spiritual endeavor--will in fact be God's Kings and Priests for the age and the ages to come!

The following words penned by George Hawtin add a dimension of fullness to the truth I now share. "Thus is the door of sonship SLAMMED SHUT in the face of the rich, the mighty, the famous, and the great, but OPENED WIDE to the poor, the humble, and the unknown. 'For He hath shown strength with His arm; He hath SCATTERED T~E PROUD in the imagination of his heart. He hath PUT DOWN THE MIGHTY from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath FILLED THE HUNGRY with good things, and THE RICH He hath sent EMPTY AWAY' (Lk. 1:51-53). Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the peacemakers, and blessed are the persecuted, for they shall be called God's sons and they shall be the children of the Kingdom of God. Is it any wonder then that those mighty shall be ashamed who come saying, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name done MANY WONDERFUL WORKS,' for they shall hear Him say, 'I NEVER KNEW YOU!' It is a sadness to my heart that the world today is filled with such men. You hear them and see them everywhere. They clamor to be rich and honored of men, but they shall be ashamed. Let the humble who have faithfully prayed, suffered persecution, been misunderstood and unnoticed as they cast their mite into the treasury of the

Lord, rejoice, for HE HATH REGARDED THE LOWLY ESTATE of His handmaiden, and the rich He hath sent away empty" --end quote.

As we approach the more excellent ministry of the sons of God and that greater glory of the age of the Kingdom of God, I must confess that in the face of my own weakness and the seeming insignificance of those elect of God scattered across the face of the earth today I feel a bit like the little boy in a story I heard one time. The little boy called at a house selling picture post cards for a dime a piece. He was asked what he was going to do with the money he was earning. He said, "I'm raising \$100,000 for our new school building." The startled customer replied, "Do you expect to raise it all by yourself?" He answered with a straight and serious face, "Oh, no sir. There's another little boy helping me."

That, precious friend of mine, is just the glory of CENTAURUS--"the despised"--who lays down his life, bringing redemption to all mankind! Centaurus is the epitome of those foolish, weak, base, and despised are not to who bring to nought the powers that are. Glorious victory! Hallelujah to the Lamb!

Brother, sister, do you feel neglected, unnoticed, unhonored, unseen, and unsung? Do you seem to those who know you, as being a little peculiar, as one who certainly isn't doing much for God--separated from all the religious activities, soul saving crusades, not involved with the great and grandiose programs of the church systems of the world? Surely you are judged as having little or nothing, for your strong foundations, laid down during a long period of processing, are hardly noticeable to those who pass by. **"Nevertheless THE FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDETH SURE, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His!" (II Tim. 2:19).** As someone has written, "You may be so unlearned that you cannot recite the alphabet, so unwise that you could not make one right decision, so weak that all men would oppress you, and so dishonored that none would associate with you, but if your spirit has beheld these things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, then you have attained a wisdom which this world knoweth not. God did not choose you because you were better or greater than someone else, but because God chose you and ordained you that He might commit unto you the word of reconciliation for the age to come when all men, through the ministry of God's sons, shall be brought to the fullness of the knowledge of God. There was nothing in us that we deserved to be chosen. The God of Jerusalem said to her, **'Thy birth and thy nativity is in the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee...'** (Eze. 16:3-5). We were chosen rather for weakness than for strength and for our foolishness rather than our wisdom, for GOD HAS CHOSEN the weak things to confound the mighty and foolish things to confound the wise, and things which are not to bring to nought the things that are that no FLESH should glory in His presence."

Welcome, my beloved, to GOD'S FOOLISH FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 8 VIRGO-THE VIRGIN [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART EIGHT

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

In last month's Study on the Signs of the heavens we considered the three Decans, or three secondary constellations grouped about the Sign of Virgo. The first is called Coma. It depicts a woman sitting in a chair holding a child in her arms, which she is contemplating and admiring. The name Coma means "the desired" or "the longed for" -- the very word which Haggai the prophet uses where he speaks of the coming Messiah as "THE DESIRE of all nations." "And I will shake all nations, and THE DESIRE of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:7). Historically this is Jesus the Christ. Prophetically it is the manchild or the manifested sons of God--the complete Christ, Head and body. How this precious child is DESIRED!

The second constellation of Virgo is Centaurus. It is depicted as a centaur, which in ancient times was a creature having the head and torso of a man, with the body and legs of a horse, and thus a dual-natured being. Centaurs were believed to be heaven-begotten. They were born of the clouds; they were sons of the gods. But they were despised, hated and abhorred by both gods and men. The Centaur in the Decan of Virgo is pictured going forth as a hunter, with a spear he is slaying a beast which is called the VICTIM, and the whole scene appears in the heavens against the back-ground of the Southern Cross or Crux. The name of this constellation in Arabic, Chaldaic and Hebrew was BEZEH, meaning "the despised one"--just the opposite of Coma, "the desired." Yet --they are one and the same! This title BEZEH, meaning "the despised one," is found several times in the Hebrew Old Testament. Most commonly known of the passages in which it is to be discovered is Isa. 53:3 where it appears twice in one verse. Referring to the rejection of Israel's Messiah by that nation, the prophet cries, "He is DESPISED (BEZEH) and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from Him; and He was DESPISED (BEZEH) and we esteemed Him not."

Let us summarize the scene. Here is a double-natured being, out of the heavens, yet in the likeness of men, who, to men is repulsive and despised, yet really great, powerful and beneficent, pushing with his spear at the heart of some victim, and moving all the while over the constellation of the Cross. What a picture! Historically this is Jesus, the man who is the Lord from heaven, but made in the likeness of sinful flesh, humbling Himself to be despised and rejected of men, yet great, powerful and glorious with words divine attended by signs, wonders, miracles, and authority and grace such as men had never witnessed, yet laying down His life, slaying Himself, as a Victim, over a cross, as a sacrifice, a sweet smelling savour unto God.

The message which beams from this awe-inspiring picture is also enunciated by the apostle Paul in ICor. 1:26-29. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty...that no flesh should glory in His presence." And so it has been, even as the apostle declared, that the Lord rarely calls the mighty ones of this world. No, He calls the lowly, the meek, the humble; those possessing a simple, childlike faith; those who in their hearts are humbly and truly seeking Him, "if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him" (Acts 17:27). To these, and these alone, He reveals the glorious MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM.

This, indeed, is a miracle of the ages; it is one of the most thrilling of all the Lord's arrangements for His people. For, to know and understand these precious truths is a confirmation of our sonship; it is assurance that the seed has fallen on good ground and that it is being received into good and honest hearts. It is evidence that the great God of the universe has begun a good work in us, that He has called us and is dealing with us as His children. Is this not a marvelous arrangement! And so we can say with the apostle that "we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

which none of the princes of this world knew" (I Cor. 2:7-8). But we have the mind of Christ, and He has revealed these things to us by His Spirit. For unto us, unspeakably, amazingly, "it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God."

To those who have not eyes to see the grand and glorious purposes of God He appears to do some very foolish things, and to exhibit a lot of weakness for One who is supposed to be the omnipotent Creator of the universe. The wonder of His ways is revealed in the fact that it is in these very things that God is pleased to reveal His glory, His wisdom and His power: to baffle the wisdom of the wise, and to bring to nought the counsels of the mighty. As George Warnock once wrote: "Therefore, in the midst of the apostasy of modern day Christianity, and the hypocrisy and artificiality of modern day religion, we who know somewhat of God's ways can rejoice in the fact that it is just like God, in times like these, to rend the heavens and come down in power and great glory...and yet in ways that will seem strange and foolish in the eyes of the world. We are confident that the darkness and gloom about us will once again become the fitting background for the display of the gems of His glory. Some good Christian people are trying to set the stage for God to work, but God always has to by-pass these efforts, for He has prepared the stage upon which He will reveal His sons who are moving in harmony with His will. For it is consistent with God's character and way, and with the jealousy of His Glory, that the greater the work He will perform in the earth--the greater will be the measure of weakness and foolishness that He will cause an unbelieving world to behold."

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. As far back as Isaiah God said that He would cause the wisdom of the wise to perish or disappear. It will be made to disappear, not by a mighty act or work of God, but by some foolish thing of the world. Foolish means something which is dull or stupid. Ah, the weakness of God is stronger than the might of man! God will take a thing in the world that man looks upon as stupid or dull and use that to cause the wisdom of the world to perish or disappear. The dull or stupid thing, so regarded by the "enlightened" religious world, will confound, disgrace, or "put to the blush" the wisdom of the wise. The wise man of the religious world will be put to shame by that which he considers to be stupid, yet is chosen of God. God is choosing that which is weak, which has no strength of itself, to confound, to disgrace, to make to blush those things which are mighty in the world. To know the mind of God we must have the mind of Christ. And the mind of Christ is this, that He emptied and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death. This humility was His capacity, His fitness for rising to the throne of God. This mind must be in us if the hidden wisdom of God is to be revealed in us in power. This is the mark of the spiritual, the perfect man.

Dearly beloved, consider Jesus! The popular notion is that the death of Christ was His cruel death upon the cross of Calvary. The truth is far greater than that; for the Christ in fact died three times, or shall we say that His death was three-fold, having three dimensions. We read in Isa. 53:9, "And He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death." It is interesting to note that in the Hebrew the word death is plural--"deaths." Is that not rather curious? "In His deaths!" Did Christ die more than one death? The plural, "deaths," intensifies the force; as of Adam it is said, in the Hebrew, that "dying thou shalt die" (Gen. 2:17), that is, Adam would enter into a DEATH PROCESS in which he would pass from one realm of death to another and die and die and continue to die until the process was completed and he was totally dead (separated from the consciousness of life) in every aspect, spirit, soul, and body; so the Christ experienced a reverse PROCESS OF DEATH that lead Him from death to death until He had died to all the negative in every realm and could live only unto God in the Spirit forevermore. He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His DEATHS.

Paul clearly sets forth the scope of Christ's sacrifice when he says, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9). This passage points to the fact of the pre-existence of our Lord and clearly identifies His sacrifice. The sacrifice He made did not happen AFTER His incarnation, but BEFORE. He left the "GLORY that He had with the Father BEFORE THE WORLD WAS" and His boundless "RICHES-in glory" and entered into this gross material realm, being "made in Eil points like unto His brethren." Ah--before ever the babe appeared in Bethlehem's manger, the Christ had DIED TO ALL THAT HE WAS AS GOD in order to become a man! When Jesus came and was numbered with the transgressors, He cut every tie binding Him to heaven. He burned every bridge behind in His course of action. With this in mind we can appreciate the magnitude of His sacrifice set forth in these words of inspiration: "Let this same attitude and purpose and humble mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. --Let Him be your example in humility--who, although being essentially one with God and

in the form of God (possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God, God), did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained; but STRIPPED HIMSELF of all privileges and rightful dignity so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that He became like men and was born as a human being. And after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself STILL FURTHER and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross! (Phil 2:5-8, Amplified). Truly, He DIED TO ALL THAT HE WAS AS ALMIGHTY GOD, He emptied Himself and became poor, becoming a MAN. THAT WAS HIS FIRST DEATH. When He laid down His divine consciousness and entered into the charnel house of this fallen world, "He made His grave with the wicked," and when He died physically, He was laid in the tomb of the wealthy Arimathaeon and thus made His grave "with the rich."

When Christ left the glory and riches of celestial life and was "made flesh," what sort of a condition did He enter into? He was not spared the lowliest kind of birth. Humanly speaking, Jesus was not born to the purple. Into the arms of a peasant maiden He came, in a stable rough-hewn out of the hillside, yonder in a little land whose light seemed to have gone out and whose people were the helpless subjects of a foreign power. If one has walked in Bethlehem and walked in Rome, he surely must be impressed with the contrast. Jesus might have been born in Rome, in the palace of the Caesuras, an imperial establishment with such a range of wealth and extravagance that even the mules of the royal stables were shod with silver. But He was not thus born. And for reasons good enough. He came to found an empire of which Rome, with her pride and tyranny, could never be the symbol. He came to win an allegiance that no legions in shining armor could ever compel. That empire is the empire of LOVE and that allegiance the response that men can make to that which they know to be love and which, because it is love, rules their lives by winning their hearts. So down this costly way of unsparing love Jesus came, His delivery room a barn, His cradle a manger, and His lot in life cast among the poor.

Handel H. Brown tells us in his extensively researched work, WHEN JESUS CAME, that "the inns, or khans, were usually quite crude affairs. They consisted of a series of thatched rooms built around a central courtyard. Often they were no more than covered porches. The travelers brought their own food for man and beast. They brought the pot in which to cook it on an open fire in the yard. They brought their bedding, and often their firewood. They looked to the innkeeper for water and shelter. When Mary and Joseph reached Bethlehem, no one took any notice of them. They were lost in a milling crowd of nameless ones. None of them had wanted to come. Like most of the men, Joseph wore crude sandals which were made of castoff rope. They were the badge of the poor. Mary was barefooted. The innkeeper took one look at them, and when he said, 'No room,' he meant it. The innkeeper turned them away. Joseph had to lead the weary donkey to a common stable. Those who have seen an Eastern byre, retch at the thought. There was no trace of the sapphire mist, or the scent of sandalwood, of which sentiment is so fond. It was full of insects with shrill voices. The loathsome blueflies gorged themselves on offal. Neither door nor curtain covered the opening of the cave. When Mary 'brought forth her firstborn son' in all the discomfort and inconvenience of a stable, she 'wrapped him in swaddling clothes' (Lk. 2:7). Then Mary laid Him in 'a manger.' This was a feeding trough used by animals. It was probably a hollowed-out stone. It was heavy enough so that the cattle could not push it around or upset it.

"The angel said to the shepherds that star-lit night, 'THIS is the SIGN unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger' (Lk. 2:12). This probably shook them more than anything else. Had they heard correctly? Surely the least they could expect for THE SIGN of such an event would be an outstanding miracle. It would be a sign at least comparable to the rod of Moses turning into a serpent (Ex. 4:2), or the sundial of Ahaz being reversed to convince king Hezekiah that God would heal him (II Kings 20:8). Yet they were not even granted the miracle of a star hovering over 'where the young child was' (Mat. 2:9). The problem was not that the sign was commonplace. It was worse than that. Babies were common enough, but who, except the outcast or the poverty-stricken, would put a baby in a manger? That was a place for cattle fodder. 'A babe ... lying in a manger.'

"But for the forewarning of the angel, this was the only child in Bethlehem they would have passed by without a second glance! The manger would have been an insurmountable stumbling block to them. They were looking for a SAVIOUR. The angel had spoken of CHRIST--the anointed of God for the redemption of the world. He had used of Him a title which really belonged to Almighty God Himself--the LORD. Who would look for 'the Anointed Lord' in a manger? Yet this was THE sign. They would recognize Him, not in spite of, but because of,

His low estate. They would find Him, of whom all the prophets had spoken, in a MANGER. It is difficult to grasp such condescension. It is also hard to imagine a bigger difference between what the shepherds expected and what they received. The contrast between the glory of the heavenly host and the meanness of the stable cannot be exaggerated. When they inhaled the fetid air of the polluted den, these sons of the great outdoors must have wondered, 'Do angels come to speak of such things?' --end quote. The message is clear--God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak, base, and despised things of the world to confound the things which are mighty! It is the law of His Kingdom.

In Bethlehem's stable Jesus the Christ came into this world as the second man, the last Adam, the new Federal Head of Adam's ancient race--redeemed and restored. He stood in all the dignity and splendor and wisdom and power and dominion given to man in the beginning ere sin and limitation and death passed upon him. What a man! Sinless man. Perfect man. Diseaseless man. Unlimited man. Anointed man. Crowned man. Man in the image of God. God man. Man the revelation of God to creation. Deathless man. What a specimen! What a man! And yet--don't forget this--He took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, even Adam's benighted race. What infinite strength out of incredible weakness! He was EVERY INCH A MAN! A man who faced' -- and conquered--every temptation known to humanity. A man who (though as God, He had been omnipresent) could only be in one place at a time. Although as God He had neither slumbered nor slept (Ps. 121:4), as man, He suffered weariness (Jn. 4:6) and required sleep (Mat. 8:24). He must go from place to place upon hot, weary, dusty feet--His rate of travel limited to the speed of walking, His feet which had trod the infinite spheres of the dimensions of Spirit were soiled and bruised by the dust and stones of the unpaved and filthy Oriental streets and paths of Palestine. How He welcomed the cleansing coolness of the customary foot bath before meals--when some unselfish person thought to minister to Him in this way! He suffered hunger and thirst, loneliness, weariness, and pain. He of whom it had been said, "Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. The world is Mine and the fullness thereof" (Ps. 50:10, 12), claimed no part of it for Himself AS A MAN, but became even more poor than the foxes and birds, for He had not so much as a place to lay His head (Lk. 9:58).

When Jesus came to earth He died to all that He was as God to become a man. But when He came to the Jordan He died again--He DIED TO ALL THAT HE WAS AS A MAN to be the Son of God. When He went down into the watery grave of John's baptism to "fulfill all righteousness," He offered there all the capabilities, potentials, ambitions, desires, and talents He possessed AS A MAN, laying all upon the altar, surrendered completely to God, reserving nothing for Himself, a burnt-offering, a sweet smelling savor unto God.

Can we imagine what Jesus might have accomplished had He elected to use the wisdom and knowledge and power resident in His PERFECT MANHOOD for His own ends? He could have 'used His power for wealth and become the rightist man in the world. He could have used 'His talents for power usurped the thrones of the rulers of this world and become Emperor of the mighty Roman Empire. He might have used His powers for sensual gratification, attracting the fairest women of the world to Him, building the largest harem of the most beautiful women ever possessed by a man. He could have become the world's greatest general, or the most famous artist, or the most acclaimed orator, or the most accomplished musician, or the most brilliant scientist, or the most articulate philosopher, or the most important, distinguished, eminent, exalted, renowned, or noble of a thousand different vocations and positions. But He didn't! He could have rallied the masses and marshaled an army before which the name of Alexander the Great would pale in- to oblivion. He could have built great hospitals, schools of learning, and gold-domed cathedrals. He could have initiated wonderful programs to better society and save the world from disease, poverty, and trouble. But He didn't! He said, simply, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I can do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things...for I do always those things that PLEASE HIM" (Jn. 8:28-29). Yes, dear ones, He DIED TO ALL THAT HE WAS AS A MAN that He might do only and always the will of His Father. And that will led Him to Calvary and the tomb and down into hell.

Finally, Jesus died to all that He was as the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh that He might live again in the glory He had with the Father before the world was--the incorruptible, eternal, unlimited dimension of SPIRIT. For when Jesus was crucified, risen and ascended, He returned to the Father or to SPIRIT and is now with the Father as SPIRIT, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. When this Christ or Anointed One was crucified, risen, and ascended, He returned to His eonian resting place--HUMANITY. He has come as the last

Adam, in the place of the first Adam, assuming his position as Head of the race, in order to QUICKEN THE SPIRITS OF ALL MEN BY HIS SPIRIT that they may regain the sacred knowledge of WHO THEY ARE and from WHENCE THEY CAME--the image of God on earth. As in the first chapter of Genesis, the Spirit of God--the Christ, the Anointing--is moving upon the face of the waters, upon the faces of multitudes of people, even the whole vast world of humanity. And God is speaking into the darkened consciousness of all men the transforming fiat: "LET THERE BE LIGHT!"

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

But we must go further. When Jesus came into the world He died to all that He was as God to become a man. After thirty years, reaching full manhood, He came to the Jordan and there died to all that He was as a man to be the Son of God with power--God manifest in the flesh. Finally He came to Calvary where He died to all that He was as the Son in order to redeem and restore all men back into the image of God--the Spirit. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). Jesus was not spared in His birth, nor was He spared in His life, nor was He spared in His death. Look at Him, precious friend of mine, as they lay rough hands on Him and lead Him away. Never before has such an One marched to the condemnation of death; never since. "He that spared not His own Son..." Now the unsparing process moves swiftly and painfully. He is "delivered up for us all." Delivered up to the kiss of the betrayer! Delivered up to the infuriated mob! Delivered up to the hammer and the nails! Delivered up to die, His heaven-piercing cry, "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me!" fading out in the hush of its own dying echoes.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will impress upon the hearts of all who follow after sonship the deep mystery of CHRIST CRUCIFIED. It is the power of an EXCHANGED LIFE, the laying down of the human life (identity, consciousness) to take up the divine life. Jesus fully and completely did this for us, that BY HIM we may follow in His footsteps. This beautiful truth is wrapped in the arms of one single verse in Isa. 40:31. This is what it says: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." The key word is "renew." "They that wait upon the Lord shall RENEW their strength." The word actually means "exchange." What the prophet is saying is, "They that wait upon the Lord will exchange strength." It means that, as we wait upon the Lord, refusing to either recognize or demonstrate any ability of our own, our strength will be taken away and exchanged for His strength. It is not a matter of combining our strength with His, or asking Him to bless and increase our strength, but a complete removal of our strength, and a putting on of His. God says, "If you're strong, if you can do it yourself, you don't need Me." But of course our strength is limited, imperfect, insufficient, finite, mortal, and corruptible. His strength, on the other hand, is unlimited, perfect, all-sufficient, infinite, immortal and incorruptible. WHAT AN EXCHANGE!

You will never understand the deep mystery of the cross until you grasp this principle of the EXCHANGED LIFE. What a cross it takes to bring to death our ways, our thinking, our ideas, our perceptions, our plans and purposes, our abilities and efforts! God would bring all who long for sonship and life to a place of complete and total dependence on HIM, THE SPIRIT WITHIN, so that He can live out His life IN US. We are His disciples, having taken a position against our outer selves by saying, "Lord, I renounce my wisdom, my strength, my ability, my (supposed) spirituality," for our trouble lies in the belief: "I am capable, I can work for God, I am holy, I am spiritual, I know something." That is our soul-life, the life of the flesh, the outer man. God wants that whole realm crucified and in its place Christ ruling and reigning within. Jesus Himself set forth the pattern, "being put to death in the FLESH, but quickened in the SPIRIT: by which (the Spirit) He went and preached..." (I Pet. 3:18-19). He was put to death in the flesh, all that was of earthly mind, self, error, mortality, limitation, and not of God delivered up to crucifixion, that He might live only in and by the Spirit, heavenly mind, truth, incorruption.

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh..." (Gal. 5:24). "I am crucified," says Paul. The "I" is the soul, the life of the outer man. In its place comes another self which is Christ. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). This Christ-self will now be manifested out of your spirit. While you in your own self have renounced all wisdom and power, Christ becomes the wisdom of God and the power of God in you. Paul was not, like some of the other disciples, an ignorant and unlearned man. His was

the best education available in his time. His speech to the men of Athens, on Mars Hill, is still recognized as one of the best classics of persuasive debate, and of homoletical and literary arrangement. His background, training, and reputation among his fellows was such that he could declare, "I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more" (Phil. 3:4). But Paul turned it all aside. He was willing to decrease. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (Phil. 3:7). Although, as we have seen, Paul was capable of eloquent speech, he wrote the Corinthians, "My speech and my preaching was NOT with enticing words of man's wisdom, BUT IN DEMONSTRATION OF THE S-P-I-R-I-T AND OF POWER" (I Cor. 2:4). In the next verse he tells us why he had laid aside his natural talents to depend upon the power of God and that alone. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." If the power of GOD WITHIN were given its rightful place today, more people's faith would stand in the power of God. Not so many would be trusting in their "church" for salvation and security, not so many would be carried away by some preacher's personality, so that they are of no use to God nor man unless they can work under his leadership.

There is a greater manifestation of strength when in yourself you have no strength at all. Is that not a strange paradox? "I am crucified...nevertheless I live; yet not I" --not the old I- "but Christ liveth in me." Why then should there not be power and wisdom and grace and authority and victory manifested in us? Christ lives in you and HE is victorious. Out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water, a flow of revelation and victory and power and triumph out of weakness and death. This is the ministry of the SPIRIT. Even though we renounce our wisdom, the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are manifested in us, for they are hid' IN HIM IN US --THE SPIRIT! Nothing of spiritual value comes out of the shallow well of the outer man or out of the stirring of our soulish ability. We have to settle for it that what is going to bring humanity to God in these last days will be that which out of weakness is made strong, out of death and nothingness brings life.

Christianity today has no need greater than the need to know the power and glory of the CHRIST WITHIN. CHRIST is the image of God, the scripture says. I know these words may seem to be incredible but they are truth--the very first mention of the "image of God" is applied, not to Jesus Christ, but to our forefather ADAM. "And God said, Let us make MAN IN OUR IMAGE, after our likeness: and let them have dominion...so God created MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE, in the IMAGE OF GOD created He him" (Gen. 1:26-27). As we consider the wonderful advent of man created "in the image of God" we can only conclude that this is a SPIRITUAL MAN brought forth out of the very spirit-substance of God Almighty, and bearing His own divine nature, character, power, and attributes. The image of God is the nature of God reproduced in man. Thus, man is the true image of God. The divine nature was best and fully expressed in the man Christ Jesus who shed upon mortals the truest reflection of God and lifted man's sights higher than their poor thought-models would allow. Jesus revealed to men their true origin, heritage and destiny. He came to show man what man really is, was intended to be, and through redemption shall be--THE IMAGE OF GOD. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. In Jesus Christ you see man as he was in the beginning and as he ever shall be world without end--THE IMAGE OF GOD. Of Him it is written, "He is the expression of the glory of God--the Light-being, the out-ricing of the divine--and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature ... Hebrews 1:3 Amplified Christ, and humanity in Christ, is like a ray of light which comes from the sun-man the outcome of God, reflects God.

Contrary to popular teaching man has never LOST the image of God, although the image has been obscured, distorted, marred and corrupted by the usurpation of the carnal mind, the outer man. A lost image is NO image. The true likeness cannot be lost in divine reflection. It would be like fire without light. The out-ricing image of God is like the Word of God. To destroy the Word of God you would have to destroy God Himself, for God and His Word are ONE. To destroy the image of God would necessitate the destruction of God, for God and His image are ONE. The apostle Paul confirms man 'I', as God's image in his remarkably significant words to the saints in Corinth: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he I-S THE IMAGE AND GLORY OF GOD" (I Cor:11:7)

After having created the SPIRITUAL MAN (man in God's image) in Gen. 1:26, we find a further work wrought upon this man in Gen. 2:7. "And the Lord God FORMED MAN OF THE DUST OF THE GROUND, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (spirit) of life; and man BECAME a living soul." Reading this passage we have the definite assurance that, as man has first been "created" on the sixth day a spiritual man, the image of

God, a further work is being carried forth by the same almighty Creator and the man is now being "formed" into another expression: "FORMED of the dust of the ground," and so BECOMING a "living soul" -- manifest in the earth realm. The first is the "created" man, the second the "formed" man. The first is a "spiritual" man, the second a "physical" man. The first bears the image of the "heavenly," whereas the second bears the image of the "earthly." The first is known unto God in the SPIRIT, the second is manifest to creation in the MATERIAL WORLD. But I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that both of these men are but aspects of the very SAME MAN!

What is man? Brain, heart, blood, bones, etc., the material structure? If the real man is in the material body, you take away a portion of the man when you amputate a limb; the surgeon destroys manhood, and worms annihilate it. But the loss of some physical member has betimes become the quickener of manhood as in the crucible of suffering there appear the virtues of humility, thankfulness, patience, compassion, drawn from the rich resources of INNER SPIRITUAL STRENGTH. The unfortunate cripple may present more nobility of true manhood than the dashing athlete--teaching us that the man on the inside is of far more enduring substance than the man on the outside! Take away the physical and take away the outer worldly elements of wealth, possessions, fame, social recognition, which weigh not one jot on the scales of God, and in what remains we get a clearer picture of man as God made him. Let goodness, mercy, justice, purity, health, holiness and love--the Kingdom of heaven--reign within us and the outer is found to be of no consequence. The real man is SPIRIT, not dust. The true man is IMMORTAL, not dying. The inner man is the IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY, not the image of the earthly as perceived by the physical senses.

Adam's sin in eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil lay in his walking after the flesh (sense realm) instead of the Spirit. It consisted in his making the outer, physical, material, sensual man his center, identity and existence rather than the inner man of Spirit. The remarkable thing is that he perceived not that all that pertains to the material world is illusionary, transitory, and corruptible. Sensual treasures are laid up "where moth and rust doth corrupt." Mortality is their doom. Death breaks in upon them, and carries off their fleeting joys. The sensualist's affections are as imaginary, whimsical, unreal and short-lived as his pleasures. Covetousness, fleshly passions, gluttony, drunkenness, immorality, fame, fashion, vanity, worldly wisdom, political power, military might, envy, hypocrisy, revenge, hate, and so forth, pass away with the works thereof. Stripped of its coverings, what a mocking spectacle the flesh is! When the almighty Creator counseled the first man and his wife, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," He gave precisely the same instruction in wisdom and prudence that the apostle Paul offered long millenniums afterwards when by inspiration he wrote, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:5-6,13). Life is in the SPIRIT WITHIN, and with what joy and satisfaction do we now entertain the precious promise, "therefore brethren we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, YE SHALL LIVE. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ..." (Rom. 8:12-17).

George Hawtin has eloquently expounded on this thought, and I share a few of his valuable insights. "Well did the apostle Paul know that the vast mass of humanity was 'at home' only in the REALM OF THE BODY. They belonged entirely to an earthly realm where things are visible, audible, and touchable. Their minds seldom mounted higher than things physical, and when for a few moments they did rise to walk upon a spiritual plane, they were not really 'at home' there, but waited for the moment when they could LAPSE BACK to the NATURAL AND NORMAL, for that is where they were 'at home.' So, while men are 'at home' in the body, they are 'always absent from the Lord' (II Cor. 5:6-7), absent from the spiritual world of true reality. HEAVEN IS CLOSED TO THEM. Their minds dwell in the realm where men buy and sell, plant and build, marry and are given in marriage. They dwell in a realm of eating and drinking, of finding pleasure for the body, amusing their minds with silly things of the world, absorbing, listening to, or looking at some fictitious thing that serves only to amuse the natural man, keeping his heart away from the realm of eternal reality."

My heart burns within me and my spirit is flooded with joy unspeakable and full of glory as these sacred and wonderful truths find lodging and substance within my consciousness. With what clarity I see that when Adam stood between the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in that long ago Eden, his future condition was to be shaped by the tree-identity (consciousness) he pursued. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit" (Rom. 8:5). It is all a matter of what you are AFTER! These are the two trees: spirit and flesh, life and death, truth and error. Every man who ever lived has had his center, his identity and his existence in one of these two trees. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are not fossilized relics from some ancient age. They are living, breathing, enduring, ever-present realities throughout all generations, and each of us in God's great today is living by one or the other of these two trees in every thought, word and deed. The tree of life (spirit) invariably ministers incorruption and immortality, whereas the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (flesh) unfailingly leads to death.

Again I would share significant and enlightening words from the able pen of George Hawtin. In his excellent paper, THE PASSING AND THE PERMANENT, he explains, "Now, since the flesh lusts against the Spirit and is at endless conflict with it, then anything that seeks to make you earthly and fleshly-minded is a great evil. The things that belong to the realm of the flesh are passing away. Even the flesh itself is passing away. Anything that is passing away is not real. It is like a bubble that floats prettily in the air only to burst never to exist again. It is like the darkness that disappears with the dawn and has no certain dwelling place. It is like a flower in the field that blooms for a moment and disappears, a vision of the night, a fleeting shadow, a moment of joy, a passing sorrow, or a sudden pain. When such things have passed by, no one knows where they came from or whither they have gone. Those, however, who indulge themselves in the things that belong to the body grow to think that nothing is true or real but what is bodily and can be touched or seen or eaten or drunk or enjoyed by the passions of men. Unwittingly they change true riches for false; things that are unseen by mortal eyes for things that are seen. They exchange things that are spirit for things that can be touched, tasted, and felt by the body. The soul now begins to think that these things which belong to the body are real and therefore becomes fleshly minded The carnal or earthly mind is an enemy of God and an enemy of all things spiritual.

"It is small wonder then that the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; for all things connected with the natural belong to time and change, while all things belonging to the spiritual are eternal and changeless. So then all who would come to know the WISDOM OF GOD, and the REVELATION of the Lord, must turn their spirit from the realm of the physical and changing, the corrupt and mortal, and fly away into the realm of the pure, eternal, unchanging, and immortal. It is only there that rest and truth are found, and, abiding there in the Spirit, even the body itself begins to be lifted from corruption to incorruption and from mortality to immortality. We said a moment ago that when the soul comes into the realm of the flesh, it becomes carnal and fleshly minded because it is dragged into the realm of the body. Inversely then, when the soul and spirit dwell in the secret place with God, they lift the body till it also becomes incorruptible, immortal, and eternal. While the spirit and the body are united and dwell together, one must always be in subjection to the other. Either the body will be servant to the spirit or the spirit will be servant to the body. One will be the servant and be ruled. The other will be the master and rule. We cannot avoid this conclusion. Either the flesh will rule the spirit, or the spirit will rule the flesh. Since, however, the flesh is like the mortal and changing, and the spirit is like the immortal and unchanging, then the spirit is the one who should be the master. If the spirit is the master, it will save the flesh by lifting it to the realm of God and immortality, but if the body is master, it will ruin the soul by dragging it to the realm of the carnal, the mortal, the changing" --end quote.

When the Lord God lowered man into this gross material realm man possessed, by the spirit, the divine potential to overcome the flesh, sanctify it, transform it, infusing it with the qualities of Life--holiness and incorruption. Jesus, the last Adam, came and demonstrated for us this very principle. This potential in man to rule the natural by the spirit is shed forth in Jesus' mighty works--by His healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, casting out devils, forgiving sins, and raising the dead--He transcended by His life, words, and actions all the so-called laws of the material, mortal realm. The great significance of Jesus' mighty works will never ring clear in our spirits until we understand that He did not perform as a unique, different kind of man--all His wonderful works were the teaching of what is NORMAL FOR MAN IN HIS TRUE STATE AS THE IMAGE OF GOD. As the last Adam Jesus demonstrated all that the first Adam lost--mankind's heritage as the sons and daughters

of the Most High. Little wonder, then, that He confidently and joyfully proclaimed to His disciples, "The works that I do shall YE DO ALSO; and greater works than these shall YE DO" (Jn. 14:12, Paraphrased).

By the Spirit within (the Father dwelling in Him) Jesus made nature harmonious--calming the raging of the sea, walking on the water, multiplying the loaves and fishes, turning water into wine, and making everything in nature, including the human mind and body, to be servants instead of masters. When a man's life is governed by the Spirit, his body is in submission to everlasting Life, Truth and Love. Finally, going to the cross and Himself rising from the dead He demonstrated for all men the wonderful and incontrovertible truth in the words of the apostle: **"If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit which DWELLETH I-N Y-O-U" (Rom. 8:11).** The truth had been lived among men, God was manifested in flesh, and the image of God had come forth in the face of Jesus Christ. But until they saw that the INDWELLING SPIRIT enabled their Master to triumph even over the grave, His own disciples could not comprehend the MAGNITUDE OF THE POWER OF GOD IN MAN. After the resurrection, even the unbelieving Thomas was forced to acknowledge how complete was the great proof of the power of the divine life in earthen vessels.

By His resurrection Jesus proved the Spirit within to be OMNIPOTENT, all-conquering, all-sufficient. He met and mastered death itself by the law of the Spirit of Life. He took no drugs to allay inflammation. He did not depend upon food or pure air or vitamins or herbs to resuscitate wasted energies. He did not require the skill of a surgeon to heal the torn palms and bind up the wounded side and lacerated feet, that He might use those hands to remove the napkin and winding-sheet, and that He might employ His feet as before. Jesus vanquished every material obstacle, overcame every law of matter, and stepped forth from His gloomy resting-place, crowned with the glory of a sublime success, and everlasting victory--the second MAN, the last ADAM--the role-model for each and every man of Adam's race! Jesus' victory over sin, sickness, pain, limitation, death and the grave was for the enlightenment of all men and for the salvation of the whole world. Paul writes, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved BY HIS LIFE (WITHIN). Rom 5:10

Glory be to God and peace to the struggling hearts Christ hath rolled away the stone from the human door human hope and faith through the revelation and demonstration of Life in God, the life resident in the SPIRITUAL MAN.

We have come to the most sublime of all truths. The beauty of these celestial realities is found in the fact that all Jesus did He did "for us" -- not in our place, but ON OUR BEHALF. A musician demonstrates the beauty of the music he teaches in order to show the learner the way by practice as well as precept. This was the precious import of our Lord's sinless life and of His demonstration of power over the whole flesh realm, including death. Our heavenly Father demands that all men should follow the example of our Lord and Master. In order to enter the Kingdom of the Heavens, the anchor of hope must be cast beyond the veil of this carnal, dying realm into the Shekinah into which Jesus has passed before us; and this advance beyond the law of sin and death must come through the joys and triumphs of a people "led by the Spirit" who are "the sons of God" as well as through their sorrows and afflictions. It is by facing the enemy in the crucible of experience and by the authority of the Spirit that victory is snatched from the jaws of defeat. Each and every test in our lives is an opportunity to prove for ourselves and demonstrate to those about the triumph of the Spirit over the flesh. Step by step, battle by battle, victory upon victory we ascend into the heights of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now to come back to our original thought--CHRIST CRUCIFIED. Our Lord died to all that He was as God to become a man. He died to all that He was as a man to become the Son of God--TRUE MAN! And He died to all that He was as a Son to bring us to God. His crucifixion was the continual laying down of SELF, and the outpouring of LIFE. It meant dying to everything in every realm that was anything LESS THAN GOD. For us it pioneered the pathway of VICTORY OVER THE FLESH, which is also victory over sin, sickness, limitation and death. The cross and the resurrection are the supreme examples of what Paul means when he says, **"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is MADE UNTO US wisdom, and**

righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD" (I Cor. 1:27-31).

Strength, my friend, springs out of weakness! Life emerges out of death! Victory is secured in the heat of battle! These are the laws of the Kingdom, and it is the lesson of the Centaur in the heavens! This is the high drama of the double-natured Centaur carrying the spear and slaying the Victim--for those elect sons of God represented by this Centaur are both human and divine, earthly and heavenly, and they are both Centaur and Victim. It means the laying down of the life for the world. It is giving ourselves to the triumph of heaven's life in our earthen vessels, but not for ourselves alone, but for creation's sake, that there shall be an outflow of life to touch men and quicken them again to the realities of the Spirit--the Paradise of God. This is son-ship! This is God IN us, God AS us, God LOVING THROUGH US, God FLOWING OUT of us, loving through us, redeeming through us, reconciling and restoring all by us. Amen. So be it!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 9

LIBRA-THE SCALES

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART NINE

LIBRA-THE SCALES
BEFORE THE WORLDS WERE FRAMED
WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES
REDEMPTION

The immutable testimony of the Holy Spirit bears faithful witness to the fact that our omniscient and omnipotent God created and designed the scintillating splendors of the heavens with their Zodiacal configurations, displaying therein the wisdom, ways and purposes of the Lord unto His people who are able to receive the message communicated for their instruction and edification. "It is God who removes the mountains, they know not how, when He overturns them in His anger; who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble; who commands the sun not to shine, and SETS A SEAL UPON THE STARS; who alone stretches out the heavens, and tramples down the waves of the sea; WHO MAKES THE BEAR, ORION, AND THE PLEIADES, and the chambers of the south; who does great things, unfathomable, and wondrous works without number" (Job 9:5-10) (N.A.S.).

All that is to take place in the earthy, literal realm has first been fulfilled in the spiritual realm. The heavens cast their shadow upon the earth, or shall we say the earthy IS THE SHADOW of the heavenly. The inspired writer to the Hebrews referred to "the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5). The pattern which was shown to Moses in the mount was according to "the example and shadow of heavenly things." The tabernacle was first created in the heavenlies, and was later made on earth. The plan and purpose of God was first recorded in the heavens, and was later written in the Bible. Likewise, as the Lord has set a seal upon the stars of the heavens, so has He sealed His servants, the Sons of Light, in their foreheads (Rev. 7:1-8). These facts clearly reveal that all that has been displayed in the constellations of the heavens shall be spiritually fulfilled in God's elect saints here upon earth in due time. The truth of God is as vast and expansive as the measureless distance of the unbounded sidereal above. Consider the fathomless expanses of the innumerable galaxies sprinkled through the universe, and you will realize that we have barely scratched the surface of divine truth. And the truth that is yet to be revealed to us, in us, through us and AS US can only be received and experienced by a divine revelation and an impartation of that truth by the Spirit of God. The Lord Himself is the great architect of the Kingdom of Heaven. He is revealing His purposes to us by His Spirit, and is leading us to walk out the necessary steps that establish His truth as reality and life within.

LIBRA--THE SCALES

Having previously dealt with Virgo, the Virgin, we now come in our series to the second house or constellation in the Zodiac: Libra, the Scales. The Zodiac consists of the twelve Signs that are around the ecliptic of the heavens, as well as the 36 Decans or pieces which go with them. There is a major Sign and three Decans, or minor Signs, in each of the houses or mansions, or "tabernacles for the sun," as Psalm 19:4 describes them. We now turn our prayerful attention to the major Sign in the second house which is LIBRA. In Latin it means "the scales" and in Hebrew it is MOZANAIM, "the scales weighing." Libra is always pictured as a pair of old fashioned balances or scales which work like a seesaw, an instrument with a beam or lever supported exactly in the middle, having two scales or pans of equal weight suspended from its two ends. When a certain weight is placed in one scale, then a corresponding amount must be placed in the other scale, if it is to be in balance. It is the most accurate kind of scale. They were used by the Egyptians thousands of years ago, to weigh things like wheat. The wheat would be placed in one large pan or basket and a stone in the other. The stone usually weighed about fourteen pounds. When the lever was balanced, it meant that there were fourteen pounds of

wheat in the basket. This figure pictures the idea of being IN BALANCE, neither lacking nor being outweighed on the other side. It bespeaks of a state of sufficiency, equilibrium, correctness. When there is more weight on one side than the other, it is unequal and out of balance--so that which is lacking needs to be ADDED until a balance is achieved again.

In Greek mythology Libra commemorated Mochis, the inventor of weights and measures. Libra also represented the balances of Astraea, the goddess of Justice, in which the fate of all mortal men must eventually be weighed. The Egyptians identified Libra with the scales in which the human heart is weighed after death. In India, Libra was also known as a balance, shown in their Zodiac as a kneeling man holding up a pair of scales. It is associated from very ancient times, by every nation under the heavens, with the patrons of justice and order. For this reason even today scales are often used as a symbol on buildings housing courts of law and justice where trials are held, accusations and disputes are settled, and the awards of justice declared and given.

In Libra the scales are NOT BALANCED--one side is high and the other is low. The figure of the scales found in all the Eastern and most ancient Zodiacs has the low side hanging toward the deadly Scorpion (the serpent; satan). In some instances the pan on the low side was held by the Scorpion's claws. In Libra there are two bright stars with spiritually significant names. The first is called ZUBEN AL GENUBI meaning "the price is deficient." The second is called ZUBEN AL CHEMALI meaning "the price that covers." All this clearly shows that this Sign of the Zodiac has reference to some great adjustments relating to deficiencies, defaults or defects, involving prices and payments. Obviously, we begin with a DEFICIT which is later ADJUSTED--from "the price is deficient" to "the price that covers." It is the picture of man, weighed in the balances and found wanting; man missing the mark; man lacking a little from Elohim; man face to face with divine justice weighing the demerits and awards of self, sin, carnality and death on the one hand, and the commensurate price and infinite power of REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION on the other. In our journey from the natural to the spiritual realm we are continually faced with our dreadful sense of LACK and the need to apprehend the necessary restoration to WHOLENESS IN GOD. This profound sense of lack, with the corresponding dealings of God to meet that deficiency and bring our state of being into completeness and balance, are wrought out under the spiritual influences signified by the Sign of Libra--the place of weighing.

Some time ago a sister in Christ was carried in vision into a revelation of this place and process of divine weighing. She wrote: "There are many places in God, and each one is different from the others; in fact, all things are in Him. Today He took me to a new place of great severity and cold exactitude, where the balances of God weigh, with inflexible vigor, all things from the smallest to the greatest. Although the sense of warm, flowing love is absent, it is, nevertheless, the background against which the severity of His balances operates. Here there is tremendous exactitude and perfection of harmonic distribution where nothing, not even the smallest atom, is out of place, for all things are located in exact positions. Although nothing moves from its designated place, nevertheless, all things are greatly moved upon by the tremendous operations of these powers of great severity. In this place of weighing which is in continuous and ceaseless operation, all things are examined and weighed to utmost perfection; not one thing, no matter how small, is ever overlooked. In this judging place which is impartial, inflexible, solemn and severe, the atmosphere is not like that of a tribunal or court of justice. It is more like that of a school principal's office, where a disobedient child is brought for correction, or a godly home, where the sole purpose of the wise discipline of an upright father is to bring a rebellious child to right paths."

BEFORE THE WORLDS WERE FRAMED

It is my deep conviction that all of God's sons are standing today in the place of weighing. We are at the end of this dispensation. That which we must do must be done now, and what we are to be we must become now. Therefore "let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high. The truth written in this message is glorious beyond compare, because it contains the truth concerning the FULLNESS OF OUR SALVATION--RESTORATION TO THE IMAGE AND GLORY OF GOD that was ours before ever the worlds were framed.

Hans Christian Anderson was a great storyteller. He could spin a yarn and tell a tale with the best of writers. He also recognized a greater writer, the storyteller of life. "Every man's life is a fairy tale," he wrote, "written by God's fingers." When do our tales begin? Many say, "Why, at birth, of course, when the cord is cut and the child draws its first breath and sees the light of day." God, the storyteller of life, tells us His "fingers" were busy long before that. Long before your conception in a physical world, you existed, because you are the children of the Father in heaven. If you did not exist before your conception, then, my friends, you have no SPIRIT within you, and God, the Father of spirits, the Father in heaven, is not the Father of the spirits of all men. The question begs an answer: From whence came your spirit? From God? From the devil? Did God by a special act of creation form it at the moment of your conception or birth? Was it pro-created in the physical union of sperm and ovum? If you did not exist before your conception you do not belong to the family of God, nor are you the sons of God, nor did Jesus descend from the heavenly realms to redeem you, and there is not much I can tell you that will do you any good.

I turn to the passages of scripture which with divine certainty relate this. In **Eph. 1:4-5** we find, "According as He hath chosen us IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (placement as sons) by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Blessed be God! The apostle Paul informs us that God chose and predestinated a company of sons BEFORE the foundation of the world. The word "before" translates the Greek word PRO meaning "to go before, to precede." Hence, the Father's act of choosing the firstfruit-sons preceded the laying the foundations of the world. How, I ask, could God choose you IN CHRIST and predestinate you in that long ago eternity IF YOU DID NOT THEN EXIST? Now, therefore, when I talk to you, I am talking to a household of God's sons and daughters; I am talking to a celestial race, a divine household; and these are the people of whom the apostle spoke when he wrote to the saints in Rome, saying, "For whom He did FOREKNOW, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (**Rom. 8:29**). Yes--the Father in heaven FOREKNEW YOU, my beloved brother, my precious sister in Christ. And that can mean nothing else but that He KNEW YOU BEFORE and at that time when He KNEW YOU BEFORE He predestinated you to enter this earth-experience and thereby be conformed to the image of first, unique, and preeminent Son, Jesus Christ.

Never were words more sublime uttered by sage or prophet than those spoken by King David when he lifted up his heart to God in a prayer of thanksgiving and adoration saying, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God" (Ps. 90:1-2). It is my deep conviction that every man of Adam's race had his beginning in God and existed in Him in eternity past before ever we came to this earth to be enriched and perfected by the experience of temptation, sin, death, redemption and restoration. Our coming to this earth was with the purpose that through the desperate furnace of trials in this charnel house of sin and death we should come to the knowledge not only of good and evil and the holiness of God, but to the sacred understanding of the mystery of godliness--of WHY the wages of sin is death; WHY when any creature of God sows to the flesh he reaps of the flesh only corruption; WHEN a man sows to the spirit he of the spirit reaps life everlasting. Having gained this sacred knowledge of the law of Being we shall not stand in God's image and glory like robots programmed to function in divine nature inherently incapable of being anything less, but we are brought to the spiritual appreciation of the principles of Divine Being and by our perfection in knowledge and experience stand before our Lord at last in an ETERNAL CHOOSING to abide in a perfection like unto His own.

As poor Job sat on the ash heap in the midst of trial and suffering the Lord commanded him to stand up like a man and respond to the questions He, the Lord, would put to him. The Lord then asked forty questions, none of which Job could answer. Among the questions was this one: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth...when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (**Job 38:7**). Job was speechless, for he had no idea where he was in that time of long ago, but the truth, it seems to me, was that Job was there among the company of the sons of God, beholding with wonder the plan of God on earth with its sufferings and testiness and the glory that should follow. These sons of God who shouted for joy on that primeval morn understood the wisdom of a plan by which they should gain the enlightenment of perfection by experience instead of perfection by creations guided only by divine instincts, and that the sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to follow as a result of them, and so awesome was the

prospect that they shouted for joy in holy expectation. We do not shout unless there is something to shout about. The message is clear--there was a time before the foundations of the earth were laid; there were sons of God who already existed in that ancient time; and those young sons of God lifted their voices with the morning stars in contemplation of the marvelous purpose they were to fulfill. It is precious to know that God's first Son, our own Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is named the Bright and Morning Star.

In the ninetieth Psalm referred to above the prophet David assures us with great plainness of speech that the Lord has been our dwelling place in all generations. Even before the mountains were brought forth or God had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting He is God and in Him we dwelt and from Him we came. Our spirits were with Him before the creation of the earth, for the Father was then our dwelling place. We were sent to this earthly realm for a wise and glorious purpose--for testing, learning, instruction, training, discipline, and perfection--preparation for our part in that magnificent work of deliverance of the whole creation from the tyranny of darkness, decay and death. The Psalmist said, "Thou turnest man to destruction (this realm of sin and death, of flesh and blood); and sayest, Return, ye children of men" (Ps. 90:3). The Lord turned man to destruction, which is to say, He sent us down to this earth realm of dust, sin and death, and then said to us, "Return! ye children of men." What a revelation that is!

During our sojourn in this life, we (the firstfruits) have heard our Father's call to return to Him. And so we are returning in obedience to His call and in the strength and anointing of His quickening Spirit. I do not believe our heavenly Father will leave us in this realm of destruction one day longer than is necessary. When He who in eternal wisdom turned us to destruction sees that all the lessons have been fully and eternally learned and that destruction's work has been fulfilled, then He says, "Return, ye children of men," and we return. When our Lord says, "Come," we come. Matters not how far we have wandered in our sin or how low we have gone in degradation. When the day comes for the Lord to say RETURN YE CHILDREN OF MEN He puts into our hearts the desire to return and we return. At the end of our sojourn in this earthly realm we will have learned the truths Father wanted us to learn and experienced His ways unto perfection. We began in God, we are walking out our predestined path in this life, and will return to the Father as fully manifest sons of God, equipped to set creation free from the curse of sin and death.

Far away in the depths of my spirit today there is a chord that still vibrates to that wondrous shout of joy before the foundations of the earth were laid, when, in that long forgotten past we were there with the Father in spirit, and there is an inward sense of assurance that much of the truth we now possess was known to our spirits since that early beginning. Because the spirit is burdened down with the earthly and visible, man has come to the place in his experience where the inner sanctum wherein God lives in man's spirit is veiled by the flesh and his spiritual consciousness is imprisoned by this gross material realm. We remember not the things of old--until that heaven-blest day when Christ comes in quickening power and touches the mind of our spirit, restoring the memory of those former things. For lack of true understanding we call this restored memory "revelation". When by the eyes of spirit we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honor, the powerful attraction kindled in our hearts for Christ and reality is, in fact, just the beginning of the wonderful RENEWING OF THE MIND to recall again the things of that high and holy realm from whence we came. The "renewing" of the mind can be nothing else but the restoration of the mind to a realm of knowledge and understanding previously enjoyed.

There is an ancient folk-tale about a tiger that was brought up with a herd of goats. From the day his eyes opened, all he saw was a goat's life so it became his style of life too. The tiger munched grass with the rest, butted heads with the younger goats for recreation, and learned to bleat in an odd sort of way a sound that resembled, so he thought, the goat's voice. Once in a while there was a nagging voice inside him that said, "You don't belong to this life!" But always he put it aside as a fantasy, some disturbing intrusion from the world of dreams. If this didn't satisfy him, he just marked it off as the discontent that always hovers around the edges of any life style. So he, a tiger, chose to stay with a goat's way of life because he believed that was the way life had to be. Then one day a tiger came into the clearing. He was all tiger, having grown up knowing who he was. He looked into the clearing and spotted the goats. He roared the earth-shaking roar of his species, bounded out and made his kill. The goats fled in terror and so did the tiger who had grown up with them. At first he wanted to stay. The roar from the edge of the forest had stirred some lost memory in his soul. He flexed his great muscles in a kind of automatic reflex to the challenge from the forest edge. For a moment he could have been a tiger too, but he could not believe in the sound he heard, the challenge it brought. He couldn't believe in

himself, in the instincts that had lain dormant so long. For a brief moment, he could have been a tiger. He wanted to try, but then the goat's life was all he knew so he turned and fled. He could have grasped a new and greater life, but then he fell back to being a goat for the rest of his days. The tiger at the edge of the forest of your existence is JESUS, unique, divine, glorious and powerful. He will not fail--He will draw ALL unto Him! He is all you should be. He is all man was created to be. He is all you were destined to be. He is what God intends. He is THE SON as you are predestined to be sons and daughters of the Most High. You cannot avoid Him. You cannot resist Him. Something deep within stirs. Deep calleth unto deep. The tiger calls to the tiger in you! The God in Christ calls to the God in you!

"But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus...for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath BEFORE ORDAINED that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:4-10).

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES

In Libra we see two scales, one of the scales is tipped down, the other is up revealing an imbalance, deficiency, lack--showing the failure of man to be weighed properly in the scales of God. Some glad morning, the dawn of which methinks I now behold, when the processing's of God in His firstfruits are complete, our eyes will behold with endless joy the surpassing glory of that celestial realm in which walked Adam, the son of God. Our eyes, long dimmed by the darkness of this carnal realm, have not beheld such glories as were there; our ears have not heard its heavenly song, nor have our wildest imaginations probed the splendors of that realm of life where Adam stood in God's image and likeness having no sin, no sorrow nor crying, no labor nor sweat, no bondage nor limitation, no pain nor death; for even now, in this "in part" realm of the firstfruits of the Spirit, we yet see through a glass darkly.

In Gen.1:26 we see the wonderful advent of man created "in the image and likeness of God," a SPIRITUAL MAN brought forth out of the very SPIRIT-SUBSTANCE of God Almighty and bearing His own divine nature, character and attributes. God first called man ADAM -- meaning RED, or SHOWING BLOOD IN THE FACE--when He created him a SPIRITUAL MAN. In Gen. 2:7 we find that in God's inscrutable wisdom the dark hour came when the creature was MADE SUBJECT TO VANITY (Rom. 8:20). Of this man who had been created as pure spirit in the image of God, it is now stated, "And the Lord God FORMED MAN OF THE DUST OF THE GROUND, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (spirit, the spiritual man) of life; and man (then) BECAME a LIVING SOUL." The man who had been spirit now "became" a LIVING SOUL--manifest in the earth realm. Adam--red, showing blood in the face--BECAME a living soul, revealing that there was a PROCESS of descending from pure spirit existence, into a lesser realm.

The point of special interest to us here is the fact that God first called man ADAM, or RED--SHOWING BLOOD IN THE FACE--when He created him a SPIRITUAL MAN. Man did not "become" Adam when he was "formed of the dust of the ground"--it was not the earthly man who was first characterized as red, or showing blood in the face--but the heavenly man! And this Adam was not formed of the dust, but was created "in the image and likeness of God." No poet or philosopher or prophet could possibly describe the glory and eminence of THIS MAN! I have long known that the "face" in symbolic terms bespeaks of the outward expression and revelation of the deepest inward parts of man's being--the heart. All that a man thinks and feels and is inwardly is written and expressed outwardly upon the countenance, known and read of all men. Blood bespeaks LIFE. To "show blood in the face" is to show life in the countenance--the OUTWARD REVELATION OF THE INNER CONDITION OF L-I-F-E!

Lowered into the earth realm, becoming a living soul, man sank even lower. The bright and glorious spirit ruled in the man and woman of flesh until that dreadful hour in which they partook of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then and there their eyes were opened to see their OUTWARD FORMS. The outraying spirit of glory that had reigned within them dimmed beneath the newly discovered consciousness of the OUTER and they knew the shame of their nakedness before the Lord. Truly the "nakedness" consisted in their sense-consciousness of the lack of reality in the realm of the flesh. In this state they knew the grief of sustaining their bodies by sweat and travail. Man was lowered from the realm of spirit, into the realm of the

soul; then in disobedience, drawn away of his own lust and enticed down into the flesh, so that at last God said of man, "He is BECOME FLESH" (Gen. 6:3) He was lowered from spirit to soul, and fell from soul to "flesh." The spirit of man is the image of God--GOD consciousness. The soul is the seat of SELF-consciousness, and the body is the seat of SENSE-consciousness. In spirit Adam was God-conscious. In soul man was both God-conscious and Self-conscious. But ruled by his five senses, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, conscious of the outward world about him, seeking his experience, existence and identity in that low realm, he was a FLESHLY MAN. Having made the transition from the celestial to the physical, we died to the spiritual and became alive to the natural, under the throes of the carnal mind, to have "our conversation...in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind...by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3).

I would point out, that Adam had already "fallen", as it were, before he partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.. It was BECAUSE he had already been lowered from a higher realm that he DID partake of this tree. One of the outstanding texts which shows this "lowering" of man and his subsequent LACK is Ps. 8:4-5 wherein we read, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For thou hast MADE HIM a little LOWER than the angels..." The word "angels" in this passage is from the Hebrew ELOHIM and is always the Old Testament word for GOD. "In the beginning GOD (Elohim) created..." (Gen. 1:1). The phrase "made a little lower than the angels" would more literally be translated from the Hebrew text, "Thou hast caused him (man) to LACK FROM ELOHIM." When God would execute the purpose of the ages He laid hold of His ELOHIM COMPANY and stripped from them some of that glory, that fullness, that oneness and caused them to lack, for He subjected us to the bondage of vanity and corruption, emptiness and nothingness, not willingly on our part, but by reason of HIM who subjected us in hope--hope, in the words of another: "...that out of all its travail and processing's would come forth a company that would redound to His praise, that the inherent glory of our pre-existent state in God, and the acquired glory through the contact with evil, and the overcoming thereof, would combine their effulgence and the latter state would be greater than the former; so that all we once had, plus all that is wrought out through the processing will combine their effulgence, and redemption's glory will shine out to His praise and all the universe shall throb anew with wonder of the power and the inworking grace of God" --Gospel Echoes.

But in the meantime we were made to lack, lowered from that pure spirit existence in the image of God. "Thou hast made Him a little lower than Elohim," the spirit was lowered it was made to lack from the realm of fullness, so that some of the counterbalancing qualities which promote order and righteousness were missing. This immediately made man vulnerable to any temptation that might come his way and so he fell into the delusion of sin. The very moment the spirit was made to lack man fell into the power of death. This in turn produced a change in even the body of man and he became helplessly subject to this realm of gross materialism as we know it now. And so, when we come to Adam in the garden, when the Lord God formed him of the dust of the ground and placed him in the garden to dress it, guard it, keep it, and take care of it, Adam was ALREADY SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD! He had already been lowered, had already "fallen", as it were, and been MADE TO LACK. He did not have sufficient resources to fulfill the command of God. And God planned it this way!

The moment you understand this truth, it is a simple matter to grasp the fact that all sin--with the whole realm of vanity, darkness, evil and death--is the fruit and manifestation of an IMBALANCE, a LACK, a DEFICIENCY, a FRAGMENTATION.

Eve was deceived in this realm by a half-truth--it is not that the devil has no truth--even the truth he has is a lie--for it is truth out of balance, partial truth, a half-truth, which, though it contains an element of truth, is not truth at all, but a lie. In the true and eloquent words of a friend: "The serpent (in the garden of Eden used an argument that is correct IN FORM, but because it was ONLY FORM and had lost its ... ESSENCE, Eve was deceived by it. What was the argument that he used that was 'correct ~ in form but actually invalid?' Hear it! 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened!' That was truth--and 'ye shall be as gods' was also a truth, for after the man and the woman had eaten, the Lord God Himself verified the serpent's statement as being absolute truth. 'Behold, the man is become as ONE OF US to know good and evil,' God said (Gen. 3:22). He was saying that Adam had become a god himself! 'Ye shall be as gods,' the serpent had said, and that he told the truth is confirmed in the words, 'The man has become as one of us' --he has become AS A GOD! In FORM, then, the serpent had a truth. He had, in fact, drawn on the very Word of God itself to

tempt Adam and Eve, for the Lord had said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' What the serpent failed to reveal, however, was the ESSENCE of the form which is that INDEPENDENTLY OF GOD man can NEVER be a partaker of the divine nature! This should have been ~ self-evident truth, but man failed to see it. Man became a god, alright, in the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil--but he became a god in the wrong realm, for at the same time that God acknowledged man's 'deity' He also CAST HIM FROM THE GARDEN--cast him from the consciousness of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth--and set him in the earth 'to till the ground from which he was taken.' Thus, we find that Adam truly became a 'god' --as the serpent promised and the Lord confirmed--but he was not an heavenly god. He became, rather, the 'god of THIS WORLD' (II Cor. 4:4). It is one thing to be 'a partaker of the divine nature' and it is quite another thing to be the 'god of this world.' In the former, there is contained the thought of TOTAL DEPENDENCE -- in the latter, the principle of INDEPENDENCE" --end quote.

Independence--separation--fragmentation--imbalance--these terms each bespeak of that which has come OUT OF God into a state of division, disunion, thus lacking wholeness. As we pointed out earlier, all sin, evil, darkness and death is the result of an IMBALANCE or LACK. "For all have sinned (missed the mark) and COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD" (Rom. 3:23).

One of the great principles of the universe is the principle of BALANCE. If the earth were a few miles closer to the sun, it would be an inferno. If it were a few miles farther away, it would be a desolate, frigid desert. But in its present location, balanced at an ideal distance from the sun, our planet is in a perfect condition to sustain an exciting proliferation of life forms. None of the other planets in our solar system can accommodate life because they are all unbalanced in their relationship to the sun. Disease is the product of imbalance in the physiological system. Cancer is one of the most dangerous and most dreaded of all diseases. In cancer, some of the cells of the body become disorganized and begin to grow so fast that they choke off organs of the body that our lives depend on. When those organs can no longer work, the person dies.

Many things that are good for us can become threats to our well-being if they get out of hand. Water is good, but too much causes a flood. Cars provide efficient transportation, but too many of them in one place can cause a traffic jam. We need food every day, but if we eat too much, it shows up in the wrong places--our hips and waistlines. Things like these we must keep under control. The most important form of control is self-control, which originates within our hearts by the spirit. To exercise self-control, we must be moderate--temperate--balanced--we must restrain the impulses of the flesh and the emotions and desires of the carnal mind. "Now the fruit of the SPIRIT is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, fidelity, tolerance, SELF-CONTROL--against these there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23,) (KJV & Phillips). Interesting, isn't it, that self-control is a fruit of the HOLY SPIRIT! The Lord our God is ONE Lord -- united, undivided, unfragmented, BALANCED in all His attributes and Being. Nothing is out of control, nothing unbalanced, no lack or over abundance anywhere, no contradiction or conflict. That is just the problem with man--he is OUT OF BALANCE! Man has been weighed in the scales of Libra--and found wanting!

It is possible even in our walk in God and our apprehension of truth to be OUT OF BALANCE. Recently a most beautiful article was received from Brother Ray Prinzing titled A BALANCED WALK IN AN UNBALANCED WORLD. I would quote just a portion of it which I found supremely edifying. "There have been some precious, yea, awesome revelations imparted by the Spirit. Men have caught a glimpse of a certain truth, and then leaned heavily upon that one revelation, until it threw their walk out of balance. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in what is termed 'the faith message.' Faith for healing, faith for prosperity, etc. Open the Book and you find these truths from cover to cover--and they are precious truths, BUT they often are taken clear out of balance.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature...and beside this, giving all diligence, ADD to your FAITH virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ' (II Pet. 1:4-8). First we have the emphasis upon the Word--exceeding great and precious promises. BELIEVING THE PROMISES, we are made partakers of the divine nature. One would surely think that was enough, but then Peter writes on, 'Giving

all diligence, ADD TO YOUR FAITH...' The inference becomes clear, the 'faith message' alone is not balanced. Place it on one side of the scale, and then START ADDING on the other side, until it balances out.

"We speak of faith for financial prosperity--and we hear some testimonies of great happenings. So we think to exercise faith in that dimension, and it doesn't work the same, and we wonder what is wrong. Haggai 1:6 speaks of the man that 'earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.' He needed to hear more than a faith message for prosperity; he was in desperate need for WISDOM, to understand what the will of the Lord is. Fast as the man prayed in the money, out it went through the bag with holes. God would purify your desires, your priorities, until HE COMES FIRST, and His will is your will, then for whatever He provides He will also control its outgo.

"We speak of faith for healing, but conveniently forget to ADD TO YOUR FAITH TEMPERANCE, i.e. self-control. It was not the devil that made us sick, it was our own eating habits, junk food, etc. and after spending years in destroying our bodies with wrong eating, drinking, smoking, overworking, etc. we suddenly decide we need faith to be healed. Thank God He often mercifully does heal us. But we also find that He would have us ADD TO OUR FAITH those qualities which would bring us into BALANCE" --end quote.

We are all sailing the sea of life. All are mariners, spiritual voyagers. We might profitably use the following illustration. Tom Smith and John Jones both presumably own sailing vessels. They agree to race to a certain point in the Pacific Ocean one hundred miles due west from Los Angeles harbor. The first few hours out all goes well. Fair and constant winds enable them to keep their course at a steady rate of speed. But then foul winds are encountered, and a storm drives them far off their course and separates them from each other. The following morning breaks with each one alone on a vast ocean on which there are no road signs and no mileposts. There is nothing as far as the eye can see but blue water. Somewhere on that ocean is a spot which is exactly one hundred miles due west from Los Angeles harbor. But in which direction is it? Both boats have lost their bearings. They know not how far they have sailed, nor in which direction. In other words, they have no knowledge of where they are. So, until they take their bearings, and learn their exact positions, it is positively impossible for them to know in which direction or how far away their destination is. They might be one hundred miles from it, or it might be only five miles distant. And so, until they learn exactly where they are now, it is impossible for them to know what the next mile will be.

Each and every son of Adam is a navigator on the sea of life. And the voyage upon which we all embarked at birth is one for which none of us was fully prepared or equipped; we were thrust out upon a tempestuous sea, there to maneuver our tiny bark to' another shore. Winds, tides, and currents swept us out to sea, and carried us on alone. Humanity, at present, is divided into a thousand fragments both individually and collectively. We are fragmented, separated--LOST! But I have good news for you, my friend--it is possible to discover exactly where we are now--and how to get back on course to that bright and beckoning harbor ahead--for our heavenly Father has sent One to search for us and SHOW THE WAY!

There is one image that is perfect: the blessed Son of God, the visible manifestation of the Father, the only One who has ever walked upon this planet who sums up the totality of DIVINE BALANCE. He is the only whole, united, balanced, UNFRAGMENTED MAN! In Jesus Christ a Man has stepped forth who came from God without any lack, so that He could make this astonishing declaration: **"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me" (Jn. 14:9-11).** Jesus Christ is the One who shows us just where we are--and opens up the way for our return into the fullness of God. Our heavenly Father demands that all men should follow the example of our Lord and Master. In order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, the anchor of hope must be cast beyond the veil of this carnal, dying realm into the Shekinah into which Jesus has passed before us, as by faith we are led to prove for ourselves and demonstrate to those about the authority of the SPIRIT OF LIFE WITHIN over the law of sin and death in the flesh.

Christ Jesus is perfectly balanced and united in all His faculties, and' IN HIM all things are restored into oneness, wholeness, balance. **"He that is joined unto the Lord is ONE SPIRIT" (I Cor. 6:17).** **"That they all may be ONE; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be ONE IN US...and the glory which**

Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made PERFECT IN ONE; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me" (Jn. 17:21-23). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are all ONE IN CHRIST JESUS" (Gal. 3:28). "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even IN HIM" (Eph. 1:10).

One of the most challenging passages in all the Word of God is found in Eph. 4:15. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up INTO HIM in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." The key words are: GROW UP I-N-T-O HIM...WHICH IS THE HEAD. Grow up into ...the Head! Who ever heard such a thing? Who has ever seen a body grow up into a head? The body grows, and the head may grow somewhat, but the body remains a body and the head remains a head. But in the progressive development of the many-membered Christ, the Elohim Company, the door has been opened for some members who will GROW UP I-N-T-O T-H-E H-E-A-D. It signifies a transference from one part of the body to another, from the torso, up into the Head. Oh, the mystery of it! It means that these grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, sharing ALL that He is. These are the sons of the MOST HIGH. And this is the ultimate high heritage of each and every son of Adam's race, for ADAM IS THE IMAGE OF GOD.

This bespeaks of a realm where you do not draw your life from without, from others, but you have life in yourself, life for yourself, and life for others. You are not a receptacle but a source. Jesus unfolded this realm when He proclaimed, "The Son of man CAME NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, but to minister, and to give His life..." (Mat. 20:28). Jesus did not come to receive life for HE WAS LIFE. He came not to receive life but to GIVE LIFE. He HAD LIFE IN HIMSELF even as the Father had life in Himself. Within that life was contained every element of victory, righteousness, wisdom and power He could ever need. All the infinite resources of God were within Him. WITHIN HIM! No one could add anything, no one prayed for Him, laid hands on Him, counseled Him, prophesied to Him, and encouraged Him. His disciples received from Him but not one gave to Him. They asked of Him, but none contributed anything to Him. He prayed for them, but they never had to pray for Him. If He needed power, the power was in the life within. If He needed encouragement, the encouragement was in the life. If He needed wisdom, the wisdom was in the life. ALL was in the Father, and the Father was IN HIM. This is a nature and a life that is not dependent upon anything without, for it is a self-existent life, demanding no sustenance, underived, inherent, drawing not from anything or anyone. ALL SUFFICIENT, ABUNDANT, GLORIOUS AND UNCHANGING LIFE! No lack, the scales are perfectly balanced.

You can always tell when people are growing up into the Head. They no longer need to BE MINISTERED TO. They aren't waiting for a healer to come to town and lay hands on them, for they have grown up into that measure of His fullness where they discover the HEALER WITHIN, and are now able to appropriate FOR THEMSELVES the faith of God within to gain the victory over sickness and disease. They are not searching for a prophet to give them a word, to tell them where to go or what to do, to reveal the will of God in their life, for they have learned to know HIS VOICE, communing freely with the PROPHET WITHIN, flooded with wisdom and understanding. These don't talk about their problems, or lament about the devil, or plead for help, for the joy of the Lord is their strength and the peace of God rules in their heart. They don't ring up the elders, friends, or the saints requesting prayer for this and that need in their life, for they have discovered the river of God flowing out from the threshold of their own reality, life full, abundant and triumphant! Oh, yes, they may ask prayer for others, but not for themselves. These are always ministering, encouraging, helping, strengthening, blessing, lifting; but do not stop to be ministered to. This company is BECOMING ONE IN HIS FULLNESS, even those who HAVE LIFE IN THEMSELVES. These have beheld the fullness of God in Christ, and have arisen to apprehend that level of life in Him where one no longer "lacks a little from Elohim." The development of CHRIST IN US balances the scale of our deficiency, becoming in us "the price that covers." Hallelujah!

The manifested sons of God are not little fragments of God, but each grows up to be complete in the totality of the Father of spirits. Just as Jesus Christ is the personal embodiment of the fullness of God, and would be such EVEN IF WE DID NOT EXIST, so each and every son of the Highest MUST become the reproduction of the Father in the totality and completeness of Himself. The ONENESS, the WHOLENESS of God's nature must be fully developed in each son until there be no fragmentation, lack or imbalance. Thus shall sin, limitation, sickness, sorrow and death be swallowed up of life!

REDEMPTION

There are two bright stars in Libra, GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY, which tell the whole story. The brightest star, appearing in the scale which is tipped downward, is entitled ZUBEN AL GENUBI which means "the price is deficient." It is a picture of man in the carnal mind and nature, weighed in the balance and found wanting; man ruined and condemned; man with his life added up and found wholly in vanity and illusion, existing in the realm of the corruptible and passing. But blessed be God! In the other scale which is tipped upward there is another bright star called ZUBEN AL SHEMALI which means "the price which covers." When Christ is placed in the scales, then we have that weight which raises us, bringing life, truth, reality--RESTORATION, HARMONY, WHOLENESS AND BALANCE. This is exactly what the Lord Jesus taught and demonstrated so wonderfully through His healing and delivering ministry. He spoke the words of compassion and power into the souls of all marred creatures and called them beloved children of God. He healed their diseases, forgave their sins, raised their dead and lifted them up from the mire and defilement and set them on the pathway to holiness and restoration to their lost estate that they might live again as sons and daughters of the Most High. Under the Sign of Libra we are all to learn to be SAVIOURS, giving the kiss of Life, Light and Love to all who dwell in the shadow of death, darkness and fear.

Never forget, precious friend of mine, that Jesus came as THE PRICE WHICH COVERS, the substance in the scale that replenishes all deficiency. He shed His blood--His divine life--pouring it out for us. Life and blood are synonymous. Spirit and blood are synonymous. Spirit, blood and life are all different names for the same element. Jesus performed His mighty works by the shores of Galilee, but then He died, resurrected and returned in mighty SPIRIT POWER to be the MIRACLE WORKER WITHIN. Nothing less must become ours, than HIS LIFE--the divine life He lived in human flesh. "As I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me even he shall live by Me," Jesus said. The truth is so simple--He has poured out His blood-life to us to quicken us again to the glory of God that belongs to man. Our spirit is quickened by His Spirit and in union with Him we are brought to union with God.'

Christ gave Himself FOR US and TO US. Our spirit must be quickened by His Spirit. This is the power of His redeeming blood. That He might liberally pour His dear-bought treasures into benighted human storehouses, was the inspiration of Jesus' intense human sacrifice. Some hold not to this truth, choosing rather to believe that they are a self-sufficient god within themselves, needing no Saviour beyond their own inherent divinity. But here let me utter a note of warning. In the testimony of scripture the order is ever:

"Unto HIM that loved US, and WASHED US from OUR SINS in HIS OWN BLOOD." And, "To as many as received HIM, ~o THEM gave HE power to BECOME the sons of God." Break these links and the chain is gone. Even in nature a seed, though containing the life, does not sprout of itself: it sprouts because there are "mysterious forces" BEYOND the seed -- sun, wind, rain, and the whole economy of the universe--playing upon the mysterious life in the seed. Let us never forget this. Some trust so strongly in their own divinity they need no Saviour, no sun or wind or rain from without to quicken the life within. The unwary are caught by it. All this time the blood of Christ is omitted or ignored. Not one word is said about it. The silence is ominous. Do let us understand truth clearly, for "there shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even DENYING THE LORD THAT B-O-U-G-H-T THEM and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (II Pet. 2:1). Truth out of place is the most dangerous error--IMBALANCE.

The love of God became a man, the love of God became human flesh, the love of God in Jesus Christ has flowed into our souls as the precious blood of Christ to wash away the veil of flesh and quicken us again to our true identity and heritage in God. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold from your vain manner of life received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:8-19).

Hallelujah for the blood!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 10 LIBRA-THE SCALES [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES "Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TEN

THE CROSS IN THE HEART OF GOD BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

The first of the Decans (minor constellations) in the house of Libra is THE CROSS (CRUX), known as "The Southern Cross." It is situated beneath the feet of the Centaur. This is one of the most beautiful of the Signs in the heavens. It consists of four bright stars placed in the form of a cross. At the time of the coming of Jesus Christ this Southern Cross was visible in the latitude of Jerusalem! Since the time when the real sacrifice was offered at Jerusalem, and through the gradual recession of the Polar Star, it has become invisible there. It is found in the very lowest part of the sphere and in the darkest part of the heavens. It may be seen by those dwelling near or south of the equator. But due to the precession of the equinoxes and the way the earth gives us at different times and centuries a distinct picture of the heavens from the various latitudes, the Southern Cross is sometimes visible and sometimes not.

In Hebrew this Decan is called ADOM, which means "the cutting off." In **Dan. 9:26**, we read: "After threescore and two weeks shall MESSIAH BE CUT OFF..." Here we have the connection of the Messiah with the Crux or the Cross--the "cutting off" of the Messiah. Of our Lord it is written: "And after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself still further and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross!" (**Phil. 2:8**) (Amplified)

Two thousand years ago, the CROSS didn't inspire religious awe or thoughts of the Messiah's redemption. Instead, the cross inspired sheer TERROR. A crucifixion was a gruesome, torturous, and shameful way of dying--the lowest form of execution, reserved for traitors and hardened criminals. It was undoubtedly one of the most barbarous and exquisitely cruel forms of torture known to man. The method used by the Romans in the time of our Lord was a refinement of this gruesome form of death devised by the ancient Assyrians. The sadistic form of crucifixion originally was IMPALEMENT of the enemy upon sharp stakes. Cutting the branches off a small but sturdy tree, these masters of torment would shape it into an upright post with a razor-sharp point. Hauling their victim to the crucifixion site they would rip the clothing off his body in the presence of his frightened associates. These strong soldiers would then lift him up in the air over the upright CROSS, poising his wildly twisting body momentarily over the sharp point in the rectal area. Suddenly, with precision timing, the powerful warriors who held him would drive his body downward with all their might. If they were especially skilled they would drive the sword-like stake through the intestines, and all the way to the diaphragm. Although strong enough to drive the cross into the heart they would stop short so that the screaming, jerking victim would gyrate long enough to burn the event into the souls of his watching countrymen. The Assyrians knew that such a memory would aid them in conquering other cities, tribes, and nations without so much as a battle.

The Greek word used in the New Testament for "cross" is STAUROS. From the time of Alexander the Great, who also practiced the awful art of crucifixion, the term STAUROS meant "an upright stake." In respect to the Roman cross the word STAUROS referred to the upright post--the horizontal beam was called the PATIBULUM or cross-arm--for there was no word in the Greek language for "cross" as the Romans made it. The Persians who picked up the practice of crucifixion from the Assyrians were the first to change the form of execution by impalement through the bowels to impalement through the hands. Their purpose in this was not to be more humane but, rather, to cause a more lingering death to impress the vanquished with the foolishness of resisting their military might. The Persian version of crucifixion, using the crossbeam in addition to the upright post, was picked up by Alexander and his generals and carried back to the Mediterranean world.

The Romans learned the art of torture by crucifixion and immediately set out to refine and improve it in many subtle ways. At the time of Christ the Romans made use of four cross forms. In addition to the upright

STAUROS which was used alone for impalement through the bowels, there was what they called the CRUX IMISSA in which the cross-beam was located about one-third the way down the post. This is the traditional design which is usually associated with the cross upon which Jesus was slain. The third Roman cross form was called the CRUX COMMISSA in which the crossbeam was hauled to the very top of the pole, forming a T-shaped cross. The fourth Roman cross form was in the shape of the letter "X" and was called the CRUX DECUSSTA. Tradition maintains that Peter was crucified upside down on this shape of cross. The Latin word CRUX, which was the Roman term for these instruments of torture, comes into English as "cross" by way of the French CROIX.

Regardless of the cross form used it was a slow and agonizing death--reserved for traitors, slaves and in general the SCUM of the Roman world. But the process of crucifixion involved more than the shame of a brief public hanging. First, the victim was mercilessly scourged with spiked whips, sticks and all manner of physical and verbal abuse. Then the victim was forced to CARRY his own heavy cross to the site of the crucifixion. Afterwards came the painful process of nailing his hands and feet to the cross. Finally, this slow, agonizing death was aggravated by taunts, threats and buffeting from the crowd. The terror of the cross--like the anticipation of a public hanging--is heightened by the victim's fear of the event. Most criminals were crucified immediately after their trial because the forebodings of pain were more than most mortals could handle. The crucifixion of Jesus was typical in this respect--He was crucified on the same day He was convicted. But this death sentence was no sudden surprise to Jesus. He anticipated His death by the cross throughout His three-and-one-half year ministry. As a young man growing up in Galilee, He undoubtedly witnessed a number of Roman crucifixions.

Of all the lives that have suddenly ended in what would seem to be defeat and tragedy, none would have appeared to be more defeated or more tragic than the life of Jesus, the teacher from Nazareth. He had claimed to have power over all things, even over life and death. In fact, He had proved His claim by bringing the dead back to life, yet, to all outward appearances, He seemed to be unable to forestall His own death. Not only did Jesus die, but the tragedy and defeat seemed even worse because He died under the most shattering circumstances. According to the custom of the times, to be hanged on a tree was to be forever accursed--to have the memory of your name blotted out both in earth and in heaven. The triumph of Christ over this kind of death only adds immeasurably to His ultimate victory, because He transformed His cross--the symbol of the curse-- into the symbol of His eternal triumph. Yes, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death--EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS! Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it!

When Jesus hung upon the cross the heavens robed themselves in midnight mourning and bowed to the earth and wept. The rocks in their dumb grief burst, because their Creator was put to death by those whom He came only to save and bless; and the earth it-self rocked with convulsive throes. As the Lord of glory hangs there--absolute silence takes the place of the noisy babble of the crowd. At length after three hours, the silence is broken, and a cry pierces the darkness, till it strikes a heaven not opened now, but closed even to Him, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

THE CROSS IN THE HEART OF GOD

In spite of the awful fact of Calvary's dreadful scene I would be remiss if I failed to tell you that the CROSS OF CHRIST was not a cross of wood. The cross on Golgotha's hill was undoubtedly a wooden cross, but the cross of Christ which the apostles preached and in which they gloried and by which the world is reconciled to God was something more than a wooden beam. When in wisdom and holy expectation our Lord exhorted His disciples, saying, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up HIS CROSS, and follow Me," He was not making reference to a cross of wood, but to a cross that would bring death to one's own identity, will and ways, and identify his life henceforth with the life of Christ. The DEATH OF THE CROSS is in some mysterious and divine way the gateway to the LIFE OF THE CROSS. The wooden Roman cross on which Jesus was crucified was not actually HIS CROSS, for the cross of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe, all the handwriting of ordinances of the law were nailed to His cross, and He made peace and reconciled all things in heaven and earth unto Himself by the blood of HIS CROSS. No literal parchment was nailed to the cross of Calvary, nor does that cross even exist today.

It is my deep conviction, and I say it with all reverence and respect to my blessed Lord, Jesus Christ, but the truth is that Jesus in the natural suffered no more on the cross than thousands of others who were nailed to a

tree, or thousands of others who died on the rack during the Roman inquisition, or thousands of others who were burned at the stake, or fed to the lions, or made blazing human torches at the Circus in Rome. The physical suffering was no greater. The cross of Christ refers to a greater spiritual cross and a greater spiritual death. The cross of Christ had its beginning that day in heaven, when the Word of God, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of NO REPUTATION, and took upon Him the FORM OF A SERVANT, and was made IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN; and being found IN FASHION AS A MAN, He HUMBLING Himself, and BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS." Fierce as was His suffering at Calvary, that fearful hour of agony and blood was but the final act of a life of the cross as step by step He descended from the majesty and glory of equality with God to the fearsome moment when in anguish He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Though I am sure it is impossible to plumb the shining depths and the inexhaustible riches of the meaning of the cross, I would like to endeavor to set before you the deeper meaning of the cross of Christ. We will never understand the mystery of the cross until by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God our eyes perceive the eternal cross in the heart of God Himself. The only true and eternal life in the universe is the life of God. He alone is self-existent. He alone is reality. He alone is eternal substance. If we are to fully know and partake of that life, we must die to all that is contrary to that life. Everything that exists in the universe has its opposite--and as surely as God exists there is the opposite for all that He is. God is love--and the opposite of love is hate. God is light--and the opposite of light is darkness. God is truth--and the opposite of the truth is the lie. God is life--and the opposite of life is death. Every positive has its negative, and all the laws of the universe reveal this principle of opposites. Jesus enunciated the fundamental principle of life (spirit, God) when He said that except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it die it brings forth the increase of life. Every negative must be brought to death. Everything in the universe must die to all that is contrary to divine life and nature, being born again of the Spirit. This is the meaning of **"Behold, I make ALL THINGS NEW" (Rev. 21:5)**. This has been the Father's plan for man--man in the image and glory of the incorruptible God.

The principle was set in motion with the first man, Adam. Adam had to fall into darkness, sin and death, not because he was inherently evil or rebellious, but because all that is contradictory to God must be stirred up, experienced, faced, understood, repented of, overcome and eternally put to rest in man's will before the image of God can shine safely and eternally through him. In recent months my whole understanding of why the cross is the gateway to LIFE has been clarified and crystallized within my spirit. I have come to see that God Himself dies to everything but His self-giving self, which is love. God Himself dies to every dark principle that would sow selfishness, pride, strife, bitterness, trouble, pain, sorrow, chaos, disappointment, weakness, limitation or evil of any kind. The cross is the very heart of God, and the basis of why He is the ETERNAL GOD. He is eternally God just because He IS ETERNALLY all that makes Him God.

In the increasing light with which God is filling the hearts of His elect, this scripture, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is ONE Lord," bears a depth of meaning greater far and deeper than the surface truth we have understood with natural minds. That this passage may become clearer to our minds, scintillating in heaven's light like the ray which is broken into many prismatic hues, consider now the glorious things concealed in this mighty word of the Lord. The Lord our God is ONE. One, in the numerology of scripture, means UNITY, UNITED, UNDIVIDED, UNFRAGMENTED. One is the primary number, denoting beginning or source. Unity being indivisible, and not made up of other numbers, is therefore independent of all others, and is the source of all others. "One" excludes all difference, for there is no second with which it can either harmonize or conflict. One means unity and unity comes from the word "unit".

In reference to His substance, God is SPIRIT. In reference to His state of being, God is ONE. That which is ONE is that which is UNITED, UNDIVIDED, UNFRAGMENTED. Oneness speaks of unity, harmony, singleness, concord, solidarity. God is ONE! The fact that there is ONE GOD must not be confused with the truth that GOD IS ONE. Perhaps, as someone has said, this is only another aspect of viewing the same truth, for God is truly one, undivided in Himself, or in His will and purpose. And surely HE alone is God! But this One God IS ONE. It is a great and blessed fact that God is ONE. He who is united, undivided and unfragmented in every aspect of His nature and state of being cannot be influenced, affected, moved, upset, frustrated, changed, altered, damaged, destroyed, made discordant or set at variance in any way. The character of God is eternal, change-less, unaffected. The love, joy, peace, righteousness, wisdom, justice, power and will of God

do not rise and fall, rise and fall, rise and fall. Matters not what happens nor what men devise or devils say or do, the love of God, the purpose of God, the holiness of God, the power of God are steadfast, unmoved, unquenched, unaffected, without fluctuation. He is Jehovah, the SELF-EXISTENT ONE. He is ONE. No power in the universe can cause any deviation whatsoever in God's nature, will or action.

But how is it that God is UNCHANGEABLE in His nature--is it because He CANNOT change or because He CHOOSES not to change? Truly God "cannot lie" and God cannot be anything other than life, light and love. But why CANNOT He be? The answer that the blessed Spirit of Truth has revealed in my heart is because HE HAS ETERNALLY DIED TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT DARKNESS CAN ARISE IN HIS LIFE! The entire principle of darkness has its foundation in the life of God, for was it not God Himself who "divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called night" (Gen. 1:5). "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things" (Isa. 45:7). This mystery of darkness in God's nature remains unrevealed because He has eternally WILLED to be Life, Light and Love. All the negative potential is there--the law of opposites--but there is a cross in God's heart--by which He eternally dies to all that would make Him anything less than GOD. This is ALWAYS happening in God's life, because the cross is an eternal fact. "Eternity" doesn't mean unbeginning time in the long ago or unending time in the inscrutable future. Eternity means NO TIME. Eternity is TIME-LESS. This means that the decision to die to the negative principle is not subject to review or change--it is forever settled and determined in the heart of God. That's why He says over and over, "I change not." It is not that He is intrinsically set so that He cannot change. Rather, it is that He has ETERNALLY CHOSEN not to change. It is an eternal, accomplished, irrevocable choice, born of wisdom and understanding. It is the eternal cross in His heart. Therefore He cannot change. He is forever love. He is forever pure. He is forever righteous. He is forever wisdom. He is forever Light and Life. He is forever SAFE!

The cross is the secret of God's gift of love. It means that God does not live for HIMSELF. All the selfhood of God is forever crucified upon the cross in God's heart. Selfhood must be a vital characteristic in any life. The selfish desire that would cause God to live for Himself--to this God eternally dies. He has willed to be a self for others instead of a self for self, by eternally dying to the dark, selfish principle. Andrew Murray said that the spirit of love in AN ETERNAL WILL TO ALL GOODNESS. The best and most wonderful word in the universe is Love. For God is love. What is love? The deep desire to give itself for the beloved. Love finds its joy in imparting all that it has, all that it is, to make the loved one happy and fulfilled. This is THE ONE ETERNAL, IMMUTABLE GOD that, from eternity to eternity, changeth not, that can be neither more nor less, but an ETERNAL WILL TO ALL THE GOODNESS that is in Himself and come from Him. The creation of ever so many worlds adds nothing to, nor takes anything from, this immutable God: He always was, and always will be the same immutable WILL TO ALL GOODNESS. So that as certainly as He is the Creator, so certainly He is the Blessor of every created thing, and can give nothing but Blessing, Goodness and Happiness from Himself, because He has in Himself nothing else to give.

The spirit of love does not want to be rewarded or honored; its only desire is to become the blessing and happiness of everything that needs it. The wrath of an enemy, the treachery of a friend, only gives the spirit of love opportunity to be more triumphant. The rebellion (selfhood) of Adam but opened up avenues for mankind to experience and now the incredible depths of the love of God! God IS LOVE! And His sons are of His own nature. The Sons of Love! What a blessed title! Little wonder, then, that the whole vast creation, sold under slavery and bondage to sin, sorrow, and death GROANS for the manifestation of THE SONS OF LOVE!

From this flash-point, Life sheds forth Light and Love. The whole creation sprang out from this unselfish love, for God said, "Let there be..." and "God SO LOVED THE WORLD that He gave..." Life begins after the cross, even in the life of God. The cross is more than Calvary- it is the fulcrum or point of power in which the entire infinite might of the forces of divine desire issue in love, creation, and self-abnegation for others. This is why Jesus said, "Take up YOUR CROSS and follow Me." We carry our cross with us in our walk IN SPIRIT- the cross that God has in His heart --not to suffer physically necessarily, but to die to all negatives and all selfhood and selfishness and spring forth as rivers of living waters in life anew. So we become life and light for others. As Adam Parker wrote, "How does the sun in the sky give light? It is continually dying to produce light. We don't see the death, or the dark contracting forces in this great star. We only see the light. But death is the key to the light. And that light is the life of our world in the physical dimension. So also the Son, with the cross in

His heart, is the Daystar risen in our lives. We share in His eternal death and new life, for He is our very life -- and He in us is the light of the world that brings life to all men.

All the books in the world, though written with pens of silver and ink of gold, could never fully describe the glories of His cross, nor could all the learned tongues of men or the heavenly voices of angels explain to the mind of man how He, who was rich, for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. Eternity itself will not be too long to sing the praises of such a One, who came from the cross in the bosom of God to shed His life blood that all creation might find eternal life in Him.

BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

We have been told many times, by the Spirit that life can only come through death. This is one of the fundamental laws of creation. Jesus said, "**Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit**" (Jn. 12:24). In other words, it brings forth an abundance of life--but it is necessary that it die before a new life can be brought about. If it doesn't die, it remains alone, and nothing is brought forth. It was essential for Jesus to be made a man, of the earth earthy, with a body made of the dust of the earth, for the life of God to fall into this ground and die that He might bring forth much fruit, after His own kind.

If Jesus Christ had not died, He would have remained the ONLY begotten Son of God. God would have had no more sons like Him, but because He did come in the likeness of men, with a body of the dust of the earth, encased in the darkness of mortal mind, to die in that body, He can now bring forth many more begotten sons like Himself; and not only that, He came to make it possible for an entirely new creation to come into being.

There is no doubt that the Christ played a very important role in this present creation, for all things were made IN Him, THROUGH Him and FOR Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. Without Him the present creation could not have come into existence. I hope, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to enable you to see and understand His relationship to this present kosmos. If life can only come out of death, then there was a death connected with the bringing in of this present creation. If this law is true, there had to be a death associated with the birth of creation.

I would draw your reverent attention to a few significant passages of scripture. Most Christians seem to think that the time the Christ of God left the glory above was when He was conceived in the womb of the virgin of Nazareth and born a babe in Bethlehem's stable, laying down that life that He had with the Father, birthed into our life which is a life of death, separated from the eternal glory of the Father for a mere 33 years, then laying aside that robe which was of flesh to return to the Father and take again that glory which He had with the Father until that wonderful day when the angel Gabriel was dispatched by God to Mary in Nazareth. But a close inspection of the scriptures will give us a different idea.

In that wonderful prayer Jesus prayed on the night before His crucifixion, He said, "**I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.**" Then He went on to ask, "**And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory I had with Thee before the world (kosmos) was**" (Jn. 17:4-5). These words certainly indicate that Christ had been away from the Father's glory for a lot longer than 33 years. He is actually saying that He left the glory BEFORE THE KOSMOS CAME INTO BEING. How long ago that was I don't have the foggiest notion--but it was certainly centuries, millenniums, yea, vast and innumerable ages before our blessed Christ walked among us. Now He was asking the Father to restore to Him the glory He had forsaken before ever the kosmos came into being. In the 24th verse we read: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: FOR THOU LOVEDST ME BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD."

Why these references to the beginning, yea, before the beginning, before the founding of the kosmos? What happened away back there that He should appeal to it? Why did He speak of the Father's love for Him in that distant point of time? Did not the Father always love Him? I feel deeply within that something tremendously important happened at that time that invoked a special love from God, His Father, causing Him to love His Son in a very special way. One thing is certain--that was the time when the Christ left His pre-existent glory. Otherwise, why should He say, "Father, glorify Thou Me, with Thine own self, with the glory I had with Thee B-

E-F-O-R-E THE KOSMOS WAS." If He had left the glory of the Father only when He came to earth as a man, why not say, "...the glory which I had with Thee before I came to earth"? Ah--it was not in Mary's womb that He descended from the glory of the Father, it was much farther back--BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD!

Notice now these wonderfully meaningful words penned by John the Revelator. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (the beast), whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD" (**Rev. 13:8**). Let us notice just what truth is stated here. A better rendering would be, "The Lamb that was PUT TO DEATH from the founding of the kosmos." Weymouth's translation reads, "All the inhabitants of the earth will be found worshipping him; every one whose name is not recorded in the book of Life--the book of the Lamb offered in sacrifice FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD." The sacrifice and death of the Christ did not start with the events surrounding Calvary; it began away back there at the beginning, and culminated on Calvary. He was the Lamb who was put to death from the beginning. Just as the cross did not begin at Calvary, so the crucifixion of Christ did not begin at Calvary. Peter expressed the fact that the cross existed as a work of God before the foundation of the world in this manner: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was FOREORDAINED B-E-F-O-R-E THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, but was manifest in these last times for you" (**I Pet. 1:18-20**). The Lamb whose offering was already a glorious and eternal reality in the heavens, remained only to cast its shadow upon the earth, on Calvary's hill. We would have thought that in calling our Lord "the Lamb" this name would have been used only in respect to His humiliation in His earthly life. However, in scripture it is most used in reference to His glory in the heavenlies. Peter saw Him as a Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world. John saw Him as a Lamb that had been put to death from the founding of the kosmos, highly exalted, standing in the midst of the throne. Actually John saw the Lamb SLAIN IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE! What a wonder!

What does it mean that Christ was the Lamb slain "before the foundation of the world"? The word "world" in these passages translates the Greek word KOSMOS meaning "order, arrangement, system of things." The "world" is a negative thing in relation to God. James declares, "...the friendship of the world is enmity with God, whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (**James 4:4**). The apostle John adds his testimony, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (**I Jn. 2:15-16**). The world is the present system of things upon this earth conceived by the carnal mind and generated by the natural man.

The world consists of all that man has instituted that replaces God (the Spirit) in his life. The present political systems, economic systems, educational systems and religious systems are not of God, but of the world. When people, activities, or things--whether good or bad, beautiful or ugly--enslave man, they comprise the world. Anything that causes man to disregard the SPIRIT, be removed from the anointing, trust in the outer world of flesh, or be independent of God is the world. All that does not come from the Father, all that originates outside of SPIRIT, all that man institutes by his own carnal wisdom and fleshly ability is of the world, and is contrary to the life and nature of God.

The word "foundation" (foundation of the world) translates the Greek word KATABOLE which is a compound word made up of BALLO meaning "to cast, to throw" and KATA meaning "down." When man fell from his high and holy relationship with God and was cast down into the carnal realm of consciousness, the "foundation" of the world was laid in his heart and actions. But--blessed be God! The apostle Paul informs us that God the Father elected some SONS in Christ BEFORE the foundation of the world! "According as He hath chosen us in Him BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD...unto the adoption of sons..." (**Eph. 1:4-5**). The word "before" translates the Greek word PRO meaning "to go before, to precede." Hence, the Father's act of choosing us in Christ preceded the fall of man and the establishment of the world system.

These blessed ones chosen by the Father are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world" (**Rev. 13:8**), and they are the heirs of the Kingdom of God "prepared for them from the foundation of the world" (**Mat. 25:34**). Praise God, our sonship is assured, our victory over the world is certain, the outcome of God's plan is sure--therefore all creation is standing on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God's

sons coming into their own! The world, as a result, shall pass away and "the kingdoms of THIS WORLD shall BECOME the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ!"

It is my earnest prayer that the Lord will give understanding to all who read these lines. Christ was lowered from the bright glory of the Father BEFORE THE WORLD WAS and He was the Lamb that was put to death from the FOUNDING OF THE WORLD. Meditate deeply upon this, my beloved, for we are looking at two different events in these two statements. He was lowered from the Father's glory before the world was. This was how this present creation was made possible. He had to make a sacrifice of Himself in order for the creation to be brought into being as He has to continue to sacrifice Himself to bring the new creation into existence.

Life can only come out of death. The life you and I have in the natural had to be given us by the Son of God and it has to be sustained by other things giving their lives so we can keep ours. All of the beef, fish and fowl we eat, the fruits and vegetables we consume, were at one time living things; living creatures that gave up their right to live so we could live. There are some things that are written about Jesus that are an enigma to the natural mind. One is, that He is the beginning of the creation of God. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD" (Rev. 3:14). Now we know that it has been said of Jesus that He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. This really means that He is everything, the beginning and the end, and everything in between; the center and the circumference, and the whole area of the sphere. And here we find that He is the beginning of the creation of God. What can this mean? Clearly it means that He was the first of the creation to be brought into being. He had to be brought forth before anything else was, if He was "with God in the beginning." This is verified in **Prov. 8:23-31** where we read of wisdom personified (Christ). "I was set up from age-lasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, when there were no depths I WAS BROUGHT FORTH, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I BROUGHT FORTH."

If Christ was the beginning of the creation of God, what was He in the beginning? What place did He occupy in the grand and glorious scheme of creation? Let us consider the very first thing God brought forth from His creative hand. The picture we get is of a universe and an earth that was without form and void, and darkness covered the face of the deep (Gen. 1:2). Dense darkness covered the whole kosmos. The earth was dark and the heavens also, for there was no light anywhere. The first necessity was to bring the illuminating, life-giving LIGHT into a cold and darkened kosmos. So LIGHT was the first thing God brought about. "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). Now what was this light? Was it the sun, the moon, or the stars as some Bible teachers are wont to tell us? It couldn't have been, for the light of the sun, moon, and stars shone not upon earth until the fourth day. This must have been some other light. If Christ was the beginning of the creation of God, He must have somehow been connected with this first light. And if He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last, was He not the light that God brought forth at this time? Let us look at the last light, in the next to the last chapter of the Bible. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and THE LAMB IS THE LIGHT THEREOF" (Rev. 21:23). So in the end there is no need for the sun nor the moon, for the glory of God and the Lamb is the light. If He is the light in the end, can we not see that He was also the light in the beginning--for He is the beginning and the end!

Now let us look at some of the things Jesus said about Himself. "I am THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (kosmos); he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of Life" (Jn. 8:12). The whole kosmos was in darkness, the heavens as well as the earth; else the heavens would have shed their light upon the earth. The first and greatest need was light, and God brought that light into the dark universe, and that light was THE WORD, THE CHRIST. Jesus also said, "I am come a light into the kosmos, that whosoever believeth on Me should not walk in darkness" (Jn. 12:46). The truth He proclaimed was that HE WAS THE LIGHT THAT CAME INTO THE KOSMOS, to bring light into the darkened creation. He was indeed the light, but there was more in Him coming into the darkened universe than just to be a light. There was much more to it than that! John by inspiration of the Spirit sheds additional revelation on it when he speaks of the Word being with the Father in the beginning, and how all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. Then he goes on to say, "In HIM was life, and the life was the LIGHT OF MEN" (Jn. 1:4). From this verse we see that light and life are essentially one and the same. "The life was the light of men." So when He came a light into the kosmos, He also was the life that came into the creation, to give life unto all creatures. "The Spirit is Life," says the apostle Paul. Life and Spirit are synonymous even as Life, Light and Spirit are but

three ways of saying the same thing. The Word was the Life, the Life was the Light, the Light was the Christ, the Spirit is the Life--GOD INFUSED INTO HIS CREATION--or, as we read in **Job 32:8**, "There is a SPIRIT IN MAN: and the INSPIRATION OF THE ALMIGHTY giveth them understanding."

John continues, "That was THE TRUE LIGHT, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (**Jn. 1:9**). There never was any other light. All other lights are artificial, imitation. Only the Christ was the TRUE LIGHT, and He came a light into the kosmos. In these statements of the apostle John he speaks of the time of the beginning of the creation, when the Word was with God bringing in the creation. He is NOT speaking of the time of His birth in Bethlehem. In the beginning He was the light, and He has been the light ever since, and will be in the vast ages yet to come. And in the end there will be no need of the sun nor the moon to give light. "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (**Isa. 60:19**).

Light is life, darkness is death. Whenever we read of light it always speaks to us of life; when we read of darkness it is referring to death. Light is that which dispels the darkness. When one brings a light into a dark place the darkness goes, because you see, darkness is really nonexistent; it has no substance, no reality; it is just the absence of light. Provide the light and the darkness is gone. It seems strange to our natural understanding that the Light in the beginning didn't do away with the darkness; the darkness still remained. Why didn't the darkness disappear when the Light came on the scene? When you turn on the light in a dark room the darkness flees. Where did it go? It didn't go out the door or through the window. It didn't go anywhere because it is a negative, a no-thing. So why didn't the Light in the beginning dispel the darkness? The answer is, of course, that God did not at that time shine His Light into every place. He "divided the light from the darkness."

This gross material realm was created on a level of death, and death is still a part of the creation; and as long as darkness exists death will still be around. But, blessed be the Lord! Darkness and death will ultimately be done away, for the Light shall shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day and "there shall be NO NIGHT there." When this present creation came into being, death was in the universe, for everything has its opposite, and death is the opposite of life as darkness is the opposite of light. There is even the opposite in God, which is slain by the cross in His heart, so that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. Everything of this present creation, when it was formed, had the potential of death in it. It was a built-in factor in creation. But included in God's great and eternal purpose is the abolition of death and darkness; and God, in working out His plan, is doing just that. When He has finished there will be neither darkness nor death anywhere in the universe. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." But destroyed it shall be, and His Son, who is the Light and the Life, is the One ordained to perform this great task. And He performs it IN US. Praise His name.

When once we understand that this present creation was formed with the shadow of death upon it, it will become increasingly clear that the Son had to leave the eternal, incorruptible glory of the Father, and enter into a level of death, in order to bring the creation into being. It was the Word of God lowering Himself to bring forth and indwell on this lower level. Thus, He was the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. This was the beginning of God's great creative and redemptive process. So when this present creation came into existence the potential of death was in it; but thank God, the potential for life was also there, for there was both light and darkness in it from the beginning.

The Light of Life is now being unveiled in a people into whose hearts GOD HATH SHINED. The pen of inspiration wrote, "YE are all the children of the Light, and the children of the Day, we are not of the night or of darkness" (**I Thes. 5:5**). There are many other places where we read of the children of light, the sons of light, the children of the day; and the children of night or of darkness. We can be either children of the Day, or children of the Night. We can walk in light, or in darkness; it all depends on who we are following, and where our source is--flesh or spirit. The Spirit is life, and light is life. "If ye walk after the Spirit, ye shall live!"

Christ is to God what the light-rays of the sun are to the sun. Compared to the great orb of fire blazing in the heavens the gentle sunlight which strikes planet earth seems pale and limited; yet it is the very substance of the sun and the dispensation of the sun to us. Ere it left the sun it was with the sun and was the sun, as the Christ was with God and was God. "He is the sole expression of the glory of God--the Light-being, the out-
raying of the divine--and He is the perfect imprint and very image of Gods nature" (**Heb. 1:3**) (Amplified). Light

is energy, and the energy of the sun, for example, can change into other forms of energy. When light causes sugar to form in green leaves, some of the light energy is changed into chemical energy and stored in the sugar. When you look at those green leaves you see nothing that even slightly resembles the glory or brilliance of the sun. The lesson here is that the light of the sun has been LOWERED into another form, and when you eat those leaves you receive the strength of life from the energy in the sugar which is really the energy of the sun lowered into that existence.

In like manner, the Christ was the Light and the Life of the creation, but in becoming that Light He Himself had to be limited--as the rays of sunlight are the glory of the sun by measure, so is Christ the measure of God to every man. When He left the glory of the Father to bring forth the creation and to shine upon it and live within it, He was lowered from the infinite realm of the Father, stripping from Himself some of that in order to fulfill the Father's great plan of creation and redemption. This He did BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, and this He did BY THE CROSS IN THE HEART OF GOD for only by the work of the cross could He lay aside the glory He had to shed it forth in love and blessing to creation. He was the Lamb slain from the founding of the kosmos, made subject to death with the rest of creation, that through death He might bring forth much fruit unto God.

I hope you can see this. The glory which He had with the Father before creation was, was not the glory He brought with Him; He had left some of that behind. He had come down to a lower level, actually a level of death, in order to bring the creation into its present state. He had glory, yes, as John said, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). The glory they saw in Him was the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, but it was not the Father's glory, just as the energy in a green leaf is not the glory of the sun.

Before the Christ could bring the new creation into existence, with the fullness the Father had planned, He had to return to the glory with the Father He had left before the kosmos was. He Himself, as the token and forerunner of humanity had to be clothed again with the fullness of the glory of God before He could lift the creation to that level. He could not lift the creation to a higher level than the one He Himself was on.

When He became a man, born in Bethlehem as the Son of man, this was the beginning of His return to His Father. The Father was getting Him ready for a glorious, triumphant return to the glory He had left before the kosmos was. When the time was at hand for Him to go to the cross, and He was telling His disciples about it, this is what He said: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be GLORIFIED." What a paradox! What a mystery! Here He was, facing His dreadful ordeal of being captured, taken to the Judgment

Hall, falsely accused, ridiculed, spat upon, slapped, His beard plucked out, tied to a pillar and scourged until His back looked like a plowed field, mocked by the Roman soldiers, and finally to suffer the agony of the cross; and all He said to His disciples was, "The hour is come for the Son of man to be GLORIFIED." He spoke not one word about the agony and sufferings He was about to endure; He talked only of the glory He was about to enter into. So in the seventeenth chapter of John, when He was praying to His Father, He said to Him, "Father, the hour is come; GLORIFY Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee" (Jn. 17:1). "And now, O Father, GLORIFY Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (Jn. 17:5). The glory He was about to enter so surpassed the sufferings that He thought not of the sufferings; great as they were, they were not worth mentioning. He had waited for long millenniums and through vast ages for this hour, and now it had arrived. And "for the JOY that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

I would like you to notice these words: "Father, glorify Thou Me with THINE OWN SELF." He was asking now for the glory of the fullness of the Father; not the glory of the only begotten Son, but the glory of the fullness of God; and this fullness He received AFTER He was crucified and ascended to the realms above. He is no longer in a limited state; He now possesses the fullness of deity, the full extent of the glory of God. And He has done all for us--on our behalf. HE is the forerunner, opening up the way, that we may follow Him to the place into which He has entered. A new and living way is opened for us, beloved. All that He is and has there is FOR US; it is to be our possession.

It was when the Christ hung upon the cross before the foundation of the world, and upon the cross of Calvary, that He became the one fruitful tree. He tasted death for every man and was made perfect through sufferings that He might lead many sons to glory. It was under the shadow of His cross that we were found and were quickened by His Spirit. It is there He found us, and it is there that we found Him, the Man who is our hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. It was there that streams of living water were poured out in the dry place; from that moment the Rock followed us, and out of it, living streams are flowing more abundantly. It is the cross in OUR LIVES which brings the release of these living streams to mankind, for the body of Christ is the channel of His life by the extension of His cross. While we praise God for the cross of Calvary, and while the soul of man will ever love to thank Him who gave His life for us, yet I believe the triumph of the Christ began at the cross in the heart of God before the foundation of the world and ends only when the race has received from God the Father, through the Christ, Head and body, the grace, power and glory of God that makes them sons of God like Himself.

Hallelujah for the Cross!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 11 LIBRA-THE SCALES [Cont'd]

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KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART ELEVEN

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE CROSS TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

We continue with our study of the first of the Decan, or minor constellations, in the house of Libra -- THE CROSS (CRUX) -- known as 'The Southern Cross.' It is situated beneath the feet of the Centaur. This is one of the most beautiful of the Signs in the heavens. At the time of the coming of Jesus Christ this Southern Cross was visible in the latitude of Jerusalem. In Hebrew this Decan is called ADOM, which means 'the cutting off.' In **Dan. 9:26**, we read: 'After threescore and two weeks shall MESSIAH BE CUT OFF...' Here we have the connection of the Messiah with the Crux or the Cross --- the 'cutting off' of the Messiah. Of our Lord it is written: 'and after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself still further and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross!' (**Phil. 2:8**) (Amplified).

Two thousand years ago, the CROSS didn't inspire religious awe or thoughts of the Messiah's redemption. Instead, the cross inspired sheer TERROR. A crucifixion was a gruesome, torturous, and shameful way of dying ---the lowest form of execution, reserved for traitors and hardened criminals. Most criminals were crucified immediately after their trial because the forebodings of pain were more than most mortals could handle. The crucifixion of Jesus was typical in this respect --- He was crucified on the same day He was convicted. But this death sentence was no sudden surprise to Jesus. He anticipated His death by the cross throughout His three - and-one-half year ministry. As a young man growing up in Galilee, He undoubtedly witnessed a number of Roman crucifixions. According to the customs of the times, to be hanged on a tree was to be forever accursed -- to have the memory of your name blotted out both in earth and in heaven. The triumph of Christ over this kind of death only adds immeasurably to His ultimate victory, because He transformed His cross -- the symbol of the curse --into the symbol of His eternal triumph. Yes, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death --- EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS! Oh, the wonder of it!

One of the most strangely arresting statements in the Word of God is that Jesus is the "lamb SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD' (**Rev. 13:8**). Well do I know that there are shining depths and lofty heights of meaning in that sublime statement, yet the central thought seems to be plain enough? It is that long ago "-when 'the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy" --- the purpose of creation and redemption was conceived and wrought out in the heart of God in celestial realms. The sacrifice and death of the Christ did not start with the events surrounding Calvary; it began away back them at the beginning, and culminated on Calvary. He was the Lamb who was put to death from the beginning. Just as the cross did not begin at Calvary, so the crucifixion of Christ did not begin at Calvary. Peter expressed the fact that the cross existed as a work of God before the foundation of the world in this manner: 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was FOREORDAINED B-E-F-O-R-E THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, but was manifest in these last times for you' (**I Pet. 1:18 -20**). The day came ... wonderful day! --- when that love-purpose, conceived and enacted in eternity, cast its shadow into time. The fullness of time having come, God "sent forth His Son." And on the cross of Calvary the eternal purpose became an historic verity.

Christ came into this world, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, to bring us back to God and the glory we had with Him before the world was. That may seem a strange statement to some, but because God is God, all the wisdom and understanding of the universe dwells in Him. We must expect Him to say many things and state many facts that the natural mind cannot comprehend nor pry into. It is the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth understanding. The most unlearned and simple among men can comprehend the deepest things of God in that moment when the divine light from above shines upon them. It is

a divine certainty that Christ was with the Father and loved by the Father before the worlds were made or the ages framed. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God' (In. 1:1-2).

In that wonderful prayer Jesus prayed on the night before His crucifixion, He said: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: FOR THOU LOVEDST ME BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD." And ... blessed be God! --- it is no less a divine certainty that in that long -ago eternity God loved and elected some OTHER SONS in Christ, as the pen of inspiration affirms: "According as He hath chosen us in Him BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD ... having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (placement as sons) by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will ' (Eph. 1:4-5). 'For whom He did FOREKNOW, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among MANY BRETHREN" (Rom. 8:29).

Our human minds cannot measure eternal things or such divine love. Human love is limited to days, weeks, months, and years in duration. Thirty-five years ago I stood by my lovely, blushing bride-to-be in a marriage ceremony under the stars. A year and a haft prior to that hour we had fallen in love -- deeply, devotedly. In pledges written poetically, and in promises whispered personally, we had spoken of our love that would last forever and ever. Yet it came as a stunning, shocking, sobering reminder of the frailty of earthly love when I discovered in our marriage vows that we could only pledge our love to each other 'until death do us part.' There was a moment when our love was born -- but there would be another moment when it will cease! Not that we embrace death -- but all EARTHLY THINGS pass away whether by death or by transformation to a higher plane of existence. Not so with the love of God! God's love toward us did not begin the day we were born into this world. You may go back beyond the time when a wave beat upon a beach, or a star shone in the sky, or glorious Seraphim cried 'holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty!' and when you get back as far as the mind can reach you will know that GOD KNEW YOU THEN, GOD LOVED YOU THEN, GOD PURPOSED FOR YOU THEN, GOD PREDESTINATED YOU THEN, and the blessed Lamb of God was SLAIN FOR YOU THEN UPON THE ETERNAL CROSS IN THE HEAVENS. This is a deep spiritual truth, a mystery of the universe. Think and pray over it and the Holy Spirit will teach you.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE CROSS

We have come to see that the great cross of Christ was not the wooden one upon which He was crucified. The real cross of Jesus the Christ lay in the eternal disposition of Christ --- His humility, His sacrifice, His spirit of self-denial, His laying aside His glory, His pouring out of His life, His lowering of Himself to raise all, in Him, up to God. This was no single act --- it was a constant and all - pervading nature. This is the real cross where He was eternally slain before the world was.

After Christ was risen from the dead the apostles went out to preach His Kingdom, and what they preached was the cross. And wherever they went into the wide world they carried the cross, and the power of that cross transformed the world. It changed Saul of Tarsus from a fierce persecutor of the saints to a tender believer and a fearless apostle of Jesus Christ. Its power changed wicked men into holy ones. It shook off the bondage of paganism and altered the course of history. Its power departed when it was changed from a transforming principle in men's lives and made an outward symbol to be hung around the neck as an ornament. Paul said, 'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world' (Gal. 6:14). Paul's GLORYING in the cross was not an IDOLIZING of the "old rugged cross", not an ornament to be worn, not a symbol to be displayed, not a magic sign to ward off evil, not a Christian fetish, not a relic to be prayed over. Again the apostle wrote, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18).

"The preaching of the cross" . . . Here we note that the word "preaching" is actually the Greek word LOGOS --- THE WORD. The word LOGOS goes far beyond just an utterance, a spoken saying, or particles of speech -- it reaches into the very will, purpose, intent, and thought behind the words. The LOGOS (WORD) OF THE CROSS speaks to us of the full will of the cross, the full purpose of the cross, the full intent of the cross, the mighty power of the cross working in our life, which becomes in us THE POWER OF GOD. As Ray Prinzing wrote: "IT IS NOT IN THE SYMBOL, IT IS IN THE WORD --- in the outworking of the will and purpose of God

through the cross that becomes HIS POWER IN US. Or, shall we say, it is the experiential outworking of the cross in our life which becomes THE POWER OF GOD. Talking about the cross, singing about the cross, doesn't do but the inworking of this WORD OF THE CROSS becomes a marvelous thing." Not the theory of the cross, but the tremendous, heart - gripping WORD --- the REALITY of the cross is what towers in our interest.

The principle of receiving all divine things involves giving it all up. As Abraham was told to sacrifice Isaac, and the rich young ruler was told to sell all his possessions and give to the poor, so the principle of the Cross is one of sacrifice --- forsaking and relinquishing all. A. C. Dixon wrote: 'May the Spirit of God help us now to go a little farther into this Holy of Holies, and try to realize the meaning of CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED, with the glory of it, the glory of giving up glory, the honor of surrendering honor, the reputation of being of no reputation, for the sake of the glory, honor and reputation of others. Seeking glory and grasping after honor may mean selfishness; but there is a higher glory than seeking glory, and a deeper honor than grasping after honor ---the glory of the sacrificial spirit which gives up glory and honor for the sake of others.

"Let us imagine, if we can, a man in this world who is truth incarnate. In him is all troth; and I mean by troth, reality without sham --- no pretence. There is not a ring of unreality about him. A man like that would be the glory of his nation. Then imagine another man in whom all light centers. I mean by light, knowledge and understanding, light on every subject in the universe; and if you could find a man like that he would be the glory of his nation. Then look for another man in whom life is centered --- physical life, intellectual life, ethical life, spiritual life, all the life you can think of incarnate in this one man. He would be the glory of his nation. Then find another man in whom all wisdom is centered, not simply knowledge, but how to use it. He never makes a mistake, never acts foolishly. He would be the glory of his nation. Find another man in whom all power is centered, and he would be the glory of his nation. Then another man in whom all love is centered, love that is pure, love that is not flecked with lust; everything that is lovely and of good report centers in him. He would be the glory of his race.

"Now find, if you can, a man in whom all of these things are centered --- all troth, all light, all life, all wisdom, all power, all holiness, and all love, and you would say that a man in whom all of these were incarnate was not only the glory of earth, but he is the glory of heaven. In such a man you have the glory of all worlds. Yet we have just approached the glory of the Cross. I have been describing to you our LORD JESUS CHRIST! He is the only One who ever came into this world of whom it could be said, 'In Him is all Troth, all Light, all Life, all Wisdom, all Power, all Holiness and all Love.' These things incarnate in Christ make Him not only the glory of earth but the glory of heaven. YET YOU HAVE NOT TOUCHED THE GLORY OF THE CROSS. I have just described in this faint, feeble way the glory of the incarnate God.

"Let us go a step farther and see what the Cross means. If you can find a man in whom all truth is centered, not contending for the troth, but dying for those in error, you have reached another degree of glory. If you can find a man in whom all light is centered, light not displaying itself, but dying for those in darkness; if you can find a man in whom all wisdom is centered, not wisdom admiring itself, but dying for the ignorant; if you can find a man in whom all life is centered, not protecting itself, as a coward would, but giving itself for those who are dead; if you can find a man in whom all holiness is centered, holiness not cultivating itself, though that is a good thing, but holiness giving itself on the altar, dying for the unholy and the impure; if you can find a man that has all power, not exerting itself, but willing to be weak, restraining itself, that it may carry out its noble purpose of sacrifice for sin; if you can find a man that is all love, not simply enjoying itself, but love on the altar, love dying, love giving itself, to the cross in order that the unlovely might be saved; if you can find all these, you will have some little conception of what the Cross of Christ means. Now put all into one --- O God, help us to realize it!all Truth, all Light, all Life, all Wisdom, all Power, all Holiness, all Love, incarnate in one Man, who gives Himself for the untruthful, for the darkened, for the dead, for the weak, for the unholy, for the unlovely and you have some conception of what the Cross of Jesus Christ is in its deeper meaning" --- end quote.

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

Jesus' secret to the life of sonship was: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it and whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it" (Mat. 16:24-25). ". . . let him deny himself" --- not: protect, defend, uphold and promote himself, or feel sorry for himself. How can you love any one else if you have all of that to do? Most people would rather

deny the movie theater, the liquor store, the gambling den, the Babylon church system, communism, and Fidel Castro, but the message is clear --- "If any man will be My disciple, let him . . . deny HIMSELF." Poor, sweet, innocent little SELF! A brother in Christ once asked whether there can be found in all the universe a more possessive, blinding, or deceiving devil than the devil of self. It is self, self, always SELF that stands between you and true sonship to God. It is the friendly hand of SELF that turns you away from your cross and refuses to let you take it up and follow Christ w the place of execution. Would God that all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship would learn this divine secret? It is the SELF-LIFE that stands between them and the full manifestation of the will, purpose and glory of God in their lives. It is SELF --- the outer man of sense consciousness -- that shuts us out from the vibrant and incorruptible life of the SPIRIT.

In his remarkable book, BORN CRUCIFIED, the author, L. E. Maxwell, makes the following potent observation: 'The victorious believer will become aware of many forms of SELF which must yet be dealt with. We shall discover in our service for Christ, self-confident and self-esteem; in the slightest suffering, self-saving and self-pity; in the least misunderstanding, self-defense and self-vindication; in our station in life, self-seeking and self-centeredness; in the smallest trials, self-inspection and self-accusation; in the daily routine, self-pleasing and self-choosing; in our relationships, self-assertiveness and self-respect; in our education, self-boasting and self-expression; in our desires, self-indulgence and self-satisfaction; in our successes, self-admiration and self-congratulation; in our failures, self-excusing and self-justification; in our spiritual attainments, self-righteousness and self-complacency; in our public ministry, self-reflection and self-glory; in life as a whole, self-love and selfishness. THE FLESH IS AN ' I ' SPECIALIST. These are but a few of the multiplied forms of the flesh to be discovered and taken to the cross. In the palace of Wurtzung hangs a hall of glass. It is called the hall of a thousand mirrors. You enter. A thousand hands are stretched out to meet you, a thousand smiles greet your smile, a thousand eyes will weep when you weep; but they are all your hands, your smiles, your mars. What a picture of selfish man! Self all around, self multiplied, and self-deceived' -- end quote.

Why did the love of Christ lead Him to the cross? Because nowhere in Him did SELF rise up and say, ' I have had enough of it.* Nowhere in Him could self say, 'I should not have to suffer so much,' or 'I should not have to give so much.' When Judas betrayed Him, there was no place in Him where self could rise up and say, "I trusted this man to be the treasurer and now he has sold me down the river.' Or when Peter denied Him, 'I gave him the keys to the Kingdom and now he denies Me.* He could truly say, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me (In. 14:~0). There was no ground in Him where the carnal mind could do its work. The path of sonship is truly one of denying ourselves, submitting to the cross as the Lord applies it to our lives, and following Him all the way. The road to Mount Zion passes through the hill of Golgotha. This is a WALK which requires all that we have and all that we are.

SPIRITUAL LIFE. Volumes have been written on the CRUCIFIED LIFE -- the surrender of our will to God, of becoming nothing, that He might become everything. I am sure that some of my readers have sung the little chorus that expresses this beautifully:

**'Lord, take me and break me until I'm nothing,
And make me and mold me until I'm something,
Then take me and use me for Your glory,
Until all that I am is You.'**

As another has written: 'Herein is a definite inworking of the Spirit, till we recognize that in ourselves we are nothing -- as pertains to the spiritual realm. Then He will make us a 'something' -- indeed, the new creation is to become a part of HIMSELF, so we truly bear His image. And we are able to say with Jesus, ' I can of mine own self do nothing' (In. 5:30). Now, this we have found -- the deep inworkings of the cross do not take away our self-respect, sense of self-value that belongs to the natural realm. It is dealing with an entirely different realm. The cross is used to cancel out any self, effort to become spiritual. All of the natural gifts and graces wherein we are endowed in the earthly, proper for their sphere, do not qualify us for spiritual glories. We are born into this earthly realm, receiving whatever strengths, abilities, and weaknesses that are appointed to us. And we grow and develop to the fullest potential we are able. Likewise, we are BORN into the heavenly realm, and endowed with HIS gifts and graces, and then are to progress toward spiritual maturity. Thus we find that we have a LIE WITHIN A LIFE. The natural has its sphere, the' spiritual has its sphere. The spiritual will help

you to be even a better natural person, BUT THE NATURAL CANNOT HELP YOU BE A BETTER SPIRITUAL PERSON. For 'it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing' In. 6:63).

'The lesser (flesh) can be helped by the greater (spirit but it is self-evident that the lesser can add nothing to the greater. Day by day we cry out to the Lord' for HIS EVER PRESENT HELP, and He enables us to accomplish the task before us -- imparting wisdom and understanding even beyond our inherent abilities. He truly condescends to men of low estate, and ministers to us in the very nitty-gritty of this earthly living. Yet, when it comes to growing in spirit, that His life might fill and flood us, and that all comes under His indwelling control --- the flesh can add nothing to this. 'Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?' (Mat. 6:27). It is HIS LIFE growing within us, ministered to by the Spirit, receiving of His grace. True, we can 'give ourselves to these things' in our yielding and seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, but we cannot BIRTH OURSELVES into His Kingdom, nor can we make ourselves more righteous -- self-effort produces self-righteousness. And that is the self which is dealt with by His cross. Spiritual life must be spiritually sustained.

Paul taught this to the foolish Galatians, asking them, 'Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh (Gal. 3:3) --- Gospel Echoes.

The Spirit-substance that nourishes our spirit is the life of the Father within. When we live out of SPIRIT we walk in GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS and SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS has no place. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracle of God -- out of his innermost being. When one speaks the truth, when one speaks and performs what he hears from the Father, it is GOD IN MANIFESTATION, and self is there crucified upon the cross in God's heart. God is raising up a people today, sons who no longer are self-conscious. The secret of Jesus' sonship was that He paid no attention whatsoever to Himself. "Whatsoever I see the Father do, that is what I am doing, whatsoever I hear the Father say, that is what I am saying." The Father said, "You are the way, the truth and the life," so He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." He did not say it with His eyes turned to the outer man, thinking how important He was, how vital He was to the situation. He said it because His heart was set on the Father. He said, "The Father has given Me the words I should say." And He spoke the words the Father gave Him with no self-consciousness at all.

God is raising up sons in these days whose eyes are set upon the Father, who will be able to declare, "We are the light of the world," not out of self-consciousness, but because of a God-consciousness, who is speaking out of our innermost being, "Arise and shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." The Lord said to Paul, "They will not accept thy word, turn to the Gentiles, for I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, thou shalt be My salvation to the ends of the earth." If Paul were diplomatic, if Paul were religious, if Paul were self-seeking, if Paul were self-saving, he would have kept the revelation to himself and just walked out of town calmly and said, "Well, they do not understand, but really, I have a deeper and greater calling, I will just go off to fulfill it." The Father said to Paul, 'I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, thou shalt be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'" So Paul said to the people, "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Acts 13:47)

Jesus instructed His disciples: "Into whatsoever city you enter and they receive you not, shake the dust off and say to them: Nevertheless, the Kingdom of God has come nigh unto you" (Mat. 10:14; Lk. 10:11). Do not walk out of town silently, muttering to yourself, "They did not realize what we represented, that we are, in expression, the Kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. They did not realize that the Kingdom of God is working and living and expressing itself in us." There can be no self-seeking; no self-saving in these days, there can be no self-protection in the life of sonship. The sons of God cannot be self-righteous, parading the ideas of the carnal mind before men under the guise of spirituality, but neither can the sons of God be so wrapped up in self-saving that they pretend to be more humble than they are, and pretend to be what they are not. God is declaring that the creation is groaning and travailing, waiting for the unveiling of God's sons. Are we going to sell the world short in these days? Are we to deny that the Lord is saying to His elect, "As the Father sent Me, so send I you"? Are we to deny that we are the sons of God, calling ourselves, like Babylon's masses, "sinners saved by grace," "Christians," etc. Why have we not heard this word before? Because the Father did not send the babies to be the saviours of the world. The baby Jesus in the arms of Mary was not the saviour of the world. The Father sent His SON to be the saviour of the world. And there was

no salvation or expression or manifestation until He began to be about thirty years of age, then it was that the Father spoke from heaven: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And on the mount of transfiguration: "This is My Son, hear Him." When the son has come to maturity he has but one desire, to do the Father's will, to speak the Father's words, and to accomplish the Father's purpose. Jesus said: "In the same manner in which My Father has sent Me --- as a son in maturity in full commitment to His will, with the Father dwelling in Me, My eyes fastened on Him and My whole being swallowed up into Him --- as the Father has sent Me to be Light and Life and Salvation and all that creation needs --- SO SEND I YOU!

No man can walk this path of sonship apart from the cross. When the blessing of God comes, when the power and glory of God arise upon us, what happens? We speak either out of the life of God with no self-consciousness, or self takes the credit for what we have received and struts about like a peacock, with its tail all spread out, parading flesh before men. Self will assume the tide of 'Reverend,' 'Head Elder,' 'Senior Pastor,' 'Bishop,' 'First Apostle,' 'the Prophet,' 'General Overseer,' or 'God's man of faith and power for this hour,' subjecting the people to his dominion for prestige, power or gain. I do not hesitate to tell you that men who have never denied self and who know nothing of the work of the cross have been blessed by God with gifts and self has usurped these gifts and used them for its own ends -- building vast empires of flesh in the name of the Lord. These men of reprobate minds presumably serve God but are dedicated to material gain. They promote what they term a "faith message" or a "life message" with joy, peace, miracles, blessing, healing, prosperity, glory, fame, power, and anything else you can invent which would appeal to the lusts of the flesh, and make life on earth one continuous glorified "Disney World" experience. In the name of Jesus Christ, and under the banner of spiritual ministry, they separate the simple, God-fearing saints from their money. These religious racketeers, wearing the masks of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, promise blessing, healing, miracles and prosperity "-BUT NOT WITHOUT A PRICE. Their 'prayer request" forms are attached to their 'offering' forms, subtly suggesting that if you GIVE you will GET. Their clever promises and adroit manipulations have led tens of thousands of distressed and needy souls to send in their meager incomes in hope of a miracle in return. The apostle Paul bluntly describes these crafty promoters of greed and warns the godly against their message and methods in these forceful words: **'. . . men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that GAIN IS GODLINESS: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain . . . and having food and raiment let us therewith be content. But THEY THAT WILL BE RICH FALL INTO TEMPTATION AND A SNARE, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the LOVE OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL: which while some have coveted after, they have ERRED FROM THE FAITH, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, FLEE THESE THINGS; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."** **1 Tim.6:5-11**). Again, 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose GOD IS THEIR BELLY, and whose glory is in their shame, who MIND EARTHLY THINGS.' **(Phil. 3:18-19)**.

There is a work of the cross that cuts deeper in the lives of God's sons than the things of which we have been speaking. The revelation of Jesus Christ is the need of the hour. Only a present intervention of the divine mind, only a present revelation of the spirit of wisdom and power will be able to meet the need. If God does not give a special ministrations and the spirit of wisdom and power to meet the need, it will not be met. There are no buttons to press to solve problems and deliver creation. The further we move in God the more helpless and totally empty we become.

God is moving on. The higher we go in God the more refined become the testings. God is causing us to take positions and stands, not against the BAD simply, but against things that are GOOD. Of course, if you take a stand against things that are good and were started by God, formed by God, ordained by God, it will appear as if you are an instrument of the devil out to destroy the work of God. But God said once, **"That which I plant, I will pluck up"** **(Jer. 1:9-10; 18:6-10)**. I rejoiced for years because I saw that **"every tree which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up"** **(Mat. 15:13)**. Now, as we move on in God, we must rejoice when we see God pluck up that which HE PLANTED. God says, "That which I built, I will destroy." We are to rejoice when we see God destroy that which He built. Unless God has done a work in our spirits by the power of the Holy Ghost, we cannot believe that. Our own concept is that if God built it, the only one out to destroy it is the devil. But God says: 'I will destroy.' May The decade of the 1990's be a decade in which we are prepared to lose the good as well as the bad, prepared to see God pluck up that for which we have given our life to see it planted, where we see God break down and destroy that for which we have sold ourselves out.

Most of us have no problem as to our bad; we know the flesh and all that it represents must go to the cross. But all of us have areas in our life which we think are good: a devotion, a commitment, a consecration, a faith, a prayer life, a knowledge, a ministry, but which are as much SELF as the bad temper, the lust, and the rest of it. God is saying that everything must go. That which is left will only be CHRIST HIMSELF formed in us. Why is this? Because when God has planted something, after a while we become idolatrous about it. Idolatry is really the self-life projecting itself into the things of God so that they turn into idols because they become the thing which is produced by our consecration, our prayers, our dying. But we do not want it to die, because it has cost us too much, and it represents a work of God in our life. We have given our whole life to see this thing come into being, and anyone that comes along to destroy it is destroying all our consecration, the prayers we have prayed, the reputation we have lost, the deaths we have died. After God has established it, you are telling me that it has to die? But that is exactly it! If it lives we will do what Israel did with the brazen serpent. We make an ephod out of it and go after it to worship it. I know people today who instead of worshipping God, worship worship. It is not the Lord they delight in, but the soulish sensation they get out of 'worship.' Others worship a message -- the faith message, the sonship message, the Kingdom message. Many worship experiences and ministries. Wherever God has brought us in previous dealings, God is progressively moving forward. Today He says: 'Build it', tomorrow He says, 'Destroy it.' Today He says: 'Plant it,' tomorrow He says, 'Pluck it up.' Today He says: 'Get a harvest,' tomorrow He says, "Let the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die.' He who has a right to build has also the right to destroy when He is through with a thing. And, woe! unto that man who cannot discern the times.

Unless Christ is being formed in us, unless self is firmly nailed to the cross, we will not surrender to the planting of the corn of wheat; we will not accept the destruction of the thing God has used so mightily in our life. Many who read these lines have given their lives to some realm in God, and now the Spirit speaketh expressly, 'Get up and leave it.' Why did the Jews crucify Jesus? Because of His position relative to the Law. The Law represents Moses and the deliverance out of Egypt, and then one day Jesus stands in their midst and announces: "It was said by them of old time . . . but I SAY UNTO YOU!" bringing an entire new dimension of Grace. Israel knew that if you make an end of the Law, you make an end to Israel. The whole life of Israel was wrapped around Moses and the Commandments and the Law. They knew that if you take that away, it means the end of "US", and that is what they did not want. We want "US" to continue on forever. But it is 'GOD' who must continue on! No matter who we are, where we came from, what God has done for us, the time comes that we become swallowed up into God, so that when it is all over it will be God alone remaining. Not what we have been formed into remains, but the Lord alone.

There is no clearer statement of truth in all scripture than the truth that the sons of God are the temple of God, the body of Christ, the dwelling place of the Most High. It was with an expression of wonder that Paul demanded of the Corinthians, "know ye not that YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, WHICH TEMPLE YE ARE' (1 Cor. 3: 16-17). And again, "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD; as God hath said, I will DWELL IN THEM, and WALK IN THEM..' (II Cor. 6:16).

How our glad hearts rejoice and our tongues drop down their pearls of praise in the sacred knowledge that we are each a living stone in the living temple of God, rising to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord. There is, however, a holy ambition of God that transcends the form of what we are becoming in Him. Only with the mind of the Spirit can we fathom the deep mystery John the beloved encountered on barren Patmos when in vision he beheld the glorious Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. With astonished wonder and open-mouthed amazement he cried, 'And I saw NO TEMPLE THEREIN!' What a wonder! The Bible calls us the temple of God, but one day we will cease to be the temple. 'And I saw no temple therein: FOR THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY AND THE LAMB ARE THE TEMPLE OF IT' (Rev. 21:22). Think of it! The very thing that is represented by us must one day be swallowed up into GOD HIMSELF --- no longer to be a 'container' of God, but SPIRIT as our total reality. As the Lord has spoken to us in times past, Christ has been doing things in us, He has been putting a devotion in us, forming a commitment, creating a character, perfecting a ministry, performing a work of grace in our life until we can say: "I am what I am by the grace of God." The Lord has worked and wrought within us until of this commitment, and of this faith, and of this consecration, and of the blessings and gifts and ministry and attainment we can say: "The Lord hath done it for me." But that is over. From now on God is not interested in what He has done FOR YOU. From henceforth it

must be "When Christ who is our life shall appear..." If there is a mind in us, it must be mind of Christ, not our religious mind that is cultivated through the years until it is religious and devoted and full of the Bible and stayed on God. From now on it must not be our mind stayed on Him, it must be HIS MIND IN US.

What we have witnessed to for years was a work of God, His salvation in us, His peace in us, His victory in us; we had become a product of the work of God. But God's purpose is not that we shall be a testimony of the work of God, but that there shall come a revelation of A PERSON, that the revelation will BE CHRIST. It will not be a revelation of the work of God, but a revelation of the Person of God in us. God is talking to His sons about PERSONIFICATION, MANIFESTATION, REVELATION AND IDENTITY. Now you are going to PERSONIFY CHRIST as you have embodied the works of Christ. Christians represent the work of God: Saved from this, having received that, changed into something else, but it is still 'ME'. What you see is a marvelous expression of the handiwork of God. But God intends that the hour should come when there shall be a revelation of the Person of God, the Identity of God, so that HE IS OUR LIFE. Not: we have life because He has wrought life in us, but "Christ who is our life shall appear" He no longer gives us peace, He becomes our peace, our righteousness, wisdom, redemption, sanctification, ALL THAT HE IS until we are no longer a witness to a work or an experience, but a witness of His Person, His Identity as our reality. Are you willing to have nothing but the Person Are you willing for God to be your life, and you His life until HE IS ALL THERE IS? Are you willing to forget the work and the experience to bear HIS IDEN'ITYYY? In our moving on into God, God is saying to us: "What I did for you yesterday, the works of God, must now become the Person of God in you. The cross must strike not only at our carnality and sin, but at all our blessings and experiences and attainments in God. While we praise God for all His mighty acts on our behalf, in and through us , it must all be slain by the cross until we no longer talk about the work of God wrought in us, for that is duality --- God and me. When men saw Jesus, the salvation of God, they saw more than a work of God; they saw the PERSON OF GOD, for, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father' In. 14:9). Ultimately God's purpose is that when the cross has done its work Christ will be so formed in us, so expressed and revealed through us, until he that sees us sees the Father. There are tens of thousands of people here in Texas and tens of millions around the world today who are living witnesses to the work of God, of His handiwork, the power of the blood, the power of faith, the glory of His gifts and graces. But what is God looking for and creation groaning for that is DIFFERENT from what we have had for two thousand years? Ah --- creation is groaning for the manifestation of the sons of God, the unveiling of GOD IN HIS SONS, a people who are no longer witnesses to the work of God, but who bear the very Person of God, who bear the very Identity of God, from whom flows the life of God without limit or measure. What the Spirit is saying is that God must have a people in whom the Lord, the Spirit, is BECOMING rather than DOING. That is what the manifestation of the sons of God is, that is what the revelation of Jesus Christ is, there will never be the unveiling of Jesus Christ if all I can talk about is what He has done. His works are not Him --- HE is a Person. Paul said, 'It pleased God to reveal His Son in me.' Not, 'It pleased God to reveal some of the works of His Son in me and give me an experience. And when he prayed earnestly for the saints: 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you", Paul did not mean that they should receive another healing, another miracle, another answer to prayer, another gift of the Spirit, another revelation, or die a little more death and so on. There came an hour when Paul knew that the works of the Lord would not be sufficient, but that the Lord Himself had to be put on, so that instead of having a work of faith, or a work of love, or a work of power, the Lord Himself, the spirit of life within, would BE THE FAITH, LOVE AND POWER. It looks as if you are turning your back on these wonderful experiences in God, but you needed them to bring you where you are. The lesser is swallowed up of the greater.

If at this hour we still need God to DO for us rather than for Christ to BECOME in us, then we are not ready for any revelation or unveiling. When God sends His manchild forth, He sends them forth as those in whom Christ is so fully formed that it is not a matter of needing God to do any thing more, for these sons live entirely out of God their life within. May Christ be so fully revealed in all of us is my earnest prayer and my deepest desire, that in these coming days there will not be any longer a cry in our being, O God, do something more for me,' for that leaves me with myself on my hands. The secret of Jesus was that for three and a half years He did not have to be more consecrated, He did not have to be more dedicated, He did not have to be more victorious, all He had to do was let the Father within live out through Him. This is sonship --- Christ fully formed in us, Christ living out all the glory of God, in all the fullness of His Life and Light and Love and Power and Victory, expressed through us, and AS US.

Blessed Father! let it be so in us. Let Christ be fully formed in me and in all who read these lines and in all the body of Christ. Oh God! let the work of doing for us come to an end, until it shall be GOD IN US. Lord! cause Jesus Christ to become in us our Peace, our Joy, our Life, our Victory, our Mind, our Nature, our Power, our Wisdom, that from this moment on there shall be the expression of Himself, not a witness to His work, but a revelation of His own Person and Being and Nature. Oh God! may that divine nature, that divine reality of God be so fully manifested in us, that the creation that is groaning for the unveiling of God in His sons will see Him unveiled in His body, unveiled in His Church, unveiled in His ministry, unveiled in His King-Priests, that every eye shall see Him and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him, and every knee shall bow to Him. Amen!

There should be no need to remind those who read these pages that the cross does not end when God becomes ALL in us -- for the cross is eternal in the heart of God. Let us rehearse what is meant by the cross of Christ. Truth, light, life, wisdom, holiness, power and love all in ONE CORPORATE MAN --- the Christ, Head and body. What a character that is! Yet truth, light, life, wisdom, holiness, power and love by themselves do not make for true glory. I have heard people testify about the work of God in them and all they were doing was bragging. They were boasting and glorying in what God had done for them, in what God had given them, and all they had was centered in themselves. But truth becomes truly glorious when it goes to the cross, when it becomes sacrificial, not defending, but dying upon the cross for those enslaved by error. So with light when it goes to the cross, not displaying itself, when it is willing to give itself for darkness; when life refuses to protect itself, but goes to the cross and gives itself for those who are dead; when wisdom goes to the cross, not admiring itself, but giving itself for the ignorant; holiness, not boasting in itself, but giving itself for the unholy; power not exerting itself, but holding itself back in order that it may be sacrificed for those who are weak; love not enjoying itself, but pouring itself out for the unlovely. That is greatness, great through conforming to the death of Christ, great in that all that is good is on the altar of sacrifice for those in need. That is God, for God brought the whole vast universe, the creation, all things visible and invisible, in the heavens and in the earth, out of Himself; then He gave Himself to the creation, to live for the creation, to dwell in the creation, that He might be ALL-IN-ALL. Truly this is the heart of God and the hope of creation!

I would close with these true and transforming words from the pen of George Hawtin. "Hear, Oh man of God, and give earnest heed, ye sons! It is now in this dreadful age of greed and selfishness, violence and spoil, that the Father all-glorious is finding a people who has nailed SELF and SELFISHNESS to the cross of Christ. He is picking them out one by one, setting them apart as sheep are set apart from goats and as wheat is separated from the tares. These are beginning to reign with Him in that kingdom of SELF-LESS-NESS, even the kingdom of God. The self and greed that has reigned in the earth for six thousand years will not exist in that wonderful day of the kingdom of God, the seventh dispensation, the day when God and all His creation will rest from the labor and travail of the past. Make no mistake about this: should one carnal mind be among the sons of God in that day, the earth would be brought to the same curse as it is now. But such cannot be, for all who will reign with Him have passed by the way of the cross, delivered forever from self. 'Not I, but Christ' is their eternal theme. THE WAY OF THE CROSS HAS LED US HOME."

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 12 LIBRA-THE SCALES [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TWELVE

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

The Southern Cross is the first of three minor constellations or groups of stars which adhere to the constellation of Libra. It cannot be seen in most parts of North America, but throughout the Southern Hemisphere it is bright and easily seen. The constellation is also called CRUX, which means "cross" in Latin, and its stars form the shape of a cross. Innumerable eons before that dreadful and wonderful day when the Christ of God hung upon a cross, this most beautiful and brilliant of the Signs of the heavens scintillated against the darkness of the celestial canopy proclaiming with unerring wisdom and divine immutability the eternal cross in the heart of God.

"The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again" (**Eccl. 1:5-7**). Like the waters of rivers, we have all experienced the downward journey, irresistibly drawn by the gravitation of the flesh and self, until we come to the lowest point, a raging sea of pollution and death. But there is another power, transcending the pull of the earthly and that is the DRAWING OF THE SON, lifting us up out of the "dead sea" and raising us up again into the heavenlies, to bring us back to the glorious heights of the Spirit.

Multitudes throng the low road, taking the path of self, sin, and death. But some, praise God, are already being irresistibly drawn upward, to take that HIGH WAY back to the image and glory of God. It has been said that the "way UP is DOWN," but to unceasingly go downward, without a way up, would create a hopeless frustration that would surely end in eternal defeat. But what is true of the cycles of nature is also true in the spiritual processes of God, there is a place in our going down process where we finally "bottom out" and begin that upward journey. Certainly HIS CROSS is that TURNING POINT, and brought to the end of self, partaking of that death process which slays the carnal mind, we find there also begins an ascending, that we might progress and return to the LIFE OF THE SPIRIT. The cross of Christ stands as the bridge between the old and the new, between the depth and the height, and there is no point so low, but that His cross has penetrated to that depth, HE IS THERE to turn us around. In the cross God Himself has descended to the lowest depth, and there abides to receive us, to redirect our course, so that from that moment on there is an upward turning. "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; EVEN THERE SHALL THY HAND LEAD ME, and Thy right hand shall hold me," as we read in **Ps. 139:8-10**.

How we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory in the blessed knowledge that "all these things are of God." He has planned it all. He is, too, who has been fulfilling it. There is no place BEYOND GOD, for it is "IN HIM that we live, and move, and have our being," even though it be without a consciousness of His presence and consumed by the consciousness of our own self-will. Still we cannot get beyond Him, for matters not the extremity of our rebellion and waywardness, we shall find that HE IS THERE with His cross, waiting to deal with our self-hood, and then with HIS LIFE to restore us back into wholeness in Him again. There is, then, a divine Plan, and that plan is "the way of the cross" that LEADS HOME. A clear and profound statement of this plan occurs in Hannah's simple words in **I Sam. 2:6**, "The Lord KILLETH, and maketh alive." A killing process is here taking place, one which is being carried out under the direction of our Lord.

The question sometimes annoys us --- Why does God deal with me as He does? Why is God so SEVERE? Why does He strike so VIOLENTLY?. This burning question the scripture answers very simply by saying: He KILLETH. There is something within us that must be put to death. And that something God deliberately kills, whether we understand what He is doing or not. He does not ask us for permission thus to kill. It is the old "I"

which must be put to death, our mistaken identity. Our self-hood must be bruised and broken. And not our self-life in the form of egoism and self-willfulness only. That too. But what we wish to emphasize here first and foremost is that our soulish life in its relation to God must be broken. It is that confidence which I have in myself, in my own understanding of spiritual things, in my own will, in my own ability and righteousness and spirituality, that confidence in myself with which I always oppose THE SPIRIT and which is the real hindrance to the expression of HIS INDIVIDUAL LIFE, which must be broken. To break our own inherent and deeply rooted self-confidence, and self-righteousness, which is fallen man's deepest error, is undoubtedly the most severe work that God has to accomplish within us. And when we see how He does it, we must stand before Him in awe, adoration, and thanksgiving. He breaks our old fleshly life, our carnal consciousness. This He does by driving it to exhaustion, to a point where it has spent all its energies and lies at His feet, surrendered and brought to naught --killed.

Is it not strange that the God who thus slays us is the same God who has given us the command: "THOU shalt not kill." It would seem a double standard --- GOD can kill whom He will, and without any permission or cooperation from us, but WE are forbidden to kill! Why is this? The answer is found right within the passages which speak of His killing. We have already quoted the words of the mother of Samuel the prophet, "The Lord killeth and maketh alive," to which she adds, "He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." The Lord Himself declares, "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand" (Deut. 32:39).

As the spirit of revelation and understanding floods our minds, we are left without any question as to the meaning of all this. The KEY in each of these statements is the little conjunction "and". "The Lord killeth, AND maketh alive! The Lord bringeth down to the grave, AND bringeth up." "I kill, AND I make alive." "I would, AND I heal." Thus the picture becomes clear --- no one has any right to kill that which he CANNOT MAKE ALIVE, nor to bring to the grave that which he CANNOT RESURRECT, nor to wound that which he CANNOT HEAL. God has commanded men not to kill for the simple reason that man is powerless to restore that which he slays. Death and destruction for man is final, irreversible, and eternal. Only one with the power to restore, AND THE DISPOSITION TO. SO IX), may be permitted to bear the sword! Infinite wisdom and divine purpose must be the sure foundation beneath all destruction and restoration. Herein lies the deep mystery of the cross ... God kills AND makes alive!

"I am CRUCIFIED with Christ: NEVERTHELESS I LIVE; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Before Jesus died on the cross, men would go to a cross to die. This was the method of execution for criminals. Since Jesus died on the cross, men now go to the cross to live. The seat of death has become the source of life. Whosoever loses his life shall find it, Jesus said. That is the meaning of the cross. For years we have emphasized the work of the cross, the dying to self, the crucifixion of the "I", to be stripped of every vestige of the flesh and the carnal mind. And the more we preached death, the more conscious we became of dying, and there was nothing but death, death, and more death. But there is the death side and the life side to the cross. An over-emphasis on the death side of the cross will arrest our spiritual progress by glorifying a death process that has no end, forever dying, but never coming to the knowledge of BEING DEAD. But there is a dying to die no more, and then it is time for RESURRECTION, to become conscious of the inflow of HIS LIFE which results in our complete salvation, spirit, soul, and body. It was upon the cross that He poured out HIS LIFE to us, so that dying we might live.

T. Austin-Sparks wrote: "The Spirit of God shows that God's ways and means are always positive and not negative. I want to say that with emphasis --- let us underline it in our minds. God's ways are ALWAYS CONSTRUCTIVE AND NOT DESTRUCTIVE; they are purposeful, not just ends in themselves. And if God's inclusive, comprehensive means is the Cross, let it be understood, once and for ever, that by the Cross He is working to an end --- a large end. The cross is never intended to end in destruction; it is never intended to end with a negative. God is working for some great thing, and He uses the Cross in a positive way. You see, the weakness in our apprehension of the Cross is largely due to a miss-apprehension of the Cross. Our idea of the Cross is that it is destructive, it is negative, it is death. We revolt against that; we don't want to be always reminded about this death of the Cross --- death, death, death. It is indeed possible so to preach the Cross as to produce death; but that is a mis-preaching. That is not God's interpretation of the Cross at all. Let me repeat:

the Holy Spirit shows quite clearly that God's ways and means are always positive and not negative; they always have in view something more, and not something less; not an end, but a newness and a fullness.

"If only we could really grasp that, it would transfigure the Cross. When the Lord confronts us with the challenge, what do we do? We revolt, we draw back --- we don't like it! Why? Simply because we have not seen that, in this application of the Cross, God is set upon securing something more in our lives, something more than there has ever been before. That is God's law. God is not a negative God. Other gods are negative gods, but our God is not a negative God. He is not working to bring things to annihilation; He has very large purposes of INCREASE before Him in all His ways and in all His means. What we really have to see is that, whatever the Cross may negative --- it is God's most positive instrument for securing spiritual, heavenly, eternal values. The Cross is God's most positive instrument for securing the enlargement --- not the annihilation --- of THAT WHICH WILL ABIDE FOR EVER. So it is very necessary for us to move onto this solid foundation, that God always comes in with a mind to create or to recover, to build and to increase. It only we could believe that of the Lord --- even on our most devastating times, when every thing seems to be taken away, and all is stripped from us; when everything seems to be going, and the end appears at hand: if only we could believe then that God is working ---not to bring values to an end, but to increase them! That must be our ground --- that He is ploughing, He is digging; He intends a harvest; He intends an increase. He understands exactly what He is doing and how --- we don't. But we can be sure of one thing: God is at work by the Cross to make things safe for Himself' --- end quote.

The new birth is spiritual. The cross is spiritual. The life of sonship is spiritual. The well-spring of life is changed at the cross. The cross is the transition point by which we die to this carnal realm and are made alive unto God. There is a new influx of life from a heavenly source --- "born from above." This new intake of spiritual life establishes our identity as sons of God. The cross withers the old consciousness, and the Holy Spirit imparts the new. The cross is the sword, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, to make place for the new life from above. The life from beneath and the life from above are bitter enemies that will never be reconciled. As in warfare, there can be but one victor and one vanquished. This is the point where it hurts. The cross withers and dries the carnal consciousness, the self-life. There is real pain. The struggle of life against life --- or rather life against death. The old life is death --- a paradox of paradoxes. The present energy that motivates and energizes the human organism we call life, the Lord calls it death. The life that ends in death is not life, merely a mortal consciousness, a passing thought, a ripple in the sea. **"If any man come to me, and hate not ... his own life ... he cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14:36).** The Lord hates your life, or He would never ask you to hate it. There is a place for hatred. This is very offensive --- a direct insult of the flesh. The offense of the cross must come. There are many things preached to avoid the offense of the cross, yet where there is no cross there is no life. This temporary life is a counterfeit; because it poses to be the real thing. The Lord hates this false life of ours, and He asks us to join with Him in that hatred. There is hope at this point --- real, glorious hope! The Lord Himself is that hope. Those that hurt over their own mistaken identity, their nothingness, are good candidates for the crucified life of the risen Lord. There must be a deep union with the risen Lord, that the saint and the Saviour may consciously share the same life. There was great energy that brought Him out of the grave --- resurrection energy --- greater than atomic power. This resurrection life energy is now available for the saints, for it abides right within YOUR SPIRIT. The trouble is that the life that merits only hatred is constantly blocking the way. Only the cross can remove it!

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). What is this that Paul says: "I am crucified with Christ"? What does the apostle really mean? In what sane and solid sense does he use these hitherto un-heard -of words? Saul of Tarsus, we have his own word for it, had never seen Christ in the flesh, nor His cross either. He had not been in Gethsemane with Christ like Peter, nor on Calvary with Him like John. The two thieves might have said, "We were crucified with Christ," but how could Saul of Tarsus say it? For he was still at home in his own country; he was only as yet an aspirant to Gamaliel's school when Christ was crucified; and the crucifixion of Christ was long past before Saul had set a foot in the city of the crucifixion. In what sense then can he say, and say it so often and so boldly, "I am crucified with Christ"?

Nearly half a century ago Lloyd C. Douglas wrote a best selling religious novel called THE ROBE. Paul Rees, in reviewing the book, points out that its readers will remember that Marcellus Gallio was the Roman tribune who was supposed to have been the officer in charge of the actual crucifixion of Jesus. When Marcellus returned to his quarters after the crucifixion, he made a confession to his Greek slave Demetrius. He confessed that he felt dirty and ashamed. When Demetrius tried to console him by reminding him that he was only obeying orders given him by Pilate, Marcellus asked, "Were you out there?.. . Were you there when He called on His God to forgive us?" And the rest of the story is concerned with the strangely persistent way in which this Roman noble was haunted by his sense of guilt for having crucified the Lord. He, who was supposed to be upholding the law by executing a guilty man, was somehow condemned by that man's innocence and made to feel guilty himself. "WERE YOU OUT THERE," he asked. It is a fair question that Marcellus put to Demetrius. And the answer is "Yes." WE WERE ALL OUT THERE! Whether Roman or Greek, whether Israelite or Gentile, we WERE there when they crucified our lord.

Yes, the Christ was crucified "for us" --- on our behalf --- but Paul goes deeper into the mystery that is Christ and says that if we want to understand the deep meaning of the cross, we shall have to see, not just Christ dying for us, but also our identification with Him, we will have to see ourselves on that cross dying with Jesus. You see, IF JESUS MERELY DIED INSTEAD OF US, then Jesus will merely rise instead of us. Selah. Pause and think about that! The scripture declares that we are crucified with Christ so that we may rise with Christ. If there is no participation in the cross, there can be no participation in the resurrection. George Hawtin has given beautiful expression to this precious truth in his article, THE CHRIST LIFE. He writes: "Every man and every woman will have to face the cross. If there be no cross, neither will there be a crown. We will have to face it in our own lives and, if I am not mistaken, we will have to face it every day we live. 'For to me to live is Christ, and to DIE is gain' (Phil. 1:21). Death to ourselves will be the greatest death we ever die. This death will never be accomplished by our vain struggling and trying, but it will be accomplished in that blessed hour when the Holy Spirit reveals to our hearts the truth that He revealed to Paul: 'I AM CRUCIFIED with Christ.' The world itself cannot contain the full truth of this precious statement, 'I am crucified with Christ.' We will never GET crucified nor will we ever have faith to crucify ourselves. We will never go to an altar and accomplish this act by faith. The lesson we must learn, my earnestly seeking friend, is simply this: Before ever there was a world or a sinner in it, God Himself by His almighty power placed ALL MEN IN HIS SON JESUS CHRIST and then, having done so, He crucified Him and, when He crucified HIM, He also crucified ME, because I was in Him. 'When HE crucified His Son, He crucified YOU, because He had placed you in Him. All this took place before the foundation of the world. All men died IN ADAM and, because all men died in Adam, ALL MEN live IN CHRIST, because God has placed all men in Him. 'For as in Adam ALL die, even so in Christ shall ALL be made alive' (I Cor. 15:22). 'But,' you ask, 'why is it then that all men are not saved?' The truth is that all men are saved, but all men have not yet believed, because God has not yet opened their eyes. All Christians are crucified with Him, but few, oh so few, have ever been told that crucifixion is an accomplished reality --- accomplished by God Himself and left for us to accept and believe. Once the believer grasps this truth and seizes upon it by faith, then he understands that all of the old carnal realm with all its terrifying specters was a paper tiger, an alarming, petrifying panic, a phantom, a dead lion, no more real than a nightmare. My brother, my sister, in that good and glorious moment when you see God by His almighty power placing ALL MEN IN CHRIST, yea, even before the world began, and, having done so, He sent Him to the cross to be crucified, then you will know that, when Christ was crucified, YOU were crucified, for you were in Him. Then you will join with Paul and every participant of the revelation, saying, 'I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.' Then you will be able for the first time in your life to RECKON YOURSELF DEAD UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD" --- end quote.

A most wonderful and significant event, completely passed over by the vast majority of Christians, occurred at the time of the crucifixion of our Lord. In the purposes of God extending from Paradise lost to Paradise regained, the time came when all three of the characters (God, Adam, the serpent) involved in the ancient drama in Eden MUST meet again --- this time AT THE CROSS! You will understand a great truth when you see how it is that Christ, Adam, and the serpent ALL MET AT THE CROSS. Let me unfold for you this deep and blessed mystery which transpired on the hill called Calvary. Yes, Christ, the manifestation of God in flesh, the consciousness of God in our spirit, was present there at Calvary. But Adam was also there in flesh, old Adam, the self-consciousness of man in the soul---he was not there in the flesh of Jesus (the last Adam), but represented in the flesh of one of the thieves crucified WITH HIM. Furthermore, the serpent was there, that

ancient serpent, the power of the carnal mind, the law of sin and death in our members--this serpent was manifested in the flesh of the other thief crucified WITH CHRIST. Three and a half years prior to this event Jesus had encountered the serpent in the wilderness of Judea, the temptation came in these subtle words, "I-F THOU BE THE SON OF GOD, command that these stones be made bread" (Mat. 4:3). And now, on mount Calvary, while drinking in obedience to the Father the last bitter dregs from the cup of suffering and death, the satanic voice is heard once more taunting Him through the lips of this jeering malefactor: "IF THOU BE THE CHRIST, save Thyself and us!" (Lk. 23:39).

Do you imagine, my friend, that it was an accidental and inconsequential incident that Jesus was crucified between TWO THIEVES? No way! The truth of God is multi-faceted and the scriptures abound with many and varied representations of the redemptive plans, purposes, and processes of God. There are those unique passages which point to all that has been wrought and made blessed reality IN CHRIST. The prepositional phrase "in Christ", appearing some thirty-five times in the New Testament, is filled with spiritual dynamite! Vital necessity, this reality of being IN CHRIST. This has much depth and preciousness in it when we remember that Christ is made up of many members, and that they are joined together as one, ONE MANY-MEMBERED CHRIST. There is a realm of fullness to come into, and it is IN CHRIST, until it is no longer "Christ and me" but just--CHRIST. God has chosen us IN HIM, and we are made alive IN HIM. We are new creatures IN HIM and are to walk IN HIM as we have received Him, rooted and builded up IN HIM and established in our faith. We become the righteousness of God IN HIM, we are established IN HIM, and can do all things IN HIM that strengthens us. God always leads us to triumph IN HIM, making our lives a sweet savor of Christ. IN HIM we have every spiritual blessing in heavenly places; as we abide IN HIM we are made complete IN HIM who is the head of all principality and power.

We should direct our thoughts to yet another consideration. Wonderful as is this troth of our identification IN CHRIST, let all who read these lines know and thoroughly understand that there is another and blessed aspect of truth to be embraced in the precious words "WITH CHRIST". Now I believe that I am quite correct in this statement--I am certain that Paul never said that he was crucified IN CHRIST He did say that he was crucified WITH CHRIST. Paul gave us a remarkable clue to this great mystery when he explained, "I am crucified WITH CHRIST" (Gal. 2:20), and again "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified WITH HIM, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rom.6:6). With these words in mind it should not be difficult to see that Paul never makes the statement or the inference that Christ DIED IN HIS STEAD. But Paul made it the sharing of a common death by saying that he was crucified W-I-T-H CHRIST This may seem to be an insignificant and unimportant point, but it makes a whole universe of difference whether we were crucified IN CHRIST or WITH CHRIST. Every word of inspiration is meaningful and full of depth. Truly Christ died FOR US, not in our stead, precluding our dying, but on our behalf, thus enabling us to truly die and rise again WITH HIM.

Now actually, Paul nor any of us, nor anyone else from Paul all the way down to us, was actually, physically, bodily crucified with Christ. I refer of course to that particular time of the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus the Christ was there at the crucifixion as the embodiment and manifestation of THE LIFE OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT, the pure, sinless, separate, divine, heavenly One pouring out His divine life for the world. So also did Adam, man in his self-consciousness in the soul, have a representative or a manifestation of himself there at the crucifixion. One man, a thief, was there as the representative of the living soul, of all humanity, or the representative of the first Adam, if you please. And the remaining thief, the jeering malefactor, was the representative of the serpent and his kingdom, the spirit of the carnal mind, the power of sin and death in our members. And ALL THREE DIED ON THE CROSS--TOGETHER! They all died the same natural death and not one of them was saved from it. The two thieves, above all who have ever lived, were truly and uniquely CRUCIHED WITH CHRIST.

Turn aside with me for a few moments and meditate upon these THREE CROSSES on Golgotha's hill. We will find a very wide field of truth opened before us in these THREE CROSSES. There were THREE MEN met together there by the counsel of God that fateful day. Three, in the numerology of scripture, stands for that which is solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire. E.W. Bullinger, in his book, NUMBER IN SCRIPTURE, points out that "All things that are especially COMPLETE are stamped with this number three. God's attributes are THEE: omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. There are three great divisions completing time--PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE. Three persons, in grammar, express and include all relationships of

mankind. Thought, word, and deed, complete the sum of human capability. The simplest proposition requires three things to complete it; viz., the SUBJECT, the PREDICATE, and the COPULA. Three kingdoms embrace our ideas of matter--MINERAL, VEGETABLE, and ANIMAL" To which I would add--man himself is a TRIPARTITE being composed of SPIRIT, SOUL, and BODY. Those three parts comprise the whole man. The three crosses on that hill far away were there by neither accident nor coincidence. There is deep mystery and divine meaning in the scene!

It is interesting to note that two of the three men there that day were THIEVES. I must emphasize that any man, message, action, or entity that brings to mankind any thing less than LIFE is a THIEF and a ROBBER! Man is spirit, soul, and body, and is it not a self-evident truth that TWO OF THESE THREE have no life of themselves and can transmit naught but corruption and death. Truly did Jesus say, "It is the SPIRIT that quickeneth (giveth life); the FLESH (soul and body) profiteth nothing" (Jn. 6:63). The apostle Paul adds his testimony in these words, "For to be carnally (fleshly) minded IS DEATH; but to be spiritually minded IS LIFE and peace. And if Christ be in you the BODY IS DEAD because of sin; but the SPIRIT IS LIFE because of righteousness. If ye live after the FLESH, ye shall DIE; but if ye through the SPIRIT do mortify (put to death) the deeds of the BODY, ye shall LIVE" (Rom. 8:6, 10, 13). Should one seek ever so earnestly for life and immortality in either soul or body, all such seeking will remain unfulfilled, for neither possesses one iota of divine life. They both, in very fact, DEPRIVE mankind of that most precious gift of all--LIFE! There is no life in the natural mind nor in the physical body, both fall dreadfully short, and should we trust in the flesh, exercise the flesh, or walk after the flesh IT WILL ROB US of the reality of the SPIRIT WHICH IS LIFE. The SPIRIT (Christ) alone possesses life, eternal life, incorruptible life, abundant life! The man or woman who lives out of any dimension other than SPIRIT will sooner or later discover to his or her chagrin that soul and body are indeed TWO THIEVES! And it was these three--spirit, soul, and body--the whole man in the totality of his reality that was crucified upon three crosses in that long ago!

You remember that the thieves began to rail on Jesus, but one of them said, "Lord, help me!" The rulers, and the soldiers, and the people standing there derided and mocked Him, but this one malefactor asked that Jesus have mercy upon him. How foolish it seems to the natural mind for this one to ask Jesus to help him or have mercy upon him, for here are two men, both dying upon a cross, yet one requests help of another who is in no better position to help him than he is himself Such a thing appears utterly ridiculous and because it was so absurd in the natural there MUST BE A MYSTERY HIDDEN IN THESE THINGS. All three of these died at approximately the same time, on the same day. When the soldiers came to Jesus, He was already dead and they broke the legs of the two thieves so that by shock, as we know it today, their deaths might be hastened. All were dead by sundown. So the manifestation of God in the flesh (spirit) died. The manifestation of humanity (Adam) in the flesh also died. And the manifestation of the serpent (sin, carnal mind) died. They all entered the realm of death.

Listen now with infinite care as the drama of Calvary is enacted in that solemn hour. The thief who represents the living soul, man's self-consciousness, or Adam, turns to the thief representing the serpent, the carnal mind, the law of sin and death in us, and says, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing that thou thyself art under the same sentence of condemnation and suffering the same penalty? And we indeed suffer it justly, receiving the due reward of our actions; but this Man hath done nothing out of the way--nothing strange, or perverse or unreasonable" (Lk. 23:40-41). He then turns to Jesus, crying out, "Lord! REMEMBER ME when you COME INTO YOUR KINGDOM!" (Lk.23-42)

With these poignant words he confessed a wonderful faith in the almighty power of Christ. It has no parallel in the Bible. There hangs the cursed malefactor with Jesus of Nazareth, and he dares speak and say, "I am dying here under the just curse of my sins, but I believe Thou canst take me into Thy heart and remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." The word "remember" means to recollect and both of these words can be broken down into two words: re-member and re-collect. The prefix "re" before them means to REPEAT OR TO DO SOMETHING AGAIN. So the malefactor was asking that when Jesus came into His Kingdom, He would remember him, or make him a member again. He was saying, "RE-COLLECT or collect me again into that Kingdom and give back to me my original place." This is re-storation, re-newing, re-demption, re-conciliation, re-freshing, and re-surrection he was asking for! This was man, Adam, the living soul seeking the restoration of

life, fellowship, authority and glory that he first had--in Christ! This is the soul crying out to the spirit for salvation!

Oh, that we might learn to believe in the almighty power of the CHRIST WITHIN! The penitent thief believed that Christ was a King and had a Kingdom, and that on the other side of the cross He would take him up in His arms and in His heart and remember him, make him a part again, when He came into His Kingdom. He believed that, and believing that, he died. Dear brother, sister, you and I need to take the time to come into a much larger and deeper faith in the power of Christ, that the almighty Christ will indeed take us in His arms and carry us through this death process, revealing the power of His death in us. Christ must do it. Christ CAN do it! Now that Christ is upon the throne, now that the revelation has dawned that HE has all power and authority in heaven and in earth, would you be afraid to do what the malefactor did when Christ was upon' the cross, and entrust yourself to Him to die His death and to live His life? Christ, the very Christ of God within your spirit, will carry you through the very process He went through. He will make the process of death work in you until it is complete and your soul is swallowed up into the reality of HIS SPIRIT.

We have seen the faith of this man. Now let us consider the response of Christ to his cry. First, the Lord met him with that wonderful promise, "Today shall thou be with Me in Paradise." It was a promise of fellowship, relationship, participation with Christ--"Thou shall be WITH ME." Further, it was the revelation of the amazing and glorious and triumphant OPENING OF EDEN AGAIN, a promise of entrance back into Paradise from which walking after the flesh had cast man out---"With Me IN PARADISE." Finally, it was the heralding of a change, of the dawning of something new for all mankind, a NEW DAY, a new age, a new Kingdom, a new order, a new realm, a new glory, a new covenant, a new reality, a new identity, a new nature, a new spirit, a new heart, a new mind, a new life, a new dominion--"TODAY THOU SHALT BE WITH ME IN PARADISE!"

Such truth as this requires deep spiritual thought and meditation. What do you think, beloved, Jesus meant when He announced the glad tidings to this poor thief dying WITH HIM, "Very, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be WITH ME IN PARADISE." Today--in Paradise! Do you imagine that He meant that the thief would, that very twenty-four hour day, walk with Him up and down streets of gold, strumming a harp, in some far-off heaven somewhere? Or do you suppose Jesus was telling this man that within a few short hours he would find himself in some "compartment of departed spirits" deep in the heart of the earth? Ah, I do not hesitate to tell you that the Christ spoke of things infinitely higher and grander than such time-worn traditions of men, for the blessed Son of God, the all-conquering last Adam, spoke of the amazing and wonderful and triumphant OPENING OF EDEN AGAIN. By death and resurrection Christ triumphed gloriously over the whole kingdom of sin and death; He strode boldly and fearlessly back into the Paradise of God from which man had been banished; He opened up for us all a NEW and LIVING WAY: He passed through the dominion of the Cherubim and the flaming sword keeping the way to the Tree of Life; He claimed again the dominion and the eminence and the glory which once belonged to the first Adam.

Consider the scene! "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the TREE OF LIFE ALSO IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN" (Gen. 2:8-9). "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the TREE OF LIFE WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD" (Rev. 2:7).

Our English word "Paradise" comes to us from ancient Persian by way of the Greek language. Paradise is the transliteration of the Greek word PARADEISOS which, in turn, transliterates the old Persian term PARIDAEZA. The PARIDAEZA denoted an enclosed park, beautifully landscaped with floral and fruit trees planted along a spring-fed stream, belonging to the king and his nobles. History tells of the idyllic beauty of the orchards of the king's forests, grazed by sheep, and guarded at the entrance by two soldiers whose task it was to see that intruders and spoilers were kept out. Only those who were friends of the monarch were given the pleasant privilege of passing peacefully through its gates to enjoy the sweet waters of the stream and the delicious fruit of the trees. In fact, the Old Persian word PARIDAEZA gained such intentional popularity that it became a loan word in Aramaic and Hebrew as well as Greek. The Hebrew word for Paradise is GAN, the word used in Genesis for the Garden of Eden. In the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) the word PARADEISOS is used and Gen. 2:8 reads, "The Lord God planted a PARADISE eastward in Eden." It is not surprising that the Jew,

during the Babylonian captivity, observed how many things about the paradise-parks of the king and the nobility resembled the story of the Garden of Eden! There was the pure spring-fed stream, bounded by every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. The Jew beheld the PARIDAEZA of his majesty, and thought of the flaming sword of the Shekinah and the guardian Cherubim at the entrance to the garden of the King of the universe! The Jewish captives knew of the flocks of sheep which grazed in the royal enclosure, feeding by the still waters, and thought of how beautifully they depicted Jehovah's sheep, over whom He was Shepherd as well as King! In short, the word PARADISE seemed a most fitting term for that wondrous realm where heaven met earth before Adam discovered his self-hood, and it was adopted into the Hebrew language by the post-exilic rabbis in particular to speak of the garden of God.

Beloved, these are but symbols, shadows, word pictures of grand and glorious SPIRITUAL REALITIES. Great and precious promises are given to the "overcomer"-- the overcoming one is promised a crown, a throne, a white stone, a new name, a feast of manna from a golden bowl, the fruit from the tree of life, and the privilege of becoming a pillar in the temple of God! He is, furthermore, promised entrance into the PARADISE OF GOD. But this does not mean that the overcoming sons of God will live in an earthly Paradise, nor does it signify a mansion just over the hill-top in some bright glory world above. This Paradise is far more than a piece of real estate somewhere over in the Middle East. The Paradise of God which is promised the saints of God is not a physical place or geographical location on this or any other planet. It is a STATE OF BEING. It is the state of being man was in when first he was brought forth from the creative hand of God and placed in splendor and infinite dominion here upon earth. The Paradise of God was the place where heaven and earth met together in the very person of Adam, the son of God. It is man living in the presence of God, walking in the mind of God, clothed with the glory of the incorruptible life of God, man living above sin, sickness, fear, pain sorrow and death, man as master and lord over all things! It is in THIS PARADISE OF THE SPIRIT that the overcomer eats of the tree of life!

During those moments of agony upon the cross, God ordained that one solitary first-fruit of Adam's race should be gathered from the world of sin and death and restored to the Paradise of God as wonderful proof that THE WAY WAS OPENED UP. It was the Spirit of God that moved upon the heart of this dying thief, causing him to turn his eyes upon the crucified Lord. There was a quickening, a rending of the veil of the carnal mind, and opening of the heavens above him, and in an instant his vision became clearer than that of all the multitude, and the soldiers, and the priests, and even the disciples. He saw in the Man hanging between him and his fellow thief, the Messiah, the Son of God, the last Adam, come to OPEN ANEW THE GATE OF THE PARADISE OF GOD.

That is why Jesus came--to open again to man the Paradise of God. He lived and moved and ministered from that Paradise all the years of His sojourn on earth. The pure river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb is again accessible as Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto ME, and drink. He that believeth on Me...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (In. 7:37). The tree of life is now within constant reach as it is written, "This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is IN HIS SON" (I Jn. 5:11), and again, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth in Me SHALL NEVER DIE" (Jn.11:25-26). This tree is vibrantly and continuously bearing the fruit of His divine life in all who partake of it. The leaves of this wonderful tree are for the healing, the restoration of THE NATIONS. In this blest realm of Paradise, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, the curse is removed, as it shall finally be in all the earth, for there shall be NO MORE CURSE. The throne of God and of the Lamb is with men--heaven and earth are united again. The river that flows from the throne of God flows from out of our innermost being, the Kingdom of God IN MAN. In this Paradise His servants serve Him, for they behold His face in the light that the Spirit brings. His name shall forever be in their foreheads, His nature reigning in their minds and hearts--only His will forever and ever. There is no night here in this city of living stones, for the never-ending day of the Lord has come. No need for the light of candles, or lamps, nor for the light of the sun or the moon, no external light of any kind is needed, for the glory of the Lord, the light of the SPIRIT floods the length and breadth of the city of God. God Himself has reconciled all unto Himself and HE GIVETH THEM LIGHT

TODAY! Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise, Jesus assured the thief. Oh, the wonder of it. "Today" did not signify a particular date on the calendar two thousand years ago. The word heralded the bringing in of a

NEW DAY, a NEW DISPENSATION, a NEW PROVISION, a NEW ORDER, a NEW REALM OF LIFE AND VICTORY, GLORY AND POWER! Ah, today! Paradise! In this one notable statement Jesus reveals that the Garden of Eden, the Paradise of God, the high and holy estate from which man fell, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth was at last OPENED ANEW. Thank God--we can now enter! Today is THE DAY!

And yet, the mystery would not be complete apart from the knowledge that there is within us that which must die upon the cross NEVER TO LIVE AGAIN. The second thief died--and for him there was no repentance, no hope, no today or tomorrow, no offer of life, no promise of Paradise. He died to pass out of existence forevermore. Only by the spirit of revelation and understanding from above can we see that this bespeaks of the death of the carnal mind and of the law of sin and death in our members. The carnal mind is hopelessly blind to eternal things, pitifully helpless, and dreadfully full of death. The heart of the natural man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, NEITHER INDEED CAN BE. This explains why DEATH is necessary for our return to God. Death is the only way out of the world in which we are. It was by death to God that we fell out of God's world. And it is by death TO SIN AND THIS WORLD that we are delivered from the power of sin and death and the folly of the outer world. So--may I say-- you will never get out of this world alive!

Can we not see by this that there is that which must die to live and there is that which must die never to live again. Christ died to give us His life. The repentant thief represents that in man which must die to receive of HIS LIFE that it may live. Death alone, without ANOTHER LIFE, is not enough to bring us back to God's world. We need death to get out of this world, but we also must have the life of God to live in God's world! The soul of man is the receptacle of His life in the Spirit--in which union man's soul is redeemed, restored to the Paradise of God. This is the first thief. This thief dies to live by receiving the life of the Christ upon the cross in the midst. But the second thief represents that serpent in us which must forever be done away, whose head must be thoroughly crushed once and for all, the BODY OF SIN which is DESTROYED. "Knowing this, that our old man IS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM, that the body of sin might be DESTROYED, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is DEAD is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:6-7). Three crosses, three men, and three deaths. Oh, the mystery of it!

If you can see it, my beloved, the second thief is that work of the cross the apostle sets forth in Gal. 6:14, wherein he says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." There are vast multitudes of believers in the church systems today who may have grasped the concept of the death of Christ for them, and go about glibly declaring that Jesus died for them, and yet they do not even faintly perceive the fact that this also means that THE WORLD IS CRUCIFIED UNTO THEM. When the Bible speaks of the world in the New Testament, it is not referring to planet earth nor to the created universe, not to the stars and clouds and mountains and flowers, but most always to the WORLD SYSTEM--to the corrupt system of this world order with all its evil devices, with all its vain and false and selfish and corrupt desires, its aims and goals and purposes, its self-centeredness and egotism. The "world" in scripture is this whole fleshly and carnal system that passes from father to child down through the centuries. The result of man's rebellion against the Spirit has been the establishment of a whole world system which the Spirit testifies is PASSING AWAY.

If we are God's elect the world has been crucified to us; it is dead. It is somewhat like a man who loves a woman. He greatly loves her but one day she dies, perhaps even in his arms. He looks down at her body which just a moment ago was warm and moving. Now all is still and silent. The light has gone from the eyes. Perhaps, if he really loved her, he might even yet smother her face with his kisses. Wait but an hour or so and that body will grow cold and a little longer and it will no longer be soft, but now stiff and cold. Wait but a few days and it will begin to rot and stink and a week later one would not be able to stand to go into the room with it. That is what the Lord says should be happening in every believer's life concerning this whole world system, with all its vaunted success, all of its goals, with all of its economics, politics and religion. The world has already received at the cross, its death blow. Even its king, the devil, has received a wound in his forehead from which he will utterly perish. So this system is crumbling into oblivion. Even now you can smell the putrefaction of it. For the sons and daughters of the Most High it has lost its allurements with all its baubles and successes which men in the world count of great value and of high esteem.

Ray Prinzing commented on this passage: "While experimentally the world becomes crucified unto me-- so that we no longer have any desire for the things of the world, no lusting for friendship with the world, no latent feelings that can be awakened and stirred up by the world; to make it even more complete, 'I am crucified to the world.' Thus, as far as the world is concerned, you become dead to them also. They have no more desire for you--there is nothing in you that appeals to them, you are as useless to them as a corpse. You cease to exist in their realm. Don't be amazed, then, if they no longer seek you out or try to fellowship with you. Only those who are quickened to the same new life which you are receiving, can fellowship with you in that life. To all others you are a stranger and a foreigner."

In the Song of Solomon the King, beautiful type of God's corporate Son, Head and body, exclaims, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me up to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense" (S. of S. 4:6). Myrrh in the scriptures is a figure of death, while frankincense is a figure of life, and was uniquely the fragrance of the Most Holy Place, the incorruptible realm of God. Beloved, THE CROSS IS THE MOUNTAIN OF MYRRH. It is not just a small amount of myrrh, but a great and eternal MOUNTAIN of this costly perfume. How many times we go up to the cross with our self-life as if it were mountains of grief and regret, of suffering and sighing, of rain and loss, and not a sweet and priceless fragrance unto God. How often when we take up our cross to go after Jesus, we follow Him moaning and repining at every step. All the fragrance of this precious mountain is lost when we go up reluctantly and grudgingly, or withholding something from death. Oh! let us go up with joy unspeakable and full of glory, exulting that we have been counted worthy to suffer and to follow in His footsteps, and that to us it has been granted to die to the vain spirit of this world, to the carnality³, childishness and abomination of the wretched religious systems, and to have our own fleshly minds, ambitions, desires and ways firmly nailed to the cross, to be gloriously alive unto God and exquisitely conformed to the image of God's beloved Son.

It is not enough to make an occasional trip up to the cross, for death must become a mountain to us, we must go there to stay until the day breaks and the shadows all flee away. It bespeaks of a STATE OF BEING. To BE DEAD is a STATE OF BEING. We must abide in the Lord's death. Today, many zealous Christians have the wrong concept. They believe they must fast, weep, pray, and wait on the Lord in order to die. That is all good, but it is not death. To tarry at an altar is easy; to pray for a week is easy; even to fast for a month is easy; but to stay at the Mountain of Myrrh for a lifetime is not easy. We could all fast and pray for a long time without any sleep, but to stay in the Lord's death means that we so absolutely DIE to the flesh, the world, and the devil that we simply ARE DEAD. It is only then that the day breaks eternal and shadows of this earthy realm forever flee away. Let us open ourselves before the Lord. I do believe that we all have the sense that our Day is not yet fully broken. We all realize that there are still some haunting shadows of limitation, fear, lack of understanding and fleshiness about us. Even in our bodies, the lines, the gray hairs, the weakness, reveal that our bodies have not yet caught up to our spirit. No matter how much we say that we are the elect sons of God, sons of Light, sons of the Day, kings and priests of the Most High, living in the Holiest of all and feasting at the feast of Tabernacles, there is still the sense that we are not clearly in the Day. As long as we have such a realization we will spontaneously say, "UNTIL the day break, and the shadows flee away, I WILL GET ME UP TO THE MOUNTAIN OF MYRRH, AND TO THE HILL OF FRANKINCENSE." But, praise God, the Day is at hand!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 13 LIBRA-THE SCALES [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART THIRTEEN

THE CROWN THE VICTOR'S CROWN

In this Study we come to the third and final minor constellation, or group of stars, which surrounds and completes the Sign of Libra. This constellation is known as CORONA BOREALIS--the Northern Crown---or simply, the Crown. It is a lovely semicircle of twenty-one stars, most of which are of the white, twinkling kind, so that the crown is fully jeweled. This beautiful crescent is right overhead in the early summer sky. The Hebrew name for Corona is ATARAH, meaning "Royal Crown." In Arabic, its name is AL ICLIL, meaning 'an ornament' or 'jewel.' This star name is found a number of times in the Old Testament, but Isa. 28:5 is one of the most significant references to the most perfect of all royal diadems: 'In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a CROWN (Atarah) OF GLORY, and for a DIADEM OF BEAUTY, unto the residue of His people.' Here we are shown the great truth that the 'crown of glory' and the 'diadem of beauty' of the elect of God is just the Lord Himself--THE INDEWELLING SPIRIT OF LIFE.

It is interesting to note that each sign, each mansion, each house of the Zodiac ends its final Decan with one of surpassing glory, one of resounding victory, one of eternal triumph either for Christ the Head, Christ the body, or for the whole race of mankind! In the same way we see that the Bible and the book of Revelation end with the great triumph and victory of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. In the house of LIBRA which we are now considering, the Sign means "the scales." The scales are not balanced--one side is high and the other is low--revealing an imbalance, deficiency, lack. It is the picture of man, weighed in the balances and found wanting; man missing the mark; man lacking a little from Elohim; man face to face with divine justice weighing the demerits and awards of self, sin, carnality and death on the one hand, and the commensurate price and infinite power of redemption and restoration on the other. In our journey from the natural to the spiritual realm we are continually faced with our dreadful sense of LACK and the need to apprehend the necessary restoration to WHOLENESS IN GOD. This profound sense of lack, with the corresponding dealings of God to meet that deficiency and bring our state of being into completeness and balance, is wrought out under the spiritual influences signified by the Sign of Libra, the place of weighing.

In solemn truth this process of restoration is wondrously wrought out along the precise lines dramatically revealed in the three Decans of Libra: the CROSS, the VICTIM, and the CROWN. The cross is the transition point by which we die to this carnal realm and are made alive unto God. There is a new consciousness of life from a heavenly source--"born of the Spirit." This new reality of spiritual life establishes our identity as sons of God. The cross withers the old consciousness, and the Holy Spirit imparts the new. The cross is the sword, in the hand of the Spirit, to make place for the new life from above. The life from beneath and the life from above are bitter enemies that will never be reconciled. As in warfare, there can be but one victor and one vanquished. This is the point where it hurts. The cross withers and dries the carnal consciousness, the self-life. There is real pain. The struggle of life against life--or rather life against death. The old life is death---a paradox of paradoxes.

The constellation of the CROSS represents the process by which we are crucified with Christ. The second Decan in the house of Libra is called VICTIMA, meaning "the victim." It is located right below the scales, and was anciently called SURA-- a sheep or a lamb. This is our blessed Lord Jesus Christ giving His life for us and to us, "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). We would have thought that in calling our Lord 'the Lamb' this name would have been used only in respect to His humiliation and His earthly life and physical death. However, in scripture it is most often used in reference to His glory in heaven the realm of Spirit. John saw the Lamb in the midst of the throne, standing as if slain, "having seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6). The Spirit works as the Spirit of the Lamb. He works as a hidden, but divine power, breathing into the heart of His own people that which is the divine glory of

the Lamb--His life, His nature. The Lamb is the Temple and the Light of the New Jerusalem. It is from beneath the throne of God and of the Lamb that the river of the water of Life flows. There must be a deep union with the crucified, resurrected and ascended Lord, that the saint and the Saviour may consciously share the same life. There was great energy that brought Him out of the grave--the power of an incorruptible life--greater than atomic power. This resurrection life energy is now available for the saints, for it abides right within YOUR SPIRIT. "He that is joined to the Lord IS ONE SPIRIT" (I Cor. 6:17).

The last constellation in the house of Libra is the CROWN. This is the Crown of Life which Jesus Christ has won by His death and resurrection, as He has been highly exalted by God. The scripture says, "a CROWN was given unto Him" (Rev. 6:2). Again, "But we see Jesus....CROWNED with glory and honour..." (Heb. 2:9). The voice of omnipotence proclaims, "I have set MY KING upon My holy hill of Zion" (Ps. 1:6). And so we rise from the Cross and from the slain Victim to that One whom God hath raised up from the dead, taken up into the higher than all heavens and caused to sit at the right hand of the Majesty on high, CROWNED with glory and honour. Christ has risen from the depths of the SOUTHERN CROSS, all the way up to the heights of the NORTHERN CROWN! His shameful Cross issued in a glorious Throne. In the light of these beautifully meaningful pictures who can deny that the great and glorious plan of the Almighty is foreshown in these starry patterns above GODS BIBLE IN THE SKY! That Southern Cross connects with the Northern Crown. There is a CROSS formed of stars, and there is a CROWN formed of stars. With what joy and satisfaction do we now entertain His precious promise, "Be thou faithful unto death (the work of the Cross); and I will give thee a CROWN OF LIFE" (Rev. 2:10). Look up into that night sky and see the Northern Crown, the CORONA BOREALIS (which, by the way, at midnight every night shines over the city of Jerusalem!) and be reminded that there is a CROWN of life and righteousness and glory and honor for all who follow on to know the Lord. This crown is that FULL SALVATION which includes the plenteousness of His incorruptible life, nature and power. It is the FULL SALVATION of spirit, soul and body. That is a glorious promise. His Word declares it. The heavens declare it. Oh, the wonder of it!

THE CROWN

From the dawn of time the crown has been a symbol of rule, whether by secular monarch or by sacred priest. The early form of the crown was a simple band that was first used to hold back the long hair of the wearer, not unlike our modern headband. Eventually it was adopted as a royal headdress even among peoples wearing short hair. Such bands are represented in sculptures of ancient Egypt, Nineveh, and Persepolis. Some of these bands were about two inches wide and were made of linen, silk and even silver and gold. These ancient headbands gradually developed into the more elaborate turbans encircled by a band of silk or other expensive material and decorated with diadems and other precious objects to assume the dignity represented. When a ruler conquered other countries he would sometimes signify his multiple-kingdom rule--by wearing several bands of cloth or metal around his turban. An example of this is seen historically in the advent of Ptolemy into Asia Minor. When he made his entrance into Antioch, Ptolemy wore two bands or CROWNS around his headdress to advertise the fact that he was emperor of Asia Minor as well as Egypt. In the process of time, when bands of precious metal replaced the bands of cloth as crowns, "horns" were added to the royal circlets. In the Middle East, as in the Bible, a horn is a symbol of power and authority. It was natural, therefore, for the designers of crowns to use points on the bands to indicate the might of a king or ruler. These bands were an artistic rendition of horns and indicated the number of countries under the rule of the wearer. If his crown had three horns it meant that he ruled over three countries, five horns meant that he ruled over five countries, and so forth. But whether simple headband, turban, or the elaborate metal crowns of recent ages their message has always been the same--to declare that the wearer is SOVEREIGN!

One of the Greek words for crown is DIADEMA which may be translated into English as "diadem." When heaven was opened to the blessed apostle banished to the wilds of Patmos, and the white horse Rider appeared in the bright skies above, the glory and eternal triumph of God's Christ was magnificently expressed in these meaningful words: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were MANY CROWNS; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His

mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron... and He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:11-16).

Can you not see, my beloved, that this remarkable vision, blazing and shining with its scintillating glory of power and truth, points directly to our Lord Jesus Christ who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, ruling the universe and guiding the spheres. This reference is clearly not to the entire Christ body, but to the Head of that body. He is King of kings because He is King of all those who shall rule with Him as kings. This same book of the Revelation distinctly and markedly identifies the Lord Jesus as the King of kings. "And from JESUS CHRIST, who IS the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH"

(Rev. 1:~). The word "prince" in this verse is translated from the Greek word ARCHON which means "a first in rank or power; chief ruler; prince; ruler." So Jesus is 'The FIRST IN RANK of the kings of the earth! I would solemnly admonish all who read these lines, DON'T TRY TO PULL RANK ON JESUS! Ah, "HE is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things H-E MIGHT HAVE THE PREEMINENCE' (Col. 1:18).

Jesus is Lord of lords because all others who rule with Him as lords have completely and lovingly submitted themselves to His supreme Lordship. No one can promote the Kingdom of God who has not, first of all, subjected himself to the very Lordship of Jesus the Christ--for the whole objective of the Kingdom of God is to ultimately bring to pass this wonderful end: "Wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of J-E-S-U-S EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT J-E-S-U-S CHRIST I-S L-O-R-D to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

What does the word "Lord" mean? In the days of Jesus, the word "lord" (Greek: kurios--with lower case letters) was the title by which slaves addressed their masters. When the word appeared in capital letters and with the definite article --THE LORD--it meant the Caesar of Rome. In fact, when soldiers or public servants met each other they used to greet one another by calling out "Caesar is Lord," and the response came, "Yes, the Lord is Caesar!" But, you see, when Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God He came proclaiming MORE than just forgiveness of sins and a home in heaven. He came introducing a KINGDOM. In the Old Testament the Messiah was always represented as the coming KING, the coming LORD, greater than Moses, greater than David, greater than angels. Even the great king David proclaimed of Him, "The Lord (Jehovah) said unto My Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool" (Acts 2:34-35). And Peter said in reference to that statement, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same JESUS, whom ye crucified. BOTH LORD AND CHRIST" (Acts 2:36).

This presented a problem for the early disciples. In the culture of their day Caesar was hailed as THE LORD. They insisted to the contrary that Jesus Christ is the Lord! Caesar didn't mind other men being called "lords" as long as the title "T-H-E LORD" was reserved for him. But when the believers gave themselves to Jesus they recognized that they were doing something far more significant than "accepting Jesus as Savior" at a revival meeting. They were pledging allegiance to a NEW KINGDOM--a new GOVERNMENT! They were being "born again" into a new realm as citizens of an entirely new order--a new age-- a new WORLD! Therefore, Jesus, to them, became not only their sin bearer but the CHIEF-OF- STATE--THE LORD! The message was: "J-E-S-U-S IS T-H-E- LORD! It is HE who possesses supreme authority over us!" That is the real reason Caesar persecuted the Christians. The gospel we find in the scriptures is a far different gospel than we have in the religious systems, the evangelistic efforts and revival campaigns of today. The gospel of today is a gospel of "easy-believism" salvation. But the gospel of the Bible is the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. That gospel presents Jesus as KING, as LORD, as FIRST ONE, as MAXIMUM AUTHORITY. The word LORD bespeaks of authority--the authority over all authority. Truly "we see Jesus CROWNED."

The revelation of Christ to the human heart as King will always be subsequent to the revelation of Him as Saviour. There need not necessarily be a long interval between these two revelations, indeed the sooner the one occurs after the other the better; but the Saviour must ever be discovered first, and in the joy of that

discovery the soul will be led on to find the King. When Gideon had achieved the liberation of his countrymen from the yoke of Midian, we are not surprised at hearing that they offered him a throne. It was natural that they should say, "Rule over us," when his prowess had by divine assistance rescued them from the pitiful bondage of their enemies. It is even so in the history of our own spiritual progression in God. As we make proof of HIS power to save, and earnestly desire that He should carry on His saving work to its final triumphant conclusion, we begin to feel that He will be the better able to do this, the more completely we surrender ourselves to His control. If He is merely a Saviour, called in at a moment of emergency, He will show Himself on such occasions strong to save. But if He can once become our King, then He will exert His regal power in making such transformations within the little kingdom of our own nature as shall bring us to our full rights, benefits and state of being as citizens of His glorious Kingdom.

Thus we begin to long for His reign within; earnestly to desire that every lofty imagination may be cast down and every fleshly desire subdued, so that He may have His will, and ours be lost in His. And then we begin to find out that there is a vast difference between the conditions of the discovery of the Saviour and the conditions of the quest of the King, and oftentimes great searchings of heart will follow ere we can make up our minds at all costs and hazards to start upon this quest and to accept this allegiance. Fear not, oh, my brother, my sister! Let us not pause to calculate the consequences of His Rule. What are all these outward trails, the strippings, purgings and processings, as compared with the inward glory which the discovery of the King induces in our consecrated hearts? Surely we cannot lose by His sovereignty! If He asks us to give up all that we have in the world of appearances, it is only that He may enrich us with His VASTER ALL--the true riches, the eternal glory of the Spirit.

The word "kingdom" is derived from the two terms "king" and 'dominion"--KING'S DOMINION. It exists wherever the dominion of the Christ rules and holds sway over the hearts of men. Christ is the great King right now, ruling all things for the well-being of His subjects and bringing absolute perfection and completion to His plans which He ordained before the foundation of the world. He is the King of the ages and invincible. He shall yet arise in power and glory in His completed and perfected body---the MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD---and reveal Himself as the great conquering King, initiating the mightiest of all campaigns, bringing deliverance to the whole creation, reconciling all things unto Himself, and then shall all know the glory of His Kingdom as every tongue confesses and every knee bows, and all in that day declare that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD. At the triumph of His Kingdom sin, sickness, sorrow, pain and death all flee away to be remembered no more in the consciousness of creation.

He is the great King of kings and Lord of lords, crowned with glory and honor, and His Kingdom rules over ALL. And praise His name, He is even now bringing forth in the earth a KINGDOM PEOPLE-- the firstfruits of His redemption--who are discovering His Lordship over all of their lives. When all hell assails us, when the power of death all around crowds in upon us, when the pressures of this world would frustrate, vex and suffocate us, when our own soulish passions and emotions and self-will would drown us in a sea of carnality and ungodliness, HE THEN STANDS UP WITHIN US AS KING--in Kingly authority. When old Adam, the outer man, mortal consciousness in this gross material realm, would tear us apart, frustrate our lives, suffocate our inner reality, and smash our identity as sons of God upon the rocks, HE IS THERE, the still small Voice, that deep, Inward Knowing. Let us learn of the real and eternal, and make way for the reign of the Spirit, the Kingdom of Heaven, the rule of His Truth and Love and Life birthed within each one of us. "This is life eternal," says Jesus,-- IS, not SHALL BE; and then He defines everlasting life as a present knowledge of His Father and of Himself, --"This is life eternal, that they might KNOW THEE, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom 'thou hast sent." To know God as Truth, as Love, as Life, as Spirit--this certain knowledge is what eternal life is composed of. Thank God, in every situation and circumstance of life HE IS PRESENT TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS unto Himself, thus reigning as King over our domain. As this victory is secured within, it is then, and only then, that truly "we see Jesus... CROWNED with glory and honour."

We are to crown the Lord, the Spirit, as King in every place in our being, outer and inner. It was the humiliation of France, in the fifteenth century, that her king Charles VII, was not crowned in the proper city, where former kings were crowned. Joan of Arc, burning with the high resolve to remove this dishonor, and have the king crowned in Rheims, emerged from obscurity, gathered an army, drove the enemy back from one point to another, until she dislodged him from Rheims. The king came then. The crown was placed upon his brow in

the right place; and the fair maiden, Joan, bowed at the foot of the throne, the tears of joy streaming down her beautiful cheeks. Where are we to crown our King? We are to crown Him in the most sacred and authoritative chamber of our nature, from whence proceed the impulses and propensities of our spiritual life. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Mat. 6:10). So then the Kingdom of God originates in the realm of spirit (heaven) and finds expression in the earth-realm (physical). If you walk after the SPIRIT you will live, you receive the crown of life, the crown which IS LIFE, the dominion of life out of your spirit. The authority of life is in the Spirit, even the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. And this Spirit of Life is in YOUR SPIRIT, AND FROM THENCE HE WOULD BE CROWNED AND RULE IN LIFE OVER THE KINGDOM OF YOUR BEING.

So, precious friend of mine, when you conduct the King to the place of crowning in your nature, you may have to escort Him down a winding passageway, intricate with illusions, fears and wild distortions of the carnal mind, dismal with sin, sickness and weakness, bare and jagged with earthly consciousness and evil tendencies, on through the gloom and grime of corruption and death, to the most sacred altar of your heart. There crown the Omnipotent Ruler--the Spirit--and implore Him to arise and cleanse and purify all your entire nature every whir. Bid Him write His laws upon your very heart, so that it cannot beat unless it beat in conformity with the TRUTH and LOVE, and RIGHTEOUSNESS and POWER and LIFE and VICTORY of God's glorious Christ!

There is an interesting and enlightening statement in **Rev. 4:11** wherein we read, "Thou art worthy, Oh Lord, to RECEIVE glory and honour and POWER: for Thou hast created all things and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." The Lord is here declared to be worthy to R-E-C-E-I-V-E POWER--as well as glory and honor. The question follows, How can God, who inherently possesses A-L-L POWER--R-E-C-E-I-V-E POWER? The **62nd Psalm** says, "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that POWER BELONGETH UNTO GOD." Fifty-six times the scriptures proclaim God to be THE ALMIGHTY. "Almighty" means "All ruling; all powerful; absolute sovereign; omnipotent." Now, how can the omnipotent, sovereign, all-powerful, all-ruling God RECEIVE POWER? It is time, beloved children of God, that every man comes to know that there is no power apart from God. Omnipotence has all-power, and to acknowledge any other power is to dishonor God. Either there is no omnipotence, or omnipotence is the only power. A child of ten should be able to understand a truth so simple, a truth so sensible.

The truth is, of course, that although God (SPIRIT) is the supreme authority and power, and the only reality of the universe--nun with his mortal mind does not so perceive Him. The carnal mind ever pursues an identity apart from God, proclaiming the ancient error: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High" **Isa. 14:13-14**). I will...I will... I will! So man, in his distorted consciousness, rules his own life and destiny apart from the consciousness of God--yea, in opposition to God! And the inevitable result of this course is chaos, sorrow and death. How certain is it that "there is a way which SEEMETH RIGHT unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (**Prov. 14:12**). The power of the human will is not sovereign. The human will pertains to the material senses, the outer man who is perishing. There is no reality there.

There are many species of insanity. All sin is insanity, in different degrees. The carnal mind is an insane mind given wholly to destructive delusions. The natural man is mentally ill beyond comprehension. The carnal mind is spared from this classification in our world, only because the vast majority of the inmates in this vast asylum called 'society' is equally mad and in consonance with the delusion. There is a universal insanity of the so-called 'wisdom' of this world, but the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God--the Spirit. The mortal, sinful, sick, warring, confused, sorrowing, imperfect, carnal children of men are counterfeits, to be laid aside for the pure reality--man in the image of God. This mortal, this deranged mind of old Adam, must be put off, and the new man or real man, the sane man in the precious mind of Christ must be put on.

This brings us back to our question: If the Lord HAS ALL POWER, how is it that He R-E-C-E-I-V-E-S POWER. The answer is found in the prayer Jesus taught us which sets forth the great principles of KINGDOM PRAYER. Jesus says, "When you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN" (**Mat. 6:9-10**). What does it mean for God's Kingdom to come? I am the king of my life; I am seated upon the throne; I make the decisions; I do according to my own will. But when THE LORD comes I must abdicate my throne and let HIM sit upon the throne! The

testimony of sons in the Kingdom of God is: 'Till I met THE LORD I was the commander of my life. Since I came into relationship with Him, HE COMMANDS.' 'Thy will be done in earth" is something for now--not tomorrow, not in the millennium or the ages to come. You see, when I abdicate the throne and resign from the dominion I have exercised in my life, that realm of dominion which was reserved unto myself is GIVEN TO THE LORD. The power which I once held in my own hands is YIELDED UP TO HIM and He now exercises the power and authority that I formerly exercised. Thus, HE RECEIVES POWER! He receives the RULE over my life. He never took that rule by force, but He receives the rule when I surrender it up to Him. It is when I truly recognize that there is NO POWER BUT THE LORD, THE SPIRIT, that I crown HIM Lord of ALL!

THE VICTOR'S CROWN

There are two different Greek words in the Greek New Testament which are translated 'crown' in English. One of them is STEPHANOS, which denotes a wreath,' a "chaplet.' The other is DIADEMA, meaning a 'diadem." The most common term rendered 'crown' is the word STEPHANOS. The popular name 'Stephen' is derived from this word and this crown was usually a laurel wreath woven of fragrant branches, or the like. It was granted to winners in the Olympic games and also as a token of public honor for distinguished service--especially military leaders who had been victorious over their enemies on the battlefield. It was also given at marriage feasts, especially in royal families, to celebrate the joy of the bridegroom in having 'won' the maiden as his bride. This crown always denotes a VICTOR'S CROWN the crown of an OVERCOMER-- one who has fought and WON!

Everywhere in the New Testament world, Greek society left its mark on the culture and religion of the people. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions was that of the Olympic Games. Held every four years in Greece since its inception, the Olympic Games quickly became world renowned. There was scarcely a city in the Roman Empire where mention of the games did not bring excited discussion. Many cities were anxious to host the games. Two cities in Palestine were granted this honor: Dor and Samaria. During the reign of King Herod in Palestine, he built magnificent accommodations for the games.

The apostle Paul evidently enjoyed the games; he did not hesitate to stop and watch them and to draw lessons from them. He had been in the great coliseum in Rome. He had attended the Greek Olympics in Athens. He knew the thrill of watching the races. No doubt he had cheered with the crowds as the athletes strained their muscles and pressed toward the mark for the prize. I am sure that Paul was often caught up with the excitement of a great crowd in the sports arenas of his day. Out of his experience he penned these instructive words: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be castaway" (I Cor. 9:24-27).

In the passage before us, Paul likens the spiritual life unto a race. Pointing to the track runners, he said they run their race to receive a prize. The Greeks of that day presented a crown of woven green leaves to each winner. To win the crown was a great thrill, a tremendous achievement and a coveted honor. To the Greeks, athletic supremacy was the epitome of life. The Olympic victor's crown is said to have been the ancient world's most coveted, sought after prize. The victor was duly celebrated. Honors of various sorts were conferred upon him, including the erection of statues in his honor, as well as the composition, by a renowned poet, of a poem or "victory ode." Olympic heroes in many cities reportedly were even kept at public expense for the rest of their lives.

Paul had felt the electric charge permeate the air in the arenas when the games were finished and all the winners were gathered together to receive their crowns. The trumpets sounded, the crowds cheered and the granite walls trembled as the victors knelt in the center of the arena. Suddenly, emerging from his private observation box, the king would walk in great pomp and colorful display toward the kneeling victors. A hush would come over the crowd. Silent tears dropped from happy faces. In the suppressed silence, the winners could hear their own hearts pounding with joy as the king placed the crowns on their heads one by one. When the last crown decorated the last brow, the trumpets played an anthem of victory. Amidst the deafening roar of

the crowd, the athletes embraced each other while tears spilled down their faces and they talked of "next year" when new crowns would be won. Paul reminds us that the athlete trained and ran to obtain a CORRUPTIBLE CROWN. Those green leaves would soon dry up, turn to a faded brown and crumble into oblivion. The fragrant branches soon wilted and became dead and brittle. In contrast to this, oh ye saints of God, OUR STEPHANOI are INCORRUPTIBLE CROWNS which will never fade away in death--for our crown is the Crown of Life--LIFE ITSELF!

How appropriate that we should read of the twenty-four Elders: "And round about the throne were... four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads CROWNS (stephanos) OF GOLD" (Rev. 4:4). Golden Stephanos! Golden Victor's Crowns! Gold is a symbol for the divine nature. And how true that we are only able to overcome by being made partakers of HIS DIVINE NATURE! To be "crowned" means to be given kingly authority. As the kingly authority of God's divine nature ascends the throne of our lives we are CROWNED, MADE RULERS, not after the carnal pursuits of the flesh, but in the love, truth, life and glory of God's own character.

"And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats (thrones): and upon the seats (thrones) I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne...and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power...after this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands; and all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God" (Rev. 4:2-11;7:9-11).

The imagery of this passage is drawn in allusion to the encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness. God is represented as sitting upon His throne in the Tabernacle of Moses, within the Most Holy Place. The twenty-four Elders bear a special signification for they are represented as distinct from both the four Living Creatures "in the midst" of the throne and the great multitude "before" the throne. These Elders occupy a unique position described as "round about" the throne--yet UPON THRONES! In order to fully appreciate the scenery here drawn by the Spirit we need to go back and examine one particular of the order established by God among the people of Israel after they came up out of the land of Egypt. It is important that we get a clear idea, not only of the structure of the Tabernacle of Moses, but also of the arrangement of both the people and the priesthood in relation to it.

The Tabernacle was erected in the very center of the camp of Israel. Within the Tabernacle the Most Holy Place was uniquely the abode of the God of Israel among His people. When the Tabernacle was set up as described in Exodus chapter forty, the Shekinah, the Cloud of God's Presence, covered the Tent of the Congregation, and then the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle, resting in the Holiest of All. The Lord instructed Moses, 'Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the Holy Place within the veil before the mercy seat... that he die not: for I WILL APPEAR IN THE CLOUD UPON THE MERCY SEAT' (Lev. 16:2). Isaiah testified, 'O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, that DWELLEST BETWEEN THE CHERUBIM, Thou art God' Isa. 37:16). God was IN the Cloud; He APPEARED in the Cloud, He SPOKE out of the Cloud, He LED Israel by the Cloud, and in the Cloud He DWELT IN THE MOST HOLY PLACE. Thus, the Tabernacle was in very fact GOD'S THRONE among Israel from which HE RULED OVER THEM!

The Most Holy Place is, then, an earthly picture of the throne of God--the realm of God's manifestation in power and dominion. The Most Holy Place prefigured CHRIST THE KING together with all those holy sons of God who reign with Him. It is the glory of KINGSHIP. Armed with the understanding that the Tabernacle constituted God's throne among His people, let us remember that there is "before" that throne a "great multitude" of people receiving the blessings and benefits of His Kingdom ministered through the typical sacrifices and ritual of the Tabernacle service. The arrangement of the Tabernacle, the Priesthood, and the Camp of Israel into three distinct divisions, sets forth the three-fold economy of God in His redemptive

processes. Let us see! The Tabernacle is the dwelling place of God---His throne, His sphere of activity, the center of His power and glory and authority. The Camp of Israel, the great multitude "before" the throne, represents the whole world of mankind outside of God, estranged from the life that is in Him. But there is a third company--the CAMP OF THE PRIESTS--situated, as it were "round about the throne," directly BETWEEN the Tabernacle "throne" and the "great multitude" of the Camp of Israel "before" the throne. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, *'The Israelites shall encamp each by his own tribal standard or banner, with the ensign of their fathers' houses, opposite the Tent of Meeting, and facing it on every side. Then the Tent of Meeting shall be erected, with the CAMP OF THE LEVITES (PRIESTS) IN THE MIDST OF THE CAMPS'* (Num. 2:2,17). Divine infinite purpose lies behind this whole arrangement and the moment the wonderful significance of this dawns upon your spiritual understanding, you will see that God has placed a PRIESTHOOD COMPANY between Himself and the world of mankind!

The priests made their Camp around the Tabernacle and between the Tabernacle and the great Camp of Israel. It should be clear to every thinking mind that the Priesthood camped "round about" the Tabernacle corresponds precisely to the twenty-four Elders seated "round about" the throne in Revelation chapter four. You will recall the account in I Chronicles twenty-four of how, under David, the Levitical Priesthood was divided into TWENTY-FOUR COURSES under the headship of TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS. The twenty-four courses or orders of the Priesthood were chosen by families--according to the twenty-four grandsons of Aaron the High Priest. Each course was named for one of these twenty-four grandsons and the male descendants of each grandson constituted one of the twenty-four courses throughout their generations. We are indited to lightly pass over many profound statements of Holy Scripture. The Priesthood was divided into twenty-four orders for this stated purpose: *"This was their order for coming on duty to serve in the house of the Lord, according to the procedure ordered for them by their forefather Aaron, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded him"* (I Chron. 24:19) (Amplified).

The priesthood numbered thousands. Of course, all those priests could not go into the temple at one time, so they were divided into courses and assigned to work shifts, each "course" of Priests and Levites came on duty for a week, from one Sabbath to another. When a "course" was on duty, all its members were bound to appear in the temple and the service of the week was subdivided among the various families which made up that course. The point I wish to emphasize here is this: It took all twenty-four courses to MAKE UP THE ENTIRE PRIESTHOOD OF GOD! As the Father unfolds these truths to the inner man, we become convinced that as the four Living Creatures "in the midst of the throne" reveal the glory of KINGSHIP, so the twenty-four Elders "round about the throne" reveal the glory of PRIESTHOOD. KINGS AND PRIESTS! A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS! PRIESTS THAT SIT UPON THRONES! REIGNING PRIESTS! A MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION WITH AUTHORITY AND POWER! This is the great truth revealed in the throne of God, with four Living Creatures in the midst of the throne, and the twenty-four Elders around the throne. John the Revelator summed up in three short verses the wonderful truth of which I now write: *"And when He had taken the book, the FOUR BEASTS and FOUR AND TWENTY' EIDERS fell down before the Lamb, every one of them having harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. And THEY (the four Living Creatures and the twenty-four Elders) sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou was slain, and hast redeemed US to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast MADE US unto our God KINGS AND PRIESTS; and WE shall reign on the earth"* (Rev. 5:8-10). The four Living Creatures---KINGS! The twenty-four Elders PRIESTS! Together they bow low before the great King of kings and High Priest of the heavens, intoning this NEW SONG---"Thou hast MADE US unto our God KINGS AND PRIESTS: and we shall REIGN over the earth

Ah, beloved, those are not mere words. This passage is one of rare beauty. It is like a precious diamond, the effulgence of whose radiance dazzles the mind. It is a drop of pure distilled essence, whose fragrance fills the rooms of the heart of every man and woman who has received the call to sonship. It is a joy forevermore and challenge to all who comprehend its message. It must be engraved deeply upon every heart of God's Royal Priesthood. It exalts and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. "THOU has MADE US!" THOU! There is so much depth to that text that I am afraid that we often do not perceive it. It is like a beautiful star-studded sky on a bright clear night and one cannot even begin to grasp the vast depth that lies above us. So it is with these marvelous words: "Thou hast MADE US TO BE KINGS AND PRIESTS!" Can you say that? As we plumb its depths a little more I hope that you will ask yourself the question more carefully, "Am I being MADE a PRIEST

unto God? Is the process of transformation into the priestly nature taking place in my life? My deepest desire for you, dear one, is that you will come to be able to experientially say these words: "Jesus Christ is MAKING ME A PRIEST!" Not in the sweet bye and bye--but HERE AND NOW!

However clearly we see by the eye of revelation and faith the truth of this realm of Kingship and Priesthood, however earnestly we desire it, however firmly we think we grasp it by faith, all will not avail--GOD HIMSELF MUST DO IT! As the path to Priesthood, God Himself must write His law in our hearts, bring forth the new divine nature in such power of the Holy Spirit, that it is HE that works WITHIN US both to will and to do. So often the emphasis is upon the soul submitting to the Spirit; but it is the Spirit which must subject the soul. God Himself in us must by the Holy Ghost so shed abroad His love in our hearts, that to love becomes as natural to us as it is for the dove to be gentle. God Himself in us must by the Holy Ghost so fill us with the nature of righteousness that to be righteous becomes as natural to us as breathing. God Himself in us must by the Holy Ghost so clothe us with the mind of Christ, that to think the thoughts of God becomes as natural to us as are the self-serving thoughts and desires of the unregenerated man. God Himself in us must by the Holy Ghost so make us vessels of mercy that to be merciful becomes as natural to us as the emotions of anger and retaliation are to the carnal nature.

Consider, beloved, is it not GOD HIMSELF who has faithfully directed all your steps, who has initiated each Circumstance of your life, who has given sight to your poor blind eyes and caused you to behold the majesty of HIS PURPOSE? Is it not GOD HIMSELF who has led you out of the blinding traditions and enslaving bondage of Babylonian religion, and nurtured you and brought you to the place in which you stand in Christ today? Is it not GOD HIMSELF who placed the circumstances and experiences in your pathway which thrust you onward and upward at the crossroads of your life? I do not hesitate to tell you that no more than you can SAVE YOURSELF can you MAKE YOURSELF an overcomer, BRING YOURSELF to perfection, TRANSFORM YOURSELF into life and. immortality, or OF YOURSELF apprehend the beautiful ministry of Kingship and Priesthood unto God.

The unveiling of the sons of God is not the revelation of some people that can do something. No, it is the unveiling of some people who have BECOME something. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to BECOME the sons of God" **Jn. 1:12**). "Thou has MADE US unto our God Kings and Priests." If Jesus IS who He IS, then certainly He can DO all things, but the doing is incidental, a by-product of the BEING. If you are BECOMING what HE IS, the signs will follow automatically, you cannot help it But we are not following signs. We are "following on to KNOW THE LORD." Our hearts are set on HIM. We are not becoming occupied with ourselves, we are occupied with what He has said He would MAKE US, for HIS sake. "This people have I formed FOR MYSELF." "Ye shall be UNTO ME a Kingdom of Priests."

Once God has you, it is up to Him to MAKE YOU whatever He desires you to be. He can make the vessel as it pleases Him. If He wishes to make you a healer, that is not your business. If He wants to make you an evangelist, or a deliverer, or a teacher, or a King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek, let him MAKE YOU whatever He wants to make you! And when the revelation of His calling bursts within your bosom, embrace the calling with all that is within you, yielding to the processings necessary to bring it to pass. Do not drown the high purposes of God in a flood of false humility Set your face as a flint, turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, consider not your own weakness, faults, inability or insufficiency, for YOUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD! As with the halting and stammering Moses of old--HE WILL. MAKE YOU!

Yes, God will make us--but as we learn His ways our cooperation, yieldedness, and submission are vital to the process. He never rapes or brutalizes us. But we must surrender. The twenty-four Elders, the Royal Priesthood, have on their heads CROWNS of gold. Golden Stephanos! Golden Victor's Crowns! In the Theatre of Ephesus there was found an inscription which read: "He fought three bouts, and was crowned two times." In like manner the sons of God will soon be rewarded for their bouts with "principalities and powers" which have their rule in the darkness of the carnal mind. God is even now bringing forth an INCORRUPTIBLE people. OVERCOMERS! Who shall overcome ALL THINGS. And of them, finally, it shall be said: "They fought many bouts, and were crowned EVERY TIME!" No more weakness or failure. No more flunking two tests and winning one. Overcoming ALL THINGS! A Royal Priesthood. Priests reigning in God's own nature, love and power. Reconciling the world. Subduing all things. As Kings they are seated IN THE THRONE; as Priests they

sit ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE. From thence they minister to the Great Multitude standing BEFORE THE THRONE. In their surrender to the rule of the Spirit, they themselves BECOME RULERS as the authority of God flows through them. God, the Spirit, RECEIVES POWER in their abdication of the thrones of their lives; they RECEIVE CROWNS (authority) as the dominion of God expressed through them.

God will have a body through the earth in these days, a people filled with God, walking as God terrible as an army with banners--whose only purpose is that the Father be glorified, a people formed for Himself, through whom He can reveal and manifest Himself in all His wonderful fullness. Oh, beloved, come, let us now open our hearts wide to him. Come, and as we gaze upon this glorious ministry and its life-flow unto all the peoples of the earth, let us yield ourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may work HIS WONDROUS WORK in our lives until we am CROWNED with His life, His love, His mercy, His goodness, His glory and power unto the blessing of all the families of earth. May God grant it in these days.

Precious elect of the Lord--we are now to run the race for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus as if there were a vast audience in a large amphitheater eagerly watching and enthusiastically cheering us on. In particular we are to look to our trainer and coach, Jesus, who has run this course before us, and been highly, completely successful. After elaborating upon the exploits of the great heroes of faith in the Old Testament dispensations, the writer to the Hebrews says, 'And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith' (Heb. 11:39-40; 12:1-2).

'Cloud of witnesses' means STADIUM OF SPECTATORS in Greek. In some of the more spacious amphitheaters of olden times, the spectators rose in tier above tier to the number of forty or fifty thousand; and to the thought of the combatant as he looked around on this vast sea of human faces, set in various and gorgeous coloring, these vast congregations of his compatriots must have appeared like clouds, composed of infinitesimal units, but all making up one mighty aggregate, and bathed in such hues as are cast on the clouds at sunrise or sunset by the level of the sun. And though in their day this multitude of faithful warriors received not the promise--did not win the crown at the end of their race--yet God prepared some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. From beyond the veil, in that great amphitheater of departed spirits, that vast stadium of spectators, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Noah, Joseph, Abel, Gideon, Samuel, David, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and all the ancient worthies are joyfully cheering us onward, for they all know that if we can conquer sin, limitation, and death, THROUGH US they also shall receive the promise! They are most certainly the ones who now, with us, are going to be perfected (Heb. 11:40): who are going to receive all the glorious fullness of the Lord for this new day. Have you ever considered how it is that 'they apart from us shall not be made perfect'? Their perfection depends on our perfection. Our victory will be their victory. The victory we obtain shall in turn be ministered unto them. Hark! Brethren, hark! Do you not hear the deafening roar of the crowd as they cheer us onward, do you not feel the electric charge that permeates the air? Can you not hear? Have you seen--have you seen the heavenly hosts gathering from all the heavens? Can you not see the CLOUD OF WITNESSES by which we are compassed about? Let us run the race! Let us overcome sin and sorrow and pain and death! Let us win the victory over the flesh, the world and the devil! Even now the trumpets are ready to sound, the King is prepared to decorate the brows of the overcomers with the Golden Stephanos--the VICTOR'S CROWNS! Press on, saints of God, the victory is nigh at hand!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 14 LIBRA-THE SCALES [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART FOURTEEN

THE CROWN OF LIFE
THE CROWN OF MERCY

We continue with our study of the third and final minor constellation, or group of stars, which surrounds and completes the Sign of Libra. This constellation is known as CORONA BOREALIS---the Northern Crown---or simply, the Crown. It is a lovely semicircle of twenty-one stars, most of which are of the white, twinkling kind, so that the crown is fully jeweled.

From the dawn of time the crown has been the symbol of RULE, whether by secular monarch or by sacred priest. There are two different Greek words in the Greek New Testament which are translated "crown" in English. One of them is STEPHANOS, which denotes a "wreath," a "chaplet." The other is DIADEMA, meaning a "diadem." The most common term rendered "crown" is the word STEPHANOS. This crown is usually a laurel wreath woven of fragrant branches. It was granted to winners in the Olympic Games and also as a token of public honor for distinguished service---especially military leaders who had been victorious over their enemies on the battlefield. It was also given at marriage feasts, especially in royal families, to celebrate the joy of the bridegroom in having "won" the maiden as his bride. This crown always denotes a VICTOR'S CROWN--the crown of an OVERCOMER--one who has fought and WON!

Paul reminds us that the athlete trained and ran to obtain a CORRUPTIBLE CROWN. Those green leaves of the laurel wreath would soon dry up, turn to a faded brown and crumble into oblivion. The branches soon became dead and brittle. Have you won trophies in your lifetime? If you have lived a little while and have had a chance to look back on some of them, you have seen them begin to turn and you wonder why in the world they could have seemed so important at the time. I wonder about what Olympic stars, who spend years of grueling training working to win a gold medal, must think thirty years later when they look at that medal. What does it really amount to then? Athletes will give themselves to incredible amounts of self-sacrifice to win some perishable crown. In contrast to this, oh ye saints of God, OUR STEPHANOI are INCORRUPTIBLE CROWNS which will never fade away in death--for our crown is the Crown of Life--LIFE ITSELF!

The Victor's Crown is granted as a reward for faithfulness---it is the trophy earned by steadfastness, perseverance and carrying the battle onward to victory. There was once a king who had a heavy stone placed in the middle of a busy road. He hid himself and watched to see who would remove the cumbersome obstacle. Men of various walks of life approached it and went around it. As the king watched, some men openly cursed the king for allowing the road to be so cluttered. One by one they dodged the task of removing the heavy stone. At last, a poor peasant, on his way to town, approached the place. His back was laden with a load of vegetables which he was going to sell. He stopped and contemplated the stone. The king watched eagerly. The peasant laid his load on the ground. Taking a deep breath, he buffed and puffed as he rolled the heavy stone off the road. Turning around, he spied a money bag which had been laying beneath the stone. With trembling hands, he opened the bag. It was filled with a fortune in gold pieces. There was a note folded among the pieces of gold. It stated that the person who removed the stone could have the gold. It was signed by the king.

Beneath every task that the Lord puts in the pathway of our spiritual journey, is a hidden blessing. We, like the people in the story, have a choice. We can dodge the obstacle if we wish. But we do it to our own hurt. Our King will reward us if we faithfully OVERCOME in each test. There are crowns He has prepared for the overcomer. We will receive them if we press on to victory! "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, IF WE FAINT NOT" (Gal. 6:9). Faint NOT in your fulfilling of the Lord's will and you will reap no reward. That is the law of sowing and reaping. "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things WHICH WE

HAVE WROUGHT, but that we receive a FULL REWARD" (II Jn. 8). The word translated "wrought" is also translated "gained." Either way, the message is clear: it is possible to lose rewards which you have gained. You must be faithful to the end of the journey, to the completion of the process, to receive a full reward.

"Behold I came quickly: HOLD THAT FAST WHICH THOU HAST, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11). If, by faithfulness, you hold fast to the ground you have already gained, you will receive your crown. If you do not stay faithful all the way to the end, you will LOSE that crown which you have already gained! However, SOMEBODY is going to receive it! The Greek word for "take", here, is LAMBANO. It is also translated, "receive." It is not that some other person is going to snatch your crown from you . . . but God WILL HAVE A PEOPLE, a firstfruits, to display the fullness of His life to creation. Should we fail to FOLLOW ON to become that people God will raise up another generation, just as He did with the children of Israel who refused to believe Him and enter into the Promised Land. That is the law of the Kingdom.

May God help an who read these lines to realize that if we would be overcomers we cannot be sluggards or quitters. Nothing can defeat us except our own UNBELIEF! I think of a young man whose goal (in the natural world) was to become a member of the legislature. Now that is a high goal for a man to try to reach. He strove manfully and was defeated. So he decided that he should go into business. The result was that he went bankrupt and spent seventeen years paying off the bad debts of his crooked partner. He fell in love with a beautiful woman and death snatched her out of his hands. He then decided to go into politics. He ran for congress and lost. Then he sought an appointment to a government office (the U.S. Land Office) but was rejected. Then he became a candidate for the vice-presidency, and he was defeated. If any man had reason to quit, this man did! He had a young son who was the darling of his life. And the boy died Did he give up? No, though many a lesser man would have. Today in Washington, D.C. you can look up into his face, filled with sorrow and compassion, and yet with a certain determination as he sits there in his great white chair in the Lincoln Monument and looks down upon the Union that he saved and the slaves that he freed. He didn't quit! He became an overcomer! He prevailed! And he being dead, yet speaketh. Ah, beloved, you may feel today that you have failed every test and opportunity that God has set before you on the journey to the Throne--but arise and shake the dust from your feet, be strong and of a good courage---the race has not ended yet!

"Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and CONTINUETH therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, THIS MAN SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIS DEED" (James 1:25). "This is a faithful saying and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to MAINTAIN good works" (Titus 3:8). "Who then is a FAITHFUL and wise servant . . .? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh SHALL FIND SO DOING" (Mat7 24:45-46). "My beloved brethren, be ye STEDFAST, unmovable, ALWAYS ABOUNDING ('being superior, excelling) IN THE WORK OF THE LORD!" (I Cor. 15:58). It is dearly evident. The crowns (rule in the Kingdom) will go to those saints who faithfully run the race to the finish. Quitters will not receive crowns. The faithless will be empty-handed. But the overcomers shall receive the CROWN OF LIFE.

THE CROWN OF LIFE

The journey to the Throne carries us through the process clearly revealed in the three Decans of the Sign of Libra: the CROSS, the VICTIM, and the CROWN. The cross is the transition point by which we die to this carnal realm and are made alive unto God--the realm of SPIRIT. The cross always meant DEATH. When a man picked up his cross and headed for Golgotha, he wasn't coming back! This has never changed. The cross still means DEATH. Notice the Lord's choice of words. "If any man will come after Me, let him DENY HIMSELF and take up his cross DAILY and follow Me" (Lk. 9:23). Notice the word, "daily". This cross-bearing business is a DAILY matter. Just as we need DAILY bread (Mat. 6:11), we need DAILY crucifixion. The life of a disciple demands "dying" every day. Seven days a week. Three hundred and sixty-five days a year (366 in leap year), the true disciple takes up his cross, crucifies the outer life, the flesh man, the carnal mind, the consciousness of old Adam --and DIES! Paul said, "I die DAILY" I Cor.15:31). "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). If you take up your cross, it is for the purpose of being CRUCIFIED. If you get crucified, you will DIE. If you DIE, if your mortal consciousness with all its affections, lusts, and delusions are SLAIN, your SPIRIT, the inner reality of the Christ in you will LIVE and reign in righteousness, glory and victory! Now let us turn our attention to this CROWN OF LIFE. Jesus said, "Be thou faithful unto

death (the completion of the work of the Cross) and I will give thee a CROWN OF LIFE" (Rev.2:10). One does not have to be a doctor of theology to see that only those 'who faithfully take up their crosses daily and follow Jesus into death to the outer life and the outer world of illusion, will receive a VICTOR'S CROWN OF LIFE. Truly, he that loses his life will save it!

With the apostle Paul the life of the footstep followers of our Lord, the overcomers, is compared to a race and like a boxing match. He exhorts the brethren in Corinth to run this spiritual race of life with the purpose of being victor, and with the goal of being rewarded by Christ with the reward appropriate to that victory. The pagans, he says, strive in their carnal, natural, physical races to obtain carnal, natural, and CORRUPTIBLE crowns, but we strive for an INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN. The startling truth is that not every christian shall automatically receive this incorruptible crown, for it is not a free g./ft but a PRIZE TO BE WON. Paul says, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but ONE RECEIVETH THE PRIZE? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" I Cor. 9:24-25).

James writes of this special blessedness of the one who is patient under trial and stands up under the severest testing, "Blessed, happy, to be envied is the man who is patient under trial and stands up under temptation, for when he has stood the test and been approved he will receive the VICTOR'S CROWN OF LIFE which God has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12). "Temptation," here, is not used in the usual sense. It means "tried." The rest of the verse makes it dear. God never tempts a person to sin. In fact, the apostle goes on to make that point dear. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot BE tempted with evil, NEITHER TEMPTETH HE ANY MAN" (James 1:15). God will not tempt you to sin, but He will TEST you in faithfulness and faith. Blessed is the man who endures testing. He will receive the CROWN OF LIFE. It is with you, as with your Lord; first the CROSS... and then the CROWN.

To further confirm the truth of this higher realm and measure of life which is reserved for the overcomer Jesus Himself says, "Fear none of those things which thou shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I WILL GIVE THEE A CROWN OF LIFE. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7, 10-11).

To help us understand this transcendent realm of life offered to the overcomer, let us examine the two terms "mortal" and "immortal". "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this MORTAL must put on

IMMORTALITY. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this MORTAL shall have put on IMMORTALITY, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15:53-54).

MORTALITY signifies a state or condition of liability to death; not a condition of death, but a condition in which death is a possibility.

IMMORTALITY signifies a state or condition not liable to death; not merely a condition of freedom from death, but a condition in which death is an impossibility.

Many people think that "mortality" is a state or condition in which death is unavoidable. That is an altogether erroneous understanding. That which is "immortal" cannot die, but that which is "mortal" can die,--that is, in a state or condition where death is a possibility. Even if the person dwelling in mortality were to live on and on and on--endlessly--yet, at all times death would be a possibility. But with the person abiding in immortality death is an UTTER IMPOSSIBILITY. The person who is mortal may not necessarily have to die--but the possibility is always present he can die!

When man was lowered from the realm of pure spirit existence into this gross material realm he was placed by God in the realm of mortality. He entered into the sense-realm with only a consciousness of his outer flesh-life, the inner spirit being veiled. In this consciousness he could not have been immortal, for God said to him, "In

the day that thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die" (**Gen. 2:17**), and it is IMPOSSIBLE for an immortal person to die! But, on the other hand, it was not necessary for Adam to die, for if he would die anyway why would God have pronounced the threat or penalty of death as a result of his disobedience? If Adam would never have eaten of the forbidden tree, it is obvious that he would have continued to live for as long as that condition was met. It could have been forever! And yet he lived within the POSSIBILITY OF DEATH at any time through disobedience, proving that he was NOT IMMORTAL. The thing we want to see is, that although Adam possessed physical life in full and perfect measure, he did not possess INHERENT LIFE. His outer life was a SUSTAINED LIFE, SUSTAINED FROM W-I-T-H-O-U-T HIMSELF by "every tree of the garden."

Many of those who read these lines have pondered the events that transpired in the Garden of Eden in that dim and distant past. Little by little fragments of truth have opened up, but the grand sum and total of it is not yet unfolded before us. In that heaven blest Garden which the Lord God planted there were all manner of trees that were good for food, and Adam and Eve were to freely partake thereof with one exception--the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now we know that eating a piece of fruit in itself was not the sin, but rather that tree represented something, and that fruit signified a SPIRITUAL REALITY.

At the beginning of man's existence on earth we are shown Adam in a relationship with THREE KINDS OF 'FREES. To understand God's plan, we must be completely clear about these three kinds of trees and what they represent. The three types of trees are set forth in **Gen. 2:8-9, 16-17**. "And the Lord God planted a Garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground (man's consciousness) made the Lord God to grow EVERY TREE that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the TREE OF LIFE also in the midst of the Garden, and the TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL." Here are the three classes of trees which could be perceived and experienced by Adam and Eve: (1) all the trees of the Garden (2) the tree of life (3) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

There is a clear distinction made between a GROVE composed of "every tree of the Garden that is good for food" on the one hand, and the two trees which were in "the midst of the Garden" on the other hand--the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Thus, ALL THE TREES OF THE GARDEN (the grove) are distinct from either the tree of life or the tree of knowledge. The tree of life was not of the same nature as "all the trees of the Garden" and the tree of knowledge, likewise, was not the same as those trees. After God formed man of the dust realm He placed him before these three kinds of trees, and man's whole life was pictured as a matter of feasting upon one tree or the other. How man would live and walk depended entirely upon his relationship with these three kinds of trees. God told man plainly, "You may freely eat of ALL THE TREES OF THE GARDEN." He also said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." Let all who read these lines know and fully you understand that there was no death in "all the trees of the Garden"--death lay only in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam could have continued to live on and on and on ... forever . . . being sustained only by the fruit of "all the trees of the Garden." It was not necessary for him to eat of the tree of life in order to continue to live. He had only to keep on eating from "all the trees of the Garden." Yet--though he continued to live and not die he was STILL MORTAL, for the POTENTIAL for death lay with him. His life was a SUSTAINED LIFE, not an immortal life. Yes, in obedience to God he was justified--his life was secure--the sustaining elements would not be denied. Thus seen, Adam had life, and death was entirely avoidable, yet he was in such a condition that death was possible--he was MORTAL. Before long Adam did disobey and lost for himself and for the whole human race the privilege of a sustained life. Adam, and all men in him, fell into death.

The tree of knowledge and the tree of life both were "in the midst" of the Garden. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the flesh--the carnal mind. "For to be carnally minded IS DEATH" (**Rom. 8:6**). "For if ye live after the flesh YE SHALL DIE" (**Rom. 8:13**). The tree of life is the Spirit--the mind of Christ. "To be spiritually minded IS LIFE" (**Rom. 8:6**). "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, YE SHALL LIVE" (**Rom. 8:13**). The life-giving fruit of this tree was accessible to man but had absolutely nothing to do with the realm of earthiness. In the tree of life God invited man to discover HIM--the indwelling Spirit--as the source and center of life, that in union with Him God would be at once both the indwelling power of life and the environment in which man would live, move, and have his being. By eating of the tree of life man would be full of light, abounding in heavenly wisdom and knowledge, fearful in power and dominion, ethereal as a spirit and shining in the image of God. The fruit of this wonderful tree would make men radiant with the resplendent glory of God

as was Jesus, the last Adam, at the transfiguration, whose face shone as the sun and His raiment was as the light. The mighty power of this tree would raise men up beyond any possibility of sin, corruption and death into the incorruptible divine life demonstrated by Jesus when He arose from the dead in a body of glorification. In this tree of life the effulgent perfumes of the heavenly realm would be fragrance and life to man's nostrils. He would taste spiritualities and touch spiritual things. The wisdom and power of God Himself would be wide open to him and he would walk in the presence and glory of celestial realms. The gates of that realm would never be shut by day or night. The heavens would be opened over his head and he would walk in the power and majesty of God Almighty.

It is imperative that every saint of God understands that the first man Adam and the last man Adam are more than mere historical characters. That first man did indeed live and walk upon this earth in the long ago. The second man, Jesus Christ, likewise lived and walked upon the earth two millenniums ago. But great is the mystery of God and great is the mystery of man. The truth is that both men are **STILL ALIVE AND WALKING THE EARTH**. Both are here alive in their posterity and both continue to reproduce after their kind. You will never understand the mystery of God and the mystery of man until your eyes are opened to see that both men exist right there within that wonderful and complex world which is **YOU**. The first man was made "a living soul" and your soulish man is the offspring of that soulish man; the second man was made "a QUICKENING SPIRIT (I Cor. 15:45) and your spirit man is the offspring of that spiritual man.

There is a spirit in man and that spirit is **THE TRUE MAN** and the true personality--the image of God. The spirit can never rest satisfied until it rests in God. It ever seeks communion with God and longs with unutterable longing and unceasing desire for fellowship with the Most High. This should not seem strange, for God is the **FATHER OF SPIRITS** (Heb. 12:9). Therefore it is no wonder if the spirit is restless until it is one with Him. The first man is of the earth, earthy, and he is your earthiness; the second man is the Lord from heaven, and this is the tree man of spirit. The beautiful, pure, and divine constitute his ancestry. His origin is not, like the outer man who is perishing, in brute instinct and material substance. Spirit has its primitive and ultimate source of being--God is his Father, and Life is the law of his being. The first man is natural; the second man is spiritual. The first man contained a "breath of life"; the second man "has life in Himself" even as the Father has life in Himself. "For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself (In, 5:25). Both of these men, precious friend of mine, are **Y-O-U**. And you may walk after the flesh and **DIE**, or you may walk after the spirit and **LIVE!**

We have seen that father Adam in the beginning had a conditional natural life (body and soul) which could have been sustained forever by walking in obedience to the law of God. Death came by sin, and sin is the transgression of the law. Furthermore, he could have possessed **IMMORTAL** life by being joined to the Spirit. Jesus came to earth in that same wonderful potential of manhood--but He not only walked in union with the Spirit, He brought His faculties into union with the Spirit until soul and body were raised up into the full immortality of God's divine life and nature. This realm of **IMMORTALITY** which He apprehended for the whole man has by Him been made available to all who will avail themselves of it. We have already seen that it is promised to the **OVERCOMER** and is a **PRIZE** to be gained by running for it. It is called a **CROWN OF LIFE**. It is the **RULE OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE**. Now let me be very clear--many shall attain to never-ending life as they continue to walk in faith and obedience as Adam could have--but only those who **PAY THE PRICE** shall actually be raised up into **IMMORTALITY**---completely beyond the capability of dying or ever again being corrupted either spiritually, soulically, or physically.

I am sure that this thought that not every Christian shall in the ages to come possess the full degree of life which is **IMMORTALITY** will come as a shock to many. But the scriptures clearly indicate **MORE THAN ONE DIMENSION** of everlasting life. One is the kind of life Adam could have had, a **SUSTAINED LIFE**, and the other is the kind of life that **ONLY JESUS** has been raised up into--**INHERENT LIFE**. The first raises men up in redemption to the quality of life Adam knew before he sinned and the second goes far beyond "redemption" (a buying back) to the ultimate purpose of God for the **NEW CREATION**, expressed in the nature, image, glory and dominion of the last Adam, the Lord from heaven. One will never understand that quality of life which is a "prize" to be won until he clearly sees that the first Adam never did dwell in that dimension of life demonstrated by the last Adam. Redemption means "to buy back" and involves a return to a former condition. Redemption, therefore, does not guarantee an entrance into the full and complete glory of the last Adam, the Lord from

heaven; but it does purchase for men a return to the first condition and state of man before he sinned. Redemption restores men to the Edenic state of fellowship with God, human perfection, and eternal access to a SUSTAINED LIFE. But those elect sons of God who lay hold upon the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, many sons brought to HIS GLORY, become partakers of a life which far transcends in wisdom, glory and power the sustained life of redemption's provision--even IMMORTALITY AND INCORRUPTION! The wonderful everlasting life provided by redemption is the FREE GIFT of God to all who believe on the name of the Lord, receiving Him as Saviour and Redeemer. The dimension of life which transcends redemption is a glorious PRIZE to be sought after and WON.

Let us consider a few scriptures that speak of the life which is a FREE GIFT by faith. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (In, 3:16). "For the wages of sin is death; but the GIFT OF GOD is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the FREE GIFT came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom. 5:18).

Now we shall examine other passages that reveal a realm of life which is NOT A FREE GIFT at all. One previously quoted is James 1:12, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation (testing); for when he is tried he shall receive the VICTOR'S CROWN (STEPHANOS) OF LIFE." This "crown of life" is reserved only for the Victors --the overcomers! Consider how great is the exhortation of Paul in I Cor. 9:24-45, "Know ye not that they which run a race run all, but ONE receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an INCORRUPTIBLE. I therefore so run." "To him that OVERCOMETH (not believeth.) will I give to eat of the TREE OF LIFE, which is in the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

That the great apostle himself had not yet (in his opinion) qualified for this "crown of life" he states plainly in his epistle to the church at Philippi. Harken to his word! "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may W-I-N CHRIST, and be found I-N HIM" (Phil. 3:7-9). Surely Paul did not have to go through all that sacrifice, humiliation, stripping and death in order to have Christ in his life--to be SAVED! Paul himself had explained to the Philipplan jailer the simple requirement for salvation: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). But in chapter three of Philipplans Paul continues, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; IF BY ANY MEANS I MIGHT ATTAIN UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF (Greek: out from) THE DEAD. NOT as though I had ALREADY ATTAINED, either were ALREADY PERFECT: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 10-12).

Fortunately, Paul gives us some very vital information concerning this resurrection "out from" or "from among" the dead, without which we would be very much in the dark. He tells us just how he was planning to be included in it. He also tells us how others came to be included in the same class with him, and he states that the revelation concerning this great attainment and the way into it, is the sign of spiritual perfection (Phil. 3:11-15). But the popular teachers of this day have totally missed these great truths. Let us consider them very carefully. They are of the utmost importance. In Phil. 3:8-14, Paul informs us that he had given up the world, given up everything, that he might suffer with Christ, with his nature transformed to die even as Christ died, "IF BY ANY MEANS I might attain unto the resurrection out from amongst the dead." In our King James Version this is rendered, "the resurrection OF the dead:" a pathetic, and altogether misleading translation.

A moment's just reflection will suffice to convince the reader that the apostle is not speaking here of the broad truth of "the resurrection of the dead," inasmuch as everyone must rise again." There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15). In the Greek language the resurrection "of the dead" is NEKRON or TON NEKRON and is applied to all classes of people because all will be raised. But the term EK NEKRON--"out of the dead"--is not once applied to the unjust or the ungodly, or in any general sense. The resurrection of which Paul spoke was not the general resurrection of saints. Paul knew that he was a saved man, and as such knew there was positively no way he could escape the resurrection of the just. Now, if there

were but one resurrection of the saved, as modern Babylon teaches, then all of his strivings were altogether uncalled for and useless. But no: Paul was not striving in vain; and unto the saints at Philippi he wrote, "But whatever former things I had that might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as one combined loss for Christ's sake. Yea, furthermore I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege--the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth and supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish in order that I may WIN Christ ... that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from HIS RESURRECTION; and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed in spirit into the likeness even to His death, in the hope that IF POSSIBLE I MAY ATYAIN TO THE.. . RESURRECTION THAT LIFTS ME OUT FROM AMONG THE DEAD EVEN WHILE IN THE BODY. Not that I have now attained this ideal or am already made perfect, but I PRESS ON to lay hold of and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me" (Phil. 3:7-12) (Amplified).

Oh! dearly beloved brethren, the resurrection "of" the dead is one thing, but the resurrection "out from among" the dead is a mightily different thing. If ALL the people in a building leave it at the same time, it is the coming out "of" the company; but if only SOME of the people present leave, theirs is a coming out "from" the rest of the company. It was for this resurrection "out from" the dead that Paul longed continually. This was the bright and blessed hope that shone upon his soul and cheered him amid the sorrows and trials, the toils and the difficulties, the buffetings and the conflicts. Every soul who dies, both saint and sinner, must be in the resurrection "of" the dead, for as in Adam ALL die, so in Christ shall ALL be made alive. There is no possible way of avoiding it. But to be a partaker in the resurrection "from among" the dead, that, Paul tells us, is a special blessing and distinction for those who FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD. These not only are clothed with everlasting life in body, soul and spirit: they are invested with such IMMORTALITY and INCORRUPTION as to be forever and completely beyond the capacity to sin or the capability of death. There's is not merely a SUSTAINED LIFE, but an INHERENT LIFE--God's own divine and eternal life in the fullness of HIMSELF!

You will never know the power of Christ's resurrection until you know union with Him.. There are a couple verses of scripture that I would like to consider with you. If you will let these gracious inspired words speak for themselves, you will be given to understand a mystery comprehended by very few men or women who have walked the face of this planet. The following words of the apostle Paul are freighted with meaning and spiritual significance. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21). The opening statement of this beautiful passage declares that "Our conversation is in heaven." The word conversation is from the Greek word POLITEUMA meaning "citizenship." It is not our words or our talk that are in heaven, but our citizenship--our habitation and residence with full civil rights. We are citizens of heaven. Our residence is in heaven. Heaven is our place of birth, our homeland, our native sphere of habitation. We already dwell in heaven N-O-W. God is SPIRIT, and heaven is the RFAIM OF THE SPIRIT in which God dwells. To be born of the Spirit is to be born in heaven. To live in the Spirit is to live in heaven. To walk in the Spirit is to walk in heaven.

It will be worth our time to examine prayerfully just what is actually stated in the passage of scripture now under consideration. "For our citizenship is in heaven, FROM WHENCE WE LOOK..." "We LOOK." I ask you to notice this particularly. 'From whence WE LOOK.'" "FROM WHENCE we look." It does not say, 'from whence we SHALL look? Nor does it say, 'from whence the Lord shall come.' 'From whence WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: who shall change our vile body.. .' It does not at all say that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come from heaven, although that is how our superficial reading and carnal mindedness has taken it. Nothing is said here about where Christ dwells, or where He is coming from. The subject is not where Christ is, but where WE ARE and WHAT WE ARE DOING THERE. Where are we? "Our citizenship (residence, homeland) is in heaven.' This lovely passage shows the believer to be a heavenly man, positioned in the heavenlies---living out of the realm of SPIRIT. And what are we doing there? From that lofty vantage point and exalted state of consciousness we are LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR to change our vile body. Just as a man may sit in a tire-tower steadily looking for the tell-tale signs of smoke that alert him to a forest fire, so WE SIT IN HEAVEN LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR TO CHANGE OUR BODY. The message is clear--we are not on earth looking for our Saviour to come crashing down from heaven. Rather, from our exalted seating in

the height of heaven we look for this change, for we know the Christ there, we belong to Him there, we are joined in one with Him there, we are heavenly because He is. He will extend the work of salvation and exaltation to the body-realm, so as to present the whole being in the power of eternal life in the true sphere and home of that life above--a spiritual body. We are to possess a fully developed body which belongs to the celestial world. This change from mortality to immortality takes place as Christ rises from within us, coming out of heaven (spirit to manifest finally in the visible world. As we find CHRIST IN US as the source of our life, tremendous changes take place. Oh! the mystery of it. It is not from earth that we look for heaven to swoop down and change us; it is in heaven that we look for our outer man to catch up with our inner man. "FROM HEAVEN we look..." Hallelujah!

This, my beloved, is that resurrection "out from among" the dead, the "crown of life" which is that FULL SALVATION that includes the plenteousness of His incorruptible life, nature and power. It is the FULL SALVATION of spirit, soul and body, a victory so complete, so powerful, so divine and eternal, that there is NO POSSIBILITY of ever sinning or dying again. And while I have called it a "salvation," it is MORE than salvation, it is something BEYOND salvation, an attainment, the P-R-I-Z-E of a quality and dimension of life the first Adam has never known! These overcomers possess the very fullness of the divine nature. They are not merely "saved by grace," but have totally laid down their own lives and completely taken up HIS. They are an INCORRUPTIBLE and IMMORTAL people spiritually, soulically and bodily. This, dear ones, is the TRUE ETERNAL SECURITY! Why is this resurrection such a PRIZE? Why is it worth giving up everything to run the race? Because it bespeaks of a REAIM OF LIFE and honor and glory and dominion in the fullness of Christ which none others shall receive. It is reserved for OVERCOMERS alone---not for the general run of Christians who have hob-nobbed with the world and taken the mark of the beast by following and propagating the doctrines of anti-christ which are cherished by the man-made churches.

The Lord seeks to bring His overcoming remnant into THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE. It is greater than Pentecostal power. Greater than power to speak in tongues, prophesy, heal the sick, cast out devils, and do signs and wonders. It is greater than witnessing power, and even greater than power to raise the dead. Pentecostal power lies within the "in part" realm of I Cor. 13:8-10. When that which is PERFECT is come, that which is in part shall be done away! Soon, very soon, those powers will no longer be needed because the manifested sons of God shall arise in the power of the Melchizedekian Priesthood to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. A ministry is coming where there is no limited measure of the Spirit, no "in part" manifestation of the "gift" realm. There will be no need to heal the sick, cast our devils, multiply bread and fish, or raise the dead---it will be a ministry from the IMMORTAL REALM where everlasting life will flow fully and freely to all creation. Death is not the grave or the coffin. DEATH IS THAT WHOLE DREADFUL REAIM IN WHICH MAN HAS EXISTED EVER SINCE THE TRANSGRESSION IN EDEN. Mankind groans to be delivered, not merely from sin and sickness and trouble and the grave, but out of death, out of the DEATH REALM altogether.

We can only speculate what it will be like to be in the full power and glory of IMMORTAL life. God is moving to bring His holy remnant into the power of and indissoluble life, even now. There will be a full and complete severing from the earth realm, from the carnal mind, from the death realm and all its claims, God wants a free, heavenly, celestial people, a body of sons totally detached from all that is earthly, limited, and temporal. It is possible to move into a resurrection realm in our consciousness that places us beyond time, beyond the thinking and power of the world, beyond the bondage of health, security, and death itself. Is that not the greatest power that God can give to mankind--to make him an eternal SPIRITUAL BEING in the very glory of God? Ah, what a PRIZE! What a CROWN! "So let us run..."

But note, precious friend of mine, I did not say that God would make us SPIRITS--but SPIRITUAL BEINGS. What God is creating is a NEW CREATION--something that has never been before! It is God (spiri0, but not just God. It is man (form, image), but not just man. It is God and man brought together in a union producing a race of beings that are not God or man, yet God AND man! It is the NEW CREATION. In the vast storehouse of truth embraced by the Holy Scriptures no part or phase thereof is in any way more outstanding or clear than the truth that man was designed by his Creator to possess a body. Man is not designed to have his spirit flit about through eternity without a body. The apostle Paul echoes the sense of revulsion found in the heart of every man at the thought of being found "naked" or disembodied. Speaking of the earthly tabernacle of flesh,

he writes, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us FOR THIS SELFSAME THING IS GOD..." **I Con 5: 1-5).**

There is another body, thank God! Formed of the incorruptible life of the resurrected and glorified Christ of God, the last Adam, the God-man, the firstborn of the NEW CREATION species. This marvelous body is from heaven even as my present body is of earth. It is the offspring of the last Adam, just as my flesh body is the offspring of the first Adam. I do not hesitate to declare to you that as a man PUTS ON CHRIST he puts on not only the spirit of Christ but also the RESURRECTION BODY of Christ and this body IS OUR HOUSE FROM HEAVEN. As the pure and holy life of the Son of God is formed within us God shall also give us bodies worthy of such divine life, bodies capable of expressing all the wisdom and nature and power of that blessed realm beyond sin and death, yea, beyond time and space and matter! What a PRIZE! What a CROWN! This is the CROWN OF LIFE--the crown which IS LIFE ITSELF! Ah, beloved saints of God, let us PRESS ON to obtain this glorious and eternal Crown of Life!

THE CROWN OF MERCY

There are several crowns promised to the overcomer. In **II Tim. 4:7-8** Paul says, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." It is my duty before God to tell you that the VICTOR'S CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS is not that "imputed righteousness" accredited to your account at the time you placed your faith in Christ, but an A'FFAINED RIGHTEOUSNESS acquired as one's STATE OF BEING through the deep processings of God in the life. Imputed righteousness justifies you from your sins; attained righteousness transforms your nature, qualifying you to reign in righteousness in the Kingdom of God. "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness..." (**Isa. 32:1**). "And they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (**Rev. 20:6**).

Then there is the CROWN OF GLORY. "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a CROWN OF GLORY that fadeth not away" (**I Pet. 5:4**). The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of glory. God is called, "the God of glory" (**Acts 7:2**). The Kingdom on God is a family; its Father is called "the Father of glory" (**Eph. 1:17**). Christ, who brought this Kingdom into being is called "the Lord of glory" (**1 Cor. 2:8**). The Holy Spirit, the energy of this whole heavenly Kingdom, is called "the Spirit of glory" (**1 Pet. 4:14**).

T. Austin Sparks has written: "The crown of the incorruptible is glory. The Son, as the Lord of glory, is governing everything in relation to glory. What a glorious statement that is; how much there is gathered into that--GOVERNING EVERYTHING IN RELATION TO GLORY--the LORD OF GLORY! So we have in our Bible a whole book containing the record of the activities of the Lord of glory. Situations and positions seem at first sight all the work of the devil, all the work of devil-inspired and devil-energized people--situations so difficult that they look hopeless. And that book contains the verdict of the long run, that everyone of those situations was turned to glory, something glorious came out of every hopeless and impossible position. The LORD OF GLORY was seeing to that! Yes, there is much comfort in that title 'the Lord of glory.'

"Glory is not some place to which we are going presently, although glory may be a sphere in which everything is glorious. Glory is for now. It is a part of the very life that we have now received. It is the essence of Christ as 'in us, the hope of glory~. May the Lord teach us how to keep clear of this corrupted world, how to keep clear of that wretched, corrupt old man. You remember that magnificent, though so very simple, picture Bunyan has given us--the man with the muck rake, with the crown of glory over his head, but so occupied with his rake and obsessed with what is down there in the mud, that he sees not the glory, he misses it all" end quote. Ah, beloved, that muck is our outer man, the flesh life, the carnal mind, and we are always turning him this way and that to see if we can find something good in him, some glory. May the blessed Spirit of Truth teach us now and forever that there is no glory in this outer world of appearances, and we must end all the investigations in that

realm. Count it all but dung, but loss, and lift up your eyes to the Lord of glory--and you will find the way of glory, and you will be crowned with the Crown of Glory, even the Spirit of the Lord.

Another wonderful crown is mentioned in **Ps. 104:4**, "Who CROWNETH thee with loving kindness and tender mercies." In the Hebrew "lovingkindness" is HHESED; "tender mercies" is RAHHAMIM, which is equivalent in power to our English word "compassions." This is the God of all grace placing a crown upon those who rule with Him. This is the God of love placing upon your head the insignia of anointing as one of His King-Priests. What IS this crown, this kingly, priestly anointing, this power and authority to rule? HHESED and RAHHAMIM - -LOVINGKINDNESS and TENDER MERCIES! Or it can be stated as: mercy and compassions.

Think of it! God's Crown, God's Ruling Authority and Power! Crowned with MERCY! Ruling by MERCY! This is truth of unfathomed depth. What kind of a crown do you have in mind when you think of "wearing a crown" in the Kingdom of God? It is my prayerful hope that these words will prove helpful in bringing many of God's precious elect into their crown-fitting. "In mercy shall the throne be established" (**Isa. 16:5**). "Mercy shall be built up for ever" (**Ps.89:2**). It is when this MERCY COMPANY has fully become, matured in the nature of God, then shall the completeness of the MERCY THRONE be revealed in the earth. Christ is now OUR Mercy Seat, and in due time God's firstfruits are to become that Mercy Seat for others--to unfold God's transforming mercy to all. In the Tabernacle in the wilderness the Mercy Seat--the Mercy Throne is what the Most Holy Place was made for. As we today are given boldness by the blood of Jesus to truly enter the Most Holy Place not made with hands--the realm of God's fullness--may we enter humbly with this knowledge and in this spirit--the Most Holy Place is prepared and ordained ... for MERCY! It is made just for the Mercy Seat. The unmerciful will never stand on this holy ground. No place here to view any man with the thought, "Does he deserve it?" We have not deserved it, any more than any man, we had no merits to claim His favor, but it was freely given to us just the same, and from this holy station we shall learn to freely give in like manner, not imputing men's sins unto them, but revealing HIS REDEEMING MERCY.

This is often times difficult for those priests-to-be who have come out of the church system with a heavy hangover of condemnation and charging every man with guilt and shame. It was a sin to do this, it was a sin to do that, and we were so sin-conscious that we were not able to kindle any consciousness of the awesome power of HIS ABOUNDING MERCY.

This truth might well be illustrated by the children's story of the sun and the wind. In the make-believe story, the sun and the wind discussed which of them was the strongest. The wind said he could prove that he was the strongest by blowing the coat off a man who walked on the road below. So the sun slipped behind a cloud and Mr. Wind started blowing until the man thought a tornado had come up. But the harder the wind blew, the tighter hold the old man took on his coat. Finally the wind saw that he could not blow the man's coat off, so he gave up in defeat. Then it was the sun's turn to try. The sun came out from behind the clouds and smiled kindly on the old man. Presently the warm loving rays of the sun caused the man to pull off his coat. The sun had proved that the power of love and light and kindness is stronger than fury and force!

How we have ranted and raved and stormed at men about their sins and judgment! But it has been well said that "There is no difficulty that enough love will not conquer; No disease that enough love will not heal; No door that enough love will not open; No gulf that enough love will no bridge; No wall that enough love will not throw down; No sin that enough love will not redeem. It makes no difference how deeply seated may be the problem, how hopeless the outlook, how muddled the tangles, how great the mistake a sufficient realization of love will dissolve it all--if only you could love enough you would be the happiest and most powerful being in the world."

Ah---perhaps now we can understand something of the divine wisdom that, when it purposes to save a world gone awry, says, "FOR GOD S-O L-O-V-E-D THE WORLD, that He gave His only begotten Son ..." Then to the bearers of that love He bids, "LOVE your enemies..." And God in Christ has enough love to go around, praise His wonderful name! And by that love He is CROWNING His King-Priests for the age and the ages to come with lovingkindness and tender mercies! What a Kingdom! What a Throne! His Word declares it! The heavens declare it! This is the CORONA BOREALIS--the Northern Crown, the dominion of the sons of God!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 15 SCORPIO-THE SCORPION

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART FIFTEEN

THE SERPENT SATAN - A SPIRIT

The third scene in the great prophetic drama of GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY (the Zodiac) is simply fascinating as we view its related constellations as drawn on the ancient star charts. It is called SCORPIO (the scorpion) by the Romans of antiquity and is the most brilliant of the twelve Signs of the Zodiac. Unfortunately for observers in the northern-hemisphere, it cannot be properly appreciated because part of it is below the horizon. A scorpion is a most malignant insect. It is a noisome and deadly enemy that is most frightening. Its bite is not always fatal, though it can be; still it is always extraordinarily painful, and the scorpion is a dangerous pest. The star picture brings before us a gigantic Scorpion, larger than a man, with its tail uplifted in anger, endeavoring to sting in the heel a mighty man, but is crushed by the man, who has his foot placed right on the Scorpion's heart. If a little insect puts fear in the heart of a large man, how much more would a Scorpion much larger than a man!

The Hebrew name for the constellation of Scorpio is AKRAB, which means "the conflict" or "war". The word is used of the scorpion, but is also the word for war as in Ps. 144:1 where the sweet singer of Israel intones, "Blessed be the Lord, my strength, who teaches my hands to WAR (AKRAB) and my fingers to fight." The whole scene of this constellation is one of conflict. The first Decan, or minor constellation surrounding Scorpio, is that of SERPENS -- the struggling Serpent. We see this serpent theme repeated over and over in the Zodiac. In fact, one of the great astronomers who did not understand this, said: "Why, the whole heavens are scribbled over with serpents and snakes," echoing most astronomers' disdain for astrology. The Devil is portrayed as the great antagonist in this battle. He is portrayed as a serpent; as a dragon; as a scorpion; as Cetus, the water -- snake; as Leviathan, the serpent in the sea; as Hydra, the many-headed monstrous snake. He is presented in many guises but always as a malignant, venomous and hostile creature.

The second Decan is the picture of a great and powerful man whose name is ORPHIUCHUS, meaning "the serpent-holder." It portrays a mighty man who is struggling with a giant Serpent, trying to keep barn from accomplishing what he is attempting to do. The Serpent is putting forth a mighty, effort to reach up and grasp THE CROWN (CORONA, see Studies #13 & #14), which is situated immediately over the Serpent's head. You will discover in the sketch which we have reproduced for you here that the strong man, Orphiuchus, is restraining the Serpent while crushing the Scorpion! The man is grasping the Serpent with both hands, disabling the monster by his superior power and effectually holding him fast so that he cannot get the Crown. With one foot lifted from the Scorpion's tail as though stung and hurt, he is in the act of crushing the Scorpion's head with the other. He thus appears as the One who has power over the Serpent and over death, holding, conquering, and destroying them, though himself wounded in His conflict with them. The scene is drawn from the very heart of the Gospel -- the ages-long battle between the "seed of the woman" and the "seed of the serpent." The very heart of the message of the Bible talks about a great warfare between the forces of righteousness and the forces of evil in this world; between faith and unbelief; between truth and error; between life and death; between the carnal mind and the mind of Christ; between the followers of Christ and the followers of anti-Christ; ultimately it is the battle between'.. Christ and Satan. The contest is for Dominion ORPHIUCHUS is, first and foremost, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who at the cross was wounded in the heel, but in His resurrection, ascension and glorification has crushed the head of the Serpent, conquering sin, sickness, limitation and death! "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it become Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might DESTROY HIM that

had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:9-10, 14-15). In that long ago Eden the sublime message of the constellation of Scorpio was expressed prophetically in the pronouncement of the Almighty to the Serpent: "And I will put enmity between thee and woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Gen. 3:15). We are told in chapter one of Genesis that God put the stars in the heavens for Signs, and these Signs convey a message. God has revealed that message to Adam and to his sons and grandsons. That message has gone into all the civilizations of the world as the Signs of the Zodiac and is passed down through the centuries. At the time of the building of the tower of Babel, this was corrupted into astrology, whereby, instead of these being Signs of God and His salvation by which we should worship the God of heaven and earth, they were changed into deities themselves and people began to worship the host of heaven: the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars. Some fail to see what the Signs of the Zodiac have to do with the Gospel or with the call to sonship. But with the Signs we have considered thus far it should be clear to every thinking mind that all the major themes of God's great plan and glorious purpose in creation and redemption are distinctly, expressly, precisely, accurately, methodically, graphically and comprehensively portrayed in the Signs of the heavens! Coincidence? Hardly!

The third Decan in the house of Scorpio is HERCULES, and describes more fully the out-working of Christ's triumph. Because the pagan nations had lost sight of this original revelation, they began to assign different people to the various figures and the men that are portrayed in these constellations. What they really depict, in fact, is Christ in and through His body, the sons of God, accomplishing the totality of the victory which He came into this world to effect. Dr. Joseph Seiss has pointed out that "According to the mythic accounts, Hercules was the god-begotten man, to whose tasks there was scarce an end. From his cradle to his death he was employed accomplishing the most difficult and wonderful of feats laid upon him to perform, and all in the line of vanquishing great evil powers, such as the lion begotten from Typhon, the many-headed Hydra sprung from the same parentage, the brazen-looted and golden-horned stag, the Erymanthean boar, the vast filth of the Augean stables, the swarms of life-destroying Stympalian birds, the mad bull of Crete which no mortal dared look upon, the flesh-eating mares of Diomedes, the queen of the devastating Amazons, the triple-bodied Geryones and his dog, the Dragon which guarded the apples of the Hesperides, and the three-headed snaky monster which kept the gates of hell. Some have argued that the story of Hercules is a purely Greek invention, but it certainly dates back in all its essential features, in Egypt, Phoenicia, and India, to a time long anterior to the Greeks. By their own confession the Greeks did not even understand who or what Hercules was, or what was meant by all his great labors. They took him for the sublimest of the hero-gods, as the accounts came to them, and here and there, as in so many other things, appropriated all to their own country and people. They could not make out their greatest hero, or any meaning to his works! Not with them, therefore, did the mythic story of the powerful laborer originate. its true original is in the ancient constellations of the primeval astronomy, which, like the Scriptures, pointed to the coming Seed of the woman, to bruise, vanquish, and destroy the Serpent, and everything of the Serpent born or belonging to the Serpent's kingdom" ---end quote.

The old Hebrew name (shown on ancient star charts) for Hercules was GIBBOR, the word used of the "strong man" in Ps. 19:5, and translated as "mighty" and "mighty man" throughout the Old Testament. GIBBOR means "warrior, powerful, champion, valiant man." Hercules (Gibbor) is shown on the star charts down on one knee; in his right hand he wields a heavy club and in his left he grasps CERBERUS, the three-headed monster. He has the skin of a lion, which he has slain, thrown around him and his left foot is set directly on the head of the great Dragon. Ah, my beloved, beyond all the pagan distortions and confusions, there is the glorious revelation of the great work of our God and Saviour. How good it would be if God's elect people could comprehend the magnificent glory God has in store for us! Jesus Christ is the forerunner, the pioneer, the apostle, the first Son, the beginning, and the first born from the dead. He is the first Son to be exalted through the terrible sufferings of the realm of death and, seeing Him, we know that the promise to all others is certain, for it was not of Adam alone of whom God spoke, saying, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let them have dominion," but the promise was to ALL the sons of men, of whom the first Son, Jesus Christ, is now exalted and has taken His seat at the right hand of power. We see Jesus and by seeing Him we know the glory that is available for those who follow in His steps just as the first golden leaves of fall are the herald of millions of flaming colors and hues to follow. It is a glorious thing to see that in the unchanging stars of the heavens and the shining Signs placed there by God in the night sky, we have a gallery of Truth, a picture of the conquering Christ whose members we are. We see that the hand that made those Signs is divine. It is the same hand

which had penned the revelation which we have before us in our scriptures. It is the same hand which formed and sent into this world the first born Son, the Christ of God, and led Him through His mighty works on to Calvary and the open tomb, unto the position of all power in heaven and in earth. It is the same story of creation's hope of deliverance as God declared through Paul the apostle, "All who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons. You did not receive the spirit of slavery again, inspiring terror; but you did receive the spirit of adopted sons--in which spirit we cry ABBA! FATHER! The Spirit Himself bears witness with our own spirits that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs too--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ; if indeed we share Christ's sufferings in order to share also His glory. Why, the sufferings of the present I deem not worth considering compared with the glory soon to be disclosed to us. All creation is yearning, longing to see the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to futility, not of its own choice, but by the will of Him who so subjected it; yet with the hope that at last the creation itself would be set free from the thralldon of decay to enjoy the liberty that comes with the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation is moaning in the pangs of childbirth until this hour. And more than that, we ourselves, though we possess the Spirit as a foretaste of bliss, yet we ourselves inwardly moan as we wait for fill sonship IN THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODIES" (Rom. 8:14-23) (Weymouth).

These inspired statements become crystal clear once we apprehend God's purpose in His many-membered son. These members of the Christ-body are members of His flesh and of His bones. These people have drunk deeply of His Spirit, for it is in one spirit that all the members are united with the body. These are members in particular of GOD'S CHRIST, God's anointed, God's Messiah, GOD'S HERCULES, God's GOD-MAN, by whom He shall wield His victorious club, subdue all His enemies, and plant His foot on the Dragon's head--obliterating the ancient Serpent of error, sin, sickness, pain, sorrow, limitation and death. To these younger sons of God Jesus has proclaimed, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Lk. 10:19). "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly". (Rom. 16:20). Of these the Psalmist David also prophesied, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet" (Ps. 91:13).

**"Come, Lord, and burst the captives' chains,
And set the prisoners free;
Come, cleanse this earth from all its stains,
And make it meet for Thee!**

**Oh, come and end Creation's groans--
Its sighs, its tears, its blood,
And make this blighted world again
The dwelling-place of God!"**

THE SERPENT

The subject on which I now write is one of both peculiar difficulty and solemnity. Of difficulty on more accounts than one, but more particularly in view of the false, and, indeed, heathenish ideas that have been bequeathed to us from times of spiritual darkness and superstition, and the acceptance of which can only be due to a lack on the part of the Lord's people of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God. To sweep away the dust and cob-webs of mere tradition, or popular folly that have buried this truth, and given us a merely ridiculous parody on this subject will incur the misunderstanding and wrath of not a few sincere people.

Hardly had the human race been called into existence, than we find a strange enemy making his attack upon it under the guise of a serpent. Although the writer of this account gives no name to this creature, except "the serpent," other scriptures leave us no doubt as to who it was. Mere serpent, mere animal, it could not possibly be; for speech is the distinctive characteristic of intelligent mind, and that this Serpent obsessed the faculty of both speech and reason was and is enough to prove that someone of a higher kingdom and order than that of beasts and reptiles was acting. The preachers are always telling us that the Serpent in the garden was one of these long, slender reptiles that have backbones and ribs and scales on the outside of their bodies. Numerous pictures have been sketched of the snake dangling from a tree limb, conversing with Eve. But the inspired Word of the omniscient Creator contradicts the uninspired word of the tradition-ridden theologians! John the

Revelator stood transfixed in the visions of God on Patmos and beheld in spirit the splendor of the scene which unfolded before his wondering eyes as "the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which IS THE DEVIL, AND SATAN, and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. 12:9; 20:1-2).

Here Satan is called "That old Serpent." The word "old" is from the Greek ARCHAIOS which means "original" or "primeval". "Primeval" means FROM THE FIRST AGE OR AGES. Phillip's translation reads, "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key of the pit and a huge chain in his hand. He seized the dragon, the SERPENT OF ANCIENT DAYS, who IS both the Devil and Satan ... " Another version states, "And he seized the dragon, the ORIGINAL SERPENT, WHO IS the Devil and Satan." The Amplified Bible renders, "And he gripped and overpowered the dragon, that OLD SERPENT OF PRIMEVAL TIMES, WHO IS the Devil and Satan." Man says that a fallen angel, Lucifer, somehow got into the serpent and spoke through its mouth; but the almighty Father declares that that original Serpent I-S T-H-E D-E-V-I-L A-N-D S-A-T-A-N!

Is there a Devil, a real being with personality? If so, who created him, and why does an all-powerful God of righteousness and love permit such a being to exist? Many answers have been given. On the one hand, there is the view that the Devil is a hideous looking creature in a funny red suit, with cloven hoofs and a forked tail, whose chief business is to tempt and endeavor by all devious means to destroy Christians--and to preside over the alleged tortures of the departed damned. On the other hand, some say the Devil never existed; that he is a fiction of the imagination; a crude myth or superstition. Others tell us that the Devil is dead.

**"And so they've voted the Devil out,
And of course, the Devil's gone;
But simple folk would like to know
Who carries his business on!"**

There is a story told of an aged Minister of the Gospel in a certain town who one morning was taking his usual walk by the side of a river. A young man who had been away in a distant city attending college where he had become an atheist, who used to attend this good man's ministry, and knew his habits, thought he would have some fun with the "Preacher," as he called him. Meeting the "Preacher" he said, "Good morning, Preacher." "Good morning, my son," replied the Minister. "Preacher, I have just had bad news," said the young man. "Well, what is it?" asked the Preacher. "One of your great friends is dead," replied the youth. "Oh? and who is he?" asked the old man. "It is the Devil," and he laughed long and loudly. But there was no laugh on the face of the "Preacher." Putting his hands on the young man's shoulders and looking straight into his face, he said, "Poor fatherless child, what will become of you now that your father is dead?" Well--if the Devil were dead we should not be sorry; and we shall one day join in singing a song of victory when all the works of the Devil shall be destroyed completely and forever in every man everywhere and upon the face of the whole earth. But meanwhile the Devil is not dead. He is very much alive and very, very real. He lies, he talks, he thinks, he acts, he deceives, he quotes scriptures, he promulgates religion, he tempts, and inspires every evil in society and the world. I have with me the crushing facts of a world reeking in crime and lust and war and misery; a world which in spite of science and education and culture and modernity, is causing men's hearts to fail them for fear of the things which are coming to pass; a world which according to the beloved apostle, "lieth in the Evil One."

Tie is called "that old serpent the devil." He is called Leviathan, the crooked serpent. He is called the Dragon. Tie is called a Lion. He is called a Scorpion. He is called the Wicked One. He is called the Accuser. He is called the Adversary. But let no one imagine that in writing about the old Serpent the Devil, I am writing about the traditional Devil preached so loudly by the church systems. If there are any who have the idea that I am speaking of the "orthodox" Devil of popular religion, they will soon be undeceived.

Oriental imagery is never more graphically displayed in all its eloquence than in the use of the biblical word SERPENT as a figure of Satan, the Devil. This symbol, along with a number of other word pictures, is very expressive of his nature and activity. Let us remember that there is much language in the scripture that is figurative and much that is allegorical. When our Lord Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth," He was speaking quite evidently in figurative language. He did not mean that Christians were to be put into a gigantic

salt shaker and shaken over the globe. Nobody would be so ridiculous as to believe that. And when Christ said, "I am the light of the world," He did not mean He had to be lit like a candle and put up somewhere where He would shine! There are figures of speech in the Bible. In our everyday conversations we make numerous referrals to the nature, character or personality of creatures or things, such as: "That guy is a real turkey," "He is a snake in the grass," "She can swim like a fish," "He is sharp as a tack," "She is neat as a pin." These are all figures of speech designed to express an image we are seeking to convey. All of us are accustomed to using symbolic language to communicate an analogous idea on a different plane of understanding. When Satan is spoken of as a serpent it no more means a literal snake than when Dan is so called in Genesis 49:17. "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." When Satan is called a serpent it no more means that he is a snake, or appeared in the form of a snake, or incarnated himself in the body of a snake, than that the Emperor Nero was a LION (II Tim. 4:17), or king Herod a FOX (Lk. 13:32), or Judah a LION'S WHELP (Gen. 49:9). It is the same figurative use of words when "doctrine" is called "leaven" (Mat. 16:6). When a figure of speech is thus employed it is for the purpose of expressing truth on a higher plane, and is intended to be a figure of something BEYOND THE LETTER OF THE WORD.

Let all who read these lines thoroughly understand that when we discuss the Garden of Eden, the Serpent in the Garden, and the fall of man, it is not with any idea of drawing an historical sketch. The past is meaningless unless it relates to the present. It is because we see repeated all around us, day after day, generation after generation, the same carnal, fleshly attitudes and activities that brought about the original fall, and in the repetition of these attitudes and activities there is the tragic and dreadful departure from REALITY and the LIFE of the Spirit of God, even among the Lord's own people who dwell in the Garden of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. So obvious and incontrovertible is this fact that I do not hesitate to say the Garden of Eden is not so much a past event as a present and continuing event. It is a crisis leading to a process---a continuing unfoldment. This is the tragic effect of man's first departure from God. It happened back there in the past.. . but it continues to happen because the spirit of Adam is within us all! It is, then, for our own instruction and learning that we draw on the lessons brought to us by that past event, which though it occurred long millenniums ago, still finds a place of relevancy not only in our modern society but among all who name the name of Christ and, sadder to say, within those who have received the call to sonship and have gone "without the Camp," as well.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion..." (Gen. 1:26). That man would bear the image of God and have dominion over all things is the first announcement of God's intention regarding man and the first announcement of His purpose; and locked up in that wonderful declaration is a universe of meaning that does not reach the eye and that the mind has never understood. Furthermore, after God announced that man should have dominion over all realms, He then commanded the man, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply (reproduce the image of God), and replenish the earth and SUBDUE it" (Gen. 1:28).

The word "subdue" here is the Hebrew word KABASH meaning "to tread down; conquer; subjugate; bring into bondage." Allow me to stir up your pure minds to think for a moment--what was there in the earth that needed to be TREADED DOWN, CONQUERED, SUBJUGATED, and BROUGHT INTO BONDAGE to Adam? When the Lord gave Adam this command to TREAD DOWN and CONQUER, sin had not yet entered into man's experience, nor any of sin's results. There was no sin, sickness, trouble, sorrow nor limitation. There was no death. What, then, was there for Adam to conquer? Now, notice further the responsibility laid upon Adam in **Gen. 2:15: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."** The word "keep" here is the Hebrew word SHAMAR which means "to guard," as you can see in chapter 3:24 where this same word is used of the Cherubim which God placed at the east of the Garden to guard it from man's presumptuous entrance after he sinned. "So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim's, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to KEEP (or guard) the way of the tree of life."

It seems to me that if Adam was to guard the Garden against something, there surely must have been things that were not in harmony with man in God's image! Would not divine sense, or human sense, or common sense indicate that if Adam was to tread down and conquer and subjugate things upon earth, there were things

that were overtly hostile to him. It should be crystal clear that we have had a false notion if we have been among those who assume that in the beginning EVERYTHING WAS HARMONIOUS in God's creation. How could they have been when we read of one, that ancient Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, who was already in the earth in the beginning, of whom it is written, "The devil sinneth from the beginning. . . he was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the math, because there is no math in him. When he speaks a falsehood, he speaks what is natural to him; for he is a liar and the father of lies" (1 Jn. 3:8; Jn. 8:44) (Amplified Bible).

I must confess that I used to believe, as many folks do, that in the beginning Adam walked upon earth surrounded by the beasts of the field---the lions, tigers, dinosaurs, cattle, dogs, snakes, scorpions, and creeping things---and that these were so naturally peaceful and docile that Adam was able to romp and tussel playfully with them all, without hostility or fear. Not so! These are but typical representations, figures of spiritual things, but the principles in the earthly things must correspond in nature to the spiritual things, Adam was told to subdue the animal kingdom, to conquer and subjugate the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and everything that moves upon the earth! If the tigers just naturally ambled up to Adam, wagging their friendly tails, affectionately licking his face, what need would there have been to subdue them? If the serpents were not poisonous nor the scorpions dangerous, why would it have been necessary for Adam to guard against them or tread them down? If the lions were not wild or ravenous, how could Adam conquer and tame them? If the dogs were not ferocious, why the command to subjugate them?

And beyond all this, it 'is evident that in nature all creatures are not savage by nature. But even the domestic animals must be trained and guided. Proofs abound on every hand that God's creation needs rule, like "the horse, or the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee" (Ps. 32:9). Good as the ox is to labor, he needs a lord; man, therefore, is given to subdue and guide him. Dogs, tame and friendly as they may be, need a leash and the restraining hand and command of man. Have weak children never been knocked down and injured by friendly dogs? Can it not be seen by this that God committed to Adam the wisdom, power, and responsibility to RULE over the kingdoms around him? Before him lay the whole earth, the seas, the heavens, all Idled and swarming with creatures, myriad life forms, each declaring by type and shadow that man was to exercise dominion over every realm BENEATH AND ABOVE that God had created, and as creation bowed in obedience to his godly mind, and the dominion in his spirit, that glorious reign of wonder and peace under the direction of a Son in the image of God was but a prefiguring of the day when a whole FIRST-FRUIT COMPANY OF SONS IN GOD'S IMAGE would reign over THE REGIONS BENEATH, and over ALL THE EARTH, and over THE HEAVENS ABOVE until everything everywhere, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, would be in submission to their godly minds and omnipotent wills.

Ah! let us meditate deeply upon the power and authority that God has given to the body of Christ. I make no apology for declaring to you the truth that each and every creature of earth typifies a reality in the realm of SPIRIT--good or bad, positive or negative. This can be seen dearly in the words of Jesus when He says in **Lk. 10:17-19**, 'And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name. And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give you power to TREAD ON SERPENTS AND SCORPIONS, and over all the power of the enemy.'

Spake He of the serpents and scorpions of the fields? Nay, my brother, He spake rather of SPIRITS possessing the nature typified by serpents and scorpions, hidden and cunning, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness, in the thoughts and desires and ambitions of the carnal mind, full of deadly venom. There is a revelation in all nature, in light and darkness, summer and winter, rain and drought, in fruits and harvest, in storms and sunshine. There is a revelation in the lives of men, yea, even in beasts and birds and creeping things, each saying something to us, and of us. Every law and wonder of nature speaks to our souls of other higher things, and as the growth of seeds was to the spiritual eye of Paul a witness of the development of the CHRIST LIFE WITHIN US, so the serpents and scorpions and beasts and birds of earth and heaven above witnessed of higher things to Jesus, all figuring some of the countless forms of NATURES.

The dove is the well known figure of meekness, purity, perception, love and constancy, and so was a fit symbol for the HOLY SPIRIT who at Christ's baptism came 'like a dove' and abode upon Him. The other fowls of

heaven, as the Law of Moses shows us, dean and unclean, each bespeak a kind or quality of nature, expressing those characteristics that originate in the spirit realm. Hence, in scripture unclean birds are a type of evil natures, as John the Revelator shows in **Rev. 18:2**, 'And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of DEVILS, and the hold of every FOUL SPIRIT, and a cage of every UNCLEAN AND HATEFUL BIRD.' I know the Lamb, the meek and sacrificial nature of the Son of God, which is oppressed and afflicted, and yet openeth not its mouth; but I have known also the nature of the beast, wild and ravenous, that spirit, so obvious in the world, which stomps and rends and breaks in pieces and devours, of whom Peter warns us, saying, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (**1 Pet. 5:8**).

Man was created for the Holy Spirit to indwell, to bear the image of God, but not all spirit is Holy Spirit, and all these unclean spirits--the spirit of the Devil and the myriad spirits which characterize the kingdom of darkness find expression in man as he FAILS TO EXERCISE DOMINION OVER THEM. There is one more thought that should be mentioned here. The birds of heaven represent those spirits which have to do with the UNDERSTANDING, the mind of man. 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not . . . ' (**II Cor. 4:3-4**). The beasts of the earth are those spirits affecting the WILL of man. Serpents, scorpions, and the creeping things of earth represent those spirits connected with the EMOTIONS of man. 'And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name they shall cast out devils.. . they shall take up serpents" (**Mk. 16:21-23**). Then follows the lowest realm of all--the dragons, fish, and sea creatures, those spirits finding lodging and expression in the BODIES of men.

All these, hostile to the image of God in man, Adam was commanded to SUBDUE, TREAD DOWN, CONQUER AND SUBJUGATE! The Spirit today is teaching us that when the Bible speaks of something being 'under our feet,' this is a symbolic phrase meaning that the thing had been put in subjection to us, we rule over it, it does not rule over us. We find that there have been so many attitudes and dispositions which have ruled within us---and as His Kingdom takes its rightful place in our lives, these are subdued and brought to nought. In the soul-realm we have the dominant spirit of self-will, impulses of evil which rise up out of the heart, emotions of fear, anger, hostility, bitterness, hurt, pride, etc. which usurp unlawful sway over our lives. In the body realm we have the fleshly appetites and desires, carnal passions. And then there are those religious spirits of ironclad dogmas and creeds, traditions, sectarianism, and commandments of men.

'Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (**Lk. 10:19**). The promise belongs to YOU and to ME, for it is the Kingdom of God that the Lord has given authority and power over the power of Satan's kingdom. It is a wonderful day for the believer when he becomes conscious that God NOW GIVES HIM DOMINION in Jesus Christ that he may become an overcomer over ALL!

SATAN--A SPIRIT

What scientists have discovered makes it relatively easy to believe in the existence of worlds, or spheres of life, beyond the comprehension of human senses. In the realm of sound, for example, we know that the human ear is quite limited, that sounds which are very real are inaudible to us if they are below or above a certain range of frequency. And the same is true of sight. The existence of radio waves, gamma rays, ultra-violet light rays, etc., also helps us to realize the power of invisible forces which are beyond our comprehension. In **Eph. 2:2** Satan is described as "the prince of the power of the air, the SPIRIT that now worketh IN the children (sons) of disobedience." The Amplified Bible says, "At one time . . . you were following the course and fashion of the world . . . following the prince of the power of the air. You were obedient to him and were under his control, the demon spirit that still constantly works (Gr.:energeo, energizes) in the sons of disobedience . . . for we are not wrestling with flesh and blood---contending only with physical opponents---but against the despotisms, against the powers, against the master spirits who are the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (spiritual) sphere" (**Eph. 2:2; 6:12**).

The message is clear--we have had the FALSE GOD in us! It came as a revelation to me when I saw that the Holy Spirit lives in those who have been "begotten of God" and "born of the Spirit." The spirit that is born of God is renewed in the image of God. But then I read that if the Holy Spirit is in the children of God, there is also

a spirit in the children of the Devil. "The spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience." Who can dispute the poignant words of the apostle John: "Ye are of God, little children.. . because greater is HE that is IN YOU, than HE that is in the world" (1 Jn. 4:4). Then two verse later John clearly identifies these TWO SPIRITS which are in the people of God and the people of the world: "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby we know the S-P-I-R-I-T OF TRUTH and the S-P-I-R-I-T OF ERROR." Paul adds to this his testimony: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12).

This gives us a most wonderful understanding of the workings of SPIRIT. SPIRIT, like everything else in nature, has its opposites--positive and negative, good and evil, light and darkness. the negative power, Satan, is an invisible spiritual influence--energy--which exerts itself upon the mind, desires, emotions, and will of men. "IN WHOM the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them" (II Cor. 4:4). The Spirit of God is the spirit of Truth; the spirit of the Devil is the spirit of error. "To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness (wrong understanding, perverted knowledge) to light (truth), and from the POWER OF SATAN unto GOD" (Acts 26:18). Some teach that in all the universe there is only ONE SPIRIT. And truly, in the sphere of the Kingdom of God, there is but the one Spirit, for "he that is joined unto the Lord IS ONE SPIRIT" (I COR.6:17). The question follows-What about he that is NOT "joined unto the Lord"?

The fact that a thing is "spirit" does not necessarily make it equal to or of the same character as God. God is not God, in fact, because He is spirit--neither is that which is spirit necessarily of the same mind and expression of God just because it is spirit. There must be something more than that to make it qualify for godhood. Using the physical body as an example, let us note that although it is flesh from the very moment of its conception, it could not be said that everything that is "flesh" is HUMAN! Thus it is that man's SUBSTANCE is flesh, but his BEING is much more! Obviously, there are more than one kind of flesh. What makes a man human is not the fact that he is flesh--he is human because he takes on a particular shape and is endowed with an intellect and a certain set of emotions and capacities. Paul stated it this way, "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds" (I Cor. 15:39). Learn this, O man, and you will know a great principle: ALL FLESH IS NOT THE SAME FLESH! All flesh came from the same creative hand of God, but the characteristics differ. What depth of meaning this adds to the statement of the apostle wherein he says, "Know ye not that he which is joined unto an harlot is.. . ONE FLESH?." (I COR. 6:16). Obviously, all flesh is not one flesh. The flesh of a fish and the flesh of a dog can never be one flesh. But any flesh which is of the same nature and may be joined in a union of life with its own kind IS ONE FLESH. And may I add, though there be gods many, and lords many, to us there is but one God, the Father; and though there be spirits many, to us there is but ONE SPIRIT, and one body, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

I am sure that it would be correct to conclude that in the physical world a man's SUBSTANCE is flesh, but his BEING is much more! So it is with God. His substance is SPIRIT--but His being is MUCH MORE THAN THAT In connection with this truth I am deeply impressed to share the following thoughts from a letter received from a FULL-GROWN MAN. The first birth produces an ABORTED CHILD--the second birth produces a FULL-GROWN SON. The first birth gives life 'on loan'; the second birth gives a permanent inheritance. That is why it is written, 'Ye MUST be born again!'

"This second birth involves a RENEWAL of the spirit. Paul said, 'Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit' (II Cor. 7: 1). If the spirit were always a holy thing, it would not be at all in keeping with the truth for Paul to tell us to be cleansed in our spirits. That there is filthiness in the spirit of man is testified by Job who said, 'My breath is corrupt.' The word 'breath' is misleading, for it is the Hebrew word RUWACH: spirit. 'My spirit is corrupt,' the original says. That is why David also said, 'Create in me a dean heart, O God; and renew a RIGHT SPIRIT within me' (Ps. 51:10). The very fact of the need for renewal speaks of a WRONG SPIRIT that needs to be set right.

"Now, we may also see this in terms of resurrection. The spirit needs to be revived or resurrected This, of course, presupposes that the spirit within man is dead, which it certainly is--but not dead in that it is non-existent. Dead, rather, in that it is UNRESPONSIVE to that sphere from which it fell, which is the sphere of Godhood and the realm of LOVE. Its deadness (unresponsiveness) is the result of INDIVIDUALITY in the form

of EGOTISM it having the sense of its own god likeness apart from the recognition of the CORPORATE GOD. EGO is not in the soul, it is a matter of the spirit, and is nothing in the world but a remembrance somewhere in the depths of man of his former nature of godhood and of that lofty state from whence he fell. Ego states, 'I am God'--if not in words, at least in attitude---and in action, for it always seeks to bring the spirits of other men into subjection to itself. That is why demons are called in the Greek DEIFIED SPIRITS-- it is that godlike thing in man that wants to be god all by itself, saying, 'I am God and will therefore exalt my throne above the stars (spirits) of God and will be a god apart from fitting into my place in a corporate life.' The truth that Ego fails to see is that there is One that is greater--greater because it is plural and corporate and unified--the GREAT ELOHIM. Thus, the very state of individuality, which is divisive, has robbed us all of the nature of God and plunged us into that duplicity which separates man from himself, man from man, and man from God. So the human spirit is dead--unresponsive to that cohesiveness which is in the Godhead, unresponsive to the love principle that binds God together, unresponsive to that law which is written eternally in the heavens in the VERY BEING OF GOD HIMSELF.

"The spirit, then, is dead--UNRESPONSIVE--but not non-existent! It is a lamp that is not lit, lacking the essence life of God. Lacking love, which is that which makes the Word alive, the human spirit is the FORM OF GOD without being the ESSENCE of God. When the light of the wicked (double-minded) was put out, Adam's spirit became a dead letter--a FORM of the Word--a knowledge of good and evil--and because his spirit is dead, it became a DEAD WORD. A dead Word is a lie because it does not contain the essence-life of the Truth. That is why the Lord said to me those many years ago now what I have only come to understand completely in the last year: SATAN IS A WORD. Jesus Christ, as the living expression of the nature of God, is THE WORD, the IDGOS, the LIVING ONE--the SPIRIT-ESSENCE-WORD. Satan, on the other hand, is A word, a fragmented, shattered, divided, scattered part of the whole--the DEAD ONE the FORM as opposed to the essence! LEGALITY instead of life! DUPLICITY instead of unity! SELF instead of love!" --end quote.

This is merely a feeble introduction to a subject of vast depth and eternal significance. Next month, Lord willing, we shall endeavor to continue this theme in the hope that the Spirit of Truth shall enable us in some measure to plumb the depths of this great mystery of Scorpicy-the Scorpion.

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 16 SCORPIO-THE SCORPION [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART SIXTEEN

THEE SERPENT A SPIRIT
THE SERPENT'S MEAT
UPON YOUR BELLY YOU SHALL GO

In the great prophetic drama of GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY the third scene is called SCORPIO--THE SCORPION. A scorpion is a most malignant and deadly enemy. Its bite is not always fatal, though it can be; still it is always extraordinarily painful and dangerous. The star picture brings before us a gigantic Scorpion, larger than a man, with its tail uplifted in anger, endeavoring to sting in the heel a mighty man, but is crushed by the man, who has his foot placed right on the Scorpion's heart. The Hebrew name for the constellation of Scorpio is AKRAB, which means "the conflict" or "war."

The whole scene of this constellation is one of conflict. The first Decan, or minor constellation surrounding Scorpio, is that of SERPENS---the struggling Serpent. The Devil is portrayed in the Bible as the great antagonist in this battle. He is portrayed as a serpent; as a dragon; as a scorpion; as Cetus, the water snake; as Leviathan, the serpent in the sea; as Hydra, the many-headed monstrous snake. He is presented in many guises but always as a malignant, venomous and hostile creature. The second Decan is the picture of a great and powerful man whose name is ORPHIUCHUS, meaning "the serpent-holder." It portrays a mighty man who is struggling with a giant Serpent, trying to keep him from accomplishing what he is attempting to do. The Serpent is putting forth a mighty effort to reach up and grasp THE CROWN which is situated immediately over the Serpent's head. The strong man, Orphiuchus, is restraining the Serpent while crushing the Scorpion! The man is grasping the Serpent with both hands, disabling the monster by his superior power and effectually holding him fast so that he cannot get the Crown. With one foot lifted from the Scorpion's tail as though stung and hurt, he is in the act of crushing the Scorpion's head with the other. He thus appears as the One who has power over the Serpent and over death, holding, conquering, and destroying them. Orphiuchus is, first and foremost, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who at the cross was wounded in the heel, but in His resurrection, ascension and glorification has crushed the head of the Serpent, conquering for Himself and for all creation sin, sickness, sorrow, limitation and death!

The third Decan in the house of Scorpio is HERCULES, and describes more fully the out-working of Christ's triumph. What it really depicts, in fact, is Christ in and through His many-membered body, the sons of God, accomplishing the totality of the victory which He came into this world to effect. The old Hebrew name for Hercules was GIBBOR, the word used for the "strong man" in Ps. 19:5, and translated as "mighty" and "mighty man" throughout the Old Testament. GIBBOR means "warrior, powerful, champion, valiant man." Hercules (Gibbor) is shown on the star charts down on one knee; in his right hand he wields a heavy club and in his left he grasps CERBERUS, the three-headed monster. His left foot is set directly on the head of the great Dragon. Ah, my beloved, beyond all the pagan distortions and confusions, there is a glorious revelation of the great work of our God and Saviour. How good it would be if God's elect people could comprehend the magnificent glory God has in store for us! It is a glorious thing to see that in the unchanging stars of the heavens and the shining Signs placed there by our omniscient and omnipotent God in the night sky, we have an immense gallery of Truth, a vast and awesome portrait of the conquering Christ whose members we are. May the Spirit of God make it wonderfully real to all who read these lines that the elect sons of God are members in particular of GOD'S CHRIST, GOD'S ANOINTED, GOD'S MESSIAH, GOD'S HERCULES, GOD'S GOD-MAN, by whom He shall wield His victorious club, subdue every enemy, and plant His foot on the Dragon's head--obliterating forever that ancient Serpent of error, sin, sickness, pain, sorrow, limitation and death. To these younger sons of God Jesus has proclaimed, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Lk. 10:19). "And the God of peace shall

bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). Of these mighty sons of God the Psalmist David also prophesied, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet" (Ps. 91: 13).

THEE SERPENT A SPIRIT!

Oriental imagery is never more graphically displayed in all its eloquence than in the use of the biblical word SERPENT as a figure of Satan, the Devil. This symbol, along with a number of other word pictures, is very expressive of his nature and activity. I make no apology for declaring to you the truth that each and every creature of earth typifies a higher reality in the realm of SPIRIT--good or bad, positive or negative. This can be seen clearly in the words of Jesus when He says in Lk. 10:17-19, "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name. And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven (the realm of SPIRIT). Behold I give you power to TREAD ON SERPENTS AND SCORPIONS, and over all the power of the enemy." Spake He of the serpents and scorpions of the fields? Nay, my brother, He spake rather of SPIRITS possessing the nature typified by serpents and scorpions, hidden and cunning, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness, in the thoughts and desires and ambitions of the carnal mind, full of deadly venom. Even the fowls of heaven, as the law of Moses shows us, clean and unclean, each bespeak of a kind or quality of nature, expressing those characteristics that originate in the spirit realm. Hence, in scripture unclean birds are a type of evil natures, as John the Revelator shows in Rev. 18:2, "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen and is become the habitation of DEVILS, and the hold of every FOUL SPIRIT, and a cage of every UNCLEAN AND HATEFUL BIRD." We know the Lamb, the meek and sacrificial nature of the Christ within, the Son of God, gentle, kind, compassionate, redemptive, blessing all He touches; but have we not known also the nature of the beast, wild and ravenous, that spirit, so obvious in the world, which stomps and rends and breaks in pieces and devours, of whom Peter warns us, saying, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8).

Some teach that in all the universe there is but ONE SPIRIT---the Holy Spirit of God. I solemnly tell every person who reads these lines that the scriptures are clear, and give us a wonderful understanding of the workings of SPIRIT. SPIRIT, like everything else in nature, has its opposites--positive and negative, good and evil, light and darkness. As was pointed out in our previous message on this subject, spirit is not good--neither is spirit evil. Spirit is just a type of thing, just as flesh is a type of thing. For that matter, flesh is neither good nor evil. It is just there. Flesh becomes evil when its use is perverted. Flesh is good when it is properly used as the temple of God or when it is used to give visible manifestation to the nature of God. As Paul said, "There is nothing impure of itself." Jesus displayed the wonder of glorified flesh when He appeared to His disciples following His resurrection and said, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have" (Lk. 24:3). Spirit, then, like anything else is neither good nor evil until it is expressed through usage. Only then does it take on a holy and righteous or an evil and unrighteous character.

Let us mediate deeply upon this word--SPIRIT. The English word "spirit" is from the Latin SPIRARE, meaning "to breathe," the words respiration, expiration, and inspiration all being derived from the same source. The word "spirit" in the Old Testament is the translation of the Hebrew word RUWACH, the primary significance or root-meaning of which is WIND. Similarly the New Testament Greek word for "spirit," PNEUMA, comes from PNEO, meaning "to breathe or blow," the primary significance or root-meaning being WIND. The English word "ghost" used in the King James Bible, though now somewhat obsolete and not in general use, is derived from the Greek PNEUMA--meaning a blowing or a wind. But let no one hastily conclude that we are about to attempt to prove that the Holy Spirit is a holy wind, for nothing could be farther from our thought. Since one cannot live ' without air and breathing in the realm of the physical, wind and breath are used symbolically of the Holy Spirit, apart from whom there can be no life in the realm of the divine. The Holy Spirit is God's breath, God's out-breathing, God's ENERGY FORCE by which He accomplishes His purpose and executes His will. Many times we have thought of the Holy Spirit as power, and certainly He has power, but power is basically the ability or capacity to act or do things and it can be latent, dormant, inactively resident in someone or something. Force, on the other hand, more specifically describes energy projected and exerted on persons and things, and may be defined as "an influence which produces or tends to produce motion, or change of motion."

Power might be likened to the stored energy in a battery, it is there, but inactive. Force, however, could be compared to the current flowing from the battery, starting the car. Force, then, more accurately represents the sense of the Hebrew and Greek terms relating to God's Spirit, and this is borne out in a consideration of the scriptures.

It will greatly aid our perception of the activity of the Holy Spirit once we understand the simple truth that all spirit is ENERGY. Energy has many forms, but it is not something that you can see or hold in your hand. You can think of energy as something that can make things change. For example, a moving object has energy because it can change things by crashing into them. Heat is another form of energy. Heat energy can change ice by melting it into water, and heat it more, changing it into vapor. It can run the engine of an automobile, jet plane or rocket. There is another kind of energy, called chemical energy. It is in the coal or oil that heats buildings. It is in the food that nourishes your body and keeps you active. There is atomic energy which can be set free from the atoms of some materials. And there is the energy carried by light waves, called electromagnetic energy. It is the electromagnetic energy in sunlight that warms the earth. Light waves, streaming out of the sun, carry energy to us across nearly a hundred million miles of space. When the energy of the light hits the earth, part of it changes to heat. Some of it is stored in plants as chemical energy.

Another kind of energy of which we, the people of God, are aware is SPIRIT ENERGY. In physics energy is known as the capacity for doing work. The Greek noun for energy is ENERGEIO and its verb form is ENERGEIA. These words are used in the Greek New Testament several times. Because of the association between "doing work" and "energy," the words are generally translated into English as "work" or "working." Since so much has been learned about energy in recent years it would now be far better to translate the words for just what they mean--energy or energizing. Let us look at a few scriptures. "That ye may know...what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working (energeia) of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph. 1:18-20). Yes, it was energy, God's energy, which RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD! And the record further states that He was raised up by the SPIRIT of God! And not only did Paul say that it was God's energy (His invisible power-force) which raised Christ up, but he went on to say in Eph. 3:7 that it was the same energy of God which transformed his own life and made him a minister of Jesus Christ. "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working (energeia) of HIS POWER.' Then on top of this Paul declares that it is this SPIRIT ENERGY of God which is WORKING WITHIN US to bring us unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ 'From whom (Christ) the whole body fifty joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working (energeia) of every part, maketh increase of the body...' (Eph. 4:16). And furthermore he states that 'He that is joined unto the Lord IS ONE SPIRIT' (2 Cor. 6:17). ONE SPIRIT!. ONE ENERGY SOURCE! ONE ENERGY FORCE! YOU AND THE LORD! 'Them is one body, and ONE SPIRIT' (Eph 4:4). You will know a great truth when you understand the simple fact that in the Kingdom of God there is ONLY ONE SPIRIT. In union with the Lord you are that one spirit. All spirit is energy, exerting a force, or influence upon creation. GOD is the supreme source of energy, the highest and purest form of energy, and the wonder of it is beyond comprehension, but in union with God Y-O-U ARE THE ENERGY SOURCE FOR ALL THINGS! All creation stands on tip-toe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God pouring forth the energy of divine spirit love, joy, peace, righteousness, provision and power! Through this ministration ALL THINGS SHALL BE C-H-A-N-G-E-D! 'Behold, I make all things new' (Rev. 21:5).

The Holy Spirit is God's ENERGY FORCE. It is God's energy force projected and exerted upon creation. It is God's motion, action and influence in one measure or another upon, in, and through man. Yahweh accomplished the creation of the universe by means of His Spirit or ENERGY FORCE. Regarding the planet earth in its early formative stages, the record states that "The Spirit (energy force) of God was moving to and fro over the surface of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). Psalm 33:6 says, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath (spirit of His mouth).' Like a powerful breath or living wind, God's Spirit can be sent forth to exert power even though there is no bodily or visible contact with that which is acted upon. Where a human craftsman would use the force of his hands and fingers to produce things, God uses His Spirit. Hence that Spirit is also spoken of as God's 'hand' or 'fingers.' Jesus told the Pharisees, 'If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you' (Mat. 12:28). But Luke, in recording the same event, expresses it thus: "If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come

upon you?" (Lk. 11:20). The Spirit of God is the finger of God, the working, the activity of God usward. How great is His working!

There are two basic characteristics of the wind which qualify it to so fittingly serve as the supreme symbol of the Holy Spirit. The wind is first of all a powerful force, and secondly it is Invisible. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the spirit (Jn. 3:8). You cannot see the wind, and yet you are aware of its reality because of its power with the visible effects of that power manifested all around you. In earlier times the wind was used broadly as a source of energy. Man has always known how to use sails on a boat or ship. Later, he learned to use the same principle to construct a windmill, using the force of the wind to turn grindstones, pump water, and do many other kinds of work.

Because the wind is both invisible and powerful; the biblical words RUWACH (Heb.) and PNEUMA (Gr.), meaning wind, gradually took on much wider meanings, and came to represent any invisible power or influence, good or bad. And since God's power, within or without, is exercised through channels and by agencies beyond human sight or perception, therefore this word 'spirit' came more and more to be applied to all of the Lord's 'dealings and operations. The invisible and powerful INWARD ENERGY FORCE which motivates and transforms our lives into the image of God is the HOLY SPIRIT. Only by the Holy Spirit are we guided beyond the outer senses, and beyond the letter of the Word, into the glorious and eternal reality of 'the deep things of God,' even all those things which God has in reservation for them that truly love Him, which the human eye hath not seen, the human ear hath not heard, neither hath entered into the human heart to understand and appreciate.

That spirit is a proper term for nature, ideas, thoughts, attitudes, desires, mind, will, and all such characteristics is illustrated by a story I read one time. An eider was telling of a young lad in a certain congregation. This boy was a devotee of baseball. He was a little leaguer. When the world series ran he came to the meeting of the church dressed in a baseball outfit, a glove on one hand and a small transistor radio in the other. His pocket was stretched by a ball. He didn't hear the ministry that came forth in the meeting. His ear was glued to that radio. He refused 'to miss one word of the announcer's description of the game. Now, that boy was FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF BASEBALL. He thought baseball. He talked baseball. He even took his bat to bed. It was all he cared about. He was filled with it. It was his life!

As I am writing, equal rights are still an issue in our land. There are people filled with the spirit of equal rights. They don't have time for anything else. They are consumed with a desire to petition, lecture, organize, and march. Nothing else matters. They eat, sleep and dream equal rights. Their money, time, talents and energies are exhausted as they pour themselves into the struggle for equality. They are FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT of equal slams for all people. These people are filled with an attitude, a mind, a disposition, a will, a passion, and all these characteristics produce a tremendous INFLUENCE upon the thinking, attitudes and actions of multitudes of citizens. Perhaps now we can understand what it really means to be FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT means to not only be filled with the consciousness of the Person and presence of the Holy Spirit of God, but with all the characteristics within that Spirit: His nature, will, mind, ways, virtues, disposition, purpose, etc. How many believers settle for something far less than this! We are living in an hour when it is popular, the 'in thing,' to be a "Spirit-filled" Christian. But truly I say to you that multitudes have settled for a superficial experience of 'tongues,' or some 'gift,' or 'feeling,' and have never even dreamed of what it means to become literally filled with each and every characteristic of the divine nature and power of God! Becoming filled with the Holy Spirit must do far more for us than cause us to repeat some foreign syllables suggestively whispered in our ear, or to become ecstatic in our emotions. To be Filled with the Spirit means to be filled with ALL THE SPIRIT IS. It means that the life and nature and power of the indwelling Spirit must control and swallow up completely soul and body until there is no manifestation but of the Spirit Jesus, that blessed firstborn Son, was so filled, for He possessed the Spirit 'without measure.' And Paul prayed for the saints that they might be FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD' (Eph. 3:19). This measure is reserved for all who will go all the way with God, to be sons even as Jesus was 'the Son of God.' Sonship is the hope of creation, and the SPIRIT WITHOUT MEASURE is the hope of the sons! It is there that sin, sickness, limitation and death are swallowed up, and the wisdom, nature, life, power and glory of the living God is revealed through His people.

Let us take a closer look at some of the characteristics of the Holy Spirit. He is variously defined as --'The Spirit of God,' 'The Spirit of Christ,' 'The Spirit of Holiness,' 'The Spirit of Truth, and Spirit of a Sound Mind,' 'The Spirit of Liberty,' "The Spirit of Burning," 'The Spirit of the Father,' 'The Spirit of the Son,' "The Spirit of Promise," 'The Spirit of Meekness,' 'The Spirit of Understanding,' 'The Spirit of Wisdom,' 'The Spirit of Glory,' 'The Spirit of Counsel,' "The Spirit of Grace," 'The Spirit of Adoption,' 'The Spirit of Prophecy,' 'The Spirit of the Lord,' etc., etc. These various titles, repeated many times, and used interchangeably, give us a full. proper assurance that they are relate to the same HOLY SPIRIT--indeed, frequently the word 'Holy is added in, combined, as for instance, 'The Holy Spirit of God.' 'The Holy Spirit of Promise," etc. These various expressions are descriptive of the spirit, nature, disposition, power and glory of one God, the Father; and also the spirit, nature, disposition, power and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, because He is the expression of the Father; and also it is the spirit, nature, disposition, power and glory of all who am truly the Lord's in proportion as they have been made ONE IN HIM. "He that is joined unto the Lord is ONE SPIRIT" (1 Cor. 6:17).

Each of these characteristics is a form of the energy of God. This energy is transmitted from the spirit into soul and body to produce its power within us, just as electricity is transmitted from a battery to an engine to make it function in a certain way. When the 'Spirit of Holiness" is transmitted into our lives and consciousness we begin to function in our personality in that characteristic of God's holiness, thus becoming holy. When the 'Spirit of Wisdom" is transmitted into our consciousness we cease from our own natural reasoning and commence to act in accordance with the higher wisdom of God. When the "Spirit of Life" permeates our being even our bodies shall be quickened by His life within until this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality. Then shall be fulfilled the word which was spoken, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51).

Our failure to see that the Holy Spirit of God is not the only form of spirit in the world leads us into all manner of error and misunderstanding. There is another spirit mentioned frequently throughout the Word of God, and in opposite terms, namely, 'The Spirit of Fear,' "The Spirit of Bondage," "The Spirit of the World," "The Spirit of Error," "The Spirit of Antichrist," "The Spirit of Jealousy," "The Spirit of Slumber," etc., etc. These terms signify the WRONG SPIRIT--the spirit, nature, disposition, power and will which has its chief exemplification in Satan, the Devil, the Serpent, the Adversary; the same spirit manifesting itself in all who walk in and live out of the carnal mind. Sin, error, darkness and death are all characteristics of the SPIRIT OF THE NEGATIVE REALM, even as holiness, truth, love, life, etc. are all characteristics of the one Holy Spirit.

As mentioned previously, there are brethren who are convinced that all spirit is the same spirit and that there is only one spirit in the world, which is the spirit of God in every man. But we are constrained to take heed to the testimony of the Holy Spirit wherein He says, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but TRY THE SPIRITS WHETHER THEY ARE OF GOD: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 Jn. 4:1). Both the HOLY and the UNHOLY spirit bear the characteristics of personality, both alike are invisible, both are powerful, both are spirit, both are energy!

It is true--for the child 'of God there is only ONE SPIRIT, and that is GOD in every man born of the Spirit, for 'he that is joined unto the Lord I-S ONE SPIRIT.' It should be equally obvious and self-evident that the man who is not joined unto the Lord is N-O-T OF THE ONE SPIRIT. Why else would the apostle differentiate between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God saying. 'For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God' (1 Cor. 2:11). Even for the redeemed, before they are brought to that full union with God, there is the distinction between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, where by we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit; that we are the children of God' (Rom. 8:14-16). It is only when OUR SPIRIT is quickened by HIS SPIRIT and brought unto UNION WITH GOD that you have the ONE SPIRIT.

I would draw your reverent attention to some of the characteristics of the unregenerated spirit of man. Duet. 2:30 speaks of a certain Sihon, king of Heshbon, of whom it was said, *The Lord thy God hardened his spirit (RUWACH) and made his heart obstinate.' Dan. 2:1 shows Nebuchadnezzar dreaming dreams 'wherewith his spirit (RUWACH) was troubled and his sleep brake from him.' David had this to say: 'Blessed is the man unto

whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit is no guile." The latter statement would indicate that there are those in whose spirits there is guile That is why Paul had to say, 'Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the spirit. (II Cor 7:1) If the spirit were always a holy thing, it would not be at all in keeping with the truth for Paul to exhort us to be cleansed in our spirits. That there .is filthiness in the spirit of man is testified by Job who said, 'My breath is corrupt.' The word *breath* is misleading, for it is the Hebrew word RUWACH--spirit 'My spirit is corrupt would be a more literal translation. That is why David also said, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (Ps. 51:10). The very fact of the need for renewal speaks of a WRONG SPIRIT that needs to be set right Who can deny that the spirit of man has been contaminated?

'The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." (Ps. 34:18). On the other hand, pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall' (Prov. 16:18). There is a generation with whom the Lord is not pleased, as this is His testimony against it. 'They set not their heart aright and whose spirit was not steadfast with God' (Isa. 57:8). Another contrast is drawn in Eccl. 7:8 where the Holy Spirit says, "The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit? It is all SPIRIT-but one is separated unto God, as seen in the fruit it bears, and the other is not How awesome this indictment by the Lord, "Thus saith the Lord God: Woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit and have seen nothing' (Eze. 13:13). Malachi warns, 'Take heed to your spirit that ye deal not treacherously' (Mal. 2:15). And to cap it all off (though scripture could be piled upon scripture), James says, "The spirit (pneuma) that dwelleth in us LUSTETH TO ENVY!! (James 4:5). That cannot in any way be the spirit of the New Creation, nor can it be of the spirit of the image of God in every man. It is in this passage that James goes on to say, 'RESIST the devil,' and the method whereby we resist that 'spirit within that lusteth to envy' is shown in the following verse: 'Draw nigh unto (be separated unto, enter into union with) God... purify your hearts... ye DOUBLE MINDED!' (James 4:5-8).

Well did Jesus know the limitation of the spirit of man apart from the Holy Spirit Well did He know that our understanding could not possibly ascend beyond the things of man. He did not leave us thus comfortless and confined, but promised in words that cannot fail, *When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.' And yet again, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me" (Jn. 15:26). And not only is there the Spirit of God and the spirit of man, there is also a spirit in the children of the Devil, "the prince of the power of the air, the SPIRIT that now worketh IN the children of disobedience' (Eph. 2:2). How significant and full of meaning are these words of the apostle John: 'Ye are of God, little children... because greater is HE that is IN YOU, than HE that is IN THE WORLD' (1 Jn. 4:4). Then two verses later John dearly identifies these two spirits which are in the people of God and the people of the world: 'We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby we know the S-P-I-R-I-T OF TRUTH and the S-P-I-R-I-T OF ERROR? Paul adds to this his testimony: 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of GOD' (1 Cor. 2:12).

In words fraught with eternal significance the inspired apostle exhorts, 'Be renewed in the S-P-I-R-I-T OF YOUR MIND' (Eph. 4:23). One has so aptly written, commenting on this verse: 'Note that it reads: in the SPIRIT of our mind, for this is far more than just mental gymnastics of our own self-efforts. It is the energizing of His Spirit upon our human spirit which in turn takes dominion over our mind and brings our mind into subjection to the Spirit of truth. There is beneficial results in the power of positive thinking, even on natural realms. But true transformation comes when it is in THE S-P-I-R-I-T OF YOUR MIND. Oh, it may become the norm of our life to just be thinking HIS thoughts, because of the enlargement of His Spirit force within us.* It is more than merely a renewing of the mind--it is the renewing of SPIRIT--the spirit of the mind It is an absolute must to receive from a realm higher than Adam can give in order to have our minds renewed. The change comes from the Lord from heaven, out of the spirit realm of God, uniting with our spirit. It is the heavenly Jesus dwelling in our hearts, making us ONE IN HIM.

Elwin Roach has shared this illuminating thought concerning the transformation of the mind: word, renewing, is adequately rendered in Rom. 12:2; however, to be a little more accurate, the word could be translated RENOVATION (see Strong's Exhaustive Concordance). We are then transformed by the renewing of our minds. There is only a slight difference in the two words, but when renovation is used, we get the thought of a complete house rearing, house cleaning, and then a total refurbishing. Everything old is removed and replaced with all new furnishings. God, however, does something differently in His renovation. He does it just the

opposite. He does not clear out the old things and leave our minds a total void and then start filling them with new thoughts. He starts bringing in the new thoughts first, and with this the old passes away and gives place to the new--and all this is of God. Think about it!"

The activity of the mind is primarily in the realm of THOUGHTS. Thoughts are very real and alive. Thoughts are SPIRITUAL REALITIES, transmitted energy, coming upon your person via the gate of your mind. This energy (thoughts) is transmitted into your conscious mind from the unconscious to cause you to act and react in a certain way. Thoughts do not originate in mortal brain. Thoughts are invisible and powerful entities which have their origin in the dimension of SPIRIT. Thoughts do have an objective! You should know and become aware of the objectives of the thoughts that enter your mind. Every decision you have ever made or ever will make has its origin, intent and power in the INVISIBLE REALM the realm of spirit. You will never understand the mystery of life until you thoroughly know that there is a negative and a positive spirit force. The negative leads to death; the positive leads to life. The mind is the gateway, the channel through which these energy forces affect our lives. The thoughts that come to us bear the characteristics of the spirit force operating in us. Let us list some of the characteristics of the negative realm: "...unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, debate, deceit, malignity, whispers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful" (Rom. 1:29-31). What a list. Search your mind...stop and think! Are some of your thoughts carrying these characteristics? They carry within them the power of death!

Now let us list some of the characteristics of the spirits (thoughts) which come from God. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23). Thoughts carrying these characteristics come from God, the author of life. Each of these characteristics will cause you to take on and express the very NATURE OF GOD, for they are the energy producing the very power of God's nature in the life. What frame of mind do you find yourself living in much of the time? Think now! Is it creative, holy, virtuous, joyful, confident, loving, life-giving, humble, temperate, peaceful? Or is it depressed, discouraged, uncertain, frustrated, angry, fearful, hateful, proud, self-centered, intolerant. You are what you are because of what you have been THINKING! We are constantly entertaining and being influenced and shaped by thoughts which have an origin. They are spirit They are like the wind--they just "blow" into your mind. They are energy: motivating, directing, compelling your actions. They are POWERFUL, INVISIBLE FORCES that shape your destiny!

Prov. 23:7 says, "For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Well did the prophet assert: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose MIND/s stayed on Thee" (Isa. 26:3). To which is added the inspired testimony of the apostle Paul: "If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections (thoughts) on things above (spiritual, heavenly), not on things on the earth (natural, carnal)" (Col. 3:1-2). And again, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, THINK on these things!" (Phil. 4:8). This we can do, praise His name, for "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; CASTING DOWN IMAGINATIONS (thoughts), and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity EVERY THOUGHT to the obedience of Christ" (I Cor. 10:4-5).

Beyond the effect of spirit upon us and the energizing of spirit within us, there is that ability to MINISTER SPIRIT. Every child of God should seek that God would open his eyes to show him this wonderful ministry of the Spirit. Paul spoke of it in these inspired words, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the SPIRIT: for the letter killeth, but the SPIRIT giveth life ...if the ministration of death ... was glorious ... how shall not the MINISTRATION OF THE S-P-I-R-I-T be rather glorious" (II Cor. 3:6-9).

This passage contains two significant phrases: "Who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament ... OF THE SPIRIT" and "the ministration of...SPIRIT." The New Testament is not the black, leather covered, book called the Bible. This book is what Paul calls "the letter." It is the law, the record, the history, the form which tells us many things about the historical man called Jesus. The twenty-seven books called the New Testament are merely the guide given to point us to the TRUE NEW TESTAMENT, Jesus, the Christ of God! "Search the

scriptures," said Jesus, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which TESTIFY OF M-E' (In. 5:39). Our scripture says that God has made us able ministers of the New Testament! To minister the New Testament does not mean to minister sermons, doctrines, laws, commandments, or facts about Jesus Christ. To minister the New Testament is to minister the very life of God which is CHRIST IN OUR SPIRIT. 'He hath made us able ministers of ... the SPIRIT.'" The word minister implies the thought: to serve, impart, give out or wait on. As a member of the New Creation' you have been called to be an able minister of the New Testament--a minister of the SPIRIT!

You may say, "Who, me? Me a minister of the SPIRIT?. Why, I can't even testify without stuttering and my knees knocking!" How can we minister spirit We know how to minister tangible things: our hands minister food to our mouths, they wash our bodies, clothe our bodies, minister ointments and medicines to diseased or painful members, and serve others in a multitude of ways. This is not hard to understand but how can a person minister SPIRIT? We minister spirit when we minister WHAT THE SPIRIT IS within us! As we walk in the attitude and will of God, speak the words of God, act in the wisdom of God, express the character of God, manifest the nature of God, there is transmission of spirit energy to the people, events, and circumstances about us.

How can we describe that Holy Spirit which is within us? We can describe the fruit of the apple tree in terms of the characteristics of the apple, i.e., peeling, meat, stem, core, seeds, texture, flavor, etc. The characteristics make up the description of what an apple is, what it is like. Similarly, we may describe the Holy Spirit in terms of the virtues or attributes of the Spirit called "the fruit of the Spirit." "Now the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23). This is the image of God, what God the Spirit is like! And the new man of our spirit is created in the image and likeness of God (Eph. 4:23-24). Here are nine individual realities which are not visible to the natural eye, yet we know they exist, for like the wind we have observed their influence and effect. They are Spirit, YOUR SPIRIT, and you can minister out of that realm!

What kind of fruit does a natural tree bear? You will answer, "Natural fruit, of course." That is right. In nature everything produces "after its kind." Apples produce apples, oranges produce oranges, vegetables produce vegetables, etc. If natural trees produce natural fruit, what kind of fruit should we expect from SPIRIT?. The answer is simple: SPIRIT FRUIT!. The fruit is of the same nature and substance as that which produced it. If God is Spirit, Holy Spirit, then it follows that the fruit of the Spirit is likewise Spirit. To minister Spirit, therefore, means nothing more or less than to minister the virtues of the fruit of the Spirit to another person. It does not mean to minister the letter of the Word, or pronouncements of judgment, to preach sermons, or convince people through argument of a doctrine, or show people where they are wrong, ungodly, or under condemnation. NO! That is all the ministry of the letter which killeth! We are called to minister the SPIRIT WHICH PRODUCES LIFE!

God is not complicated. Spirit is not complicated. God is Spirit, and God is love. Love is not complicated. Love has no problems communicating, influencing, ministering. When those around us are discouraged or distraught, we can minister encouragement to them by our word, attitude and action. When people are sad and sorrowful, as ministers of Spirit, we will minister joy and faith unto them. In the presence of fear we will exude and speak peace. When our enemies hate us we will love them in return. When men curse us we will do good to them, when they revile us we will bless them. When our friends are depressed, uncertain, and frustrated, we will manifest such calmness and confidence that will lift them from the shrouding gloom of despair into faith and victory.

It is a significant fact that all the virtues and characteristics of the Holy Spirit are spirit, and therefore ARE ENERGY--POWER! In the area of will, attitude, nature, mind, disposition, etc., there is always a transmission of energy. Haven't you noticed how one person's attitude will "rub of P' on to another person? One can begin complaining and soon everyone is complaining. One begins to be argumentative and before you know it everyone in the room is in a heated argument. Or a whole group of people may feel frustrated and hopeless in a situation, and just one person can enter the room with a cheery smile, radiating the aura of confidence and assurance, speaking a positive word of encouragement and victory, and soon the whole atmosphere changes, becoming charged with this new expectation, the spirit of the whole group being raised up into hope and

anticipation. What is this? It is the work of spirit invisible, intangible energy - POWER! Invisible, but very real. And very powerful! There is constantly, in this world, the definite transference of spirit energy from person to person, negative or positive. The rise and success of false religions, ideologies like nazism and communism, rock music, immorality, etc., are the direct result of negative spirit influence transmitted to the masses through faithful ministers of unrighteousness who have become FILLED WITH THE UN-HOLY SPIRIT, and consequently transmitters of the same.

Think not, dear friend, that in order to minister the Holy Spirit you must speak idle words, put on a front, or exert some self-effort to impress someone. We are not subscribing to Dale Carnegie's concepts of HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE. Such methods are soulish pretense and carnal hypocrisy. But you do have a right to know that since your spirit has been quickened by HIS Spirit all the virtues and abilities of the Holy Spirit actually are inherent within your nature. By recognizing the reservoir of life, ability, power and nature within (our true identity) we are enabled at any and all times to appropriate it for ourselves and minister its realities to all whom we contact. And this is P-O-W-E-R--the very POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD!

One thing must be very clear. There are three dimensions of spirit energy which daily touch our lives: God, the satanic, and the human. Every thought, word and action of mankind emanates from one of these three invisible but powerful sources. 'As sons and daughters of the Most High we are called to the high calling of being transmitters of the life-giving energy of God here upon this earth! Yes, you can minister SPIRIT--HOLY SPIRIT! Hallelujah!

THE SERPENTS MEAT

The ancient Serpent, having beguiled Eve, became the recipient of the first curse in history. Most students of the Word know Osat man was cursed, the woman was cursed, the ground was cursed, the earth was cursed, but few remember that before all this the Serpent was cursed. The curse is first mentioned in **Gen. 3:14**. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, THOU ART CURSED above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shall thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."

It will prove most instructive to note God's order of speaking, and then the judgment or sentence passed. The Lord called unto the man, inquiring, "Where are thou?" And Adam answered that they had hidden themselves, because of their shame as they realized they were naked. Then God said to the woman, "What is this that thou hast done?" And Eve replied that the serpent had beguiled her, and she did eat of the forbidden fruit. Then God spoke to the serpent, and said at once, "Because thou hast done this, THOU ART CURSED. Most of us have thought that he was cursed long before this! In the passing of the judgment-sentence, God began with the serpent, then to the woman, and ended with the man, reversing the order from when He first spoke to them. In the curse to the serpent, He said, "Upon thy belly shall thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days Of thy life." The serpent, being called before the tribunal of the Almighty, received a two-fold curse, recorded here in strong figures of speech which sternly emphasize the power of the judgment: UPON YOUR BELLY SHALL YOU GO and DUST YOU SHALL EAT.

Science will tell you that snakes which crawl upon the ground do not eat dust. They eat frogs, insects, rats, birds, rabbits, fish and eggs. When God inspired Moses to write Genesis the latter certainly knew that snakes do not eat dust These terms are symbolic and spiritual. This is not speaking of a literal snake dangling from a tree limb in some ancient paradise. The serpent in Eden had not only the faculty of speech, but reasoned upon matters relating to God and man; he speaks of good and evil as though possessed of a thorough knowledge of the laws of the Kingdom of God; he argues against the divine prohibition; steals upon the woman with the most alluring subterfuge, and finally persuades her to disobey the commandment of the Lord. No mere animal, it is evident, could be capable of what is here attributed to the serpent! Furthermore, loss of speech was not part of the curse; if the serpent in Eden were a literal snake his descendants crawling around on this planet today should be able to talk!

This is a symbol and the Deceiver, Satan that old Serpent, the Devil, has to eat dust! What is the dusty Not the dirt of the ground. Not even the dust of the frogs, rabbits, field mice, etc. In the passing of the judgment-sentence, God began with the Serpent and said, "DUST shalt thou eat." Then to the man, God said, "In the

sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for DUST THOU ART, and UNTO DUST shalt thou return" (**Gen. 3:19**). So that first Adam, fleshly, sinning, and cursed is declared by the counsel of the Lord God to BE DUST Said the wise man, "For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (**Ps. 103:14**). That we are DUST!. Not very flattering, not very complimentary, is it? This great gob of mud called man, strutting his superior know-it-all attitude even in the face of the Almighty! Dug! Our FRAME! DUST!. What for value is a frame of dusty HE remembers that we are dust whether we do or not.

Words are helpless, hopeless, and inadequate when necessity demands that we explain the things pertaining to the spiritual realm. Only in spirit can we understand the incomprehensible. The spirit of wisdom and revelation from God must enlighten the eyes of our understanding. Here we have a word picture describing the relationship which exists between "that old Serpent the Devil" and the realm of death. Just as "dust" speaks of a waterless soil, so the realm of the Serpent is separated from the realm of the Holy Spirit. Adam was formed of the dust of the ground, of the physical, carnal, earthly sense-realm, and as such, became the rightful food for the Serpent. This means that the Serpent--the negative spirit realm---now finds its base of operation and fulfillment of its nature, desires, and purposes in and through mankind. By the very nature of things, when the Serpent eats, he seeks to SATISFY HIS APPETITE and GRATIFY HIS DESIRES. Originally he found pleasure and purpose in higher things and had access to higher realms (of spiri0, but the curse of "eating dust" limits the object of his devouring. Today, the sphere of Satan's activity is earth, and the object of his devouring is the man of the earth. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour" (**1 Pet. 5:8**). As the creatures of the forest are constantly alert lest some other animal of prey catch them unawares and devour them, so are we admonished to be sober and vigilant--for as sure as the snake swallows the rabbit, so certain is it that Satan seeks to DEVOUR YOU! Your dust, your earthiness, your flesh, your carnal Adam-man-nature is the Serpent's meat! By feeding upon the dust-man who loves earthly things, Satan devours him - makes him part of himself It means your whole being swallowed up into the negative spirit-realm, captive to and expressing the negative energy of that realm. This gives fresh and dear meaning to the statement of the apostle, 'The whole world lieth in the Wicked One" (**1 Jn. 5:19**). The whole world has been consumed--is captive to and living out of the NEGATIVE REALM! Who can deny it?

The message is clear Adam and those belonging to him are of the earth, earthy. The Holy Spirit bears witness: "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that they are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (**1 Cor. 15:45-49**). The Amplified Bible reads, 'The first man was from out of the earth, made of dust earth-minded; the second man is the Lord from out of heaven. Now those who are made of the dust are like him who was first made of the dust--earth-minded; and as is the Man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven--heaven-minded. And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, so shall we and so let us bear also the image of the Man of heaven.'

Ray Prinzing has aptly written: "The curse was on the serpent, for deceiving, and the seed of the serpent still carries that curse, and the nature of the deception that caused it. There are two seeds which are spoken of, the woman's seed, and the serpent's seed. One bespeaks of the positive realm, the other bespeaks of the negative. However, it is to be pointed out that if the woman's seed has a literal fulfillment, personified in a man, and a people, so also the serpent's seed has to be literally fulfilled in a man, and a people. A seed line that is evidenced in those 'after his own kind.' That the serpents seed was also expressed through people is evident when we read that Cain 'was of that wicked one' (1Jn. 3:12). This is more explicit in the Greek text, where the word 'of ' is 'ek', literally OUT OF the wicked one. Then Jesus spoke of some, saying, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do' (**In. 8:44**). If they are of the same spirit, then they will do the lusts of that spirit realm. Obviously Cain, who was OUT OF the wicked one, received the curse reaffirmed on him, for he slew the truth and propagated a false system. Righteous Abel fell victim to the cursed one, for a time, but there is One, whose blood now speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, and through Him victory comes.

"It is not the creature, but the negative spirit force motivating the creature, against whom we take dominion. When the 'spirit of the world' is now energizing to disobedience, there is an immediate conflict between that

spirit, and the Spirit of God dwelling within us. In some this is but a small thing, and the 'contrary spirit' is held in control by their normal, congenial disposition. But in others, this serpent spirit is so aggressive, that when you walk into their presence, or they come into yours, there is an immediate clash without either one saying a word. Our warfare is not with the various races on earth today, nor yet with men of our own lineage, but we do contest the spirit of the deceiver that motivates them. It is not the man or woman--but there are natures, spirits, curses that remain in the earth today, that the CALLED - OUT-OF-THE-LORD are facing in this conflict of the ages. That is why we need to be filled with the Spirit of God, lest we become carnal and start fighting flesh on a carnal realm" end quote.

Whenever we live in the earthly life of Adam, we are earthly and also on earth and fall into the sphere of Satan's activity, becoming the object of his devouring, drawn deeper and deeper into that negative realm. Dear saints, you wonder why Satan tempts you, pressures you, torments you, and you have constant battles with that realm? It is because you are still bearing at least a portion of that image of the first Adam, the man of dust. And dust is the Serpent's meat. He has the power to eat on you as long as you have that nature of Adam in you. On the other hand, whenever we live in the heavenly life of Christ, the identity of the image of God, we are heavenly and in heaven. Thus, we TRANSCEND SATAN'S SPHERE of activity and are no longer subject to his devouring. This is the son realm where no dragon abides, for he is cast out of this heaven where the manchild reigns! Would you, dear reader, like to starve that old Serpent, the Devil? Then get rid of the dust! Stop bearing the image of Adam, renounce that mistaken identity, and as Paul exhorts, "Let us bear the image of the Man of heaven." When you have been completely transformed into the image of Jesus Christ, then you will have nothing in you for Satan to feed upon, nothing to satisfy his appetite or gratify his desires. And it is there that death will be conquered! As a brother once wrote: 'I can tell you, beloved, that already Satan is finding short rations and skimpy meals in some of God's sons that are pressing on to the High Calling. Victory after victory they are gaining, because they are crucifying that earthy nature. They are letting the Christ come forth in His fullness in their lives, and beginning to bear more and more of His blessed image. They have no fear of Satan or of his weapons. They could walk through the midst of hell itself, and no devil could touch them. Thieves, murderers, drunkards, gamblers, and harlot's cannot contaminate them. Filthy lucre cannot tempt them, apostate religion cannot attract them, nor fleshly methods or soulish ministry ensnare them. They are Overcomers, witnessing to the world of the image and power of the Living Christ! This is the purtx3se of God for His sons! It is for you, beloved...believe, and enter in!"--end quote.

Can we not see that the more we live and walk in the Spirit, the less we are disturbed by the agitation's of the soulish realm, or the shenanigans of the flesh? Caught in the lowlands of the flesh, one is an easy prey for the serpents and scorpions and creeping things which inhabit that low realm. Rising up to walk in the Holy Spirit a new perspective is found, flesh is both seen and recognized for what it is, and left behind, while the horizons of the Spirit beckon onward, and upward, in the realm of the heavenly where no dragon dwells. So many of God's precious people dwell in the dust realm, and, as someone has said, there is no need to describe at length the "dust storms", we have all faced them far too often -- the jealousies, the envyings, the back-bitings, gossipings, anger, agitation's, lusts, fears, bitterness, strivings, and all the other expressions of the carnal nature, the realm where the Serpent dwells and eats to the full!

UPON YOUR BELLY YOU SHALL GO...

It's not news to any of Us that we are in the midst of a war between two kingdoms: the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Neither is it news to us that WE are the battleground! More particularly, the major focal point of the battle is our mind. There the battle rages at its greatest intensity, because the war is a struggle for our hearts and loyalties--the very souls and lives and beings of men. This fact is highly relevant to the subject I am dealing with in this message--the Serpent that dwells within us. It is that force within us that opposes the ways of God in our lives and tries to keep us from seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

This brings us back to the curse laid upon the Serpent in the beginning: "Upon your belly shall you go." This judgment speaks of infinitely more than a literal snake slithering along upon his literal belly, just as the word "heel" speaks of infinitely more than a location on the foot, and the word "head" speaks of something greater far than a mere physical head in the words of the next verse: "And I will put enmity between thee and the

woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy HEAD, and thou shall bruise His HEEL" (**Gen. 3:15**). So, 'upon your belly you shall go,' paints for the eyes of our understanding the picture of the Serpent crawling in humiliation, prostration, limitation, and subjection upon the ground. The Psalmist uses a similar expression in **Ps. 44:25**, "For our soul is bowed down to the dusk our belly cleaveth unto the earth." Such denotes a prolonged prostration and a depth of subjection as could never be conveyed or expressed in normal terms.

The very fact that God states that the Serpent was now to crawl upon his belly, which obviously he had not done before, reveals that there was a descending from one realm to another, from a greater to a lesser, from a higher to a lower. Moving on his belly limits the sphere of the Serpent's activity, now he can only creep along the ground. Previously he had access to loftier realms, his sphere of activity extended to higher domains--exalted realms of pure spirit expression--but he is now lowered into the dust-realm, into the world of man, and confined to the earthy, restricted to action upon and expression through THE MAN OF THE DUST How truly this accounts for the words of the apostle in **Eph. 2:2**, "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, THE S-P-I-R-I-T THAT N-O-W WORKETH I-N THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE."

Ah, yes, this evil spirit is IN MAN! When the serpent was lowered into the dust realm, man became the base of operation for his activity. I do not hesitate to declare to you, my beloved that you will find Satan operative in NO OTHER REALM in the whole universe! You do not meet the Devil in rocks, trees, fish, mountains, rivers, clouds, birds, nor on far-away planets, in distant galaxies, in flying saucers, nor in any other object or location outside of man. You don't have to worry about the Devil stealing the keys to your car and driving off with it! But you may have to worry about the devil in men doing so! You need not fear the Devil walking into your living room with a shot gun and blowing your brains out, but the deal m men has done so tens of thousands of times! The Devil as an invisible spirit or a hideous creature in a funny red suit will never try to seduce your wife, but the devil in some man may surely attempt it. I must tell you frankly that I have not had any problem with that Devil out there someplace, but I have had a great deal of difficulty with that Devil whose countenance I behold when I look in the mirror!

Can we not see that under the curse God limited Satan to the dust of the earth, to the realm of the First Adam--the man of dust? Many have seen the connection between Satan and the carnal mind and not understanding by revelation the origins of these things; have assumed that the carnal mind is Satan. The truth, however, runs deeper than that--it goes to the spirit of the mind. Through the curse Satan became one with man, the energy force of human nature, the spirit of the carnal mind, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness, in the crooked thoughts, selfish desires, distorted emotions, in the illusions and delusions of the sense-realm of the world of appearances, and in all the corrupt motions of the flesh. May God graciously give us enlightenment to see that included with Satan is the kingdom of Satan; therefore, since Satan is in man, the kingdom of Satan is also in man. Satan is the prince of this world, so the world too is included in the kingdom of Satan and is also in man. Man is the very center of the OLD CREATION in every aspect. If one would meet Satan, there is no need for him to go to any special place--by going to man he will meet Satan. If he desires to find the kingdom of Satan, there is no need to go to some distant planet, nor to some far-away hell by going to man he will encounter the kingdom of Satan. It is the same with the world. Within man there is world, sin, Satan, death, flesh, the carnal mind---all that pertains to the negative realm, the kingdom of darkness. The first Adam is not a small man! On the contrary, he is a big, all-inclusive man! The whole vast realm of reality, positive and negative, is CENTRALIZED AND PERSONIFIED IN MAN.

The reason why so many fail when it comes to the wiles of the Devil is that they don't really want to resist him. You see, Satan never appears as a monster with horns and a forked tail, carrying a pitchfork. HE COMES IN YOUR THOUGHTS! HE APPEARS IN YOUR DESIRES! HE COMES IN YOUR IMAGINATIONS AND REASONINGS! Some people are always saying, 'I hate the Devil.' Well, you may as well say, "I hate myself." One day I asked God, 'God, why don't you just kill the Devil and let it be over with?' You will never guess the answer I received. The Lord said, 'If I kill the Devil, YOU WILL DIE? And verily I say unto you, Except a man hate his own life, and will count all things but loss, and reckon himself indeed to be crucified with Christ, he will never know victory over the Wicked One.

You will find men and women who claim to hate the Devil and all he stands for, but no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it. In so doing he gives place to the Devil. It is the flesh that lusts against the Spirit! The flesh unceasingly wars against the King and His Kingdom that is within you. Just as the religious leaders of the Jews cried, "We will not have this man to rule over us," so the flesh, your flesh, and my flesh, desperately striving to perpetuate the corrupt nature of Adam within, would push Christ from the throne of the heart and reign in his stead. The energy force and motivating power of the flesh is the ancient Serpent of Eden. Multitudes do not understand this mystery, and few will proclaim this truth. The sacred mysteries of God are revealed only by the Holy Spirit of Truth. This is one of those mysteries which I unfold before you today. It is never our striving against the evils of the world, the flesh and the Devil that gains any victory at all; the almighty Christ within us would destroy them all in one smashing defeat; but we have the wretched habit of refusing to yield our hearts to the King. Christ alone can put the adversary under foot and forever bruise his head! Our responsibility is to resist the Devil and YIELD OURSELVES UNTO GOD THAT HE MAY REIGN.

Praise God! The heavens declare that God has a man--ORPHIUCHUS the serpent crusher HERCULES the strong man, the mighty man, the valiant champion who slays the three-headed monster and crushes the head of the dragon. It is a glorious thing to see that in the unchanging stars of the heavens and the shining Signs placed by God in the night sky, we have a gallery of divine truth, a portrait of God's TRIUMPHANT CORPORATE MAN, THE CHRIST OF GOD. Ah, He's a wonder--this CHRIST WITHIN! Just as surely as Satan is incarnated in mankind, so is the living Christ of God enthroned within the saints! The greater, grander, transcendent truth is, beloved, that THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU! The Christ that we preach is nigh at hand. 'He is not far from every one of us,' the apostle Paul says. 'Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) But what saith it} The Word (Christ is NIGH THEE, EVEN IN THY MOUTH, AND IN THY HEART' (Rom. 10:6-8). 'Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and for ever.' Unless we are sure that He is unchanged and unchangeable, that He is right here WITHIN US in every rum of life as really as He was in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, unless we live daily in the power of this, our life will never be pure, we will never see His works, we will never know His quickening, we will never conquer sin and death, and he brought to the Father. Therefore, why strain your eyes to pierce the clouds? The cloud that hides Christ from us is in ourselves, in our love of serf, in our blind adherence to traditions, in our devotion to the outer world of appearances. Let us ask God to send the living wind of His Spirit from the innermost part of our being that bloweth where it listeth, to sweep it aside, and then we will see Christ as our life at every step of the journey. You can never overcome your seducing enemy by your own wisdom or strength. Christ alone can put him under foot and forever braise his head. AND CHRIST IS YOUR LIFE! Arise, O ye mighty ones, and conquer-- for the MIGHTY ONE I-S W-I-T-H-I-N Y-O-U!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 17
SCORPIO-THE SCORPION [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
“Studies in end-time Revelation”

PART SEVENTEEN

THE DEVIL IN MAN
OUT OF THE HEART

We continue with our study of the Sign of SCORPIO — THE SCORPION. This Sign of the heavens brings before us a gigantic Scorpion, larger than a man, with its tail uplifted in anger, endeavoring to sting in the heel a mighty man, but is crushed by the man, who has his foot placed right on the Scorpion's heart. The minor constellations around Scorpio enhance this scene of obvious conflict. The first is that of SERPENS — the struggling Serpent. The second is the picture of a great and powerful man whose name is ORPHIUCHUS, meaning "the serpent-holder." It portrays this mighty man struggling with a giant Serpent, trying to keep him from accomplishing what he is attempting to do. The Serpent is putting forth a mighty effort to reach up and grasp the CROWN which is situated immediately over the Serpent's head. The strong man, Orphiuchus, is restraining the Serpent while crushing the Scorpion!

The whole scene is one of conflict — the conflict of a great and mighty man, a warrior, with the Serpent, the Monster, and the Dragon. Oriental imagery is never more graphically displayed in all its eloquence than in the use of the biblical terms SERPENT, SCORPION, and DRAGON as figures of Satan, the Devil. The Devil is portrayed in the Word of God as the great antagonist of God's people and of the Kingdom of God. He is presented as the deceiver of the nations, the perverter of mankind, the enslaver of men's lives and the destroyer of creation. He is presented in many guises but always as a malignant, venomous, hostile and dangerous creature. And his story begins right at the beginning of time, at the dawn of human history, in the drama of the opening chapters of the story of the Bible.

The book of Genesis is probably the most important book ever written. The word "genesis" of course means origin or beginning, and the book of Genesis gives the only true and reliable account of the basic entities and conditions of the universe and of life. Genesis yields vital information concerning the origin of ALL THINGS — and therefore the meaning of ALL THINGS! Let every man know that in the whole of the universe there is no greater truth than this one sublime truth that THE FUTURE IS BOUND UP IN THE PAST. A man's belief concerning his origin will inevitably determine his belief about his purpose on earth and his eternal destiny.

The first several chapters of the book of Genesis lay a ground-plan for the entire revelation of God's purposes in relation to man. As a piece of literature the story is sublime; magnificent in range, in profundity of design, and the unparalleled heights of spiritual revelation it attains. I can confidently say that every revelation of Himself and His purpose that God has ever given from the foundation of the world can be found in these opening chapters of Genesis. There is no revelation of scripture, spoken by holy prophet or apostle, or revealed to the spirits of worshipping men who have come into holy contact with the presence and power of God, that cannot be found in seed form as type, shadow, parable, or allegory in the book of Genesis. The entire plan of the ages is there portrayed from its majestic beginning to its triumphant conclusion. Each and every experience, situation, condition, capacity, potential and destiny of mankind, with all the principles and processes by which God shall bring man to perfection in the image of God is there set forth in awe-inspiring wonder. And nowhere is this more obviously true than in the account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is the greatest parable in the Bible. How shall we speak of God's great and wonderful purpose in man except in the language of parables? God prepares an exceedingly beautiful and fruitful garden for man, whom He has created with His own hands. Precious stones, rare odors, refreshing streams, trees full of fruit and splendid colors surround that first man. Who can speak of the marvelous realities there initiated except in the language of pictures? Pictures are not lies: they denote things, realities; they let the things that are meant shine through. When we come to the Garden of Eden it is evident

that this is more than merely a piece of real estate somewhere over in Mesopotamia! No such place has ever been found, neither the angel with the flaming sword to keep men out. The garden of God is not a physical place located on this or any other planet. It is a STATE OF BEING. It is a higher existence for man than this cursed state we find ourselves in by physical birth and mortal consciousness. It is the state of being that man was in when he was first brought forth from the creative hand of God and placed here upon earth. It represents man in the presence of God! Man with the incorruptible life of God accessible to him! Man as master and lord over all things! Man living above sin, sickness, pain, limitation or death! Blessed realities, one and all! And yet — the Garden also represents man together with all the factors and conditions, internal and external, of being and environment, which ultimately were to lead to his ruin and alienation from God. In one sense, man was the Garden. And yet, man was in the Garden. The Bible reveals it as a "Garden within a Garden." Man both in a state of being and an environment — the two corresponding. All the conditions which surrounded man also were obvious realities within the heart of man. The original man with his nature, characteristics, capabilities and potentials is what we see in the Garden of Eden. The external conditions of man's environment corresponded precisely with man's inward nature for either good or evil, carnal consciousness or spiritual consciousness, life or death. This was man in the Garden! It is a Garden within a Garden, a world within a world, man within and without

Against the background of this picture of the Garden of Eden it is related how man was put into this Garden in order to live in it and how two trees stood in the middle of the Garden: one the tree of life, the other the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And upon these two trees IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN the destiny of man was to be decided. There were, indeed, three kinds of trees in the Garden. There was the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and then all those other trees denoted as "all The trees of the garden." Man began his sojourn upon earth living in the realm of "all the trees of the garden." But man's future experience and destiny were to be decided by his relationship to the two trees in the middle.

Two trees in the middle. First of all there is the tree of life. It is clear from the context that man was not forbidden to eat of it. It was there, revealed, offered, available: LIFE, abundant, immortal, incorruptible, eternal! For this reason the tree of life is mentioned very casually in Gen. 2: 8-9. It was IN THE MIDDLE — that is all that is said about it! It was right there in man's consciousness, in man's nature. The life that comes forth from God is in the middle. This means that God, the source of life, is in the middle. In the middle of the world which is at Adam's disposal and over which he has been given dominion is not Adam himself but the tree of God's eternal and incorruptible life. Adam's life was to come from the middle which was not Adam in his self-consciousness, but in his God-consciousness. This means that with God as his center man would have life. It means that man was created and formed with the wonderful capacity to LIVE IN THE SPIRIT and WALK AFTER THE SPIRIT. "For . . . to be SPIRITUALLY MINDED is life and peace" (Rom. 8: 6). One of man's inherent potentials was to know God within as the source and center of his life.

But, like the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil also stands in the middle of the Garden! To this tree is attached the command not to eat of it upon penalty of death. Death in the middle. Within. In man's very nature. Thus is it declared with unquestionable certainty that man was formed with the capacity to LIVE IN THE FLESH and WALK AFTER THE FLESH. "For to be CARNALLY MINDED is death (Rom. 8: 6). One of man's inherent potentials was to know Self as the source and center of his life. But alas! Self would not bring life, it would mean death. Man could make the world of appearances, the physical realm, mortal consciousness, the bodily senses and appetites his center but death would be found to dwell in that center. Life and death were in the middle. Two trees, two realities IN THE MIDST of the Garden of man's experience and being. Both realities are in the middle — within man. One or the other is every man's center, the plane of his consciousness, the sphere of his existence. But mark it well — both cannot be the center of any man's life! He who eats of the tree of life will find that the death realm will come to have no more dominion over him. And he who eats of the tree of death will discover that he becomes alienated from the tree of life. Thus, both trees, both realities are in the center of man's life but both cannot be the center of his life! "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8: 13). "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5: 16). How simple! God would at once be the limit and the middle of our existence.

But how could Adam grasp these mighty realities? How could Adam, living as he did in the "soul realm" of "all the trees of the Garden" understand what divine life is when he had not yet tasted of the tree of life? How could

Adam comprehend what death is when he had never yet experienced anything of its dread power? How could Adam even know what difference there is between life, good, evil, sin, and death, living as he did in the unblemished innocence of his child-like beginning? As well explain the mysteries of biology or astronomy to a new-born infant! Could all of this really mean anything more to Adam than empty words? No, Adam could not be expected to understand such awesome things, but under the gracious and skillful hand of God he would be instructed and taught. To this end man was placed on earth in a Garden with two trees in the middle — and with both God and a Serpent walking and talking with him!

The drama of Adam and Eve in the Garden is of supreme importance because it explains the real nature of our life here on earth. It is the portrait of ourselves, our state of being, and how we fashion the environment in which we live. It is the Creator's instruction manual on spiritual and psychological anatomy. When you thoroughly understand the teaching of the Garden of Eden you will understand the nature of God, the nature of man, and the nature of Satan. This parable is placed at the outset of human history and in the opening scenes of God's divine record because it is the foundation of all understanding, the blueprint of man's experience on earth and his destiny in God. Adam and Eve in the Garden represent the whole of humanity in the first Adam. They represent you and me and every man and woman who has ever lived or shall live. What happened to him happens to us. What he was we are. His experience is our experience. His destiny is our destiny. May the mighty spirit of wisdom and revelation from God give enlightenment to the eyes of your understanding that you may see and know of a truth that what was happening to Adam in the Garden speaks of spiritual realities even in the beginning of history, before history, beyond history and yet in history; it is we ourselves of whom the Garden speaks, it is we ourselves who are confronted, intended, addressed, accused, expelled, instructed, and redeemed. GOD HIMSELF is the One who blesses and curses. It is our pre-history, truly our own. It is the beginning, innocence, guilt, redemption and perfection of every one of us. What happened to Adam there is what is happening to us here! Adam and Eve stand for what man is, how man is, why man is.

THE DEVIL IN MAN

Now it was in the midst of the Garden that man first encountered the ancient Serpent. Us not news to any of us that we are in the midst of a war between two kingdoms: the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Neither is it news to us that WE are the battle ground! More particularly, the major focal point of the battle is our mind. There the battle rages at its greatest intensity, because the war is a struggle for our hearts and loyalties — the very souls and lives and beings of men. This fact is highly relevant to the subject I am dealing with in this message — the Serpent that dwells within us. It is that force within us that opposes the ways of God in our lives and tries to keep us from seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

This brings us back to the curse laid upon the Serpent in the beginning; "**Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life**" (**Gen. 3: 14**). These terms are symbolic and spiritual. This is not speaking of a literal snake dangling from a tree limb in some historic paradise. This is a symbol and the Deceiver, Satan that ancient Serpent, the Devil, has to eat dust! He was cursed to this low realm of eating dust because that is exactly what he was doing when he tempted mother Eve. Adam was formed of the dust of the ground and bore the image of the earthy — and as such became the rightful food for the Serpent. The Serpent — the negative spirit realm — now finds its base of operation and the fulfillment of its nature, desires, activities and purposes IN AND THROUGH MANKIND. By the very nature of things, when the Serpent eats, he seeks to SATISFY HIS APPETITE AND GRATIFY HIS DESIRES. Today, as in Eden, the sphere of Satan's activity is earth, and the object of his devouring is the man of earth — the carnal nature. Whenever we live in the earthly life of Adam, we are earthly and also on earth and fall into the sphere of Satan's activity, becoming the object of his devouring, drawn deeper and deeper into that negative realm.

The very fact that the Serpent was now to crawl upon his belly reveals that there was a descending from one realm to another, and man, with the Serpent in him, now grovels in the dust, trapped in the humiliating quagmire of trouble, pain, sorrow, sin, sickness, limitation, fear and death. Moving upon his belly limits the sphere of the Serpent's activity, now he can only creep along the ground, lowered into the dust-realm, confined to the lowlands of the earthy and material, restricted to expression through THE MAN OF DUST. Truly he is "**the S-P-I-R-I-T that now worketh in the children of disobedience**" (**Eph. 2: 2**). Because of this remarkable curse you will find Satan operative in NO OTHER REALM in God's vast universe! Satan is one with man, the

energy force of human nature, the spirit of the carnal mind, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness, in the crooked thoughts, perverted desires, depraved emotions, in the illusions and delusions of the outer world of appearances, and in all the corrupt motions of the flesh.

I want to tell you where everything is — everything is right there where you are — WITHIN YOU. Everything. On the positive side — God is in you, Christ is in you your hope of glory, the Word of Christ dwells in your heart by faith, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, the glory of God has come upon you and is arising upon you from within, the wonderful mind of Christ is in your mind and the Kingdom of God is within you. On the negative side — the spirit of antichrist is in you, the man of sin sits in the temple of God which is your body, the beast rages in the ravenous emotions of your soul, the image of the beast is seen in you by your outer actions, the nature of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters (peoples) is in you, and that ancient Serpent, the Devil, and Satan is within you, the spirit that now worketh IN the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2: 2).

Men dream of a Devil — a hideous and obscene monster in human form; a short, skinny elf in a red body suit, with impish face, horns, pointed ears, a spade beard, thin mustache, having a long forked tail and a pitchfork in his hand. If you ask one thousand church-going professing Christians to describe for you, the Devil, would not all of them describe him in the fashion portrayed above? Or would they describe him to you as a snake Millions of professing Christians suppose they would recognize the Devil instantly. But would they, really? I do not hesitate to tell you that the Devil of Christianity is a myth. The famous preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon, was once correcting the sermons of a class of preacher boys. One young man waxed eloquent on the subject: "Putting on the whole armor of God", and dramatized each piece put on. Then when the armor was on, he cried out: "Now where is the Devil!" Mr. Spurgeon cooped both hands around his mouth, and whispered: "inside the armor." Let me illustrate. The following story has been chronicled by another. The year was 1941. Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and they began to conquer in Southeast Asia. The British were told, "Be careful. The Japanese are going to conquer Singapore, too." But the British said, "No need to worry. There is absolutely no danger of that happening. Look at all the cannons we have." Singapore, you know, is a nation at the end of the Malaysian peninsula. If you look at your hand and think of your thumb as the Malaysian peninsula, at the top of the digit, where the fingernail is, that would be Singapore. And from the hand to that first little digit, that's jungle. At the top of the thumb, Singapore is cleared of jungle. Civilized. It was well defended with guns pointed out to sea so that no ship could possibly invade. Nobody could ever attack them without running right into the British guns. That's why the British weren't worried on Dec. 7, 1941, as the smoke rose from Pearl Harbor, when they heard that the Japanese would be hitting Singapore next The British only laughed. They felt secure. Then came February. Out of the jungle, from the hand up through the thumb came the Japanese. And when, suddenly, on Feb. 24, 1942, the British heard the crack of rifles, they turned around and saw the Japanese coming from their rear. In only ten days, Singapore fell into the hands of the Japanese. Why? Because the guns were pointing in the wrong direction. All of their guns were pointed to the sea. They were defenseless. And let me assure you, precious friend of mine, there are vast multitudes of the Lord's people in this hour, maybe even you, whose guns are pointed in the wrong direction! The guns are pointed on that hideous, monster Devil roaming about that world out there. In our minds he belongs to the Garden of Eden, spoiling life for Adam and Eve; to the plains of the East, wrecking havoc upon poor old Job; to the Judean Wilderness, tempting Jesus; to Berlin during the thirties and early forties, possessing Adolf Hitler; to the prisons and mental hospitals, possessing the criminals and mentally insane; walking up and down the isles of the church building, trying to hinder the meeting; he is always on the outside of us or possessing someone else/

But go with me now into that long ago when Jesus walked the dusty trails with His disciples. He had asked the twelve disciples who they thought He was. Peter promptly answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" Then Jesus said to him, "Peter, flesh and blood did not reveal this unto you, but My Father which is in heaven." In other words, "This understanding didn't come from your fleshly mind. You didn't think this up by yourself. This is not the product of your own nature, or the result of your reasoning and logic; this came to you from My Father." So remarkable was this revelation to Peter that the Lord said to him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona!" So here we have an instance of the Father working in Peter, imparting His thoughts and understanding to Peter.

Only minutes later Jesus began to introduce to His disciples the subject of His coming suffering and death on the cross. The possibility of the death of their beloved Lord was a prospect so foreign to the thinking of the disciples that they were hardly able to comprehend His presentation of this unspeakable fate. Was He not the Messiah? Was He not the Son of God? Did He not come to establish a great Kingdom? Were not they, the disciples, to reign with Him in that Kingdom? With these questions in mind, they could hardly endure the dark foreboding which grew in their minds as Christ talked about the future. Then Peter, who had just been pronounced blessed, took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee!" Ah, when Jesus mentioned the cross and dying, Peter began to rebuke Him. Where did he find the senseless courage that would dare to rebuke the Lord? The answer is disturbingly evident — far, far too clear to be a comfort to any of us! The Lord Himself gives us the answer, for. He turned and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind Me, SATAN! thou art an offence unto Me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." What a shocking way to talk to the great apostle Peter, the one possessing the revelation of the Christ's identity, the one called blessed, the one to whom the Lord had just given the keys to the Kingdom Heaven! Atrocious to say to this man of deep revelation and keen perception, "Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men!" Indeed, "Get thee behind Me, S-A-T-A-N!" How unthinkable!

Hearing Peter's entreaty to the Lord, which of us would not have said that this was the language of genuine affection, tender solicitude, and loving concern? No doubt we would have chimed in and said, "How kind! How true! How good! Amen!" But Jesus replies, "Get thee behind Me — SATAN!" And our Lord was not merely on a name-calling spree when He uttered these words, either. He never uttered words in vain, without a definite meaning. Jesus did not speak merely to Satan in Peter, neither did He say, "Peter." Furthermore, He did not tell Peter that his words sounded like the words of Satan. He simply addressed Peter AS SATAN. Peter as Satan — on what basis? That he was demented, insane? That he was a medium, bringing spirits out of the supernatural sphere? No — merely that he SPOKE AS A MAN!!! "Get thee behind Me, Satan, you who think and speak like a man!" Is this not also what James was saying when he described the wisdom of man in these words: "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. THIS WISDOM descendeth not from above, but is EARTHLY, SENSUAL and D-E-V-I-L-I-S-H!" (James 3:14-15). Here we see that that which is earthly and sensual is that which is considered by the Spirit of God, DEVILISH!

On the surface there doesn't seem to be anything wrong with what Peter said. It was a good thought, a kindly thought He didn't want to see His Lord and Master suffer and die, and he said so. What was wrong with that? Wasn't that a good sentiment for him to have? What was wrong with it was that it was the product of Self, it emanated from human sympathy and not from the heart of God. Anything that proceeds from Self, by the very nature of things, is bound to be opposed to the mind and will of God, for if His thoughts, and His ways, are as far from being like ours as the heavens are above the earth, there can be no unity in them at all. Self and Satan despise and hate the cross. They will scamper wildly in any direction to avoid it. They will turn their backs upon it, dig under it, try to go around it or climb over it, but they will never embrace it. The cross is the death knell of Self, and Self is the arch enemy of the cross. The friendly sympathy of Self is the cunning mind of the Serpent

Again in Jn. 6: 70 we read, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you I-S A D-E-V-I-L?" Here our Lord of course referred to Judas. In the scriptures we have some very plain statements to the effect that certain men WERE SATAN or DEVILS. Please, let us not forget that we are still studying the fully inspired Word of God, and not some infamous fairy tale. The Devil, about whom we are studying, hates above all else to have his real identity and location made known. The only way he can carry on his business is to deceive men and women into thinking he is what he is not. As long as we think he is some funny little man with horns and a pitchfork we can never be deceived by him! I fearlessly declare, beloved that Satan and the carnal mind are so ONE that you cannot have one without the other! Satan and Self are so ONE that they are indivisible! Satan and human nature are so ONE that they cannot be separated! Is it any wonder, then, that the friendly hand of Self, yea, the friendly hand of Satan, was so quickly extended to prevent our Lord from going to the cross? "This shall not be done unto Thee," exclaimed Peter. "You must not talk that way, Lord. You are the Christ, you can never go to the cross! You must save yourself. Don't go to Jerusalem. Don't let them lay their hands on you. We shall fight against it with the sword, if necessary, or you can call twelve legions of angels to save yourself from the cross." Save yourself, save your-SELF is the eternal cry! Escape the cross! Turn aside! Turn back! Ah, what voice is this? Truly it is the voice of Satan. But never forget for one moment, my beloved, that it is also the voice of the

carnal mind Oh yes, there must be a death to Self, that brash, ego-centric devil that would and does usurp the throne of Christ's Kingdom within. He no more wants you to go to the cross than he wanted Jesus to go.

And now we uncover some other startling facts. The Greek word DIABOLOS is the Greek word for "devil" In all the Greek New Testament it is never used for anything or anyone else. But in three appearances of the word in the New Testament, the men who were supposed to translate that original, instead of translating it in harmony with every other use of the word rendered it in such a way as to mystify and hide the truth. When translated in harmony with the rest of the scriptures, here is what I Tim. 3: 11 actually says. It is talking about deacons. And it says this, "Even so must their wives be grave, NOT DEVILS (diabolos), sober, faithful in all things." Just imagine a deacon marrying a funny black thing with horns, a pointed tail and cloven hoofs! In **Titus 2: 1-3** Paul is giving some instructions concerning the churches and the believers in those churches. And here is what he writes to Titus: "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, NOT DEVILS (diabolos), not given to much wine, teachers of good things." In **2 Tim. 3:1-5** we read this: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, DEVILS (diabolos), incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." What an indictment against human nature, and against modern religion! "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be ...DEVILS...having a form of godliness, but denying the power (hero! ')

Jesus, on many occasions, drew this analogy of men as serpents — devils. In my mind when Jesus uttered the following parabolic phrase, He was revealing one of the most important and foundational truths of all times. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (**Mat. 23: 25,33**). John the Baptist used the same terminology. "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducces come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come?" (**Mat. 3: 7**). Various translations render this passage..."Ye generation of vipers," "Ye offspring of vipers," "Ye broods of snakes," "Ye serpent's brood," etc. You see, Christ and John were well aware of who and what and where the Enemy was and ever shall be.

As in Christ's day, so today, the churches are, indeed, full of devils' And they have no more desire to go to the cross than Peter did. Well does this enemy of God, enthroned in the human heart, this adversary of redemption and of all mankind, know that, in the blessed hour when the "I" is crucified and brought to death, all his power and all his authority and sway in that life is broken forever. His appetite is denied, his desires are rejected, his base of operation is destroyed, and his work is abolished in every life that has become identified with Christ in the cross. Once a man has embraced fully the cross of Christ and Self has become forever dead with Him, then it is with him even as the firstborn Son in triumph declared: "I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me, there is nothing in Me that belongs to him, he has no power over Me" (**Jn. 14: 30**) (Amplified). Satan has no power at all when SELF is gone. Then he has no more power in your life or mine than he had in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. How unspeakably wonderful the hour for any man when Satan shall find nothing in him upon which he can feed or lay hold, nothing upon which he can satisfy his evil desires or his corrupt nature, nothing that responds or corresponds to him! When Self is crucified with Christ the lust of the flesh is mortified, the lust of the eyes is dead, and the pride of life is nailed to the cross. The man of dust exists no more and from then on it is NOT I, BUT CHRIST!

OUT OF THE HEART

Do you believe, precious friend of mine, that Satan can work in someone right there where you are, and in someone in New York City, in someone in London, in someone in Moscow, in someone in Hong Kong and in someone in Nairobi all at the same time? It is true — but how? Can he travel at the speed of light and be in that many people around the world at the same instant? Is he omnipresent? Absolutely not! He dwells IN MAN — he is right there in every man's mind and heart and nature.

We see this principle fulfilled in the story of Job. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (**Job 1: 6**). May I reverently add that every time the sons of God present themselves before the Lord — Satan comes also among them! It bespeaks of a

condition within these sons — our minds vs. His mind, our will vs. His will, our ways vs. His ways. It is a heavenly place within the sons of God wherein we must be tested to show whether we be sons indeed. This impudent Devil of self-will is in every man, and 'even our Lord Himself surrendered His own will to the Father's, saying, "Father, if Thou be willing remove this cup from Me: nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done" (Lk. 22: 42). Until every son has been completely perfected and thoroughly tested it is not possible for the sons of God to come and present themselves before the Lord without Satan coming also among them. Does he not walk in the natural mind of every man? It is written, "And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence cometh thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it (Job 1: 7). Now the Lord's questions are never for His own enlightenment. He knew well whence Satan came. Oh, yes, Satan had been walking to and fro throughout the earth — God knew this — for he walks in our earth, even that earth which we are, from the east to the west, from the north to the south, from sea to sea and from pole to pole he walks in the earthly planes of our souls, in the secret chambers of our minds, in the fleshly motions of our bodies; he travels up and down in us from the heights of our heavens to the depths of our hells. There is not a day that he leaves us! Dust is his habitation.

All the way to glorification this inner antagonist is present. This is why every revival God has ever sent through the ages ended in apostasy. Satan — not the Devil with horns and pitchfork — but that inward Devil of fleshly wisdom, sense-knowledge and carnal zeal — has a subtle way of identifying himself with every move of the Spirit of God, so as to corrupt it from within. Many years ago F. J. Huegel wrote: "Students of the great Welsh Revival (1900-1903) say that the wonderful stream of Divine Life little by little lost its saving efficacy, as another stream from a very different source, naturally very filthy, began to mingle with the River of Water of Life proceeding from the Throne and from the Lamb. 'Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them' (Job 2: 1). Beware of false fire. Beware of the counterfeit glow. When the soulish takes the place of a pure working of the Holy Spirit, you have a 'revival' whose fires, though they purport to be from Heaven are more likely to be from Hell. There are any number of 'doors' through which Satan may enter to get control of revival. An undue stressing of the emotional; excitement which grieves and suffocates the Holy Spirit who works quietly; a glorying in the evangelist rather than in the Saviour he preaches; dap-trap methods; self whatever the form in the ministry itself, obstructing Christ, veiling His cross and His glory; these are some of Satan's keys" — end quote.

The same sad story has been chronicled for us in our generation by George Hawtin in his excellent booklet, MYSTERY BABYLON. Speaking of the events that surrounded the great Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit in 1948, he says, "The spirit of Babylon goes much deeper than sects and denominations. It is a mystery the spirit of which seems to be deep-rooted in the heart of man. It is like an octopus with many arms reaching in all directions. If it cannot catch you with one of its arms, it will enfold you with another. It is like a demon which, being cast out, will return with seven other demons more powerful and cunning than itself. You do not have to look for the spirit of Babylon in some great and powerful denomination: you will find it in your own heart if you look close enough. Mystery Babylon is in the forehead.

"Perhaps it was a miracle. I do not think it was chance. I learned that men could be baptized with the Holy Spirit. So I sought and found this blessed new experience in God, and joys flowed like a river as the Comforter came in. But here again the arms of another daughter of Babylon began to enfold me. Was I going to join their church? Was I going to preach for them.? Was I going to take out papers and credentials? This time I was persuaded, and I did, and for seventeen years thereafter I was a faithful slave of the organization, speaking its language and building its visible tower. But I was never fully satisfied, though I loved the work, I loved the people, and I loved the students of my old Bible School. Many dozens of them went out to minister far and wide and many found their way to distant and foreign lands. I am sure their rewards will be many, indeed. All the while there was a longing for a freedom which I did not know, a relationship with God that I did not have. Many times I taught the people that some day God would send a revelation of truth, but the very denomination we had so faithfully built would not be able to receive it When finally that revelation did come, they were not able to receive it, and those of us who did receive were vomited like Jonah from the belly of the denominational whale, thrown up upon dry land, for we had sickened his stomach.

"God does not leave you in a dry land for long if you are bound to be one with Him. Should my life be very long on earth, I shall never be able to forget the glory, the awe, the reverence, the holiness, and the power that came to our classroom as we waited on God that glorious 13th of February, 1948, when God began to do a

new thing that was destined for a time to shake the church all over America. How we sang the songs of deliverance! How the praises of God echoed down the corridors of the soul and re-echoed among the battlements of heaven! Music of heavenly choirs on earth went sweeping up the sky steeples while angels stood at heaven's gates and swept their harps of gold. Day after day, month after month the celestial wonder continued. Heaven came down our souls to greet and glory crowned the mercy seat. People came for thousands of miles to drink at the ever flowing fountain of life and it looked for a time as though the walls of Babylon were to be broken down and the whole church would come marching to Zion,

"But the Babylonian captivity was not over yet. As I look sadly in retrospect now, I can see with great clearness that the great and blessed move of God was not two years old before the sectarian spirit began to show its ugly head and men began to hide the Babylonish garment in their tents together with the silver and the wedge of gold. The old Babylonish garment was well hidden deep beneath the earth of the tent, but it was there nonetheless, and the whole move was becoming more and more enfolded by another tentacle of the great octopus. Stricter and more rigid became the teaching and the discipline. There was to be no fellowship with anybody who was not within the confines of our ever narrowing circle. We were the true church. We were the elect. We stood on the foundation and all other men stood on sinking sand. No man must cast out a devil unless he followed us. No teaching was worth the time it took to tell it unless it originated with us. We were the most spiritual people in the world. We were going to reign in the kingdom and even now we were beginning to reign. We had the gifts of the Spirit, and we were going to 'call the shots' in the tribulation. The elders were no longer fathers, but men who were to carry out the will of those who were lords over the heritage of God. Everything was cut and dried and firmly enfolded in the arms of another of the harlot daughters of the Babylonian system. We boasted of the gifts of the Spirit, but what had become of them? Where were the healings? Where were the miracles? Where was the faith, the gift of languages, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge? The only thing that was left was prophecy and it became a weariness to the flesh, flowing continually from the mind of man and scarcely ever having any fulfillment. Prophecy that has no fulfillment comes from one of two sources: from the mind of Satan or from the mind of man, but never from the mind of God. How often I have listened to people fumble for words as they prophesied thus giving the lie to their words having been inspired of God. How is the faithful city become a harlot!" — end quote. To this faithful testimony I would add — again the sons of God came and presented themselves before the Lord, and how clearer can it be that SATAN CAME ALSO AMONG THEM!

The entire religious world is today walking in fleshly wisdom which seems so logical to the carnal mind. Fleshly wisdom always seems to "make more sense" than does the wisdom of God! Satan causes carnal wisdom to prosper because it is denial of the life of the Spirit, so that many times Christians and churches operate contrary to the Spirit with the argument, "It works!" Their method of evangelism is contrary to the ways of the Spirit, but since it works they continue in it. The "program" of the church is contrary to true spirituality, and is built generally around flesh-appeal activities of ceremonies, concerts, social activities, sports, Sunday School contests, puppet shows, movies, special speakers, sensationalism and other carnal tactics and techniques, but the organizations continue in it because "it works" and causes the "church" to prosper in numbers and in finances, while their spirits remain dwarfed and hideously shriveled and stunted, if indeed they have been quickened at all! It must be remembered that if anyone or anything prospers on principles other than the life of the Son of God, that person or thing is being prospered by the Devil and not by God!

Turn with me to two verses of scripture in Gal. 3: 3 and Phil. 3: 3-4. "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" "We are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit . . . and have no confidence in the flesh' The flesh is the name by which the Word designates our fallen condition — Satan in man. Well did William Law write these words of keen insight: In this antagonism of the flesh to the Spirit the flesh has TWO DISTINCT STRATEGIES. On the one hand, the flesh lusts against the Spirit in its committing sin and transgressing God's commands. This is the evil of the flesh. On the other hand, its hostility to the Spirit is no less manifested in its seeking to serve God and do His work! This is the good of the flesh. In yielding to the flesh, the soul sought itself instead of the God into whom the Spirit could have raised it. Self-effort and self-development prevailed over God's life. And now, so subtle and mighty is this spirit of self, that the flesh, not only in sinning against God, but even when the soul learns to serve God, still asserts its power, refuses to let the SPIRIT ALONE LEAD, and in its effort to be religious, wants to serve God independent of the Spirit and is still the great enemy that ever hinders and quenches the Spirit. It is because of this cunning deceitfulness of the flesh that there often takes place what Paul speaks of to the Galatians; "Having begun in

the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Unless the soul is brought into absolute submission to the Spirit, the surrender to the Spirit being very entire, and the holy waiting on Him be kept up in great dependence and humility, what has begun in the Spirit, very early and very speedily passes over into confidence in the flesh.

Just where the flesh seeks to serve God; there it becomes the strength of sin. Do we not know how the Pharisees, with their self-righteousness and carnal religion, fell into pride and selfishness, and became the servants of sin and the children of the Devil? Satan has no more crafty device for keeping men out of life than inciting them to a religion, even a serving of God, in the flesh. He knows that the power of the flesh can never conquer sin nor please God, that in the flesh and the serving of the flesh no one will ever become a son of God, for those who become sons not only defeat the Devil in the wilderness of temptation, but also deny their own souls, wills, plans, abilities, desires, ambitions, hopes and dreams to declare: "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And He that sent me is with me; for I do always those things that please Him. The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things so ever He doeth, these also doeth the Son. The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works" (In. 8: 28-29; 5: 19; 14: 10).

If there is one lesson a son of God needs to learn it is this: If I am to deny self in my relationships with others, to conquer selfishness, anger, and lack of love, I MUST FIRST LEARN TO DENY SELF IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD! There the soul, the seat of Self, must learn to bow to the Spirit, where God dwells. Listen, my brother, my sister, to the voice of the blessed Spirit of God. It is confidence in the flesh that motivates men to busily and craftily work for God rather than seeking the Lord until He works. It is Self doing what the Spirit alone can do; it is the Soul taking the lead, in the hopes that the Spirit will second its efforts, instead of trusting the Holy Spirit to lead and to do all, and then waiting on Him. Oh, brethren! How we need to watch this! All that is not of life, of the Spirit, is merely the good of man—soulish. How much of our religious exercises have been soulish! I can tell you of a truth that most of the "power" in the modern "revival meeting" is nothing at all but soul power. Have you not noticed yourself that in many church services, revival meetings and crusades a kind of atmosphere is first created psychologically to make the people feel warm and excited? A chorus is repeated again and again to warm up the audience. The people are feverishly urged to "get into the spirit" of the meeting. Some stirring stories are told. Special music is sung. The people are instructed to stand up, sit down, say "Amen!" and "Praise the Lord!" When the atmosphere is thoroughly heated up, the preacher will then stand up and preach. If he does his job skillfully he can anticipate a large "altar call." These are methods and tactics, but they are not the power of the Holy Spirit! Many preachers today think they have power (even many so-called sons of God); but they are merely employing psychological soul power to influence people and manipulate congregations. Many have become self-made experts in manipulating people and crowds. The Bible Schools of Babylon's religions offer a course for ministerial students called homiletics. Homiletics is the art of writing and preaching sermons. The sad truth is that the vast majority of religious activities is just that—an art. You can go to school and LEARN HOW TO DO IT! How to prepare sermons. How to speak persuasively. How to use gestures. How to tell jokes. How to preach. How to stir people by the skillful use of sentimental stories about death, repentance, hell, heaven, needs, miracles, etc. This all seems so desirable, so good'. But I say to you that you can learn these very same psychological techniques, apply them in the business world, and sell vacuum cleaners! The fact is, most all salesmen employ these same proven procedures of presentation, sentimentalism and pressure to sell insurance, automobiles, real estate, and thousands of other items daily! They don't need any Holy Spirit to do that! All that is necessary is some good human personality mixed with some proven techniques and one can persuade people to buy almost anything! These are means and methods, but they are not the power or work of the Holy Spirit. They are no more spiritual when used religiously than they are when employed commercially. In the Kingdom of God they are flesh!. To which our Lord says today, as He did to Peter in that long ago, "Get thee behind Me—SATAN!"

There is no life in methods, techniques, or formulas. How much better it would be if the Lord's servants would expend their energies, like Mary of old, at His feet, learning to know Him and to know His ways. How much better it would be were the time spent on our knees, low and humbled before God, that He might place within a deep distrust of the flesh. How I pray that God would truly reveal to all those apprehended to sonship that the one great hindrance to the life of sonship is the power of the flesh and the efforts of the self-life. Open our eyes, we pray Thee, to this snare of Satan. May we all see how secret and how subtle is the temptation to have confidence in the flesh, how easily we are led to try and perfect in the flesh what has been begun in the

Spirit May we learn to trust Thee to work in us by Thy Holy Spirit, both to will and to do only those things which THOU ART DOING! Today, after hearing the Father's call to sonship, after partaking of the deep and vital dealings of the Spirit of God, I have had to totally repudiate all such soulish wisdom of the carnal mind, all such fleshly tactics of Babylon's kingdom to bend low before the disciplines of the Father of sons, to travail mightily that God would bend me, break me, bind my soul power, bridle my Self, and block all that would proceed from my carnal mind. If I have learned anything of the ways of the Father I have learned this one thing: He who would be a son of God must be able to discern what is done from his soul power and what is done by the Spirit of God; further, he must confess and utterly forsake all that pertains to his own soul power, nailing it to the cross of Christ, that ultimately his own faith, as well as that of his hearers, may be found to stand solely in the power of God and not in the wisdom of the flesh. This is the only route, my dear brother and sister, into the glorious reality of sonship to God. All the good works of the soulish realm can never, in a billion years, deliver the creation from its bondage to the tyranny of corruption. Only the mighty working of THE LIFE OF THE SON OF GOD can accomplish this. It is the Spirit that QUICKENETH; the flesh PROFITETH NOTHING. Therefore—"Get thee behind me, SATAN!"

Can you not see now how it is, my beloved, that when the sons of God present themselves before the Lord, Satan comes also among them? This very same experience happened to none other than our blessed Lord Jesus—the Pattern Son. Did you notice how strangely Matthew and Mark speak of Christ's temptation? "**And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil**" (Mk. 1:12; Mat. 4:1). What a strange statement! The Holy Spirit of God drives the sinless Son of God into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan, the arch enemy of all righteousness, a murderer from the beginning, and the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary for the Son to be PROVEN, to be made STRONG, to OVERCOME in these realms before proceeding on into His glorious ministry and the agony and death of the cross.

Do you suppose the Devil came to Jesus there as a weird-looking figure, with little, evil-looking horns protruding from his temples, and a pointed tail? How often with our childish and distorted understanding, have we pictured Jesus confronted by that legendary figure in the red suit, with a pitchfork in his hands! This is nought but foolishness, for Satan is spirit, and spirit is INVISIBLE ENERGY! How many times have you been tempted by the Devil? Can you count the times? How often has he spoken to you, enticing, suggesting, compelling? Have you ever seen him? Have you ever heard his audible voice? Certainly not! And yet—you HAVE sensed his presence, you HAVE heard his voice, you HAVE felt his power! It was all in your MIND, in your EMOTIONS. And does not our Lord, the Spirit of Truth, speak to us in the same way? That still small voice, the inner urging, the inward knowing, the spiritual consciousness—all from a dimension beyond the natural senses. Because it is all in our mind and heart does not mean that it is imagination or hallucination! In the depths of my spirit I am absolutely certain that there was not some hideous spirit-being materializing before the eyes of Jesus in that Judean wilderness. Remember—Jesus was not only the Son of God, He was the Son of man. And being both He was capable not only of hearing from God, but hearing those things that be of man. So when we speak of that ancient Serpent which is the Devil and Satan, we are not talking about some mighty fallen angel, but that mind which savors the things of man—the carnal mind. The apostle James put it this way: "**But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death**" (James 1: 14-15). The Moffat Translation reads, 'Everyone is tempted as he is beguiled and allured by his own desire, the Desire conceives and breeds sin, while Sin matures and gives birth to death.' Everyone has desires of one kind or another, and that really can be quite natural. When we see the word "lust", most Christians think it is used exclusively in a negative, sensual, or sexual context The word simply means desire, and a person's desires are not always evil. The Greek word EPITHUMIA is translated primarily as "lust" in the King James Bible, but the same word is also translated "desire" in Lk. 22: 15 where our Lord Himself told His disciples how much He longed (desired, lusted) to eat the Passover with them. A related Greek word, EPITHUMEO, is often translated as "desire" and is used in several places in a positive context, as in desiring to know the things of God (Mat 13: 17). Even in the things of the Spirit one must keenly discern between his own desire and the desire of the Spirit.

The record states that after fasting for forty days, Jesus hungered. When you're hungry, what kind of desire do you have? You want to eat! In that crucial moment the Tempter came to Him. He began to feel the physiological pangs of hunger, and then the thought occurred to Him. Jesus dropped down from the high and holy thought of God, into the reasoning of the human mind. He descended in consciousness from the Son of God to the Son of man. He said, "I know who I am; I can turn these stones into bread." And in His natural mind

the voice cunningly suggested, "If you are the Son of God, go ahead and do it! Use your sonship to fill your belly! Use it to satisfy your own needs and desires!" But Jesus quickly discerned that wily Devil and knew how to nip that idea in the bud before it had time to blossom. He got to it before it could conceive, before it could start making a baby of sin. Jesus answered out of the depths of His spirit, **"It is written—man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mat. 4: 4).** And that ended that temptation! The battle lay not with some mythical personage outside of Himself. The conflict was within. The voice was an inner voice. The suggestion was in His mind, its power in His emotions and will. God speaks to us in our mind and spirit Satan also speaks in our mind and heart. There is no monster without. There are three things in this vast world, and only three— the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; briefly, appetite, avarice, and ambition. I do not think you will be able to avoid the conclusion that all the inventions, creations, and contrivances of man are in existence to cater to these three things. It was with these three things that Eve was tempted. She saw the tree was good for food (the lust of the eyes), a tree to be desired (the lust of the flesh), a tree to make one wise (the pride of life), and the temptation was not from without but from within. How remarkably the three temptations of Jesus in the wilderness parallel these three! Every temptation of the Devil comes to us through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. There are no others. Not for Adam and Eve, not for Jesus, and not for us.

Humankind has an enemy—a wily Nemesis, an adversary, described in God's Word as desperately wicked, deceitful above all things. This enemy has adversely affected every generation of humankind from the Garden of Eden to the present. Just who, or what, is this inimical deceiver? The prophet Jeremiah unmasked this enemy in these words of inspiration, "The HEART is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," and he went on to ask the searching question, "who can know it" To the enlightened mind of this prophet, the depth of iniquity of which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of any man to comprehend. How many times have you heard it? Someone perpetrates an unbelievably ghastly crime; like the axe murders of an entire family by a young lad barely in his teens, or the brutal murder of a father and a mother by a teenager a few years ago, who buried them in a shallow grave, and then repeatedly drove a tractor over the site, in an attempt to cover the crime — and yet relatives, close friends and near neighbors all said, in a state of bewilderment and shock, "But he was such a nice, quiet, decent boy!"

A motion picture some years ago portrayed the dual lives led by a judge, who had two families, some distance apart! He had "married" two different women, was actually living with each for a certain number of days each week; would then disappear, as if he had some important responsibilities in a distant town, when in actuality he was going to spend the remainder of that week with a second family. Obviously, each wife thought she knew this man, thoroughly! After all, just how well do you know your own spouse? Interesting, isn't it? We feel we truly know our husbands, wives, children; our closest and dearest friends. But according to the word of God we don't even know ourselves. We, perhaps above all people, are most often deceived by our own hearts! There is a deeper part to all of us—a part that only God knows! As a friend has so aptly written: "We should not find this so amazing a passage of scripture if it were not for one important thing. Jeremiah did not list an exception, saying, The heart is deceitful above all things except the Devil. 'He merely stated that the heart is deceitful above all things, PERIOD! Since Jeremiah spoke by the Spirit of God, this could not possibly have been a slip of the tongue or something uttered before it was thought through. If the heart is deceitful above all things, it naturally follows that there is nothing more deceitful. The heart of man, then, is the MOST DECEITFUL THING IN THE WORLD!"

"There is no doubt whatever in my mind that Jesus had this very scripture in mind when He spoke the words recorded in **Mk. 7: 15-23.** **"There is nothing,'** He said, **'from without a man that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, these are they that defile the man.'** Having said that, He uttered the statement that so often followed His teachings when there was contained in them a mystery. **'IF any man has ears to hear, let him hear.'** If we will be honest with ourselves, we will have to admit that we have fostered and taught for generations a concept that directly contradicts the words of Jesus Christ, for we have, indeed, declared that there IS something from without a man that can enter into him and defile him. We have called him Satan (an adversary), and so he is! We have called him a murderer and a liar, and so he is! We have had much truth about him — but the one thing we have NOT known about him is his LOCATION! We have said that he was without — Jesus said that he is within! If there is nothing from without a man (and in the Greek that reads: not one thing) that entering into him can defile him, then we must conclude the Satan's activity is not without, but within.

"As we continue to read this passage, we hear Jesus say, 'For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication's, murders, thefts, coveteousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these things come from within and defile the man. ' Every sin category imaginable is contained in this discourse. Everything that a man could ever think or do that is evil is said by Jesus to come — not from outside of man but from within! In our consideration of this passage, there is one all-important phrase that we must be careful to note, for it is the key to the true nature of Satan and the heart of man. Jesus said, 'For from within out of the heart of men. . .' It is imperative that we notice the grammatical number of the two words here. The word 'heart' is singular being in the Greek in the genitive singular case. The word 'men' however is plural being in the genitive plural case. We have, then, ONE HEART but many men!" —end quote. This heart is the heart of the Self, the inward nature of man, one great nature shared by all the inhabitants of the world, the very heart of Adam shared with his many-membered body!

The natural mind is the mind channeling the condition of the human heart. It is not the same mind that understands how to drive your car, or lusts after someone of the opposite sex, that also understands the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Not at all! The promise is sure: "Then will I sprinkle dean water upon you, and ye shall be clean...a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony (spiritually unresponsive) heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a (soft, pliable, responsive) heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statues, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them" (**Eze. 36: 25-27**). This new creation of which the Spirit speaks is blest not only with a new heart and a new spirit but with a NEW MIND as well. For, Paul says, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord." **"But WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST" (I Cor. 2: 16)**. There is by regeneration within ourselves, beyond the realm of our conscious knowledge, a divine life, the child of God's Spirit, ever unwearied, ever growing and maturing, to gain control of our whole being, and transform us into the image of God.

There is still a fierce battle raging between these two hearts, these two spirits, these two minds, these two conditions, these two natures. This is the conflict so graphically portrayed by the Sign of Scorpio in GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY! Praise God, the mighty man, God's Orphiuchus, God's heavenly Hercules, that blessed company of the sons of God, is disabling the Serpent, crushing the head of the Scorpion, and placing his foot determinedly upon the Dragon's head. Today, although the Kingdom of God has not yet completely triumphed upon this earth in all realms, although God has not yet gained a sphere wherein He can express the authority of His life in a full way, and although His glory has not yet been fully manifest, nevertheless there is a place, a small sphere, thank the Lord, where there exists the condition of God's reign, which thereby manifests God's glory, wisdom and power. This is the body of Christ! Today the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led members of Christ's body are the expression of God's reigning here on earth. What God desires today is to perfect and expand and intensify His reigning sphere within His people and through His people. It is through the body of Christ, the sons of God that God will bind Satan and destroy his power of sin and death in all men. It is through the sons of God that life, yea, incorruptible life, and blessing shall be ministered so that all the families of the earth shall be blessed and made to live unto God. Thus His name will be honored in the whole earth, His Kingdom come, and His glorious will done. This is the commission of God's sons—God's MIGHTY MAN! This is the grand conclusion of the ages-long conflict of Scorpio!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 18
SCORPIO-THE SCORPION [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART EIGHTEEN

THE GOD OF THIS WORLD
THE TRADUCER

The Sign of Scorpio portrays the conflict between the "Mighty Man" and the "Scorpion" and the struggle between the great and powerful Orphiuchus (the serpent-holder) and the Serpent. The scene is right out of the pages of the opening chapters of Genesis, and the closing chapters of the book of Revelation. Its wonderful message, in fact, runs like a scarlet cord through all the pages of the Word of God —for it is a picture from GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY.

In **Genesis 3: 1** we read, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" The word serpent in our language comes from the Latin "serpo" meaning "to creep," but the Hebrew term has no relation to the form or motion of any external attribute of a serpent. The word used here for serpent is the Hebrew word NACHASH which is a primitive root meaning "to hiss or whisper." It, furthermore, means "to search or scrutinize closely, to find out by experiment, to practice divination, augury, incantation or enchantment." According to Webster incantation means "the chanting of special words or a formula in magic spells or rites," Incantation may speak in addition of hypnotism. The Serpent, then, is a HISSER, a WHISPERER, a DIVINER, an EXPERIMENTER, an ENCHANTER, a MAGICIAN, and a HYPNOTIST! And, I might add, so is the carnal mind!

In **Isaiah 8:19** the Holy Spirit has recorded for our learning a most significant exhortation. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead?" The same inspired prophet penned a prophecy concerning Jerusalem under the prophetic term "Ariel," saying, "Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be. . . out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust" (**Isa. 29: 4**). Here we read of spirits that "peep and mutter," which speak "out of the ground" and "whisper out of the dust." Is this not reminiscent of the Serpent in Eden, the hisser and whisperer, calling to Eve and speaking hypnotically from the dust realm?

Whisperings out of the dust — there is something sinister in the thought, but beyond the evil that is suggested, there is also the thought of subtle suggestion — a whispered temptation — something so subtle one could wonder from whence it comes, a word so low and so whispered as to be almost imperceptible —or is it a thought, a desire, a command from an inner nature. These whisperings ARISE FROM THE DUST OF THE CARNAL MIND, OUT OF THE GROUND OF THE ADAM NATURE where lies the Serpent! It is significant to note that "the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (**Gen. 3: 1**). The contrast is drawn between the Garden and the field Adam lived and walked in the Garden, and his responsibility was to "dress and keep it." Garden is from the Hebrew GAN, meaning a fenced or protected area. It was, furthermore, cultivated and tended. Field is from the Hebrew SADEH, indicating that which is spread out; flat land; wild farm or wilderness. The field where the Serpent dwelt was an unfenced and uncultivated area. This field bespeaks of the mind of the flesh — the unbroken, unharnessed, unbridled, untended, unplowed, unprocessed, undisciplined, unprotected sphere from whence the Serpent "whispered out of the dust" — the subtle voice whispering enticingly from the unexplored wildlands of the FLESH! This whisper, this tantalizing hiss is communicated through the thoughts, reasoning, desires, passions, plans, hopes, fantasies and cravings of the CARNAL MIND! In the first age of Adam's creation, God used the Serpent to reveal what lay dormant, undiscovered and uncultivated within man's innermost being — a CUNNING NATURE — EGO — SELFHOOD independent of God. If by the grace of God you can see the truth of this, you

will then plainly discern in all the propensities of the carnal mind the CREEPING, SLITHERING, WHISPERING, DIVINING, ENCHANTING, HYPNOTIZING SERPENT OF EDEN!

Before pursuing this thought, we do well to consider also the word translated "subtle" in this passage. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any best of the field." The Hebrew word for "naked" in Gen. 2: 25 is AROM. The English word that describes the Serpent's nature in Gen. 3: 1 is "subtle," and the Hebrew word here is ARUM. Both AROM and ARUM are derived from ARAM which means "to be bare, to be cunning" Hebrew scholars say that originally these three words were the same word — ARAM. Now, why should the expression "naked" and the term "cunning" be the same word? What is the connection? We can answer with only one word: SEDUCTIVE. By way of illustration, a naked woman may be a seductive woman. There is a close connection between the two. The ideas of naked and cunning come together in the word SEDUCTIVE or SEDUCE. Can we not see by this that the Serpent was actually more seductive than anything in the bestial realm. Ah! the mind of the flesh is, in truth, the most seductive thing in the world!

In this connection a friend has written, "There was a tree set in the midst of the garden called the Tree of Life. God had given man the right to eat of that tree and in eating of it; man would enter into eternal life. The tragedy that we have seen is, however, that man did indeed eat of that tree — for if one will read carefully he will find that the Tree of Knowledge of which man ate was also in the midst of the garden, which can only mean that the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge are ONE AND THE SELFSAME TREE. The Tree of Life, however, is the essence of the truth and the Tree of Knowledge is the form of truth!" Here is the key —form vs. essence. It is just the difference between the letter of the Word and the spirit of the Word; between law and grace, between ritual and reality, between doctrine and life, between shadow and substance, between facts and truth. And vast multitudes of Adam's descendants today have not learned the difference between these two trees, or between the voice of the Lord God in the Garden and the hissing of the Serpent from the field. So many of the Lord's people have not to this day discerned between flesh and spirit, between the letter that killeth and the spirit that giveth life, between the external ritual and the internal reality, between the outward shadow and the inward substance, between facts and truth, or between form and essence. Jesus never said, "Ye shall know the facts and the facts shall make you free." He stated, rather, "Ye shall know the TRUTH!" And what a difference there is! Facts are merely the FORM OF TRUTH, the husk of the kernel, truth held by the carnal mind in the intellect as dead-letter doctrines, laws, creeds, forms, rituals, ceremonies, ordinances, works, activities, etc. — all figures representing or standing for truth and reality, but within themselves containing NO LIFE. "The letter killeth," the apostle assures us. "The spirit giveth life." "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," saith the Lord. Jesus proclaimed, "I am the truth, I am the life" The Serpent said, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened!" That was a fact — and "ye shall be as GODS, knowing good and evil" was also a fact, for after Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree, the Lord God Himself verified the Serpent's statement as being a fact. "Behold, the man is become AS ONE OF US to know good and evil," God said (Gen. 3: 22).

Again a friend has aptly written, "In form, then, the serpent had the truth. He had, in fact, drawn on the very Word of God itself to tempt Eve, for the Lord had said, I will create man in My own image. ' What the serpent failed to reveal, however, was the essence of the form which is that INDEPENDENTLY OF GOD man can never be a partaker of the divine nature! This should have been a self-evident truth, but man failed to see it. He was deceived by the very form of truth — taking the Word of God which had promised to make him in the image of God, receiving it as a doctrine rather than a revelation, as form rather than life, and was thereby brought to ruin, cheated out of the very thing he sought. Man became a god, alright, in the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — but he became a god in the wrong realm, for at the same time that God acknowledged man's 'deity' He also CAST HIM FORM THE GARDEN — cast him from the heavenly realm — and set him in the earth 'to till the ground from which he was taken. 'Musing upon this incident years later, the prophet David wrote, 'What is man that Thou art mindful of him . . . for Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. . . ' It was as a god that man had dominion, but a further reading of this passage reveals that the works of the hands of God over which man was given dominion under the first covenant was limited to the earth realm. Thus, we find that Adam truly became a 'god' — as the serpent promised and the Lord confirmed — but he was not an heavenly god. He became, rather, the 'god of this world' (1 Cor. 4: 4)" — end quote.

The Serpent did not preach truth, he preached facts. Form apart from essence' Dead doctrine about God instead of participation through union with God. Man came into knowledge, but he lost his life. In fact, man became a partaker of that wisdom possessed by the Serpent, the wisdom of this world. It is significant to find that in the contrast of the wisdom of the world, as over against the wisdom of God, James says, "**This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish**" (**James 3: 15**). This is always the Serpent's approach to us. EARTHY — that which appeals to the flesh, the natural senses. SENSUAL — literally, soulish, that which appeals to the ego and the mind. DEVILISH — that which touches the human spirit realm to defile with the negative spirit of the world. But, thank God! there is also "the wisdom that is from above" which is "**first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy**" (**James 3: 17**).

THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

In his first epistle, the apostle John informs us that "**the whole world lieth in wickedness**" (**1Jn. 5: 19**). "This present evil world (Gal. 1: 4)" is now governed by those who obey the carnal nature, the Serpent within them. Satan, "the god of this world," rules through carnal individuals (old Adam), thus filling this world with the wickedness and corruption so evident everywhere. The result of the Serpent's work, through the carnal nature in mankind, is the conglomerate world system — economic, political and religious — prophetically called Babylon. The most outstanding characteristic of the Serpent is his ability to deceive. From the very opening chapters of the Bible, he is depicted as a liar and a deceiver. "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat," was Eve's cry, and in the closing chapters of the Bible, the fact of his deceiving nature is further emphasized in the inspired words penned by the Revelator wherein he says that he is "**that old serpent called the devil and Satan, which DECEIVETH THE WHOLE WORLD**" (**Rev. 12: 9**).

To properly understand the "wisdom of this world" which is "foolishness with God" we must first understand what is meant by the "world." The Greek word for world is KOSMOS, which means system, arrangement, or organization. There are two things which have captured our attention, having been quickened for our consideration by the Spirit of God. These two are sin and the world. Because both are contrary to the Spirit of God, they must be dealt with and purged from all who would walk in sonship to God. However, the defilement of these two aspects differs. The contamination of sin is savage, hurtful and ugly, while the contamination of the world is cultured and refined, appealing to the intellect and the artistic in man. The contamination of sin is like dirty motor oil poured on a beautiful white wedding gown. But the contamination of the world is like a colorful pattern printed on white doth. From the human standpoint, a wedding gown with dirty motor oil splashed on it is considered filthy and undesirable, whereas a cloth with a colorful design is not dirty, but rather desirable. However, in the sight of God, BOTH ARE UNDESIRABLE! God's standard has always been neither a stained garment nor a colorful piece of cloth, but a pure white garment. "**And to her was granted that she would be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints**" (**Rev. 19: 8**). "**He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment'**" (**Rev. 3: 5**). Just as a dirty spot is not pure white, even so a colorful design detracts from the pure whiteness. Likewise, the world appears better than sin, but when related the divine nature, both are contaminating and require purging.

Furthermore, the effect of sin and the world upon man differ greatly: sin defiles and degrades man, whereas the world possesses man. It is just as serious for man's life to be controlled and dominated by the world as to be defiled by sin. If Satan only uses sin to contaminate man, he only causes man to be perverted and shamed, but if he uses the world to possess man, then man is alienated from God into a realm of ego-centric self-sufficiency and self-deception. Sin may be defined as an act of disobedience to God, while the world may be defined as man's organized system or kingdom by which he lives in independence from God.

A study of Genesis makes the difference apparent. Although Adam was corrupted by sin, he was still living in the presence of God. It is not until Genesis 4 that we read of Cain: "**And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden . . . and he builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch**" (**Gen. 4: 16-17**). This is most significant! "Nod" is the Hebrew word for exile or vagrancy. Thus, Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, away from the life of the Kingdom of God, away from his inheritance in God, into exile, to walk totally independent from God and outside of God. This "land of Nod" or condition of exile is stated to be "on the east of Eden." The Garden of Eden, the Kingdom

of Heaven on earth, was westward, but Cain traveled eastward. Adam was driven away from the Tree of Life, driven eastward (Gen. 3: 24), and now Cain continues on yet farther in an eastward direction (as all the metaphysical religions do today!) away from even the presence of God. Oh, what spiritual realities lie hidden in these simple words of Holy Writ! The Word of God clearly reveals that the route of spiritual progression is from east to west. Jesus Christ, who is the wisdom of God, is pictured by the Psalmist as a bridegroom typified by the sun who comes out of his chamber to run a race through the heavens (Ps. 19: 4-6). Malachi speaks of Christ as "the sun of righteousness, arising" (Mal. 4: 2). Everyone knows, of courses, that the "race" of the sun is run from east to west. The lightning referred to in Mat 24: 27 is actually the sun, for the Greek word merely means a bright shining, and lightning, as we know, does not flash from east to west, having no specific design or direction. Thus, Jesus said, "For as the bright shining (sun) cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Cain, had it not been for sin, would have been living in the Garden of Eden, which typifies the Kingdom of Heaven on earth — man dwelling and walking and living in the economy of God, the Spirit. In spite of sin, he was still able to know the presence of God, which typifies the anointing. But now Cain is rejecting even the presence of God and moving in the opposite direction of the course of the anointing, moving further and further from the life of the Spirit. His final end is that of an exile, a vagrant, living on a territory not pertaining to him, not his true inheritance or possession. There, alienated from God, and severed from the anointing, the record states Cain dwelt. He settled there. He built there. How happy is the man who clearly understands that the pathway of the anointing is ever from glory to glory, and as long as we are short of the image and incorruptible life of God we must never settle anywhere! The very condition of settling precludes our re-entrance into the Paradise of God. The man who settles is lost from the on-going purposes of God. Those blessed ones who in this hour hear and heed the call to sonship cannot settle in any zone until they stand in holy splendor with the Lamb upon the pinnacle of Mount Zion in the heavenly sphere of life and glory and dominion. But men always settle when, following the spontaneous moving and revelation of God, they begin to organize and systematize it, building walls of formulated creeds and dogmas about it, endeavoring to preserve it, as though the almighty Spirit who gave the outpouring in the first place had never commanded, "leaving. . .let us GO ON to perfection!" Once the move of God is creedalized and organized those within its walls are nevermore free to follow the course of the anointing, or to walk with God in His on-going unfolding of His glory.

Sin began with Adam in the Garden, for Adam sinned and was corrupted by sin and overcome by death, but he did not fall into the world at that point, neither was he possessed by the world then. The word "world," as we have pointed out, translates the Greek word KOSMOS meaning order, arrangement, system of things. The world is a negative thing in relation to God. James declares, ". . . the friendship of the world is enmity with God, whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4: 4). The apostle John adds his testimony, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John. 2: 15-16). Many Christians have the mistaken notion that the world is the movie theater, the dance hall, stylish clothing, and such like. Others confuse the world with the earth. But the world is the present system of things upon this earth conceived by the carnal mind and generated by the natural man. The world consists of all that man has instituted that replaces God in his life. The present political, economic, educational and religious systems are not of God, but of the world. When people, activities, or things — whether good or bad, beautiful or ugly — enslave man and usurp God, they comprise the world. Anything that causes man to disregard the Spirit, be removed from the anointing, or be independent of God is the world. All that does not come from the Father, all that originates outside of the consciousness of God, all that man institutes by his own carnal wisdom and fleshly activity is of the world, and is contrary to the life, nature and ways of God. There is an interesting statement in Eph. 1: 4. "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." The word "foundation" translates the Greek word KATABOLE which is a compound word made up of BALLO meaning "to cast, to throw" and KATA meaning "down." When man fell from his high and holy relationship with God and was cast down into the carnal realm of existence, the "foundation" of the world was laid in his heart and actions. But — blessed be God! The apostle Paul informs us that God the Father elected some sons in Christ "before the foundation of the world"! The word "before" translates the Greek word PRO meaning "to go before, to precede." Hence, the Father's act of choosing us in the Christ preceded the fall of man and the establishment of the world system. We are not told how many days, years or eons this choosing

preceded the world, but methinks it was away back there when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy!

Since the world is in such opposition to God we must consider its origin and process of development. The world began with Cain. Cain built the first city — organized society, civilization — which typifies the worldly system of independence from the SPIRIT. The world did not exist when man was created (except in abstraction), but developed gradually after the fall, as man removed himself from the anointing and walked in his own carnal way. When man was brought forth from the formative hand of God there was already the universe, the heavens and the earth, and all created things; but the world did not exist. Following the fall, when unregenerated man began to multiply upon the earth the Serpent in man gave direction and character to the "New World Order" of man, thus the scripture speaks of the natural man as walking **"according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the SPIRIT that now worketh IN the sons of disobedience"** (Eph. 2: 2).

There are three primary requirements for man's existence and well-being on earth: provision, protection, and pleasure. For man to live an abundant and fulfilled life in the earth realm he needs the provision of food, clothing, shelter, etc., a means of defense to protect himself from adversaries, and a form of recreation and amusement for his happiness. Prior to the fall GOD WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THESE THREE NEEDS OF MAN, and they were supplied abundantly in the Garden of Eden experience. After Cain's departure from the anointing, the scripture describes him as "of that Wicked One" (I Jn. 3: 12). The preposition "of" is in the Greek EK — "out of" — "Cain was OUT OF that Wicked One" — the seed of the Serpent! Out of the descendants of Cain were produced the founders of man's own system of supply for these three great needs of life. These were the three sons of Lamech. Jabal was the father of tent dwellers and cattlemen (Gen. 4: 20). Tents and cattle are for the supply of man's living and therefore belong to the category of provision. In the beginning God intended that HE should be our provision and so made Himself available to man in the Tree of Life, that in union with Him we should have all things, even the supply of God Himself. Jabal represents man's own efforts, apart from the anointing, to make provision for himself. Spiritually, this symbolizes the carnal religious systems with their rituals, ceremonies, and ordinances designed to "feed" God into man. All religion is the invention of man in his effort to meet man's spiritual need — apart from the anointing! Alas! they understand not that the reality of God's life is not contained in, nor ministered through, doctrines, programs, rituals, ceremonies or ordinances. Those who live in that realm know nothing of the mighty power of the indwelling Christ of God. Man's religion is of the world, for it is outside of God, being not of the Spirit, nor by the anointing.

Another of Cain's sons, Jubal, was the father of all that handle the harp and organ. Playing harp and organ is for pleasure and inspiration and thus pertains to the category of pleasure. This worldly aspect is fulfilled, spiritually, in the maze of social activity in religion, as well as in much of the music, programs, and sermonizing, all of which is designed to be pleasant, acceptable and entertaining to the people. I personally have little use for most of the concerts, programs, and pulpit showmanship which constitutes much of the so-called "ministry" among God's people today, for it is, without doubt, very appealing to the carnal mind which is ever wont to feed upon soulish entertainment rather than with reverential awe and holy brokenness to drink at the fountains of living water from the throne of God. I am convinced that our faithful heavenly Father has given the ministry of the blessed spirit of Truth for the perfecting of the saints, whereas the worldly church system has given us a veritable smorgasbord of religious shows for the entertaining of the saints. Most solemnly do I declare unto you that all such ARE OF THE WORLD, and not of the Father, for their methods and means He outside of the anointing of the Spirit and can never lead God's people beyond the husks of man's own vanity. Thank God! a people is arising who are finding their way out of Cain's pleasure land of entertainment and sentimentality, back to the Paradise of God, back to the Tree of Life, where they partake deeply of this sublime truth: **". . . in Thy presence is fullness of Joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore!" (Ps. 16: 11).**

The third son, Tubal-cain, was the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron instruments. These instruments were formed for the purpose of defense, thus referring to the category of protection. Ignorant of the power and sufficiency of the indwelling Spirit, with what pompousness do the religious systems construct about them their walls and implements of defense! Church history is replete with examples of revival after revival in which men were sovereignly caught up into heavenly places of glory and power, only to have man put his hand of flesh

upon the workings of God, to control, protect and preserve it, as though the omnipotent Spirit needed man's useless wisdom and regulations to preserve His mighty work! Out there in Cain's world you must have the earthly braw and iron implements of Tubal-cain — the implements of organization, denomination, creed, coverings, fellowships, rules, regulations, boards, etc., to defend and preserve the work; but, blessed be God! as one moves westward into the anointing of God's presence and life the omnipotence of the indwelling Spirit Himself becomes our fortress and exceeding strong tower! With what deep comprehension of the ways of the Lord did the Psalmist pen the words of faith in the power of God alone when he wrote, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. For THOU art the glory of their strength: and in Thy favor shall our horn be exalted. For THE LORD IS OUR DEFENSE; and the Holy One of Israel is our King" (Ps. 89: 15-18).

In these three important inventions of the sons of Cain man found within himself the answer to his need of supply, defense and amusement. Man found no need of God, of the anointing, for he set about to establish his own world, independent of God. This was the civilization produced after mankind departed from the presence of God — a godless life created by men. This present world system of things is patterned after the order of Cain. It is all outside of God. That does not mean that it is all evil. It simply is not of the Spirit! How clear that in this earth the politics, economics, education and religion is outside of God! When we have learned how the world was formed, it is easy to define the world. Originally, man was in the family of God, lived by God, relied entirely upon Him, and had at his disposal ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD. Now the Serpent, through subtilty, sophistry, the carnal mind, the wisdom of this world, has systematized the world to replace God in being all to man. Man, having forsaken his inheritance, having departed from the presence, and having lost the anointing relied upon the world and was overcome by the world. Therefore, the world consists of everything that replaces God and possesses man.

Cain built a city — as did Nimrod after him. "And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch" (Gen. 4: 17). There was no city in Eden, no fleshly system, no carnal arrangement of things. Not system, but LIFE! I wish to speak with utmost solemnity here. Throughout the centuries the religious systems have accumulated a great number of traditions, rites, ordinances, methods, institutions and practices, each of them supplanting something of the pureness and freshness and glory of the SPIRIT. These things have become so universal in the churches of the world, and in the lives of their members, that there is no thought of ever being able to "run" the church and its business without them! Generation after generation, people have been raised up from childhood in this atmosphere and have absolutely no knowledge of anything else or another way. It never even enters the minds of these people that THE CHRIST WITHIN is the Head of the church, the life of the church, and the whole sufficiency for the church, its people, its work, and its needs. Each church must be constantly creating new plans, programs and activities to keep the people busy "doing something". The idea is to keep the people busy and to keep up the interest, so that they may be kept in that church. In the church world such a church is known as a "lively" church, and the pastor is known as one of the "successful" pastors. Spirituality has little, if anything, to do with it, for the whole group, including the so-called pastor and church leader, is simply a natural body of people, carrying on what they imagine is a church.

He who makes God's house of living stones depend on mere outward forms; he who confounds Truth with the shibboleths of sects and denominations, or the usurpation of preachers, builds upon the baseless and shifting sands. The true and eternal church depends solely on the presence of Christ. Sweep away from your spiritual walk as much as you will the infinite cobwebs which the ambition and the ignorance of men have spun for centuries over the surface of the faith. Fling to the four winds the voluntary humility and all the vain deceits, traditions, and ordinances, which, like those of the Pharisees, are but "weak and beggarly elements." It is not the form but the essence which constitutes true religion. Christ knew nothing of external paraphernalia, and those who follow the Lamb know nothing of it either. Distinguish between the flickering shadows of outward symbols and the verities of eternal life. Distinguish between the valueless injunctions of touch not, taste not, handle not, and the divine nature which produces love, joy, peace, righteousness of heart, and all were suddenly swept away, it would in all probability cease to function. If the churches had to drop all their rituals, forms, programs and ceremonies; all their confirmations, baptisms, and communion services; all their special singing, organ music, and altar calls, they would feel as though they had been stripped naked and could not serve God in any way. All this simply demonstrates the terrible fact that the faith and dependence of the

churches is not in God, but is in the trappings they have accumulated to themselves throughout the centuries. The thought that God is perfectly able and fully willing to run His church without the aid of anything in the way of fleshly contributions, is found to be abhorrent to the average church member.

God's true church, in contrast to the false religious system of Babylon, has never been contaminated by the world. You may be assured, my beloved, that the Father has faithfully answered the prayer of Jesus, "And now I come to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep ties and powers in the celestial realms, and the hope of all creation for deliverance and restoration to the Kingdom of God. Let all who treasure the call to sonship know once and for all that CHRIST WITHIN I-S s-u-f-f-i-c-i-e-n-t! all else is —the world. '

The truth that is set like a diamond in the pages of God's Word is the absolute and total sufficiency of the Christ within. To say that the Christ Himself is not sufficient for our whole life as sons of the Most High, that the indwelling spirit of life is not enough, that there is something the outer man must do to add to, supplement, or improve on what He is within us is an insult to God and a blasphemy against our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet we see men doing this on every hand. The carnal mind is never able to take God at His word! It continually seeks to initiate some additional actions or services on the natural plane to take the place of pure spiritual reality.

When Jesus came in the flesh, He came into a world steeped in religion. He came into a condition brought about by centuries of teaching the law and the rites and sacrifices of the temple worship. Into this had been woven the traditions of the elders, an accumulation of those same centuries. It had come to include also even the washing of pots and cups, together with ceremonies of washing of hands before eating and a multitude of other practices imposed upon the people by their leaders. The temple in the city of Jerusalem was the symbol of all this to the people. Their whole life revolved around that building and the rites and sacrifices the priests offered in it. It was the sacred spot of the nation and of all Jews wherever they were in the world. Every Jew had that one desire to go to Jerusalem and worship. This system of religion was imbedded in the lives of the people, and had been for long centuries. It had become a part of their life and they endured it all with the hope perennial within their hearts that some day the Messiah would come and lift not only this yoke, but that of the Roman empire as well. But when the Messiah came, they did not recognize Him. For here was all this great mass of law, ritual and Pharisaical teaching and tradition, while the Messiah was but an unknown man, of almost unknown origin. Jesus brought a new and revolutionary way of life. It was a way of believing, and not a way of doing. It was faith in the Christ and right relationship with God and did not consist in the doing of anything, or the keeping of external observances. It was simplicity in the highest degree, set up against organized worship of the highest degree. The revolutionary way of life which Jesus brought to the people was in exact and complete opposition to the bondage under which the people now found themselves.

The people were constantly taught and instructed that they must observe all the things the priests and Pharisees told them, or they would perish. Jesus came into their midst and said that all those things would do them absolutely no good whatever, but if they wanted life they should come unto Him and drink — merely by believing into Him! He was placing the Christ and faith in the Christ against all the accumulated tradition of the nation. He was assuring them that they would NOT LOSE A SINGLE THING by coming unto Him, and casting all else away from them. And they would gain life. But who could hear such a thing in the day of Christ. In fact Jesus Himself said that no man could come unto Him, except the Father who had sent Him, would draw that man. It is just as true today! Ah, beloved, if you were to go into any church on any Sunday and say to the people, "If you will cast aside all your form, all of your traditions, all of your rituals, all of your ordinances, all of your cherished and time-honored creeds, all of your solemn assemblies, all of your myriad activities, all of your committees, and SIMPLY COME UNTO THE CHRIST AND BELIEVE INTO HIM AND DRINK OF H-I-M, YOU WILL LOSE NOTHING, but you will gain the glorious and eternal reality of God forevermore," what kind of reception would you receive? You would actually be asking the people to give up everything they are doing and all the things they have been given by their ministers and church orders with which to serve and worship God — exchanging it all for GOD ALONE. What an unbearable burden it would be for the people to be REDUCED TO GOD, to possess nothing but GOD HIMSELF! You would find this an almost impossible thing to accomplish. Truly Christ has been usurped by the world'

THE TRADUCER

As we have pointed out, the most outstanding characteristic of the Serpent is his ability to deceive. From the very dawn of human history, as recorded in the Bible, he is depicted as a liar and deceiver. "The Serpent beguiled me and I did eat," was Eve's plaintive cry, and in the closing book of the Bible, the fact of his deceiving nature is further emphasized in the words of the Revelator who described him as "that old Serpent called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (**Rev. 12: 9**). The apostle is referring back to that significant statement in **Gen. 3: 1** wherein we read, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made."

The Bible was not written in English, but Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. It is to the ancient Hebrew words we will refer, to glean the truth from this passage. From a casual view of these words comes the ancient myth of a snake wound around a tree in the Garden of Eden. However, the Hebrew word translated "serpent" is NACHASH. This word NACHASH means "to hiss, mutter, whisper; as do enchanters." Secondary meanings are "to divine," "enchant." It is because of these expressions that the noun "serpent" appears. An allied Chaldean word means brass, actually polished brass, from a root word meaning to be bright. Dr. Bullinger, in the Companion Bible, says, "the Hebrew term probably includes the sense of fascinate, enchant" This element of fascination connects with the later use of Nachash as "serpent." Satan, then, is a WHISPERER, an ENCHANTER, a FASCINATOR, and a SHINING ONE! He is a speaker, a teacher, a diviner, a creator of illusions and appearances — a deceiver!

And just how does Satan deceive? A key is found in the Greek New Testament name for Satan — the devil. The Greek word is DIABOLLOS. DIABOLLOS is a compound of two words — DIA and BOLLO. DIA means "a channel of an act" and BOLLO means "to throw — either with force, or without force, yet with a purpose, or even carelessly." Hence, the Devil is A CHANNEL SOMETHING PASSES THROUGH. The pipe through which water enters your home is a channel — a means of passage. The frequency bands assigned to a single transmitting station for either radio or television is called a channel — the frequency or means of passage of communication from the station to your receiver. Any channel is the vehicle through which a thing passes from one location or state to another. And, may I add, the Devil is the channel (DIA) through which a carnal thought, idea, concept, desire, passion, etc. passes before it reaches your CONSCIOUS MIND. This explains very well why Strong's Analytical Concordance has rendered the compound word DIABOLLOS as "a traducer." The English word "traduce" means "TO TRANSFER FROM ONE ORDER OF REASONING TO ANOTHER ORDER OF REASONING, as to translate from one language to another language." Hence, the Traducer, the Devil, the Translator, the Interpreter sits enthroned in the mind of man and his primary job is to transfer or translate KNOWLEDGE!

This ancient Phoenician coin, which was minted long ago in the bustling commercial city of Tyre, bears a curious image. The coin shows a serpent entwined around a tree stump. To the left of the stump stands an empty cornucopia. To the right, a flourishing palm tree. Curious, yes. But is it significant? Amazingly, the story these symbols tell is of great relevance to our spiritual understanding!

To classical scholars, the symbols on the coin are familiar ones. They are found in the art and mythology of many civilizations through the millennia. What do they all mean? First, consider the snake. The snake on the Phoenician coin is the symbol of a powerful god whom the Romans called Aesculapius, the Greeks Asklepios. Who was this personage? Aesculapius was an ancient pagan god of healing. To his temples sick people came from all over the world. His symbol was the serpent! } This symbol has come down to us today in the two snakes which intertwine the staff on the shields of the medical profession. Persons wishing healing from this god were instructed to lie down in his temple so that the tame snakes of the priests could slither over them. The sufferer who was "fortunate" enough to have this dubious honor take place was said to have been touched by the hand of the god of healing! His healing powers are reflected in the meaning of his name, Aesculapius. It means, literally, "THE MAN-INSTRUCTING SERPENT." Now we see a significant connection! The Serpent who sought to teach mankind is mentioned, of course, in the third chapter of Genesis, where he seduced our first parents, Adam and Eve. It is none other than man's adversary, "that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world" (**Rev. 12: 9**). In mythology, Aesculapius was believed to be the child of

the Sun, and thus the "enlightened" of mankind. He was often represented in art by a serpent or as an old man holding a staff around which a snake is entwined.

This "Traducer," or "Translator," or "Enlightener," is nothing more nor less than the spirit of your mind! Those elect saints who read these lines know that the metaphysical and occult "channelers" have no light of truth or Holy Ghost power to set men free or transform into the image of God, but how often we fail to realize that there is a MASTER CHANNELER sitting as a god right within our own minds, and how often we yield our lives into his hands of illogical reasoning — deception and delusion. The words coming from this Translator may be enticing and exciting — but only to the natural man; and, my beloved, they minister death! Hence the need to heed the apostle's inspired admonition, "Put off the old man. ..and be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4: 22-23). The simple truth is: YOU CAN'T TRUST YOUR INTERPRETER! Of him our Lord stated plainly, "There is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (Jn. 8: 44). And he is "that crooked serpent" (Isa. 27: 1).

The magicians of Egypt were diviners and enchanters. God spoke unto Moses and said, "What is that in thine hand.?" Moses replied, "A rod." God said, "Cast it on the ground." He obeyed and the rod became a serpent. This was a very important lesson to him because the symbol of the serpent to an Egyptian represented WISDOM. It did not symbolize evil, Satan, or the Devil. Remember what Jesus taught his disciples..."Be ye as WISE AS SERPENTS and harmless as doves." God took that dry, lifeless stick and made it come alive. The lesson was plain to Moses. The rod is a type of the Christ. Isaiah spoke about a rod coming out of the stem of Jesse (Isa. 11: 1). Jesus became the WISDOM of God. Later, Moses and Aaron his brother went to meet Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. They went in to Pharaoh and asked him in the name of the Lord to let the people of Israel go. And Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord? Why should I obey His commands? What sign can you show me that your God has sent you?" Then Aaron threw down his rod, and it was turned into a snake. But there were wise men, magicians, in Egypt who heard of this. They came in and threw down their rods, and their rods also became snakes. But Aaron's rod, in the form of a snake, ran after them, overtook them, and swallowed them all; and then it became a rod again in Aaron's hand. The message is clear — Christ, the wisdom of God, swallows up and consumes all the wisdom of this world— of the carnal mind!

Again I would quote the timely words of a friend who has shared with us her keen insight into the mysteries of God. "Paul in II Cor. 11: 3 warns the church at Corinth to beware lest they fall into the same trap that ensnared Eve. I fear, 'said he, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 'The English here does not tell the full story. It is, therefore, to our advantage that we delve into the Greek that we might receive in greater depth that which was intended by the Spirit of God for our hearts. When it was said that the serpent "beguiled" Eve, the Greek indicates that he cheated her out of something, for the word used is a combination of the Greek word EK which means 'out' and the word APOTAO which means 'to cheat. 'She was, then, 'cheated out' — sold short — and it was no less thing than the glory of God that she lost. That is why it is written of all mankind, 'All have sinned and come short of the GLORY of God. 'The means by which the serpent — the Seer — beguiled Eve and cheated her out of her inheritance was through subtilty. Again, delving into the Greek, we find that the word used is PANOURGIA meaning 'adroitness, trickery, craftiness, and sophistry. 'It is this word ' sophistry ' that has captured our attention, having been quickened for our consideration by the Spirit of God. The English definition of this word is, 'Reasoning that is superficially plausible but is actually fallacious. 'It is a synonym for intellectualism and has to do with sophism which is 'an argument that is correct in form or appearance but is actually invalid. 'It is, also, 'an argument that is used for deception or displaying intellectual brilliance. '

"We find, then, that in cheating Eve out of her inheritance, in causing her to fall from the Glory, the serpent employed the use — NOT OF AN OUTRIGHT LIE—but of a TRUTH! He used an argument that is correct in form, but because it was only form and had lost the essence. Eve was deceived by it. What was the argument that he used that was 'correct in form but was actually invalid'? Hear it! 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened?' That was a truth — and 'ye shall be as gods' was also a truth, for after the man and the woman had eaten, the Lord God Himself verified the serpent's statement as being absolute truth. 'Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil, ' God said. In form, then, the serpent had a truth. What the serpent failed to reveal, however, was the essence of the form which is that INDEPENDENTLY OF GOD man can NEVER be a partaker of the divine nature! This should have been a self-

evident truth, but man failed to see it. He was deceived by the very form of truth and was thereby brought to ruin, cheated out of the very thing that he sought. Man became a god, alright, in the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — but he became a god in the wrong realm, for at the same time that God acknowledged man's 'deity' He also CAST HIM FROM THE GARDEN — cast him from the heavenly realm — and set him in the earth 'to till the ground from which he was taken. 'It is one thing to be 'a partaker of the divine nature' and it is quite another thing to be the 'god of this world! In the former, there is contained the thought of TOTAL DEPENDENCE — in the latter, the principle of INDEPENDENCE. Though the terminology is the same — that is, 'ye are gods' — the essence is not. 'The man has become as one of us' but he did not become, in his rebellion, an actual partaker of divinity. The serpent, then, through reasoning that is superficially plausible but is actually fallacious, beguiled Eve. It was through a mere intellectual grasp of the word of God that Eve was 'cheated out' of her inheritance in the Living One and fell into the realm of death. We must not, as we consider these things, lose sight of the fact that the apostle Paul had a fear for the church that BY THE VERY SAME DECEPTION, our minds should also be corrupted! 1 fear, ' said he, lest... as the serpent beguiled Eve through SOPHISTRY (the form of truth without the essence), so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. ' May we have ears to hear!" — end quote,

The apostle Paul, in speaking of Christ as One in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, hastily adds: "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." The word "beguile" here is in the Greek PARALOGIZOMAI meaning "to mis-reckon, to wrongly reason." It is a compound word consisting of PARA meaning "along side of from which we get our English terms paralegal and paramedic. In medicine the word PARA is used to denote something disordered or abnormal. The second half of the word is the Greek LOGOS which is translated to mean the WORD OF GOD, as in Jn. 1: 1. Ah—the great Traducer, the Translator, the Interpreter, the Beguiler is he who causes us to NOT REASON GOD'S WORD CORRECTLY. The deceiver adds an idea along side of God's Word — the form added to the essence, the letter added to the spirit, the shadow promoted instead of the substance, and the results are very DISORDERED AND ABNORMAL! Eve did not correctly reason the things the Traducer communicated to her conscious mind and this whole world of illusion, deception, sin, pain, limitation, sorrow and death is the tragic result!

Earlier I pointed out that the second half of the Greek word DIABOLLOS (Devil) means "to throw or to cast, or to cast right through." Another word that has been quickened in my spirit is "input". We get "input" from the negative realm of spirit — the spirit of our carnal mind. This dart throwing of the adversary refers to thoughts, beliefs, concepts, ideas, feelings, moods, desires, etc. injected into your conscious mind out of the invisible realm. Though we may be alert for danger from without, the greatest danger always lies within ourselves. Both our ability and our wisdom are but foolishness in the sight of God, and should we consciously or unconsciously set our hearts upon them, we find ourselves leaning upon our own meager resource, devoid of the Spirit of God, and abandoned to our own devices. With what holy unction does the apostle Paul exhort the saints, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand, .above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6: 13, 16).

You want to watch that crafty Translator within! In the temptation of Jesus we discover this wily adversary-coming upon the Master with Bible in hand, so to speak. "It is written!" — this was the glittering weapon, the fiery dart, the master-stroke of the Traducer. "If Thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread." "It is written!" he thundered as he offered the kingdoms of earth to Jesus if He would bow to the shrewd worldly wisdom the Traducer outlined in His mind by which He could have conquered even the might of the Roman empire. An easy way to popularity was pointed out — it was suggested that He cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. No harm would come to Him for God had promised to send His angels to care for Him. And the multitude, amazed, would follow Him. What gave immeasurable force to the Traducer's suggestions was his appeal to the awful authority of God's Word. He cast about the things he offered the glow of Divine approval. He enforced his ideas with the sacred sanction of the scriptures. It was with the Bible in hand that he approached the Son of man. "It is written!" If the Word of God supports it, if the Bible sanctions it, why it must be good. How the Traducer loves to come to us with the Bible in his hand! It casts about him such a holy air. But here is where we discover the awful depths of the Traducer's duplicity. He is no stranger to the scriptures, and he will quote the Word when such a procedure will serve his purpose. When he deals with a chosen one of God, obviously, he must meet such a one upon the high plane on which he lives. He could get nowhere by

suggesting the gross sins of the flesh to one separated unto God. It must be through the Word. It must be through a carnal, twisted, literalistic and erroneous understanding of that Word — the letter that killeth. The letter killeth, and Satan has the power of death! The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are the same tree in the midst — the tree of knowledge is the outer form of truth, whereas the tree of life is the spirit of truth. To be carnally minded is death, says the apostle. How much plainer can it be that the crowning work of the Traducer is to put a natural, carnal, reasoned, intellectual interpretation to the Word which is spirit and life. He takes the language of SPIRIT and translates it into the perverted, garbled dialect of fleshly wisdom and carnal understanding. People sometimes accuse me of spiritualizing away the Word of God. How, I ask, can you spiritualize something that already I-S SPIRIT AND LIFE? The danger lies not, precious friend of mine, in spiritualizing away the Word — it is, rather, in canalizing away that which is SPIRITUAL! To bring the spiritual thrust and essence of the Word down to the low lands of carnal forms of religion is the subtilty of the Serpent. Ah, what a Translator he is! What a liar and deceiver! And all the time he is quoting the Word of God and rejoicing in what a really sound "fundamentalist" he is.

There isn't a vice you cannot justify, there isn't a doctrine, however contrary to the heart of God, you cannot prove, there isn't a religious methodology you cannot deify, there isn't a Babylonian garment you cannot glorify, by appealing to the scriptures. All have an, "it is written" to fall back on, The damnedest lie can be made to appear true. All the Traducer needs to do is to quote scripture. Every dirty heresy abroad, every false cult, all find in God's Word their foundation. **"They that are unstable and (spiritually) unlearned wrest . . . the . . . scriptures unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3: 16)**. I have learned that one can prove or disprove anything with scripture. Brethren sometimes write to me trying to engage me in lengthy debate over some point of doctrine—the letter that killeth. The hour is too late, the time too short, the purposes of God too urgent, my friend, to give myself and the precious time and energy Father has placed in my care to such foolish wranglings and carnal disputations. This is not a moment to jot every doctrinal "i" and cross every creedal "t". There is a truth that runs like a golden thread throughout all the pages of Holy Writ, teaching us that the elect whom God has chosen must become aware of the abiding presence and indwelling life of the Spirit. Students of theology, poor souls, pour over their musty volumes, they learn all the arguments and proofs of the doctrines about God, but the almighty God Himself they do not know. They become ineffective and spiritually impotent because they have separated Truth from the Person, knowing the form, standing on the letter, reciting the doctrine, articulating the facts, but having no vital, living relationship with Him who alone IS THE TRUTH. A lifetime of walking with God has taught me that it is possible for one to know all the arguments and appear to have all the answers, but still be a stranger to the heart of God. I testify to every man who reads these words, however, that the moment any man begins to know Him wonderful changes take place in his understanding, for to know Him is to be like Him. **"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3: 18)**. His Word is SPIRIT, His Spirit is LIFE, and His Life is POWER to transform, to awaken our consciousness to the abiding reality of Himself, to raise our being up into that heavenly, eternal sphere where I AM THAT I AM.

My good friend Elwin Roach, in his PATHFINDER PUBLICATIONS, some time ago wrote a series of timely articles on this subject of The Traducer. In closing I would share a portion of the wisdom that flowed from his anointed pen.

"When we hear religious teaching and acquire knowledge, if the thoughts are not coming from the Spirit of Christ (the anointing), they are passing through this soothsayer (traducer) before reaching our minds. This is the sayer who is soothing, he is lying, and is calculating. He is the translator for the humanistic, Adamic mind. The Traducer is very accomplished at what he does. Therefore, we should become more cautious WHAT we are hearing and HOW we are hearing, as Jesus warned in Mk. 2: 24 and Lk. 8: 18. Men and women alike have the tendency to try and grasp any and all things with their own minds that has been so logically put together by this brilliant Traducer, but let us be reminded of this: The carnal mind cannot receive the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned, and there is nothing about it which desires the things of God, for that mind is enmity against God (I Cor. 2: 14; Rom. 8: 7). However, as we have already mentioned, the Traducer does make the word of God pleasing and understandable to this dusty mind. Very often, when we read the Bible, the words coming off its pages go through the channel, through the dia, that thing in the mind called the traducer, the translator. This is what has produced so many fictions, frictions and factions in the church. The Traducer has helped to form many thoughts, ideas, reasonings, imaginations, images and idols — in other words, A LOT OF

WIND, A LOT OF WINDY DOCTRINES! This translator is very consistent, for he can only translate one way. He always conveys dusty thoughts and carnal revelations, because this is all that the mind of man can receive. All scriptural truth (the reality of God) comes from above, even from Jesus who is the truth, the Lord from heaven. In other words. THE TRADUCER VEILS THE TRUTH, while JESUS IS TRUTH REVEALED!"

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If you would like any of these messages or would like to be on J Preston Eby's mail list you may write him at the above address or e-mail me at Gary@Sigler.org and I will forward your request to Preston. He has nothing to sell, all his writings are free to all. You may contribute to his ministry to help spread this message to the world, but gifts are not tax deductible.

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 19
SCORPIO-THE SCORPION [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART NINETEEN

WHO MADE THE DEVIL?

In this message we continue our meditations upon the great drama portrayed by the Sign of Scorpio, the conflict between the "Mighty Man" and the "Scorpion" and the struggle between the great and powerful Orphiuchus (the serpent-holder) and the Serpent. It shows this mighty man struggling with a giant Serpent, trying to keep him from accomplishing what he is attempting to do. The Serpent is putting forth a mighty effort to reach up and grasp the CROWN which is situated immediately over the Serpent's head. The strong man, Orphiuchus, is restraining the Serpent while crushing the Scorpion! It is interesting to stand in the still darkness of the early morning and watch the breaking of the dawn: first the gray streaks in the East, and then the brighter light, until the full-orbed sun ascends above the horizon. There is a sunrise with its dawn like that in the Bible. The foregleam begins with the promise in the curse upon the Serpent, that the seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head. It grows brighter as God calls Abraham and covenants to make of him a great and holy nation, who should bless all the nations of earth. We see it in the miracles and authority exhibited by Moses as he challenges the tyranny of Pharaoh and by a mighty hand leads the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. We see it in the conquest of the Promised Land, in the victories of God's people over the pagan nations and kingdoms entrenched in that theatre. We see it in the prophetic reign of king David and the peace, glory and dominion of Solomon's expanded kingdom. We see it in the ministry of Jesus, whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, healing all that were sick, casting out devils with a word, raising the dead and proclaiming the Kingdom of God in the midst of men.

The disciples were greatly perplexed when Jesus died. But then He arose the conquering Christ! The fact of the Christ's resurrection is historic. The man who disputes it disputes the best established fact in history. He was seen by those who had despaired of His existence. He ate with them. He drank with them. He walked with them in a bloodless body. He talked to the despondent and broken-hearted apostles, the eleven, for nearly forty days. It was impossible to be deceived. He spoke, and was seen and heard on one occasion by five hundred, the most of whom were living at the time that Paul made the declaration that they knew Christ and had seen Him after His resurrection. He proved His resurrection by telling them that if they would go to Jerusalem and enter into an upper room, and wait for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit's power would come. The promised outpouring took place. Christ went up and the Holy Ghost came down. They saw Him go and they saw Him come. It shook the place where they were sitting. The divine earthquake shook Jerusalem. It shook Israel. It shook the Roman Empire until it fell, to rise no more. It shook the world. The Spirit's power came. The Christ returned in mighty Spirit-power. He who IS the Truth came again as the Spirit of Truth. He came as an indwelling Life. Men who were weak became strong. Men who were wicked murderers and devils were transformed into men of virtue and power with God. Men who were illogical became great and mighty reasoners. Men who were feeble stood up, and in their spiritual majesty tower today over all the men of their time. All history substantiates the claim. Every philosopher and potentate of their time had to recognize them so that Peter, Paul, James, John, and many of their successors, became the mightiest Powers even in a heathen Empire.

The day had dawned; the shadows were fleeing away, darkness dispelled. We would but deceive ourselves were we to conclude that the conflict of the ages between Orphiuchus and the Serpent, between Christ and Satan, between truth and error, between light and darkness, between righteousness and unrighteousness, between life and death has ended. The second thousand years is drawing to a close since Jesus came, died, conquered death, and poured out His life-giving Spirit and, blessed be His name! He pursues His mission still and reigns in majesty over His Kingdom by entering into these temples of clay, and filling our spirits and souls and bodies with His own eternal presence and power, making us one with Him, members of His very own body, of His flesh, of His bone, and of His blood. He is redeeming a vast company of sons into whom He is

putting His mighty Spirit, inworking His glorious mind and nature, inscribing upon the heart His Law of Life. And the hour is wonderfully nigh at hand when there shall be a further transformation, the bodies of His elect sons shall be changed in likeness unto His body of glory as this mortal puts on immortality and this corruptible puts on incorruption, so that we, who were destined from the beginning to be the revelation of HIMSELF to creation may complete His mighty work for the redemption of humanity.

A new day has dawned! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. A new age has arrived. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said. Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me. It is done" (Rev. 21: 4-6). Blessed promises of a mighty deliverance, which we even now begin to see fulfilled. The time has come for the nations to hear the voice of the Son of God and live. There shall be a glorious victory as the head of that ancient Serpent is crushed and he goes not out any more to deceive the nations. The un-deceiving of the nations means a new mentality, new understanding, new thought processes, the unveiling of the truth about all things in the minds of the vast multitudes of earth. What anticipation this evokes in our hearts! "And it shall come to pass, that...all the nations...shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16). "And the nations... shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it "Alright, you old Devil," he shouted, "I am going to kill you and put an end to you for all those nasty things you've been doing. I am going to let you have it, you old Devil!" As he drew near to the Devil with fists clenched, ready to smash the Devil's face, the Devil said, "Hold it! Don't do that! Remember — if you kill me, you will have nothing to preach about." What a word!

The good God, according to the common testimony of church goers, is ever trying to do this and that, while the Devil is continually interfering with His plans, frustrating His purposes, usurping His instruments and defeating the issue. On some good days the good God wins, on some bad days He loses. They go about continually talking to the Devil, praying to the Devil (though they call it commanding and rebuking), and give place to him over and over again. They "bind" him in this meeting or in that situation, but, like Samson breaking the cords of Delilah, he bounces right back in full regalia at the next meeting or occasion. These "devil-worshippers" ever beat the air against him and do occasionally, they claim, win a battle against him, but the war rages on. If they do not get an immediate answer to their prayer, they are sure the Devil is hindering. If everything does not go according to plan, the Devil is interfering. If obstacles appear along the way, the Devil is fighting them. The outcome of this battle exceeds the ludicrous —it is a terrible blasphemy. Not only are most Christians constantly defeated in their spiritual life, but they actually consign to the Devil the final victory in God's creation. The majority is thoroughly convinced that in the end the Devil wins at least 90% of humanity and carries them down with him into everlasting damnation and hell-fire. The picture drawn is of a frustrated God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to be its Saviour, but alas! only a handful of the teeming billions of earth can be persuaded to take advantage of His gracious provision, the rest led captive by the ruthless and unrelenting grasp of the Devil. The bad God is thus far more effective in his designs for mankind than the good God. I long with intense longing that the Lord's precious people will repent of ever having believed the insipid and useless traditions that make the almighty God seem to be a victim of the will of His own creation. It is my opinion that most of the theology of the Christian world is stupid prattle that seeks to render the almighty God impotent by robbing Him of His omnipotence. It teaches that God gave His Son that all the world through Him might be saved and then renders His sacrifice hopeless by leaving ninety-nine percent of all His creatures in the hands of the Devil for all eternity. In this view God finally gives up, throws up His hands in defeat, and says, "I've had enough!" He then turns the billions of souls over to the Devil, consigning them all to banishment from His presence into the unending torments of fiery damnation. The fact is, precious friend of mine, a scene such as this would be comparable to the President of a country handing the masses of his nation over to the enemy as punishment because his General lost the war— while he (God), his General (Jesus) and the army (the saints) are rewarded with peace, wealth and pleasure forevermore. Everyone becomes a prisoner, burning forever in torment, EXCEPT THE ONES WHO HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WINNING THE WAR! I tell you solemnly and reverently that the God I serve is not the author of this kind of nonsense. Such a doctrine as that belittles the power and wisdom of God and does despite to the spirit of grace, the atoning work of Christ, and the precious blood that He shed so that the world through Him might be saved. Such a doctrine as that is, undoubtedly, one of the "doctrines of devils" of which Paul warned. I say that because I cannot think of anyone

outside of the Devil himself who would be happy with the prospect that Calvary was such a colossal failure! But the preachers, including some who profess to be in the "Kingdom Message," would lay down their lives for such an abominable heresy!

I say to all who read these lines that OUR GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND OMNIPOTENT. If ever there will come victory over the negative realm, the adversary, it will be when we come to KNOW THAT GOD IS GOD, AND THERE I-S N-O O-T-H-E-R GOD. He is sovereignly in control of all that touches our life, and of the march of history and the final outcome for all creation. The nations know not this God, nor do the professing Christians in the church systems know Him. So the Lord almighty within must bring forth those who can be His witnesses — people who have come to experientially KNOW THAT HE, and HE ALONE I-S GOD. Those whose very lives convey the message and bear the evidence that there is but ONE GOD. We have had enough of the world's stupid witness, those who believe in a God for good, and another God for evil, and oft times it is not clear which "GOD" they are declaring, especially when they spend more time exalting the prowess of the Devil than they do proclaiming the praises of their Creator and Redeemer. Let all men know — God is even now producing His witnesses WHO KNOW that HE alone is God, that HE controls the interplay between good and evil, that all is by HIS design and at HIS word, and the evidence of this reality is demonstrated by their lives. Once Christ truly and experientially becomes LORD OF ALL IN YOU, then He will have abolished for you all Devil-consciousness and HE will be both the Center and the Circumference of your reality. In that day, my beloved, for you, THERE IS NO DEVIL ANYMORE!

I do not wonder sometimes that those who only read my writing think that I am a hard and vindictive man, especially as I warn men of the error and abominable apostasy of the nominal church systems. But if you only knew, I am one of the most peaceable and gentle men in the world. I am a very quiet man (except in the pulpit!), and believe that I am merciful and compassionate toward every sinner, I have only been a fighter because I had to fight. Was Jesus Christ not a great fighter? Is He not a great fighter still? And is He not the Prince of Peace? Is He not God's Lion, the Lion of the tribe of Judah? And is He not the Lamb of God? God's Lion is a Lamb! God's Lamb is a Lion! I call God to witness and you to witness that when I have been called upon to fight — for whom have I fought? I fought for God. I fought for Truth. I fought for reality. I fought against the false shepherds who were taking away the key of knowledge, who entered not in themselves, and them that were entering in they hindered. I fought those who withstood the right ways of the Lord, deceiving the people and holding them in bondage to slavish forms of empty religion and superstitious conceptions of God. Stephen fought the devils in the Jewish system to their very faces although he knew he would die. He saw his Master in the heavens. Do you see your Master in the heavens? Do you see that the only Reality is that which emanates from the Christ-Spirit Do you know Him within, in the depths of your being? Do you hear His voice? Do you know what He wants you to do? He wants you to follow in His steps, to BECOME HIS SALVATION unto the ends of the earth. He wants you to grasp hold of life, and deliver His creation from sin, sorrow, death, hell and the demonic power which curses this world. The peace of God means war with sin. He that is a friend of evil is the enemy of God. This is the kind of peace Jesus left He made warriors of men. They went forth to fight the world and the Devil, in Greece and Rome, with thirty thousand gods. They marched up the Acropolis; they marched upon the Parthenon; they threw down the altars of the boni dei, they threw down the altars of Venus; they destroyed the altars of Jove, They demolished the altars of Mercury. They smashed them, by the Spirit's power, with the sword of TRUTH they trampled upon them; they triumphed and brought in a dimension of the kingdom of God.

Oh, that is such a sublime verse where Jesus said, "**ALL AUTHORITY is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations...**" (Mat. 28: 18-19). Do you see that? There is a tremendous power in that "Therefore," I am with you. I will back you. Every angel in heaven if needful will come forth and surround you. Fight! What does it matter, the puny governments and armies and courts of THIS WORLD? All authority is given to the Christ of God, and we are the members of God's Christ! The hosts of God will troop over all the skies, ten thousand times ten thousand millions, if need be. Embrace TRUTH! Speak TRUTH! Live TRUTH! "I COMMAND...Go ye therefore, you poor fishermen, and tax-gatherers and discredited rabbis, go, I am with you." If only we realized what power there is behind us!

God is raising up a SONSHIP COMPANY that will go for the Devil's fortresses, to batter him, shatter him and break up his kingdom. God is even now preparing an army of OVERCOMING ONES, transformed in the spirit

of their mind, triumphing over sin, error, limitation and death, who shall go forth in the power of the SPIRIT to pull down the strongholds of creed and ritual and religious foolishness and ignorance and set the captives free; who will beat down the strongholds of miss-conceptions, miss-information, miss-understanding — sin and death — and let the prisoners go free! Satan is not a God like unto the Lord my God. He does not interfere with God's purposes nor frustrate God's plans. ALL AUTHORITY is given to the Christ of God — in heaven and in earth! How much authority is "ALL" authority? I shall fight that battle against the lies of religion and for the supremacy of the Christ while there is a drop of blood in my body. I shall claim that every foot of this earth and every man upon this earth and under the earth belongs to Christ, for He made the earth and He made every man. He tasted death for every man, and therefore, every foot of the earth; and every man on the earth and under the earth belongs to Christ my Lord. They are His by right of creation and they are His by right of redemption. No Devil anywhere can gainsay that fact. I claim for His this great and universal Kingdom. The church has forgotten that Christ came to establish a Kingdom and that it must break in pieces and CONSUME (take into itself) every other kingdom including the Devil's kingdom. The Gospel which Christ preached was the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The hope and aim of all His work was the establishment of the Kingdom of God. When the end shall come, He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and in it will be everything God created, that God may be ALL-IN-ALL. We who preach this Gospel of the all-inclusive redemption of Christ preach not a Gospel of limited atonement, nor of a partial Kingdom, nor of a Christ who was a failure, nor of a Devil who wins the battle for souls and possesses the souls of untold billions throughout an endless eternity. Such a doctrine would be blasphemy! We preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and of the triumph of that Kingdom in every realm. We demand that every man upon this God's earth, and under the earth, and in heaven and hell and throughout the universe, shall bow the knee and glorify God by calling Jesus Lord and serving and obeying Him with a willing heart. God shall grant it. If it takes ages upon ages, God shall grant it!

We must have it! We shall fight it out to the end, and we will win. The Christ in us shall win. Sin shall be abolished. Disease, death, pain, and hell shall pass away. This victory must be fully accomplished in the firstfruits first. The Day is at hand. Then, O Christ, and then alone, wilt Thou see the travail of Thy soul and be satisfied. Then, O Christ, and then alone, can we be satisfied; when the last rebel has bowed at Thy feet, and there is no more Fight; for there is no more Devil anywhere. Hallelujah! God shall reign forever, the reality of creation! It is a living hope; this hope that, at last, every poor sinner will have heard the glad sound and that at last every poor spirit in earth and heaven and hell will bow before the Christ, and will own His sway, and there shall be harmony and peace and unity everywhere, for God shall be All in All. That is my hope.

WHO MADE THE DEVIL?

Yes, my friend, there is a Devil — but the Devil of orthodox Christianity is but an invention of the imagination of man. What people say about the Devil and the testimony of scripture about him are two altogether different things. Well did the apostle warn, "[Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils](#)" (I Tim. 4: 1). "Doctrines of devils" does not mean necessarily doctrines spawned by devils, rather, doctrines about devils. The theologians and saints of the middle ages spent aching hours working out the shapes, sizes and special responsibilities of the various demons that Satan commanded. There was even a demon called Ukobach, who was credited with the invention of fried food! Many of the contemporary teachings on demonology are straight out this Dark Ages superstition. The whole system of demonology which came to us from medieval times had its origin in the idea of animism which influenced the thinking of the pagans in early history. They believed that all nature was commanded and controlled by invisible spirits upon whose capricious whims all events relied. Life in those ancient times was a constant struggle with the elements over which men had no control. The unpredictable behavior of the sea, periods of drought or storm, the appearance of volcanoes and the titanic upheaval of earthquakes were all viewed with awe and fear. All these phenomena, benevolent or destructive in turn, were gradually seen to be under the control of spirits "just happen"! The reason some have held the view that Satan was originally an angel is because it seems to relieve God of the responsibility for evil and sin in the world. When they are asked whether a good God created a bad Devil, they can reply: "No, He did not create the Devil; He created a beautiful and powerful angel who later became the Devil!" This sounds good on the surface, but when the searchlight of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God shines in our hearts, this line of reasoning is seen to be but shallow inductions of the natural mind.

How COULD an all-wise and holy God create an evil Devil? Our reply to that is another question: If God, all-wise and all-knowing, created a being and designed within this being the inherent ability and potential to become evil — a will capable of rebelling against Him — and if in His omniscience He knew beforehand that this creature would become evil, is God then any LESS responsible for the Devil? If, on the other hand, we say that God created a holy being and did not know he would become evil, then God is not omniscient and the Devil got a step ahead of God! If the Devil could do something back there that was outside of God's plan,, which God did not know he would do, then HOW CAN WE BE SURE HE MIGHT NOT PULL A FAST ONE ON GOD AGAIN! Ah, beloved, such carnal reasoning is an affront to the majesty of the Most High God! Is it any less thinkable that God would create an evil one than to suppose that He would create a holy one with the God-given ability to become evil? In either case, there is absolutely no way to absolve GOD from the responsibility for the existence of the Devil!

That "all things are of God" is declared again and again in the Bible. Did not the Lord say to Pharaoh, that man of rebellion against all that was of God, "Even for this same purpose have I RAISED THEE UP, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth." (Rom. 9: 17). The infinite wisdom of God's mind cannot be searched out by these puny little heads of ours. We must discard our childish theology and bring our minds into harmony with the mind of Christ. We must begin to peer through the mighty telescope of God's wisdom as it looks through the vast universe of good and evil until heavenly light bursts with blazing brilliance upon our inquiring spirits and we see with crystal clear vision that God is in all things, and is responsible for all things, including the so-called evil things as well as the good things. Is it not a fearful thing to say that evil is of God? There is nothing fearful about this view unless the TRUTH be fearful! I would not be surprised if some of the compatriots of the prophet Amos may have thought he was speaking blasphemy when by the Holy Spirit he said, "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and THE LORD HATH NOT DONE IT?" (Amos 3: 6). There are untold millions of Christians who do not like to believe that A-L-L- T-H-I-N-G-S A-R-E O-F G-O-D — including evil. They much prefer to believe, as the harlot system has taught them, that in the beginning God made everything "perfect," then one of the "perfect" angels made himself into the Devil, and proceeded to wreck the works of God's hands, so degrading God's beautiful and perfect creation until the Lord Almighty Himself was hard put to the test to discover some way to restore the creation from the clutches of the Devil. And after six long and tortuous milleniums of conflict and struggle, contest and effort, the battle still rages on year after year and generation after generation, the Devil out-foxing God at times, and God getting the upper hand eventually. Childish prattle! Vain imaginations! Carnal-minded stupidity!

Why, oh why can men not believe the simple, unvarnished Word of God." Ah — we have God's own Word for it — His positive statement that HE CREATES EVIL. "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that THERE IS NONE BESIDE ME. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I THE LORD DO ALL OF THESE THINGS" (Isa. 45: 7). God creates evil! It cannot be! But here it is in the Word. What will you do with it, beloved? "We must explain it somehow," the fundamentalist says, "surely it doesn't mean that God creates evil, sin, sinners) devils, or wrongdoing — it must mean that He creates physical evil — famines, pestilences, hurricanes, tornadoes, forest fires, floods, calamities, judgments, etc. which God sends upon mankind as punishment for their wickedness." Not so! The word here for evil is the Hebrew word RA which is used throughout the Old Testament to denote wickedness, sin and wrongdoing. In some five hundred passages it is so used!

As soon as this significant truth dawns upon your enlightened consciousness, the knowledge of WHENCE CAME THE SERPENT will speedily follow. The Word of God is certain and unmistakable. The record is clear and unequivocal. The Holy Spirit emphatically declares, "Now the Serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which THE LORD GOD HAD MADE" (Gen. 3: 1). Two things are here revealed: the nature of the Serpent is a beastly nature — and GOD MADE HIM! Suppose that instead of trying to explain this passage in harmony with some cut-and-dried creed, we let all creeds go and wait upon the Spirit of the Lord to give understanding of what the passage really means. Then, if the creed does not harmonize with the light the Spirit brings, throw the creed away. At any rate, here is the statement in the Word and we will be brave enough to receive it as truth and trust the same One who spoke it to explain it. "The Serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which THE LORD GOD HAD MADE." These words deserve volumes of explanation, but can

you not see that they are filled with the spirit of revelation? God made the Serpent; God made him with a beastly nature, God made him subtle, God made him the Devil and Satan. God made him a murderer and a liar from the beginning! It is completely impossible for any man to truly know and love God until his spirit has been taught that before all things, through all things, in all things, and after all things is God, omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, purposeful, and filled with righteousness, love, kindness, forgiveness and truth. He was before all things and BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST. There is no angel, principality, or power anywhere in all the endless vastnesses of infinity that does not hold his authority by direct appointment of God. In Him all men and angels and creatures live and move and have their being, for He fills all things. By Him and for Him and to Him are all things. From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends, bringing glory to God forever and forever, Amen.

The imagination that a thing can have its beginning in God, and then become something other than what God foresaw, purposed, intended, or planned for it is an absurd assertion that comes from the distorted mind and wild imagination of man and not a truth that comes from the omniscient mind of our heavenly Father, for OF HIM AND THROUGH HIM AND TO HIM, are all things; to HIM be glory forever and

Jesus declared of Satan, "The thief cometh not, but for the steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10: 10). Out of God's own mouth proceeds the assertion, "I have created the waster to destroy" (Isa. 54: 16). We gather from this passage that Satan is a created entity with a definite purpose. That purpose is revealed in the opening words of the above quoted verse: "I have created the smith (the Devil) that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that BRINGETH FORTH AN INSTRUMENT for his work." The "smith" that "bloweth upon the fire" is also the one who heats the furnace seven times hotter! "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery Mat which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you" (I Pet. 4: 12). Our trials and testings are associated in the Word of God with the ministry of Satan. You never thought of Satan having a ministry? "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted (tested) of the Devil. And when the Tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Mat. 4: 1-3). "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, No man can be declared strong until he has been tested for weakness. No man can be proven honest until he has been presented with the opportunity to steal or cheat. No man can be declared virtuous until faced with opportunities with women other than his wife. No man can be an overcomer until he has faced the dreadful foe. Those who are worthy to slay their Goliaths must First have slain their lion and their bear. No man can be an overcoming son of God until he has encountered THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS and come forth victorious! Everything has its right and wrong, its truth and error, its good and bad, its proper use and its misuse, and the one must overcome the other. Sweet must overcome and swallow up bitter, smooth rough, soft hard. Life swallows up death, said Paul in II Cor. 5: 4; and it gets its strength from HAVING AN OPPOSITE WHICH IT HAS SWALLOWED UP. You cannot say a certain yes in a decision, until you have first canvassed the alternatives and said an equally certain no to each of them. The strength of the yes is swallowing up the nos! Not in having no nos, not in ignoring their existence, but in facing them and replacing them by the final yes. And here we have God's perfect wisdom in the formation of the human race and in bringing forth a convenient opposite, the wrong one, the evil one, THROUGH WHOM HE WOULD BRING HIS VAST FAMILY OF SONS TO MATURITY. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He OBEDIENCE by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5: 8). "For it became Him. ..in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation PERFECT through sufferings" (Heb. 2: 10).

The Hebrew word for "satan" is used two ways, with the definite article, the satan, and without the article, The word "satan" simply means "adversary." There is no thought of monstrosity or evilness, but simply opposition. Thus the scriptures speak of "adversary," "an adversary," and "the adversary." It is that which is ADVERSE to ones well being, desires, plans, hopes, goals or causes, whether good or bad, real or imagined. Jesus told His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Peter immediately rebuked Him and opposed His going to Jerusalem, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee." Jesus then turned and said to Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan.-thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Mat. 16: 21-23). Jesus knew from the law and the prophets what He must suffer. Peter unwittingly was trying to get Him to fail in fulfilling the prophecies and plan of God. Peter was opposing Him in

His determination to carry out the mission the Father had given Him, and hence Peter was a satan (adversary, opposition) to the Lord. From the beginning there has been that which has stood in opposition to the life of the spirit in man, and has fully earned its reputation as the most adroit of adversaries. Paul describes it as the flesh warring against the spirit, the carnal mind that is enmity against God. It is the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience (offspring of old Adam). As a man once said, "We have met the enemy, and he IS US." Elwin Roach penned the following helpful explanation: "When the definite article 'the' is used with the word satan, this is not stating the devil's name but is saying this adversary is the chief adversary to whomever it is an adversary to. This is no doubt why the government of Iran calls the United States of America "THE GREAT SATAN";; for indeed, we are THE GREATEST ADVERSARY they have. We stand in the way of their desires, their goals and aspirations of tyranny. The United States of America is like the angel of the Lord, with a flaming sword in hand, who is adversely hindering their evil progress. Therefore, they can rightly say we are their Great Satan, but we are not the Satan that is fixed in the average Christian's mind" — end quote.

If there are those who feel that in these messages on The Serpent the picture I have painted exhibits the prevalence of the darker hues, I am so glad now to literally splash the canvas with flaming colors. And then in the light that the Spirit brings we will discern the true meaning of the momentary process, and the glory that follows. As one has written, "God is constructing a temple, made of living stones, through which to manifest Himself throughout the ages to come, and Satan was created as a chisel and hammer to be used in the construction of this building. The living stones that are even now being placed in this temple have been chosen, says the Lord, in the 'furnace of affliction' (Isa. 48: 10). God, however, is mercy; God is love; God is compassion. He 'is a healer, not a destroyer. It was, nonetheless, necessary that an oven be heated in which to purify the gold — a furnace in which the wood, hay, and stubble were to be burned — but God, in His nature of love, could not perform the necessary affliction. It was for this reason that He created an instrument that was capable of performing this essential action in the lives of men, for in Satan God literally created a chastening rod. If we can realize that behind the acts of Satan is the mighty hand of God working to bring forth gold from these earthen vessels, we can rejoice, as David, in our afflictions and trials and exclaim with him, It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes' (Ps. 119: 7). Praise God! When we begin to see the good that comes from the assaults of Satan on our lives, we are able to appreciate all the more the greatness of our God and the depth of the wisdom of His great mind. He is truly a God of might and power, and all things are in His hand — even this adversary whom we call the Devil" — Connie Asbill.

Ah, my beloved, the FORCE is necessary for growth, and to produce strength, stamina, and endurance. Any living thing that grows up without any opposition is weak and powerless. God's NEW CREATION must be strong and powerful, and anything that desires to be strong, or anyone, must wrestle with a force that is contrary to them. Any man who wants to develop muscular power to be strong, must spend weeks and months and years in vigorous training doing heavy exercises, lifting heavy weights, using the opposing force of gravity to develop his strength. A man who wants to be a great wrestler, doesn't just wrestle when he is in the ring. At his training center he has his wrestling partners with whom he wrestles by the hour. If he didn't do this he would be weak and powerless in the ring. A boxer has his punching bags and sparring partners, with whom he spends hours every day. Those opposing Jones are indispensable to develop strength and technique. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered day after day, may grow large, but it is inherently weak, and if suddenly exposed to the elements will wither and die. But a plant that is constantly exposed to the fierce winds and pounding rains, burning heat and chilling cold, is strong and not s no baby saint, for no one less than God Himself had given testimony that Job was a perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil. God had blessed this man with great wealth and a large family. He had seven sons and three daughters. He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses. His household was very great with many hired servants so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. The thing we want to note is that although Job was wealthy in temporal things, rich in spiritual things, and proclaimed perfect by the Lord Himself, he had not been "tried by fire" as sons of God must be — he was as yet UNTRIED, UNTESTED, and UNPROVEN. In the midst of Job's ordeal of affliction and suffering the spirit of prophecy came upon him and he opened his mouth and spake concerning the purpose of God in it all, declaring, "But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23: 10). Never do I cease to be amazed at how the preachers and teachers, apparently without exception, join their voices in unison with those of Job's contemptible comforters, indicting and blaming poor old Job, charging that God brought all these calamities upon him because he had sin in his

life, or because he was self-righteous, or because of some other appalling fault in Job. The only reliable testimony we have of Job's true state of being is that spoken by the Lord Himself, and HE declared that Job was A PERFECT MAN! Perfect, yes; but untried! His perfection remained to be tested, proven and demonstrated. Now, what does God do but deliberately hand over this perfect and upright man into the hands of Satan to do his worst upon him, only that he should not touch his life. It was because that God desired to test Job that He brought forth "the smith to blow upon the fire." Please note that it was not Satan's idea to persecute poor old Job! Oh, no! It was God Himself who brought, up the subject! There Satan was, presenting himself before the Lord, appearing for duty, and God asked, "Where have you been?" Satan replied, "Walking up and down in the earth" (no mention of Job at all). "Well, Satan," the Lord asked, "have you considered My servant Job? Have you noticed that he eschews evil and fears God? Have you noticed that, Satan?" You can be assured, dear ones, that Satan had noticed Job, but he wasn't doing anything to him.

One of the most glorious testimonies of the preservation of the saints of God is given here in this passage by Satan himself. "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast Thou not made a hedge around him and about his house and about all that he hath on every side?" Praise the Lord! Yes, there truly is a hedge around the people of God, and that hedge is Jesus Christ Himself. The Psalmist recognized and rejoiced in this fact when he said, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, HE IS MY REFUGE and my fortress: my God, in Him will I trust" (Ps. 91: 1-2). "You've put a hedge around him," Satan said, "and I can't get to him!" Then he went on to say, "You must put forth THINE HAND and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." But the Lord, who searcheth the reins and the heart, who knoweth them that are His, knows who can be trusted with affliction, and will not allow any to be tested beyond what they are able to bear. He therefore said to Satan, "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power — in thy hand — only upon himself put not forth thine hand." One can only know God by vital relationship to Him. Job KNEW God! Job knew in his deepest heart that God is good, loving, true, righteous, omnipotent, omniscient, immutable and faithful in all His way. At one point in his trial he exclaimed, "I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth. ...and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God," and again, "I KNOW that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee" (Job 19: 25-26; 42: 2). Being a perfect man Job understood the nature of God, he knew what God is like — how He is. Armed with this knowledge he was unshakable and unmovable as the hand of Satan moved against him. With lightning swiftness the misfortunes fell as tribulation and affliction smote this man of God. All hell broke loose upon him. His possessions were gone. His servants were gone. His cattle, his family, and his dwelling place were as though they had never been. And now he was desperately ill, tormented with pain, and without even a bed to sleep on he lies down in the ashes of what was once his beautiful home to listen to the relentless arguments of his friends, monotonously attempting by lengthy speeches to make a fool of him and prove that his present despair was the result of his own sin and disfavor with God. I do not know how many days their debate continued, but such miserable comforters as these are always at hand, ready to attest that those who have entered the furnace of affliction have been bad examples as Christians, unbelieving, unfaithful, or that they harbor secret sins and so are deserving of punishment. Unless the Lord Himself has convicted them of sin, or lack of faith, or of lack of understanding and applying the Laws of Life, sufferers should pay no attention whatever to them. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence before God" (1 Jn. 3: 21).

in one tragic day all Job's earthly wealth and glory had vanished as a mist before the rising sun. But did Job curse God for all this calamity? Did he even curse the Devil? Was he a fair weather saint without spiritual understanding? No, indeed! He rent his mantle, shaved his head, and falling upon the ground, he WORSHIPPED GOD with the unmistakable words of reverence, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: THE LORD GAVE, AND THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY; BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!" (Job 1: 22). You see, beloved, all external evidence shouted aloud that God did not love Job, that God had forsaken him, that God did not see him, that God wasn't concerned about what happened to him, and that God wasn't just. It seemed that God had now revealed Himself to be the opposite of all Job had experienced and known of Him. But, praise God! Job knew God! He therefore knew that in spite of all the external evidence, in spite of how terrible and hopeless things appeared, God had not forsaken him, God did love him, God did see him, God was concerned about what happened to him, God was in control of everything, and God was just. Ah, this is faith — trusting God's goodness, wisdom and faithfulness in the knowledge that HE has everything in control, that ALL is according to HIS purpose, IN SPITE OF ALL EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY! Faith declares with Job, "Though God slay me, yet will I trust Him," — and

then after being slain — TRUSTS HIM! Job, stripped of all, tried by fire, tested in the furnace of affliction, found that the key to life is not some creed or doctrinal statement of what we believe about God, but that which we KNOW OF HIM by virtue of intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Him. "The trial of your faith is much more precious than gold that perisheth" (I Pet. 1: 7).

It all fits into the Divine economy, not in the sense that God wills evil, but in the sense that He appoints it for a purpose and unto a greater end and overrules it in the great disciplinary and instructive processes of redemption. He "turns the tables" on the Devil — the wrath of men, as the Psalmist puts it, is made to praise God. The flesh, the world, and the Devil for the final vindication of God's government have to be permitted to run their course. Most diseases do. Meanwhile the suffering caused and the immeasurable tragedies are designed to serve God's purposes. We see this, too, in the trials of Joseph carried into Egypt, yea in the passion and death of our Lord Himself. They say, "Thank you, Mr. Devil! for helping to make me a son of God." Surely this is the lesson learned by Job, and this is the lesson being learned by us as we see our earthly dependencies withering as grass before our eyes and passing away. The emphasis of many today in the "Sonship Message" is on life— gaining immortality for the body. That is indeed a glorious aspect of our inheritance as sons of God. But I do not hesitate to tell you that it is not enough! In fact, that message by itself is truth out of balance. It is not mere length of life we seek, but a quality of life— the nature of God! Should I today bypass the grave and carry with me into immortality the inherent weaknesses, faults, idiosyncrasies, passions, lusts, and flaws of character which have dogged my steps throughout my earthly sojourn I would still not be fit to reign as an overcomer over the nations and all things. Not only must we have life, we must have the nature of that life fully developed in us producing the image of God. And we will never reign until we have been thoroughly tested, tried and proven!

The New Testament abounds with this same truth. Did you notice how strangely Matthew and Mark speak of Christ's temptation? "And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. " What a strange statement! The Holy Spirit of God drives the sinless Son of God into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan, the arch enemy of all righteousness, a murderer from the beginning, and the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary for the Son to be PROVEN, to be STRONG, to demonstrate His ability to OVERCOME in these realms before entering into His glorious ministry and the death of the cross. Truly God creates evil and uses it, too, for His glory! The apostle fully understood this great truth and practiced it himself. He instructed the Corinthian believers to "deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (i.e., the flesh life), that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," and he declares in his letter to Timothy that he himself has delivered certain brethren unto Satan "that they may learn not to blaspheme." But the apostle had experienced something of this kind of discipline also, for he says, "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, THE MESSENGER OF SATAN TO BUFFET ME, lest I should be exalted above measure." All this dearly shows that Satan is a force created by God for a specific work, and even that work shall result in blessing for God's children and redound to the glory of God!

Since Jesus is the Pattern Son, all that happened to Him is the example for our lives. Jesus was being prepared to launch His ministry which was to declare that the Kingdom of God is at hand. But true Kingdom ministry requires that all His sons be proven before the authority and power of the Kingdom is trusted into their hands. We must know Who the Source of our life is, and Who is the King of the Kingdom of God. That with which Jesus was tempted in the first temptation in the wilderness was to turn the stones into bread. To turn stones into bread might have been a good idea. Jesus had fasted for forty days and was hungry. Bread was His immediate need. That in itself was not an evil desire — for He had no sooner come up out of the wilderness when He performed a miracle, his first miracle, of the very same nature. Instead of stones, it was water — and instead of bread it was wine — but, pray tell, what is the difference between turning stones into bread and turning water into wine? ABSOLUTELY NOTHING? The difference did not lie in the act: it lay in the motivation! The Father had not instructed Jesus to turn stones into bread. If Jesus had, therefore, yielded to the desire to do so, He would have set a dangerous precedent — He would have acted with a power entrusted Him by God to be used for God — but it would have been apart from the word of God because it would have come "by the will of man" rather than by the motivation of the Spirit of God. It was not a wrong desire — it was the wrong VOICE! The Father gave instruction for the miracle at Cana of Galilee, for Jesus said at another time that He never did anything unless His Father gave it to Him to do. Sons of God do nothing based on needs. If

the directive comes from the wrong source, the whole act of meeting a need is wrong and will prove a futile effort at best. Man's religion is saturated with such good work! Many ministries have been launched, attempting to turn stones into bread, but the vast majority of them have heard from the wrong voice. Good works coming from the wrong source bring forth a carnal thing without life. However, good works that originate from the mind of Christ will indeed be good, and will redound to the glory of God. Thus Jesus demonstrated a vital truth we all need to learn: THE SPIRIT MUST BE THE ONLY SOURCE OF OUR ACTIONS; HIS WILL MUST BECOME OUR WILL!

"For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil" (**Heb. 2: 14**). The word "destroy" does not mean to kill or annihilate, for we know God did not kill the Devil or annihilate him! Destroy, in the original, means "to bring to nought; render powerless; make of no effect" So — through death — the Lord Jesus BROUGHT SATAN TO NOUGHT, RENDERED HIM POWERLESS AND MADE HIM OF NO EFFECT. The Lord came and put upon Himself "the flesh," the body of sin," the "body of death," the "dust realm," the "man of earth," and BROUGHT IT TO THE CROSS that "through death (of the man of dust) He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil." When the flesh is crucified, when the dust of the carnal mind, the man of the earth is put to death on the cross SATAN'S GROUND IS DESTROYED BENEATH HIM, his sphere of activity is removed, his base of operation is closed, he is rendered completely powerless and ineffective. Thus, it is by this death on the cross that Christ destroyed the Devil! When the Son of God came into the world, when He had been tested on every point and had overcome the adversary in all things, He uttered these significant words: "I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coining. And he has no claim on Me — he has nothing in common with Me, THERE IS NOTHING IN ME THAT BELONGS TO HIM, he has no power over Me" (**Jn. 14: 30**) (Amplified). Ah, this is the glory of sonship — nothing in common with Satan! There was nothing in Jesus that corresponded to him and nothing that responded to him! None of the nature of Adam that pertains to Satan. So mighty was the indwelling life of the Father within Jesus that Satan had no power over Him, no place within Him. And, precious friend of mine, when you have died completely to that Adamic life, when there is none of the dust of Adam in you, SATAN WILL HAVE NO POWER OVER YOU, NO PLACE IN YOU. Satan's base of operation will have been destroyed, his sphere of activity removed. God destroys Satan by destroying (rendering inactive) YOUR FLESH.

Dear saints of God, don't believe for one moment that anything in all God's great universe is out of control! God IS GOD. There is NO OTHER GOD. Satan is NO GOD in his own right. Our God IS in full control of every sphere of activity, and the Serpent himself operates directly under the province of God. May the Holy Spirit illumine our minds to perceive the truth that Satan has no power at all except that which God delegates to him. Do you really believe that Satan could cause all the trouble in the world UNLESS GOD HAD ORDAINED IT? My friend, if you believe Satan is a problem to Almighty God, then your God is entirely too small! Satan is no thorn in God's side who made him in the first place, who binds his hands daily, who sets his boundaries and limits his power and marks his path. Oh, yes, those who would be sons of God must OVERCOME HIM. Beloved, when that purpose is accomplished, Satan will have completed his course as an instrument in the hand of God who has everything under control! Hallelujah!

There is only ONE GOD — not two. Yes, Satan is indeed "the god of this world," but those born from above are not of this world even as our Lord is not of this world. Satan enthroned in the temple of the carnal man is "a" god — not THE GOD. There is no power apart from God. Omnipotence has ALL POWER, and our Lord Jesus Christ has ALL POWER in heaven and in earth, and to acknowledge any other power is to dishonor God. Here me now and believe me now or later — G-0-D HAS N-0 ADVERSARY! Satan is not the adversary of God! That is a preposterous misconception of popular religion. God created the adversary for our perfection and testing — he is man's adversary, not GOD'S! The truth is so simple, so plain, a child of ten can understand a principle so apparent, while the learned doctors of theology step right over it and never see it. In relation to God there are no antagonistic powers nor laws, spiritual or material. Either there is no omnipotence, or omnipotence is the only power. Jesus Christ is OMNIPOTENT! He said so Himself. He that is in you IS GREATER than he that is in the world. He IS! Then if Jesus our Lord is Sovereign, and He is, He can do anything He pleases. He doesn't have a Devil that opposes His every move and binds everything He does. He doesn't have a Devil that is trying to take over His whole world that He has created as most people

imagine. HE IS SOVEREIGN! UP IS OMNIPOTENT' "ALL POWER is given unto Me," He said All power is OMNIPOTENCE! He creates His own evil when evil is needed to form and fashion a subject or people or nation He is working on. God does have a NEGATIVE FORCE at work in His creation, a negative dimension of SPIRIT, the adversary of those being conformed into his image, the fiery furnace of refining, the rod of chastening, the sparring partner, the violent storm bending the tree to make it strong. Glory to God! The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth! This is the glorious message of the Sign of Scorpio!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 20 SCORPIO-THE SCORPION [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TWENTY

THE ACCUSER
THE DRAGON IN THE SEA
THE BOTTOMLESS PIT
THERE IS NO DEVIL ANYMORE

For several months we have plumbed the depths and scaled the heights of revelation in the grand drama portrayed by the Sign of Scorpio in GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY. We have seen that the testimony of the heavens and the revelation of scripture are one in every respect in showing to us the great significance of the conflict between the powerful Orphiuchus and the Serpent, that is to say, between Christ and Satan. In this writing we draw to a conclusion these meditations on this scene of conflict and triumph, to pass on to the next celestial Sign and the scintillating treasures of truth it contains for the elect of God in this Day of the Lord.

THE ACCUSER

The various names for the Serpent are most instructive. In the word "serpent" there is the idea of cunning, of slyness, "the wiles of the devil." It is not the thought of monstrosity showing itself in a public way, but diplomacy working under cover and carrying its point underhandedly. In the word "satan" we have the thought of the adversary merely. There is no thought of evilness, but simply opposition. From the beginning there has been that which has stood in opposition to the life of the Spirit in man, and has fully earned its reputation as the most adroit of adversaries. Paul describes it as the flesh warring against the Spirit, and the carnal mind that is enmity against God. The flesh and the carnal mind are neither inanimate objects, but living, energizing realities, truly the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience (offspring of old Adam). The word "devil" means an adversary who slanders, or an "accuser." This title is used throughout scripture, where he is revealed as the slanderer of God and the accuser of man. In that long-ago Eden he slandered God -- "Yea, hath God said! God doth know..." -- and accused man -- "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked...and the Lord God said, Who told thee that thou wast naked?" (**Gen. 3:1, 7, 11**). The Serpent's chatter on down through the centuries has followed exactly the same line -- he has not deviated one iota from his first method of approach. More Christians are defeated by accusation and condemnation than anything else. We will be the victim of a double deception if we cannot recognize either the liar or his lies!

The scriptures draw a wonderful contrast between the intercession of Christ, on the one hand, and the accusation of the Devil, on the other hand. As I have studied the Word of God and been taught by the precious spirit of Truth many things have become evident, one of which is that while intercession may be Godward, the scriptures reveal that the primary thrust of the intercession of the Christ is not Godward at all, but manward, an intercession that is to us-ward, to bring us to God, to draw us to the Father, to work mightily in us, that we might yield ourselves unto Him, to live out the revelation of the Spirit in our lives. The real truth about the intercession of the Christ has been clouded by the corrupted theology of man. I am sure that you, as I, have heard preachers try to describe His ministry of intercession. It goes something like this. Satan, our enemy and the accuser of the brethren, stands before the Father up in heaven accusing us day and night. Satan tells God about all our failings; he enumerates to God every sin we commit in thought, word, or deed. He is constantly, unceasingly, relentlessly and unmercifully accusing us of every shortcoming and weakness. The Father, on the other hand, is portrayed as greatly offended and incensed by our sins, and exceedingly wroth with sinners; a vindictive punisher, somehow obligated by His superior sense of justice to be the avenger of every little thing we do wrong. Many parents have unwittingly darkened the hearts of their little children with threats of the certain vengeance of this God who is a constant terror over the life. "Now don't you do that because GOD will punish you!" And even much stronger things are told to little children. God becomes a mean, harsh, vindictive old man up in the sky with beady little piercing eyes possessing wonderful X-ray vision which can penetrate

into the deepest recesses of mind and heart, and the thickest darkness of night, scrutinizing every thought and action. This God, moreover, is waiting, lurking about everywhere, with a punishing whip of large dimensions!

Enter the Son. You know as well as I do that the church system has always taught that this God of exacting justice and undiminished wrath must be appeased, soothed, turned aside from His furious vengeance, and that this feat can only be accomplished by the bold and insistent intercession of the compassionate SON, our wonderful Lord and elder brother, standing opposite Satan, before the judgment-throne of the Father, as our Advocate, our Lawyer, pleading our cause, beseeching God to be kind to us for His sake, to commute our sentence, and begging for our lives on the ground that He paid the price for the forgiveness of our sins. According to this hypothesis the anger of God can only be appeased by looking upon the bloody sweat and cruel, ugly death of His Son, as He stands there interceding for us. I do not hesitate to tell you that such a teaching is utter rubbish and the brashest sort of nonsense. It springs from the Romish tradition that likens God the Father to a fearful and offended despot, spoiling for the blood of the offenders, and it makes Christ to be the One who pleads with God on behalf of the victim until the Father is consoled and placated. And if it weren't for our Advocate, Jesus, God would listen to the Devil's accusations and really lay it on to us. We could even lose our salvation because of Satan's accusations, if it weren't that the merciful Jesus is there to prevent God from casting us into hell, by presenting His blood on our behalf. Such is a gross caricature of the truth. More than that, it is a stupid absurdity and a horrible blasphemy. Praise God, the Spirit is unfolding Truth in ever-increasing dimensions of glory which magnifies God's glorious nature of love and mercy, His wisdom and power, His goodness and the prudence of all His plans and purposes.

It is my conviction that not even Satan is senseless enough to believe that he could approach OUR FATHER and convince Him to condemn us because of our failures. Nowhere does the scripture state that Satan accuses the saints to God. What it does say is that "the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which ACCUSED T-H-E-M B-E- F-O-R-E OUR GOD day and night" (Rev. 12:10). It is one thing to be accused before, that is, in the presence of, or in front of another person, and another thing altogether for the accuser to accuse you TO the other one. It should be abundantly evident that Satan does not accuse us to God, he merely accuses us before God. It is not the almighty and omniscient God, my brother, my sister, whom Satan wishes to convince of your unworthiness -- it is YOU! Satan has no misconceptions about his ability to persuade God of your weakness and worthlessness, but if he can influence YOU to believe that you are unworthy, that you are a failure, that you are hopeless, that it is impossible for you to attain to the High Calling of God in Christ, that it is beyond the realm of possibility for you to lay hold upon life and immortality; or that God does not love you, leaving you condemned and helpless -- he is thereby able to rob you of all your hope, faith, confidence, joy, peace and victory!

Don't think for one moment, my beloved that this scene is set in some far-off heaven somewhere! Satan is not standing in a red devil suit before the great white throne somewhere beyond the milky way -- ah, he lurks, rather, in the corruption and unbelief of our own carnal minds, in the unrelenting voice of our own distorted conscience, in the perverted reasoning and logic of our silly superstitions about God, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness. The reason why so many saints fail when it comes to the temptations and condemnations of the Devil is that they don't really want to resist Satan. We have been taught in the past to flee from the Serpent, that old dragon that appears as a roaring lion, and this we have been doing all along; but on this Day, this glorious Day of illumination and truth, all of us who walk in the light of this Day will discover that it has been the very Serpent that has been BRUISING YOUR HEELS all these years in your house, causing you to err, to sin and stumble day and night! And it is the very Dragon that has been ACCUSING YOU DAY AND NIGHT BEFORE GOD IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD WHICH YOU ARE! You see, Satan never comes as some hideous monster with horns, a forked tail and a pitchfork. He doesn't blare at you through a loudspeaker. HE COMES IN YOUR OWN DESIRES! HE SPEAKS IN YOUR OWN THOUGHTS! HE TORTURES THROUGH YOUR OWN FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS! The battle rages in the MIND, whisperings out of the dust realm, accusations that shout at you from within. And God is there, too! The indwelling Spirit of God likewise speaks from within, out of the spiritual mind, the voice of inspiration, the spirit of revelation, words of grace and wisdom drop from His tongue, the still small Voice of the Father from within His temple of clay, graciously assuring, "I love you, My beloved son; you are My very own son, and I will be a Father to you; I will strengthen you, I will uphold you, for I am the Faithful One and will complete the good work I have begun in you and present you faultless before My throne." And there, before God in His temple -- within

-- rises the other voice, the voice of the carnal mind, the voice of the flesh -- the Accuser! It is there in the imaginations of the mind, in the heavens of that universe which you are, that Satan the Accuser must be cast down, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God within.

The Devil may accuse us, but God will never condemn. Is God for us, or against us? Is He on our side, or isn't He? "What shall we say to all this? If God be for us, who can be against us? Who can be our foe, if God is on our side? He who did not withhold or spare even His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also with Him freely and graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect when it is God who justifies? Who shall come forward and accuse or impeach those whom God has chosen? Will God, who acquits us? Who is there to condemn us?" (**Rom. 8:31-34**) (Amplified). That wonderful Father! That gracious Redeemer! The most loving and faithful of all beings! He turned my heart back again and restored me into His life. God, the Father, sent Jesus -- the very fullness of His own heart -- sent Him into the world to die on Calvary's cross. God so loved the world that He gave! We did not choose Him, He chose us and ordained us! We love Him, because He first loved us! Who is he that condemns? Not God! What can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? The answer is sure -- there is not one created thing in all the vast universe that can separate us from God's love - certainly not the accusation of the Devil!

What does it mean, that Jesus makes intercession for us? Jesus is our mediator, our intercessor and our advocate; He stands between God and us, but just what is He doing when He does this? Is He pleading with the Father to be merciful to us and forgive us? No, a thousand times no! The Greek word is ENTUCHANO meaning "to meet with, to converse with, to entreat." The question is just this: With whom does the Christ meet, with whom does He converse, and whom does He entreat? God, or man? God so loved the world that He gave His Son for us. God so loved! God gave the Son! Does the Father of love have to be entreated to be kind and merciful and gracious unto us? Listen! "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM...now then we are ambassadors FOR CHRIST, as though GOD DID B-E-S-E-E-C-H Y-O-U by us: we pray (Greek: beg, petition, beseech, intercede) you in Christ's stead, BE YE reconciled to God" (**II Cor. 5:19-20**). Therefore, we find that HIS INTERCESSION IS TO US-WARD, to meet with us, to converse with us, to entreat us, to petition us, to intercede with us, to reveal the Father's heart to us, to bring us back to Father, that we might be reconciled to God; working in us that we might know Him in all His glorious and eternal reality. All this attention of Christ is directed toward us. God does not have to be interceded with for us, it was the invisible and unknowable God who sent the Christ to us, to meet with us, to woo us, to draw us that we and the Father might be one again.

THE DRAGON IN THE SEA

"And the great DRAGON was cast out, that OLD SERPENT, called the DEVIL, and SATAN, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth... and I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the DRAGON, that OLD SERPENT, which is the DEVIL and SATAN, and bound him a thousand years" (**Rev. 12:9; 20:1-2**).

Large sections of scripture, in fact a preponderance of the prophetic books, are couched in symbolic terms, hiding much of the "mysteries" of God in figurative language. This is done quite purposely by the Lord that the unspiritual while "seeing" actually see not and "hearing" actually hear not (Mat. 13:10-17). The careful study of the key Semitic symbols, in which so much of the Word of God is given, is vitally important to the one who would "rightly divide the word of truth." Since the book of Revelation is a "sign-i-fied" or "sign-language" book (Rev. 1:1), we should not be surprised to find that it abounds in Semitic symbols which convey the truth in figurative language.

Just as the title "serpent" in Genesis describes the Devil as wily, seductive, poisonous, and deadly, so the term "dragon" is descriptive of his great power, magnitude, and terrifying monster qualities. Hear what the scriptures say about the Serpent and the Dragon, and it will be very clear that these are one and the same. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven: and behold a great RED DRAGON, having seven heads and ten horns...and the great DRAGON was cast out, that ANCIENT SERPENT, called the DEVIL, and SATAN, which deceiveth the whole world...and they worshipped the DRAGON which gave power unto the beast...and an angel came down and laid hold on the DRAGON, that ancient SERPENT, WHICH IS THE DEVIL AND

SATAN, and bound him..." (Rev. 12:9 13:4; 20:1-2). The Dragon is a fabulous mythical creature that never really existed except in the imaginations of men. They were supposed to be enormous in size, up to forty feet long. They had wings like a bird's, scales like a reptile's, claws like an eagle's, and long tails like an alligator's. They breathed fire. The Dragon always stood as a symbol of wrath and destruction. In Africa and Asia people still worship images of monsters and dragons.

As the subtle Serpent came with stealth into the Garden of Eden defiling with selfhood the hearts of the parents of the human race, making a murderer of Adam's first son, so has he developed in mankind from that small and unimposing beginning to become a monster of gigantic dimensions filling the whole world with religious delusion and fleshly corruption. In Genesis Satan entered Eden as a cunning little Serpent, but in Revelation he has grown into a monstrous fire-belching Dragon in the earth and in the sea. In Genesis Satan is an enchanting Serpent indwelling a mere handful of people, whereas in Revelation he is a "great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns," a composite of peoples, nations, and governmental authorities. So now the network that he runs is huge and powerful and intimidating and dominates the world and the so-called church as well. He is no longer the inconspicuous little reptile of Eden. He is the horn of worldly strength that Jesus claims makes him "the prince of this world." How is it that Satan began as a little Serpent in Eden and ends as a great Dragon in the book of Revelation? Because he dwells in the minds of men and men have so built him up in their minds and attributed to him such power and authority that the little Serpent has been transformed into a great red Dragon! He is not some sinister creature from outer space, nor a powerful, omnipresent spirit. No. He exists in the mind of man -- he's in your mind if you allow him to be! That's why the scripture admonishes: "...neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). How do you give place to the Devil? With your own thoughts!

When Adam and Eve departed from Eden the Serpent was in their hearts, their minds, and in their bodies. It should not be difficult for any man to see that all the unrestrained evils that are running rampant in the world today are but the out-croppings, the fruitage, the increase, yea, the manifestation of the Dragon that is now full-grown from the little Serpent in Eden. This monster dwells within each one of us. It could be explained as the accumulated genetic legacy and cosmic consciousness from hundreds of our ancestors who have lived out of and cultivated the beastly nature. After Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden it was but a short space until the Serpent in Cain slew one righteous man, whereas the Dragon that stalks the earth today in a vast multitude of billions of Adam's posterity has slain millions on the blood-stained battlefields of every continent and nation on the face of the earth, not to mention the untold millions more who have been the victims of crime and violence of every kind, and the saints of all ages who have been viciously persecuted to death. Ah, yes, the little Serpent has become a giant Dragon, stalking and stomping about in the dust of Adam's race!

We need not be surprised at the increase of this satanic power at the end of the age. Can we not see that in every age the degree of wickedness in the earth is proportionate to the INCREASE OF MANKIND? Of a dim and distant age it is written, "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth...God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:1,6). And of our own age it is declared, "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, devils, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:1-4). Two millenniums ago the apostle Paul accurately prophesied, "But the evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13). May the Spirit of the Lord open wide the eyes of our understanding to see the simple and evident truth that as MEN increase in the earth -- THE DEVIL INCREASES! In making this statement, I am fully aware that such a thought runs contrary to long-established views of theology, but we are not in the least concerned with the views of Babylon's theology, for so-called theology is not really the truth of God but the ideas of men. I am concerned only with the truth of God as it is revealed in His Word in the light of inspiration and revelation.

Now we come to an amazing promise which may be hard for the natural mind to interpret, but when men seek the face of the Lord He sends His Holy Spirit to dispel the darkness of the carnal mind that He may reveal to our broken and contrite hearts the things that pertain to the eternal purposes of God. The promise is stated: "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent even

leviathan that crooked serpent; and HE SHALL SLAY THE DRAGON THAT IS IN THE SEA" (Isa. 27:1). The word "leviathan" means literally "a beast dwelling in the sea." In the Hebrew the chief word for dragon is TANNIN and in meaning is synonymous with LEVIATHAN. The translators of the Greek Septuagint used the word DRAGON to render both words. DRAGON is derived from another Greek word, DERKOMAI, which means "sea serpent, serpent of the abyss." Leviathan, the sea-serpent, and the Dragon are thus different aspects of the same being, for note, "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish LEVIATHAN the piercing SERPENT, even LEVIATHAN that crooked SERPENT; and He shall slay the DRAGON that is in the sea." The prophetic type for the victory described in this passage is found in one of the Psalms of David. Speaking of the mighty deliverance of Israel from the troops of Pharaoh, when the Lord divided the waters to provide a passageway for His people, David sings: "Thou didst divide the sea by Thy strength! Thou didst break the heads of the serpents in the waters! Thou didst break the heads of leviathan in pieces" (Ps. 74:13-14). Here the "serpents" plural and the "heads" of leviathan plural speak symbolically of the Egyptians who were energized by the spirit of their carnal minds to persecute and pursue the people of God. Truly, this is the SAME SERPENT THAT DWELLS WITHIN US, the DEVIL and SATAN, the BESTIAL NATURE WITHIN THE OUTER NATURE OF ADAM, that inner force which opposes the Spirit and tries always to bind us to earthly things, keeping us from seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. My soul rejoices with joy unspeakable in the blessed knowledge that God has promised deliverance for all mankind as this SEA DWELLING BEAST is slain with the mighty, strong sword of the Lord -- the WORD (TRUTH) OF GOD!

Before we speak further of this, I would like to point out that throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the raging, restless, surging masses of unregenerate humanity, tossed to and fro by the inner storms of the turbulent nature of fallen man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described the carnal man when he said, "These are raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame" (Jude 13). The beloved John, banished on the Isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on many waters. The angel revealed the meaning of the many waters, saying, "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are PEOPLES, and MULTITUDES, and NATIONS, and TONGUES" (Rev. 17:5). John also saw a vision of a beast rising out of the sea, a beast coming up out of the midst of the multitudes of raging, restless, seething humanity, the sea of man. The natural sea is a great deep, an abyss (Gen. 1:2; 7:11; 8:2; Deut 8:7; 33:13). The Psalmist wrote of this abyss of fleshly men, "They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart is DEEP (an abyss)" (Ps. 64:6). To the enlightened mind of David the depth of iniquity of which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of man to comprehend. The heart of man is an UNFATHOMABLE DEPTH, or, as Jeremiah observed, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it" (Jer. 17:9). While John the Revelator saw the beast (outward manifestation) rising out of the sea (abyss, depth) of humanity (the carnal mind), Jesus expressed the same truth thus, "For from WITHIN, O-U-T O-F THE HEART OF MEN, proceed all these evil things!"

But God, blessed be His wonderful name! Has a remedy for this sea-dwelling beast, Leviathan the crooked Serpent, the Dragon in the sea, for His plan of redemption is directed toward removing this beast with His strong and mighty sword -- the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word (truth) of God! The Word of the Lord declares, "thou rulest the RAGING OF THE SEA: when the waves thereof arise, THOU STILLEST THEM" (Ps. 89:9). Many centuries ago the Spirit of God inspired these beautiful words of promise, "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high IS MIGHTIER THAN THE NOISE OF MANY WATERS, yea, than the MIGHTY WAVES OF THE SEA" (Ps. 93:3-4). Praise God! HE rules the inner raging of the sea and He stills all its tempests! That unstable nature within, so quickly moved by the storms created by the carnal mind, the torrents of passion, the streams of vain imaginations, the waves of frustration and fear, the winds of doubt and unbelief, the turbulent emotions of body and soul -- all are quieted by the Lord, the Spirit, who arises within in peace, confidence, truth and faith to RULE THE RAGING OF THE SEA. And then follows the calm, the state described by Paul, -- "that we be no more tossed to and fro with every wind...but may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:14-15). The Spirit of God within is great peace, overflowing joy, unending love, unwavering righteousness and omnipotent power. It is only necessary then to gain the conscious awareness of the presence and life of God as the essence of our being, and to know that this life is the law and substance of our reality. When your

consciousness is imbued with the Spirit of Truth -- not merely the letter of truth, but the Spirit of Truth -- all inner and outer tempests are stilled, the sea is calmed, and the Dragon out of the sea vanishes over the horizon.

When John beheld in vision the unveiling of Christ -- Christ the Head and Christ the body -- he also saw "a throne set in heaven" with Christ upon the throne. "And before the throne there was a SEA OF GLASS like unto crystal..." (Rev. 4:16). As surely as the raging sea represents multitudes of restless, clamoring, surging, sinning humanity, so does the exquisite sea of glass before the throne of God represent an assembled throng of quickened and transformed saints IN WHOSE HEARTS THE PEACE OF GOD RULES. This great SEA OF REDEEMED MEN is calm and serene, tranquil and quiet, transformed "even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The sea-dwelling beast has been dealt with. The inner nature of man has been transformed, Satan has been bound, and the sea is now calm.

The "Sword of the Lord" is the Word of God, the living and energetic Word, the almighty Word by means of which He slays the DRAGON IN THE SEA. When the bestial nature which once brought forth raging waves of the sea is conquered the sea of man is peaceful and serene, expressing the peace of the Kingdom of God. In the earth today there are two companies of "sea people" -- those of the TROUBLED SEA and the SEA OF GLASS PEOPLE. Thank God, amidst all the trouble, distress, sorrow, problems and pressures of this world system there is a SEA OF GLASS, a people abiding in the peace of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth! These are "before the throne" - willing subjects of the Lordship of the indwelling Spirit. The apostle Paul greeted the Ephesian believers with this fervent prayer: "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1:2). Peace! One of the beautiful titles of our Lord Jesus Christ is "Prince of Peace." The first mark of the Kingdom of God is: Christ as King. If Christ is the Prince or King of Peace, then peace is a dimension of the Kingdom of God. There are many wonderful truths to embrace, endless revelations to inspire and thrill and transform the hearts of God's sons, but none more meaningful or sublime than that transmitted by Paul to the Romans, "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). The Kingdom of God is...PEACE!

The mark of what a kingdom is, is to be seen in the King. Christ now reigns on the throne of the Father, and that throne is individualized as the power of His presence in the heart of every saint. There is an embodiment, a manifestation of the Kingdom; its power is seen in the lives of those in whom it rules. The Christ lives and dwells and rules in our hearts! The blessed firstborn Son proclaimed to those called to be His many brethren: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" Jn. 14:27. As you acquire peace in your heart from God by the spirit of sonship, I have good news for you! You have received a dispensation of the Kingdom of God, for that is what the Kingdom is. As the peace of God reigns in your heart, in the midst of all the problems and pressures, in a world of turmoil and fear, the Prince of Peace has ascended His throne and reigns. Peace is spirit. The Kingdom of God is spiritual because God is spirit, and, never forget, my beloved -- spirit is REAL! Peace is REAL! The Kingdom of God is a spiritual dimension available to men upon this earth. It is within you as the righteous, peace, and joy of the Spirit-rule in and through you. Even now God is bringing "many sons" to walk in the conscious awareness of the Kingdom and minister its glorious and eternal reality to all mankind now and in the age and ages to come.

How the world needs this peace! Men's hearts are failing them today for fear in looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. The land is filled with violence, moral breakdown, broken homes, corruption and evil men in government, gang warfare, rebellion, sorrow and death. The world continually sinks deeper and deeper into sin and ever-increasing degradation, reveling in drunkenness, promiscuity, sodomy, blowing its minds with drugs, deafened and demented in body and soul by the raucous racket called "music", cheating, lying, stealing, raping, murdering, until it has become a seething mass of godlessness and immorality. Ah -- the TROUBLED SEA! How often the raging waves of that sea beat with fury within our own breasts in the form of doubts, fears, frustrations, anxieties, sorrows and confusion. Thank God, there is another sea, the sea of glass, the power of the Lord's Spirit to minister the peace of God in the midst of tempest -- a strong and mighty Word of the Lord with which to slay the Dragon in the sea. This is the message Jesus intended to convey when in the midst of the storm on the sea of Galilee He commanded, "Peace! Be still!" He had the peace within Himself or He never could have imparted it to the winds and the waves. The Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of

righteousness, peace and joy, is within you, precious friend of mine, and is becoming individualized and personified within a people for such a time as this.

As we consider these thoughts, may God almighty grant that His Spirit may instruct us in the way of truth and understanding. When John beheld the Lord coming upon a white horse, followed by the armies from heaven, he saw a sharp sword going out of His mouth "that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 19:15). In the midst of all the confusion and darkness of this hour the Spirit of God is calling out a people for His name. He is training them in the school of obedience and refining them in the furnace of affliction. He is stripping them of self-interest, draining them of self-will, plucking from their hearts all the deceptive ways of Babylon, causing them to abhor the vain efforts of the flesh. These are putting on the whole armor of God, these are dwelling in heavenly places, seated with Christ; these are the army from heaven that follows the Word of God into battle. From within, out of the innermost being, is arising a strong and mighty Word, the absolute truth about God and all things, by which every enemy shall be silenced. "He cast out the spirits WITH HIS WORD" (Mat. 8:16). This sin-weary world shall yet be governed by a glorious company of sons of God, every one in the image of Christ, every one a brother of Jesus Christ, every one infused with His life and invested with His authority, every one a son given "power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy" (Lk. 10:19). The whole earth, as Eden was, shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

These sons shall be able to raise their voices in mighty declarations of authority. This authority is rooted in their own experience. By the understanding of the Almighty they shall have conquered the Dragon of sin and limitation and death in their own lives. Then shall be fulfilled on the grandest scale ever the word spoken by the Lord, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mk. 16:17-18). Some people have thought this meant to be able to handle poisonous snakes without being bitten. Others have supposed it meant that IF you accidentally took up a serpent, as Paul did on the island of Melita, there would be no harm. But beyond all this, let me point out to you one of the meanings of the term "take up" in this passage. Not only does the Greek word AIRO mean to "take up", it also means to "take away." It may just as well be translated, "They shall TAKE AWAY serpents," not take up and handle them. The ENTIRE SERPENT KINGDOM SHALL BE REMOVED, TAKEN AWAY by these mighty believers; yea, they shall slay the Dragon that is in the sea! And it begins now, on the personal level, in our own consciousness.

Thank God, this wonderful victory is even now being established in the experience of a people apprehended of God. How we long for such a day as this for all people and nations! Today we hear much of "deliverance ministries" and many go about "casting out devils" in lengthy sessions of exorcism attended by manifestations such as coughing, vomiting, etc. Some are told they have legions of devils and they are given names like "lazy devil," "false doctrine devil," "lust devil," "gossip devil," etc., etc. We praise God for all who are delivered in any measure from bondages of any kind, but often it is like a man at the mouth of the mighty Mississippi trying to bail out the river with a bucket -- there seems to be no end to the masses of spirits, bondages, problems, and works of the flesh with which people contend. We find, however, that the redemptive work of Jesus Christ is not merely that which deals with the branches of the tree, but is that which essentially must "lay the axe to the root of the tree." That is, it is that which must take action against the Adamic mind, against the Adamic nature that exists in the very root of men's lives. That is why Paul said, "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). It is interesting to note that the word "principalities" is from the Greek ARCHE meaning commencement, beginning, origin. This bespeaks not of the branches of the tree, but the root -- the commencement, beginning, origin or SOURCE of the problem -- not flesh and blood, but the SPIRIT which now worketh in the sons of disobedience! This is the Serpent, Satan, the Devil enthroned in the human nature!

The ultimate warfare lies in that deep inner realm where the source of all things is found. As long as we content ourselves to deal with individual "demons," or to treat "social ills," or to wage war "against sin," or to struggle with the "lusts of the flesh," all of which exist in the external realm of the tentacles, we shall find ourselves ever defeated in even these things. Do not try to reform the outer world of appearances. When you meet with

thievery, drunkenness, adultery, pride, cursing, false religion, worldliness, or any form of degradation, do not look at it, but through it. Do not look with the eyes, with the natural understanding or perception -- look with the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Look through the individual, beholding by the spirit the root and source of the issue -- and there will flow grace to help. We do not deal with people in their outer form or with manifest problems -- we deal with spirit. We are not called upon to heal a person; we are not called upon to reform a person; we are not called upon to heal some terrible disease; we are not called upon to change the outer activity of a human body. We are called upon to minister the living Presence, to impart mercy, love, grace and power. Then the hearts of men will respond! "The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men." That is what we are called to do. Redemption lays the axe to the root of the tree, deals with the strongman who sits enthroned in the nature, pierces the head of the octopus, automatically destroying the power of the tentacles! Speaking of the hour when the sons of God would rise to that place of authority in Jesus Christ, John the Revelator wrote, "And there was war in heaven and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not" (Rev. 12:7-8). Men must rise to that place of understanding, consciousness, and authority in the Spirit wherein the axe is laid to the root -- not to some individual manifestation, some outer expression, some external action, some pesky little "demon" -- but to the ROOT ITSELF: the ADAMIC NATURE. WHERE SATAN'S SEAT IS! In dealing with the root, the tentacles will take care of themselves. This goes far beyond merely "casting out" the negative, it involves such a complete TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND BEING until the negative HAS NO GROUND TO STAND UPON, NO PLACE TO DWELL.

THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the BOTTOMLESS PIT and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and satan, and cast him into the BOTTOMLESS PIT, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him..." (Rev. 20:1-3).

The "bottomless pit" is certainly not a hole in the ground; it is, rather, a Semitic symbol which signifies a state or condition wherein there is no bottom, thus NO GROUND TO STAND UPON. Satan was given "ground" in man's life when the Almighty declared to him, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat..." (Gen. 3:14). Praise God, when our adversary, the Devil, is cast into the bottomless pit, it means that he is circumvented to a realm where he has no ground to stand upon, no base for his activity, and no foundation upon which he can build his work. God is "pulling the rug out from under the Devil" as He renews our minds and transforms our nature, that there be no basis upon which the forces of evil can operate. This indicates such a transformation of being that not only are the works of the Devil destroyed in us, but also it is impossible for him to corrupt us again. Thus conformed to the image of the Son we can say with Jesus, "The prince of this world cometh, and HATH NOTHING (no place) IN ME!"

In those blessed sons of God, joined in Christ as one body, God is raising up a house in which He can dwell and manifest His glory without interference or conflict. When the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, he revealed a truth which lies in contrast to the picture of Satan in the bottomless pit. "...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). There are three aspects of the church mentioned in this wonderful passage: the "house of God," the "church of the living God," and the "pillar and ground of the truth." What does this term "the house of God" mean? When you refer to "your house," you mean the place where you dwell, where you live, where you work out your life, where you are comfortable and at home; and that is just the meaning of the house of God. It is not an empty cliché, it is not a light or loose term. The "house of God" is the place where God dwells, where He lives, where He works out His life, where He is comfortable and at home without any strain or struggle. This house is none other than the church of the living God. Notice that the term here is not merely God, but the living God. He is living! He now dwells in the church, lives in the church, moves in the church, and works out His life, not in some superstitious religious way, but naturally and comfortably in the church. When we say that the church is the house of God, we must have a very deep realization that God DWELLS, LIVES, AND WALKS OUT HIS LIFE in this house!

The true church is not only the house of God, but it is also THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH. The question follows -- What is truth? Do not think that truth means doctrine! Truth is not what you believe about a thing, the truth is the very fact of the thing itself. The word truth means REALITY. Nothing is real in the whole

universe, nothing is truth; everything is but a shadow. Nothing is what it appears to be. All of us could look at the same object, and every one of us might see it differently. Many who read these lines have traveled and seen in the distance a mountain having a certain form, perhaps a likeness to some other object. But as you got closer and drove around the mountain it took on altogether different shapes and the original appearance was not found there at all. Each of us interprets all things according to the finite sense of human mind, in the light of the education, environment, and background of our individual experience and knowledge. To understand that what we see represents only our concept of that which is actually there is important. Everything that can be seen, everything that can be touched, everything that can be possessed and enjoyed is not real -- for creation is but the shadow of God. Only the Son is His image, His out-lying, His manifestation -- all else is but His shadow. The correct understanding of the book of Hebrews makes this very clear. Whatever exists in this universe is but a shadow, not the real thing! What is the real thing? It is CHRIST -- HE is the reality of everything! The food you eat is not the real food, but only the shadow of the real food. The real food is Christ! The physical life you live is not real life, but only a shadow of the real life. The real life is Christ! **"I AM THE LIFE," saith the Lord. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 Jn. 5:12).** If a friend has a photograph of himself, you will say, "This is so and so. But in truth that is not so and so. It is only a picture, an image, and a false image at that. In fact, all images that are not the projection of life itself are false, for living realities are not found in images. Most of what we call images are but shadows, for a shadow is an image. All the types, all the figures, in the Old Testament, as well as creation itself are but shadows of the REALITY WHICH IS CHRIST HIMSELF. Christ is the truth, Christ is the reality of the whole universe. If you just have a doctrine about Christ, you do not have the reality of Christ. And if your spirit has not been quickened by His Spirit, you still do not have either life or reality, for the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, howbeit an unlit candle which gives no light! Christ Himself is the reality, and His Spirit is the SPIRIT OF REALITY.

The people in whom this living God dwells, lives, and moves, is the PILLAR AND GROUND upon which the reality stands. It bears the reality. Within this people the living God dwells, and upon this people the truth, the reality stands. Ah, as the nature of God's people is changed by the Spirit of God Satan finds himself shut out, excluded from their lives, no ground to stand upon, no base for his activity, indeed, HE IS IN A BOTTOMLESS PIT! As new creation people our lives BECOME THE PILLAR AND GROUND of this universal reality, which is the Lord Jesus Christ! In the church God dwells, because the church is the house of God. And upon this people is BUILT THE REALITY OF CHRIST. Redeemed by His precious blood, justified by His grace, quickened by His Spirit, transformed by His Word, we become the base, the sure foundation upon which all the glory of God can be displayed. And on this holy ground is where the saint of God discovers that Satan is bound, securely chained, and a great seal set upon him. This is not a future event -- it is an eternal reality to those who walk in the Spirit. In the story of the Pilgrim's Progress, you will remember that "Christian" was approaching a narrow passage as he traveled toward Porter's Lodge for the night. In the narrow passage he saw two lions but did not know that the lions were chained. Then he was afraid and considered going back, for he thought that nothing but death was before him. But the Porter at the lodge, whose name was "Watchful," perceiving that "Christian" was about to turn back, cried with a loud voice not to fear the lions for they were chained and could do him no harm. So "Christian" warily walked into the narrow passage, trembling for fear of the lions. He heard the lions roar. He felt their hot breath on his flesh, but they did him no harm for they were, indeed, on a chain. "Christian" then clapped his hands for joy and boldly went on through the narrow passage and arrived safely at the other side. Satan, the roaring lion, is chained, my friend! Not going to be -- he IS. Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, the messenger of the everlasting covenant, has chained him and set the seal upon him. And this Jesus lives and dwells and moves in you and me! Sometimes it seems as if the world is full of lions crouched for a spring -- as if there are lots of terrifying things about to happen from formidable adversaries all about. But when we discover the power of the indwelling Christ, we find out that, as terrifying as those things seem to be, they are already chained by God. Springing doesn't get them anywhere.

Hear it! All the reality of the universe is established upon the lives of God's saints! If anyone wants to know what life is, he will see and touch it in God's people. If someone would like to know what love is, what joy is, what peace is, what truth, faithfulness, righteousness, power, glory, wisdom or knowledge is, he will see it and touch it upon and within this people. **"And the government shall be upon His shoulder" (Isa. 9:6).** "Upon the shoulder" means that THE WHOLE BODY BEARS THE WEIGHT OF IT. Jesus Christ is the Head, the mind, the leader, but the power and glory of the Kingdom rests upon His body, the PILLAR and GROUND of the

TRUTH. What a day, when all nations become a bottomless pit for Satan, and he has no more ground in the nature of the human family! I can tell you, dear ones, that already Satan is finding very little "ground" to creep upon in those elect sons apprehended as the firstfruits of God's redemption. Victory upon victory they are gaining as they are changed from men of the dust to men of the Spirit, from the image of the earthy to the image of the heavenly. The reality of His divine life is being built up in their inner man, and even now THEY ARE THE GROUND, THE BASE, THE FOUNDATION OF THE TRUTH, even Mount Zion of which it is written, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth (this) shall not make haste (be anxious)" (Isa. 28:16). Zion is composed of those sons in whom the Christ has been established as a sure foundation; no matter what comes, how hard the winds of adversity blow. How fierce the storm. How overwhelming the waves, how severe the pressures, these REMAIN UNSHAKABLE, FIRM, STEADY, RESOLUTE, UNDISTURBED, CONSTANT, AND IMMOVABLE, rooted in and living out of the Spirit. Upon such a people the government, the authority of God's Kingdom rests! Through the ministry of such a people, praise God, the day shall come when throughout all the earth, in every nation and people and kindred and tribe and tongue THE DRAGON THAT IS IN THE SEA SHALL BE SLAIN BY THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, and God shall in the consciousness of every man be A-L-L I-N A-L-L. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them (the sons of God); and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: IN THE HABITATION OF DRAGONS, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. The BEAST OF THE FIELD SHALL HONOR ME, the DRAGONS AND THE OWLS... because I give drink to My people, My chosen" (Isa. 35:1,7; 43:20).

THERE IS NO DEVIL ANYMORE!

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:3-4). "But even unto this day...the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it (the heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away" (II Cor. 3:15-16).

Can we not see by reading these instructive statements that if we can effectively express outwardly the reality of the indwelling Christ, the world will see God. The Christ is unveiled in and through the members of the Christ body. The good news we are proclaiming is in each one veiled, waiting to be manifested and displayed. If the good news of the reconciliation of God, if the good news of the glory of God, if the good news of immortality and life in Christ Jesus, if the good news of the Kingdom of God is veiled today, my beloved, it is veiled IN YOU! If you will turn your heart to the Lord, the Spirit, you will see Him. As you turn to the life of the Spirit within the veil begins to be rent, the mind begins to open, the mind-set that has been locked in spiritual ignorance and unbelief at once begins to be unlocked. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, IN WHOM the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them." The word "lost" is from the Greek APOLLUMI meaning to die or perish. The good news is hid or veiled to those who are still dying or perishing. Are you perishing? Is it not because the good news is yet veiled to you -- is not living and energetic in your experience? A few verses further on the apostle explains, "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (II Cor. 4:16).

It is now time that the prince of this world be cast out, the spirit of blindness in men's minds, which veils the glory of the Christ within. It is time for the Son of man to be glorified. Turn, O man, and behold the Lord! See the Lord as He is in His temple! The god of this age doesn't want this for any man. The god of this age is old Adam, the outer man, the man of your first birth, the man of flesh, who minds earthly things. It is your manhood, your humanity that does not want to fully see Christ, because for you to really see Christ is to give up all the reasonings, preconceptions, understanding, knowledge, decisions and the pursuits of the flesh to find that life-source which is the antithesis of SELF. The Adamic mind of selfhood will seek to keep you looking away from the tree of life by every means at its disposal. Contrary to what some teach, Self is not the Spirit, for except a man deny Himself and take up his cross he cannot be the disciple of the Christ. Self will blind you so that you will not turn to the Lord. Why must the prince of this world be cast out? So that the light of the glory of God, who is the very IMAGE (GK: CHARACTER) of God, may shine to men!" The character is in you, it is in the Christ, in your spirit. When you behold this Christ within the glory of Christ begins to shine and the veil is done away; the character of God is seen by all about.

The one thing that terrifies the forces of darkness is the fear that some day those who believe in Christ will wake up to the dynamic potential in the life of the Spirit within them and begin to live fully out of that realm. When this happens, the great problems that plague mankind will disappear. Ignorance will go; sin will go; disease will go; limitation will go; Satan will go; death will go; bondage of every sort will fade away and the Kingdom of God will be demonstrated in men. What a hope! What a day! And the wonder of it all is that this day is even now breaking in the hearts and lives of God's elect! I proclaim to you that the crisis hour in the history of the world has come, and God's people must now arise and shine and courageously take hold of life and bring deliverance to the whole world. Truly, we have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this!

Most of the Lord's people have an image of Jesus. They think they know just what the Lord looks like. But the image invariably corresponds to the idea of what He was when He was here in the flesh. But there isn't a single person in all the world today who can know just what Jesus might look like. Until they get rid of that image, they are going to have a very limited conception of the Christ. When the image goes and people begin to see Him as He really is, then our conception of Him will be enlarged beyond anything we can imagine. Now, just as most of God's people entertain an image of Jesus, SO THEY HAVE ONE OF SATAN. This image, too, must go before any of us can see things correctly. When all of the seventy came back to Jesus with the report that even the demons were subject unto them in the name of Jesus, He counseled them not to rejoice in that fact, but to rejoice in the fact that their names were written in heaven. Then the Lord announced, "**I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven**" (Lk. 10:18). The preachers tell us that this refers to the time, away back before the foundation of the world, when Lucifer was cast out of heaven. Orthodoxy has long taught that Satan was, in the beginning, a high and beautiful archangel in heaven. The theologians and preachers recite over and over how Satan was originally "the anointed cherub that covereth...the most beautiful and wise of all God's creations!" This being was, so they say, the ruler and leader of the angelic beings and apparently led them in their praise of God and shouts of joy...the greatest creature God ever created, one who had unequalled strength, wisdom, beauty, privilege, and authority, and was next to God Himself. This blameless, perfect one, named Lucifer, was created without any form of evil and with the greatest intelligence of any created being. Then, we are told (Oh, the wonder of it!), this Lucifer, suddenly realizing how beautiful and intelligent he was, became inflated with pride and power and his heart was lifted up in rebellion against God. According to the story, Lucifer gathered one-third of the heavenly angels to his cause, mustering an army with which he planned to knock God off His throne and supplant himself as god and king of the universe -- and there was war in heaven! Luckily, God won, cast Lucifer out of heaven and he became, instead of an holy angel, the Devil that he is.

It is nothing short of amazing that such a doctrine could have enjoyed such widespread acceptance in the light of the plain teachings of the scriptures on this subject. Any man who fails to discern between facts and fables, and who opposes and rebels against facts, is a fool. Fools manifest their true state by resisting and ignoring facts. Please remember, there is a world of difference between facts, beliefs, and fantasies. I believe the core of our natural earth is hot, perhaps molten. But no man knows anything about the true conditions down there. There is no possible way of ascertaining or demonstrating the truth or falsity of my belief. So it remains merely a belief: it may be true, or it may be false. On the other hand, if I thought our sun were a disk painted red, that would be a fantasy, just a highly improbable or irrational idea of my own. But facts are altogether different. They are actualities, realities, whether they can be demonstrated as such or not. Ice is cold. That is a fact which can be demonstrated. The earth is round. That fact has through recent centuries been conclusively demonstrated. It is neither a belief nor a fantasy. Fire burns; one must have air to breathe; these are facts, and, only fools will oppose or resist them. Now we are going to state some facts. Let us contrast what men say and believe with what GOD says!

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is not this the MAN that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?" (Isa. 14:12-17). It should be clear to every enlightened student of God's Word that all truth has applications on different levels. It is my conviction that the

inspired statements in the afore quoted passage may be applied on the historical level, the prophetic level, the spiritual level, and the personal level. In its first and historical application the one called "Lucifer" refers to the literal king of the Kingdom of Babylon in the days of Isaiah who -- although mighty in political and military power and the most exalted ruler among nations -- would fall just like other rulers of the past. The prophetic application points to the king of Mystery Babylon, the chief antichrist of the world's apostate church system, who is not recognized for what he is, but is lauded as the greatest religious leader in the world, by whom untold millions of those who name the name of Christ are deceived, as it is written, "And the whole world wondered after the beast." The spiritual application is found in the fall of man from his original position of glory, eminence and dominion. The message is clear -- the subject of Isaiah's prophecy is a MAN -- not an angelic spirit-being! "They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this THE M-A-N that made the earth to tremble...that made the earth as a wilderness: that opened not the house of his prisoners?" (Isa. 14:16-17).

"Lucifer," instead of being the name of an angel who became the Devil, was THE NAME THE ANCIENT'S GAVE TO THE MORNING STAR. Pliny, a noted historian of antiquity, says, "Before the sun revolves, a very large star...when in advance and rising before dawn receives the name Lucifer, being another sun and bringing the dawn..." Lucifer, the light-bringer, is the Latin equivalent of the Greek word PHOSPHOROS, which is used as a title for Christ in II Pet.1:19. Peter had been discussing the glorious experience that he, along with James and John, had had with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. Speaking of the voice that spoke to them there, he said, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well to take heed...until the day dawn and the DAY STAR (Greek: phosphoros; Latin: Lucifer) arise in your hearts." I do not have the ability to make this truth any plainer than Jesus Himself made it when He called Himself the PHOSPHOROS or the LUCIFER in **Rev. 22:16**, saying, "I AM...the BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR." In the messages of Christ to the seven churches in the book of Revelation a special promise was always given to him that overcometh, but to the church at Thyatira He gave a promise that is worthy to fill every page of this article. May our Lord give us the spirit of revelation to understand what He said: "And he that overcometh...I will give him THE MORNING STAR" (**Rev. 2:26, 28**). Just think of that! My beloved, ponder if you will -- whether we call it "Day Star", "Morning Star", or "Lucifer"-- it is all the same. This "rising of the Day Star" in our hearts is the out-raying of the Christ within, for, you see, HE IS the Day Star! It should be obvious to every spiritual mind that what is recovered through the redemption of Jesus Christ is WHAT ADAM HAD IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD. Adam in the image and likeness of God was so indwelt by light, so a partaker of the Christ Life, that he was himself a DAY STAR -- the shining one of creation!

Truly, Adam is the man who made the earth to tremble, who shook kingdoms, and made the earth a wilderness, for it was to him and him alone that these terrible words were spoken, "Cursed is the ground (earth realm) for thy sake" (**Gen. 3:17**). As we meditate upon these sobering words of judgment, we cannot imagine words that more exactly describe the tragic picture of the fall of man from his exalted position in God. Driven from the garden, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth; the whole earth realm (cursed) with sorrow, sin and death for his sake; no more could Adam hear the voice of God walking in the cool of the day -- he no longer possessed spiritual ears. No more could Adam eat of the blessed fruit of the tree of life -- he no longer possessed a spiritual mind. No more could Adam behold the glories of that heavenly realm -- he no longer possessed spiritual eyes. He who had never known anything but the rest of God was to labor and toil in the earth. The heavens were closed, the communion with the spirit was broken, and Adam found himself stripped of the life and light and dominion that had been his -- he no longer possessed a spiritual nature. What a loss! What unspeakable loss!

In its personal application the king of Babylon -- Lucifer -- is you and me and everyman by our first birth -- the identity of old Adam. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! When Adam fell, the loss was both his and upon every descendant of his -- all were cast into a wilderness of spiritual desolation and shut up in the prison, house of sin, suffering, limitation and death. As one has written, "Now poor, sin-laden mankind darkened in mind and impoverished in spirit, is forever spending money for that which is not bread and laboring that which satisfieth not. Vainly they imagine that their thirst can be slaked by partaking of the stagnant waters of earth's fleshly cisterns. Like lost sheep they wander through the wilderness of life seeking satisfaction and finding none. Pace after place they roam in their pitiful search for the fountain that satisfies, but find it they never can until at last they come to Christ. They fill the bars and nightclubs to buy wine and strong

drink that can do no more than dull their senses, unleashing their passions and rage. They throng the places of pleasure in their unending longing to satisfy the thirst that is within them. They fill their lives with the vanity of things and more things, only to find that all they have attained rises to mock them in the end." Ahh - how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!

When the Lord Jesus told his disciples that He beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven, He was saying that he had seen Satan FALL OUT OF HIS (JESUS) HEAVEN, or actually Jesus had seen Satan FALL BEFORE HIM, and become subservient to Him in the realm of the Spirit. So far as Jesus was concerned Satan was no longer in possession of any authority whatsoever. Jesus spake not of an historical event, but a living reality that He had seen occur within His own consciousness, life and ministry. THIS WE ALL MUST SEE AND KNOW if we are to have any sense of victory in our lives, if we are to truly walk as the sons of God. We must realize that if Satan has fallen he is not the almost-almighty head of a kingdom, but he has been stripped and his kingdom has been broken. This must be embraced as a wonderful reality within ourselves. When we realize that Satan has fallen before THE CHRIST WITHIN US, then we really will be set free! When this truly happens we are on our way -- not to a rapture -- but to that high and holy position that God has created for us and determined to bring us to.

To those who have Satan yet in their consciousness elevated to a position of power and who carry in their thinking an image of him, HE HAS NOT AS YET FALLEN. Such people have made a god of him, but in your life, precious one, He is to be cast down, and you are to know once and for all that THERE IS ONLY GOD WHO RULES ALL. If God is controlling a part of this world and Satan is running another part, may God indeed help us ! We would be under two governments and our lives would be a hell. But to some of us, at least, SATAN HAS FALLEN and has ceased to be a king in our domain. When this truth is revealed in power and glory within your deepest heart, for you, at last, THERE WILL BE NO DEVIL ANYMORE!

In closing this message I would share a beautiful and significant vision received by a sister in Argentina to whom the Lord has given abundance of revelations. I do not feel to comment, but leave it for the Holy Spirit to interpret this to your own heart. She relates...

"Rapping me in His love, He carried me away in spirit into the world of harmonic life and light. There, after His usual welcome of love and taking away my fears, He took me to look. When I did so, I saw what seemed to be dark, evil-looking teeth which were sharp, pointed, long and ugly. Coming out from these teeth was something very repugnant which He named "poison". Then God took something that was a part of His very own being and gave it to those ugly, hollow teeth that looked like great serpent fangs which were pouring out poison. This poison from the fangs flowed into that part of Himself which God had given to them, and in this way were fully satisfied. Flowing into the part which God had given, the poison was fully satiated. This part -- which had come forth from Him and was a part of His own being -- completely absorbed all the poison that these great Fangs poured forth" -- end quote. What a Word!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 21 SAGITTARIUS-THE ARCHER

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TWENTY-ONE

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
THE SEALED BOOK
WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK
THE FOUR HORSEMEN

We come now in our study to the fourth in the Signs of the Zodiac -- SAGITTARIUS. The word Sagittarius means THE ARCHER. He is a Centaur with the body of a horse and the torso of a man. The human portion of the Centaur is a man with a bow and arrow and he is drawing the bow and aiming the arrow at Atares -- the very heart of the Scorpion. The apostle Paul in the book of Acts (Acts 17:28) quotes from "Diosemeia, a great poem by the Greek poet Aratus, which sets forth the whole picture of the Zodiac into verse. Not many are aware that Paul quoted from a famous poem about the Zodiac -- and appealed to the words of that poem as confirmation of the fact that man is the offspring of God! When Aratus comes to the section on Sagittarius he says,

**Midst golden stars he stands refulgent now,
And thrusts the Scorpion with his bended bow.**

This is the picture of One who in refulgent glory rides forth upon a white horse with a bow, going forth as the conquering King to conquer and to conquer. It is the war between Christ and Satan. We hear much talk about "Star Wars." My beloved, the real star wars are written in the starry heavens by the fingers of the omnipotent and omniscient God of the universe. The constellations of the heavens depict the spiritual battle behind all earthly battles. The one who is conquered is the Scorpion -- the Prince of darkness, the Lord of sin, sorrow and death. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Conqueror of the Scorpion!

Sagittarius has been discovered by the American astronomer, Harlow Shapley, to be the center of the Milky Way galaxy. I was not previously aware of that fact. But I think it is particularly interesting to note that here is the first great picture of Christ the Redeemer going forth to destroy Satan. It turns out that Sagittarius (the archer, the conqueror) is the center of our galaxy, as well as Christ the great Redeemer. To my mind that is indeed a fascinating observation. You see, not only is our galaxy the launching pad for God's redemptive and reconstructive program on behalf of the whole creation, but the fact that Sagittarius is located at the center of our galaxy bespeaks of a truth wondrously set forth in type and symbol not only in the celestial heavens, but also in the Garden of Eden, and indeed throughout the revelation of the scriptures. We have discussed this in a previous message, but let me reiterate for a moment. Against the background of the picture of the Garden of Eden it is related how man was put into this Garden in order to live in it and how two trees stood in the middle of the Garden: one the tree of life, the other the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And upon these two trees IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN the destiny of man was to be decided. Two trees in the middle. First of all there is the tree of life: LIFE, abundant, immortal, incorruptible, eternal! It was IN THE MIDDLE -- that is all that is said about it! It was right there in man's consciousness, in man's nature. The life that comes forth from God is in the middle. This means that God, the source of life, is in the middle. Adam's life was to come from the middle which was not Adam in his self-consciousness, but in his God-consciousness. This means that with God as his center man would have life. Christ was the center. It means that man was created and formed with the wonderful capacity to LIVE IN THE SPIRIT and WALK AFTER THE SPIRIT. **"For...to be SPIRITUALLY MINDED is life" (Rom. 8:6).**

But, like the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil also stands in the middle of the Garden! To this tree is attached the command not to eat of it upon penalty of death. Death in the middle. Within. In man's very nature. Thus it is declared with unquestionable certainty that man was formed with the capacity to LIVE IN

THE FLESH and WALK AFTER THE FLESH. "For to be CARNALLY MINDED is death" (Rom. 8:6). One of man's inherent potentials was to know Self as the source and center of his life. But alas! Self would not bring life, it would mean death. Man could make the world of appearances, the physical realm, mortal consciousness, the bodily senses and appetites his center but death would be found to dwell in that center. Life and death were in the middle. Two trees, two realities IN THE MIDST of the Garden of man's being and experience. Both are in the middle -- within man. One or the other is every man's center, the plane of his consciousness, the sphere of his existence. But mark it well -- both cannot be the center of any man's life! He who eats of the tree of life will find that the death realm will come to have no more dominion over him. And he who eats of the tree of death will discover that he becomes alienated from the life of God. Thus, both trees are in the center of man's life but both cannot be the center of his life! "For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). And I have good news for you, my friend. CHRIST IS VICTOR! The tree of life shall win the battle! Life shall triumph over death! Sagittarius, the Archer, riding forth conquering and to conquer, wins the victory! Sagittarius is the center of our galaxy -- the all-conquering Redeemer! As it is written, "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). This wonderful victory is wrought out right here within our earth -- in the deepest recesses of mind, will, emotion and desire. Christ comes in making war with every false image, smiting every lie and misrepresentation of His character, and conquering every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

Long centuries ago the sweet singer of Israel penned these inspiring and prophetic words: "My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever. And in Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things. Thine arrow's are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under Thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy Kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad. King's daughters were among Thy honourable women: upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir" (Ps. 45:1-9).

Commenting on this beautiful passage Joseph A. Seiss wrote: "These words are from one of the most glowing of the Psalms, in the writing of which David's heart boiled with goodly words. It is marked: 'To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah -- Maschil. A song of loves. The lily-instrument, the master-performer, and the whole body of singers were called into requisition for its rendering. As a sublime ode it was to be given with the sublimest skill, for it relates to the loveliest of heroes in the loveliest of His aspects, offices, and relations to His people. This hero is none other than the promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His royal majesty and glory subsequent to His resurrection, and as to be hereafter revealed. When on earth He was despised and rejected of men, but here He is celebrated as 'beautiful, beautiful, above the sons of man,' endowed with every grace and invested with all authority and power. When on earth He was meek and non-resistant, not breaking so much as a bruised reed; but here He is contemplated and addressed as a mounted warrior, riding as a king, armed with bow and arrows, shooting down His enemies. His character here is that of the Mighty One, girding Himself with honor and majesty, and going forth to victory. John, in his visions of the future, beheld 'a white horse; and He that sat on him had a bow; and He went forth conquering and to conquer.' It is the same divine Hero, in the same character, offices, and work, in both instances. He has a crown, a throne, and a cause -- which cause He enforces with invincible majesty. His former sufferings are now turned to aromatic perfumes upon Him. Out of the ivory palaces He is gladdened with the sound of a harp. And in glory and triumph He rides forth unto victory, hailed by the daughters of kings and worshipped by the queen at His right hand arrayed in the gold of Ophir. The picture is particularly magnificent. We cannot contemplate it without sharing the enthusiasm with which the inspired Psalmist sketched it. But the surprising thing is, that it is also in the Zodiac, and appears at full length in THE SIGN OF SAGITTARIUS! In this sign we have again the double-natured Seed of the virgin, the Son of God as the Son of man. The figure is that of a mighty warrior with bow and arrows, riding prosperously" -- end quote.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Let us now consider the more excellent glory of the King of kings and Lord of lords, whom God has ordained to subdue all things, to bring blessedness to all the earth, and reconciliation and transformation to every man who has lived, or ever will live. The fifth and sixth chapters of Revelation concern themselves with the almost incredible processes of God in Christ effecting this wondrous victory in the hearts and lives of men. Many years before this vision on Patmos John, the beloved, treading the dusty trails of Palestine, beheld in the life of his beloved Master the blazing glory of God in such spiritual warfare in an infinitely greater way than ever any man had experienced, overcoming the compounded powers of the world, the flesh, and the devil, triumphing over sin, death, and the grave. Satan dogged His path and the flesh shouted its claims, but He overcame both the devil and the flesh. At last He lay within the lonely precincts of the tomb, facing the last enemy, the greatest enemy -- death itself. There He met and mastered that enemy, demonstrating within the narrow tomb the awesome power of the Spirit of life over mortality and corruption. There were rock-ribbed walls in the way, and a great stone must be rolled away from the entrance to the tomb; but Jesus vanquished every obstacle and stepped forth from His gloomy resting-place, crowned with the glory of a sublime victory, an eternal triumph, opening up the way to life and immortality to all who are willing to follow Him into the power and glory of the Kingdom of God. Our Lord is a SPIRITUAL CONQUEROR!

Now on desolate Patmos wonderful visions pass before the rapt gaze of the lonely prophet. John, describing the unspeakable wonders he beheld, said, "And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof! And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and He that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto Him: and He went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 5:1-7; 6:1-2).

The book of Revelation is first and foremost a SPIRITUAL BOOK. It is a book of spiritual realities communicated by means of signs and symbols. You will not read the fulfillment of its prophecies on the pages of Newsweek magazine, but you will see them manifest in the lives of men and women and in the great accomplishments of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Word of the Lord in its spiritual meaning does not describe for us the carnal warfare between nations. For what have wars between nations to do with the Kingdom of God? "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds..." (II Cor. 10:4). The battles beheld in spirit by the eagle-eyed seer of Patmos signify spiritual combats, combats between light and darkness, between spirit and flesh, between the carnal mind and the precious mind of Christ, between truth and error, between righteousness and evil, between life and death. A man must experience this combat within himself to become a spiritual conqueror and gain the crown of life. To many Christians the book of Revelation is a hopeless puzzle, so they ignore it. Others consider it the agenda, in a code which they alone have solved, setting forth the dreadful events that will take place at the end of the world. There is a striking thing told us at the very outset of the book -- it is a REVELATION. And one of the reasons that the book of Revelation has been so misrepresented, mis-taught and misunderstood is because men have thought that it was the unveiling of world events in the future. It is not the unveiling of events but the unveiling of a Person who has not yet been seen in all of His glory, beauty and majesty. He is like a statue that has a veil put over it, awaiting the day when the veil shall be removed and he shall be seen in all His fullness.

The very first statement in the book of Revelation is -- "The REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST." It is T-H-E REVELATION, not "revelations" plural, or a series of revelations. Everything in the book bespeaks of the unveiling of Jesus Christ. It is not "The Revelation of Saint John the Divine," as the Bible translators have erroneously titled it. It is the only book in the Bible of which we are told that it is a revelation. It is not that the other books do not contain the same revelatory characteristic; but our attention is specifically called to the fact that this is THE REVELATION of Jesus Christ. This is significant. Many Bible teachers believe that the book

must be one of future earthly events that were to be unfolded, but it is my deepest conviction that this is not the case. The Revelation cannot be intended as a series of historical happenings because it is the revelation of a Person, God and man (the Centaur) -- Jesus Christ. After the Lord Jesus ascended into the heavens, He remained hidden behind the cloud that had received Him on the Mount of Olives. Now comes THE REVELATION to unveil Him. In this revelation the Christ is seen in the glory into which He has entered. Jesus Christ is the central figure of the whole vision that is unfolded. HE, not the future of Israel, or the destiny of empires, or the march of history, or the end of the world, dominates the book. The Revelation sets before us a glorious Person, with the veil removed from our eyes so that we may look upon Him. "Revelation" is the Greek word APOKALUPSIS. This word APOKALUPSIS is a derivative of APOKALUPTO. APOKALUPTO is a compound word composed of APO, meaning "off" or "away," and KALUPTO, meaning "to cover up." Thus, APOKALUPSIS means to take the cover off, to uncover, unveil, reveal or disclose. It implies the drawing away or removal of everything that veils or hides, and therefore it is always opposed to concealment or secrecy, as in the following passage: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed (uncovered)" (Mat. 10:26). From this we understand that all that pertains to this writing of John is to reveal, unveil, and uncover Jesus Christ -- all that has been hidden or obscured to our thinking, consciousness, understanding or experience is to be plainly grasped and made a glorious and eternal reality. As the scenes depicted in the book are experienced truly and spiritually within our lives, Jesus Christ will emerge within our consciousness and experience demonstrating in and through us the fullness of His love, character, wisdom, power and abilities. Paul wrote to the saints at Colosse that the mystery which had been hidden from generations and ages past was now to be made manifest to the saints, which is, CHRIST I-N Y-O-U THE HOPE OF GLORY. Understood as the revelation of Jesus Christ in and through His body, immediately the book is changed from a prophecy of cataclysmic and apocalyptic end-time events, to a progressive unfolding of the very life, victory and triumph of the Christ in His people and unto creation. Every scene within the book, of the woes, thunders, earthquakes, conflicts, vials, beasts, etc., in all of their sundry and various manifestations, are all to serve but one purpose, and contribute to but one end, namely, TO BRING FORTH THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. And as this revelation comes to its magnificent conclusion, He shall stand revealed, uncovered and manifested to the utmost of the unbounded heavens in and through His own. "We don't know what we shall become in the future. We only know that, if reality were to break through, we should reflect His likeness, for we should see Him as He really is" (I Jn. 3:2, Phillips). Reality shall break through! And we shall be like Him! "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:13). Paul writes of "waiting for the coming (revelation) of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall confirm you unto the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:7-9). There is a grace that is brought to us by the revelation of our Lord, it is a grace which will climax all the processings and travail, and bring us into the ultimate realm of His glory -- the fullness of His abundant life. God is faithful! He will confirm us unto the end -- the full redemption of the purchased possession - complete salvation in spirit, soul and body -- the revelation of HIS LIFE!

The great Italian sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini, told of receiving a block of marble with one flaw. Because of this flaw, no artist would submit a design -- except one. In the public square of Florence a fence was built around that piece of marble, and a little shack was erected for the artist. For two years the sculptor labored. Then on a certain day a vast multitude of the citizens of Florence assembled in the public square; the fence was torn down, and the shack was taken away. At this unveiling all of Florence beheld the result and marveled. Since then, Italy and all the world has marveled at Michelangelo's "David". In that block of marble was a statue; others did not see it, but Michelangelo did. And, precious friend of mine, in the lump of clay which is you, the almighty Father sees an image too -- the image of Jesus Christ! And God is working unceasingly and tirelessly to form the image of His Son in you. No truth has come with more soul-gripping force and power to the elect of the Lord than the beautiful hope of sonship to God. Well indeed may we yield ourselves into the hands of heaven's skilled sculptor that HE may form His Son in us, for the mind of omniscience has ordained that that sonship should be the hope of all creation. It is for sonship that the whole creation groans in a sort of universal travail while it eagerly waits to see the glorious sight of God's sons coming into their own (Rom. 8:22-23). It is the Son in the sons -- the revelation of Jesus Christ! There is coming a day when all the glories of the Son of God will be revealed and manifested in the sons of God. With a heart of understanding and a spirit bright with the hope of God's eternal purpose the apostle penned these meaningful words, "...it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to REVEAL (apokalupta; unveil) HIS SON I-N M-E" (Gal. 1:15-16).

One can never understand correctly the book of Revelation if his eyes are engaged with some side issue. The unveiling of "the beast" and his "image" and his "mark" are side issues. That is, they are merely revealed as the result of the flooding light issuing forth from God's blessed Lamb. When Jesus Christ is revealed, in that true light of God, the brightness of His glory, the negative realm appears AS IT IS, for what it is, that it may be duly brought to judgment, dealt with and eradicated from our lives. The fiercest beast I have ever known in my life was the beast of old Adam's nature, the carnal mind, the seed of the serpent lurking within my own bosom. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? How I praise God with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the penetrating light of heaven's Lamb which uncovers the subtleness and deceitfulness of this wild beast raging within MY EARTH! Years ago we lived in Cuba; how well I remember the huge cockroaches that used to invade our home there. At night they marched right in from the outside like an invincible army. They came by the hundreds. In the night hours you had only to turn on the light and their presence was revealed. And as soon as the light shone upon them, revealing their intrusion, they would run for cover, fleeing like a discomfited troop. In like manner, it is not the uncovering of these dark and sinister forces in the book of Revelation that constitutes the revelation of Jesus Christ. Rather, it is the revelation, the unveiling of the blessed Lamb which penetrates our darkness and exposes all that is not of God, that it might be once and for all dethroned from mind, heart and action. As the daylight chases away the darkness -- in the very nature of things -- so the unveiling of Jesus Christ is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God destroying, removing, swallowing up the power of the negative realm in us. The daylight fills the world just as truly as the night darkness ever did. Even so, the light of God shall fill the world, even our world, and the world outside of us as truly as the darkness of sin, sorrow and death has done. Before it is all over, every creature in heaven, earth and hell shall have had a revelation of the Son of God.

Not only is this the Revelation of Jesus Christ, but of this Revelation the Seer of Patmos declares, "...and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John" (**Rev. 1:1**). The word "signified" could be read SIGNIFIED, for the Greek verb translated "signified" is the word from which the Greek noun "sign" comes. Signified means literally, "to give a sign, told in signs, to communicate by means of signs or symbols, indicating that the living message of this closing book of the Bible is set forth in sign language, or symbols. Signs have a very large place in the scriptures, as any concordance will show. And signs were divinely given to illuminate, reveal, disclose -- not to mystify or conceal. They were given to be studied, interpreted, and understood. The Revelation of Jesus Christ is set forth by many signs, and it has puzzled or baffled many; yet, as has been pointed out, the very title of the book shows that it is not a book of concealment but of revealing. The eye is quicker than the ear. And there is therefore no language so expressive as the language of symbols. The crowd will better catch your meaning by one apt symbol than by a thousand words. With few exceptions the symbolisms employed in the book of Revelation appear in the other books of the Bible; so it should not be too difficult to understand that the living realities this book is designed to convey sum up and bring to a climax in God's elect the many themes already traced throughout the Old and New Testaments.

You will understand a great truth when you understand that a sign is never the reality -- it merely points to the reality. The fact that the Revelation of Jesus Christ was communicated to John in the form of signs and symbols shows clearly that there is no "literalness" in the book. When you read of a candlestick it is not a literal lampstand of beaten gold, it stands for a reality, in this case the living church of Jesus Christ. When you read of a lamb it is not a four-legged lamb that is meant -- it is the Christ in His meek, redemptive, life-giving character. There are many symbols in this book; a dragon fights with rivers flooding from its mouth, and a seven-headed beast climbs out of a sea. When you read of mountains, an earthquake, a beast, horns, rivers, oceans, stars, sun, moon, heads, marks, horses, wars, floods, angels, books, etc., NONE OF THESE WILL EVER BE SEEN LITERALLY OR PHYSICALLY UPON THE EARTH OR IN HEAVEN ABOVE. These, with all the other signs in the book, are communications of SPIRITUAL REALITIES expressed in the form of symbols. Years a stranger in town was looking about as he walked down Main Street. Soon a gentleman accosted him and asked what he was looking for. "A Barber's Pole," came the reply. "Do you need support" he was asked. "No. I want the Barber Shop. I was looking merely for the sign. " It was not the Barber's Pole he sought - the Pole was but the symbol pointing to the reality -- the Barber Shop! Never forget as you read the book of Revelation -- the sign is never the reality! When it says an angel flew through heaven, you will never see the angel for he never flew and never will. He is a sign. The literalization of the book of Revelation has given rise to a number of popular myths. Some people believe that heaven literally has streets of gold and pearly gates; understanding not that the city is a people, the gates are an entrance to the Glory of God and the street of gold

is a walking in the divine nature of God. Thank God for the REALITY! As the heavens are higher than the earth, so far does the reality transcend the symbol! Others view Armageddon as the final world war, perhaps a nuclear holocaust, to be fought by a conglomerate of nations in a small and insignificant area of the land of Israel called "the valley of Megiddo," a place where a lot of historical battles took place. "End of the world" stories have been circulating ever since there have been human beings on earth. "Tribulation," "Anti-Christ," and "mark of the beast" theories have been spawned in practically every generation for the last two thousand years. None have ever come to pass. People like to be scared, and some like to scare others. Fear is one of the most powerful tools known to humanity, and has often been misused by religious leaders as by politicians. Notwithstanding its mysterious nature, the book was not written to frighten or bewilder its readers, for, not scared, but **"Blessed (happy) is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy...for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).**

The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ will never be plumbed by human intellect. One has asked, "Was there not a key sent with the book, and has this been lost: Was it thrown into the sea of Patmos or the Mediterranean?" "No" answers the Spirit of Truth. The key was sent along the book, and it has been allowed to lie rusty and unused, while all kinds of false keys and pick locks have been tried, and tried in vain, until men have come to look upon the book as an unintelligible enigma, only meant to puzzle and confuse. But the true key has all along been visible enough! And the attention of men has been loudly called to it. It is Christ who is giving the revelation. These things man can never know unless they are revealed. No human wisdom could foreknow these mysteries; no human mind could understand them. Furthermore, John was "in the Spirit" in the day of the Lord when he received the revelation. **"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia" (Rev. 1:10-11).** So many are looking today in the natural for the events of scripture to come to pass, but John was in the Spirit when he wrote the book - he wasn't in the natural! He was in a realm beyond the natural, and beholding events in a realm beyond the natural. These things are written in a language that only the spiritual mind can understand. A natural mind produces a natural concept. It should be obvious that only a person who knows French is able to read a book from France written in French. A Frenchman is the most likely person in the world to understand the most difficult treatise in the French language. In like manner, the book of Revelation was written IN THE SPIRIT, in the language of the Spirit, and it requires a spiritual unfoldment to understand it. Only the man who lives and walks in the Spirit can receive from it. You must be a citizen of the land - the heavenlies -- where the language of the book is known. You must read and understand it in the language in which it is written. You must know the language of Spirit. We must be quickened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God for the message to be comprehended. A spiritual book must be spiritually discerned.

No word given to a prophet from the Lord by the Holy Spirit can be truthfully understood or interpreted unless the same spiritual understanding is given to the reader by the Holy Spirit that gave it originally to the prophet. You must have the ability to "hear what the Spirit saith," and it must be in the same anointing wherein it was spoken and written. The book of Revelation, like any other part of the scriptures and prophecies of the Holy Spirit, must be "spiritually" understood. The term "in the Spirit" is much more profound than it appears in our English translation. The Greek word means "to become, or became." What John relates here is that he became in Spirit. He received an entrance into a realm that was much deeper and more intense than his world of outer consciousness -- beyond the material realm. He came into the realm of heaven, and heaven is the omnipresent realm of Spirit. Heaven is the home of all celestial beings - not a geographical or astral location, but a dimension of life, being, reality and consciousness. The purpose of the Revelation is to reveal to us what takes place when one enters into the realm of the Spirit, to live and move and have his being in the Spirit. When we enter into this new realm we experience new things happening to us.

Many years ago Albert Hughes penned the following words of keen spiritual insight: "The vision will be understood only by the spiritual man. The natural man will meet with many difficulties as he seeks to know the book. No human intellect or natural ability will be sufficient. Only the spiritually discerning will ever discern. The book has a language all its own, a language fully foreign except to those whose conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior. Only those in whose mind is the light of glory will ever understand these sublime symbols, this precious phraseology. Only in the Spirit is such triumph possible. Physically, John was in Patmos; spiritually, he was in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. That which John experienced at Patmos

was something beyond his conversion. It was a new consciousness, a complete communion. He was in tune and in touch with the infinite so that it was with the most perfect ease that God revealed His plans. Just because you have never had such an experience as this you have not the right to criticize some one who has had it. How can a Judas judge a woman who breaks an alabaster box? Let us not criticize Isaiah and Ezekiel and Jeremiah and Paul and John unless we have had something better than they have had. If you have never yet realized the highest passion of the Spirit, have common sense enough not to judge those who have. When Isaiah catches that vision of the Lord high and lifted up, when he sees the posts of the door move and the whole house of God filled with the cloud of His glory, who am I to say I do not believe it? When Paul's friend is lifted up into the third heaven and sees things that his tongue cannot describe, who am I to say he is in a trance? When John the beloved tells me that he saw this vision of the exalted Savior because he was in the Spirit, who am I to deny it? But to receive such, you must be in the Spirit.

"John was a translated man, a transformed man. Only the Spirit can do this. When this takes place in any life, we hear and see things not possible at any other time. John was told to write what he heard and saw, a most difficult task indeed. And to get others to believe you when you do write, is even more difficult. For nearly two thousand years, men have been disputing concerning what John wrote. How can men who have never seen and heard, judge the writings or the discourses of those who by the Spirit have both seen and heard? It is a mystery certainly, but not a mystery which cannot be understood. It is a revealed mystery, revealed to those who have been enlightened. This mystery can never be known by the natural man, with all his natural powers, but it is a mystery which is blessed to those whose minds and hearts have been touched by the Divine Spirit. May that Spirit who makes all revelation understood, come to us (in consciousness) and make plain this Word, this Voice, this Vision, this Personality. May we meet with him who was dead, but is alive again, until He makes us glad with the joy of His countenance, until our faces are lighted with the light of His eternal glory, until our hearts burn within us with the fullness of His reality, leading us ever onward and upward until we see Him face to face, and become like Him by seeing Him even as He is" -- end quote.

THE SEALED BOOK

The fifth chapter of the book of Revelation represents a scene in heaven -- the realm of Spirit. A book is held in the right hand of the Majesty on high, in the hand of Him who sits upon the throne of Omnipotence. The scene is purely spiritual. God is omnipresent Spirit. God never sat on a throne. He never held a book in His right hand. His throne is the dimension of His omnipotent power. The book is the symbol of the revelation of Himself in and through a people. The book was not a book as we know books, but a scroll of papyrus or parchment, written on both sides, rolled up and sealed with seven seals. No one has been able to open the book or even look upon it, signifying that none were able to DISCERN that which was written therein. John, who has been watching the transcendent scene, has been moved to tears because no one has been able to take the book or break the seals; but presently the Lamb comes to the great throne-sitter and takes the book out of His hand. Immediately all heaven breaks forth into song, and the voices cry: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). It is a song of triumph, proclaiming that the rule, the reign and glory of redemption and the Kingdom of God is come; that a people has been redeemed to manifest His power and His life on the earth. This book has to do with redemption and the manifestation of the power of the Kingdom of God.

The scene is rooted in the old Hebrew custom regarding the purchase of property. When property was purchased the deed to the new owner was made out in duplicate, an open copy and a sealed copy. The open copy was clearly for public information, open to all; the sealed copy as clearly belonged only to the owner of the property as his evidence of ownership. If a new heir came to take possession of an estate, or in case of a dispute over ownership, the claimant who was adjudged the rightful heir or owner would be given the possession of the sealed roll, or deed. And, as so attested by the judge, he only would be properly qualified to "take" the sealed roll, break the seal, read its contents, and formally take possession of the property. Now it is under the symbolism of this old bit of Hebrew custom that our Lord Jesus is here represented as stepping forward to take possession of the purchased possession and begin His reign over it. A Hebrew, immersed in the old primitive customs prevailing among his people in the land of Israel, would understand this allusion at once. The language used by the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders in the song of praise when

Jesus takes the scroll reveals the nature of the scroll. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed (purchased) us by Thy blood..." Jesus purchased these kings and priests unto God and is now taking possession of His purchased possession! It speaks of the internal processes of redemption, and the substance and value of our redemption.

Such a book was written, subscribed, sealed and rolled when Jeremiah purchased a plot of ground in Anathoth of Hanameel, the son of Shallum, his uncle. He says, "And I bought the field that was in Anathoth of Hanameel my uncle's son, and weighed him the money, seventeen shekels of silver. And I signed the deed and sealed it, and called witnesses, and weighed him the money on scales. So I took the deed of the purchase, both that which was sealed, containing the terms and conditions, and the copy which was unsealed, and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, in the sight of Hanameel my uncle's son and the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, in the presence of all the Jews who sat in the court of the guard. And I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed, and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware vessel, that they may last a long time (this was just prior to the Babylonian exile). For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall be purchased yet again in this land" **Jer. 32:9-15**). This deed was a book similar to the seven-sealed book taken by the hand of the Lamb from the hand of the throne-sitter. It is the "evidence of purchase." It is the "book of purchase." It is the title deed of HIS inheritance in the saints! It is the value of our redemption! It is the substance of our inheritance! Truly, O Lord Jesus, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou hast redeemed us..." "Redeemed!" That signifies an ownership by "purchase." He could take the book because He was the purchaser. The book was the evidence of His purchase, the book of His purchase. As the celestial choir announces that He has purchased them by His blood; that He has made them a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and that they will reign on the earth as the result of His taking and opening the book, then, evidently, the book being the evidence of His purchase, is THE TITLE DEED TO HIS KINGDOM.

It is the book which unfolds for us and in us and through us everything that pertains to our inheritance in Christ. It is the revelation of the spirit-- the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God. It is the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus. The breaking of the seals is the solemn and judicial way in which the Lamb nature establishes His rule and reign in those who have been purchased. It is the processing of God whereby the life of the Lamb is uncovered and unfolded within us. This is a book within a book. Literally, in the book of Revelation the seven-sealed book is a book within the book John wrote of his visions. However, spiritually this means that John was brought to the place where he could see the intention of God written in the nature of a people. There are seven seals upon this book. The number seven denotes that contained in this book (Spirit) is the totality of God's character and the complete revelation of His will and purpose. As these seals are loosed in God's people they begin to experience the fullness of all that God is. There has never been an expression of God at this level in the earth at any time except in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. But now there is a people, His body, the completion of Him, that has been sealed unto the day of redemption and when God has loosed in them all the seals there will be brought forth in the earth a many membered expression of God at the same level of God's fullness. You will know Him no longer by measure, you will see Him no more through a glass darkly, or as a reality beyond and outside of yourself. He will no longer be a mental image, a good feeling, an ideal, a philosophy or doctrine. You will know Him even as you are known by Him and will see Him face to face.

A remarkable prophecy was given by a saint of God in the year 1619. A portion of this prophecy confirms the truth I now share. It says, "There shall be a full redemption of Christ. This is a hidden mystery not to be revealed or understood without the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is at hand to reveal the same unto all holy seekers and loving enquirers. The completion of such redemption is withheld and abstracted by the seals of Revelation. Wherefore; as the Spirit of God shall open seal after seal, so shall this redemption come to be revealed, both particularly and universally. In the gradual opening of the mystery of redemption in Christ, does consist the unsearchable wisdom of God, which will continually reveal new and fresh things to the worthy seeker. The unsealing of the living testimony (perfected remnant of Believers, the manchild, the literal sons of God's people), along with the ark of God (Jesus Christ), must begin the promulgation of the everlasting Gospel of the Kingdom" -- end quote.

WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK

"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah...hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev. 5:2-5). John said no man was found WORTHY to open the book. He knew he was not worthy himself, and he looked for someone to come up who was worthy. Would not Joseph, Moses, Samuel, or Elijah come? Nay, neither patriarch, priest, nor prophet was worthy; not Peter, nor Paul, nor himself. John says, "I wept much."

"Worthy" is from the Greek word AXIOS. In his inspired and inimitable way Ray Prinzing has shared on this thought: "We pause to note the word 'worthy,' being the Greek word AXIOS. While the word means: to be deserving, to merit, there is a depth contained in this expression, and some Bible Scholars give it to mean: worthy by rank, by character, by ability, by action. Certainly Christ's merits were equal to the honor, and His abilities to the task. His character was without blemish and without spot. His rank was as the very Son of God. And all that He did now causes us to bow before Him, and sing, 'Thou art worthy!' John beheld the book in the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne -- full well he knew what that document was -- evidence of an inheritance lost, and yet with a promise of redemption. Perhaps he waited with bated breath for one to come and open the book -- fulfill its requirements, and bring forth the promised redemption. And NO MAN was found -- not even among the saints who 'by faith' were among 'the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. 12:23). None found in heaven, and certainly none found on earth. From the time when Adam and Eve had sewed their fig leaves together for a covering, man has consistently tried to work out his own redemption, and utterly failed. Through all his self-righteous efforts he has proven over and over again the utter futility of man to regain his lost inheritance. There are no 'do-it-yourself' works which will avail. Once any man has lost his first estate of innocence and purity, he cannot redeem himself back into that estate again. But when none was found worthy to open the book, his emotions could be held in restraint no longer, and he wept much. If none was found worthy, then the promise of the prophets, the hope of all the saints, yea, of all creation was dashed to despair. Failure at this point, and people would remain in corruption, forever subject to the tyranny of change and decay. This was a crucial moment! As goes the words of the beautiful Christmas Carol: 'The hopes and fears of all the the years are met in thee...' Faith that held mankind through his trials would be meaningless. The Word which had sustained them through deep processings would become as a fable. Redemption was the only answer, and if there be none to redeem, what then? So John went on weeping" -- end quote.

Who is worthy? In the natural there is none worthy. But when you begin to look into the Spirit you see that there is One that is worthy. The One who has prevailed to open the book is the Lion of the tribe of Judah - that signifies Jesus Christ in strength and victory. This Lion is a slain Lamb -- for He conquers not by brute force but by the power of His poured out life. The wonder of it is that THIS LION-LAMB IS WITHIN US! The worthy One is within! When you begin laying hold upon the One within you, the One within you begins unsealing the book within. Out of that unsealing comes the triumph of the Christ in every dimension of our lives. He makes war against every false and fleshly thing that there might be the revelation of Jesus Christ in us. There will be the expression of what is true in us (the Christ within) coming forth into manifestation in our outer realm. It is not a nature that ignores the corruption of our outer man -- it is a nature capable of dealing with the corruption of that outer man that the Spirit be revealed. Oh that our eyes might be opened to behold HIM! HE is worthy to open the book, to fulfill in Himself all the requirements, and now to fulfill IN US all the reality of our redemption. It is the Christ within who opens the seals, and it is the Christ within who is the book revealed. In absolute power He shall reign until the Christ is fully and forever formed in us, formed from the inner to the outer -- the image of God.

All through the Old Testament we find that God was looking for a man to carry out His purposes. But when we read Revelation chapter five we find that no man on earth was able to open the book sealed with seven seals. I can understand that no man on earth was found able. Those of us who are living way beneath our privileges in the realm of the earthlies are not worthy, nor capable. I can also understand that no man under the earth, those living in the underworld in the sensual, carnal, devilish realm, was found able. But then it goes on to say: No man in heaven. No man living even in the heavenlies, that place of exaltation, triumph and power, seated

with Christ in the heavenly places, was found able, not only to open the book, but even to look thereon. In these days of transition from the church to the Kingdom the full expression of His redemption must be made manifest in a people and it begins with the opening of the seven sealed book, written within and on the backside -- and HE ALONE CAN OPEN IT! Beware, my beloved, of any man or ministry who tries to lead you to believe that he alone has the message of the hour, that he alone possesses insight into the sacred secrets of God, that he alone has the keys to life and immortality, and if you grab on to his coat-tail he will usher you into the Kingdom. God's people are always looking for a man, perhaps we have felt that if God could find a man who would be totally committed to Him and to Truth, His purposes in the earth could be fulfilled. But no matter how dedicated, committed, filled with truth and revelation, capable and heavenly minded a man may be, no matter what spiritual progress or position or growth a man may have, when it comes to the unveiling of Jesus Christ in the breaking of the seals which releases the forces that will eventually bring about the full expression of life and glory and power -- NO MAN WAS FOUND WORTHY, NAY, NOT EVEN ANY MAN I-N-H-E-A-V-E-N! This is a word that needs to be heard by many who are pressing into the Kingdom in this hour.

As we move into these significant days of the transition of ages and nothing much seems to happen, we start blaming ourselves, or our teachers, or the prophets, and we ask, "Where is this greater manifestation of the Spirit, this coming expression of the Kingdom?" We are not speaking here about healing some sick and casting out some devils which in times past we have called revival. These things take place all the time, but by and large the world does not even know they are happening. That is not what the Day of the Lord is to bring forth: a little moving over here and a little stirring over there, but THE RELEASE OF THE FULLNESS OF THE LIFE AND NATURE AND WISDOM AND POWER AND GLORY OF GOD OVER ALL THE EARTH. This is the unveiling of the triumphant One, who by His death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father has prevailed. He is the only one worthy and able and willing in these last days to open the seals and to bring about the purposes of God, the release and sending forth into all the earth of the seven eyes of the Lord that run to and fro in all the earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards Him, or the seven horns of the power of the Lord that go forth to triumph and prevail over all the powers of darkness, or the seven lamps of fire that are to go and bring the glory of God to fill the whole earth even as the waters cover the sea. Let us forget about preachers, the people, our abilities, the gifts, and let us look UNTO JESUS. I believe it is God's purpose that the whole church of Jesus Christ will fasten its eyes on HIM and see HIM as the only One who is able in this day in which we are living. There was a day when a man could arise and be used of God, but in the book of Revelation it is the Lamb who is used. He must be the central One, releasing the fullness of the Spirit of God in all His majesty and power from within. Throughout the book of Revelation the work of the Holy Spirit is to show us our total dependence upon the person of Jesus Christ.

Oh! may Jesus Christ find a new centrality In us. Many have Him in some corner of their life, but not central in their devotion, in their prayer life, in their business, their appetites, their finances. We may be able to get away with it for some time, but when we go to seek Him, He will not be there. He is pushed away into other areas of our life, off-center, and when we start looking for Him we cannot find Him, for He is buried beneath all the clutter of our outer life and mortal consciousness. The only place to find Jesus Christ is in the center of our life, our desires, our hopes. If He is not in the center, we will have a problem. He must be in the midst of the golden candlesticks. "Cry out and shout thou inhabitants of Zion, for great is the Holy One in the midst of thee" (Isa. 12:6). Truly He is in the midst of the elders (the priesthood), and in the midst of the four living creatures (the kings), and in the midst of the throne (authority and power). We may have our eyes on the elders and their bright shining and their ministry, or on the living creatures and their power and glory, and fail to see that in the midst of all Jesus Christ is the CENTER. It is at His initiative that the seven seals are broken. It is at His initiative that the seven spirits of God are sent forth into all the earth. It is at His initiative that the events of these days take place. It does not rest with us. It is not our action upon Him, but His action in and through us that brings His unveiling and the glory that is to follow!

Even though we are kings and priests and have an authority to reign on the earth, we are not worthy to open the book, neither to look thereon. Recently I felt a deep cry in my spirit and I said to God, "There is nothing more that can be done. I know of no prayer that can be prayed, no faith that can be exercised, no knowledge that can be revealed, no action that can be taken to bring forth this sonship, this is as far as we can go." There comes a time when our pressing into the Kingdom does no good. There is no one in heaven, nor on the earth, nor in the underworld that has the ability to even look upon the book, much less to open it. Here is a realm that

is shut up to God Himself. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The fullness, the life, the immortality, the manifestation of power and wisdom and glory will never come until we first see the One who possesses it, until Jesus Christ is revealed by the Spirit as the One who is triumphant, even as the slain Lamb, the One who is central in the purposes of God and the One who has the seven horns, the seven eyes, and the seven spirits. Some "sonship" preachers and teachers apply every scripture and revelation to the many-membered body, ignoring completely the Head. But our Lord Jesus Christ is the rightful One to look upon, the One who is worthy to look upon, to open the book, to loose the seals, and to receive all the honor and glory and praise. "Thou art worthy!"

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

The legendary Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are, to most minds, one of the Bible's greatest riddles. Nearly two thousand years ago the apostle John first recorded the details of their grim ride, and ever since scholars and ordinary believers alike have wondered what they represent. Much has been written concerning the Four Horsemen, much of it misapplied to struggles between nations and would-be world conquerors, or to the horrors of tribulation under the antichrist. Actually, however, the book of Revelation is not concerned with worldly kingdoms and empires except as they become linked with the affairs of God's people. The book of Daniel, written under the Old Covenant, addressed to a natural people living in a natural land, ruled by natural laws, with a natural worship by rituals and ceremonies, is therefore a natural book dealing with natural events - the rise and fall of empires, rulers, wars, etc. The book of Daniel was not a revelation or revealing. It was a SEALED BOOK. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even unto the time of the end" (**Dan. 2:4**). The book of Revelation, contrary to common thought, is not the sequel to the book of Daniel, nor is it a parallel revelation. In fact, it has almost nothing in common with the book of Daniel. The book of Revelation was written under the New Covenant, the Covenant of the Spirit, and is therefore a spiritual book, addressed to spiritual people, born of the heavenly Jerusalem, who live and walk "in the Spirit." The book of Revelation is not, nor has it ever been a SEALED BOOK. "And He saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand" (**Rev. 22:10**). The book of Revelation is, therefore, a SPIRITUAL REVELATION, even the revelation of Jesus Christ. "Thus, the Four Horsemen and the Four Horses represent, like the figures in the rest of the book, aspects of the on-going revelation of Jesus Christ in and through His body. These are spiritual realities, touched and known only "in the Spirit."

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are among the most significant of the great symbols in the Word of God because they give the key to the processings of God within us. When you have grasped their full significance, by understanding how the scriptures speak of horses, in order to teach spiritual truth, you will have gained an appreciation of Bible symbolism. The Bible is not written in the style of an ordinary book. It has a method all its own of conveying spiritual realities through picturesque symbols, which is the language of SPIRIT communicated to the mind of man, wisdom expressed in terms comprehensible by people in all ages in different parts of the world and of different degrees of spiritual developments.

The symbol of horsemen is a strange one to the Western mind. We associate horses with useful labor and sport, but the Eastern mind associated the horse and his rider with war. The horse is without equal for beauty in the animal kingdom. His body is alive with rippling muscles. His mane and tail are items of extreme beauty. The horse is among the most intelligent of animals and few creatures can equal his strength and swiftness. No animal is of greater service to mankind. For pleasure, for work, and for war the horse exceeds them all. In Bible days the strength of armies was often reckoned by the number and greatness of their horses and chariots. In his prophetic account of the army of the Lord, Joel declares, "the appearance of them is as the appearance of HORSES; AND AS HORSEMEN, so shall they run" (**Joel 2:4**). "The horse is prepared against the day of battle" (**Prov. 21:31**). It is significant that in the scriptures you do not find horses mentioned in connection with agricultural purposes, but for riding or drawing chariots, and for use in battle.

It is significant to note that the term "redemption" means in the Greek "loosing." We are now entering the day of loosing (redemption) and our spirit joined to the Lord's Spirit is beginning to express more of His life than ever before. The only hindrance is the dominion of the soul -- our own will, mind, emotion and desire. In order for Christ to be fully revealed in us, these negative attributes of the carnal nature must be effectively dealt with. Before the One who has purchased us for the base of His operation can take full possession of His inheritance

in us there must be the dispossession of all that hinders the expression of the Spirit. Just as the children of Israel were commanded to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan -- those occupying the land belonging to another -- so must the giants that possess our land be conquered and driven out. This, dear ones, IS THE MINISTRY OF THE FOUR HORSEMEN! The events surrounding these four horsemen all portray conflict, war and destruction. The Four Horses are war horses -- and are sent forth into our earth to dispossess the usurper -- the carnal mind, the will of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, the emotions of the flesh and the works of the flesh. It is the taking possession of our earth by the Christ of God. There is an application to the outer world, and universally but all that transpires out there must first take place WITHIN US, His firstfruits. This is the opening event in heaven.

The Four Horses and their Riders present a picture of God's dealings, strippings, purgings, prunings, and processings by which we are reduced to God. Swift, powerful, irresistible ruin is visited on our outer world of illusion, and our inner heart of deceit. As the seals of the revelation of Himself are opened, we note that what comes forth represents that which is within us -- the power of life symbolized as horses. These are symbols of great strength, power and overcoming (Zech. 10:3; Joel 2:1-6; Rev. 19:11-14). "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." These things begin to happen when we discover the book within, when we lay hold upon the Spirit realm; then there will follow an unsealing of those seals that have been closed so long, and as the seals are broken there is an unfoldment of the triumphant nature of the Christ within. As the outer dimension of our life is stripped away, the inner vitality of the Christ emerges into view. HE becomes revealed! This is God's intention -- not to rapture us away to some far off heaven somewhere, but to unseal the book of life within us, for we have this treasure in an earthen vessel and this earthen vessel has veiled the reality of what lies within -- the fullness of God in the Christ within!

As the Father opens His Book of Life -- which Book we are-- He is actually sending forth the Spirit of His Word in a triumphant outflowing which will not cease till every valley has been filled and every hill has been made level, till our heavens and our earth have been purged from every stain of pollution and every heart beats in union with the heart of God. This is the Centaur, the horse and his rider in the heavens armed with a bow, SAGITTARIUS sending his arrows into the heart of the Scorpion. This is CHRIST THE CONQUEROR! I believe it, and may God hasten it to us all in Jesus' name...Amen!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 22 SAGITTARIUS-THE ARCHER [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TWENTY-TWO

THE FOUR HORSEMEN
THE WHITE HORSE
THE RED HORSE

In the grand prophetic drama of GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY the fourth scene is called SAGITTARIUS - THE ARCHER. He is a Centaur with the body of a horse and the torso of a man. The human portion of the Centaur is a man with a bow and arrow and he is drawing the bow and aiming the arrow at Atares -- the very heart of the Scorpion. I think it is particularly interesting to note that here is the first picture of Christ the Redeemer going forth to destroy the adversary. His character here is that of the Mighty One, girding Himself with honor and majesty, and going forth to victory. He rides as a King, armed with bow and arrows, shooting down His enemies. The one who is conquered is the Scorpion -- the Prince of darkness, the Lord of sin, sorrow and death. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Conqueror of the Scorpion! This is the picture of One who in refulgent glory rides forth upon a white horse with a bow, going forth as the Conquering King to conquer, and to conquer. The apostle John in his visions of Patmos beheld "a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2). It is the same divine Hero in both instances. In this celestial picture of the Centaur (body of a horse, torso of a man) in the heavens with a bow and arrows, and in John's vision of the Rider on the white horse carrying a bow, we have the dual-natured Seed of the virgin -- the Son of God as the Son of man, riding prosperously.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

John the Revelator, as he entered upon the marvelous visions recorded in the book of Revelation, saw a door opened in heaven and heard a voice as of a trumpet speaking with him, and saying, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things..." The door opened in heaven bespeaks of an entrance granted into a realm beyond the flesh, beyond the physical and psychical senses, into the realm of the Spirit. That is where John entered and that is the character of the things John saw. He beheld heavenly things -- spiritual realities. He saw a throne set in heaven -- he perceived the authority, power and dominion of the Spirit. He saw living creatures in the throne, the principle of life in the Spirit. He saw the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders, the King-Priest ministry of the Melchizedekian Order after the power of an endless life -- the ministration of the divine life unto creation. He saw that the nature of this realm is that of a Lamb. He saw in the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne a book written within and without -- the New Covenant, the living epistles written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God upon the fleshy tables of the heart; the Book of Life, a people having the law (nature) of God placed within their minds and inscribed within their hearts -- the performance of the Covenant of God.

In Revelation chapter six there is a description of the opening of the seven seals by the Lamb which draws upon many Old Testament symbols. John saw four horses. The first horse was white and the Rider had a bow, and a victor's crown was given unto him and he came forth conquering, and to conquer. The second horse was flaming red and the Rider had the power given to him to take peace from the earth and he was given a great sword. The third Rider had a balance in his hand and sat upon a black horse. The fourth horse was ashen or sickly pale and the name of the Rider was Death, and Hades followed with him. He was given authority over a fourth part of the earth to kill with sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts.

These legendary Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are, to most minds, one of the Bible's greatest riddles. Nearly two thousand years ago the apostle John first recorded the details of their grim ride and ever since scholars and ordinary believers alike have wondered what they represent. Much has been written concerning the Four Horsemen, much of it applied to struggles between nations and would-be world conquerors, or to the

horrors of tribulation under the Antichrist. Actually, however, the book of Revelation is not concerned with worldly kingdoms and empires except as they become linked with the affairs of God's people. The book of Revelation is a spiritual book addressed to spiritual people, born of the Spirit, who live and walk "in the Spirit." The book of Revelation is not, nor has it ever been, a SEALED BOOK. "And He saith unto me; seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this for the time is at hand" (Rev. 22:10). The book of Revelation is, therefore, a SPIRITUAL REVELATION, and a PRESENT REVELATION (for the time is "at hand"), even the revelation of Jesus Christ. Thus, the Four Horsemen and the Four Horses represent, like the figures in the rest of the book, aspects of the on-going unveiling of Jesus Christ in and through His body. These are spiritual realities, touched and known only "in the Spirit." The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are among the most significant of the great symbols in the Word of God because they give the key to the processings of God within us. When you have grasped their full significance, by understanding how the scriptures speak of horses, in order to teach spiritual truth, you will have gained an appreciation of Bible symbolism. The Bible is not written in the style of an ordinary book. It has a method all its own of conveying spiritual realities through picturesque symbols, which is the language of SPIRIT communicated to the conscious mind of man, wisdom expressed in terms comprehensible by people in all ages in different parts of the world and of different degrees of spiritual development.

The horse is an animal that men ride. It's like a car -- it's a vehicle. The horse in scripture is a symbol for THE BRINGING OF GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER IN WARFARE. It signifies STRENGTH AND SWIFTNES IN BATTLE (Isa. 2:7; 30:16; Jer. 12:5; 51:27; Eze. 38:4; Hos. 14:3; Joel 2:4; Heb. 1:8). "...I have taken away your horses (Strength)" (Amos 4:10). On the negative side, whenever the word horse is used in relationship with fleshly humanity it signifies Human Strength. Isaiah 31:1-3 informs us: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots (this is human strength and human ability), because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong...they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!" Again, "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are fleshly (strength), and not spirit." "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses (human strength and ability)..." (Isa. 30:15-16). However, the Lord warns, "I will overthrow your horses (human strength and ability) and confound the riders on the horses (those who trust in human strength and ability)" (Hag. 2:22; Zech. 10:5). On the positive side, wherever the word horse is used with righteousness, or divinity, or the Lord, or things heavenly, it means heavenly, divine, or spiritual strength. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war...and the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses..." Rev. 19:11, 14). That is, they followed Him in heavenly, divine, spiritual strength. In Hab. 3:14-15 the prophet, reminiscing about Israel's deliverance from Egypt, extols the triumph of Jehovah, exclaiming, "You pierced with his own arrows the head of the enemy's hordes...You have trodden the sea with Your horses, beside the heap of great and surging waters." The meaning is dear -- You have trodden the sea IN YOUR DIVINE STRENGTH!

There was a prophet in Israel in the days of Ben-hadad, king of Syria, who lived and walked continually in the spiritual realm. His eyes were open to the reality of the Kingdom of the Spirit, and because heaven was open to him none of the things of either heaven or earth were hidden to him. There was constant war between Israel and Syria through all the years of Elisha, the prophet. And the king of Israel found Elisha a greater help than his horses and chariots. For Elisha was able to frustrate all the plans of Ben-hadad, because he knew by the Spirit even the words the king spoke in his bed chamber (II Kings 6:12). Whenever Ben-hadad told his officers to make an attack upon any place in the land of Israel, Elisha would send word to the king of Israel, saying, "Watch carefully that place, and send men to guard it, for the Syrians are coming to attack it." And then, when the Syrian army came to the place they were sure to find it strongly guarded so that their soldiers could do nothing. This happened so many times that the king of Syria at last said to his nobles, "Someone among you is secretly helping the king of Israel and sending him word of all our plans. Will no one tell me who the traitor is?" And they replied, "No one of us, my lord, O king, has made known your plans; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your own room." Then the king of Syria commanded, "Go and find where that man is, so that I may send an army to capture him." After a time the king of Syria learned that Elisha was staying in Dothan. Then he sent to that place a great army, with horses and chariots. They came by night and stood in a great ring all around the city, ready to seize the prophet. In the morning the

prophet's servant rose up early, and he found the city surrounded on every side by a host of armed men with horses and chariots. And the servant cried unto Elisha, "Alas master. What shall we do?" And Elisha answered, "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." And Elisha prayed and said, "Lord, I pray Thee open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And when the Syrian army came down to Elisha, he prayed unto the Lord and said, "Smite this people, I pray Thee, with blindness." And the Lord smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. What were these horses and chariots of fire! One thing is certain -- they represented the STRENGTH AND MIGHT OF GOD IN BATTLE! They signify the almighty POWER OF THE SPIRIT. "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." With what simple words does the Holy Spirit teach us that the strength of the Spirit always exceeds and excels over the strength of the flesh! Thus, horses are symbols given to us that denote the nature and work of the anointing. Horses are figures of overcoming, strength and power, signifying that wherever these horses go, WHATEVER IS IN THEIR WAY IS OVERCOME BY THEM!

THE WHITE HORSE

Nothing can be more vivid and dramatic than the scenes which are successively exhibited as the Lamb opens the seals in the book of Revelation. The four living creatures in the midst of the throne, one after another announce the breaking of the first four seals, with a loud cry of "Come, and see!" These words bespeak of an invitation to revelation. In that blessed moment spiritual entities and spiritual realities were wide open to John as he walked in the presence and glory of heavenly realms. He saw with his eyes and heard with his ears and touched with his hands the things that were beyond the realm of natural men. He entered into a new relationship with God that day. He passed with boldness into the realm of God's spiritual mysteries even while his feet left their imprint on Patmos' sandy shore. It is my deep conviction, dear ones, that the cry of the Spirit to John, "Come, and see!" is the very same invitation to revelation resounding in the spiritual ears of God's elect in this wonderful hour at the end of the age. Only those who have caught a glimpse of the eternal realm where Christ sits at God's right hand can ever rise above earth's turmoil and the shallow vision of fleshly understanding and carnal reasoning to walk with Him in newness of life. I have prayed most earnestly that the spirit of divine revelation will possess those who now read these truths, and I am certain that if we will confess our darkness to Him, He will give us light. It is when men are satisfied with their childish creeds and blinding theologies that God abandons them to spiritual retardation, pronouncing woe upon them who enter not in themselves and forbid them who are entering. The more we are quickened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him the more trivial become the static doctrines of men and the peevish tenacity with which they argue their childish theories.

As each seal is opened the Seer beholds a visionary figure pass across the field of view, emblematic of that portion of the scroll which is unrolled. It will be observed that there is a manifest progression in the character of these symbolic representations, which rise in intensity from the first to the last. When the Lamb opened the first seal, John records, "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2). Many brethren and teachers are of the opinion that the Rider of this horse is a Counterfeit Christ -- the Antichrist. The contrast is drawn between the Rider of this white horse and the Rider of the white horse in chapter nineteen. The argument is made that the horse in chapter six rides under the first of the seven seals, while on the contrary the horse of chapter nineteen rides after the seven seals have been opened, at the time of the marriage of the Lamb and the glory of the New Jerusalem. The figure in chapter nineteen has "many" crowns whereas the one in chapter six wears but one crown. The Rider in chapter nineteen has a sharp sword coming out of his mouth, that with it he should smite the nations, whereas the Rider in chapter six is armed with a bow. The Rider in chapter nineteen proceeds out of heaven and is followed by the armies of heaven, all riding upon white horses, while the Rider in chapter six is a solitary Rider invading the earth realm. So, they say, the Rider in chapter nineteen is obviously the Christ of God and the Rider of chapter six is an impostor, one posing as the Christ -- Antichrist! With all deference to honored brethren, however, I cannot conceive of the Antichrist riding upon a white horse, even under the figure of a counterfeit! White denotes PURITY -- a purity wrought by the cleansing fire! It is the symbol of the Christ's purity and divine holiness. Every other place throughout the visions of John it stands for righteousness and purity. And in Zech. 14:20 this purity is connected to horses. "In that day shall the bells of all horses (that is the strength of all) ring out, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD. White also bespeaks of light --

illumination. These are the qualities that characterize, not only the firstborn Son of God, but also His many brethren, the sons of God. In the messages to the seven churches the overcomers are challenged, "I counsel thee to buy of Me...WHITE RAIMENT, that thou mayest be clothed" (Rev. 3:18). This is naught but the transfiguring glory of Christ, as it is written, "And He was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His RAIMENT WAS WHITE AS THE LIGHT" (Mat. 17:2). The light is the robe of divine majesty, the effulgence of the Spirit, the incorruptible life of God emanating from the nature of absolute holiness that illuminates and quickens spirit, soul and body. This is the Spirit by which Jesus was raised from the dead, even the spirit of holiness.

Furthermore, this One goes forth "conquering, and to conquer." Special attention must be paid to the peculiar statement of the elder in Rev. 5:5 that the Lamb has "prevailed" to open the book and to loose the seals. The use of the Greek verb "to conquer" occurs more frequently in John's writings than in any other of the books of the New Testament. This is the word here rendered "prevailed." It is the same word used in chapter six, "conquering, and to conquer. It is the same word used repeatedly in chapters two and three of the OVERCOMER where at the termination of each of the messages to the seven churches the Spirit proclaims, "to Him that overcometh....(conquers). We should note its use in Jn. 16:33, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Again, "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world" (I Jn. 5:4). Paul uses the same root word in Rom. 8:37, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Translated in keeping with its other applications in the Word of God the Rider of the white horse is shown to be going forth "overcoming, and to overcome; prevailing, and to prevail; conquering, and to conquer!" Another sign that this Rider is the Christ -- the evidence lies in the nature of His conquests. Indeed, if this Rider is the Antichrist, then we are in a lot of trouble! The expression "conquering, and to conquer" denotes grammatically AN UNENDING SERIES OF CONQUESTS, UNINTERRUPTED BY ANY DEFEATS. Our Futurist and Literalist friends must confess that their Antichrist at the last meets his Waterloo. But the going forth "conquering in order to conquer" can only point to one interpretation. The "conquering" might be said of any victorious earthly power whose victories should endure for the time then present, and afterwards pass away: but "to conquer" can only be said of a power whose victories should last forever. Final and permanent victory is indicated by the Greek phraseology. Victory we may say on the part of that Kingdom against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail: which Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom which shall never be destroyed. Oh, the wonder of it! How certain, how sure, how complete, how final is His triumph!

In addition, we must not overlook the fact that the crown mentioned in this passage is not the kingly crown which the Lord wears in Rev. 19:12. There are two words in the Greek signifying "crown." One means the wreath or garland of victory, which was placed upon the head of a victorious General after the conclusion of warfare. The other means "the diadem," or royal crown worn by kings upon the throne. The crown given to the Rider on the white horse is the former -- the crown of the victor "going forth conquering, and to conquer. Although the conquering is in process, the absolute, complete and eternal victory is assured. And so Jesus Christ, astride of the snow-white charger, is put in a position where He is perpetually celebrating a victory. His march is a victorious march. His movements always meet with success. His plans are fulfilled, and His campaigns unfurl to the breezes the banners of triumph. Jesus Christ is going forth as a conqueror, and He does so with great power. It is no easy campaign upon which He has entered. The action in which He is engaged requires the greatest power; and His movements are energized with tremendous force. The Bible represents Him at times in conditions and possessed of moods where He sits and reclines in repose, already having accomplished His purposes. "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12). But here in the saddle He is roused, every faculty excited, every source of strength summoned, and He is bearing forward for the purpose of accomplishing something not yet attained. He is going forth as the victorious conqueror over the hearts of His apprehended ones. And He shall ride until every foe is vanquished; until sin, limitation and death has been conquered in every member of His glorious body, and every son of God has joined Him in His triumph, mounted upon their own white horses, riding forth in the Fullness of divine power and might, to subdue all things in all realms, until God shall be All-in-all.

My heart's desire is that all who read these truths may be filled with the conviction that God our Father is preparing a people to share the image of Christ and reign with Him in His Kingdom. Herein is to be found the real meaning, yea, the vital difference between the ministry of the Rider of the white horse in Revelation six

and the Rider of the white horse in Revelation nineteen. The Rider of the white horse in chapter six is a solitary Rider, crowned with a single victor's crown whereas the Rider of the white horse in chapter nineteen is crowned with many crowns and is accompanied by an immense and powerful army astride a host of horses from the heavenlies. It should not be difficult for any to understand that the solitary Rider wearing the single crown is none other than the forerunner, our Lord Jesus Christ, in His singular victory over sin, death and hell - riding forth as the glorious Captain of our salvation to extend that victory into the consciousness and experience of His elect body, the sons of God. He must complete His conquest within our mind, heart and life before we in Him can press the battle onward to creation. When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in chapter nineteen He does not come alone. Even before the flood, Enoch prophesied of this appearing of the promised One, and said, "Behold the Lord cometh WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS (or, holy myriads of Himself) to execute judgment upon all" **Jude 14,15**). John saw, and writes, "The armies, the ones in the heaven, were following Him" (**Rev. 19:14**). Christ Jesus is the Head and the Leader as He goes before; His holy ones follow in His train, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, and these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. They are represented as armies. They come forth as a body of fighters. He has many under His command. The armies of the heavenlies are His, and He does battle with them, by them, through them, and as them, even "the called, and chosen and faithful." There is no infantry. There really is no cavalry, for all of the horses are white, and every one who follows Him is of exalted rank. It is an army of princes, a host of mighty dignitaries. Moreover, they have no weapons, except the sharp two edged sword that proceeds out of HIS MOUTH, which is the Living Word of God. They are dressed in white, for they are all righteous, cleansed by the crimson tide in which His cloak was dipped.

At this point I would share from the anointed pen of George Hawtin as he describes this glorious army. "This is the army of the Saints of God, thousands upon thousands of blood-washed sons, all members in particular of the mystical body of Christ, and though they be so many, yet are they but one Christ. He who rides at the head of this heavenly host, which for six thousand years has been preparing, is the first begotten son of God, the firstborn from the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth. He is the firstborn of many brethren. He is the eldest in a vast family of God's sons. This, I declare, is the manifestation of the true body of Christ, the manifestation of the SONS OF GOD. These are they who during their life on earth went unto Him without the camp of the world's denominations and systems, bearing His reproach, that they might be received and taught as sons by their heavenly Father. Long ago amid the shadows of earth they heard and obeyed God's call, 'Come out of her, My people, and be separate; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' In their obedience God became their Father. As a Father He instructed them, broke them free from the blinding traditions and doctrines of men. He rebuked them as any loving father rebukes his children. He chastised them as a father chastises his son, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? For if we receive not chastening, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons. As a Father He fed them, and He fed them on His Living Word of Life, they became partakers of the divine mind, the divine nature, and the divine will. The mind that was in Christ Jesus dwelt in them and as it increased they were thoroughly transformed by the renewing of their minds" -- end quote. But now the days of their rebuke and chastisement are over. The great Captain is mounted, and they are mounted too. He comes as Warrior, Judge and King, and they share with Him in the same character. They are warrior judges and kings with Him. They are clothed in fine linen, pure and white, which is the righteousness of the saints. They wear no armour. They are immortal and incorruptible and cannot be hurt nor stopped.

You, precious saint of God, are being prepared to rule and reign with Christ. We need to grasp the full implication and reality of what we are called to. Long centuries ago amidst blazing fire and quaking mountains God revealed His purpose for His elect. "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS" (**Ex. 19:5-6**). Since kingship was virtually the only type of government or state known in the ancient world, "kingdom" could well be translated today as a "government" or "state." A GOVERNMENT OF PRIESTS! A PRIESTLY STATE! A HOLY NATION OF PRIESTS! A VAST COMPANY OF KING-PRIESTS! God offered to Israel this glory of being a "kingdom of priests." ALL the tribes were to be priests. Because of their failure to enter the land at Kadesh-barnea and because they made and worshipped a golden calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving God's law, only one tribe was chosen to be a priestly tribe -- and that not on behalf of the world, but on the behalf of the unbelieving, rebellious people of Israel! God's purpose remains, however, to have an entire nation of priests in

the fullness of what priesthood means. Israel collectively was to be a royal and priestly race, a dynasty of kings and priests, each member uniting in himself the attributes of king and priest. Every man a king! Every man a priest! A kingdom of priests!

The Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) states that they were to be "a priesthood of kings." It was intended to be the way of life, the office, the nature, the ministry of all Israel, not just a selected few. Israel's would be a priestly way of life, with priestly dignity, priestly power and authority, priestly holiness and priestly character. God's kingdom people were to be a priesthood set at the crossroads of the world to minister to all tribes and nations the things of God. They would become the holy people, the mediating nation for all the other nations. Ah, beloved, there is a realm of living and ministry that goes beyond just being a christian, or attending church, or going through the motions of so many religious activities. God has always wanted a Kingdom of Priests. Priests and Kings -- just like Jesus! One of the chief reasons for the weakness and immaturity of the popular church is the mistaken idea that the saint's happiness and blessing is the main object of God's grace. A fatal error! God's aim is far holier and far higher. He chooses out of the nations a people, in works into them all the triumph of HIS REDEMPTION, all the victory of HIS LIFE that they in turn shall carry out His redemptive purposes on behalf of the whole creation. A Royal Priesthood! Ah, that is God's aim, His purpose.

The purpose of your quickening by Christ was to make you a part of Himself, to give you a calling to glory, to a place where God by His Spirit can express Himself through you, so you can bring righteous judgment to the earth. That's what this white horse is all about. Your life and everything that happens to you is given to train and equip you for a royal position in God. The only reason the heavenly Father sent you here from the realm of spirit, lowered into the bondage of corruption, was to process you, to groom you for a position in God, to be one in the Saviour and become a Saviour. This is the day when everything we have hoped and dreamed of in God will be realized in our experience. We have so limited God in the way we have thought about Him. I'm telling you that we stand on the threshold of an outworking of God that is so powerful that it will bring an absolute end to the downward spiral of sin and death in humanity. It will put a blockade in the road to the flesh. That manifestation of God through His sons which is immediately before us will turn creation around. We shall manifest unto mankind a life and victory and power that will shake the very foundations of the earth, an action that will alter the course of the world, bringing correction and righteousness. Jesus Christ shall be revealed in and through His people as LORD. A people in this hour are being raised, not out of the cemetery, but out of the grave of their mind, out of the grave of carnal, mortal consciousness, raised up to the place where they can become the manifestation of the totality of the personality of God. We are being raised to become the expression of the substance of His Person. This company is Christ the Head riding forth upon a white horse followed by Christ the body, all the sons of God riding with Him upon white horses bringing the rule of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

But when the Rider of Revelation six comes there are none with Him -- He rides alone. Ah -- is it not within the corridors of your own soul, precious friend of mine, that you must hear the hoof beats of this great white steed thundering! He must ride right into YOUR EARTH, conquering all the territory of YOUR LAND. Don't you hear the clatter of the hoofs of that gallant charger as he bounds through that world which you are, carrying its Rider to grand battlefields and glorious victories within? Christ the Conqueror goes forth to conquer. He hath a bow, and His bow is bent still and He is riding the white horse, and the arrows of Divine Conviction are piercing our hearts, and every enemy within spirit, soul and body falls down before Him; all opposition is shattered to pieces; the strongholds and defenses are torn away as paper walls; the radiant brilliance of His glory flashes its dazzling light upon the eyes of the understanding, piercing effectively every cherished tradition, human interpretation, and carnal concept. I see Christ conquering! Though all men are His by right of creation and redemption, yet He must do battle to make conquest of the human heart. He must fight His way inch by inch into the human soul until He possesses that which He purchased, until the citadels of mind, will, emotion and desire have been taken and brought under the dominion of Truth. His victories are victories of peace over conflict, of joy over sorrow, of faith over fear, of righteousness over unrighteousness, of love over hate, of truth over error, of holiness over sin, of health over sickness, of power over weakness, of the image of God over the subterfuge of self, of life and immortality over corruption and death. Of the triumph of His life within the overcomers the Lord says, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from My eyes" (Hos. 13:14). God is the enemy of death. And He is the enemy of the grave. God right now is waging a war against

the death and the grave that is in your mind, dear one. "For to be carnally minded IS DEATH" (Rom. 8:6). The Spirit of the Christ within witnesses, "Grave and death -- you're not going to have any victory!" "For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:25-26). The last enemy that shall be destroyed in you and in me is death. When the Lord prophesies this victory over death in Hos. 13:14 He closes His statement with these words: "Repentance shall be hid from My eyes. God says, "There is no way that I am going to change My mind about My purpose -- when I come forth out of the realm of Spirit and commence making war with death and hell I will not stop until every foe is vanquished." In Himself the victory is already attained, fully and forever. "I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." God is not turning back, the hour for the manifestation of sonship is at hand, and He that hath begun a good work in us shall complete it. The day of death is over. Its time to live! Hallelujah!

It is significant to note that the term "redemption" means in the Greek "loosing." We are now entering the day of loosing (redemption) and our spirit joined to the Lord's Spirit is beginning to express more of His life than ever before. The only hindrance is the dominion of the soul -- our own will, mind, emotion and desire. In order for Christ to be fully revealed in us, these negative attributes of the carnal nature must be effectively dealt with. Before the One who has purchased us for the base of His operation can take full possession of His inheritance in us there must be the dispossession of all that hinders the expression of the Spirit. Just as the children of Israel were commanded to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, so must the giants that usurp our land be conquered. This, my friend, IS THE MINISTRY OF THE FOUR HORSEMEN! The events surrounding these Four Horsemen all portray conflict, war and destruction. The Four Horses are war horses -- and are representations of the activities of the Christ sent forth into our earth to dispossess the usurpers -- the carnal mind, the will of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, the emotions of the flesh and the works of the flesh. It is the taking possession of our earth by the Christ of God. It is the gathering of the firstfruits of His redemption. The Four Horses and their Riders present a picture of God's dealings, strippings, purgings, prunings, and processings by which we are reduced to God. Swift, powerful, irresistible ruin is visited upon our outer world of illusion, and our inner heart of deceit. As the seals of the revelation of Himself are opened, we note that what comes forth represents that which is within us -- the power of life symbolized as horses. These are symbols of great strength, power and overcoming (Zech. 10:3; Joel 2:1-6; Rev. 19:11-14). "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." These horses are sent, not to overcome the world outside, but to overcome the world within. These things begin to happen when we discover the book within, when we lay hold upon the Spirit realm; then there will follow an unsealing of those seals that have been closed so long, and as the seals are broken there is an unfoldment of the triumphant nature of the Christ within. As the outer dimension of our life is stripped away, the inner vitality of the Christ emerges into view. HE becomes revealed! This is God's intention -- not to rapture us away to some far-off heaven somewhere, but to unseal the book of life within us, for we have this treasure in earthen vessels and the earthen vessel has veiled the reality of what lies within -- the fullness of God in Christ in us! He is actually sending forth the Spirit of His Word in a triumphant over flowing which will not cease until our heavens and our earth have been purged from all that stands in opposition to the image of God in man. This is the Centaur, the horse and his rider in the heavens armed with a bow, SAGITTARIUS sending his arrows into the heart of the Scorpion. This is CHRIST THE CONQUEROR!

This is the conquest that is going on right now in that inner world of our hearts, minds and bodies. May the Holy Spirit deeply impress upon you this important truth: YOU WILL NEVER CONQUER UNTIL YOU ARE CONQUERED! You see, in the army of Christ all the vanquished have enlisted, and all of those that were once enemies, such as Saul of Tarsus who once opposed Christ and who now is one of the leaders of that army beyond the veil. As we look at the triumph of Christ we see that the vanquished and the conquerors merge as one. Saul of Tarsus went forth to war against Jesus, but he was struck to the ground outside Damascus, the sword was smitten from his hand, and he was conquered by the Son of God. But in that conquest Paul was to realize his greatest victory and he, too, was to become a part of the ongoing triumph of Christ -- a triumph which is even now proceeding into the heavenly city. We don't have to wait until "some glad day after while" because the battle is going on right now. GOD ALWAYS CAUSES US TO TRIUMPH IN CHRIST (II Cor. 2:14). I want to tell you that is a life-changing concept and, yet, some who read these lines have never yet even begun to touch the hem of its garment. Our Captain, our King, our General has won the victory! He has conquered death! He has conquered hell! He has conquered all the powers of evil! And now He brings that

triumph to us! And we can receive the spoils of His warfare! How can we be winners and partakers of that victory? First of all we need to know that we can never be part of those that conquer with Christ until we have been conquered by Christ. It was not until Saul had been knocked to his knees in the dust and all his own struggles and battle had been lost, that he entered into the victorious army of Jesus Christ. In that conquest Saul of Tarsus was slain and Paul the apostle rose up to take his place. Perhaps you are struggling in your spiritual life, trying to overcome, but the problem is you have never completely surrendered to Jesus Christ. That surrender cannot be simply by word. It must be in reality. There are those who offer Christ their praise and speak great swelling words of revelation in the gatherings of the saints, but go out and know that their life is not conquered by Christ the Lord.

When Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington he came up to Washington and his aides, each dressed in their finest military garb. Cornwallis began to extol Washington's virtues as a commander and military strategist and told him how impressed he was with the incredible maneuvers he had used. He continued in this way until suddenly Washington interrupted him and said, "Your sword, sir!" At another time, in another place, after the Hellespont was crossed, and he was making ready to march through Thrace, the king of Sparta commissioned heralds to the authorities of the countries through which he was about to move, asking them if he should come as an enemy or as a friend. "By all means as a friend," replied nearly every one. The king of Macedon, however, answered, "I will take time to consider." Immediately the king of Sparta sent the message, "In the meantime we march; we march! So the great King of kings sends us His heralds as He approaches, and asks you, "Shall I come to you as a friend or an enemy?" Gladly He would be your friend. Most of you say with whatever will you can muster, "Let Him come as my Friend." Some may say, "We will take time to consider." Others will say, if not in words, truly by actions, "I want Him to come as my Friend -- to bless me -- but I reserve the rights to this or that area of my life." In the meantime the great King marches towards us. He is coming. He is coming conquering, and to conquer! He will conquer you, my friend! He will ride into your world swiftly and powerfully and will shoot His arrows into your heart until every knee bows and Christ is Lord of all! We will not experience the victory until first we have been vanquished by Christ and have surrendered our carnal weapons. The power of His Kingdom must reign supreme within. Our hearts are the seat of the throne of God, because there He reigns. The royal seat is the image of God in the heart; and where this throne is established in the heart it extends over the whole soul and body.

You who have not yet surrendered to Him as King of kings, you who know Him as Saviour, as Healer, as Baptizer, as Blessor, but have not crowned Him Lord of all within, don't you hear His trumpet pealing in your ears, sounding down through all the chambers of your soul's fortress? You who have tried to be a good christian, faithfully performing the religious activities of the man-made church systems, but have not hitherto heard the call to come out of her and come up higher into the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus -- why do you stand out longer? Why not draw in your colors this day, and invite HIM to the supreme place in your heart and life, and enroll yourself among His followers from henceforth, to follow Him to the heights of Mount Zion; and then, when He celebrates His last victory, be among those who come with songs and everlasting joy to share the fruits of His victory and show forth His praise forevermore. Amen!

THE RED HORSE

"And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come and see! And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (Rev. 6:3-4). As these seals are opened, as the clatter of the hoofs of the horses is heard, as you experience these wonderful unveilings of Christ charging into your land to accomplish their purpose, let it be said, these are not haphazard, unplanned, or hit-and-miss dealings, these are processes and experiences, instruments and forces that have been prepared, working progressively, steadily, and meticulously to accomplish the plan and will of God in our lives. The white horse is Christ riding forth out of the inner realm of Spirit invading the outer dimensions of soul and body, initiating His march of conquest. He enters our domain first with light and illumination, quickening our spirit by His Spirit, giving the understanding that comes from the light of His countenance. The horse is the embodiment of speed. He who is mounted can get over a greater distance, do quicker work, than on foot. Thus with Jesus Christ. He carries on His conquests with great rapidity. With great vigor and velocity He moves down upon the enemy; and wheeling His forces into line, charges upon the opposing ranks, overcoming them

by the impetuous energy of His movements, before they have recovered themselves from the surprise of His sudden and swift attack. And no sooner does He attack upon His white horse of illumination and righteousness, than He appears upon His red horse, pressing the battle ever forward.

Words utterly fail me to describe the scene of the Rider upon the red horse! It is so heavenly, so divine and wonderful, so terrible and awesome, that it completely defies all human description. The Christ pursues His battle upon a magnificent red horse -- not the color red, as paint or dye -- for the Greek word is PURRHOS meaning fire like or flame coloured. It denotes no color at all, but an appearance, a condition, a manifestation of fire and flame. PURRHOS is from the root PUR -- the Greek word for fire. It is interesting to note that a derivative of this Greek word for fire (PUR) is the Latin word PYRA (pure) and the English word PYRE -- the place for the burning of a corpse. PYREX also comes from the same root, PYR or PUR, meaning a fire, and REX, meaning a king -- that which is king, thus ruling over the fire, hence a "heat-resistant" glassware. All our English words having to do with that which is pure are related to the Greek word PUR, indicating clearly that that which is pure is so because it has been cleansed BY FIRE! Consider: PURE, PURity, PURify, PURification, PURitan.

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE, the scriptures affirm. I understand not why fire has been represented to us as something so terrible, so frightening, so hideous that we should try to avoid it. If our approach back to God is through fire, as revealed by the flaming sword placed at Eden's gate, why do we always try to get out of the fire? Why do we evade the fire? Why expend such energy and effort to try and pray ourselves out of the fire! Fire, in the Word, symbolized two things: judgment and cleansing. But God is not schizophrenic in His nature - one side of His character disposed to forgive, save, heal, redeem, deliver and restore, while the other side of His nature is bent on vengeful destruction and the sadistic torture of His enemies. His action in fire, as His action in grace, is pure, harmonious, and balanced, directed towards the purging that will lead to restoration. His fire cleanses the believer that he may qualify for God's highest. His action of fire towards the unbeliever is to the same end, conditioning and preparing that one for good results, when, having been broken and purged from pride and rebellion, he bows low before the Saviour, penitently receiving the gracious gift of life. The fire does not save him, but it removes the hindrance that separates him from the kind mercy of the Lord.

The crude idea that a wise and loving and righteous Creator from eternity designed and decreed endless torment in undying flame for His creatures who are the work of His hands does dishonor to the name and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; nay, it does more than dishonor, for it is a horrible blasphemy against both His wisdom and His love. It is incredible that any man who has tasted of the goodness of the Lord could ever believe that the compassionate Saviour of mankind could ever have intended us to read such a meaning into His words. The eternal fire is the truth, the Righteousness, the Love of God in a word, it is the nature of God. Any careful reader of the Old Testament will be aware that fire is often used therein as a symbol for the presence and manifestation of God. "Our God is a consuming fire," says the scripture, and the apostle adds, "God is love." God IS! He is fire and He is love. It is no straining of metaphor to say that the love of God and the wrath of God are the same thing described from opposite points of view. Every father who has had to put the rod of correction to his son understands this! How we shall experience God's love depends upon the way we come up against it. God does not change; it is man's moral state that changes. The wrath of God is a figure of speech to denote God's unchanging opposition to sin; it is His righteous love operating to destroy evil. Nothing can live in that devouring flame that is of the nature of a lie or wars against the spirit of holiness. The consuming fire is eternal as God Himself; it is because He is; it is that which was from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Oh, if there be one thing for which we ought to rejoice and praise God without ceasing it is that eternal fire which will burn up all the foulness and rotteness, all the wickedness and cruelty, all the shame and wrong from which our souls have suffered. It is not evil which will have the last word, but good; not sorrow, but joy; not hate, but love; not Satan, but Christ!

The lamb nature is nor weak, trifling, spineless little nature. The nature of the Lamb is the nature of an overcomer, one who cannot be offended, one that can look upon the sin and evil in the world and not become religiously self-righteous but can love the creation to effectively and redemptively deal with it. Fire represents the divine process of cleansing, purging, purifying, corrective judgment. Divine judgment is not unto destruction, but unto redemption. Fire appears terrible only to the man who is unprepared to pass through it.

When of old God came down on Sinai, its upper peaks were veiled with impenetrable folds of smoke, like the smoke of a furnace. And in the heart of the smoke there was the appearance of devouring fire. There is dread here! Bounds had been set to keep the people back; but a special message must be sent to warn them against breaking through to gaze, lest the fire should break forth upon them. But there was no harm as long as they kept without the barriers; and when Moses entered into the very heart of it, it did not singe a hair of his head, and injured him no more than when it played around the fragile acacia bush, which burned with fire without being consumed -- not a leaf shriveled, nor a twig scorched. Yes, our God is a consuming fire, and there is comfort and hope and blessing in the thought! When we yield to God's love, and open our hearts to Him, He enters into us, and becomes within us a consuming fire; not to ourselves, but to the evil within us. So that, in a very deep and blessed sense, we may be said to dwell with the devouring fire, and to walk amid the eternal burnings.

Nothing is more certain than the fact that Jesus Christ has already ridden, or shall yet ride into the world of each of us in FLAMING FIRE! Because of the gross misunderstanding of almost all people concerning the fire of God, I would draw your reverent attention to the natural process of fire. In the book of Revelation we have, in chapter six, the horse of flaming fire; but later on the Holy Spirit also describes the manifestation of God as fire under another remarkable symbol. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake WHICH BURNETH WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE..." (Rev. 21:8). The word "burn" means combustion, or to consume. To consume does not mean to annihilate, for there is no such thing as annihilation. You can annihilate a form, but not a substance. When fire consumes a log in your fireplace it does not destroy any of the elements within the log, it merely changes their form. Combustion is the process by which chemicals combine to form new chemicals. For example: a tree might be cut down, sawed into firewood, and burned. In the first place, the tree was formed by drawing chemicals out of the earth and air and rearranging them into the form of a tree. Now, when the wood burns the heat causes those same chemicals to vaporize, mixing with the oxygen in the air to form new chemicals, including water and the gas carbon dioxide. So what was formerly a tree can no longer be identified as a tree, but the substance thereof is now simply changed, transformed into a DIFFERENT FORM! Thus, to burn means to CHANGE. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that fire does not burn down; it always burns up; it seeks the highest level. And all that it consumes (changes) "goes up in smoke," to exist in a new form in a higher dimension. Even if you take a pan of water and place it over a fire, before long the water will take on the property of the fire and will begin to go up in steam. To burn means to change, and the change is always upward in motion.

FIRE is the heat and light that you feel and see when something burns. It takes heat to start a fire, but once the fire is started it produces heat that keeps the process going. Thus, fire is really heat and light. In my study of the lake that burns with fire and brimstone I was very much helped and impressed by the understanding given by Charles Pridgeon and I would like to quote from his scholarly work on the subject of BRIMSTONE. He says: "The Lake of Fire and Brimstone signifies a fire burning with brimstone; the word 'brimstone' or sulphur defines the character of the fire. The Greek word THEION translated 'brimstone' is exactly the same word THEION which means 'divine.' Sulphur was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks; and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. In Homer's Iliad (16:228), one is spoken of as purifying a goblet with fire and brimstone. The verb derived from THEION is THEIOO, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god (See Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon, 1897 Edition). To any Greek, or any trained in the Greek language, a 'lake of fire and brimstone' would mean a LAKE OF DIVINE PURIFICATION. The idea of judgment need not be excluded. Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in ancient Greek. In the ordinary explanation, this fundamental meaning of the word is entirely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is associated with it" -- end quote. I realize that the above thoughts define the subject very briefly, but let us summarize the meaning thus: BURN means combustion, to change the form of. FIRE means heat and light. BRIMSTONE means divine. Putting these three together can we not see that the lake burning with fire and brimstone is, actually, DIVINE HEAT AND LIGHT PRODUCING A CHANGE!

If you think the Kingdom of God is rosewater, or eau-de-cologne, you are mistaken. You cannot war on the devil with that. You cannot war on the carnal minds of men with that. You have to make war on the world, the flesh, and the devil with weapons that are mighty through God. You have to make war on the carnal mind and

the fleshly nature with fire, divine fire, that must burn up every inherent altar of Baal, and lick up the very dust around. Make no mistake! OUR GOD I-S A CONSUMING FIRE! He is man's "horse breaker" and He will break you, precious friend of mine, and bring you to the foot of the cross of Jesus no matter how hot He has to build the fire around you! Even if long ages of fiery judgment and tormenting darkness fall upon you, they will last no longer than till the Great Fire of God has melted all arrogance into humility, and all that is self has died in the bloody sweat and all-conquering cross of the Christ, which will never give up its redeeming power till sin and sinners have no more a name among the creatures of God.

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth! For HE IS LIKE A REFINER'S FIRE, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall PURIFY THE SONS OF LEVI, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:1-3).

One of God's promises concerning the Lord who comes to His temple to sit as a refiner's fire is that He shall "purify the sons of Levi." The "sons of Levi" in the days when the prophecy was written, were the priests and ministers of God. The "sons of Levi" in these days of the spiritual temple of living stones are likewise the priests and ministers of God. Prophetically speaking, "the sons of Levi" refer to all who have received the call to the Royal Priesthood of Christ after the Order of Melchizedek, which is after the power of an endless life. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house (temple), an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). Even the word "sons" is significant. Becoming a son is the result of intense discipline, as we read in Heb. 12:5-11. The Lord comes to those who long to be His Priesthood, not with visible blessings and manifestations which inflate the ego, but as a refiner's fire to purify and refine them, even as gold and silver are refined. In olden times, the refiner of gold and silver would sit over the burning crucible until the dross and impurities in these metals were completely consumed. Not until he could see his face mirrored in the molten metals did he declare them to be pure. So too with us. The Holy Spirit brings to light and deals with every aspect of our lives, consuming all that is alien and opposed to God's nature and character, until the image of His Son Jesus is formed and mirrored in us. Only then will we be able to offer Him those offerings and render Him that service which is pleasing and acceptable in His sight. The Lord never removes or destroys something without replacing it with something greater and better. He sets us apart, like the sons of Levi, and subjects us to an intense discipline of outer and inner sanctification that we might become His Royal Priesthood.

The sons have to be cleansed and purified of the carnal mind that is contrary to God and is an enemy of His, filled with all unrighteousness and evil and is not subject to the will of God and never can be. As William Law said, "SELF is the whole root, branch and tree of sin." So for us to be His Priesthood, showing forth His virtues, His life and light and love, His righteousness and glory and power, this thing, that stands in the way of the priestly nature and ministry, must be dealt with and taken out of the way. We must be emptied of self and every thing that pertains to the earth-consciousness so that we can put on the Lord Jesus Christ in the fullness of His divine nature to manifest Him in all His wondrous beauty and majesty. All carnality must go through the fire. None can escape it. There is no detour around this lake of fire if you wish to arrive finally at the safe harbor of perfection in God. The sons of Levi of this day have felt that purifying fire. Its burning has roused them from their lethargic ease as they have drifted along the stream of peace with the world, its clear flame has lit up the dark recesses of their carnal minds and the deceitfulness of the heart of man, revealing in stark reality the man of sin sitting in the temple of God, and its blasting flame has separated them from the fleshly follies of the religious systems and the so-called church. In many of them the fire is effectually doing its purifying work. They have begun to fulfill the prophecy and to "offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness," praise His name!

"But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth." The great desire of Paul's heart was to qualify for the High Calling and not be a castaway, and to help others attain also. He wanted to attain and apprehend that for which Christ had apprehended him. "Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto I also labor,

striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1:28-29). This is the great cry and longing of my heart also, that with Paul I may be counted worthy of the Kingdom and a place in the Royal Priesthood; and to help you, my reader, to attain also. It is wonderful to hear preachers describe the glories of sonship, the priesthood, the kingdom, and immortality. We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, our redeemed spirit shouts aloud and our ransomed soul sings praises when we hear, but are we going to be partakers of the glory? That is the question. Not all who imagine themselves to be sons, not all who speak passionately of their attainment in God, not all who boast of the depth of their revelation, not all who trumpet their position in the Kingdom are going to make it - only a few, me thinks. There is a price to pay to follow on to know the Lord; a test to pass. Will I pass that rest? Will you?

And yet there is glorious hope! In this wonderful process of refining the miner mines the ore out of the darkest depth. The miner has it in his mind that he will go after the ore. Now, it's not easy to obtain the ore. The ore is in inaccessible places, and it requires great effort and endeavor for the miner to obtain the precious ore. The refiner then goes after the ore. The ore doesn't go after the refiner. I have never heard of an ore searching for a refiner! You never will. It's the refiner that goes after the ore. This is my greatest hope! Somebody says, "I sought the Lord." Well, that's how it appeared to you, my friend, but the truth of the matter is the Lord sought you. What you perceived as your seeking the Lord was but your response to His seeking you. He sought you in the darkest depths of the flesh and the bestial system of this world, and He brought you forth and made you His. HE RODE INTO YOUR WORLD, NOT YOU INTO HIS. He first rode in on a white horse, and now He rides in upon the red horse.

The ore is now the property of the miner who mined it, but the mixture is there. Both gold and silver are found in nature, but not in their pure form. They come mixed with, or embedded in, various other kinds of rocks, minerals and metals. No jeweler would want to work with natural gold with bits of rock or sand in it. Nor could such impure stuff be beaten into thin sheets. No one likes a ring that turns their finger green! No, gold and silver as they are found in nature do not have, in themselves, much usefulness. They must first be separated from all the impurities that naturally accompany them. And the process for doing that is by FIRE. Our lives, dear ones, are like that. There is so much that is worthwhile in us, but so much that is worthless. There is so much that is of God, and so much that is of self. There is the image of God in man's spirit and incorruptible life and omnipotent power; but it is buried in consciousness beneath the outer veil of mortal mind, sense-knowledge, and corruption. So what does the great and eternal miner have on His hands? He has a mixture. And that is why there has to be the furnace of fire. The ore which we are, in that mixed, raw, unrefined state, brings no pleasure at all to the Refiner, nor does it fill any useful purpose in His plans. Of sons in this state He says, "With them I am not well pleased." Our Father in His sovereign purpose sees us, but He cannot use all that He sees. The ore is wonderful relative to its pure metal content but it is disgusting relative to the impurities that are mingled therein. He is unable to use us in that condition of mixture, so He comes to us as a refiner's fire. And immediately we wonder what is happening! What is happening is that HE is appearing, and, I might add, He is showing up in a FORM that we did not expect. Yes, 'tis the same Jesus who rode into our land on the white horse, giving illumination and quickening, bringing us out from the dominion of darkness into His glorious light of revelation. But He comes now, not to bless and coddle and wink at all our carnality and foolishness, but He comes as the Rider upon the red horse, riding swiftly and powerfully in flaming fire. The hoof-beats of the red horse will echo through your kingdom, my beloved, carrying its Rider into grand and glorious battles within until all that stands in opposition to the law of the Spirit of Life goes up in conflagration and Christ is Lord of all!

How long will this process continue? I would like to promise you some respite, but I dare not. Psm. 12:6. says, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES. Seven is the number of perfection. It reveals the truth that God's own nature will be produced in the fire. He will heat up the furnace until you have been perfectly cleansed and purified, nothing remaining but HIMSELF. That which the Lord is receiving unto Himself cannot be of an inferior quality to Himself. The gold -- ah, it is HIM. The silver -- ah, it is HIM. It is PURE SPIRIT, DIVINE NATURE. How marvelous is the grace that birthed us out of His own Spirit-substance, for He is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. Only the dross must be removed. Thank God that the Christ comes to us not only on the white horse, but also on the red horse to carry the issue onward to victory!

The question follows -- Who may abide -- endure -- wait for -- the day of HIS COMING? For He is like a refiner's fire. Ah, this is not the blessing realm, it is something beyond the gifts and benefits obtained by faith. This is the purging, cleansing and purifying realm! It is the realm of qualifying for sonship, of preparation for immortality, of readiness to rule and reign in life with Christ as a King-Priest after the Order of Melchizedek. And who shall stand -- or who can withstand -- who can stand against it, who can stop or prevent His appearing as the refiner's fire? No one, may I answer, shall be able to withstand or stand against His coming when He appeareth!

Charge on, O horse of fire!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 23 SAGITTARIUS-THE ARCHER [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TWENTY-THREE

THE RED HORSE PEACE TAKEN FROM THE EARTH

We continue our study of the Sign of SAGITTARIUS --THE ARCHER. This Sign of the heavens brings before us a Centaur with the body of a horse and the torso of a man. The human portion of the Centaur is a man with a bow and arrow and he is drawing the bow and aiming the arrow at Atares --the very heart of the Scorpion. Here is the picture of Christ the Redeemer going forth to destroy the adversary. His character here is that of the Mighty One, girding Himself with honor and majesty, and going forth to victory. He rides as a King, armed with bow and arrows, shooting down His enemies. The one who is conquered is the Scorpion --the Prince of darkness, the Lord of sin, sorrow and death. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Conqueror of the Scorpion! This is the picture of One who in refulgent glory rides forth upon a white horse with a bow, going forth as the Conquering King to conquer, and to conquer. The apostle John in his visions on Patmos beheld "a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2). It is the same divine Hero in both instances.

In Revelation chapter six there is a description of the opening of the seven seals by the Lamb which draws upon many Old Testament symbols. John saw four horses. The first horse was white and the Rider had a bow, and a victor's crown was given unto him and he came forth conquering, and to conquer. The second horse was flaming red and the Rider had the power given to him to take peace from the earth and he was given a great sword. The third Rider had a balance in his hand and sat upon a black horse. The fourth horse was ashen or sickly pale and the name of the Rider was Death, and Hades followed with him. He was given authority over a fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts.

Until I heard the story in which a self-educated man told of what his life was like before he learned to read, I had never thought much about how illiteracy affects one's perception of the world. He knew very little about life beyond his own neighborhood. Although he had occasionally met people from other cities, he had little idea where those cities were in relation to his own little world. Knowing only how to live by crime, he ended up in prison, where he finally learned to read. This opened up a whole new view of the world --a world he'd never known before, even though it had existed about him all his life. He discovered new options and began to make better choices about how to live. Crime was no longer his occupation, and he turned to productive pursuits. Learning to read words redefines our understanding of the world around us. But there is another kind of literacy that has an even more profound impact on our comprehension of reality. This could be called SPIRITUAL LITERACY -- that is, the ability to read -- to perceive and understand -- the language of the Spirit, the realities of the spiritual world. When we lack this ability to make sense of the broad vistas of spiritual truth, we are left trying to interpret spiritual realities from the limited, distorted perspective of the carnal mind -- natural reasoning and human understanding. I do not hesitate to tell you that the world and the church today are literally filled and overflowing with SPIRITUAL ILLITERATES!

The book of Revelation is first and foremost a SPIRITUAL BOOK. It is a book of spiritual realities communicated by means of signs and symbols. The opening statement in the book of Revelation is --"The REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST." Everything in the book bespeaks of the unveiling of Jesus Christ. The Revelation sets before us a glorious Person, with the veil removed from our eyes so that we may look upon Him and perceive His life, His nature, His ways, His purposes and His dealings. Until one sees the Christ of God on every page, in every chapter, in every scene, and in every verse of the Revelation he remains an illiterate so far as the true meaning of this wonderful book is concerned. Understood as the Revelation of Jesus Christ in and through His body, immediately the book is changed from a prophecy of cataclysmic and apocalyptic end-time events, to a progressive unfolding of the very life, victory and triumph of the Christ in His

people and unto creation. Every scene within the book, of the woes, thunders, earthquakes, conflicts, vials, beasts, etc., in all of their sundry and various manifestations, are all to serve but one purpose, and contribute to but one end, namely, To BRING FORTH THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. Thus, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are among the most significant of the great symbols in the Word of God because they give the key to the processings of God within us. When you have grasped their full significance, by understanding how the scriptures speak of horses, in order to teach spiritual truth, you will have gained an appreciation of Bible symbolism. Nothing can be more vivid and dramatic than the scenes which are successively exhibited as the Lamb opens the seals in the book of Revelation. The four living creatures in the midst of the throne, one after another announce the breaking of the first four seals, with a loud cry of "Come, and see!" As each seal is opened the Seer beholds a visionary figure pass across the field of view, emblematic of that portion of the scroll which is unrolled. There is a divine progression in the vision which opens from glory to glory. When the Lamb opened the first seal, John records, "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

As we have previously pointed out, the primary hindrance to the revelation of Jesus Christ in us is the dominion of the soul --our will, mind, emotions and desires. In order for Christ to be fully revealed in us the attributes of the carnal mind must be effectively dealt with. The carnal mind is an earthbound, unspiritual enemy of God. It is the flesh that wars against the spirit, and it is the carnal mind that receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. The natural man is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Before the One who has purchased us can take full possession of His inheritance in us there must first be the dispossession of all that hinders the expression of the Spirit. Just as the children of Israel were commanded to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, so must the giants that usurp our land be conquered. This, my friend, IS THE MINISTRY OF THE FOUR HORSEMEN! The events surrounding these Four Horsemen all portray conflict, war and destruction. The Four Horses are war horses -- and are representations of the activities of the Christ sent forth into our earth to dispossess the usurpers -- the carnal mind, the will of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, and the works of the flesh. It is the taking possession of our earth by the Christ of God. The Four Horses and their Riders present a vivid picture of God's dealings, strippings, purgings, prunings, and processings by which we are reduced to God. Swift, powerful, irresistible ruin is visited upon our outer world of illusion, and our inner heart of deceit. These horses are sent, not to overcome the world outside, but to overcome the world within; not to judge the outward nations of the earth, but to subjugate the kings which rule in our hearts. As the outer dimensions of our life are stripped away, the inner vitality of the Christ emerges into view. HE becomes revealed! Ah --this is the Centaur, the horse and his rider in the heavens armed with a bow, SAGITTARIUS sending his arrows into the heart of the Scorpion. This is CHRIST THE CONQUEROR!

No one preaches the coming of the Lord more than I do. Christ is coming. He is coming conquering, and to conquer! He will conquer you, my friend! He will ride into your world swiftly and powerfully and will shoot His arrows into your heart until every knee bows and Christ is Lord of all! We will not experience the victory until first we have been vanquished by Christ and have surrendered our carnal weapons. The power of His Kingdom must reign supreme within. The white horse is Christ riding forth out of the inner realm of Spirit, invading the outer dimensions of soul and body, initiating His march of conquest. He enters our domain first with light and illumination, quickening our spirit by His Spirit, giving the understanding that comes from the light of His countenance. He carries on His conquests with great rapidity. With great vigor and velocity He moves down upon the enemy; and wheeling His forces into line, charges upon the opposing ranks, overcoming them by the impetuous energy of His movements, before they have recovered themselves from the surprise of His sudden and swift attack. And no sooner does He attack upon His white horse of illumination and righteousness, than He appears upon His red horse, pressing the battle ever forward.

THE RED HORSE

The Rider upon the red horse staggers the imagination and defies description. The scene is so heavenly, so divine and wonderful, that words utterly fail to describe it. The first thing that is said about the red horse is that "power was given unto him to take peace from the earth" (Rev. 6:4). To those who are experiencing the progressive unfoldment of the Christ-life within one thing becomes increasingly clear -- within them there rages a furious battle. Upon our spirit being quickened by His Spirit, our lives become the meeting place -- battle

ground -- for two orders that are opposed to one another --the flesh and the spirit. This conflict is clearly defined by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Galatians. "For the flesh wars against the spirit, and the spirit wars against the flesh; for these are antagonistic to each other -- continually withstanding and in conflict with each other " (**Gal. 5:17**). Let us glance for a moment throughout the entire Bible. It is a book of warfare. Two thrones are at war. We discern rival sovereignties. We read of two kingdoms. We are everywhere conscious of a clash of wills. There are two men, two peoples, two natures, two realms. As a result we face throughout scripture irreconcilable opposites: life and death; light and darkness; love and hate; righteousness and evil; holiness and iniquity; liberty and license; truth and lies; law and grace; mercy and judgment; the glorious city of God and the great harlot city of Babylon.

The Bible is a book of war. "The Lord is a man of war" (**Ex. 15:3**). The saints are men of war. Heaven is a realm of war as well as the earth. "There was war in heaven" (**Rev. 12:7**). The sons of God are the Lord's army. David was a man of war. "Then answered one of the servants and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite that is cunning in playing, and a mighty man of valor, and a man war" (**I Sam. 16:18**). "Thou (Absalom) knowest thy father (David) and his men that they are mighty men, and thy father is a man of war" (**I Sam. 17:8**). David faced Goliath and took his sword. He was a man of war before he met Goliath. David is a type of Christ. His followers were men of war. "And there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker (**II Sam. 3:1**). The saints follow a man of war.

Long centuries ago Rebecca inquired of the Lord concerning the conflict that was going on within her womb. The Lord answered her, saying, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger" (**Gen. 25:23**). This conflict within is not only the experience of Rebecca, but of every son in whom the character of God is being developed. And as Rebecca, so too can we take much comfort from the words of God spoken to her. For within every saint pressing on unto perfection there are two nations, two kingdoms and each kingdom is of a very different character. But the promise is sure -- "the elder shall serve the younger." The spiritual meaning of this is revealed by Paul in **I Cor. 15:45-49**. "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." And so shall it be fulfilled --the natural man shall be subject to the spiritual, and then shall we see "all things in subjection under His feet" (**Heb. 2:8**).

In far away Babylon the Holy Spirit witnessed through the prophet Daniel, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (**Dan. 2:44**). Though many look for a "revived Roman Empire" to arise in Europe with antichrist at its head, the ten-toe confederacy of the end-times, yet, praise God, "IN THE DAYS OF THESE KINGS SHALL THE GOD OF HEAVEN SET UP A KINGDOM, WHICH SHALL NEVER BE DESTROYED." That there may be a fulfillment in the outer world of appearances I would not deny, although it is my opinion that historically it has already been fulfilled. But the quickening of the Spirit upon the truth so vital for today bids me look beyond the letter of the Word, beyond the outward manifestations, beyond the European Community and the Common Market, along with the religious ecumenical movement; and receiving of the spirit of the Word, turning inwardly, we find that all that pertains to the kingdoms of this world lies within the heart of man, and there have been so many kings which have RULED WITHIN US, and as His Kingdom unfurls its banner over our lives, these kings are subdued and brought to nought. There are kings of self-will, of worldly ambition, of fleshly zeal, of ruling thoughts, of religious dogmas, creeds, and traditions and commandments of men, of soulish emotions and impulses spirited by the world, of fleshly appetites dominated by the five senses, of fears, doubts, rebellions, weaknesses, and sins. The still small voice speaks a word, and immediately carnal reason tries to argue us out of it. We sense His direction and leading to "stand still", but human sympathy and sentiment tell us to get involved in things HE HAS NOT LED US to do. So we yield and obey these emotions and impulses, and wonder why we miss the joy and blessing of the Lord. But, praise God, in the days of these kings -- while they flourish, control, and bear heavy in their rule -- shall the God of heaven set up His Kingdom and all authority

and power shall be subdued before it. Into the midst of these kings has rolled THE STONE, it is breaking in pieces, consuming all these, bringing all into submission to Him!

TAKING PEACE FROM THE EARTH

The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt and their eventual conquest of the promised land is without doubt one of the most awe-inspiring, marvelous and concerted revelations of God's redemptive program, His aim, intent and objective; His purpose, processes and dealings; His design, out workings and goal that has ever been revealed to mankind. It is not my intention to elaborate upon this, merely to point out in passing the significance of Egypt in scripture. Egypt represents the place of being separated from the life, rule, and blessing of God, and of being oppressed under the dominion of the flesh, the world and the devil. There is a remarkable word of profound significance which the Lord spoke to Israel regarding their relationship with Egypt. "If ye say, **We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord your God, saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, WHERE WE SHALL SEE NO WAR, nor hear the sound of the trumpet (calling to war), nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell...**" (**Jer. 42:13-14**). Think of it -- Egypt is the place where there is no war! All is peace and tranquility in Egypt. There is security and provision in Egypt. Spiritually this is not speaking of a country in the Middle East, nor about any natural war! It is a reference to people who are experiencing no spiritual warfare in their walk. They do what comes naturally, and there is no opposition to the way they think, act or live. This is the normal state of the natural man before Christ rides into his life upon His war-steed. Those who have not been quickened by the Spirit from above do not hear the sound of the trumpet -- the sound of God's voice mustering to battle across the land. Vast multitudes of these lifeless ones fill the pews of the world's churches Sunday after Sunday, but there is no thirsting after God, no hunger for spiritual things, no comprehension of His purposes, no vision of the power and glory of His Kingdom, no glint of sword to circumscribe mind and heart. Ah, but when God's hour arrives for such an one to be apprehended of God, suddenly into his or her peaceful world charges Jesus Christ the conqueror -- and He enters with great swiftness and power. He has a bow, and the bow is bent, and immediately the arrows of divine conviction and revelation pierce the heart, and He presses the battle to make conquest of the soul. He fights His way into the human heart until He possesses that which He has purchased, until the fortresses of mind, will, emotion and desire have been taken and brought under the dominion of Truth. He first shoots the arrow of light and illumination, quickening unto God. Then quickly He shoots the arrows which "take peace from the earth" -- that very earth which He has illuminated, for the battle must be pursued until man is fully conquered and all enemies concealed within have been routed, exposed, and vanquished.

It is the almighty Lord Himself who declares war and fires the first shot. HE it is that initiates the battle. "I am come," said He, "not to send peace on earth, but a sword." Or, stronger still in the original, "**Think not that I come to cast peace on the earth; I come not to cast peace, but a sword**" (**Mat. 10:34**). Who holds the sword? Who is to wield the sword? Who is to stir up the fight? Who is to "take peace from the earth"? The Lord Jesus Himself, and the sword is the sword of the Lord. Sometimes people speak about "sweet Jesus." This Jesus offers sugar, not a sword. He tastes good but hurts no one. When life tastes bad, sprinkle on a bit of His sweetness. The Rider on the red horse is not so sweet. Jesus Christ is a warrior, fierce and frightening. E. B. Meyer once wrote, "When Christ is born, there is always trial. What trouble the New-born brought into this world! There was trouble for Mary! She was living a happy, peaceful life in Nazareth, when the sword began to penetrate to her soul, and she was called to endure an agony of misunderstanding from those who loved her best. There was trouble for Joseph, who is afflicted by startling fears, roused suddenly from sleep, and bidden to leave all and flee. There was trouble for Herod and the Jews. 'He was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him,' at the story of the new-born King. There was trouble also in a multitude of Jewish homes, entered by brutal soldiery, who tore the babes from their mothers' breasts and tossed them on their sword-points. Wherever Jesus comes, trial follows. He comes to send, not peace, but a sword; and one who knew well of what he affirmed said: I am crucified with Christ --I die daily-- I am delivered unto death for Jesus' sake.' These inward trials often spring from the unwillingness of our nature to yield to the will and way of God. A man's foes are they of his own household. Sometimes, also, when we have begun to live the new life it seems as though the box of Pandora were opened, and all the winds had escaped, each eager to out do all the rest. But out of the trouble will rise the fairest, strongest life. By and by some watcher on the battlements of heaven, beholding our approach, will cry: 'Who are these arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?' and this will be the reply: 'These are they which came out of great tribulation' -- for tribulation is education misspelt" -- end quote.

There can be no warfare as long as our will is uncontested. There is no war while our desires remain unopposed. There is no conflict when our ways are unchallenged. There is no battle as long as the Adam nature and its activities are not crossed, confronted or assailed. Our carnal life is at peace within itself until the red horse rides in and T-A-K-E-S PEACE FROM OUR EARTH! The red horse never enters our land until we have been quickened to higher and holier things, brought into living fellowship in the Spirit. The world is at peace with itself, unconvicted of its course of carnality and shame, content in the frivolous activities of the earth-life. There is a war which rages within me and, which causes far more trouble than any conflict I face without. My number one problem is neither men nor demons, but myself -- my own limited, deceiving, conniving, mortal mind. My flesh nature is my greatest enemy, for it is the enemy of the Christ. For years I blamed everything on the devil and his demons. Then I discovered to my astonishment that all my spiritual battles were right within myself. I didn't have to look far to find my greatest foe. I found that I face him in the mirror every morning. But I had never experienced a spiritual battle until I met Jesus! When He came into my life He at once declared war! Immediately, the flesh rose up in hostile opposition to the divine Invader and the flesh and the spirit were at war, one with the other. If they are doing the fighting, what are they fighting over! When two people or two nations fight, they are fighting over something. They fight to possess something, to hold on to something, to have ownership of something, or have legal access. They fight for territory or control. There is an object of their affections that they are fighting for. In like manner, the spirit seeks control of your soul and body, and the flesh wants to control them -- soul and body are the object of their affection! Whoever controls your soul and your body, controls you. The conflict is on and the judgment is in humanity.

The battle is between two natures, two kings, and two kingdoms. The flesh nature we took upon us when we were born into this world. The spiritual nature came alive in us when we were born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God. **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (Jn. 3:6-7).** Regeneration, new birth, sons of God -- these are all terms with which most Christians are familiar. The beautiful ANALOGY is accepted by everyone. But all this means to the average Christian is that he conjures up the nice religious feeling of thinking of himself "as if" he were a "real" son of God, as Jesus is. The average Christian has absolutely no idea of the transcendental implications of this new birth into the family of God. Most think of being a child of God as sort of an "honorary" title conferred on them by an indulgent God who accepts them as "little adopted human children" to whom He plans to give as their reward for accepting His gift of eternal life, a beautiful park, a celestial playground called "heaven". This heaven is designed for them to enjoy for eternity, playing, loafing, running, shouting, rejoicing, visiting, strumming harps, waving palm branches, and doing what ever other sinless thing their hearts may desire.

But let us understand what it really means to actually be BORN into the very family of GOD. I like to turn the phrase "the family of God" around, in order to better catch its significance. Instead of saying that we are born into the family of God, it is just as correct to say that we are born into the GOD FAMILY! I may say, by way of illustration, that I was born by natural birth into the family of Eby. But this also means that I was born into the EBY FAMILY. I am of the EBY KIND. I A-M E-B-Y. Not only are men born into the family of God, but they are born into the GOD FAMILY. Not only are we birthed into the Kingdom of God, we are birthed into the GOD KINGDOM -- the KINGDOM WHICH IS GOD. We are of the GOD KIND. And startling as it may be, this GOD KINGDOM, or GOD FAMILY, is the ELOHIM of the scriptures! And to be born into THIS FAMILY means that we have the awesome potential to become ALL, THAT HE IS! **"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14-15).** The new birth is nothing less than the birth of a God-being, the birth of a Christ-creature, who becomes **"Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).** There is no new birth outside of the actual birth of an actual Spirit Being, who becomes the "inner man", the new "me". It is MY SPIRIT quickened by HIS SPIRIT God impregnating His own divine seed into me thus making me alive from the dead, a new creature on the Celestial Plane. So many Christians glibly talk about a born-again "experience", or a "change of heart", being wholly ignorant as to what must transpire to produce this change, to implement this experience. They confuse "justification by faith" with the "new birth". Abraham was justified by faith long centuries before the transforming Spirit was given, but he was not born of the Spirit, from above. **"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:39-40).** Our Lord said, "Ye must be BORN," not now of the flesh, but of the Spirit. Religionists, both then and now, are incapable of grasping this greatest of all truths and its astounding implications. And so they

fail to understand that as a woman gives birth to a son, bringing an actual child into the world as a living, breathing, personality with an individual identity, nature, mind, and will, so does GOD GIVE BIRTH, delivering out of His own loins (Spirit) the offspring of Himself of His own kind, of the GOD SPECIES, to grow up into the fullness of His own divine Being. The new birth is nothing less than the birth of an actual divine, heavenly Being, a son of the heavenly Father, who is as ageless and deathless as is his immortal Parent, a brother by birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, like Him in every phase of His Being, differing only in development and rank.

For almost two thousand years there has raged a theological battle over the Godhead. Some have contended that God is one Person in three manifestations and that Jesus is that one Person of God manifested in the flesh. Others believe in the trinity -- that God is eternally three distinct Persons, co-equal, co-eternal and consubstantial, united together as one God. The truth lies far beyond the limitation of either concept. Neither view has grasped the fuller truth set forth in the scriptures and now revealed by the Holy Spirit. The wonderful truth is -- God is not one Person, neither is God three Persons. God is a FAMILY! God is a KINGDOM! God is reproducing, expanding, increasing HIMSELF! Jesus explained to Nicodemus in John chapter three that in order to enter the Kingdom of God -or the GOD KINGDOM -- human beings have to be born again. He patiently explained to this inquiring Ruler of the Jews that it was not a physical re-birth into the human plane that He was talking about, but a newborn spirit being on the SPIRIT PLANE. John refers to this birth in Jn. 1:12 when he says, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons (children, offspring) of God, even to them that believe on His name." The word sons in this passage is from the Greek word TEKNON which means "one born" or "a child". That a birth as the offspring of God is what John intended is made clear as he continues in the next verse: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. This is not a mere conception as some say, for the Holy Spirit testifies to every man, saying, "And I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto BABES IN CHRIST. I have fed you with MILK, and not with meat" (I Cor. 3:1-2). Again, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of MILK, and not strong meat. For everyone that useth MILK is unskillful in the word of righteousness: FOR HE IS A BABE" (Heb. 5:12-13). Yet again, "As NEWBORN BABES, desire the sincere MILK of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). Then John tells us, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth I-S BORN OF GOD, and KNOWETH GOD...for whatsoever is BORN OF GOD overcometh the world" (I Jn. 4:7; 5:1, 4). Regenerated believers are called the children of God all through the New Testament. Nowhere does God call us divine embryos or divine fetuses! Embryos and fetuses do not drink milk neither do they love or do the will of God! How beautifully does J. B. Phillips translate the meaningful words of the apostle John: "Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in allowing us to be called children of God -- and that is not just what we are called, but what we are. Our heredity on the Godward side is NO MERE FIGURE OF SPEECH -- which explains why the world will no more recognize us than it recognized Christ" (I Jn. 3:1).

Paul speaks of this actual sonship to God in his wonderful teaching on the discipline that God applies to His sons. "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the FATHER OF SPIRITS, and live?" (Heb. 12:9). God is here declared to be the Father of spirits -- not of angels or demons or fairies -- for the whole subject of this chapter is SONSHIP. God is not the Father of angels -- the messenger realm -- they are created spirits, not begotten. "For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee! And again, I will be to him a Father... (Heb. 1:5). The only spirits which are born spirits are the children of God! God is the Father of OUR SPIRITStherefore we reverence Him as sons reverence their father. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." When I was born into this world many years ago I was birthed a flesh being. My mother was a flesh being, my father was a flesh being, their union was a flesh union, and the offspring of that union was a flesh being. But, praise God! that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. We are no longer merely physical human beings; we are now immortal, incorruptible, heavenly, GOD-LIFE beings, having been born again from above, of an incorruptible seed, children of the Most High. "And you HE made alive, when you were dead, slain, by your trespasses and sins. But God! So rich is He in mercy! Because of and in order to satisfy the great and wonderful and intense love with which He loved us, even when we were dead...He made us ALIVE TOGETHER in fellowship and in union with Christ. He gave us the very life of Christ Himself; the same new life with which He quickened Him. And He raised us up together with Him and

made us sit down together -- giving us joint seating with Him-- in the heavenly sphere by virtue of our being in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:1-6) (Amplified Bible).

The above scripture brings us to a most significant point. Some would have us believe that the dead are dead - that is, that there is no consciousness, no knowledge, no being or existence beyond the grave; that the dead have utterly perished and have no more a portion in any dimension of life anywhere in God's great universe. The proof texts used in support of this concept are, for the most part, taken from the book of Ecclesiastes. Truly the wisdom of Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes affirms: "For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun...for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:4- 6,10).

Every diligent searcher for truth must become aware as quickly as possible of his utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit for revelation and understanding of all truth. The secrets of the Lord cannot be learned without the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible. The world is overloaded with dead, dry theologians in whose hearts the light of revelation never shines. Theirs is the realm of musty old volumes of head knowledge -- wisdom that is foolishness with God. They have never learned the difference between the oldness of the letter and the newness of the spirit. As we breathe a simple, honest prayer for guidance that will bear great fruit in understanding, may the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God quicken the minds of all who read these lines. While the passage quoted above from the book of Ecclesiastes appears conclusive and final that the dead know not anything and have passed forever out of existence in body, soul and spirit, it is imperative that we bear in mind just what the book of Ecclesiastes is all about. A careful perusal of the book reveals that Ecclesiastes is the book of man "under the sun" reasoning about life; it is the best the carnal mind can do in arriving at the reality and purpose of all things. The key phrases throughout are "under the sun" "I perceived"; "I said in my heart." The Holy Spirit has recorded accurately what the natural man reasons, but the conclusions are man's not God's. This is extremely important! To man without the life of the Spirit or the understanding of the Almighty "all is vanity. To the man whose consciousness, understanding and experience are limited to those things that are done "under the sun," truly all is vanity. "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Eccl. 1:2).

The statements about the dead knowing nothing are no more a divine revelation concerning the state of the dead than any other conclusion of "the Preacher" is such a revelation. Reasoning from the standpoint of man "under the sun," the natural man can see no difference between a dead man and a dead lion (Eccl. 9:3-4). A living dog is better than either, so far as the natural man can discern. Let all the humanists and atheists say, Amen! Let us now acquaint ourselves with the truth as it is in Jesus, for when we learn the truth I now affirm, many things which heretofore have been an inscrutable mystery will begin to come clear to our understanding. Let us then stand assured of this marvelous fact there is a realm of life BEYOND THE SUN! It may come as a shock to some who read these lines, but the Holy Spirit declares with divine certainty that YOUR LIFE, precious child of God, has nothing in common with the lives of those creatures whose existence is bound to that low realm under the sun. You belong to a special category of people to whom none of the known laws of the universe apply. The laws that govern other people do not apply to you. You are in a class all by yourself. One of the greatest truths ever kept hidden from the eyes of the natural man is this: "If any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATION" (I Cor. 5:17). The destiny of most people, of all natural and fallen men, is linked to the earth and the mortal; try as they will they cannot escape it. This is the case for most human beings, all human beings, in fact, who live and have their being in the OLD CREATION MAN --ADAM. But, blessed be God! AN EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE: EXISTS! The Master Architect of the universe saw fit to create a special category of people who are of an entirely NEW CREATION. The highest realm known to man is called heaven, and all who have been born again from above by the Spirit of God have had opened to them a realm higher far than the visible world of the physical and material. Paul tells us that we are to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). The man or woman who is born from that bright glory world above becomes an entirely new creation in Christ Jesus. And from that time forward, he lives for God. His chief delight is in spiritual things. Spiritual things are eternal things. His affections are set above and not on things below. His

citizenship is in heaven --the realm of spirit. Before his eyes there is opened up a Kingdom which is beyond his full articulation or expression, and he knows that the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of the Spirit, is within him. He has only glimpsed some of the ineffables glories that God has, is, and will reveal to him. He is now part of a Kingdom so vast in scope and so enduring in quality that the things of this world seem tawdry, mean, narrow, and insignificant by comparison.

I want to draw your attention to a few scriptures that will make the truth crystal clear. And let demons rage. Let fools and unbelievers hang their heads in shame. We quote from the incomparable Word of God. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...but God...hath raised us up together, and MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS" (Eph. 2:1,4-6). Ah, we whose spirits have been quickened by His Spirit, we in whom the mighty power is working which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand far above all heavens --have been made alive and enthroned with Him in this super-eminence N-O-W. The Lord Jesus Christ is enthroned in the higher-than-all-heavens and WE HAVE BEEN QUICKENED AND RAISED UP AND GIVEN JOINT SEATING WITH HIM IN THE UNION OF HIS DIVINE LIFE! The message is clear -- "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (I Jn. 5:11-13). Alas! those who say that the saint of God whose body goes by way of the grave is dead like a dog without being or consciousness has failed the first simple test of sonship; HE DOES NOT KNOW THAT HE HAS ETERNAL LIFE! Again, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (I Jn. 3:14). We know that we H-A-V-E PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE! We also know, therefore, that a dead saint is better than a living dog. The mighty apostle Peter put it this way, "You have been regenerated --born again-- not from a mortal origin (seed, sperm) but from one that is immortal by the ever living and lasting Word of God" (I Pet. 1:23) (Amplified Bible). We could heap scripture upon scripture --but let me ask you, precious friend of mine, How can one who HAS ETERNAL LIFE--die? Oh, yes, his body may go to the grave, and well did "the Preacher" say, "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." The great question is just this: Is that inner man, the new creation, that man begotten of the eternal Spirit and by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, that man born from above, that man seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus --is that man, I ask, IN THE GRAVE? If I have the Son of God, if my spirit has been quickened by His Spirit, if I have been joined to the Lord one spirit, if I know that I have passed from death unto life, if I have been raised up (if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above), translated into the Kingdom of the Son --can I then perish, know nothing, have no reward, and be less than a living dog, without hope in the darkness, silence and non-existence of the grave? "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live" (Gal. 2:20) is the testimony of the resurrected man. If God has not done something eternal in my spirit, then I am of all men most miserable. If my life is hid with Christ in God, but I die like a dog and that is the end of me --WHAT MORE DO I POSSESS THAN THE MAN WHO KNOWS NOT CHRIST? What advantage is there to being born again? Would it not be a monstrous lie to say that I have passed from death unto life? Indeed, what IS this life, this eternal life, this incorruptible life I have now received--if all things come alike to all and there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the clean and the unclean; if all alike die, perish, cease to exist, and know nothing! I do not hesitate to tell you that such a notion is a spiritual absurdity, a distortion of truth, and a repudiation of that regeneration wrought within! Our spiritual life, my beloved, is not measured as matter, nor by years, nor is it in any way restricted or controlled by any physical law or by those things which are done "under the sun." Hearken, O ye sons of God --divinity and eternity are born in us! We are children of our heavenly Father! "Beloved, N-O-W are we the children of God." Do you believe it? DO you! In union with Christ in one spirit I must believe that should my spirit die, the Christ would die. If my new creation life perishes, the Christ perishes. If my inner man has no consciousness apart from the outer man, then the Christ has no consciousness apart from the physical world. The Lord Jesus Christ had power to both lay down His life and take it up again. Can we not see by this that He HAD LIFE EVEN WHILE HE WAS DEAD! A child can understand that one cannot take his life up again if he has ceased to exist. If the Christ did not have LIFE IN THE SPIRIT, there would have been no resurrection of the body!

In that far away beginning the Almighty Creator proclaimed, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." God made cattle "after their kind," after the cattle kind. He made "every winged fowl after his kind," after the bird kind. But it is evident that God purposed to make man AFTER THE GOD KIND. Now, incredible

as it may seem to those who do not understand the mystery of God, God is a FAMILY. This does not mean that there are many gods. There is only one God, as there is only one Adam and one Christ. Adam is a many-membered man, Christ is a many-membered son, and God is a many-membered Godhead! The Person of God is expressed through a vast variety of manifestations of Himself as He reproduces Himself after His own "KIND." And it is in man that God is reproducing His kind. Man is God's idea, God's image, God's likeness, God's expression, God's manifestation. Man, out of all the infinite creation of God, has the supreme potentiality of being born into the very divine family of God, of which divine family Jesus Christ is the firstborn Son among many brethren. Jesus Christ is the first perfect representation of the invisible God. Do you realize what this means? It means far more than having an immortal body. The transcendent essential factor is that God is PERFECT SPIRITUAL CHARACTER. It is the supreme intelligence, combined with holy and righteous character that most importantly distinguishes GOD from every other life form. Of course God, too, possesses supreme and almighty power and eternal, incorruptible existence. But without right CHARACTER, such power and perpetuity would be destructive and dangerous! Should any one of us acquire an immortal body prior to having developed a holy and incorruptible character, a devil would surely be born! Come now, and let us reason together. Character springs from nature. Webster defines nature as: "the inherent tendencies directing conduct...what a thing really is...quality.. .essence. On the other hand, character is defined as: one's pattern of behavior or personality.. .reputation. Paul describes our old (first, fleshly) nature in **Eph. 2:2-3**. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation (behavior) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." The apostle Peter speaks of our new (second, spiritual) nature in **II Pet. 1:3-4**. "According as His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life (Gr., ZOE: God life) and godlinesswhereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Yes, my beloved, we are now made partakers of GOD'S DIVINE NATURE. The new creation has only God-like attributes. Christ is the life of it. The believer, partaking of the divine nature, displays the very characteristics of Christ. It is He who gives the child of God the righteousness of God and makes him an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. This nature, as all nature, is inherited. And from this divine nature is developed God's divine character. Understand this and you will understand a great truth: NATURE is inherited; CHARACTER is developed! Character is never formed instantaneously. No one is born possessing character. Every child of Adam is born into this world with a sinful (flesh) nature. But that precious little infant does not yet have a sinful character. As the child grows the character is formed progressively out of the nature. The nature gradually manifests itself through the actions of the child as character. In like manner, we have by re-generation been made partakers of the divine nature. The divine seed (sperm) of His life has fertilized the ovum of our human spirit (which also came from God but dwells in a state of death --not nonexistence, but unresponsiveness to the spiritual realm) producing the NEW CREATION MAN. And while this new birth is the most astounding miracle of the ages, it is, nonetheless, merely the birth of a spiritual infant possessing divine nature but not divine character. Now divine character must be developed from the divine nature --God manifesting His nature outwardly through our words, actions and behavior. This character is formed in the crucible of experience, as we learn in every situation and circumstance to yield our vessel to the Holy Spirit who is the active agent in our divine nature.

In the light of the truth we are now studying, so many things take on new meaning. The Lord Jesus Christ explained the two natures when He told Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (**Jn. 3:6**). This is the fundamental principle of the warfare that rages within us! The word flesh is a comprehensive term and includes all that a person is through his or her natural birth: intellect, emotions, will, and body. These component parts that make up a human being are corrupt, for the stream of humanity became polluted at its source when Adam and Eve submitted the human race to the outer realm of appearances. Basically, their sin was unbelief, followed by disobedience, and since all mankind was present in Adam and Eve, their sin killed man spiritually, causing him to be unresponsive to God. The flesh nature is dead to God, but very much alive to the world. The spirit nature, once fertilized by the divine Spirit, is dead to the world, but very much alive to God. This sets into action two competitive forces within the child of God: one born of the flesh, and the other born of the Spirit. Thus the child of God becomes a battlefield. Each nature wars against the other, seeking to dominate the mind, the will, the emotions and the body. It is precisely at this

junction that the red horse gallops into your land with power to TAKE PEACE FROM YOUR EARTH! Few believers understand the intensity of this warfare. The old nature, godless, unbelieving, ego-centric, selfish, and linked to the world, wants control of the individual for fleshly gratifications. The new nature, spiritual, believing, one with Christ Jesus, and eternal, wants control of the individual to produce eternal values. It is a running battle with no surrender, "For the flesh lusteth (wars) against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). Since most saints do not understand what is going on within, they encounter "mountain-top experiences", and then they are plunged into "death-valley experiences." The death-valley experiences occur when the old nature greedy for personal gratification and fed by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, dominates the spiritual nature.

Here I would share some pertinent words from the pen of Paul Mueller. "Two natures within us manifest the character and manner of each: Fallen Adam within us is that mystery of iniquity that curses and brings forth the iniquities of the carnal man. Likewise, the risen Christ within us blesses the Father, declares the truth and mysteries of God, makes known the manifold wisdom of God, and lifts us up and causes us to walk in the high places in Him. And as we give the preeminence to the Christ within, fallen Adam within will be subdued and conquered so that our spirits, souls and bodies are preserved complete and found blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He will also perfect His work' (I Thes. 5:23-24, Weymouth). Out of our mouths proceed both blessing and cursing. These things ought not to be. And when THE PERFECT MAN comes forth in the image and likeness of Christ, fully adorned with the garments of His salvation, we shall no longer express the dual natures within us. Then, the perfect man, the Christ body, shall express only the Truth, Love and Life of the Father. Their mind will be the mind of Christ, a single mind in fully redeemed bodies. O the wonder of that so great salvation reserved for those who love His appearing! The Psalmist asked the question, 'What shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?' The answer is given: 'Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper' (Ps. 120:3-4). The Smith-Goodspeed translation gives vs. 4 as, 'The sharpened arrows of the warrior, with live broom coals!' The only Warrior worthy and able to destroy the man of sin, the carnal, Adamic nature in us all, is none other than Christ Himself. HE is the Mighty Warrior! He shall destroy the man of sin within us who is the source of all evil, including the false tongue. O carnal man within! We have now been able to identify you as the man of sin within...the cause of war and strife. I am not so much concerned about the war among the nations as I am with the war within me. Blessed with the knowledge and wisdom of the sovereignty of God, and of His Lordship and dominion over the affairs of men and nations, I can now listen with understanding while the news reports tell of wars and rumors of wars among the nations. My greater distress is in the knowledge that fallen Adam, the source of all wars, is within me. He within me is the warring nature that brings me to distress and woe. Like the Psalmist, I am for peace, not the limited and restricted harmony and peace of the carnal man, but the abundant and all-encompassing peace of the kingdom of God, the peace that only the Prince of peace can bring. When I speak of peace, he within wants war and strife. Woe is me! my soul has long dwelt with that barbarian within who hates peace and desires only war. Nevertheless, I rejoice in the revelation that my redemption and yours is at hand" --end quote.

Of this great battle within someone has written an interesting and appropriate rhyme:

**Two natures beat within my breast.
One is foul, the other blest.
The one I love; the one I hate.
The one I feed will dominate.**

This thought is expanded in a poem by Norene Nicholls, titled, THE FULLNESS OF GOD, and we quote:

**"But thou flesh, my foe so bitter, was fast nailed to His cross,
Cease your cries! I will not listen, all you've dealt is gall and loss!**

**Self, you, too, must cease your struggle and come down from off the throne,
Christ, my Lord, is King and Master, and the reins are all His own!**

O my spirit, long you've waited 'neath the weights I've heaped on thee,

How you've longed to fully worship; how you've cried to be set free.

O Thou wondrous, glorious Godhead, like an ocean vast and wide,
Launch I forth into Thy fullness where doth flow Thy power's tide.

Who will dare to loose the moorings and abandon all to God?
They shall know unequaled power --they shall tread where none have trod!"

Ray Printing has beautifully expounded along this line --"Paul described it this way: 'For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin' (Rom. 7:22-23,25). Full well Paul knew that he had given himself to the Lord, made his surrender, and received the INDWELLING LIFE OF THE SPIRIT. But he also knew that there was a law in his members, in the flesh, which would war against this inner life and that there were only two ways to bring a cessation to the conflict, either to PUT OFF THIS BODY, or else to have this body SWALLOWED UP INTO HIS LIFE. He had no great desire to become a dis-embodied spirit, but rather longed to have this body changed and fashioned anew like unto His glorious body, for then he would know that GLORIOUS REST FOR THE BODY. What conflicts --the negative says, 'This body is mine by reason of the fall, and the sin that dwells therein.' The spirit of the world adds, 'This body is mine, I give it life and nourishment -- I feed its senses, tickle its emotions, stir up its impulses, etc.' But the Spirit of God within, says, 'IT IS MINE BY VIRTUE OF REDEMPTION -- I shall transform it, I shall lift it into higher realms beyond all sin and corruption.' Thus we have conflict between the negative and the positive. There might be momentary pauses in the battle, but there will be no thorough pause, complete cessation of warfare, until we are totally changed. It is when we are all righteous, that the 'prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me' (Jn. 14:30). Though Paul recognized this dichotomy in himself, the inward man delighting in the law of God, and the flesh yielding to the law of sin, he did not use this as an excuse, or an occasion to justify the flesh. But knowing of this conflict, he continually sought to 'keep under my body, and bring it into subjection...' (I Cor. 9:27). "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit DO MORTIFY THE DEEDS OF THE BODY, ye shall live' (Rom. 8:13). Through the spirit, by the power of the indwelling Christ, we battle the lower passions, putting them to death, that receiving the 'abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ' (Rom. 5:17).

"Many a battle has been fought, and won, though devils were not rebuked, and there was no writhing on the floor in intense travail, nor any challenge by an antagonist against the truth believed --it was all INTERNAL. Battles of the mind, battles of inner spirit conflict, a warfare against the vision, against the thing which God had personally revealed, but which the flesh was not ready to receive. And while we would 'reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord,' yet only HE can complete this work in us and make it an experiential reality. So we surrender, and He works it out. Now why dost thou cry aloud? IS THERE NO KING IN THEE? is thy counselor perished?... (Micah 4:9). Israel was desperate, she was in travail, in pain to bring forth, and was crying out in her distress. God answered back, 'IS THERE NO KING IN THEE?' Praise God, there is One in the midst of us who shall take the reins of the government, and He shall rule in righteousness, so that we eagerly await the emergence of His Kingdom. It is our own little INNER KINGDOM that needs The King, so it is to this realm that we ask the question, and praise God, can answer back positively, YES, THERE IS A KING WITHIN. Paul declared that 'we must through much tribulation (Greek, pressure) enter into the kingdom of God' (Acts 14:22). As much as the flesh would desire an easier way into His kingdom, there is no other way. If there was a list of special works to do, we'd struggle through, checking them off one by one, and lay claim to the glory. If a baptism would do it, we'd be baptised seven times face forward, or backwards, upside down, or however the requirement. BUT THIS IS GOD'S PROCESSING IN US, and He has purposed to do it through much pressure. If it isn't a physical pressure, it will be a mental one, and if not mental, then a spiritual one --as we travail to enter through the straight gate, and receive of His fullness. There is no cause to view this negatively, for it is this very pressure which shall literally and gloriously PRESS US INTO GOD, as His life becomes a REALITY WITHIN. One might have doctrines, visions, dreams, revelations, and be able to recite it to all who pass by your way, but they are of little value when just a mere form of head-knowledge. They have to be worked into us experimentally through the nitty-gritty processings of the day, until self is conquered, and Christ reigns supreme within us, and the vision

becomes LIFE, a firm foundation upon which we can stand to face the storms of the times. It often takes pressure to cause the Word to become LIFE to the INNER MAN.

"In some occupations a man with very little authority, limited in his power to make decisions and rule over others, is referred to as a 'straw boss'. Yet betimes this individual gets carried away with his own sense of importance and tries to go beyond his rightful place, giving orders and bossing others. Seems like we have all had our share of straw bosses' usurping authority, as they would assume control over that which they have no right. We'll pass very lightly over the fact that most of the so-called 'shepherding movement' falls into this classification, as they usurp the headship which rightly belongs to CHRIST in every individual. At the moment we are more concerned with these internal straw bosses --our own will, our own desires, our own impulses, etc. which would like to hold control within us. But when we have been OVERCOME BY CHRIST, He shall be King within. Praise His name! In fact there is quite a bit of truth in the statement that we shall only become overcomers in Christ in proportion to how much we have been overcome by Christ. To partake of His victory He must first become Victor over all our inner kingdom.

**'Take Thy throne, Lord, take Thy throne,
Take Thy throne, Lord, take Thy throne,
For our eyes have seen the King in all His beauty,
Cleanse our hearts so Thou canst take Thy throne!'**

"As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest' (Isa. 63:14). The word 'valley' comes from the Hebrew word BIQAH meaning: a cleft, a vale. Down into the valley, down into the fellowship of His sufferings, into the Cleft of His RIVEN SIDE --to know the rending of the flesh, with death to the carnal mind, i.e. minding of the flesh, to mortify all the deeds of the body which are contrary to righteousness. As a beast, taking all the bestial nature down into the vale, with its lusts and passions, weakness and frailty, laden with the sins of this natural creation, and THERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD CAUSES US TO REST --bringing a thorough ceasing of all these works of the flesh, and ending the ways of the bestial, flesh nature. Ending all the self-works that cannot attain spirituality. The beast shall not rise again, for dust returns to dust, and ashes to ashes, and that which is raised up is that NEW CREATION SPECIES IN CHRIST JESUS. How we rejoice to know that what goes down into that valley shall not come up again! There is a NEW BODY that shall arise, a new life that shall spring forth. The new creation rises all righteous, having now become the righteousness of God. Certainly there are spiritual glories which surpass all of that which we can ask or think. But methinks that even to have our very BODIES now brought into a state of righteousness and incorruption, is a wonder almost too great to comprehend. It will mean a glorious rest for the body, to be as He is.

"Beloved friend, we have not offered the world a glorious rest! True, we can say there is rest in Christ, and we have experienced moments of respite, times of refreshing. But at best, we can only awaken a soul from their spirit of slumber, and bring them into a period of conflict, with 'A LAW IN MY MEMBERS WARRING...' Certainly we know that God uses all this conflict in our process of overcoming, and certainly we know that by His grace we shall come through, not somehow, but triumphantly. But how we long to bring people into GLORIOUS REST --into a realm where it is no longer in part but satisfied in full. Praise God, He is bringing forth an ensign, a root of Jesse, raised up to be His standard, and they shall GIVE REST TO THE WEARY, for they shall lead them into righteousness, ending the warfare, and bringing forth peace. 'Saviours shall come up on mount Zion...' (Obadiah 21), and sharing the ministry of The Christ, shall liberate 'them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Heb. 2:15). HE 'hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel' (II Tim. 1:10). We shall proclaim not only a gospel of life, but also a GOSPEL OF INCORRUPTION --the fullness of the new birth, where a man sinneth not, and thus the enemy can lay no claim upon him, for he shall have entered into the GLORIOUS REST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. 'And the work of righteousness shall be peace' (Isa. 32:17). The Hebrew word for 'peace' is SHALOM and means both peace and completeness, for in a very real sense, there is no peace without completeness, for if there be any part lacking, there will still be the restlessness of desire for that need to be met. The Greek word is EIRENE meaning: peace, unity, concord. Here we see the end of division, the CEASING OF STRIFE, while harmony prevails over all. Yes, the accomplishment of righteousness shall be PEACE. And this is because HE is made unto us RIGHTEOUSNESS, and 'in Christ shall all be made alive' (I Cor. 15:22). Everyone brought into Him shall become a partaker of His righteousness. This is a vital part of the GOSPEL OF

INCORRUPTION. Strange indeed, men believe in the ability of corruption to corrupt the whole, they are sure that one rotten apple in a barrel of apples will cause them all to rot, because they have tasted of the corruption and decay to which this world has been subjected. But who is there that believes in the ability of INCORRUPTION to restore the whole? Did not Daniel make it plain to king Nebuchadnezzar, 'Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet...and brake them to pieces...and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, AND FILLED THE WHOLE EARTH' (Dan. 2:34-35). Here is a promise of the reversal of the process of degeneration, and the beginning of the process of regeneration, until HIS KINGDOM, which IS RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE, AND JOY, in the Holy Spirit, shall fill the whole earth, bringing all things into His pureness, into His righteousness, into His peace" -- end quote.

Yes, my beloved, there is a great warfare raging within, and Christ has pressed this war upon us, His conquest that is going on right now in that inner world of our hearts, minds and bodies. The battle of the ages, the famed Battle of Armageddon, portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. It is not on any battlefield on earthly ground that the glorified Redeemer confronts the banded hosts of earth and hell. We cannot go to the pages of Josephus or Tacitus or Wells, or any other historian, for the events which correspond with these symbols. Nor shall we find the grim ride of the Four Horses of the Apocalypse in the headlines of the Washington Post or the Miami Herald! The scene reveals one divine and sublime truth: CHRIST SHALL CONQUER! The Kingdom of Christ is not of this world, its weapons are not carnal, He does not conquer the nations by blowing away millions of helpless souls with bullets and bombs and bloody savagery. Ah, it is within the corridors of our own soul that we must hear the hoofbeats of the Four Horses thundering! He must ride right into YOUR EARTH, conquering all the strongholds of YOUR LAND. We don't have to wait until "some glad day after while" because the battle is going on right now. GOD ALWAYS CAUSES US TO TRIUMPH IN CHRIST (II Cor. 2:14). I want to tell you that is a life-changing concept and, yet, some who read these lines have never yet even begun to touch the hem of its garment. The Captain, the King, the General of the heavenly warfare has WON the victory! He has conquered death! He has conquered sin! He has conquered self! He has conquered hell! He has conquered all the powers of evil! And now He brings that triumph to us! He conquers that He may give us all! We can receive the spoils of His warfare by becoming the subjects of His Rule. Why not draw in your colors this day and surrender all into His mighty hands? The end of the warfare brings peace and life fully and forevermore. Hallelujah!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 24 SAGITTARIUS-THE ARCHER [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TWENTY-FOUR

THE BLACK HORSE
WHEAT AND BARLEY
HURT NOT THE OIL AND THE WINE
THE PALE HORSE

The Sign of Sagittarius portrays Christ the Redeemer going forth to destroy the adversary. This Sign brings before us a Centaur with the body of a horse and the torso of a man. The human portion of the Centaur is a man with a bow and arrow and he is drawing the bow and aiming the arrow at Atares --the very heart of the Scorpion. His character here is that of the Mighty One, girding Himself with honor and majesty, and going forth to victory. He rides as a King, armed with bow and arrows, shooting down His enemies. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Conqueror of the Scorpion! In refulgent glory He rides forth upon a horse with a bow, going forth as the conquering King to conquer. The apostle John in His visions on Patmos saw four horses. The first horse was white and the Rider had a bow, and a victor's crown was given unto him and he came forth conquering, and to conquer. The second horse was flaming red and the Rider had the power given to him to take peace from the earth and he was given a great sword. The third Rider had a balance in his hand and sat upon a black horse. The fourth horse was ashen or sickly pale and the name of the Rider was Death, and Hades followed with him. He was given authority over a fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts. The four horses are all war horses --and are representations of the activities of the Christ sent forth into our earth, that earth which we are, to dispossess the usurpers --the carnal mind, the will of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, and the works of the flesh. It is the taking possession of our earth by the Christ of God. The four horses and their Riders present a vivid picture of God's dealings, strippings, purgings, prunings, and processings by which we are reduced to God. Swift, powerful, irresistible ruin is visited upon our outer world of illusion, and our inner heart of deceit. These horses are sent, not to invade that earth out there, not to overcome the world outside, but to invade the man of earth, to overcome the world within; not to judge the outward nations of the earth, but to subjugate the kings which rule in our hearts. As the outer dimensions of our life are stripped away, the inner vitality of the Christ emerges into view. HE becomes revealed! Ah --this is the Centaur, the horse and his rider in the heavens armed with a bow, SAGITTARIUS sending his arrows into the heart of the Scorpion. This is CHRIST THE CONQUEROR! Praise God, He that is within is Mighty, the Mighty Warrior, and He charges into the battle with great swiftness and power. He fights His way into the human heart until He possesses that which He has purchased, until the citadels of mind, will, emotion and desire have been taken and brought under the dominion of Truth. He first shoots the arrow of light and illumination, quickening unto God. Then quickly He unsheathes the sword which "takes peace from the earth" --that very earth which He has illuminated, for the battle must be pursued until man is fully conquered and all enemies concealed within have been routed, exposed, and vanquished.

THE BLACK HORSE

And now we come to the third horse --the black horse. "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (Rev. 6:5-6). Horses, as we have noted previously, are symbols of overcoming strength and power --whatever lies before these horses is overcome by them. Color in scripture denotes the presence and operation of God by the Spirit. The color reveals what the horse is doing to you or producing in you. In the process there is both life and death, death to the Adam man and the apprehension of life in the Christ man. The first horse was white --the expression of life, illumination and revelation. When light comes forth you see your first beginning. In the beginning God said, "Let there be light!" Prior to this pronouncement the "earth" was "without form and void, and darkness was

upon the face of the deep." This is a perfect description of the earth man before God's redemptive and reconstructive work begins upon him. Before God's Word is heard, before His light of truth and revelation shines, the natural man, who is of the earth earthy, is spiritually void and formless, an unknown deep within. Upon this deep all is darkness; yet, praise God, God's Spirit is brooding there. The natural man is alienated from the life of God, shut out from the spiritual world, blind to reality and truth --yet God is very near. In relation to spiritual life this man begins nothing, continues nothing, perfects nothing. The wondrous change wrought is by the power of the Word of God. Life and power are in the Word. "God said" -this is the means --just as God formed the first creation in that long ago, so He now fashions the new creation. In both the initiative is on God's part. When all was void and formless and shrouded in darkness and hopelessness and nothing moved, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In both creations the transformation is the work of the Word of God, the living and energetic Word of God. God speaks and light breaks forth upon the void. The first step in creation is the awakening of man to spiritual consciousness, the dawning of light in his mind and heart, his perception of Truth through the quickening of his spirit. Light is understanding; and the first day's work is the calling of light or understanding into expression. Light represents intelligence and life --a spiritual quality. Darkness represents ignorance and death. Symbolically these are "day" and "night." Understanding and illumination quicken and enlighten mind and heart and man comes face to face with God, transformed by His glory. Those in whom this work goes on, know that each succeeding step is entirely by the Word of God. As Andrew Jukes wrote, "From everlasting all the work had been hid in Christ, the Eternal Word. Then, in time, that which was in the wisdom of God is wrought actually in the creature. Whether light, or a heaven, or fruits, or heavenly lights, or the living creatures, or the man in God's image --each form of light and life, once hid in Christ, is reproduced, manifested in the creature to the Creator's praise. What was in Christ is step by step accomplished in the earth by the transforming power of the same Word of God. Without this no change is or can be wrought. No saint can grow or live without the Word. What was in the Word from everlasting, by the Word is wrought in us" --end quote.

The second horse was red --in the Greek PURRHOS meaning fire-like or flame-colored. OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE. God's action in fire, like His action in grace, is pure, harmonious, balanced, directed towards the purging that leads to transformation. The eternal fire is the Truth, the Righteousness, the Love of God; in a word, it is the nature of God. Any careful reader of the Old Testament will be aware that fire is often used therein as a symbol for the presence and manifestation of God. "Our God is a consuming fire," says the scripture, and the apostle adds, "God is love." God IS! God is fire and He is love. Fire represents the divine process of cleansing. Divine judgment is not unto destruction, but unto redemption. Fire appears terrible only to the man who is unprepared to pass through it. Yes, our God is a consuming fire, and there is comfort and hope and blessing in the thought! When we yield to God's love, and open our hearts to Him, He enters into us, and becomes within us a consuming fire; not to ourselves, but to the carnality within us. So that, in a very deep and blessed sense, we may be said to dwell with the devouring fire, and to walk amid the eternal burnings. Nothing is more certain than the fact that Jesus Christ has already ridden, or shall yet ride into the world of each of us in FLAMING FIRE! Not to destroy us, but to purge our land. Only the dross must be removed. Thank God that the Christ comes to us not only on the white horse, but also on the red horse to carry the issue onward to victory!

When the black horse invades our land, great darkness falls upon our earth, on the natural man, the carnal mind, the fleshly nature. Black is the absence of light and color. It denotes a condition of no light, no understanding, no expression, nor substance. The anointing of the black horse is a revelation of darkness --the knowledge of just what is in the carnal man, the carnal mind, the fleshly nature --the clear and perfect understanding of what they are, how they work, their utter futility and worthlessness in the light of Reality and Truth that the Spirit brings. We will never let go of the valueless things of the earth realm until once we see them for what they really are, and the true riches. We see a beautiful portrait of this great truth in the Song of Solomon. In chapter 1:1 it is called "The Song of songs, which is Solomon's." Just as the "Holy of holies" was the Holiest place of all, just as the "Heaven of heavens" is the highest Heaven of all, so the "Song of songs" is above and beyond all the songs that have ever come from the human heart and human lips. This is the Song that is above all other songs; a Song sent down from the courts of Heaven, from the throne of God; a strain from the Heavenly choir. "Song" in the symbology of scripture means a "message." So the Song of songs is the Message of messages, the Revelation of revelations!

There are two principle characters in the drama. First you have "my Beloved" who is representative of HIM, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord who is the spirit. Then you have "My love" which represents a woman --the soul realm. This is the ineffable, pre-eminent Song; ineffable because it is a celebration of true marriage, a portrait of your personal relationship with Jesus, and a picture of the love relation between Christ and the church; ultimately it is a representation of the relationship between the Corporate Man, the Manchild, the sons of God with the Bride of Christ. On the personal level she, the soul, becomes awakened to Him, the indwelling spirit. These are internal realities. The Christ to whom our soul awakens, and whom our soul seeks and loves, is not the Christ in some far off heaven somewhere, but Christ in our spirit, who dwells in our hearts by faith. When the soul awakens to the glory of the Christ within, when she once beholds HIS beauty, HIS majesty, HIS riches, and smells HIS oils, she is filled with great desire and she cries, "Draw me and we will run after Thee!" Her heart goes out that she may rise up and run after Him. She feels she is helpless in herself, but that He has power to draw her, and He alone can do this. She longs for the kisses of His mouth, those tender moments of fellowship and communion in which His love is revealed. When God pours into you a hunger for your Beloved and begins to reveal more clearly your potential in Him, rejoice with great joy and gratitude toward God. If He did not put into our hearts the longing to know Him better and to have His very best, we would be satisfied with the least we could have and be saved, and become spiritual paupers in the Kingdom of God. How wondrous are the workings and drawings of God upon a human soul! How little do we behold or know that which He is doing, as day by day He works down in the depths of our beings. The most favored place a child of God can be in, is to continually feel the drawing of God urging and constraining him to greater hunger and to greater abandonment to Him. There is nothing we should praise Him for with such gratitude, as for every touch of hunger that He graciously gives us. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out."

In the moments of ecstasy in His presence she catches a glimpse of the Most Holy Place and cries, "I want more!" But in His presence she also receives a startling revelation -- **"I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar..." (S. of S. 1:5)**. She receives the understanding of how carnal she is. You can never become spiritual, my beloved, until the Spirit has shown you your carnality. It is not the sinner who says, "I am black;" it is not when the heart has been untouched by the grace of God, that the stain and blackness, which carnality has wrought upon the soul, can be seen by the one who is not quickened. It is when the power of the Spirit strikes the believing soul, that the soul sees her blackness; it is when she gets a vision of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that she sees herself as black as the black goat-hair tents of the Beduin --the tents of Kedar. When the soul has commenced to enter into a closer walk with the Spirit, the beauty which she thought she had, she sees wither up and drop off. The natural attractions in which she had rejoiced --the wisdom of this world, the empty religious exercises, the pleasures and pursuits of the flesh -- disappear under the searching light of His holy presence. With clearer vision than ever before she sees the emptiness, the vanity, the futility and frustration of all earthly things. It's a revealing --"I am black --but comely!" She is not repenting of past sins. When you come into the realm of the Spirit and taste of its glories you soon begin to see how easy it is to slip back into an old way of thinking. You begin to get a revelation of the carnal mind, not just that it exists, but how it works. You begin to see that the wisdom of men is foolishness to the Spirit. It is the mind of man that keeps the world in continual turmoil. It seethes and bubbles and boils and erupts like a vast cauldron. There is an impassable gulf between the carnal mind and the spiritual mind, for the spiritual mind is concerned only with the things of God and all the things that concern the Spirit, which things lead to life and immortality. But the fleshly or carnal mind is concerned only with the things of the physical realm, which things lead only to death and corruption because there is no life in them. For this very reason the scripture says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Our vision of heavenly things has been so distorted due to our looking through physical and soulish eyes. You have sometimes seen a window made of fluted glass, and you know that if you look at the street through this window everything will be distorted. The passers-by and the automobiles will appear to be warped and distorted in absurd and ugly ways. Nevertheless, you know that these things are really quite alright in themselves, and that the distortion arises from your seeing them wrongly. The pure eyes of our regenerated spirits have had to filter through the fluted shell of our carnal minds and the marvelous things of the realm of God's Spirit have been distorted into myriads of carnal doctrines, traditions, rituals, concepts, interpretations, methods, and religious systems and exercises. This distorted vision of heavenly things is really what we know

as "Christianity" and "the Church." It is a seeing, but a false seeing. It is a knowing, but a false knowing. The sons of God are arising to pass through this veil, to abide forever in the Holiest of all. Over the heart of every unquickened and untransformed man or woman there hangs an impenetrable veil of outer darkness that keeps men blinded to the glory of Truth and Reality in the Spirit. Even in the reading of the scripture the veil is over their eyes, and they sit in blindness and outer darkness until a totally new spirit and new heart is given them. Then and only then does the light shine upon them. Then and only then do they behold the King in all His beauty and discern all spiritual things. Then and only then do they understand the incredible darkness and dreadful void of the carnal mind with all its delusions and distortions. No greater tragedy can overtake a man than that, after he has been illuminated by the light of Christ, and made a partaker of the life of the Spirit, he should then mingle his affection with the emptiness of earthly things and not set them entirely on things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. The children of God are so occupied and busy with soulish zeal and carnal efforts! They are running here and there, busily initiating religious activities of all kinds, as though the Lord could not get along without their officious help. One would think that the Lord is not as interested in His own Vineyard as they are. They are organizing, and bringing together all kinds of machinery to run the Lord's business; they are inventing intricate and clever systems to get men saved, and to entertain them so that they will remain saved (?). Everybody feels that they should be "doing something for God." This sounds reasonable to the natural mind; so men mingle the thoughts, schemes, ideas, plans, purposes, ambition and zeal of the carnal mind with the new inclinations and affections of the spiritual mind; consequently Christians rush about in every direction like ants on an ant hill, doing this and doing that, going here and going there, organizing this and organizing that, promoting this and promoting that, praying, preaching, planning, toiling, giving their money, working themselves into nervous wrecks, even neglecting their families and homes, cultivating the vineyards of others and letting their own experience remain shallow and on the surface. They find no time to wait upon God in earnest, to sit at His feet in holy submission and sweet communion, to learn of Him. They spend no time in learning to KNOW the Lord of the Vineyard! Without exception, this barrenness and void in our lives is a sure proof that we are in need of God's dealing hand. Therefore, let us leave everything that we can leave, and let us get still before the Spirit that He may speak to us and work in us, and for us, and through us, to His glory. Then shall we go forth with the presence and power of God upon us, and while we shall be used of Him with those around us, we shall have learned to watch for His movings and dealings upon our souls, and to always yield to Him to work in us first. Thus shall our hearts become truly pure, unmixed with the carnal zeal and scheming of the carnal mind. The maxim for those sons led by the Spirit of God shall be: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall SEE GOD --at work!"

They who shall make up the elect of God shall not be content with a mere vision of Christ. They will take away every veil that is between them and their Lord, and with unveiled face they will behold His glory until they are transfigured into the same image, from glory to glory. God's chosen ones will not be satisfied with imaginary victory, which is really the deceptive peace of having received a revelation but not entering in. They will strengthen themselves in the Lord and put on His whole armor. They will fight the good fight of faith and finish their course --immortal and incorruptible. They will not mistake the call and revelation of God, for possession. They will not be content with visions and passing glimpses of the land of promise, but by faith they will walk up and down through the land and begin to possess their possessions. They will become more than conquerors through Him that loved them.

The black horse reveals the black -- the substance of carnality. One can never be an overcomer until he deals with the subtleties of the carnal nature. The carnal mind is the reasoning, ethics, philosophy, religion and character of the natural man. But God doesn't only reveal that to us --He reveals our comeliness at the same time. What beautiful balance there is in the wisdom of the Lord! "I am black --but comely!" It is this balance between the negative and the positive in God's dealings that accounts for the Rider of the black horse having a pair of balances in His hand. The comeliness of those pressing on into God's fullness is revealed in the further ministry of the black horse. All is not negative, for there is great spiritual wealth and heavenly glory revealed there! "And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny" (Rev. 6:6). The interpretation placed upon these words by the theologians and teachers in the church systems is that these symbols denote world-wide famine. Bread by weight and measure, say they, signifies scarcity of food. The argument goes something like this: The penny referred to was a day's wage and a measure (nearly a quart) of corn was a slave's daily ration, an amount usually purchasable for one-eighth of a penny. Ordinarily, one could buy eight measures of wheat or twenty-four

measures of barley for a penny, but in the days of the black horse only one measure of wheat or three measures of barley can be bought for a penny. This will make food eight times higher than usual. A man would be giving all of his income for the bare necessities of life. However, much carnal guesswork among commentators and writers might have been avoided if recourse had been made to one passage in the Old Testament where there is a highly significant area of correspondence. Some teachers, without any investigation or spiritual insight, have settled for the shallow and literalistic idea of natural "food at famine prices," whereas the slightest acquaintance with Biblical prices and measures would have assured them of the contrary --that the food on offer is well within the capacity of everyone to purchase. Others, obsessed with the history of the Roman empire, have held that the prices have to do with the ruinous taxation imposed on the farming community in the days of the Roman empire's decline. With what divine genius does the Holy Spirit bypass all the carnal suppositions of men, drawing our reverent attention to the wonderful connection with the words of Elisha the prophet during the siege of Samaria. In the days of Elisha there was a great war between Syria and Israel; and Benhadad, the king of Syria, led a mighty army into the land of Israel and laid siege against the city of Samaria. So hard and so long was the siege that the people in Samaria could find nothing to eat; many died from lack of food and some killed their own children and ate them.

But through all the siege Elisha encouraged the king of Israel not to give up the city. When it seemed that there could be no hope, Elisha said to the king, "Hear the Word of the Lord, Tomorrow, at this hour, in the gate of Samaria, a measure of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel." One of the nobles, on whose arm the king was leaning, did not believe Elisha's word and he said scornfully, "If the Lord would make windows in heaven and rain down wheat and barley, then this might be." "You shall see it with your own eyes," answered Elisha; "but you shall not eat any of the food." On the next morning, about daybreak, four men that were lepers were standing together outside the gate of Samaria. Being lepers, they were not allowed by the laws of Israel inside the walls of the city. These four men said to each other, "What shall we do? If we go into the city, we must die there from the lack of food; if we stay here we will surely die. Let us go to the camp of the Syrians; perhaps they will let us live; and at the worst they cannot do more than kill us." So the four men went toward the Syrian camp; but as they came near, they were surprised to find no one standing on guard. They went into a tent and found it empty, as though it had been left very suddenly, for there were food and drink, garments, and gold and silver all about. As no one was there, they ate and drank all they wanted; and then they took away valuable things and hid them. They looked into another tent and another, and found them like the first, but not a man was in sight. They walked through the camp but not a soldier was there, and the tents were left just as they had been when the men were living in them. In the night the Lord had caused the Syrians to hear a great noise like a rolling of chariots and the trampling of horses and the marching of a vast host of men. They said to each other in great fear, "The king of Israel has sent for the Hittites on the north and the Egyptians on the south to come against us." And so great and so sudden was their terror, that in the night they rose up and fled away, leaving everything in their camp, even leaving their horses tied, and their asses and all their treasure and all their food in their tents. After a time the lepers said to each other, "We do wrong not to tell this good news in the city. If they found it out, they will blame us for not letting them know, and we may lose our lives on account of it." So they went up to the gate and called the men on guard. They told them how they had found the camp of the Syrians, with tents standing and horses tied, but not a man left. The men on guard told it at the king's palace. But the king, when he heard it, thought it was a trick of the Syrians to hide themselves and to draw the men out of the city so that they might take the city. The king sent out two men with horses and chariots, and they found that not only had the camp been left, but that the road down the mountains to the Jordan river was covered with garments and arms and treasures that the Syrians had thrown away in their wild flight.

The news soon spread through the city of Samaria, and in a few hours all the city was at the gate. When the food was brought in from the camp, there was abundance for all the people. And it came to pass as Elisha had said --a measure of wheat flour and two measures of barley were sold for a shekel in the gate of Samaria by noon that day! So the starving inhabitants of the besieged city found abundance of food at prices within the reach of all, within twenty-four hours of the prediction. The entire population sallied forth to possess themselves of the spoil abandoned in the camp of the heathen army whom the Lord had caused to flee in terror from some invisible foe. And let us note -- the two primary food items available in such abundance were wheat and barley! The only difference between the relief afforded to the Samaritan multitude and that described in Revelation chapter six, is that food is both cheaper and more plentiful in the latter case! And the

deliverance and provision under Elisha is but the type of the abundance of SPIRITUAL FOOD provided for the man or woman being processed into the image of Jesus Christ! The book of Revelation must be spiritually understood. The wheat and the barley, the oil and the wine, symbolize spiritual values. All the symbology of the book of Revelation is, in fact, drawn from the imagery of the great spiritual types and shadows of the Old Testament!

WHEAT AND BARLEY

There are many types of the Kingdom of God in the Old Testament. The broadest and most all-inclusive type is the land of Canaan. This land is frequently referred to as the good land. The Lord called it "a good land," and "an exceeding good land." When the Lord says something is good, we must pay special attention. What is the goodness of this land? The land is good in many aspects. It is not our purpose to explore the manifold characteristics of the land --for that would make a book in itself. We come now to the matter that relates to our subject at hand-- the unsearchable riches of the land. The land is good in its unsearchable riches. First of all it is rich in water. "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills" (Deut. 8:7). These waters are all types of various kinds of supply of the Christ-life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus said that He would give us water to drink that we never thirst again, and that this water would be a well of water within springing up unto eternal life. The Lord tells us that out of our innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. This is the supply of the Christ-life, the Spirit within as living water. Many times we are thirsty, not thirsty in our body, but thirsty in our soul. When you are thirsty, it means that your soul is dry. But when you come athirst to the Spirit and contact the life of the Spirit, you are refreshed and quickened --you are watered. Your thirst is quenched. You are refreshed by the life of the Spirit more than by any cold water or beverage on earth. And as you drink and drink of the life-giving Spirit there will be a stream flowing forth from you-- an emanation, an overflow of His life unto creation. In this land there is not only one stream, but many springs, fountains and streams. The spring (spirit) is the source; the fountain (soul) is the reservoir; and the stream (ministry) is the overflow. Within the Kingdom people there are many streams, a stream of wisdom, a stream of light, a stream of love, a stream of understanding, a stream of compassion, a stream of mercy, a stream of power, a stream of peace, a stream of joy, a stream of righteousness, a stream of praise, etc. How many streams are there within you, my beloved? We can love and bless all of creation as a living stream flowing forth.

**"Stretch forth your hands, and heal the nations;
Speak forth the Word, and give them life.
This is the day, that God has chosen;
And as He is, so are we, in this world."**

What a wonderful source we have! What a good land this is! The sons of God are the people of the Kingdom of the Most High, the joy of the whole earth, the hope of all creation --they are the good land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills. What richness there is in this land!

Not only is the Lord, the Spirit, the living water of this land, but He is also the bread of the land, the bread of life. Something to drink always accompanies food. Water is refreshing and quickening; food is strength and sustenance. Food and drink always go together. So in Deut. 8 the very next verse says, "A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey" (Deut. 8:8). There are seven food items in all -- the perfect, eternal food. There are two kinds of grain -- the same grain mentioned in Rev. 6:6 -- wheat and barley. What is the meaning of all these things? John 12:24 tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ was a grain of wheat. Matthew 13:38 tells us that the sons of the Kingdom are grains of wheat. It is all CHRIST -- the food of the land. It is interesting to note that both barley and wheat were connected with the feasts of the Lord in Israel. All the Feast days were associated closely with the agricultural seasons of the land of Canaan. Israel was an agrarian nation. This seasonal observance of the Feasts is a perfect allegorical type of God's redemptive processes. The Lord wished to convey in type and shadow how He would cultivate His crop (the people of God), until at the end of the season (age) there would be the firstfruit or wave-sheaf offering, the OMER OF BARLEY. Let me explain. In Leviticus chapter twenty-three the Lord gave Moses instructions concerning the feasts which the nation was to observe. On the fourteenth of Nisan at evening (or sundown) they were to begin to commemorate the Passover, and twenty-four hours later, on the fifteenth of

Nisan, they were to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread which was to last seven days. After they came into their land and had a grain harvest, the Lord instructed Moses that they were to perform an additional rite during the seven day Feast. In verse ten we read: "When ye come into the land which I give you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you. On the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it." The Sabbath was the Holy Convocation that marked the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

As part of the ritual, the priest would go out among the fields, select the grain that was ripe, gather a bundle and tie it into a sheaf. He would return to the Temple and there before the altar would wave the sheaf before the Lord as an offering of the firstfruits of the harvest. This act marked the beginning of the harvest which was to last fifty days. This feature of the Feast was marvelously prophetic in the case of Jesus. Jesus was slain for us at the time of the Passover Feast, becoming our Passover Lamb. His body was laid in the tomb. Then very early in the morning -- the first day of Unleavened Bread -- the celebration of the waving of the sheaf of the firstfruits -- the women came to the sepulchre and found that Jesus had been raised from the dead. And thus Jesus became the firstfruits of the harvest, the firstfruits of them that slept (I Cor. 15:20), the first to ripen into the fullness of the image and life of God, spirit, soul and body. We like to think of the Israelite priest fulfilling the rite of waving the sheaf before the Lord early in the morning, at the same time Jesus was fulfilling the type by being resurrected from the dead into the immortal and incorruptible life of God. Truly Jesus was the firstfruits of resurrection, immortality and incorruption. But, He also was to be the firstborn among a vast family of sons which the Father-heart of God would bring to birth, sons who would be tutored and led by His Spirit, who would learn obedience through suffering, and who would partake of holiness through chastening. For was not the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ that of bringing many sons unto glory (Heb. 2:10)? And was not He to be the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29)? Therefore, the waving of the firstfruits sheaf spoke of an abundant harvest to follow. It was assurance that the patient sowing-watering-reaping process had not failed! In due time the whole field of barley would come to maturity! Ah, may we again look at that sheaf of the Firstfruits and see afresh our Lord rising from the dead. But may there also come exuberant rejoicing in our spirit in seeing that He is but the firstborn, and that an abundant harvest of sons will follow. Yea, let the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him come to rest upon us, and let us experience something of the exceeding greatness of the power that raised Him from the dead! Yea, let there come an enlarging of our vision and our hope, for our hope is not just to make it to heaven, but TO BE LIKE HIM -- SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY!

The wave-sheaf was a sheaf of barley. Sowing of barley was done in the land of Israel during the month of Bul (October-November) after the early rains had begun to fall and the ground could be plowed. Barley matures more rapidly than wheat, and the harvest began in the early spring during the month of Nisan (March-April). Barley harvest thus marked a definite time of the year and its start corresponded with Passover time, the sheaf waved by the priest on the sixteenth day of Nisan being of the barley firstfruits.

Paul Mueller has gleaned some precious truths concerning the significance of barley and the harvest of the firstfruits. He writes, "The book of Ruth is one of the most fascinating books in the Bible, telling a story of love and redemption. The story begins with Naomi's desire to return from Moab to Bethlehem. There was a famine in the land and she heard tidings from Bethlehem that 'the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread' (Ruth 1:6). How wonderful it is to hear that the Lord is visiting His people and is giving them bread, while dwelling in a land where there is famine and hunger. Presently, the Lord is again visiting His elect, giving them the bread of His living Word, even that bread which is His body and blood (Jn. 6:48-58). And all who hunger for that Bread will indeed make the journey from Moab to Bethlehem to receive that Bread, leaving the land of famine (the church system) for the realm of His visitation. Naomi's two sons had married two women of Moab, Orpha and Ruth. But her husband and her sons died, leaving Naomi with her two daughters-in-law who had no children. When Ruth heard that Naomi wanted to return to Bethlehem, she decided to go with her, but Orpha kissed her mother-in-law and remained in Moab. Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem 'in the beginning of the barley harvest' (Ruth 1:22). Naomi then requested that her friends should not call her Naomi, but should call her Mara (meaning bitter), for, said she, 'I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Carnal Christians would certainly regard this as a tragedy, but the truly spiritual person will readily see that Naomi's experience was necessary in bringing her 'home again empty' even as it is with those of us who are among the Lord's called and chosen ones. The Lord has certainly brought us home again empty, for we have

been emptied of man's lifeless doctrines and useless ways. Our past was a necessary part of our processing, for we did go out full, but the Lord brought us home again. What matters now is that we have come home and we can only come home empty, for how else could we receive the precious truths He has reserved for us?

"Ruth and Naomi came home to Bethlehem 'in the beginning of the barley harvest,' and that is a very significant truth, for the time of the barley harvest may correspond to the approaching visitation of Christ to His people at this time of the eleventh hour. Naomi's husband had a kinsman, Boaz, a mighty man of wealth. Boaz had fields of barley and wheat, and Ruth's first job in Israel was gleaning in the barley fields of Boaz. The second chapter of Ruth tell the story of her success in gleaning as Boaz ordered his men to leave 'handfuls of purpose for her.' Naomi then told Ruth to go lie at the feet of Boaz, for he was her kinsman-redeemer, and this was the custom to be followed concerning the right of the kinsman. When Boaz discovered her lying at his feet, he asked who she was. Ruth then told him, and requested that he cover her with his skirt, which was also the custom of the kinsman. Boaz then promised Ruth that he would fulfill his duty as her near kinsman. At this point, it is important that we understand the spiritual value of Ruth's growing relationship with Boaz. When she first arrived in Bethlehem with Naomi, Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz. But, when she became acquainted with Boaz, her kinsman-redeemer, Ruth ceased gleaning in the fields and presented herself to him for the fulfillment of the kinsman-redeemer role as her husband. The important spiritual truth we are to glean from this story is that when we come home we come to learn His ways and His truth. We come home emptied of all the former ambitions and ministries, and we cease gleaning in the fields of the world, for we are now being prepared to be joined to Christ. Early the next morning, before it became light enough for others to recognize her, Ruth returned home to Naomi. But before she left, Boaz filled her veil with 'six measures of barley,' which she was to present to Naomi, perhaps as a dowry (Ruth 3:14-18) --end quote.

What then, does barley represent? THE RESURRECTED CHRIST! When the harvest time came, the firstfruits of the harvest must be offered to the Lord, and the firstfruit was clearly the barley. And so it is written, "**But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that slept**" (I Cor. 15:20). The firstfruits of the harvest typify Christ as the firstfruits of the resurrection. How clearly this shows that barley represents the RESURRECTED CHRIST! But, by extension, the firstfruits include the elect sons of God in union with Christ. "**Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures**" (James 1:18). "**And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. These are they which were not defiled with women (apostate church systems, etc.) for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed (fully) from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb**" (Rev. 14:1-4).

What aspect of Christ does wheat represent? Is it not written, "**Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit**" (Jn. 12:24). From this passage we can see that the Lord is a grain of wheat falling into the earth to die and to be buried. The wheat represents Christ incarnated. Christ is God incarnated as man to fall into the earth, to die and to be buried. This is the wheat. It typifies the Christ who was incarnated, the Christ who died, and the Christ who was buried. But I would draw your attention to the setting of this beautiful statement. Andrew and Philip had just come and told the Lord that certain Greeks had requested to see Jesus. And this was the Lord's astonishing reply: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone..." Strange reply! But not hard to understand, when we realize that the Christ shall appear and shall be SEEN IN HIS PEOPLE, through His Cross and Resurrection. "We would see Jesus," said the Greeks. Then they must see Him in the harvest which His death would bring into being. They must see Him in the grain that would be reproduced after His very likeness, in His very image. They would see Him in His body! And the only way that we, as the sons of God, are going to manifest the life and resurrection power of Christ is by becoming identified with Him in His cross. It is not sufficient that we merely accept Christ and His redemptive work on our behalf. Doing that we are brought into fellowship with Him -- but we "abide alone." We must share His sufferings, share His death to self, share His abandonment to the will of the Father, share His separation from the world and the flesh, identify ourselves with His cross, so that it actually becomes our very own -- and then we shall rise in resurrection life to bring forth much fruit unto the Kingdom. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:5). No wonder the great apostle Paul who knew Christ, had personally seen His Lord on the Damascus road, had talked with Him and heard Him reply in an audible voice -- yearned

in the travail of his spirit for this great manifestation: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of (out from among) the dead" (Phil. 3:10-11). Wheat represents the incarnated, crucified and buried Christ. Barley represents the resurrected Christ. These two kinds of grains represent two aspects of Christ, His coming and His going. They represent the Christ coming down to be the wheat and the Christ going up to be the barley. We must meditate deeply upon truths so great and so profound. Have you experienced Christ as wheat? And have you experienced Christ as barley?

The fact that Jesus took "five barley loaves" with which He fed the multitudes is a very positive prophetic picture. Most Christians are familiar with the miracle of the five loaves, but very few are aware that those loaves were loaves of barley. Jesus did nothing by chance! All that He did was prophetic pointing to a larger event that is far more glorious and significant than that which is seen on the surface. If the loaves would have been loaves of wheat, something would be wrong. But they were not wheat, they were loaves of barley. As barley loaves, they could feed five thousand people, and then His disciples gathered up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. This is the resurrected Christ, the Spirit, who can only be rich and full and inexhaustible to us in the fullness of His divine life. In His incarnation, He is exceedingly limited but in His resurrection He is abundant and unlimited. There is no limit, no measure, no boundary to the resurrection life of the Christ! As Christ incarnate, He was just one grain, a little Nazarene, a humble carpenter, an itinerant preacher in one of the smallest nations on earth for a mere three years and a half. But when He came into resurrection and returned as the indwelling Spirit of life, He was unlimited. Time and space and material things could limit Him no longer. There were five loaves, but in fact there were countless loaves. There was enough to feed five thousand men plus all the women and children, with an overflow of twelve baskets full. Twelve is the number of absolute fullness, Kingdom sufficiency. It means that this is Christ in the power and glory of His Kingdom, in the inexhaustibility of immortality and incorruption. You can draw from the abundance of His resurrection life and after you have eaten all you need HIS FULLNESS REMAINS UNDIMINISHED! Christ in His resurrection can never be limited or exhausted. Wheat is the valley of death, but barley is the mountain of resurrection. Whenever you experience Christ as the wheat, be assured that an experience of Christ as the barley will follow. Ah, precious friend of mine, regardless of the problems and pressures that hedge you in and shut you up, irrespective of the circumstances and conditions that appear to confine and limit and prevent you from the fulfillment of God's full purpose in your life, let me assure you -- a barley loaf is within you! It is a loaf of the resurrected Christ who can never be limited. Apply HIM to the situation. He can never be exhausted. With the life of the resurrected Christ, you can live out the life of the unlimited God within the confines of your present limitation. You can do all things through Him who strengthens you, because He is resurrected in you and there is no limit. This kind of experience not only enables you to know the Christ within as the wheat and as the barley, but by this experience you become a grain of wheat, you become a loaf of barley.

You, as Jesus, in the present state of your development, can be limited in fullness. When Jesus was on earth He was always limited. He was limited by His flesh, limited by His family, limited by space, limited by time, limited by people's unbelief, limited by the plan and will of the father. When the Christ took upon Him a body of flesh and the nature of man, He willfully subjected Himself to the limitations and restrictions of that which is material, earthly and mortal. Jesus did not walk among men as the incorruptible God, but as mortal man. It was as a natural, physical earthling that He was tempted; He hungered; He thirsted; He knew weakness; He wept; He slept; He suffered; He died. The life of God resided in His spirit, but that life was confined, restrained and restricted by the bounds of the material world which He had taken upon Himself. It is manifest that His body was not an incorruptible body, else He would not have died though nailed to a thousand crosses! It is remarkable that through the few years of Jesus' ministry He never performed one act, nor one miracle, sign or wonder on the higher plane of incorruption. Every miracle Jesus did was in the realm of mortality. He raised a number of folk from the dead, including Lazarus, but each and every person called back from the sleep of death was merely raised up again into the mortal life to continue on for a season in the same old corruptible body. All of them DIED AGAIN! Think of it! Not one single person was raised up out of corruption into an incorruptible body. Jesus cleansed the lepers and healed every manner of sickness and disease among the people, but I do not hesitate to tell you that each and every one of those good people got sick again and eventually died! Jesus performed many other types of miracles. He began by turning water into wine. And it was very excellent wine, indeed. But just wine, nonetheless. It was composed of the same chemical elements as all fine wine. It was material, physical, earthly. It was consumed by flesh and blood bodies and a portion

eliminated from those bodies as waste. Not one ounce of spirituality was obtained by drinking it. And yet it is written: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and MANIFESTED FORTH HIS GLORY; and His disciples believed on Him" (Jn. 2:11). Yes, He manifested forth His glory. The life of the Father dwelt within Him. All power was incarnate within Him. An in limitation He lived in that life and ministered out of that life. What condescension!

Is not the fullness of God within us in limitation? Dearly beloved, whenever you are put into a situation by the Lord's sovereignty in which you are limited, in which you are pressed, in which you are restricted, you are experiencing the life of God as wheat. When in the midst of that limiting and pressing situation you look to the Lord, He is just as a grain of wheat to you. For the sake of our learning, for the sake of others -- how often He confines and limits us! We would like to send the lightning from our fingers and with a flash of fire and a blaze of glory reveal His power without limitation so that men would behold His omnipotence in us. But that is not how God works. He gives only what men are capable of receiving, so He comes in limitation lest they be blinded by the light and destroyed by the blast of His nostrils. He comes in the life of the little carpenter, the incarnate One, the limited One. There is power in Him to suffer any kind of limitation. If you are a follower of Jesus, if you are a son of God, you have to be limited. In many situations you must be like a car with a powerful engine of hundreds of horsepower, slowed down to fifteen miles per hour in a school zone, lest little children be run down. We cannot push or hurry things along. We cannot force things. We must not induce a premature birth. If it were left up to us we would bring in the Kingdom RIGHT NOW -- invading and raping creation to deliver it. We want our husband or wife converted or changed now. We want God to deal with our children or loved ones now. We want deliverance from our problems and pressures now. We are not unlike the man who prayed, "O God, give me patience -- and give it to me RIGHT NOW!" We would mass-produce sons in man-made training centers. We would mature sons of God in an artificial "hot-house" environment. May the blessed spirit of wisdom and revelation from God teach us the simple truth that the vision is caught, not taught! The wisdom and glory of God are revealed to the pure and humble in heart. God Himself is bringing up His own sons. We may be permitted to help a little here and there with a word of encouragement, a sharing of experience, a ministration of understanding and wisdom, but in the final analysis each son must come to know God for himself. No man can come unto the Christ except the Father draw him. We may plant and water, but it is God who gives the increase. We must not resort to artificial "growth stimulants" contrary to the laws of natural growth. When one turns to carnal gimmicks he frustrates the grace and power of the Spirit and disqualifies a potential overcomer from becoming a part of the firstfruit offering unto the Lord. In all of these things the unlimited power of God in us must be manifest in limitation. It is the unlimited Christ living within us that causes us to follow the limited Jesus. And yet we live out of His fullness in the unlimitedness of His eternal and inexhaustible life.

HURT NOT THE OIL AND THE WINE

These two principles -- wheat and barley -- are the very principles revealed in the black horse in **Rev. 6**. "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny." Thank God! there is more barley than wheat for the same price. No sooner does the black horse ride into our land revealing and exposing the carnality in our lives, than he follows this action with the provision of an abundance of wheat and barley! There is a divine progression here. As we forsake the darkness and futility of the carnal mind (Egypt), there lies immediately before us the incredible fruitfulness and plenitude of the land of Canaan -- the realm of the SPIRIT. As we enter into this land of His fullness and glory and unlimited power an injunction is laid upon us -- "and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." The reference is, I believe, to the sacred wine and oil which the priests kept for the Temple ceremonies, and which was deposited in the inner Temple. The word for "hurt" is ADIKEO meaning "deal unjustly with." "See thou deal not unjustly with the oil and the wine." Another translation is, "Do not commit injustice in respect to the oil and the wine." Another version reads, "Do not injure the oil and the wine." Yet another rendering says, "Waste not the oil and the wine." It bespeaks of a sacrilegious wrong or a wanton waste. In plain English it means DO NOT MISUSE the oil and the wine! Oil represents the anointing and wine is the figure for revelation. Do not MISUSE the anointing and the revelation! Do not play the rogue with the anointing! Do not prostitute or exploit the revelation! How this word is needed among the Lord's people in this hour when men use the gifts and revelation of God to their own ends, for self aggrandizement, to make a name, for financial gain, to get followers, to build a kingdom, etc. We are the people of His land, the priests of His temple. The oil and the wine are the visitation of the Lord to His body, to

His church, to His elect, to His sons who are feasting upon the wheat and the barley, now becoming custodians of His priceless oil and His precious wine. The knowledge of this sublime truth will make you holy. No one can ever truly see his place in God and yet remain in carnality. Should one claim to see these truths and possess this anointing and yet remain as he was before, then he has not seen by the Spirit, but by the natural mind only. With weeping I must tell you that there are those among us today, uncircumcised in mind and heart, with the spirit of Babylon alive in the soil of their earth, who tread the courts of the holy temple of God and usurp the holy things of God with sin and pride, with self-seeking, self-indulgence, and self-promotion. Away with the spirit of Babylon! Away with the allurements and foolishness of the harlot system! Away with the repetitious babel of religion! Away with the methods of the world! Away with every vestige of the carnal mind, and every claim of the fleshly nature! Away with worldly wisdom! Away with the pseudo-spiritual domination of the Lord's people by men who manipulate and lord it over the flock! Or in the words of the Voice from the throne of God, "SEE THAT YOU DO NOT M-I-S-U-S-E THE OIL AND THE WINE!"

THE PALE HORSE

In closing I would mention briefly the fourth horse. "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, come and see. And I looked, and lo a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (Rev. 6:7-8). There is a special significance to be attached to the description of the fourth horseman -- he whose name is Death -- and Hell followed with him. Death and Hell are specially linked in the Revelation. And since Christ came and abolished death (II Tim. 1:10) and destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14), He now boldly proclaims: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the KEYS OF HELL AND OF DEATH" (Rev. 1:18). And since the Christ now possesses both hell and death neither of them ride anywhere except by His authority! Now let us UNDERSTAND! This horse is given power over the fourth part of the earth-realm, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. This "fourth part of the earth" is clearly that portion of earthiness not already dealt with by the three preceding horses. It bespeaks of the conclusion, consummation and termination of the process. It means the final subjugation and destruction of everything within us that is contrary to HIS life and kingdom. And all the instruments necessary to accomplish this are in His hands and at His command.

There is an amazing and significant statement in the passage that we do not want to miss. "And power was given unto Him to kill...with death." To kill with DEATH! How does one kill with death? What can this cryptic statement mean? To kill with death means a death by death. Later on in the book of Revelation the same truth is presented thus: "Death and hell were cast into the lake of Fire. This is the second death" (Rev. 20:14). Now let us turn this around for clarity. "The second death IS death and hell cast into the lake of fire." Therefore we have exactly the same meaning either way it is stated. What is the second death? It is the first death and hell cast into the lake of fire! "Our God is a consuming fire." This fact is extremely IMPORTANT. The second death is not merely the lake of fire. Nor is the second death men being tortured forever in the lake of fire. The Holy Spirit has made it very simple and plain. The second death is the first death and hell CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. That is the Holy Spirit's definition, not mine. Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to see that everything cast into the lake of fire pertains to DEATH? Death itself is cast into the lake of fire. Hell, the realm of the dead, is cast into the lake of fire. And those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, i.e. those who are dead, in trespasses and in sins, who inhabit hell, are cast into the lake of fire. That is the end of death and hell and sin and sinners, for God shall destroy the whole realm of death in the lake of fire. He shall burn up hell in the lake of fire, He shall destroy death in the lake of fire, and He shall consume sin in the lake of fire. How I long to see the end of sin and death and hell! The time is coming, praise His name! God's Kingdom shall rule over all and God Himself shall be All-in-all. There shall be neither sin, nor sinners, nor death, nor hell. It is clear that God does not destroy men in the lake of fire, nowhere does it say that, for that would be a contradiction of terms. How can you destroy death by creating death? How can you abolish death by bringing men under the power of eternal death from which there is no escape? Oh, no, it is not men who are destroyed in the lake of fire -- it is sin and death and hell that are destroyed. "And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:26). "And there shall be no more death: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). Thus, the lake of fire is nothing more nor less than THE DEATH OF DEATH! "And power was given unto them to kill...with death." O, the wonder of it!

The following words by Ray Prinzing give fresh insight into this wonderful truth: "The first Adam died to God and righteousness, and became alive unto sin. The last Adam died unto sin (Rom. 6:10), and liveth unto God, and so fulfilleth all righteousness. The first made all men sinners, the last makes all men righteous. The lives and the deaths of the two Adams are thus greatly contrasting the one to the other. The FIRST DEATH was a transition from life to death, the SECOND DEATH is a transition from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality. Transformed from the carnal mind to the spiritual mind, which is life and peace, which transformation is wrought by a dying out to the one realm, to come alive to the higher realm. Because -- the second death is prepared to purge out and burn away sin and its results, and so doing cleanse all of God's universe. Death came as an enemy, the fruitage of an act of disobedience that turned man away from God and into the realm of carnality, minding self and flesh. Now God makes death overcome itself. It is by death that death is rendered powerless, and there arises an upspringing, a new life. It takes death to destroy death, and thus Christ 'did taste death for every man' --'that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Heb. 2:9, 14-15). Since we are all under the effects of the first death, it is appointed unto us to die once more - - not physical death, we are already in a state of mortality -- but now a dying out to this present death state. We conquer this death of the carnal mind by dying to it -- only God could use such a process bringing victory, but praise God, lie is destroying the first death with the second death" -- end quote.

When the process is complete, and the last soul has emerged from the warfare of the Four Horsemen, fully yielding unto the Lordship of our Saviour, then at last shall be fulfilled the beautiful promise: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be NO MORE DEATH, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make ALL THINGS NEW. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:3-5).

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 25
SAGITTARIUS-THE ARCHER [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TWENTY-FIVE

LYRA
THE LOST CHORD
THE CELESTIAL SONG OF CREATION
THE HARP OF PRAISE

In ancient times there were more constellations recognized than the twelve Signs of the Zodiac. Each of the twelve Signs has three other constellations grouped around it. Thus altogether there are twelve Zodiacal Signs with 36 additional constellations. These secondary constellations are called "Decans," from the Shemitic term DEK, meaning a "part" or "piece." The Decans are therefore "side pieces," indicating that they belong to the Sign and that their message is a part of the Sign's message. As previously pointed out, each Zodiacal Sign has three Decans, or three secondary constellations grouped about it. These three additional constellations are a part of that Sign's revelation. Therefore, to fully comprehend the significance of each Sign we must examine not only the major Sign, but also its three Decans. The Sign of SAGITTARIUS has its three Decans: Lyra, Ara, and Draco. Before proceeding to the next major Sign let us consider the three Decans or other pieces of the house of Sagittarius.

LYRA

The first is called Lyra. This star group is pictured as a Lyra or Harp. The harp is the oldest of stringed instruments of music. We find it named three hundred years before Adam died (Gen. 4:21). The only musical instrument mentioned in the book of Revelation in connection with heaven -- the realm of spirit -- is the harp. The harp was the famous instrument on which king David excelled. According to Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian, the harp of bible days had ten strings which were plucked with a plectrum (pick). The harp was used on joyous occasions; for instance, it was stated in **Gen. 31:26-27**: "And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?" The Jews refused to play the harp during the Babylonian Exile. They suspended their harps upon the willows, how could they "sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (**Ps. 137:4**). The harp was gay, and when the prophets of old admonished the people, they threatened that the harp, the symbol of joy and happiness, would be silenced unless the people repented from their sins. The harp was one of the temple orchestra instruments and its tone is described as sweet, tender, soft, and lyrical. Chronicles 25:3 states that Jeduthun and his sons prophesied with a harp, and **I Samuel 16:23** says about David and Saul: "And it came to pass...that David took a harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

Dr. Joseph Seiss, in his book THE GOSPEL IN THE STARS, wrote: "The placing of that harp as the first Decan of Sagittarius connects pre-eminent gladness, joy, delight, and praise with the action of this great Archer with His bow and arrows. There is but one such sign in all the ancient constellations, and that is associated with the going forth of this double-natured Bowman aiming His arrows at the Scorpion's heart. That glorious Archer, as He appears in this sign, answers to the Lamb as John beheld Him, standing, having seven horns and seven eyes - all the fullness of regal, intellectual, and spiritual power. Heaven grew breathless as it gazed, and a thrill went through the universal heart of living things. A new song broke forth from the living ones and elders around the throne of Deity, accompanied by the celestial harps, and rolled sublime through all the heavenly spheres, till afar in the depths of space the voices of angelic myriads took it up, and every creature in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and upon the sea, and all things in these realms, were heard singing and saying, 'To Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion for the ages of the ages!' -- end quote.

Modern atlases depict the constellation of Lyra by an eagle holding the harp, or a harp placed over the eagle. There can be no doubt about the meaning -- that praise shall ascend up AS AN EAGLE TOWARD HEAVEN. Two other conspicuous stars in this constellation are Shelyuk, which means "an eagle" and Sulaphat, meaning "springing up" or "ascending" -- as in praise. And this praise is associated with the going forth of the victorious horseman. It is the celebration of His triumph in us, the extension of His Kingdom over our land. It is also interesting to note that the name of the brightest star in the constellation of Lyra is Vega, meaning He shall be exalted. Its actual magnitude is very great, perhaps a hundred times that of our sun. This sparkling gem of the summer sky directs our attention to the theme of universal praise, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously" (Ex. 15: 1).

I would like to take this harp out of the starry heavens above and out of the inspired pages of holy writ, and, by the help of the Holy Spirit, touch the strings and bring out of them melody for our souls. Music reflects the heartbeat of every culture. From the roll of African drums to the long mountain horns of the Swiss Alps to the sound of banjos around the campfire, music speaks a special international language of the heart. All people of all cultures express the wonder and joy of life in the sounds of music. There is, I believe, not only the audible song of earth, but symphonies which have always been playing in a realm that far transcends our natural ears. The earth, nature, atmosphere, sun and moon, trillions of blazing stars and shimmering nebulae above, together with ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of the heavenly hosts are lost in melodies far, far more beautiful than any human ears can hear, but which can be heard by those who have "ears to hear." There is built into every atom and molecule of creation the harmony of a musical note; together the notes vibrate in a single and perfect chord which makes the universe sing. In the beauty of allegory the scriptures declare that the very elements give glory and honor unto the Lord of the universe. "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Isa. 55:12). "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein" (Isa 44:23). "All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee" (Ps. 145:10). "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, all ye His angels: praise ye Him, all ye hosts. Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created. He has also stablished them for ever and ever: He hath made a decree that shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling His word: mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: both young men, and maidens; old men and children: Let them praise the name of the Lord: for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven" (Ps. 148:1-13). Some months ago a word from Bro. Carl Schwing crossed my desk and I was especially impressed by the following thought: "Some nights ago, upon my bed, as my thoughts were upon the Father, my spirit was carried away to the KINGDOM OF THE ELEMENTS...I felt the strong wind blowing against my face, I reached out to touch the rain and snow...I could hear the heaving of the oceans, and the song of the four seasons...I heard the clapping of the trees...I heard the mountains shout for joy and the valleys sing...and the song was always the same 'Christ is Lord!' 'Christ is Lord!' 'Christ is Lord!' I remained in that realm for an hour or so, as my body was in a state of perfect peace. Tonight I understand more deeply what I experienced: the Kingdom of God had visited the kingdoms of the earth (not of the world), for as He had created these kingdoms before creating man, so now they are first to receive the 'Knowledge of the Lord' (the awareness of His presence). My brethren, can you not see how close The Hour is!...the Father is walking amid His creation and all creation is being shaken by His presence...and we, O sons of God, are being changed in a 'moment, in a twinkling of an eye' by His presence!" -- end quote.

Some time ago Bro. Paul Mueller shared the following experience in one of his papers. "To help us understand this truth, I would like to share with you a wonderful experience I had while in Nigeria, West Africa thirty years ago. One afternoon the Lord appeared in my room, and said to me, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand!' As soon as He said that, He immediately turned away and left the room. Needless to say, I was surprised and amazed by that visitation. As I thought about it later, I began to doubt that it was of the Lord. Since I saw no other manifestation of the Kingdom, I thought the whole experience should be questioned. A few days later, as I was walking down a path from our house to the Bible School where I taught Bible classes, the Lord again got my attention. This time, as I was walking through the lush, Nigerian bush, I heard the leaves, the shrubs, and the

plants singing a combined song of praise to the Lord and of travail for the Kingdom of God. I stopped to listen! The sound of it all was so arresting that my attention was fixed for a few minutes on the awesome, majestic wonder of that scene. The sound was so awe-inspiring, I thought it to be a most heavenly sound. The whole creation around me came alive with that combined song of praise and travail. In fact, the creation is always singing and travailling (Rom. 8:22), but for those few minutes I was given ears to hear it. As I stood there, transfixed by the wonder of it all, the Lord spoke again and said, 'Now do you doubt Me when I tell you, the Kingdom of God is at hand?' I replied, 'No Lord, help me never to doubt Your word again.' With that, I ceased hearing the sounds of the creation, everything returned to 'normal,' and the heavenly experience ended" -- end quote.

A distant relative of mine, Dr. Richard Eby, was accidentally killed a number of years ago when he fell to the street from a three-story building. Instantly he was conscious in the realm of spirit. One moment he was conscious with a flesh-restricted mind, the next moment with a heaven-released mind whose speed of function was that of light. He was instinctively aware that the Lord of lords was everywhere about him, though he did not at that time see Him. Hours later he was raised from the dead, and of one of the wonderful experiences encountered in that heavenly sphere, he says, "Music surrounded me. It came from all directions. Its harmonic beauty unlike earthly vocal or instrumental sounds was totally undistorted. It flowed unobtrusively like a glassy river, quietful, worshipful, excitingly edifying, and totally comforting. It provided a reassuring type of comfort much like a protective blanket that whispered peace and love. I had never sensed anything like it. This music was sounding within my head, not from an eardrum. Obviously it was not airborne. Most unusual to me was the absence of any 'beat.' Then I realized that without time this heavenly music could have no beat which is a measure of time! I was hearing harmonic perfection, undistorted by any interposed medium between me and its source, as heard mind-to-mind." Richard Eby explains that since God is the Creator of the universe He is the Composer of the Song of creation. This universal Song is the prime communication of worship, praise and thanksgiving. Music became the resulting harmony from all creation, both of matter and energy. All resonated in unison with the Spirit. It is like a triad of sub-electronic particles with and around which God constructed everything in the universe. The wave-forms we call Light; whereas the material-forms we call earth and water and air. The original creation mirrored the composition and perfection of Person-God. All things vibrated in unison with Him! There was total accord and harmony everywhere as the whole cosmos was resonating with and in God. Each separate thing or being thus carried out an appointed task in His scheme for the universe. A celestial-form of music resulted as the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy! Dr. Eby adds: "The music around me suddenly seemed louder. I rushed to a nearby tree and grasped its trunk to my ear: it was 'singing.' I lifted my right elbow to my head; it too emitted the same joyous, beatless melody. Excitedly I stopped to pick some flowers, and found them already in my hand. They too were 'playing' the tune!"

The atmosphere all about us is permeated with this celestial song of creation. But only the sons and daughters of the Most High can tune in to that higher frequency and sing its melody, for these are they who are LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. This music transcends any earthly sound, nor are there necessarily any words of earth's feeble languages with it. It is not learned in words, nor does it depend upon the skill of utterance. But it is a living vibration of all that GOD IS which is released from the very substance of the spirit within, flowing outward from the tabernacle of creation. This music is the beauty of holiness, the glory of the living God, the divine communion between Christ and His body, the unspoken love between the Bridegroom and the bride, the spiritual harmony between the Creator and His creation -- the triumphant symphony of glory! The source of power within this Song of songs is not tones and chords or melodies and harmonic sequencies but SPIRITUAL VIBRATIONS of divine power and reality -- Perfect Love, Life Everlasting, Joy Unspeakable, Infinite Light -- incarnate in creation and redounding unto the praise of HIS glory! It is a Song born of Life, Light, and Love. It doesn't merely tickle the outer ear or stir the soulish emotions -- it pierces the very heart and spirit of men! The Song comes in a vibration of a love so intense, a light so penetrating, and a life so transcendent that men's hearts are opened and melted as they hear. The day shall come, my beloved, when every creature in heaven above, in the earth beneath, and under the earth shall respond to the quickening power of that Song and join their voices with all the heavenly hosts and sing with such lyrity of being that the whole spirit, soul and body shall become enraptured into the beauty of infinite harmony! Hallelujah! Creation shall be released! Chains of darkness and death shall be broken! Captives of sin and sorrow and limitation shall be liberated as the resurrected Christ comes forth from within!

We as sons of our heavenly Father are called, not merely to sing that Song, but to BECOME that Living Song of Songs! "And give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He MAKE JERUSALEM A PRAISE in the earth" (Isa. 62:7). It is when we become this mighty concerto of Life, Light, and Love that its power is made manifest. The release of the Christ-life within causes us to BECOME this rhythm of glorified Life -- creation's heartbeat of joy, peace, and victory. The Song is sung as Life, Light, and Love are expressed as the essence of Being. It is an Immortal Song -- the vibration of incorruptibility. It is not in words spoken -- it is in a state of being, the 'emanation of God's glorious and eternal reality to all about. Every man who develops the power to hear this Song out of the realm of the Spirit is given the ability to sing the Song, sending it forth to a burdened and captive world. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound...!" (Ps. 89:15). As the unquenchable fire of God can never be extinguished, so this Song has always been ringing throughout creation and its symphony shall never end. Its melody of Praise demands expression! Some men may stop up their ears, others may try to drown it out, but all their efforts can never quiet the crescendo of LOVE! Its power and impact is too great, it cometh from above. Sing that Song, O Jerusalem, for it shall never, never die! Sing that Song, O ye sons of Zion, for it shall eternally triumph! Let the beauty and majesty of the King of kings in the tones and chords of this Song vibrate from your redeemed spirit that it may fill the whole earth and subdue all the nations! Yea, all ye peoples of the earth, SING THAT SONG!

THE LOST CHORD

The story of the Lost Chord has been told in exquisite verse, and in rapturous music. Perhaps you have heard of the lady who in the autumn twilight laid her fingers on the open keys of a great organ. She knew not what she was playing, or what she was dreaming then, but she struck one chord of music, like the sound of a great Amen.

**It flooded the crimson twilight,
Like the close of an angel's psalm,
And it lay on her fevered spirit
With a touch of infinite calm.**

**It quieted pain and sorrow,
Like love overcoming strife;
It seemed the harmonious echo
From our discordant life.**

**It linked all perplexed meanings
Into one perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence,
As it were loath to cease.**

Something called her away, and when she returned to the organ, she had lost that chord divine. Though she longed for it and sought it earnestly in unnumbered hours of practice, it was all in vain. It was a lost chord. And so in our world today a voice of longing cries out of every human soul in surges of incomprehensible yearning. It is a voice that is felt, not heard. None has ever walked the pathways of this planet who has not felt the haunting refrain of that "Lost Chord" moaning out its unutterable lamentation. And one and all try to silence that plaintive cry as it sobs forth its heartbreaking sorrow beneath the burden of a faint glimmer from some long forgotten memory...or world...or lost existence. Whenever I hear the story of that "Lost Chord" it reminds me of the lost joy, the lost peace, the lost power, the lost life that has fled from mankind. That whining refrain of sadness, darkness and death, echoing weirdly out of each man's soul, is but the fragmented, scrambled notes of the great Lost Chord, as they are released with harmonic dissonance and discord. It is like the exquisite notes of a masterpiece sounded forth indiscriminately without harmony. The notes may all be there but there is no lovely melody, only a raucous racket. There is recorded in the book of Job the statement of a glorious former time when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). That exquisite harmony was muted by sin and the subjection of creation to the bondage of corruption, as mankind became overwhelmed with the consciousness of this dense realm of the earthly, material and temporal. But

through the quickening Spirit of the resurrected and ascended Christ A NEW SONG IS ARISING -- the Celestial Song of Creation begins to sing within our hearts again.

**"Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore,
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more."**

Truly we experience those moments when verbal praises are inadequate to even begin to express that which surges deep within. There is a note, a chord, an inner song of rejoicing that finds no articulation in mortal words. From whence cometh this? In the measure body and soul are brought into subjection to, and union with, the spirit, the Song of the morning star begins to vibrate once more -- there is a Song of songs to be sung unto His glory. It will be heard through the celestial realms again as the NEW MORNING STARS take up that Lost Chord and begin to express the Life and Reality of God in spirit and in truth. There is a glorious company that stands upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, they are of the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north (Isa. 14:13; Ps. 48:2), brought there by the transforming grace of God, and they sing as it were A NEW SONG before the throne, which no man (fleshly realm) can learn. Well did Ray Prinzing write, "Thrilling to note that the word 'song' is the Greek word for an 'ODE'. An ode isn't the same as a 'hymn' which is a song composed and sung, whereas an ODE is a spontaneous outflow of melody and praise that finds its expression in song by the spirit's inner prompting. Men can learn hymns, they are written out in notes and words. The unsanctified singer of 'rock and roll music' records his album of hymns to collect that money too. But there is a SONG that the unsanctified cannot sing, for it is not something produced by the carnal mind, it is a RELEASING OF THE SPIRIT'S MELODY. It is a song that dates back to when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. We have carried within us a song that could not be released because of the bars of self-will and carnal rebellion. But the CROSS is canceling out the self, and the hour is close when the last vestige of the threads of that veil shall be torn aside, there shall be an outflow of the Christ within, a new song. Praise God, the day shall come when the world, long accustomed to the pipings and shriekings of such distorted music, negative beats that inflame the bestial passions of the flesh, shall awaken to hear the pure melodies of the harmony of God. Never again will they be satisfied with the discordant notes and the off-beat that has so characterized our generation. As they hear the pure song that flows from the Spirit, out of the depths of our being, they shall hunger and thirst to be filled with the same, the harmonious chord of the morning stars' song. Now a morning star means the first, early, or foremost one. And they are given as the herald, messenger to announce the day which is coming forth. The night might seem dark, but the morning star shines out to announce that the GREATER LIGHT OF GOD shall soon be seen over all the earth. 'The knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.' Ah, this gives new hope for coming days, His lighted stars betoken the victory" -- end quote. Another has written, "The universe echoes with the harmony of spirits made one in the Father! Yet taller, so much taller is our Elder Brother! Once we walked with Him...now we move and have our existence in Him. Once He walked with us, now He moves and has His existence in us...the two are One, and from that holy union comes forth God's Christ!"

I read the story of a young man who happened to visit a church one Sunday. He listened to the church service and heard an organ offertory played -- a Bach toccata. When the service was finished, the young man inquired as to whether he could play the organ. "Oh no! Only our church organist is permitted to play that instrument." But the young man persisted. Finally, they agreed to let him play one piece of music. He looked over the stops, carefully set them, and then he played the same number that was played for the offertory, a Bach toccata. There were still people lingering around. They listened -- enthralled, and when he finished, everybody applauded. The organist asked the young visitor, "What is your name?" He said, "My name is Johann Sebastian Bach! I wrote that music!" And the organist exclaimed, "Oh, to think that we almost would not let the master himself play the instrument! Only now have we heard the real music come out." YOU, precious friend of mine, are an instrument designed to be a channel of Life, Light, and Love. And Jesus Christ is the Master and wants to play the strings of emotions and thoughts and nature within you until you become a son indeed, the Song of the Lord in the midst of the earth. Your life when it is hid with Christ in God becomes a beautiful thing: every drop of blood is singing His praise; every pulsation of the heart is a joyful harmony keeping steady time; your thoughts in unison with God are running along the lines which ever lead to God, for they diverge not; they

are not like comets rushing out into the darkness, but they are like beautiful planets revolving around a Central Sun.

Handel Brown tells of a German ruler who wished to possess a Cremona violin. He offered an unheard of price. It was published in every market place throughout the realm. For months he had no success. Then one day an old man appeared at the castle gate. He was poorly dressed. He had a shabby violin case under his arm. The servants refused to admit him. Finally, because of his importunity, they agreed to carry his message to their master. He asked them to say, "Heaven's music is waiting at your door." The Prince ordered him to be admitted immediately. The old man drew from the worn case a perfect violin. He soon created marvelous music which won the Prince's ardent praise. "The violin must be mine. Name your own price," said the Prince. The old man shook his head. "I want no money," he said; "the violin may be yours only on condition that I pass my life within your house, and use the instrument every day." The Prince accepted the violin on these terms. Ah -- the Master Musician (spirit) waits outside the door of soul and body. He offers us the harmonies He alone can create. He, the firstborn Son, can make us sons with whom the Father is well pleased. Let us recall the lovely prayer of St. Francis:

**Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, union;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.**

Betimes the circumstances surrounding us appear to be chaotic and hopeless. But we are much comforted by the knowledge that the Composer and Conductor of this Symphony -- THE KINGDOM OF GOD -- knows every part and every player and is able to execute all phases to its grand conclusion. Discord only enters when we take our eyes off the Conductor or mistake another player's notes for our own.

THE CELESTIAL SONG OF CREATION

GOD ALL IN ALL -- this will be the grand conclusion of the great drama of the world's history and of Christ's redemption. There will come a day -- the glory is such we can form no conception of it, the mystery is so deep we cannot realize it -- when the Son shall deliver up the Kingdom that God gave Him and which He won with His own blood and established and perfected from the throne of His glory. "He shall deliver up the Kingdom unto the Father...that God may be all in all." ALL IN ALL -- such is the grand goal of our God! He will yet be everything to every one of His creatures, as it is fitting He should be. Nothing less will satisfy His heart for "**He has created all things, and for His pleasure they are and were created**" (Rev. 4.11). Nothing less will vindicate His love or form a fit conclusion for the sin and sorrow and death of the ages. Let us with joy believe it! Let us exult as we receive it! Let us be "laborers together with God" to accomplish it! May this simple phrase, that the smallest child can utter, become the very basis of our being, the background of every act, the key to every occurrence, a light in every darkness, a balm for every wound, and our ages-lasting consolation and good hope.

Let us awake from the terrifying nightmare of Babylon's delusions and let us wing our spirits to God's glorious consummation. Here is a vision worthy of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ -- GOD ALL IN ALL. And now, this ultimate reality must begin in us who have received the call to sonship. If this is what fills the

heart of Christ; if this expresses the one end of the work of Christ, then, if I would have the spirit of Christ within me, the motto of my life must be: Everything made subject and swallowed up in Him "that God may be all in all." What a life that will be when that really becomes our banner! To serve the Father fully, wholly, only, to have HIM ALL IN ALL! I am praying, believing, and pressing on "that God may be all in all;" that the day of glory may be hastened. Would that all the saints of God realized with what a grand cause we are working and praying; that all had some conception of the Kingdom we are partakers of, and what a manifestation of God we are preparing for! That He is not All-in-all at the present is quite obvious, for only a fraction have faintly felt that God was indeed ALL to them. Some have known Him as their Saviour, some have experienced Him as their healer, some have received gracious gifts from His hands, some have acknowledged Him as their Lord, and a few have found Him as their ALL. Happy are they who know Him thus! They have tasted of the cup ineffable, which quenches every thirst, satisfies every hunger, conquers every enemy, meets every need, dispels all darkness, and destroys all death. I am living for this -- that God may be all in all. I am living in Him, and I shall be there not only as a witness, but I have a part in it all. The Kingdom delivered up to the Father, and God all in all! I shall have a part in it and in adoring worship share the glory and blessedness. Let us permit this to penetrate deeply into our hearts that it may rule our lives -- this one thought, this one faith, this one aim, this one joy: GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL! Everything in history is moving inexorably toward a day when Jesus will have conquered everything and everyone. Like a mountain of dirt before a gigantic bulldozer steadily moving forward, all that can be conquered is being collected into the loving arms of Jesus, whose right it is to rule. When Christ ascended on high after His resurrection, He led many captives out of the pit and also set forth this greater purpose: "Now He that ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS" (Eph. 4:9-10). The message is clear -- redemption includes the complete transformation of the entire universe and all that is within it so that God shall FILL ALL THINGS. There shall not be left one corner of this vast universe, nor one creature in it, where He shall not be LORD AND KING. EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE SHALL BE RESTORED TO THE BEAUTIFUL HARMONY AND ORDER OF THE LOVE OF GOD. Indeed, HE SHALL FILL ALL THINGS SO THAT "GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL."

When God becomes All-in-all there will be no more preaching, teaching or prophesying. We won't need admonitions or reproof because ALL will know the Lord fully for themselves and live wholly in and unto Him. But there will be a lot of singing and praise! I think that music is something right out of the heart of God, the pulsating of His divine life. In the scriptures music is mentioned far more often than preaching as an expression of the spirit. Under Old Testament economy the primary manner of presenting God's Word in the Temple service was through Levitical singing rather than preaching. The major ingredient of Old Testament worship was the chanting and singing of Psalms. Then, as now, music freed the soul of the worshipper and lifted the spirit toward God. Music was also the principle characteristic of the New Testament church. Pliny, the Roman statesman and writer of the first century A.D., writing to the Emperor, and asking what he is to do with this new-fashioned sect, the Christians, reports that they seem harmless folk who gather together before dawn, and sing hymns to Christ as God. That singing is a Christian novelty. No religion on earth sings like the people of God! Most have very little, if any, music at all. The sound of singing and praise echoes and reechoes in the early church, and down the years. And naturally so. For the New Testament is the happiest book in the world, written by men who had heard news too good to be true, yet it was true; who had had spiritual experiences so extraordinary that plainly they were just impossible, and yet they had happened to them; who, as Paul puts it, piling metaphor upon metaphor, had passed out of the cold and dark night into the glory of full sunshine; men who had become new creatures, needing a new name to describe them, because the old one, with its miserable connotation, no longer fitted them, for whom life had become so strangely big and purposeful and glorious. A new name and a new song -- these are the marks of the New Creation!

The fourth Psalm is a Davidic Psalm. The inspired superscription reads, "To the Chief Musician on Neginoth, a Psalm of David." The superscription is a part of the Hebrew text, so we can know that King David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, was the human author. However, there is nothing in the superscription to let us know when, or under what circumstances, David wrote this Psalm. Taken in the divinely arranged order of the Hebrew songbook, the fourth Psalm is the first of the Psalms that include a musical superscription. In our standard English translation, that superscription reads, "To the Chief Musician on Neginoth, a Psalm of David." The untranslated Hebrew word, "Neginoth," means "stringed instruments." So, this Psalm is written "To the Chief Musician on Stringed Instruments." Who is the "Chief Musician"? In **Psalm 22:22** we find these words, "I will

declare thy name unto my brethren: IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION WILL I PRAISE THEE." The writer of the book of Hebrews translates this verse, "...I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH WILL I SING PRAISE UNTO THEE" (**Heb. 2:12**). The One who is spoken of in these verses is our Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ. HE IS THE CHIEF MUSICIAN; He is the One who inspires the singing of praises throughout all eternity! He sings praises in the midst of the church, and He leads the music of praise of His elect people from henceforth and for evermore. The superscription to this Old Testament Psalm dedicates it to the living Christ, the firstborn among many brethren. In this Psalm we hear the voice of David's greater Son: David's Lord, our Saviour!

The Lord Jesus Christ is both the Director of the heavenly choir and the Song that it sings! He it is who sings praises unto the Father in the midst of His elect. The praises that are sung in the midst of the Lord's many brethren are not the feeble praises of man, but the very Word of the Lord Himself. During the great Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit in those heaven-blest years following 1947, many thousands of the Lord's people entered into the high praises of God that burst forth from within. We literally experienced the Christ of God singing praises in the midst of His brethren. Some churches today are trying to "teach" people how to praise the Lord, how to sing and dance "in the Spirit." I do not hesitate to tell you that there is a realm of "strange fire" that is offered before the Lord today. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, "offered STRANGE FIRE before the Lord, which He commanded them not," and "they died, when they offered strange fire" (**Lev. 10:1; Num. 26:61**). Strange fire was simply fire of their own making -- fire that had not been kindled by the Lord. Then there was also STRANGE INCENSE. And so we read, "Ye shall offer no strange incense..." (**Ex. 30:9**). Incense bespeaks of WORSHIP. And regardless of how we want to say it, your worship is YOU. Worship is more than speaking words, lifting the hands, bowing down - it is simply the expression of your inner life toward the Lord. Paul says, "We are unto God a sweet savour or Christ" (**II Cor. 2:15**). "A sacrifice unto God for a sweet smelling savour" (**Eph.5:2**). We pour ourselves out to Him and it is to be IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH. But strange fire and strange incense is that which is offered up from our own SOULISH EFFORT; rather than the spontaneous outflowing of His life. In many circles the pleasure of music as an art or as entertainment is provided, in place of the anointed praise and spiritual worship that is inspired by the Spirit of God. "I hate, despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer Me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. TAKE THOU AWAY FROM ME THE NOISE OF THY SONGS: for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (**Amos 5:21-24**). "And the songs of the temple shall be HOWLINGS in that day saith the Lord," we read in Amos 8:3. I have heard those howlings, my beloved, even among "sonship" and "kingdom" people -- the noise and confusion of people praising and worshipping God apart from the anointing, the hollow melody of those who sing not by the spirit, having merely "learned" how to go through the motions, creating the harmony with their lips, but with no divine now of life. They are trying to sing the Song of the Lord, but the voice of the Christ is not heard singing in the midst. I has fallen upon my ears and I have discerned it by the spirit as the sound of a pack of wolves howling at the moor in the night. The Word of the Lord declares that the Lord Himself will sing praises to the Father in the midst of the church. It is not the fleshly efforts of man, but the quickening presence of the King of glory manifesting Himself as life in praise and worship among the many sons He is bringing to glory.

In the visitation of the Lord as Latter Rain, we heard the "heavenly choir" singing praises to the Lord from within the temple of His many-membered body. It was an incredibly glorious wonder to hear such celestial harmony issuing from untrained lips of clay. As the saints were gathered together by the Spirit and in the power of the Lord, the entire gathering, whether ten or ten thousand in number, would all break forth into spiritual song: and psalms and hymns, and would all sing the same song BY THAT SAME SPIRIT. The organ, piano and other musical instruments were in divine harmony with the many voices. One brother related the example of a large congregation all singing Handel's Messiah, from beginning to end, singing every word and every note in DIVINE HARMONY under the anointing of the Spirit, although no one in the congregation knew Handel's Messiah. I have sung the Song of the Lord and sensed every part of my being, being tuned, vibrating like a harp, the hand of the Master Musician plucking from my strings a melody divine. Have you ever heard the heavenly choir? It is a most remarkable experience, nothing like the empty sounds coming from the church systems today. And when the beat is the polluted, satanic beat of rock music, there is no way that it is going to be an offering acceptable to the Lord. The religious world speaks of "Christian rock music," but I have no hesitation in telling you that the word "christian" and "rock" constitute an unnatural and unholy union -- an

abomination. The rock beat is the ba...ba...ba...beat of the jungle, a reversion to savagery. There is actually very little melody, little sense in the lyric -- only rhythm. The mass hysteria present in the rhythmic chants of primitive peoples is perpetrated today upon the youth of our generation under the guise of "music." The so-called music is loud, primitive, insistent, sensual, strongly rhythmic, and releases the phenomena of mass hypnosis, contagious hysteria and the blissful feeling of being caught up in all-embracing, animalistic, orgiastic experience. On the other hand, music that is constructive contains always beautiful melody, wonderful rhythm and marvelous harmony; for all constructive sound is comfortable to the feelings, forever producing ecstasy, alertness and peace, energizing the mind and body, facilitating balance and self-control in the listener.

Paul Mueller penned the following words of wisdom for the elect of God. "The wonderful HEAVENLY CHOIR does not sing the high praises of the Lord without purpose. All that God does is for a glorious design, and He does nothing without an objective. The praises of the Lord which we experienced in the last outpouring came forth to prepare His elect to hear His Word and bring them to greater maturity. All that the Father intended to do in that last outpouring He fulfilled in every detail to every one of His elect who were set apart for that glory. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, the angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds as they watched over their flock by night to tell them of His birth. Then, suddenly, there appeared with the angel 'a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men' (Lk. 2:14-15). The heavenly host thus appeared to the lonely shepherds to confirm the blessed truth that had just been announced to them by the messenger of the Lord. The heavenly choir came with a manifestation of Spirit power and glory. And we are persuaded that a similar manifestation of Spirit glory will attend the birth of the corporate company of sons who are now being brought forth. When this corporate Christ company is birthed into the fullness of His life and glory, the heavenly choir will again sound forth the high praises of the Lord. Then the glory that is now within us will be openly manifest to a waiting, groaning creation, and will be joined with the greater glory of the heavenly hosts just as it was on that night of HIS birth. The wonderful phenomenon that took place in the presence of the watchful shepherds must have been a most magnificent event for them to witness. They were accustomed to the loneliness of the night watches on the hills of Judea. They had spent many such nights with the sheep, but this night was different from all others. An angel appeared as if from nowhere. Their first reaction was one of fear, until the heavenly messenger clearly announced, 'Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' The word of the Lord gave promise and hope of a Saviour for all people, which is CHRIST THE LORD. The present generation is in desperate need of 'good tidings of great joy.' Soon Christ shall appear, this time in His fullness. Then Christ, both body and Head, will be complete. He must have a body upon which to place the Head, which He is (Lk. 9:58). Therefore, the Lord is faithfully preparing a body who shall be as glorious and honorable as the Head. They will be joined to Christ the Head to make one COMPLETE MAN, who will be the hope of all creation. When this Christ company is complete the heavenly hosts will announce their birth. Many in the world who now languish in sin and darkness will then hear the good tidings of great joy at the creation of this anointed company. The message from the heavenly hosts will again be directed to all people. As the angel gave promise of a Saviour to that generation, so this corporate company is created and brought forth for the deliverance of the present creation. With that glad proclamation of victory, every created thing will join the heavenly hosts in praising God for the complete and joyful triumph of His salvation (Rev. 5:9-14)" -- end quote.

THE HARP OF PRAISE

We mentioned earlier that in the constellation of Lyra an eagle is holding a harp. The message is clear - praise shall ascend up AS AN EAGLE TOWARD HEAVEN. It is interesting to note that in nature besides man, no animal can sing, unless it can fly. That is a very significant point, particularly when you remember that even that which can fly does not sing if it is a scavenger -- one that feeds on putrid flesh. Buzzards don't sing! Once the rotting flesh of our self-life and the carnal mind has been dealt with and done away, we shall be able to soar into the heavenlies and fully join in that heavenly chorus, intoning the glory of God.

The harp is mentioned several times in the book of Revelation and in **Rev. 14:1-2** we read, "And I looked and to, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." In this passage we find this

company standing with their Redeemer upon Mount Zion. Zion represents the very highest position attainable in the Kingdom of God. Such are the ruling class in the capital city, the New Jerusalem, prefigured by King David who dwelt on the natural Mount Zion of old. And this company standing with their Lord can represent nothing other than they who have followed the Lamb experientially all the way from the death of Mount Calvary to the power and glory of Mount Zion, and will now reign with him on His throne forevermore (II Tim. 2:12; Rom. 8:17). They are said to have "His Father's name written in their foreheads" in distinction to those who, in Rev. 13:16, take the mark of the beast in their foreheads. The mark of the beast denotes that those who bear it have subscribed to the mind -- the doctrines, blasphemy, idolatry and nature of the bestial system of this world. Therefore the mark which these 144,000 bear denotes that they are not defiled with the antichrist doctrines, methods and shame, but are in every respect perfected in the divine nature. Following, in verses two and three, we find a voice of singing and of music. The singing is "as the voice of many waters;" that is, of many peoples and tongues, and it is of great volume, "as the voice of great thunder," denoting almighty spiritual power. They sing a "new song" which no man could learn except the 144,000. A song is peculiarly expressive of praise -- praise with a message. And the quality and depth of praise is dependent on one's spiritual progression in God. Those who have received salvation, but have never followed on to know the Lord more intimately, are limited in their praise; for the more we receive from the Lord, the more we learn His will, His word and His ways. Saints are filled with praise according to their individual capacities. Consequently, while unfaithful and immature saints will be filled with the good things of God according to their various capacities, yet these can never render the same worship as those who have followed their Lord all the way into the fullness of His life. Therefore these sons of Zion are said to sing a NEW SONG that no one can learn, except those who have traveled the same road as they, even as theologians, or great scientists, or business executives, or powerful political figures, have very little in common with the untutored and the unlearned in the natural. All have different capacities and different interests. A song in scripture represents both praise and a message. It is praise that bears a message, or beyond that, praise which is birthed out of revelation and experience with God. You can tell the spiritual level of a person by the songs he sings. A person's "song" will always express his depth of understanding and relationship with God. When we receive new revelation from the Lord, experientially inworked into our lives, a new song is created. There is an old English ballad the first line of which runs, "I cannot sing the old songs." Some change has taken place in the singer's feelings which makes the old song inappropriate, impossible. We all know something of this kind of feeling. Sometimes I look back over old sermons, and very often I have to say to myself, "I could not preach that again." God has been teaching me during the years of my ministry, leading me into a fuller knowledge of Truth and a deeper walk in the Spirit. Hymns and choruses which once ministered life no longer express what the Spirit is saying and doing in our lives, so we no longer sing them as we once did, and betimes change the wording. In the things of God, as in well nigh everything else, "Time makes ancient good uncouth." Thank God there is a new song, a new revelation, a new message, a fresh word, a higher experience in God for this day, and for all the days to come! Those who sing the new song have outgrown the old ones. They no longer express their experience or satisfy their needs.

What saith the scripture? **"But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Ps. 22:3).** God INHABITS THE PRAISES OF ISRAEL! Listen and pay attention, ye sons of God: When you proclaim the praises of the Most High, when you exalt Him, He inhabits that very expression of your heart. Applaud Him! Exalt Him! Laud Him! Worship Him! Rejoice in Him! Sing unto the Lord a New Song! We are much too stuffy and we have too many "religious hang-ups." There is yet so much religion, so much vain worship, so many commandments of men. **"Go forth from Babylon, flee...with a voice of singing declare...the Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob" (Isa. 48:20).** **"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever" (Ps. 89:1).** **"Sing unto the Lord! Sing praises to His name! Extol Him that rides upon the heavens by His name YAH, and rejoice before Him" (Ps. 68:4).** In the Philippian jail, **"...at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praise unto God" (Acts 16:22-26).** **"Serve the Lord with gladness! Come before His presence with singing!" (Ps. 100)** **"I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing!" (Ps. 101:1).** **"Sing unto the Lord, because He has done excellent things..."** **"Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving" (Ps. 147:7).** **"Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted His people" (Isa. 49:13).** **"O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation" (Ps. 95).** **"O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth; sing unto the Lord, bless His name."** **"The Lord is my strength and my song...sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously..." (Ex. 15).** **"Sing unto the Lord a new song, and**

His praise from the end of the earth...let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains; let them give glory unto the Lord and declare His praise" (Isa. 42:10-12).

Some time ago the following prophecy came forth, declaring, "For surely men fill balloons with helium and the balloons rise, and bear men up into the air to great heights. And as they ascend, and cast out their ballast they ascend even higher. What they have done, and the heights to which they ascend, is not because men have lost the pull of gravity, but because they have hitched themselves to a heaven bound substance, and have cast aside the weights that hold them to the earth. So, My people, I would say unto thee, cast aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset, and hitch thyself to the heaven bound substance that will bring thee into My presence. For I would say unto thee that praise is heaven bound. It is directed toward the Throne. It has a power and a force that will carry it to the Throne. And in the midst of thy praise, thou shalt find thyself being lifted into the heavenlies, casting aside every weight, every sin, every condemnation and guilt. In the midst of thy praise thou art lifted into the heavenlies. I would bring thee up, and have brought thee into heavenly places where thou has known in thy spirit newness of life, where thou hast found a new dimension of the Spirit. The hour is at hand when I will have a people that through their praises shall rise into the heavenlies. And as they cast aside every weight, they shall rise even higher. And as their praises become heated up, ascending up into the heavenlies, SO SHALL THEY ASCEND HIGHER INTO THEIR GOD."

There is something else that we may fail to grasp that is an incredible principle in the Kingdom of God. Many years ago the Lord spoke suddenly and powerfully to me, saying, "I have N-O-T COMMANDED YOU TO PRAISE ME!" I was astonished, incredulous, speechless at His word! In my understanding I was absolutely certain that God had repeatedly commanded us to praise Him! I rushed home, got out Strong's Concordance, and began a search of all the scriptures on praise. How clearly then the truth dawned on me! Yes -- we are commanded to praise -- but the command was not issued by GOD! Instead, men of God, caught up in the Spirit of God, beholding the splendor and majesty of God, cried out in spirit, "Praise ye the Lord!" I quickly discerned the pattern. It is never God speaking in the first person, proclaiming, "I command you -- worship Me!" There is no such command anywhere in the Word. God speaks of worship and praise, but not in terms of an imperative. It is always the man of God, with the veil drawn back from his vision, getting a glimpse of the Lord of Glory, as the prophet Isaiah said, "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord...high and lifted up," -- that is the beginning of worship. We could easily understand how God who made us could command us to do what He wants us to do. After all, He is our Creator! We could even understand how He could command us to say what we should say or even to think what He would have us to think. And He does, indeed, do that. He says that every thought should be brought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ. But, to go into that innermost closer, that deepest recess of the human heart of our love and affection and to say that we must love, to command us to love, and to say that we must praise, to command us to praise, seems to be a contradiction in terms.

Yea, it is more than that. Were God to command us to praise and worship Him He would thereby display the most proud, egotistical, conceited, self-centered and vainglorious personality in the universe! Have you never met an egoistic, self-seeking person reeking with the odor of their own self-importance? I have known men who were obsessed with their importance and power who manipulated others to constantly fawn before them and heap flattery upon them. There is something in me that has always detested such and found them among the most despicable specimens of manhood. Shall we now attribute such contemptible characteristics to the great and glorious God! Can you imagine saying to anyone, "Thou shalt love me!" "Thou shalt adore me!" "Thou shalt praise me!" "Thou shalt rehearse in my ears how great and wonderful I am!" We have had the idea that God is good and knows He is good; that God is holy and knows He is holy; that God is great and knows He is great; that God is omnipotent and knows He is omnipotent; therefore He is justified in commanding our respect, love and praise. But what is worship? It is simply man's response to the **REVELATION OF GOD**. When we see God we will worship Him and our worship will be in direct proportion to the clarity of our vision of Him. God has no need to command us to worship -- He reveals Himself for what He is. The response of all who behold the King in His beauty is the same -- the revelation redounds in blessing and honor and glory unto God because He is worthy! Worship is man's response, not God's command. And the response of the man to whom the Lord has truly unveiled Himself is as natural and spontaneous as breathing.

God has revealed Himself in nature and in His Word. We see God revealed in the thunderstorm. In fact the passage which says, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," is taken from the Psalm which describes a great thunderstorm that sweeps off of the Mediterranean and crashes over the hills of Lebanon and down into Judea, wrecking havoc on every side. David, the psalmist, tells us that here the majesty and the power and the might of God was revealed in the crashing lightning and the clap of thunder. Here we see the power of His arm and in all of that we are to give glory to the Lord because we get some faint glimpse of His might and His power. God has revealed Himself to us in His Word; preeminently we see that revelation in His Son Jesus Christ who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person. Ultimately we behold the revelation of God in our own experience and reality as CHRIST IN US, THE HOPE OF GLORY. Have you discovered the wonder of the Christ within? Have you beheld the beauty of the Christ within; have you inquired of Him in His temple? What makes people gamble! People don't gamble for money -- for very few win. They gamble because of the thrill and the tingle of gambling. They gamble because they love to stand right on the edge between total disaster and great wealth; because it makes their pulses pound and their hearts throb. They do it for the thrill of it. What is the reason people climb mountains and walk tightropes. It is the reason that people go to football games! If you were to pass some law that a football game was to be watched scientifically and dispassionately (like watching in a museum, for example), the stadiums would be empty overnight. People go there because they find in that one or two hours a thrill. They are lifted up out of the drabness and dullness of their life and find an excitement. They become a "fan" and they shout and they scream for joy for their team. And yet, it's an amazing thing that if person shows just a little bit of excitement and enthusiasm for the living God, he is not a "fan," he is a "fanatic." Because that is what a fan means! Fan is but the abbreviation of fanatic. Are you a fanatic for football, and blah for God? That is what a lot of professed believers are. They can work up more enthusiasm for a football game in two hours than they have for God in the last twenty years. The message is clear -- they have not yet seen the Lord high and lifted up, with His train filling the temple. They have never discovered the treasure within their field, the glorious and eternal reality of the Christ within!

Praise is not an instrument by which we can "get" things from God -- it is our response to His reality within ourselves. The Psalms are inspired songs of praise. Praise, not pity. That is the repeated message found in the Psalms. Praise for the goodness and greatness of God and for the constant care He gives His creation runs throughout the book. It carries, also, the spirit of a deep devotion to God, and a willingness to trust Him in any circumstance. It overflows with testimony of God's love, His faithfulness, His righteousness. The truths found in Psalms reveal God's unfailing care for man. But they do it in a special way -- through praise. As it says in **Psalm 107**, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" Praise, of course, is not something we plug into so that things will work out for us. The very thought "Praise God" recognizes the presence and power of God right where we are. As someone has written, "God is not moved by the breath of praise to do more than He has already done, nor can the Infinite do less than bestow all good, since He is unchanging wisdom and love." Praising God, then, isn't meant to persuade Him to help us. Instead, it lifts our burdens by opening our eyes to God's presence within us, and we gain a fresh perspective on spiritual creation, as, for example, in **Psalm 104**: "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works.... Thou sendest forth Thy spirit they are created." But can praise actually help us in practical ways? Not if we're trying to use praise as a technique. But if our praise is the natural outpouring of joy and gladness as we become conscious of more and more of God's Life, Light and Love, then praise does have a practical impact on our life, for God inhabits the praise of His people and there is the revelation of HIMSELF. In the revelation of God we can "Praise the Lord from the heavens and praise Him from the heights" (**Ps. 148:1**). We can so rejoice in the Lord, we live in the praises; all heaviness, doubts, and fear are gone and we laugh at impossibilities. As Evelyn Isaacs wrote, "The land of the miraculous is our native land. If people would continue praising Him they would enter into the unceasing praise of the spirit. It is then, all the powers of gravity would lose their hold and men would ascend from plane to plane. There is no space in heaven, on earth, or underneath the earth where spirit is not. It has no dimension, and goes beyond the extremist point of the imagination. There can be no greater fullness than that of spirit, nor can there be any greater height or depth. No mortal mind or eye can scan immortal heights, neither can depths be plumbed. No substance can bring greater expansion than that of spirit for its immensity and density are unscanned. No space is devoid of that which is substance so we may cease reasoning with the finite mind and rise to the infinite. Those who are flooded with the spirit, are not ordinary men, and unless God's people are moved into the place they are called, they too will die" -- end quote.

All the sacrifices of the heavenly realm into which we are now translated are spiritual sacrifices. The altar upon which the spiritual sacrifices are offered is Christ Himself as it is written, "BY HIM therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:15-16). "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17). The "sacrifice of praise" in no way infers that we must consistently and persistently mouth words of praise and thanksgiving unto God when we in no way feel like doing so. That is the idea many people have. They feel they must "wring" some praises out of their soulish senses in order to offer a "sacrifice" of praise to God. To the contrary, the sacrifice of praise must be the very BEST of our powers, like the lamb without blemish in the Old Testament, painstakingly selected and carefully and reverently brought to the Tabernacle door. In the awesomeness of His presence and glory we launch joyously down our little rivulet, until we are borne out into the great ocean of praise, which is ever breaking in music around the person of Jesus. Praise is one of the greatest acts of which we are capable; and it is the transcendent service of heaven. In that blessed realm of spirit they ask for nought, for they have all and abound; but throughout the cycles of glory the inhabitants of those bright worlds fill them with praise. And why should not our earthly tasks be wrought to the same music? We are the priests of creation; it becomes us to gather up and express the sentiments which are mutely dumb, but which await our offering at the altar of God. The praise of the order of sons is not that which is offered in the assembling of the saints, in which so much is soulish instead of spiritual, but the daily expression of the spirit of sonship -- thanksgiving and honor and glory to the Father in all things and for all things, in the nitty-gritty of everyday experience and under the pressures and problems of life. More than words, this sacrifice is an attitude, a disposition, a STATE OF BEING. It is the outraying of the nature, love, grace and mercy of God in all and unto all. It has been said that the messenger must so become one with his message until the messenger BECOMES THE MESSAGE. In the same vein, the praiser must so become one with his praise until the praiser BECOMES THE PRAISE of God in the earth. This is the greatest of all spiritual sacrifices! In these blessed ones is fulfilled the Sign of LYRA in the heavens -- the eagle holding the harp. In these the praise of God ascends into the heavens as the Song of the Lord personified in God's Christ!

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 26
SAGITTARIUS-THE ARCHER [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TWENTY-SIX

THE NEW SONG
THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB
THE PLACE OF WORSHIP
THE CELESTIAL SONG OF CREATION

The first of the Decans (minor constellations) in the house of Sagittarius is THE HARP (LYRA). The harp is the oldest of stringed instruments of music, mentioned in scripture almost from the beginning of history. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments the harp is the supreme symbol for praise and worship. Modern atlases depict the constellation of Lyra by an eagle holding the harp, or a harp placed over the eagle. There can be no doubt about the meaning -- that praise shall ascend up AS AN EAGLE TOWARD HEAVEN. Two other conspicuous stars in this constellation are Shelyuk, which means "an eagle" and Sulaphat, meaning "springing up" or "ascending" -- as in praise. And this praise is associated with the going forth of the victorious Horseman. It is the celebration of His triumph in us, the extension of His Kingdom over our land. It is also interesting to note that the name of the brightest star in the constellation of Lyra is Vega, meaning He shall be exalted. Its actual magnitude is very great; perhaps a hundred times that of our sun. This sparkling gem of the summer sky directs our attention to the theme of universal praise as every creature in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and upon the sea, and all things in all realms are heard singing, and saying, "To Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion for the ages of the ages!" (Rev. 5:13).

It is my purpose in these articles on THE HARP to take the harp out of the starry heavens above and out of the inspired pages of holy writ, and, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to touch the strings and bring out of them melody for our souls. Our heavenly Father has acknowledged us as His children. He tells about how He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and how we were with Him in the celestial councils when the worlds were framed, when the gargantuan galaxies and the distant array of spiral nebulae came into being, when in the heat of nuclear fury the first photon burst forth at the fastest of all speeds at the command of the One who said, "Let there be light" -- with that command a universe of raging infernos came into existence -- and you beheld all this! And every time a new sun was born, or a new solar system came into being, or a new life was formed, you were filled with joy at the wonder of Father's great and glorious plan, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, all the morning stars sang together, rejoicing over each creation, its splendor, its magnitude. My beloved, you are not an insignificant, purposeless blob of earth trapped on a smaller-than-usual planet full of ailments and disorders, lost amidst millions of other whirling galaxies. YOU ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE MOST HIGH. I want you to know that your names were written down in the Family Book in the heavens, the Lamb's book of life, before the light of the sun ever brought the beauty of the dawn or kissed the everlasting hills. Never forget -- the sons of God were with the Father before the world was, eternal children of the heavenly Father whose plan and purpose and power and love reaches out throughout all time, and who gave the world His best when He sent His First-begotten into the world. He has redeemed His own, He has brought forth a first-fruits of that redemption, He has established them into a Kingdom, to bring a wayward world devoid of spiritual consciousness back into relationship with Him. This earth, this solar system, this vast universe beyond is not going to be left to someone else. No one is going to come in some distant age and behold the desolation and ruins of this planet, as they look at the ruins of ancient empires, and say, Here it is, the place where the Christians lived; here it is, the planet where Jesus lived and died and rose again; here it is, the world where the sons of God once aspired to deliver the whole race from the bondage of sin, sorrow and death, and lift it up to righteousness, joy, peace and life in the Spirit. That chapter of history, precious friend of mine, is never going to be recorded, because you are a part of God's bright today and His endless tomorrows, for you have been with Him from the beginning, and are going to be with Him in His creative and redemptive and reconstructive work in all the glorious age and ages to come, when every knee shall bow in homage and

every tongue shall frankly and openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. This is the message of the Kingdom! This is the great gospel of God! This is the word of the sons of God, that mighty household of warriors in the earth! This is the unmistakable message proclaimed from times immemorial by the portentous portrait in GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY, the wonderful picture of Lyra, the Harp, held high by the Eagle. The message is clear -- in all, through all, by all, and unto all THE LORD SHALL BE PRAISED! The Oracle can by no means fall short; the Prophecy cannot fail. It is written in the Signs of the heavens, it is written in the pages of Holy Writ, it is written in the minds and hearts of God's sons. The almighty Father calls on you to stand, to conquer the darkness, to break the power of the adversary, to vanquish death, to know that you can move forward with new assurance, new faith, new strength, new understanding; for His purposes for you abide forever.

THE NEW SONG

"And I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him a hundred and forty four thousand who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads; and they sing a NEW SONG before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever He goes; these have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are spotless" (Rev. 14:1-5, R.S.V.).

We have pictured here for us the company of the firstfruits unto God. These are a company of overcomers as signified by their having the Father's name and the name of the Lamb written on their foreheads. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God...and I will write upon him My new name" (Rev. 3:12). The number of them is 144,000. The number is symbolic, as are all the scenes in the Revelation. Twelve is the number of divine government. The number is twelve squared: twelve times twelve. It is divine government brought to its fullest and ultimate expression and reality. It is not a literal one hundred and forty four thousand; it rather means that all who make up this company have attained unto a place of rulership with the Lamb in the Kingdom of God. There are some things said about this group to which I would draw your reverent attention. Besides having the name of the Father and the name of the Lamb written on their foreheads, which indicates the position unto which they have attained, they sing a new song which no one else can sing but the hundred and forty four thousand. A name in the scriptures is descriptive of the character of the one who bears that name, especially when God gives the name to that person. Names are very important and this is why God many times changed the names of some. Jacob, the deceiver, the supplanter, had his name changed to Israel the prevailer, a prince, a ruler with God. His name had to be changed because he had a change of nature and his old name was no longer descriptive of him. Abram, a high father, was changed to Abraham, a father of multitudes. Abram's wife Sarai, which means Yah is Prince, was changed to Sarah, a princess, because from her kings would be born. This first-fruits company bore the name of God and the name of the Lamb, which tells us that they had attained unto the image and likeness of God and were filled with His fullness.

They sang a song that no one else could sing. A song bespeaks of an experience. Aboriginal people often do this. We civilized ones do not; it is something we have lost through our civilization. A dear brother told of his experience while in missionary work in Liberia. He said, "While we were in Liberia we often witnessed people singing out their experience. If a hunter had killed an elephant, a buffalo, a leopard or some other large animal, the village people would all gather around him to hear about the hunt. They would all sit in a circle and he wouldn't just tell them about it, he would put his experience into a song and he would sing it and dance, acting out how he stalked the animal and killed it. This was his song, no one else could sing it. It illustrated his experience in the hunt and he would sing and dance to the enjoyment of all the villagers." The new song the hundred forty and four thousand sing is of their experience and theirs alone, which they have had while following the Lamb. It is a song of victory over death, of conformation to the image of God, of life and triumph for evermore. Others cannot sing this song, for they have not had the same experience.

Today God is declaring new things...and every time God declares a new thing there is a NEW SONG. The new song of the Spirit that is being sung throughout the earth in this hour is not the work of accomplished musicians whose talents have birthed a new sound -- but the new song of the Spirit is the expression out of a people of the "new thing" that God is speaking and doing in the midst of His elect. Long millenniums ago the sweet singer of Israel intoned, "O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth..." (Ps. 96:1). It is the song that God gave David at the time of the dedication of the Ark of God on Mount Zion...and it concerned the "new thing" that God was doing then. But it was really prophetic of the "new thing" that God is doing now. It is the song of His Glory, the song of His Kingdom, the song of His righteous judgments in the earth, the celebration of His immortal and incorruptible life formed in a people. The voice from heaven (Rev. 14:2) as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and as the voice of harpers harping with their harps, appears unquestionably to be the voice of the company of the redeemed as they celebrate the consummation of God's great redemptive process. The new song can only mean that they have experienced within their lives the last, the final, the full and complete outworking of redemption. It is called the new song because the old song was the song of creation "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). At creation, when life sprang forth into the conscious enjoyment of celestial being, the heavenly chorus filled all the vast realm of visible and invisible things with rapturous and melodious praise and thanksgiving for the privilege of life in all the intensity and beauty and wonder and mystery of it. The creation of man was designed to be the topstone of this mystery as there was entrusted to him the dominion of the lower creation in anticipation of his ultimate rule over the entire creation. The disruption of this unspeakable joy by the fall of man, opened the way for a yet higher creation -- the NEW CREATION -- by which God would participate in the infinite sorrows of that which had fallen, and bear through death its curse, its pain and its tears, to establish that new creation of unsullied joy and peace, love and truth, life and glory which, because united with deity incarnate, could never fall again. Hence the "new song" which can only be sung when redemption is finally accomplished, and realized in the triumph of the Redeemer over all forces and powers of evil, including the Last Enemy which is Death. Singing is the antithesis of sorrow. There will be no cessation to the new song, because within those who sing it Christ has put an end to the reign of sin and death from which all sorrows spring.

No man can learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand which are redeemed from the earth realm, from the power of sin and the dominion of death. As the triumph of His life works within we are more and more learning to sing that song, the new song. The melody of praise which arises from the soul set free is rising as a sweet incense unto the Lord. All praise to the Lamb who hath redeemed us! All praise to the Lamb who hath given us of His victory! He alone shall be exalted! He alone hath gotten the victory! The new song, no mortal can learn, for it is born of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Even now there are beginning to vibrate within those chords of Life, Light and Love which shall burst from our being in manifestation as the shackles of sin and the grave clothes of death are left behind. At the dawn of creation we sang the Song of the ages, when once the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. How glorious it was! Yet this new song shall be greater far than that primeval song -- for the Song of Redemption exceeds the Song of Creation, as the new creation transcends the old. It is the blessed privilege of every apprehended one to join in the glad tidings of victory as we approach our destiny in God. We were begotten, called and ordained in the bosom of the Father in an environment of singing and rejoicing. And when we are restored to the glory that we once had with the Father before the world was, we shall surely embody a Song as we never have before. As Paul Mueller so aptly wrote: "Surely all the Lord's apprehended ones can sing and give praise to the Lord for His goodness and mercy. By His omnipotent Spirit, the Lord is able to put a song in the heart, even though that one may be bound up and imprisoned by the soul that is darkened by doubts, fears and unbelief. Because of His life within, we are able to Sing and praise the Lord. We have been given a glimpse of the glory before us and can now sing and rejoice in the spirit of triumphant victory. We should be comfortable midst the true spirit of praise, worship and rejoicing, for we received our instructions in that environment, and we are also returning to that same divine realm of glory, light and life. We will lift up our hands in the holy sanctuary of the Lord, and will bless Him when we have arrived at the end of our journey to His house. Then our praises to Him will bring forth His blessing out of Zion (Ps. 134:3).

"The prophet foretold our ascent up to the hill of Zion in this very night, when he said, "Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel. And (in the same night-time) the Lord shall cause His

glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm...with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering and tempest, and hailstones' (Isa. 30:29-31). The good news we may now receive and cherish is that we shall have a song to sing during this present time which is the night of this dying age of man. The song we now sing is not a song of doom, gloom, and despair, but a song of victory, of triumph, and of jubilant fulfillment. In spite of the darkness and gloom all about us, we have a song to sing that defies all human reasoning and understanding. It is the song of the redeemed, the song of the Lamb and the song of Moses (Rev. 5:9 14:3 15:3). This song we now sing was not given us by man, nor could we have ever sung it while in captivity in Babylon's strange land. No man can sing this new song but those who have been caught up in His glory. In the midst of this night the Lord has given this promise for His chosen ones: 'But for you will there be a song, as in the night when a sacred festival is held, and gladness of heart, as when one sets out with a flute, to go to the mount of the Lord, to the Rock of Israel' (Isa. 30:29, Smith-Goodspeed). Brethren, we are not in darkness. This day has not overtaken us as a thief in the night. We are sons of the new day, sons of light. Children of the night and of the darkness of this world sleep on, but we will watch and be sober, waiting for His appearing. The Lord hath appointed us to obtain full salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. REJOICE, YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH!" -- end quote.

THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB

In chapter fourteen of Revelation we have the 144,000 singing a new song, accompanied by harpers harping with their harps, and shortly there follows another of these beautiful and illuminating passages wherein we read, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints" (Rev. 15:2-3). "The song of Moses and the Lamb" -- whatever can it mean? Well, we will see, for we will turn to the passages in the scriptures, in which the idea is referred to. We will take the song of Moses first. You will find it in Exodus 15. It is the song of the great leader of Israel just after he and his followers had passed in safety through the Red Sea. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my Father's God, and I will exalt Him" (Ex. 15:1-2). Now to enter into the full significance of this song we shall have to enter into the secret place of the heart of Moses himself. We cannot do that in its entirety as it ought to be done, but we are able now to measure and to estimate the value of the life of Moses as those who stood near him could not possibly do. Now, to understand why this song is put into his mouth, we must try to enter into his experience at the moment when it was first sung. This man of faith and courage has been leading a poor slave-hearted people out of bondage. There never was a more lonely figure in all history than he, and not one amongst his followers could understand the greatness of the sacrifice he had made. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:24-25). Thus Moses leaves behind him all the advantages of Egypt and the favor of its king; and for the sake of his "father's God" he deliberately chose the hard way, the solemn way, the way of Yahweh, and now he sings his paean of praise for victory granted. It could not have been but that he sang it all alone; there was not another man in the whole host who was worthy to sing it with him. It says the host of Israel sang, I know, but, for all that, Moses sang alone, and I think the Spirit has really entered into the situation when He makes Moses say, "My God, my strength, and my song. He also is become my salvation." For this man, all alone, has wrought for God, all alone has he been chosen to be the deliverer of Israel, and even now he sings his song of triumph on the very eve of a long pilgrimage. For his probation is not over. I pray you not to miss this point. Moses is not singing in the Promised Land, he is singing on the desert journey, he is singing on the borders of the Red Sea, he is singing amid trials and wearinesses innumerable. Moses' hardest battles had still to be fought, yet he is singing, "The Lord is my strength and my song." This, then, is the song of Moses. It is the song of a victory and salvation being inworked and wrought out by faith through the crucible of the journey. And none can learn this song but those who are experientially pressing forward against all the odds to lay hold upon the prize of HIS LIFE.

Now what is the song of the Lamb? The teachers and preachers in the church systems suppose it means that the blood-washed throng, the believers out of all the ages, around the throne of God in heaven, whose toils are

over and done with for evermore, are there singing "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." And among this throng they include all who are saved by free grace alone, including the last murderer who has paid the penalty of his crime, and died in the odor of the electric chair; or the loathsome degenerate, whose flesh has reaped corruption as a result of his immoral life style, but who has achieved an eleventh-hour death-bed repentance, and now stands with Moses and the saints of all ages before the throne of God in heaven singing, "Worthy is the Lamb!" If this is your conception, my friend, you frustrate the meaning, for that is not the thought conveyed by the Spirit of God in this beautiful passage. The Seer of Patmos, who was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, looks as it were from heaven, but it was upon earth that he gazed. "I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous" (Rev. 15:1). What he saw from heaven was what you and I are doing, and he describes the sons of God on earth as singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. True, it is the song of heaven too, but it is a song that is begun on earth, and only those who have sung it here are entitled to sing it there.

Let us see now some of the references to this in the New Testament. The Lamb is first and foremost our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the body of the Lamb, that glorious company who have followed Him all the way to Mount Zion by way of Mount Calvary. If you turn to Mark's gospel you will discover one most illuminative phrase in his account of the eve of the Passion of our Lord. It is this: "And when they had sung a hymn they went out" (Mk. 14:26). More accurately: "When they had sung a song." What was it! It was one of the songs of Israel, one of the prophecies of Himself. In all probability this was the song that Jesus sang on the eve of Gethsemane, and in the shadow of Calvary: "Bind the sacrifice with chords, even unto the horns of the altar." "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, because His mercy endureth forever." Now, brethren, consider: twelve men were singing that song, but one that had been of the company was on his way with busy feet to betray his Master; and the other eleven sang as loudly as Jesus, we may be sure, like the host of Israel on the shores of the Red Sea; but, for all that, Jesus sang alone. No other could possibly sing that song and know what Jesus knew, feel what Jesus felt, do what Jesus did. August loneliness of the Son of God, singing His death-song in the shadow of betrayal and torture and death! This was the first note of the song of the Lamb that was slain; and yet, I say, though it was the first note, in a sense, it was not. The whole life of Jesus, the oblation that He made from the day of His call unto the day of His death, was the song of the Lamb that was slain, the song that was heard in heaven, but the song that was sung on earth and is still sung on earth by those who follow in His footsteps. Jesus began His song when He began His oblation of the life that was laid down for mankind, and still Jesus is singing that song, for the Lamb that was slain has not ceased His activity -- He is going forth to the ends of the earth conquering and to conquer.

Of that on-going song we read, "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters" (Rev. 14:2). John was listening as from heaven, and the voice that he heard was not only there, it was here, singing, as it were, a new song. "And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song...and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth" (Rev. 14:2-3). He does not mean that they had been plucked away from the earth, for our Lord's prayer had to be answered: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (Jn. 17:15). And, lastly, our text: "And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire" -- like the Red Sea -- "and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints" (Rev. 15:2-3). So Jesus from His throne, and the saints around it, and the warriors on earth, join in one glad triumphant song; IT IS THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB. The song of the lamb is not the song of sinners saved by grace; it is the song of joy out of sorrow, of peace in the midst of storm, of perfection out of suffering, of light out of darkness, of righteousness triumphing over sin, of victory snatched from the jaws of defeat, of life conquering death. It is the song of the overcomer! The "Lamb" bespeaks of the humiliation and suffering that leads to life and exaltation. Ah, there is no victory without a battle, no overcomer without the powers of death and hell. My soul, consider! what was that which to the Seer of Patmos made the harmony complete? It was the vision of a vast multitude taking up the song -- the experience -- of the Lamb of sacrifice. There was a time when, to that multitude, the spectacle of sacrifice would have brought discord to the heart; but in the completed harmony it brings joy. The sweetest music is the song that is born of experience. The universe is all music, but it is not all music to our ear. We only hear a few chords, and they are minor chords. The minor chords seem discords when they stand

alone; they lack the full symphony to bring out their symmetry. Thou art living in a world of perfect music, only thou hearest but a small portion of the music. Often art thou saying that the coming melody shall atone for the jarring chords. Nay; say rather that the jarring chords themselves shall be revealed as part of the completed harmony! The melody is not to come; it has come already; it has only to be revealed, and then the harpers stand upon the glassy sea. Until we thoroughly understand how suffering is preparation for reigning, we shall never be enthralled by the song of the Lamb. The minor chords get a meaning and receive a vindication when we stand upon the sea of glass and sing and harp this song. Do you not know that this was from the outset the goal of your being -- to be made perfect through suffering? It was for this that your first innocence was clouded. It was for this that your first joy was dimmed. It was for this that you were lowered from the garden of God to the field of thorns and thistles. It was for this that your first hope was shaken -- that you might reach Mount Zion by the steps of Mount Calvary. The minor chords of testing and trial played together with the chords of faith and patience harmonize into the symphony of perfection and glory. The wilderness of the Son of man is better than the garden of Adam. The morning stars sang together over your untried nature; but there awaits a yet grander music -- when the harps of God shall proclaim that you have conquered all and stand triumphant in His image!

Just as the Israelites of old, after having passed through the Red Sea dry shod, stood upon the shore singing the song of Moses, Miriam and the women playing upon their timbrels, while their enemies perished in the waters, so these victors of our text, having passed over another sea and through the fiery trials of this earth life, stand at the transparent sea mingled with fire, where all is purged, purified, and transformed, singing a similar song of triumph for the manifestation of divine judgment, which is called "The song of Moses and the Lamb." What might this company be? What might be the sea upon whose shore they sing the song of victory to their Lord and Deliverer? Me thinks I have stood upon that very shore. This song is sung by a people who have been redeemed from the world systems symbolized by Egypt. This song of deliverance and triumph is sung by all who get the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. Our deliverance from the Babylon systems is much greater than Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Greater. Think of it! But the deliverance is on-going, and the song is ever intensifying in tone and fervor. Our full deliverance will involve even our bodily transformation, as Paul Mueller wrote, "Only as we are delivered from this body of sin and death can we realize fully the victory of this prophetic song. He who is Lord of all is just as able to change these bodies as He was to wall up the waters of the Red Sea so that the people walked over on dry land. Then, He who is declared to be 'King of saints' shall in truth and in fact be that which the term implies, for He has caused them to triumph victoriously over sin and death. We shall then be overcomers indeed! When we have experienced the predicted deliverance, we shall then sing the song of Moses with joy and victory, saying, 'I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him. The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is His name. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee: Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thy arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which Thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever' (Ex. 15:1-18).

"What a wonderful Kingdom song! Moses and all Israel with him sang this song and prophesied that those of Palestina, Edom, Moab, and Canaan would be 'still as a stone till Thy people pass over' into the Promised Land. The Canaanites possessed the land that God promised to Israel, but they were assured that the Canaanites would be 'still as a stone' while Israel inhabited the land. This is truly one of the examples that our God has provided for us. It is an example illustrating His faithfulness to lead us into the abundant land of the Kingdom of God, just as He led our forefathers into Canaan's fair land. As historical Israel was delivered out of Egypt and led into the promised land, even so shall we be delivered of the conglomerate Babylon systems of this worldly order and into the Kingdom of God. And then we shall sing the song of Moses with the experiential knowledge of the prophetic truth this inspired song foretells. The Lord Himself was the song that Moses and all Israel sang just as He is for us today. The fresh, new wine of the Spirit is beginning to flow in our lives. We are

now beginning to sing a new song, even a song of praise to our Lord, for He is being revealed as our salvation unto the fullness. While all else around us may be quiet and uneventful, we are beginning to sing a new song unto the Lord. Our spirits within us are becoming alive to a new and greater salvation. The Christ within is the song we sing, just as He was the song that enabled Moses and all Israel to sing unto Him. As the Lord sings His praises within us, nothing can stop the flow of life that comes from the wells of salvation. Therefore, with joy we will continue to draw water out of the wells of salvation" -- end quote.

THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

Soon after John the Baptist was thrown into prison, Jesus left the country near Jerusalem with His disciples, and went toward Galilee, the province in the north. Between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north lay the land of Samaria, where the Samaritans lived, who hated the Jews. They worshipped the Lord as the Jews worshipped Him, but they had their own temple and their own priests. And they had their own scriptures, which was only the five books of Moses, for they would not read the other books of the Old Testament. The Jews and Samaritans would scarcely ever speak to each other, so great was the hatred between them. It was a long and tiring journey from Judea back to Galilee, and as He walked along the broad, hot valley floor of the ascent of Lebonah, Jesus would have seen the low-lying hills to the east and the gradually rising heights to the west. He would then come to Sychar, near the ruins of the ancient Shechem. And here, being much wearied from their journey, Jesus and His disciples paused to rest at the well at Sychar. This well had been dug by Jacob, the great father of the Israelites, many hundreds of years before. It was an old well then in the days of Jesus, and it is much older now, for the same well may be seen in that place still. Even now travelers may have a drink from Jacob's well. It was early in the morning, about sunrise, when Jesus was sitting by Jacob's well. He was very tired, for He had walked a long journey; He was hungry, and His disciples had gone to the village near at hand to buy food. He was thirsty, too; and as He looked into the well, he could see the water, a hundred feet below, but He had no rope with which to let down a jar to draw up some water to drink.

Just at this moment a Samaritan woman came to the well, with her water jar upon her head and her rope in her hand. Jesus looked at her, and in one glance read her soul and saw all her life. He knew that Jews did not often speak to Samaritans, but He said to her, "Please give me a drink." The woman saw from His looks and His dress that He was a Jew, and she said to Him, "How is it that you, who are a Jew, ask drink of me, a Samaritan woman?" Jesus answered her, "If you know what God's free gift is, and if you knew who it is that says to you, Give me a drink, you would ask Him to give you living water, and He would give it to you. There was something in the words and the looks of Jesus which caused the woman to sense that He was not a common man. She said to Him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where can you get that living water! Are you greater than our father Jacob, who drank from this well?" "Whoever drinks of this water," said Jesus, "shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. "Sir," said the woman, "give me some of this water of yours, so that I will not thirst any more nor come all the way to this well. Jesus looked at the woman and said to her, "Go home and bring your husband and come here." "I have no husband," answered the woman. "Yes," said Jesus, "you have spoken the truth. You have no husband. But you have had five husbands, and the man you are now living with is not your husband." The woman was filled with wonder as these words penetrated her soul. She saw that there was a man who knew what a stranger could not know. She felt that God had spoken to Him and she said, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet of God. Tell me whether our people or the Jews are right. Our fathers have worshipped on this mountain. The Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where men should go to worship. Now, which of these is the right place?" Her concern, and the major issue of the moment for her, had to do with the specific proper location for worship. In this respect, this woman differed little from multitudes in this hour who ask, "Where should we worship! What church should we attend" "What ministry should we submit to?" The Lord did not dodge her question. Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The time would come, said the Lord, when both "this mountain" and "Jerusalem", as well as any other geographical locality, or appointed structure, would be considered completely irrelevant as a condition to worship.

A recent newspaper article was entitled, ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS STRIVE FOR SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL HOME. It included the views of a rabbi and a Palestinian activist. The interview with the rabbi stated, "Today, Jews believe that worshipping in Jerusalem is essential to serving God, many of whose 613 Biblical commandments can be fulfilled only here." At the same time, the interview with the Palestinian pointed out, "So sacred is Jerusalem, Muslims believe, that a good deed committed here has 1,000 times the normal weight, while a sin committed here has 1,000 times the normal gravity. Opinions and sentiments concerning Jerusalem still run deep and are strongly felt by the carnal-minded after two thousand years! The modern city of Jerusalem still is the object of a struggle for power involving pride, envy, oppression, tyranny. The Samaritans for generations had worshipped God in Mount Gerizim and the Jews had for generations worshipped in their temple in Jerusalem. Each scorned the other's place of worship and Jesus is here speaking to the woman of Samaria and telling her that PLACES ARE OF NO CONSEQUENCE. God is spirit -- and mountain worship will not be acceptable. Neither will temple worship in Jerusalem be acceptable to God. If man is to worship God, then man must worship God AS HE IS, and not as man thinks He is or where man thinks He may be. Carnality and the natural man attempt to bring God into a realm that will enable them to see God according to their belief. Therefore some worship idols or images of metal, wood, or stone. Others worship the sun or the elements. Some must go to a building to worship God and others must have all manner of rites and ceremonies. Some must have a Jesus in a body of flesh, before they can worship God. But Jesus said that God was seeking a people who would worship God in the realm and sphere in which God is -- in Spirit and in Truth. Worshipping a physical location is not spiritual worship. "Oh," you say, "I do not worship the location, I just go there to worship God." Precious friend of mine, if you must go there in order to worship God, you are worshipping the place! When we worship God in spirit and in truth, it separates us from all the "helps" and "crutches." Such a worship takes away all the traditions of men, all the ceremonies and all the rituals and all the forms that every religious body of people are cumbered with. We won't go to a mountain, neither will we find it necessary to go to a temple. We will not have to work anything up or pray anything down. Certainly the Lord draws His people together for seasons of fellowship, praise, instruction, and edification. We do not oppose such gatherings, as the Lord ordains. But true worship will not take place just on Sunday morning or perhaps a night or two each week. True worship is a CONSTANT, CONTINUAL STATE OF BEING. God is spirit, and who can know spirit except God take us unto Himself in the realm in which He abides. God, Spirit and Truth, fills all space, is everywhere present, eternal and unchanging. When we live and walk in the spirit we are always dwelling at home in Him. We are always able to know and experience Him in the heaven of His presence, the true home and heaven of the consciousness of the life, reality and substance of God within.

This is one of the great truths that the vast majority of church members have not grasped to this day. That is, that the place of worship has no bearing whatsoever on the act of worship. Today, in order to hold together the system, the religious system men have developed, there must be a place of worship, and men must gather themselves together at that place so that they may worship. Anyone who claims to be able to worship God at any time and in any place becomes a heretic to the organized religionists. For, if the places of worship were taken away, and men truly worshipped in spirit and in truth, the whole religious system would fall apart. There would be no reason for it to continue. The whole religious system is builded upon having a "place" for people to come to so that the works of men may continue to be carried out. Again, let me affirm that God does indeed gather His people together, but such gathering together is UNTO HIM, and the place and order becomes inconsequential. It is when the place becomes important, it is when preachers and organizations demand your attendance, your submission, and your allegiance to them and their program, asserting that you cannot make it in to heaven, or the Kingdom, or sonship, or immortality apart from their teaching, their method, their order, their program -- it is there that worship in spirit and in truth is usurped by worship in "this mountain" or in "Jerusalem." Religion always tells us where, when and how to worship. Ah, but the Spirit, like a rushing wind carries us off to that realm of spirit and truth...far beyond place, time and methods...into the very presence of the Father...for it is there we gather to worship!

Let all who read these lines know of a certainty that worship in spirit and in truth is the worship of the New Covenant. This worship of the New Covenant and Testament is a new worship, which Christ Jesus, the heavenly spiritual Man, the second Adam, set up almost two millenniums ago; and then put down and abolished the worship at the mountain, and the worship at Jerusalem, when He set up this worship in spirit and in truth. And this spirit and truth must every man and woman know within themselves, by which they may know the God of truth, who is a spirit, within their spirit. The Jew inward worships in temple, his body being the

temple of the Holy Ghost. And the Jew outward, in the Old Covenant and Testament; they sing and pray and preach in their temple, an outward temple made with hands. But the Jew inward, in the spirit, in the New Covenant and Testament, the new and living way, sings and rejoices and ministers and prays in the Holy Ghost, their bodies being temples of the Holy Ghost. And not yet the outward body of flesh, but the body of the inward man, the house from heaven, the spiritual body, the body of the Christ which every man who is putting on Christ is building within his own reality of Christ within. The type has passed, and we know that the temple built with hands is no more. But what do we see! Men are trying to reproduce it or to invent a substitute for it, thus perpetuating the Old Covenant, to walk as outward Jews. Church buildings, cathedrals and temples are pawned as the meeting place with God! Call these "churches" if you will. THEY ARE NOT CHURCHES. The very name is a blasphemy. They are mere buildings; and there is nothing sacred or holy about them. They are not the "house of God" as the ignorant love to call them. We praise God for the privilege of gathering together with those of "like precious faith," and rejoice in any assembling of saints that is truly unto Him: but in point of fact it is not in any building made with hands that the Father is worshipped. Ah, how greatly we misconceive our true position! We certainly need not the Tabernacle of Moses, the Temple of Solomon, nor any cathedral or so-called church building to worship the Father or to minister as the Lord's anointed; because we are constituted priests of the HEAVENLY TABERNACLE, which no human hand ever reared, and which is the true meeting-place between God and His spiritual priesthood, yea, of all who come to God.

It is an indisputable fact that in all of the recorded history of the human race men have been prone to associate their worship of God with places and things, and to attach some special sacredness or power to that place of thing, until the places and things become more important than God Himself. Many precious folk imagine that because they met God in some glorious experience in such and such a building, room, or seat, they will find Him there again. I remember seeing people during the great healing campaigns of the late 1940's and early 1950's, long after the tent was folded, the lights out and the trucks departed, returning to stand in the saw dust at the exact spot where the glory of God had been seen, expecting to meet God in just the same way again. Jesus said: God is not a place, a building or a mountain; God is SPIRIT. You cannot confine God to a temple or a time. God does not move exclusively on Sunday morning at twenty minutes past eleven, following three choruses and two minutes of singing in the Spirit. His Spirit is everywhere, all the time. Whatever your expression or ministry is it should be able to function at any time and in any place, just as well as it does at "church. That is how Jesus ministered. He ministered in the fields, in the mountain, in the streets, in the homes, on the lake, and in the temple. His meetings never started at ten and ended at twelve. He was the temple of God at all times and in every place. And God manifested in His temple at all times and in every place. This will be the mark of the manifested sons of God. Their ministry will not be in church buildings nor in auditoriums. Their meetings will not be scheduled for certain hours on Sunday and Wednesday. There will be no newspaper or television advertising. There will be no campaign manager, music director, or prescribed order. They will appear and show forth the glory of the Father in the restaurants, in the homes, in the fields, in church buildings, on ships at sea, in airplanes streaking through the skies and trains racing through the night. It will be the sovereign, spontaneous, continuous, unrestrained, unplanned, unrehearsed, omnipotent outflow of Life, Light and Love. It will change lives, transform churches, revolutionize cities, conquer nations. It will redeem society and sweep the nations and all things into the Kingdom of God. IT IS THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT. Even now we must learn to live and walk in the Spirit if we treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God. They that worship God must do so in a state of being: in spirit and in truth.

I was greatly blessed many years ago by the following words written by George Hawtin: "There is a place in God where saints may dwell ten thousand times more real than any natural realm. There is a true temple, NOT MADE WITH HANDS, eternal in the heavens. It is the mystical temple, which is HIS BODY. There is a church which is THE TRUE CHURCH. Its happy saints dwell in the realm of the Spirit, and, because they do, they continually worship God in spirit and in truth. I anticipate that many will ask, 'How do we worship God in Spirit?' But this you will not discover until the hour comes when you learn that neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, nor in the church system, nor in the denomination, nor in the mass, nor in the ordinances, nor in any such thing do men worship the Father. When you have departed from all these things and broken these idols from off your neck and cast their image from before you, then you will see no man but Jesus only, and then only will you understand what it means to worship in spirit and in truth. When this wisdom is sweet to your soul, then like the woman of Samaria you will drop that jug with which you for so long a time drew natural water from a natural well, and you will run off as she to unashamedly declare, 'Is not this the Christ?' -- end quote.

May God help all who have received the call to sonship to realize that we do not have to go to Jerusalem or to a mountain, or be at a special time or place to worship the Father, or use special words or a certain form, or go through the religious exercises the whole church world goes through every Sunday, but that we worship the Father at all times and in all places because our whole life IS WORSHIP. The great apostle Paul declared, "I am poured out like an oblation." Like incense, his whole life was an offering to God. May God almighty do a work in us and cause us to be true worshippers, that whether we are in the desert, or in the mountain, or in Jerusalem, or at home, or in a gathering of the saints, whether by voice, or by offering up, or whatever we are doing, reality be in us, so that whatever we do, we are doing it out of that reality. Strange, isn't it, that most "gifts of the Spirit" only work after three choruses or at the close of the sermon! Let us ask God to help us not to be PROFESSIONAL WORSHIPPERS, but to be TRUE WORSHIPPERS of the Father.

There is a wonderful scripture passage which is troubling to many wherein the inspired writer admonishes, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). Be not alarmed or distressed because of those who would use the letter of this word as a hammer to bring condemnation to one who does not attend their weekly or daily set times of assembly! Nor, on the other hand, should you use your "liberty" as an excuse to "do your own thing," becoming self-righteous in your "freedom," independent and exalted in your own "spirituality," cutting yourself off from the body of Christ! Both extremes are unbalanced. On the one hand, there is the person who is in bondage to a group or leader or religious system, being careful to observe the letter of the law, attending every time the group assembles, regardless of the spiritual quality of the meeting. The other extreme is the one who is so independent and self-sufficient that he holds nothing but contempt for any gathering, regardless of the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit. In seeking to be free, he has come into bondage to lawlessness and rebellion. He is going his own self-righteous, puffed-up way, not being led by the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, the righteous Judge, bring us into balance, that we may truly be free in our spirits from man's religious requirements and bondages, yet humble before the Lord and before our brothers and sisters in Christ, ready to serve one another, and ready to receive from each other, as He leads, and gathering together as He directs, with meek and receptive hearts.

But there is a truth in this passage beyond all this. The Greek word for "assembling" is EPISUNAGOGE. It is a compound of the Greek prefix EPI with the word SUNAGOGE from which we get our transliterated English word Synagogue. EPI means super-imposition -- that which is above, higher than, highest, upon. SUNAGOGE means a meeting, assembly, of gathering. Putting these two together, EPI-SUNAGOGE means THE ABOVE SYNAGOGUE, THE HIGHER MEETING, THE HIGHEST ASSEMBLY, THE HIGHER-THAN-ALL-GATHERINGS! It bespeaks of something greater far than merely collecting so many breathing bodies together in one place. It is a meeting in a higher realm, on a higher plane, in the high places of the Spirit, and in the heights of Truth. It is a gathering together in a dimension above. It indicates an assembling IN THE SPIRIT, as Paul also testified, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). Tens of thousands, yea, tens of millions of believers gather together in "church buildings" every Sunday morning, and because they make the effort to get out of bed, get the family ready, and drive off to warm a pew, they are convinced that they have met the requirements of the divine fiat: "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. My beloved, they have not even touched the hem of the garment of this truth! We are not to forsake or neglect that wonderful seating we have together WITH CHRIST IN THE HEAVENLIES! That is precisely what the passage is saying. Hebrews 10:25 is nothing but lifeless words, until one sits in the presence of the Father, joined in worship with kindred spirits, and partakes of that holy communion within the veil! It is only as spirit calls to spirit that the depths of eternal truth are opened. And multitudes who meet together every week for singing, teaching, etc., have never discovered the glorious and eternal reality of that ABOVE SYNAGOGUE. They do not meet or minister or live from that higher-than-all-heavens realm of HIS LIFE.

When we meet with a company of the elect, we are not to think of them as the whole of those with whom we worship and minister. The true priest is one of a great festal throng, which is comprising the spiritual temple built of the living stones of redeemed and transformed men and women. As priests in the HEAVENLY SANCTUARY, the TRUE TABERNACLE which is above, we are but part of a great and universal congregation consisting of all the elect saints who have gone before, and those now living, gathered out of all ages, and throughout the vast universe of God. The preacher, the prisoner, the traveler, the mother, the king -- all meet

there IN THE SPIRIT REALM, and worship and minister from thence. All are priests, and yonder is the great High Priest of our profession, who has pressed through the heavens and ever lives as the Minister of the heavenly sanctuary. He is "a minister of the true tabernacle." And such are we! He has raised us up and made us sit together with Him in these heavenly places, and He has made us to be a kingdom of priests. It is not "in church" on Sunday morning that we know the power of this priesthood; it is IN THE SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH, it is ASSEMBLED TOGETHER IN THE ABOVE SYNAGOGUE, in reality wrought within, every moment and everywhere and in every situation and circumstance as we live and walk and move in HIS REALM.

The regenerated spirit becomes a component factor in the sweet harmony of God's spiritual Kingdom. And what a Kingdom! And what a harmony! In duration it is from everlasting to everlasting. The granite hills shall melt away; the earth shall leave its orbit and fall into the chaos of crashing worlds; Orion, Arcturus, and Pleiades shall cease to travel the holy aisles of heaven; the sun shall be turned into darkness; the heavens shall be rolled back as a scroll, and as a vesture shall they be folded up; but beneath the scepter of the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Father, the Kingdom of Heaven shall still remain and move on in sweetest harmony with His holy will. For in this high and holy Kingdom no forces ever dash, no laws ever fail, no truth ever goes astray, no beauty ever fades, no light ever loses its luster, no good ever grows less, no life ever gets old, no love ever becomes cold, no joy ever ceases, no harmony ever has a discord. From the time when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God first shouted for joy, rhythm and rapture have rolled upward and onward through all the boundless and eternal spiritual universe as the sweet expression of the mind and will of almighty God. This universe, this higher-than-the-heavens universe, this Kingdom of Heaven, is the home and heritage of every son of God. He belongs to it, and it belongs to him. He is in it, and it is in him. He holds himself in harmony with it, and it fills his soul with its songs. He apprehends its truth, enjoys its beauties, and partakes of its holiness. There is no place in it where he may not feel at home -- no place where he has not a right to be; for it has been the Father's good pleasure to give him the Kingdom. His life is not measured by years, but by its possibilities and expansiveness. He has already been translated into this Heavenly Kingdom (Col. 1:13)! And the inner man which is renewed day by day, the heavenly man born from above by the incorruptible seed of the word of God, the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness cannot, by the very nature of his being, ever be separated from the consciousness and reality of this heavenly existence, contrary to the contentions of those who teach that departed saints are dead like dogs, without consciousness or being, until the day of resurrection. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). Divinity and eternity are born within the man who is born of the Spirit. Now he is a child of God, but it doth not yet appear what he shall be. We are not to forsake this UPPER-SYNAGOGUING of ourselves together -- the communion and fellowship and expression together in this highest of all realms -- THE SPIRIT! Though we should meet and sing a thousand songs of praise and preach a thousand sermons out of the Good Book -- if we fail to touch that high realm of life and reality in the spirit we have not "upper-synagoued" at all -- having merely assembled and done some religious things on the low plane of soulish activity.

THE CELESTIAL SONG OF CREATION

More than a hundred years ago a preacher by the name of George T. Lemmon penned the following report: "At the last session of Parliament Tomlinson brought his wonderful Apollo Chorus of four hundred and fifty voices. The members of this Chorus were his own choice from the twelve thousand members of his four great classes of the three preceding years. Every member of the Chorus was a soloist of skill and power, yet all were here massed as the keys of a splendid human instrument of harmony. For the closing session of this remarkable assembly they were to sing the "Hallelujah Chorus." Dr. Barrows had pledged the Parliament that they would hear such music as had never charmed their ears before, and the music that thrilled six thousand souls that night more than fulfilled the pledge. The Chorus rises. The gallery has been given over to their use. Here at the right rise one hundred basses. Next to them stand eighty tenors. Across on the left are one hundred and twenty altos, and stretching in a double row from end to end of the rear gallery are one hundred and fifty sopranos. No orchestra is to share tonight with the full, rich melody and uplifting power of the human voice. The piano gives the chord, and then the only instrument that aids the choral host is the tiny baron in their leader's hand. The moment has come in the movement of the oratorio for the songs of men to lift their ascription of praise and honor to the Christ of God. First bursts forth the deep tones, repeated over and over again, of the rolling, stirring bass: 'He shall be King of kings. He shall be King of kings.' Then the altos lift the

same great title on the pinions of their melodious tones: 'He shall be King of kings. He shall be King of kings.' The tenors are now inspired, and still higher they raise the glorious strain: 'He shall be king of kings. He shall be King of kings.' Now with full voice the one hundred and fifty sopranos ring out high over all 'And Lord of lords. And Lord of lords.' And then the four hundred and fifty joining, voice to voice, swell the exultant unison: 'He shall be King of kings, and Lord of lords. He shall be King of kings, and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

"Then, as if from out of the eternal splendors, a voice that would sound the hearts of men put the query: 'How long will your hallelujahs ring! How long shall Christ be King of kings, and Lord of lords?' The Chorus gives reply. Deep as from hearts long schooled in sorrow, but now alive with joy, rolling out the profound utterance of the bass 'He shall be King of kings, and Lord of lords, forever and forever and ever and ever and ever.' Then the altos lift the confident acclamation, as from hearts in which the Christ was newly born 'Forever and forever and ever and ever and ever.' Higher still the tenors steadily raise the resounding note of faith, as though they would conquer the world with song: 'Forever and forever and ever and ever and ever.' Then, like a prophecy of the music that carols from the spirits of the ten thousand times ten thousand burst out the sopranos with the same unending song. Once again the full Chorus unite their soul-revealing voices, and on and on and on as though time were already dead, they repeat the stirring truth. This time not four hundred and fifty merely, but thousands added unto them, are singing the spirit-inspired chorus. For once at least God heard from hearts His Spirit taught that matchless chorus sung, and as I joined my voice to that heavenly throng moved by the anointing of worship there flashed upon my mind a vision of the day that is to be, when from out of the everlasting city the Son of God shall come enthroned in glory and the gathered host bend adoring hearts to the Lamb who for them was slain. Then, as about that great throne there gathered the people from the ends of the earth, and the kings of all nations laid down the scepters of their power, I heard the thunderous bass of Africa's ransomed millions roll out the adoration of their hearts to Him who broke the shackles of their darkness. Europe, her millions upon millions singing with all the gladness of victorious faith, lifted voice to swell far and wide her melodious alto. From the vigorous host that come from the two Americas there rings out such a triumphant tenor that a smile answers them on the face of Christ. And then Asia, old Asia, the mother of all religions, bows at the feet of Him who brought the true, and from her reverent host that outnumbers all the rest, the glorious climax rises, 'He shall be King of kings, and Lord of lords, forever and forever and ever and ever.' Onward, ever onward rolls the glorious song, and as in my ears that choir keeps singing ever louder and more glad my soul beats high with exultation as I pledge it a part in that world-ending, heaven-enlarging chorus; ever rolling onward until every created thing, every living, pulsating, vibrating spirit in the vastnesses of infinity shall be as harps in tune, which, with individual variations, and yet in perfect symphony, will make universal melody unto Him. And to the sons of God who pray with me that that day may quickly come I would repeat over and over the message that commands my soul: The world, and the whole of it, for God and His sons. No less will satisfy the Father. No less will satisfy His sons" -- end quote.

**I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
When, at His bidding, every storm is stilled,
Or who can say how great the jubilation
When all the hearts of men with love are filled.**

**But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,
And myriad, myriad human voices sing.
And earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will answer,
At last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!**

Thirty centuries ago the Psalmist cried out in spirit, "Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being" (Ps. 146:1; 104:33). All the way through the book of Psalms, even in its most sorrow-laden passages, you feel that you are walking in a smoldering volcano of praise, liable to burst out at any moment into a great flame of thanksgiving to God. And as the book draws to its close, the flame leaps high from the crater: here you have praise and nothing but praise. You have perhaps watched a great conductor bringing every member of his orchestra into action towards the close of some majestic symphony, have seen him, as the music climbed higher and higher, signaling to one player after another, and always at the signal another instrument responding to the summons

and adding its voice to the music, until at the last crashing chords not one was left dumb, but all were uniting in a thrilling and triumphant climax. So these final Psalms summon everything in creation to swell the glorious unison of God's praise. They signal symbolically to the sun riding in the heavens, "You come in now, and praise Him!" Then to the myriad stars of night, "You now, praise Him!" Then to the mountains, piercing the clouds with their summits, "Praise Him!" Then to the kings and judges of the earth, "Praise Him!" Then to manhood in its strength and maidenhood in its grace and beauty, "Praise Him!" Then to the multitude of the redeemed in earth and heaven, "Praise Him!" The crescendo continues until the wide universe is shouting with every voice the praise of God alone. The Psalms in their sequence show forth the redemptive progression that can only end when every heart beats in unison with the heart of God; when every mind shall harmonize with divine wisdom and purpose; when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

Herein is fulfilled the Oracle of Lyra in the heavens, the prophecy of the Harp written eternally in the shimmering night skies above! The loving, praising, worshipping attitude of the whole universe is to be complete and perfect. Thus all the ends of the earth shall offer up their praise and thanksgiving to Him for His great love and salvation and inflow of life. What a THANKSGIVING DAY that will be! Every knee on this globe, and in the heavens above, and in the underworld shall confess the Lordship of God and His sons. What a TESTIMONY MEETING! There has never been one like it. The summing up of the universe is the revelation of harmony. It is not that the harmony comes at the end, but that the harmony is revealed at the end. The universe is all music, but it is not all music to our ear. We only hear a few chords, and they are minor chords. The minor chords seem discords when we hear them in their fragmented position; they lack the full symphony to bring out their symmetry. Often our hearts cry out that we are living in a world filled with discords. The Father must teach us that we are living in a world of perfect music, but we only hear a small portion of the music. Sorrow, pain, disappointment, heartaches, frustration, and travail, not to mention sin and death, seem to our ear sad and discordant notes. Often we feel that the coming melody shall atone for the grating chords. Nay, my brother, my sister; say rather that the grating chords themselves shall be revealed as parts of the completed harmony. Then shall we fathom the depths of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, then shall we understand His ways that are past finding out, then shall we see just how it is that all things work together for good. The melody is not to come, it has come already; it has only to be completed to be revealed, and then the harpers shall stand upon the glassy sea.

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 28 CAPRICORNUS-THE GOAT [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TWENTY-EIGHT

CAPRICORNUS-THE GOAT LIFE OUT OF DEATH

In our study of the "Real Meaning of the Zodiac" it has been amazing to many to see that all the major themes of scripture concerning God's great plan of creation and redemption are clearly figured in the Signs of the heavens. Truly God has written the gospel in the stars! Many of the Lord's people have shied away from any teaching concerning the Zodiac out of fear of venturing into the swamplands of astrology -- a valid concern. But we must not be prevented from treading the courts of God's glorious revelation simply because it has been perverted and counterfeited by the carnal mind. In **Job 38:31-32** we read, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" Mazzaroth is a Hebrew word which means "the constellations of the Zodiac." And then, hidden in plain sight in Job chapters 38 and 39, are given the twelve Signs: Battles of heaven -- Job 38:37; Lions -- Job 38:39; Ravens -- Job 39:41; Wild goats -- Job 39:1; Hinds -- Job 39:1; Wild ass -- Job 39:5; Unicorn 39:9; Peacocks -- Job 39:13; Ostrich -- Job 39:13; Horse -- Job 39:19; Hawk -- Job 39:26; Eagle -- Job 39:27. An accident? Hardly! But what is the purpose of all this! Does it merely concern some mysterious physical influences of the sun, moon and stars over the earth and men's lives -- or is it something far grander and greater?

In the book of Revelation the Holy Spirit gives us the symbols of the lion, the calf, the man, and the eagle and also of the twelve tribes in the heavens. Are these not the true powers in the heavens that project their dominion upon the earth! Are these not the very ensigns and standards which the enemy fears because he knows that the heavens do rule! These are powerful concepts. The grand truth of it is portrayed for us in Moses' and Aaron's mighty acts before Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. Did not Moses and Aaron and the magicians of Egypt employ the very same signs and perform the same feats? Aaron threw down his rod and it was turned into a serpent. But then the magicians of Egypt were called in and they all threw down their rods, and their rods became serpents also. But Aaron's rod, in the form of a serpent, ran after them and swallowed them all; and then it became a rod again in Aaron's hand. So -- how do we overcome the serpent-enemy! Did not the Lord Jesus say, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw ALL MEN UNTO ME" (**Jn 3:14; 12:32**). Can we not see by this that satan is a serpent and the Christ became a serpent. But, praise God! Christ swallows up all the serpents of the adversary! How do we overcome the devil who goes forth as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour? We send forth the Lord's powerful lion of the tribe of Judah to destroy it! How do we overcome the bellowing bulls of Bashan? We send the Lord's wild ox (unicorn) against them! How do we overcome the weakness of Adam's flesh in us? Is it not by the very indwelling power of Him who God sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, who overcame sin in the flesh, and sent the spirit of His victory into us that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. It was by flesh that flesh was conquered! The flesh of Jesus proved greater and more powerful and of more value than Adam's flesh, so much so that Jesus could say, "Except ye eat My flesh and drink my blood, ye have no life in you!" We must ever keep in mind, my beloved, that whatever the enemy has perverted or counterfeited, the Lord has something greater and more powerful that we may dispatch to swallow it up. Little wonder, then that the adversary tries to frighten the Lord's people away from the sacred secrets of the Mazzaroth by setting up the "boogey-man" of astrology! Thus, it becomes obvious that the enemy uses fear to keep saints from discovering that within the Signs of the Zodiac lay the mysteries, the sacred knowledge, understanding, victory, immortality and eternal life! The Signs of the Zodiac in their original purity are a glorious presentation of the wonderful plan of God in creation and redemption, incorporating all the inter-play between good and evil, with the ultimate triumph of truth over error, of light over darkness, of life over death. These marvelous Signs, at the time of the Tower of Babel, were corrupted into a carnal, fleshly system of pagan religion, or mythology, which

is seen today in horoscopes and other forms of astrology. But we are looking beyond that smokescreen at the original revelation God wrote in the sky and which has truly gone out into all the earth. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Truly we see in these twelve Signs of the Zodiac the way or path to full salvation, triumph and the glory of God.

CAPRICORNUS -THE GOAT

In our study, we now come to Capricornus -- the name is Latin for goat. The Hebrew names associated with the Sign are GEDI and SAIR. Both terms are used in the Old Testament for kids of the goats of sacrifice. There is no prototype of this strange creature, the front half of which is pictured on the old star charts as a goat and the rear half as a fish! But that is precisely what Capricornus is! It is a goat with a fishes' tail; it is half-goat and half-fish. What does it mean? This Sign has a very strange appearance on the old star charts because it shows a wounded goat, with its head bowed and its knee bent under, fallen down in the posture of dying. On the other hand, the tail of the fish is wiggling, vigorous and living! Unless there is some significance to this strange combination, we might imagine that its inventor was having an hallucination. But when the true meaning is understood we can see the wisdom of God in the prophetic revelation portrayed by this wonderful Sign in God's Bible in the Sky.

First of all, we have the figure of a goat. This is a sacrificial animal. The picture and the meaning become even more clear as we consider some of the stars in this constellation. Some of the brightest stars are AL GEDI, which means "the Kid"; DENEAL GEDI meaning "the Sacrifice cometh"; and MA'ASAD, "the Slaying." God commanded the children of Israel, saying, "Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin-offering" (Lev. 9:31). So Aaron "took the goat, which was the sin-offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin" (Lev. 9:15). And of the goat of the sin-offering Moses said, "It is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord" (Lev. 10:16-17). We see here a picture of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, for truly He became our sin-offering, being "wounded for our transgressions," and "bruised for our iniquities." He was "cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was He stricken."

LIFE OUT OF DEATH

Note that from the dying goat comes a living fish -- the living fish thus takes its being out of the dying goat and derives all its life and vigor from thence. The living fish emerging from the dying goat therefore has an important meaning. In addition to the falling and dying of the goat, Capricornus is the Sign of a mystical procreation and bringing forth. It speaks of life that springs forth from the death of the sacrifice. That which is brought forth is a fish, the familiar and well understood symbol of the spiritual body brought out of the dying of the Lord Jesus. When Jesus called and appointed His first apostles, He said, "I will make you fishers of men" (Mat. 4:19). When God promised that He would bring again the children of Israel into their own land, His word was, "I will send for many fishers, and they shall fish them" (Jer. 16:15-16). So in Ezekiel's vision of the living waters the word was, "And there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither" (Eze. 47:1-9). Christ speaks of the members of His body as "born of water" (Jn. 3:5). In the Kingdom parable of the drag-net and in the miraculous draughts of fishes God's people are symbolized as fishes. Fish thus denote the men who are brought to life out of the dying of the Lord Jesus. The early Christians were accustomed to call believers ECHTHUES and PISCES — that is, fishes. Very early in the history of the Church both the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and the great truths of the Kingdom of God were set forth by means of pictures and symbols. Jesus used this method in all His teaching parables of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Revelation given to the Churches by the apostle John was also communicated by means of signs and symbols. Divine truth is more than just an understanding of the plain statements of the Bible. In fact, though some will be offended when they read it, a literal translation of the Bible is virtually worthless. The truth of the matter is that every word of scripture contains a sublime coded mystery which when deciphered by the spirit of revelation, reveals a wealth of spiritual meaning. The narratives and histories and teachings of the Bible are but outer garments in which the real meaning or life is clothed. And woe unto the man who mistakes the outer garment of the scripture for the truth and reality of God! This was precisely the idea to which the sweet singer of Israel addressed himself when he cried out, Open Thou mine eyes, that I might behold wondrous things out

of Thy law!" (Ps. 119:18). Concealed within the statements, stories, laws and events of the Bible are the higher spiritual realities of the Kingdom of God, the very essence of the Living Word.

Do my readers know what an acrostic is? It is a poem, of which, if the first letter of each line be taken in order, these, when put together, will spell a word or a sentence. Now the Greek word for fish is _____; and this in its five letters, acrostically represents the five Greek words which mean in English, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour." The Greek words themselves are: _____ . The early Christians chose '_____', that is "The Fish," as a convenient secret sign of the truth about Jesus which they believed. The "Sign of the Fish" is found on the walls of the Roman Catacombs, those underground galleries and halls in which the ancient Church of Rome often hid and congregated. Fishes made of bronze, and others made of glass, have also been found in the catacombs. The heathen Romans who persecuted the believers did not understand what the emblem meant; but to the members of the Church at Rome the Fish represented Christ the son of God as Saviour; by extension it meant the members of His body; also, as many kinds of fish are for eating, the symbol came to carry with it the thought of the Lord's people feeding upon Christ, the heavenly, spiritual food. It is very important that we see the great truth of the life that comes out of death. As J. A. Seiss wrote, "As men naturally are but reproductions and perpetuations of Adam, and live his life, so Christ's people are the reproduction and perpetuation of Christ, living His life. They are in Him as the branch is in the vine. They are repeatedly called His body, one with Him, 'members of His body and of His flesh and of His bones.' And so close and real is their life-connection and incorporation with Him that they are called 'Christ.' What then could better symbolize this than the Sign before us? The goat and fish are one -- one being, the life of the dying reproduced and continued in a spiritual product which is part of one and the same body. The goat of sacrifice is projected into a new creation, which is yet an organic part of itself."

This principle of life out of death is one of the most powerful laws of the Kingdom of God. It is the very law of creation and redemption. It is my earnest prayer that the Spirit of God will give each one who reads these lines the spirit of revelation and understanding. If your spirit is able to grasp the truth I now purpose to set forth in the following pages many dark spots will be removed from your spiritual vision and you will see great truths in a light which has been hidden from you hitherto. We must ever keep in mind that light dispels darkness and brings into clear perspective all things that were hidden in the gloomy mists of night. Light is understanding, whereas darkness is error and ignorance. Therefore, when the light shines we see all things as they are and not as they have always seemed, or as we were told they were, or as we imagined. Light shining on any portion of truth quickly dispels the darkness that long hung over that truth making things that seemed confusing or beyond explanation to become simple, reasonable, and easily understandable.

Life out of death is the same as light out of darkness, for in the world of spiritual realities light and life are synonyms and darkness and death are likewise synonyms. **"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1:4)**. Life and light and darkness and death are first set forth in the opening scenes of the book of Genesis, the book of Beginnings. The life and light are associated with God, whereas darkness and death are associated with creation. Let me point out the significant fact that darkness was the first recorded condition or state of creation, and all that was light and life and beauty and glory came into that darkness, or was spoken into existence out of the darkness. **"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. God said, Let there be light; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good.. ."** **(Gen. 1:1-4)**. Here you will notice that in relation to the creation DARKNESS PRECEDED LIGHT. The spiritual application of this principle is given by the apostle John, **"In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shines on in the darkness, for the darkness has never overpowered it or put it out" (Jn. 1:4-5)**. And again, **"For God, who COMMANDED THE LIGHT TO SHINE OUT OF DARKNESS, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6)**.

There is a great and wondrous reason why the darkness precedes the light in the divine order of creation. Let us begin with God. It has pleased the Lord to leave great truths obscure and well hidden from the prying eyes of the curious and the unbelieving. He shrouds His precious truths in mystery so that none but the earnest seekers who partake of the spirit of revelation are ever permitted to see beyond the outer shell of the letter, and behold the unfolding glories which lie concealed within the inner kernel. Perhaps the simplest yet most profound statement about the nature of God is found in the beautiful writings of the beloved apostle John. He

says, "He that loveth not knoweth not God for God is love. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (I Jn. 4:8,16). Would that my tongue were eloquent enough to explain it, or that my mind were great enough to comprehend it. But neither is sufficient. When we speak of God's attributes we may say that God is a spirit — infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. This is a very beautiful definition; but it largely defines only God's attributes, whereas the text, "God is love," tells us WHAT HE HIMSELF IS. This text reveals His nature, His state of being. For instance, in speaking of justice, we know that God has justice as one of His attributes, but He is not justice; God IS love. This fact gives us a revelation of GOD'S VERY NATURE. Our poor, lisping, faltering tongues cannot proclaim the gospel as we would like; but we have God's Word that is true for the present time and for all the times of all the ages. God IS LOVE! IS — unchangeably! IS — eternally! God is love in heaven, in earth, in hell! IS — everywhere! And the great practical consequence is for you and me to respond to that God and to that love, to become filled with that love, one with that love, the embodiment and manifestation of that love to all men in all realms. The best and most wonderful word in the universe is Love. For God is Love. And the best and most wonderful word in the inner chamber of our heart must be — Love. For the God who meets us there is Love. What is Love? THE DEEP DESIRE TO GIVE ITSELF FOR THEE BELOVED. Love finds its joy in imparting all that it has, and all that it is, to make the loved one happy and fulfilled. And the heavenly Father, who offers to meet us in the inner chamber — let there be no doubt about this in our minds — has no other object than to flood our hearts with His love.

Love has been described as AN ETERNAL WILL TO ALL GOODNESS. This is THE ONE ETERNAL, IMMUTABLE GOD that, from eternity to eternity, changeth not, that can be neither more nor less, but an ETERNAL WILL TO ALL GOODNESS that is in Himself and come from Him, so that as certainly as He is Creator, so certainly is He the blessing of every created thing, and can give nothing but blessings, goodness, fulfillment, and holiness from Himself, because He has in Himself nothing else to give. The judgments of God can never be rightly understood apart from His nature of love. If God's judgments spring not from His love then they come not from God at all, for He IS LOVE. He possesses the attributes of both justice and wrath -- but He IS LOVE! What ought this to teach us about His judgments! The pen of inspiration wrote, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth . . . for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12:5-10). God doesn't go around purposelessly punishing or vindictively torturing any of His creatures. But He does go about precise paths of bringing forth correction UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS, as the prophet says, "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Isa. 26:9).

The words of the following poem strike poignantly at the deep meaning and sublime purpose of God in creation and redemption.

**Why did God make the universe, the earth and the sky above?
Scripture gives the answer when it says that "God is love.
Before God made the universe He worked a master plan,
He knew how everything would end before it all began.**

**He made mankind so He could have an object of His love,
But, man was blind and did not see -- it came from above.
So God created evil as He had created night,
So man could see the good in Him -- in darkness we see light.**

**He made the "blackboard" very black, with evil, sin, and woe.
He made an adversary to be His cunning foe.
He made the earth to be a "stage" to show the hosts above,
By all of our experiences, His wisdom and His love.**

**He locks up all in stubbornness to make His mercy clear;
Lets satan lure all men away, so He can draw all near.**

He gives His only firstborn Son to die and save us all;
Yet each in his own class we read; we're blind until our call.

You ask me why God made the earth, the glittering stars above!
The scriptures give the answer when they say that GOD IS LOVE!

— Author Unknown

It is very important that we grasp the deep message in the words of this inspired poem, because, once we understand it, we comprehend as never before the eternal mystery of creation and redemption. It will be a wonderful day for you, dear one, when first your soul becomes enthralled with the revelation that God, before ever the world began or ever the ages were formed, looked forth from His temple of wisdom and omnipotence to chart with resolute care the course and purpose of every age. Your heart will throb as you read the opening proclamation of scripture, "In the beginning — GOD!" In the beginning of what? Not in the beginning of God, certainly, but in the beginning of His creation of all things, in the beginning of time as we know it, in the beginning of the orderly procession of the divinely destined ages. In the beginning stands God, omnipotent and omniscient, creating, sustaining and guiding all things and all people and all the ages of time according to the purpose of His own will. No purpose ordained by God from the beginning can possibly go astray or be hindered by the efforts of devil or man. Oh, for the hour when all creation will grasp the beautiful message, "From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends!" (Rom. 11:36).

If God be the Creator of ALL THINGS, then it must of necessity follow that GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL THINGS. We read the passage quoted above from the Emphatic Diaglott, "because out of Him, and through Him, and for Him are ALL THINGS, to Him be the glory for the ages, Amen. All things are out of God, all things are through Him, all things are for Him, and all things are unto Him, ending in Him. The clearest possible rendering is given by Goodspeed, "For from Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends! Glory to Him forever! Amen." The Bible opens with the simplest and yet most profound statement ever recorded by human hand. "In the beginning -- GOD" The sweet singer of Israel declared of Him, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, THOU ART GOD" (Ps. 90:2). Our God was the great active force, the cause of all that began to happen "in the beginning." How awesome the thought that there was a "time" when there was nothing — absolutely nothing — but God! There was no blue-green orb called earth, no silver-shimmering moon, no diamond-studded heaven of stars and planets, no angels, no devils, no man — nothing but GOD HIMSELF. There were not even the 100 elements out of which everything in the universe is constructed — there was only God. Paul caught something of the sublimity of this eternal and Self-existent One and wrote, "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17).

Let me emphasize this wonderful and important truth: "He is before all things." This can mean nothing else but that God is not one of the "things." He is BEFORE all things. He is before A-L-L THINGS! And just as majestic is the truth that "by Him ALL THINGS CONSIST." Now let us soar down through the corridors of time to the consummation of all things. "For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL" (I Cor. 15:25-28). GOD ALL IN ALL — this will be the grand conclusion of the whole vast universe and of Christ's redemption. There will come a day — the glory is such we can form no conception of it, the mystery is so deep we cannot realize it — when the Son shall deliver up the Kingdom that God gave Him in His rulership over ALL THINGS — that God may be all-in- all. ALL IN ALL — such is the grand goal of our God! But I must point out that before that long-ago beginning God was NOT all-in-all. He was simply A-L-L. There was nothing else. No "thing" beside Him. There was not even space— for God was ALL. Oh, the mystery of it! This raises an interesting and important question. If God was "before all things," then OUT OF WHAT did He CREATE all things! If there was only God, and absolutely no thing other than God who was all, what kind of material did God have at His disposal from which to construct the all things? If you were standing completely alone, with nothing outside your own being existent, what material would be available for making something other than yourself? The answer is, of course,

NOTHING! YOU WOULD HAVE TO MAKE THE "THINGS" OUT OF YOURSELF! And friend, this is precisely what God did. Now we can understand the full import of those words inspired by the blessed Spirit of Truth through the apostle Paul: "Because BY HIM were the all things created. ..and Himself is before all, and the all things I-N H-I-M HAVE CONSISTED" (Col. 1:16-17).

Now let us return to the nature of this God who was ALL. We must clearly see that God is all-inclusive, and that He lacks nothing whatsoever. And God is love -- all goodness. Having said that God is complete and therefore good, we can now go on to describe the attribute through which we are aware of His existence — His desire to share. This is the consequence, the effect of His goodness. Some have said, and I have said it too, that God created man because He was alone and yearned for fellowship — for creatures of like kind with which He could commune. But this falls short of the absolute nature of God which is the nature of love. Love does not give because of the desire to receive; rather, love gives purely out of the desire to bless. The desire for fellowship is the desire to receive — not give! Now God possesses that attribute also, as we shall presently see, but God is first of all love -- the pure and unmixed desire to impart. Here we have the first principle of creation — God's infinite desire to impart led to the creation of a vessel to receive His blessings. The creation of this vessel (the cosmos) was the beginning and the end of creation. He therefore created the universe with all the hosts thereof, and this world with its inhabitants. Thus the Creator could now bestow upon the creation His infinite love and inexhaustible abundance. God is the Lover, creation the beloved! "For God so loved the world . . . "

We have shown that the Creator's nature is sharing or imparting; however, there can be no sharing unless there is some agent that can receive. So God's infinite desire to impart implies a desire to fulfill every possible dimension and quality of desires to receive. Can we not see by this that God's infinite desire to give demands AN AGENT WITH THE DESIRE TO RECEIVE! The very nature of God requires CREATION! To impart or share with others, on any level, can only be considered noble or kind when the recipient desires and enjoys that which is offered to him. When the recipient rejects the gift yet the donor continues to insist on its acceptance and finally forces him to accept, one can hardly consider this an act of giving — much less of love. All who read these lines know by experience that the mere mechanical act of giving is, in itself, unsatisfactory and unfulfilling. We do not give advice to the mountains, nor do we offer money to animals. Clearly there must be a desire to receive on the part of the recipient, a knowledge of what the gift entails and signifies, before we can say we are truly giving. It follows that God could never give anything to anyone without an active desire to receive on their part. So the first step in creation was to bring forth the manifestation of the DESIRE TO RECEIVE! This desire is inherent in creation, although some are so blinded by sin and benumbed by death that they seek for the answer to their craving in all the wrong places, even rebelling against the glorious Giver. But God has a plan for all these, to bring them to repentance (a change of mind and desire), so that they can desire properly and discover the true source of life and blessing. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE." (II Pet. 3:9).

Armed with the knowledge that there was only God — and no "thing" apart from Him, God was ALL — it readily follows that because of His nature to give God must create an instrument with both the capacity and desire to receive. The only way to accomplish this was for God to withdraw Himself, to remove Himself, that there would be a place or condition where HE WAS NOT. God is light, the scripture declares, and in Him there is no darkness at all. Therefore, let it be clearly known that darkness is nought but the ABSENCE OF GOD! "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (Gen. 1:2). You will understand a great mystery when you see how it is that the creation was brought forth in the domain of darkness, the realm from which, though created by God, God had withdrawn Himself! "For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:20-21). Not only was darkness (the absence of God) the first state of creation, it remains the condition of the Adamic creation unto this day. The command, "Let there be light," is not merely an historical event, but a prophecy of the glorious reality that would be birthed out of the darkness of the first creation. The work begins with darkness. God said, "Let there be light," and at once light shone where all before was dark. It is only when the Word of God pierces the dense darkness of our alienated, carnal mind with the divine fiat, "Let there be light!" that our darkness displeases us and we are turned to the light. In that blessed moment the shroud of

ignorance and death is removed from our heart and the light of life shines in to illuminate, quicken and transform that world which we are. "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Mat. 4:16). "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the the light of life" (Jn. 8:12). "Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. 1:12-13).

God's method in His going-forth cannot be better understood than by the use of a somewhat uncommon word — parsimony. We may say that God's method of realizing Himself in creation is by parsimony. To use an illustration — if we desire to understand the composition of the great white rays of light, we break them up into their constituents and see them as crimson and purple and gold. To break up the composition of the white light we hold a portion of it back. This is what takes place when we pass it through a prism or through stained glass. Part of it is held back and we see the remainder. This is parsimony. To change the figure, those who love little children often act upon the same principle. We have to shed a portion of our experience, dispense with a part of our resources, yield up a measure of what we are, and become children ourselves if we are to understand and relate to children. We isolate some of our persona, as it were. Your little boy or girl knows you as father, but perhaps your fellow citizens know you as professor, banker, lawyer, doctor or proprietor. You have a larger life than the little child knows anything about, and yet to live your fatherhood properly you have to shed the other persona in the presence of your child and live as a child. What is this but parsimony! Part of your nature is dismissed, or withdrawn, or held back, that the other part lived in the home may become to you a richer experience. Many know me as a man of God, a preacher and teacher of the Kingdom of God, and there is a certain esteem of the ministry the Lord has favored us with; but my little five year old grandson knows me as someone to play cars with! This principle of parsimony helps us to live our life truly. When we get home we shut the world out; when we are at business we live in that as though there were nothing else to live for. To understand character we go forth and prove it, and going forth we insulate or restrict portions of our being.

It is not difficult to see how to apply this to God's great principle of creation. God withdrew Himself creating darkness and void -- this is the self-limitation of Deity; or to state it in other words, God retained, or held back, His full resources in order that there could be formed outside of Himself and beyond Himself and yet within Himself the desire to receive. This is righteous, purposeful, divine parsimony. The desire to receive is the basic mechanism by which the world operates, the dynamic process at the base of all manifestation. The desire to receive affects all creation because it is the basis of all creation. As we view the animate creation we find a remarkable physical dependence upon the external world for survival culminating in man, who has the greatest desire to receive of all creation -- not only for physical things, but also for psychological things like peace, happiness and satisfaction, and above all, the deep inner craving for spiritual life, the insatiable hunger after reality. When God created man male and female in His image He revealed that He is Himself male and female in His nature and attributes. God would never have known the action of giving and receiving had He not known them as characteristics inherent within Himself. The masculine nature is the nature of the Giver. Aggressiveness, boldness, strength, valor, authority, power and dominion are among the traits of the masculine sex. And it is the man who supplies the sperm for the creation of a new life. Thus, man is the Giver. Modesty, gentleness, tenderness, sensitivity and dependence are attributes of the feminine sex. And it is the woman who receives the sperm in the act of procreation. Woman is therefore the Receiver. The realm of her reception is in darkness — the new life, the new creation, the product of her union is formed in the seclusion and darkness of the womb — space. In its beginning the new life is without human form and darkness is upon the face of the deep. What marvelous things are wrought in darkness! Said the Psalmist: "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (Ps. 139:14-16).

I find myself too confined to set forth this truth as I should do, but let us request of God's Spirit the ability to see that it is in darkness that the embryo is created, and in that long ago beginning it was in a great darkness that creation was formed. God the Giver withdrew Himself from Himself creating space, and within that space He brought forth creation -- the Receiver. In darkness the Receiver existed in a state of lack, made to lack a little from Elohim. It was a region of rayless darkness. Deepest night rested over it. It was without form, utterly

shapeless in all its parts. It was void, that is, unfilled up. It knew nothing of God who was to become its fullness. In none of its parts was there any reception or filling up. Then the Spirit of God began to move upon the face of this deep. This activity of the Holy Spirit is called that of "moving" over the face of the waters. The word "move" is from the Hebrew RACHAPH and occurs only three times in the Old Testament, the other two being translated "shake" (Jer. 23:9) and "fluttereth" (Deut. 32:11), respectively. Some commentators relate the word particularly to the hovering of a mother hen over her chicks. In any case, the idea seems to be mainly that of a rapid back and forth motion. In modern scientific terminology, the best translation would probably be "vibrated." If the universe is to be energized, there must be an Energizer. If it is to be given life, there must be a Life-giver. The vibrating of God over the creation in darkness is not unlike the movement of the male at that precise moment when he inseminates the female with the seed of life. It is most appropriate that the first impartation of energy into the universe is described as the "vibrating" movement of the Spirit of God Himself — the injection of His life as divine seed into creation! This movement is immediately followed by the divine fiat: "Let there be light!" and into the darkness the light shone. In that blessed moment God and creation began their long journey into union, oneness. The Giver began to give and the Receiver began to receive. The heart of the Father was pleased. Now there was an object to Receive out of His infinite desire to Give! The law of creation was begun.

Think it not strange, my beloved, when your pathway leads you down, down, down into the experience of darkness and despair. It is in the darkness that the desire to receive is first kindled within you. We flounder a bit in our understanding of these things, but as time passes by and the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and reveals them unto us, we begin to understand that in all the universe a thing is a thing ONLY BECAUSE IT HAS ITS OPPOSITE. Good without the knowledge of evil can scarcely be called good at all. Who could possibly speak of the day if night had never been known! There was no first light except there was darkness before it. What could we know of life if there were no death! What would we know of health if there were no sickness? What would we know of wealth if poverty had not spread its spectre upon the earth? No man can be trusted until he has been EXPOSED TO THE OPPOSITES, until he has been moved to desire something beyond his darkness, frustration, limitation and lack. Myriad have been the men who have inquired why God cast the noble and divine spirit of man into the earthly, sublunar plane, into bodies built of clay, where they endure sorrow, temptation, pain, sickness, and the constant trials and ruthlessness which this body of death imposes upon the soul. He might, preferably, have maintained them in His heavenly sphere where all spirits rejoice in His presence, where once the morning stars sang and all the sons of God shouted for joy, where they could merit the ineffable goodness of the divine splendor which is bestowed upon them. Ah! but first, He must create in us the desire to receive; second, He must involve us in the grand purpose of the receiving — to mature us into His image until we have thoroughly learned the great law of His Being, of His Kingdom — it is MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE! God created this world peopling it with earthly bodies through which the soul must labor and struggle. By experience and travail, through faith and patience we attain His objective of purification, wisdom, understanding and holiness; without the struggle this necessitates, we would be nothing more than idle recipients of God's blessing. It has been demonstrated time and again that that which costs a man nothing is generally unappreciated. The natural consequence of eating unearned bread, of receiving something for nothing — that is not earned by labor and travail — is folly and shame. Ah, beloved, there is purpose in affliction. There is purpose in trial. There is purpose in temptation. There is purpose in suffering. There is purpose in sorrow. There is purpose in pain. There is purpose in sickness and infirmity. There is purpose in light and darkness. There is purpose in limitation and abundance. There is divine purpose in all the inter-play between good and evil in our lives. One who grows up in a sheltered environment, who is pampered all his life, grows up a weak, spineless individual. ADVERSITY builds strength of character. If we were never exposed to trials and tribulation, we would grow up weak indeed! The more we are exposed to ADVERSE circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with our environment, the more we are challenged by the world around us, the stronger we become. Saints, if we would be the sons of the Most High (the ultimate Givers) we must be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! Our Father wants us to be strong, so He has wisely given us strong currents of opposition so we will become strong. There is a great and magnificent future ahead for the sons of God, and a great work our Father has for us to do in the age and the ages to come, and He is preparing us and making us ready for the high and holy place He has for us. Can we not see that all the opposing forces we now encounter are working together for our good — to develop the strength, character, wisdom, faith and power we must acquire? Have you noticed how strangely Matthew and Mark speak of Christ's temptation? *"And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the*

devil." (Mk. 1:12; Mat. 4:1). What a strange statement! The Holy Spirit of God drives the sinless Son of God into the wilderness to be tempted by satan, the arch enemy of all righteousness, a murderer from the beginning, the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary for this Son to be PROVEN, to be made STRONG, to OVERCOME in these realms before proceeding on into His glorious sonship ministry and the death of the cross. Truly God creates darkness and void and uses it, too, for His glory!

You see, God only makes us Receivers in order that we may become Givers. The woman receives the seed of life from the man, but in bringing that child into the world she is miraculously transformed into a Giver! "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman (Eve) of the man. Nevertheless. . .as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman" (I Cor. 11:8-12). The Word of God bears immutable testimony to this wonderful truth. Father Abraham heard the call of God and got him out of his own country, from his father's house and his father's kindred, and sojourned to a land that God showed him. God gave to him the promise of a seed and that in this seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. After many years of experience in Canaan, this man of faith, yet without the promised seed, and seemingly without hope, was visited by the Lord and we read in **Gen. 17:1-2**: "When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the ALMIGHTY GOD; walk before Me, and be thou perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." Now this name, GOD ALMIGHTY, is both interesting and touching. In the Hebrew it is EL SHADDAI. God (EL) means "might" or "power" and signifies the Strong One. SHADDAI is different, though it also describes power; but it is the power not of force, but of all-bountifulness, SHADDAI primarily means "breasted," being formed directly from the Hebrew word SHAD, that is, "the breast," or more exactly, a woman's breast, and is so used in various places in the scriptures. Thus SHADDAI means "the Pourer or Shedder forth" of life as a woman bears her child and then feeds and sustains it with the milk from her breast. God is the Giver out of His own life and He bears out of His own substance his offspring and then feeds and sustains and strengthens it with the "milk" of His Word. Can we not see that all natural things have spiritual counterparts? By her breast the mother has almost infinite power over the child. And how! Because of the child's one basic characteristic -- the DESIRE TO RECEIVE! Some of my readers perhaps have heard the old Greek story of the babe laid down near some cliff by its mother, while she was busy with her herd of goats. The babe, unperceived, crawled to the edge. The mother, afraid to take a step, lest the child should move further and fall over the precipice, only uncovered her breast, and so drew back the infant to her. It is this figure which God Himself has chosen in this name EL SHADDAI, by which to express to us the feminine nature of His Almightyness! Male and female is the image of God, and in it is revealed the law of Giving and Receiving, the law of God's own nature. But beyond this is shown the fundamental law of God and creation — the Giver demands a Receiver, but the Receiver receives only to become a Giver! God's Almightyness is of the breast, that is, of bountiful, life-giving supply! Therefore He can quiet the restless, as the breast quiets the child; therefore He can nourish and strengthen, as the breast nourishes; therefore He can attract as the breast attracts, when we are in peril of falling away from Him. Ah, this is the ALMIGHTY who appeared to Abraham and assured him that he would be blessed according to the promise. And there is a blessed and significant aspect to God's dealing with Abraham that perhaps we have overlooked. When the Lord revealed Himself to Abraham as EL SHADDAI He said, "I am EL SHADDAI; walk before Me. . .and I will make My covenant between Me and thee." The covenant was contingent upon Abraham walking before EL SHADDAI, that is, in exposing his walk, his total being and experience, to EL SHADDAI, until he would learn the nature, ways and law of EL SHADDAI, the law of Receiving to Give. Abraham was the Receiver in the covenant, God promised to multiply him exceedingly and make him great; but then the great purpose of the blessing of the covenant was disclosed: "In thee, and in thy seed, shall ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED" In close relationship and union with EL SHADDAI Abraham would learn the one great law of creation — one Receives so that he may Give! How wonderful are these things!

The feminine Receiver in turn acquires the masculine character of Giver. This principle is seen again in the order of the life-cycle — children are Receivers, everything provided for them out of the bounty of the parents. In due process, however, the child grows up and becomes an adult — a Giver. In maturity, out of his nature to Give, the process of creation is extended. The parent creates, just as God did! a receiver, a new life, to the end that his desire to Give may find fulfillment in pouring lavishly upon the child of his love. So in all of nature the law of creation is in wonder beheld — one Receives to become a Giver; he then himself creates a Receiver in order to Give — and the process goes on from generation to generation, from age to age. Certainly this sublime truth is alluded to in the inspired words of the apostle wherein he says, "For the invisible things of Him

from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20).

It might be thought that Giving, the first aspect through which Creator God is known to us, implies diminishing or loss. At times our experience in this world is that, after we have shared or given something, we are left with less than we had before. Although we have perceived it thus, if we are quickened by the Holy Spirit to have eyes to see and hearts to understand the nature of all things, we will soon discern that this is not truly the case, since giving is the prerequisite for receiving. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Lk. 6:38). This is the law of the Kingdom! When we give we create the correct spiritual atmosphere for the drawing down of forces from above. Can we then say that God became diminished by His sharing with creation? Not at all! In creation God receives the increase of Himself into Himself again so that instead of diminishing there is eternal expansion. So God is a Bestower, a Father. He imparts without being in any way diminished by imparting. The miracle of the widow woman's unending cruise of oil, and the feeding of the five thousand from five little loaves and two fishes, with twelve basketsful of fragments left over, are parabolic illustrations of this great principle. God does not give to receive again — there can be nothing of that in the nature of God or in the law of creation. It is simply the law of creation that what one sows produces a harvest. Men sow to reap a harvest but God sows out of His pure and unmixed desire to give. In this He is the measure of the perfect Donor. We could compare this to a rich man deciding to get rid of all his money so that he can provide other people with the opportunity to make money. While he is in possession of his money, he has all that he wants, and consequently no desire to receive. It is only after he has made himself poor that he has enabled others to share of their profits with him, thus making him even richer than he was before. Out of his great love of sharing — a boundless love — comes the essence of the Creator who ceaselessly bestows His blessing by withdrawing Himself, bringing forth a creation in darkness with its lack and desire to receive, and then pouring into the creation of His Life and Light and Love, bringing eternal increase out of Himself and into Himself. Oh, the wonder of it!

Brethren, I deplore the vain prattle that is being preached today concerning so-called "seed faith." From coast to coast preachers are saying the very opposite of what I am saying here. They unashamedly tell people that the way to get out of debt and unleash an abundance of financial blessing is to plant "seed money," to give in order to get! They persuade tens of thousands of Christians that if only they will send in their "seed faith" offering to God's servant God will bless and prosper them, they will soon have all their bills paid, they will have the finest and best of all the good things the world has to offer, and an abundance of the amenities of life. My beloved, I do not hesitate to tell you that the only ones being financially blessed and prospering and getting rich out of this carnal teaching are the slick preachers who are hoodwinking God's precious people into sending them their hard-earned money. It is wondrously true — give and it shall be given unto you! But it is a monstrous farce to teach people to give IN ORDER TO GET. Giving to get is contrary to the nature of God, contradictory to the law of creation, and runs counter to the principles of the Kingdom of God. It springs not from love, but from lust. It is not of the Father, but of the world. It is not spiritual, rather it is fleshly, earthly. Still the law is there — give and it shall be given unto you! But nowhere in God's blessed Book are we exhorted to give so that it will be given. The premise is wrong. God so loved that He gave. There is the difference. His is the law of love, the pure and holy desire to bless, requiring nothing in return. You may give to receive — and God will honor it — but verily you HAVE YOUR REWARD. Your reward is the things you receive in return. It has nothing whatever to do with love, with obedience, with the desire to bless. It has nothing to do with the nature of God, no correspondence with the Kingdom of God, and there is no eternal benefit, no heavenly treasure laid up thereby. Oh, that God's elect may learn this one sublime truth — it is more blessed to give than to receive! When the Holy Spirit prompts you to give, then give out of a heart of love and obedience, but do not deceive yourself by thinking you are doing God a service when your motive is to get, when your heart and expectation is set on the increase of money and goods you will receive from your giving.

The spirit of love is not in you till it is the spirit of your life, till you live freely, willingly, universally according to it. It knows no difference of time, place, or person; but whether it gives or forgives, bears or forbears, it is equally doing its own delightful work. The spirit of love does not want to be rewarded or honored; its only desire is to become the blessing and happiness of everything that needs it. The wrath of an enemy, the treachery of a friend, only gives the spirit of love an opportunity to be more triumphant. The rebellion of Adam but opened up

avenues for mankind to experience and know the incredible depths of the love of God! God IS LOVE! And His sons are of His own nature. The SONS OF LOVE! What a blessed title! Little wonder, then, that the whole vast creation, sold under slavery and bondage to sin, sorrow, and death groans and travails for the manifestation of the SONS OF LOVE! To know this is a wonderful help to faith. It teaches us that to love God, or the brethren, or our enemies, or the whole wretched race of men, is not a thing self-effort can attain. We can do it only because the divine love is dwelling in us; only as far as we yield ourselves to the divine love as a living power within, as a life that has been born into us, and that the Holy Spirit strengthens into action. Our part is first of all to rest, to cease from effort, to meditate deeply upon the depths of His love to us, to know that He is in us, and to give way to the love that dwells and works in us a power that is from above. The love of God reigns. The Spirit of God still waits to take possession of the heart where He has hitherto had no room. Love is timeless, eternal, unbounded. God so loved. He loves still. Though one hundred and sixty billions of men have lived and died and gone to Christless graves, HE LOVES THEM STILL. He will deal and deal in mercy and judgment until the desire to receive in them responds to Him as the one and only infinite supply. Oh, my dear friend, can you believe that? His mercy endureth forever, throughout all ages, and love will conquer, praise His name! Don't you believe for one moment the hideous lie that there are vessels created with the desire to receive that somehow will escape God's love and slip away into eternal death or everlasting torment. Such an idea is repugnant to all who know the truth and flies in the face of both the nature and wisdom of God the Creator-Giver.

Hence it is that God, wanting to show us what love is, sent One who from the beginning was sinless; who was conceived without the aid of lust (the desire to receive), who was conceived of the Holy Spirit of Infinite Love, and into whose being there entered no evil passion, since the virgin was sanctified in her spirit, her soul, and her body; so that the Holy thing that was born of her was the incarnation of Love (the pure and unmixed desire to give) in every part of His spirit, in every drop of His blood, and in every organ of His body. People have great difficulty relating to an abstraction or an invisible force. It must be personalized and that is why God has come in the person of Jesus Christ, so that we might see Him and see what God is like. God has been personalized. Love has been personified. God so loved Him that when He died the very heavens were darkened, and the earth trembled under the noonday sun veiling all nature, while silence in earth and heaven lasted until Love had finished His sacrifice upon the cross. Just as the first creation was born when God withdrew Himself, creating darkness, and a vessel in the darkness with the desire to receive, so the new creation came forth in the darkness when God withdrew Himself from Himself on Calvary (My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!) and in that Son who hung in darkness was created a race of men with the desire to receive of HIS FULLNESS, EVEN THE SONS OF GOD. That was Love so divine, so wonderful, so awful, that it could only have been possible for God in Christ to have revealed it at all. This Love is the Love which God imparts to us. This same Love that was in Him must be in us. The sons of God must be the sons of love. Go and learn what that means and the hope of sonship will gleam brightly in your soul.

What a high, holy, heavenly calling! And how reminiscent of Paul's statement in **Eph. 2:4-7**: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might SHOW the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ." So vast, so marvelous are the wonders of His grace, it will require the ages to come to continue to unfold these wonders, and He has purposed that there should be a people through whom He would give this demonstration that in the ages to come He might show..." "Show" is from a Greek word meaning "to exhibit, to put on display like a work of art, to demonstrate." The Amplified Bible reads, "He did this that He might CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE through the ages to come the immeasurable (limitless, surpassing) riches of His free grace in Kindness and goodness of heart toward us in Christ Jesus." Kenneth Wuest translates, "In order that He might EXHIBIT. . . in the ages that pile themselves upon one another in continuous succession the surpassing wealth of His grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus." Show. . . demonstrate. . . exhibit the riches of His grace — unto whom? Not to those who already know it — that would be useless nonsense. But to those who do not know it! To the whole vast creation of men and worlds who dwell in darkness with the insatiable desire to receive, but to whom has never been revealed the true and eternal and unbounded source of life and reality.

Ah, God is preparing a divine show for all the earth, indeed for the entire universe. The mighty Barnum, in describing his circus, said it was THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. True, Mr. Barnum was a great showman and, for its kind, he had a great show, but God is the Master Showman and is preparing to give the world THE GREATEST SHOW IT HAS EVER SEEN. It is a theatrical of MERCY and GRACE and LOVE in a world of wrath and violence. This will be God's master stroke as the curtain rises on the world's greatest drama — God's Great Show — THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD! Praise His name, once the finishing touch is put on the last stone of His living temple of Kings and Priests, the firstfruits of His redemption, in ages yet to come He shall put His grace and kindness inwrought in us ON DISPLAY so that the entire creation may walk across the stage of His cosmic theatre and behold and see and finally come to understand and appreciate WHAT. GOD HAS PROVIDED FOR ALL MEN IN CHRIST. All who have ears to hear must hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches. Across the land and around the world the Spirit is saying today that He is preparing a people, He is preparing a body, He is preparing sons who shall be conformed to the image of His Son, who shall be partakers of the divine nature, who shall have the mind of Christ, who shall be brought to glory and who then shall become the very express image of the Father, the brightness of the Father's glory and the outshining of the Father's person. These shall receive of His fullness until they have within themselves conquered all sin, sickness and death. God is now preparing sons, God is now preparing a body for that first Son, we are the body of the first Son, the body of the Christ, the body of the King of glory, the body of the great High Priest in the heavens after the order of Melchizedek. We are the body of the Giver and in and through these sons, when all have been brought to His fullness, having received of all His glorious and eternal reality, His salvation shall be manifested, exhibited, and demonstrated unto the ends of the earth and unto worlds yet unknown. The Lord is saying to His people in this day: "For this cause have I raised thee up and sent thee to be a light unto the nations and thou shalt BE MY SALVATION to the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:6; Acts. 13:47).

When those who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship speak the words the Spirit is speaking to the Churches in this hour, people demand, "Who do you think you are?" When we declare that we are called to be the manifested sons of God, to grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, to partake of a greater ministry than that of the Church-age, to set all creation free and reconcile all things in heaven and in earth back into God, people ask, "Just who do you think you are?" It really makes no difference who WE think we are, but it makes a great deal of difference that we know WHO AND WHAT WE ARE APPREHENDED TO BE IN HIM. Our ears have heard the sound of the trumpet, we cannot — dare not — settle for anything less, we must follow on to know Him in all His wonderful fullness, to desire to receive of all that He is and has so that we can in turn become His Givers unto all. HE THAT HATH AN EAR LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH. Let us not sell creation short in these days. The whole creation is groaning and travailing together in pain to be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Mankind is sick and tired of sin and fear and hatred and sorrow and pain and empty religious platitudes, rituals, ceremonies and doctrines. The whole race is gripped by the most intense DESIRE TO RECEIVE — there is everywhere an unprecedented hunger for deliverance, life and reality. Let us not deny the Lord who purchased us to be a Kingdom of Priests. While we seek no glory of our own, there is, nevertheless, great wealth and heavenly glory for all who fulfill all the will of God. You never lose with God. You are never diminished by giving, you are never impoverished by pouring out all that you are and have. There is an interesting fact in connection with the life of the great missionary, Hudson Taylor. Hudson Taylor's brother desired above all things to be famous and so he scorned the Christian life and scoffed at his brother's zeal to pour out his life as a missionary among the impoverished and ignorant heathen. He went into business and politics to become famous. Over a century has now passed and throughout the whole world the name of Hudson Taylor is well known, and in writings, when it does appear, his brother is referred to as "Hudson Taylor's brother" — Mr. Anonymous — who gave up all to become famous! The compelling passion of my life is to be filled with all the fullness of God and come into the image of Jesus Christ. The deep cry of my heart is for the satisfaction of knowing that my life counts for God. As God knows my heart, it is not a selfish desire. The reason I want to be like Jesus is because I love Him so, but also because it is the only way I can ever be used in the restoration of fallen creation. I see the needs of the world around me, and realize that I am practically powerless to do anything about it. Oh Yes, I can pray, and give a little, and believe God, and see occasional conversions, deliverances, and blessings. But anyone who says that they have reached the place where their ministry is meeting the needs of the world is either blind to the needs of humanity, a proud hypocrite, or a compulsive liar. "Lord Jesus! Breathe Thy Spirit into all who read these lines until we are like Thee in all of Thy ways that Thou mayest be glorified and all creation blessed. Make us a

center of omnipotent God. May the great river of Thy love and grace and power flow and flow and flow until the outflow of Thyself from our center knows no circumference, enveloping all creation in Thy life and light and love. Amen!"

God will make the reality ours.

In the several pages of this writing our theme has been LIFE OUT OF DEATH, or LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS. This is the divine, sublime message of the remarkable Sign of Capricornus — the dying Goat from whom springs the living fish! It is the pouring out of light into darkness, of life into death that quickened creation may be raised up to the glory of the Creator and redound unto His glory. May God make it real to your heart!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 29 CAPRICORNUS-THE GOAT [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART TWENTY-NINE

LIFE OUT OF DEATH

We continue in our study of the Sign of CAPRICORNUS — THE GOAT. The goat in the scriptures is a sacrificial animal. And while the Sign is known as the goat, it is a very strange creature indeed. On the old star charts the front half is pictured as a goat and the rear half as a fish. It is a goat with a fishes' tail; it is half-goat and half-fish. This Sign has a strange appearance on the old star charts because it shows a wounded goat, with its head bowed and its knee bent under, fallen down in the posture of dying. On the other hand, the tail of the fish is wiggling, vigorous and living! Note that from the dying goat comes a living fish — the living fish thus takes its being out of the dying goat and derives all its life and vigor from thence. The living fish emerging from the dying goat therefore has an important meaning. In addition to the falling and dying of the goat, Capricornus is the Sign of a mystical procreation and bringing forth. It speaks of life that springs forth from the death of the sacrifice. That which dies is a goat; that which is brought forth is a fish, the familiar and well understood symbol of the spiritual body brought out of the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ. What could better symbolize this than the Sign before us? The goat and fish are one — one being, the life of the dying reproduced and continued in a spiritual product which is part of the one and the same body. The goat of sacrifice is projected into a new creation, which is yet an organic part of itself.

LIFE OUT OF DEATH

Some of the brightest stars in the constellation of Capricornus are AL GEDI, which means "the Kid"; DENE AL GEDI meaning "the Sacrifice cometh"; and MA'ASAD, "the Slaying." God commanded the children of Israel, saying, "Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin-offering" (**Lev. 9:31**). So Aaron "took the goat, which was the sin-offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin" (**Lev. 9:15**). And of the goat of the sin-offering Moses said, "It is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord" (**Lev. 10:16-17**). We see here a picture of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, for truly He became our sin-offering, being "wounded for our transgressions;" and "bruised for our iniquities," He was "cut out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was He stricken." Each and every son of Adam is born in sin and shapen in iniquity and, because we have sinful natures and dwell in a world where every filthy sin and foul evil abounds on every hand, we accept our environment of corruption as normal and tolerable, never remembering anything better. A man who is born amid poverty, squalor, disease and crime often pays little heed to his condition since he knows nothing better, but a man born to wealth, fame and power, reduced to poverty and misery, is cast into an agonizing hell. No man on earth can properly understand the terror, the horror, the abject dismay of the death Christ suffered when He took upon Himself the form of a man and became obedient unto death, because no man remembers the excellence and glory and exaltation of that world of life he enjoyed with the Father before the ages began. Paul tried to express the extent of the Christ's impoverishment and the depth of His humiliation with these words of inspiration: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (**II Cor 8-9**). And again, with the use of words that, though inspired, are yet feeble, he exhorted us to let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus: "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (**Phil. 2:5-8**).

We will never grasp the enormity of Christ's sacrifice until the Holy Spirit somehow gives us the ability to see the death of Christ in all its lifetime scope and experience — not as six hours on a cross but as thirty-three and a half years, fully participating in the death realm in all its aspects, man as we are man, flesh as we are flesh, weak as we are weak, limited as we are limited, tempted in all points as we are, suffering in all ways as we do,

grappling with all the forces within and without that we struggle with, that through His suffering He might become the very first man to overcome it all, the first perfect man, the first man to break out of the dungeon of sin and the prison house of death — righteous, victorious and living! The Word of God, through His incarnation, became the son of man that we who were born sons of men might through Him become sons of God, yea, perfect sons of men and incorruptible sons of God. What a sacrifice that was and what a death He died! A brother shared the following experience which graphically portrays to our understanding the magnitude of Christ's sacrifice. "Years ago, when I was still at home on the farm, we had a manure pile in the field, the former owners had been cleaning out the barn and piling the manure there for years. There was a colony of snakes living in this manure pile, and on a sunny day one could see several of them lying on the sunny south side, sunning themselves. One day I was emptying a load of manure on the north side, and I sneaked up over the pile to get a look at the snakes. There were several lying there; and as I stood looking at them, the Lord seemed to say to me, How would you like to become one of those creatures and live among them in this manure pile! I shuddered at the thought of it. I just couldn't comprehend how terrible it would be. To lower myself to that extent was unthinkable. Then the Lord said to me, For my Son to leave His home in the glory above, to become a man in the likeness of sinful flesh, for your sake and your salvation, was much more than that. I have never forgotten that experience. It made me appreciate much more the sacrifice He made for me."

George Hawtin ably wrote of this death-realm: "Now it naturally follows that, if our blessed Lord spent all the days of His earthly existence in death, we also are doing the same, and I shall advance many infallible proofs to show that the very thing men have called life is not life at all, but death. Indeed we may claim that three score and ten years are the years of our life and, of course, we all understand what is meant by that statement, but the real truth is that the three score and ten years during which we dwell in this corruptible body are not the years of our life, but the years of our death. When we mortals put a man in a coffin and bury him in the dark, cold earth, we say the man is dead, and indeed he is; but have you heard what Jesus answered when one of His disciples said to Him, 'Suffer me first to go and bury my father?' The strange reply He gave was this 'Follow Me: and let the dead bury their dead' (Mat. 8:21-22). How strange that statement sounds to us who do not understand what death is, but the Lord was really telling them that the able bodied men who were carrying the coffin to the cemetery were just as dead as the man who was lying breathless within it. In other words, the very thing we insist is life God says is death. The sooner we learn that lesson the sooner we will release as useless all things that pertain to this realm of death that we might be enabled to firmly lay hold on life, even the life which Jesus gives, aionian life, or the life of the ages. When the truth of this dawned upon my soul, I found many earthly things slipping away from me in a manner I had nor known hitherto. Who among us could ever desire to lay fast hold upon that which he discovers to be naught but death? The things that are dead we bury out of our sight, and I think I am right in saying that the lusts and temptations that belong to this death lose their grip upon us when we know that they are naught but death and that the flesh life to which these temptations cling is but a vapor that the wind driveth away. I cannot see myself slaving to lay up great wealth in store for that which I know is dead. What an abominable lie has gripped our hearts, deceiving us into endless labor and travail until on every side men and women are dying of heart attacks in their worry to provide worthless goods for this body of death. — end quote.

In order that the Christ could become a ransom (release) for our sins, He had to shed His blood and die on the cross; and in order to die He had to become mortal — subjected to this whole dreadful realm of sin and death. He had to surrender Himself to the condition, circumstances, powers and state of being of the death-realm. He became a man, a mortal like the rest of us. When He was still a babe in His mother's arms, when King Herod discovered that the Magi, instead of coming to tell him where the baby could be found, had tricked him and returned to their country by another route, the wicked Herod was exceedingly wroth. He had found out that this babe was to be the king of the Jews, and this endangered his position as king. So he wanted the baby destroyed, and sent soldiers to kill every male child under two years old in that vicinity. Joseph was warned by God in a dream about this plot to destroy the child and instructed to flee into Egypt. Why did He flee? Here was a miracle child, the Son of God! Could anything happen to Him? Yes, if Herod's men had gotten their hands on Him He could have been killed like all the others; for you see He was just like them. He was mortal and could have been killed. He was born to die, but not yet; it was too soon, He had a work to do first, and when that was accomplished, then He was ready to die. "But we see Jesus, made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." This was part of God's purpose, so He humbled Himself and became obedient even unto death, the death of the cross. The writer of Hebrews tells us just how human He was, "It

was right and proper that in bringing many sons to glory, God should make the leader of their salvation a perfect leader through the fact that He suffered. For the One who makes men holy and the men who are made holy share a COMMON HUMANITY. So He is not ashamed to call them brethren, for He says, I will declare thy name unto my brothers in the midst of the congregation will I sing Thy praise. And again, speaking as a man, He says, I will put my trust in Him. And one more instance, in these words, Behold I and the children God has given me. Since then, 'the children' have a common physical nature as human beings, He also became a human being, so that by going through death AS A MAN, He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. 2:10-14), (Phillips Translation).

Sharing our humanity, being made in the likeness of sinful flesh, He had the same sinful nature we have. Now do not mistake what I say! I do not say that Jesus had the same fallen condition of Adam — I say that He had the same sinful nature Adam has and had from the beginning. The question is just this — when did Adam receive his sinful nature — before he sinned, or only after he sinned! A sinful nature is simply a nature that sins or that is liable to sin. If Adam had not been created with a nature capable of sinning, how, I ask, could he have ever been tempted.? How could he have sinned? The correct answer to these questions reveals to our spiritual understanding the amazing fact that the sinful nature had to precede the first sin, not follow it. Can we not see the simple truth that it was not the act of sinning that gave Adam the sinful nature — rather, it was the sinful nature that caused him to sin! It was therefore necessary for Christ Jesus to come in exactly the same state as the first Adam was in before he sinned and plunged the race into death. He could not have been tempted otherwise, but He was subject to all the temptations man is subject to. "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." The suffering was not suffering surrounding the cross. In order to be a perfect sacrifice He had to be perfected before He went to the cross. It was through the years that He lived as a man, that He suffered through temptation. You and I haven't suffered much this way, because when the temptation gets too severe we just yield to it and sin! He couldn't sin, for if He had, He could not have been our Capricornus, our goat, our perfect sin-offering required to redeem the race. So he had to resist and overcome all temptation, and this must have been excruciatingly difficult for Him to do many times, for He had all the desires and inclinations of the human, sinful nature to battle with.

I would draw your reverent attention to these significant words of inspiration which we quoted earlier, but now I will share them as they are beautifully translated in the Amplified Bible. "Let this same attitude and purpose and mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus — Who, although being. . . one with God and in the form of God, possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God, God, did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained; but stripped Himself of all privileges and rightful dignity so as to assume the guise of a servant, in that He became like men and was born a human being. And after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself still further and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross! Therefore God has highly exalted Him . . ." In this wonderful passage we have the summary of all the most precious truths that cluster about the person of the Son of God. There is first His wonderful divinity: "in the form of God," "equal with God." Then comes the mystery of Him laying aside that glory in that phrase of deep and inexhaustible meaning: "He stripped Himself," "He emptied Himself." The humiliation follows: "The form of a servant," "Made in the likeness of men," "found in fashion as a man." Then comes the crushing and mortification of suffering and death: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And all is crowned by His glorious exaltation: "God hath highly exalted Himself!" Christ as God. Christ becoming man, Christ as man in humiliation revealing the glory of the Father in a body of flesh, and Christ in glory as Lord of all: such are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge this passage contains.

The great truth we want to grasp here is that Christ (the Word) dwell from eternity in the form, the essence, the nature and the being of God. In that divine nature He was eternal, untemptable and incorruptible. But when He laid aside that glory, emptying Himself of it, taking upon Him the form and nature of man, He, the ETERNAL ONE, subjected Himself to the dread power of death, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. When the Christ laid aside His eternal heavenly glory, the UNTEMPTABLE ONE took upon Himself all the frailties and weaknesses of human nature so that the One who cannot be tempted was found in a nature that could be tempted and indeed He was in all points tempted like as we are. The inspired apostle James says that "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin" (James 1:14-15). Was Jesus truly tempted in all points like as we are, or did

He have some mystical advantage over us, some inherent quality of divinity, some unique spiritual power which enabled Him to be oblivious to the cravings and demands of the flesh? Anything, to be a temptation for us, must excite something within us that responds to the temptation. That for which we have no desire, can never tempt us. I used to think, as many do, that Jesus was so high and holy that He could not be affected by the base things that allure us. He was indeed high and holy, but not to the extent that He could not be touched by the same infirmities, weaknesses, and feelings that touch us. While some may still find it hard to believe, because of our superstitious religious view of Christ, He knows exactly how the person feels who is tempted to lie, cheat, curse, steal, murder, or commit adultery. There had to be the desire in His flesh, the inclination in His nature to answer the temptation, but, blessed by God! HE OVERCAME IT ALL! He was tempted in every point as we are, YET WITHOUT SIN. As we have the indwelling Holy Spirit, so He had the indwelling Father and by that overcame all temptation and in the one instance of His intense desire to go His own way, He resisted even unto blood. He was the first to do this and HE ENTERED INTO IMMORTALITY AND INCORRUPTION.

There is something diabolical about temptation, something satanically bewitching and bewildering. It stirs up our senses and excites our emotions and passions. For the time being the forbidden thing seems more important than anything else in the world. It weakens our powers of judgment, both moral and spiritual. People who are otherwise very intelligent and self-controlled will in a brief season of temptation commit wholly unthinkable follies — which they often live to regret a whole lifetime afterwards. It paralyzes our will. Our many good resolutions melt like wax in the hour of temptation. All this temptation frequently does simply by being permitted to press in upon us. It is like chloroform. If it gets too close to us, it will deprive us of the very possibility of offering resistance. But, praise God, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you in be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that ye may be able to hear it" (I Cor. 10:13). May God in His great mercy give us a true insight into the glory of what is offered us in this truth — that our great HIGH PRIEST, whom we have in the heavenlies, is One who is able to sympathize with us in each and every circumstance, because He knows, from personal experience, exactly what we feel and face. Yes, that God might give us courage to draw nigh unto Him, He has placed upon the throne of heaven One out of our midst, of whom we can be certain that, because He Himself lived on earth as a man, He understands us perfectly, is prepared to have patience with our weakness, and give us just the help we need to overcome and enter into His glory. May God give us eyes to see and hearts to understand the depth of the mystery of which I now write. Had the Logos, the Word of God remained in that bright glory world above, in that spiritual dimension detached from this realm of flesh and corruptibility, He might have been ever so desirous to help us and lift us up to godhood: but, if He had never tasted death, how could He allay our fears as we tread the verge of Jordan? If He had never been tempted, how could He succor those who are tempted? If He had never wept, how could He dry our tears? If He had never suffered, hungered, wearied on the hill of difficulty, or threaded His way through the quagmires of weakness and grief, how could He have been a merciful and faithful High Priest, having compassion on the ignorant and wayward? But, thank God, our High Priest is a perfect one! He is perfectly adapted to His task, and is able to lead each and every member of God's elect out of this valley of the shadow of death over into the victory and glory of perfection and incorruptibility!

He who alone is life, having never touched death, humbled Himself for our sakes and became obedient unto death. He stooped to die and lived thirty-three and one half years in it. Then at the end He went to the cross. Earth's voices must fall silent here, for they will never be able to tell the story of how it is that life comes out of death. I would have said that such a thing would be impossible had He not said of His life, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again" (Jn 10:18). When He expired on the cross, He passed into the totality of death, and on the resurrection side of the tomb He proved that there is NO FINALITY TO DEATH, that even in death He was wondrously alive, for, said He, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." It was not simply that He had faith that GOD would raise Him from the dead. NO! The power He possessed was the power to take His own life up again and this power is a power He both had and executed WHILE HE WAS DEAD! There can be no other explanation. A child of five should be able to understand that one cannot lay his life down and take it up again unless he has life even in death. In the power of that life which the Christ still possessed, being dead, He passed back from the realm of death to the realm of life, and on the resurrection side of the tomb He cried in triumph, "Behold, I am alive forever more" (Rev. 1:18). And now He is alive in the flesh, praise God, triumphantly holding in His incorruptible hands the keys of both death and hell, and is abundantly able to offer life eternal to dead men who believe in Him. "The

hour is coming, and now is," He has proclaimed, **"when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (Jn. 5:25)**. Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, by partaking of death during the days of His flesh and ending all death by the power of His resurrection, has brought to light both life and immortality. Notice, precious friend of mine, it is not said that He has created life and immortality — He has brought it to light, turned His searchlight upon it, disclosed it, revealed it, opened it up, proclaimed it and made it known. Christ is life. In Him is life. In Him alone is life. And the man or woman who has been quickened by Christ HAS LIFE, is passed from death unto life, and shall never die. **"I AM (not I will be) the resurrection and the life,"** says Jesus, **"he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (Jn. 11:25-26)**. Sad to say, even some who profess to be teachers of God's elect and sons of God do not believe that simple truth which Martha embraced that day when the Christ brought life and immortality to light in her awakened consciousness. Our Lord Jesus plainly told us, **"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give into them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hands."** (Jn. 10:27-29). The moment any man hears the voice of the Son of God and becomes a sheep following Him, at that moment, the gift of God, which is eternal life, is given to that believing man and the life of God begins to live and dwell and abide in that man as a well of water springing up unto eternal life. Christ is the Tree of Life, and all who partake of Him receive life, not in some future age, not in some distant resurrection, but here and now, for He gives them eternal life. Apart from Him there is naught but darkness and death. "Whoso drinketh of this water shall thirst again," were the words He spoke to the troubled woman at the well of Samaria, **"But whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give Him shall become a fountain within him, springing up unto eternal life" (Jn. 4:14)** Christ is the fountain of life. He alone is the fountain of eternal youth, of eternal consciousness, of eternal being. This is the wonderful message of the NEW COVENANT, the covenant of life.

Again I would quote briefly from the inspired writings of George Hawtin. "Sweet mystery of life, at last we've found Thee! And we have found that Thou, O Christ, art life — not that life which flourishes as grass in the field today and tomorrow the wind passes over it and it is gone, nor life like ours, which is as a mist which the wind driveth away, but life aionian, life everlasting, life eternal, life evermore, the life of the ages. Well spoke our beloved Lord when He said, **'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, and shall not come into condemnation, but IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE,'** or as Rotherham has translated it, **'hath passed over out of death into life' (Jn. 5:24)**. It is a wonderful hour in the experience of any man when he passes from death 'across to life,' and that is exactly what happens when we believe on Christ. As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself, and to all who believe on Him life is given, even that eternal life which God Himself is and which abounds like rivers of living water within us when Jesus Christ comes in to abide. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is every man that trusteth in Him! With this wonderful realization firmly abiding in our hearts; we are better prepared to grasp the truth Christ clearly gave us when He said, **'Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live' (Jn 5:25)**. Think on that statement, child of God. Was not Jesus telling us that we are dead as dead can be? And did He not make two remarkable statements — first, the hour is coming, and, second, the hour now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live? Have not we who have believed proven the truth of this in our very spirit and in our experience? The greatest proof in the universe that Jesus Christ is alive forevermore is the fact that, when we believed, He came to dwell within us. He came to live His life in us. He came to deliver us from our sin and our habits and make us to know that death would never more hold our spirits in its vice-like grip. Do we not know that He who lives and was dead, and, behold, He is alive forevermore, has come to us that we might live also and has raised us up together with Himself to share with Him the life of the ages" — end quote.

Yet some tell us that the dead are dead — that there is no life or consciousness or being for the child of God apart from or beyond or above physical existence — should you lay this tabernacle aside there is nothing — you cease to exist — you are gone! I do not hesitate to tell you that it is a wicked lie, a monstrous deceit, and a dreadful denial of the life we have now been given in Christ Jesus. Let's get right down to brass tacks here. Do you want to hear the truth beyond all the superstitions you've heard, beyond all the emptiness and hopelessness of Old Testament economy? Eternal life is first and foremost spiritual, not physical. To hear

some preachers teach it one would think that a man cannot possess eternal life except it be manifest on the physical level — in an immortal body. I think that no man understands the first thing about life out of death who misses the clear and unmistakable understanding given by Paul in his words to the Romans: “**And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness**” (Rom. 8:10). The body is dead, just as God told Adam it would be. So for the man who has received Christ his body is still dead because of sin but his spirit is alive because of righteousness — Christ’s righteousness, of course, for there is none other, the righteousness that comes with Him when we believe into Him and He gives us Himself and with and by Himself His life. This life which even now is reality within us is that life and immortality which has been BROUGHT TO LIGHT through the gospel. Hear and believe the wonderful news, precious friend of mine, YOUR SPIRIT I-S A-L-I-V-E BECAUSE OF THE INDWELLING CHRIST! Those who minister the finality of death — when your body dies you’re dead and gone, non-existent — minister under the blindness of the OLD COVENANT, the ministration of death. They know not that the Christ has come and given us life, they understand not that Christ IS NOW the resurrection and the life, they comprehend not the glad truth that eternal life is even now a glorious and eternal reality in “the inner man” which is renewed day by day,” they, like the patriarchs and the prophets under the Old Testament, and like the Jews to this very day, are still awaiting the Saviour and looking to some future day for the resurrection, totally oblivious to the wonderful fact that “**If ye then BE RISEN with Christ, seek those things which are above (in the higher realm of the spirit; where your eternal life is), where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God**” (Col. 3:1). I am here to tell you that CHRIST IS COME! I proclaim to you today the glad tidings of the NEW TESTAMENT, the ministration of life. God has anointed me to declare the RESURRECTION WHICH I-S, not one that shall be! Those who minister the finality of death minister the Old Covenant and know nothing as they ought to know and have seen nothing — the heavens have never been opened to them. Their ministry is not one of faith and hope and present reality, but of fear of death and a sense of foreboding and depression. They know not the life that transcends the body, the life that is first of all realized spiritually rather than soulishly or physically. Death is emphasized, dramatized, its power glorified by men who minister, not out of the power of life, but out of the fear of death. It is the fear of death that drives many in this hour to seek the immortality of the body. And make no mistake! “**If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead SHALL ALSO QUICKEN (MAKE ALIVE) YOUR M-O-R-T-A-L B-O-D-I-E-S by His Spirit that dwelleth in you**” (Rom. 8:11). That is the hope yet to be fulfilled in and through the manifested sons of God. But I say to all who have not the consciousness of that eternal life which is already yours, that resurrection in which you are already raised, that eternal consciousness, existence and being you already are, I say to those who are striving for physical immortality because of the fear of the finality of death — Christ has already come and Himself partook of flesh and blood, that through death He might destroy death, and might DELIVER THEM WHO THROUGH FEAR OF DEATH ARE ALL THEIR LIFETIME SUBJECT TO BONDAGE. Under the Old Testament life and immortality had not yet been fully brought to light. No wonder the old saints often lived and spoke as those subject to bondage. No wonder they emphasized the power of death, the hopelessness of death, the finality of death! But how sad that the redeemed of Jesus Christ, His brethren, so often prove that they know so little of the deliverance and life He has given and the song of joy: “Death is swallowed up in victory. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through Christ our Lord!” My brother! art thou living in the full experience of this blessed truth? He delivers from the fear of death and the bondage it brings, changing it into the joy of knowing that “we have passed from death unto life!

Since then, we have been made alive because of our spirit being quickened by His Spirit, Paul leads us on to another marvelous truth which I fear multitudes of earnest believers are failing to see, including some elect saints of God. “**Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but a now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who HATH ABOLISHED DEATH, and HATH BROUGHT life and immortality to light through the gospel**” (II Tim. 1:9-10). The Word of God is true. It is not a silly fairy tale or a superstitious myth. It is not a lie. Men are liars. God is true. And when God says, “Christ who hath abolished death,” we poor puny worms of the dust had better believe it, and cease calling God a liar by telling Him He is wrong. For “**he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar**” (I Jn. 5:10). Oh, read it and re-read it and rejoice in it with joy unspeakable and full of glory! Through His thirty-three years of death Christ hath abolished death and through the power of His glorious resurrection He has brought that resurrection life into us so that it is wonderfully true that “**when we were dead . . . He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus**” (Eph 2:5-6).

Christ on Calvary bore every sin of every sinner. He was made a sin-offering (Capricornus—the goat) for us, He who knew no sin. And since He became our sin-offering, therefore when He died, our sin died. Calvary atoned. And then and there the total and unending death that fallen on Adam and his race fell on another. “The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD” (Jn. 6:51). Oh, the victory of Calvary means so much more than any of us ever realized in the past. It was such a pathetically ineffectual work, according to the way it was once taught us. It was weak and so limited in scope, so incomplete! Christ came to save the world (Jn, 12:47); God sent His Son “that THE WORLD through Him might be saved” (Jn. 3:17). But it was all in vain. He wasn't able to do what He came for. That's what the preachers say. Thank God, that long night of darkness is passing! Thank God, a fuller, deeper message now goes forth, which does not limit the God of Israel, which does not belittle and besmear the atonement, the all-inclusive work of our Saviour Jesus Christ! He did not die in vain! He was not a failure! Calvary was not a defeat, but an exultant victory. And there He, the spotless sinless Lamb of God actually gave His life for the life “OF THE WORLD.” Let us never again forget that fact.

The world was lost. All had sinned. And the wages of sin is death. Oh, let us grasp this one great spiritual truth! Babylon has lied to us. Let us forsake her shame and deceptions and evil imaginings! She has led us to believe that the wages of sin is anything and everything else but what God says it is. What a fraud! What a fiend she has made of the God of love and mercy and grace! And it made her the richest earthly institution which ever did exist or ever will. But no: the wages of sin is actually death. And Jesus died. Therefore the world goes free. It doesn't take a Doctorate in mathematics or physics to figure that out. The equation is very simple. Yes, friend, Christ actually gave His life “for the life “OF THE WORLD:” not for one half of it, not for just a few Christians who are “not of this world.” He actually paid the full penalty for the sins “OF THE WORLD”—A-L-L OF IT. Jesus actually paid it all! All men, because of sin, had come under the curse and were dead. They were lost, bound for eternal night. But Jesus, the only Man who was born to die, the last Man who ever did actually die, became the sin-offering for every sinner, and bore those sins to dark Calvary. Listen to this! I did not write it. It is the Word of the eternal God which all of us in the past have loudly proclaimed to be inspired; yet not one of us believed a word of it, except the little scraps here and there which suited our fancy, tickled our vanity, or appeared to support our superstitions. Here is what God says: “Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came UPON A-L-L MEN to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came UPON A-L-L MEN unto justification of life” (Rom. 5:18). Oh, if we could but get all the poor victims of pope and popery to read and believe that one verse of scripture, then all their bowing and scraping and paying would stop immediately. And if we could get all the Christians in the churches to somehow believe it, what a transformation it would bring. And if all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship could somehow believe it, how it would hasten the day of manifestation! Jesus gave His life for the life of the world. That ends the matter for all time and eternity. So Paul could write, “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). Because of this John the beloved could write, “He is the propitiation (mercy-seat, sin-offering) for our sins: and NOT FOR OURS ONLY, BUT ALSO FOR THE SINS OF THE W-H-O-L-E W-O-R-L-D” (1 Jn. 2:2). And because of this Paul could affirm, “Christ.... HATH ABOLISHED DEATH.” He could also write, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death... that He by the grace of God SHOULD TASTE DEATH F-O-R E-V-E-R-Y M-A-N” (Heb. 2:9). Certainly “every man” includes Adolf Hitler, Nero, Cain, and every other son of Adam from the dawn of history to the end of the last age that will ever come. And because of this we, like the woman at the well, “KNOW that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour OF THE W-O-R-L-D. That is the free gift to every son of Adam who was ever born or ever will be. Let God be true, and every man a liar! For death is actually abolished, there is no longer any such thing. When Jesus died, sin died. When He arose, death died. The abolishment of death became an actuality in very fact on the resurrection morn, when the triumphant proclamation went forth, “He is not here: for He is risen” (Mat. 28:6). It was effective even from the day that God closed Eden's gates, though not manifested.

But now someone is going to question the foregoing statements and ask us why it is that, if death is abolished, men continue to die. The answer is, of course, men do not continue to die. Oh, we know their bodies go to the grave. And we call this death. It is not death. God does not call it death. Those who equate death with a body in a coffin know absolutely nothing about death. Ye who were dead hath He quickened! I was lying neither in a coffin at the funeral parlor nor in a dark hole in the ground when I was quickened and made alive in Christ. Death was not my body in a coffin, and the life I have received is not an immortal flesh-body. Don't you

see? What men call death is not death, and what men call life is not life. Only when the Holy Spirit enables us to see the true nature of all things can we understand a mystery so deep. One man came and by the grace of God tasted death "FOR E-V-E-R-Y M-A-N." Mark carefully, He only tasted it. He remained in death for thirty-three and one half years culminating in the death of the cross. He merely sampled it. But He sampled it in the place of every son of Adam. He actually tasted death "FOR E-V-E-R-Y M-A-N." Do you believe it? Dare you believe it? The mystery is just this. Jesus died for the whole race of men. When He arose He injected He injected life into the stream of humanity, so that there is a spiritual quality in man that transcends the body realm. It is a dimension of being that even the grave cannot hold. It is that "light" which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and that light is Christ (Jn. 1:4,9-10). No life beyond the grave? Then Christ did not die and rise again, He did not taste death for every man, He did not give His life for the life of the world, He did not abolish death and bring life and immortality to light! That light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world is the spiritual sense of being, that in man which is eternal and deathless, which God will pursue until it is brought to the image and likeness of God that He may become "All-in-all." This free gift came (has already come) upon ALL MEN unto justification of life (Rom. 5:18). Can anything be plainer! Any other doctrine is OLD TESTAMENT doctrine, not the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who hath abolished death.

Hearken to the Word! One day a poor man, a heartbroken father, came to the Master. His little daughter had passed on. He said, **"My daughter is dead" (Mat. 9:18)**. He thought she was dead. Little did he comprehend that the One who stood before him is the resurrection and the life. But what did the Master say? A strange word for Old Testament saints, for sure. "And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn." What did He say on another occasion! **"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep" (Jn. 11:11)**. Oh yes, a little farther on, because the disciples misunderstood Him, He also said that Lazarus was dead. This which we call physical death is the nearest thing to death that we know. But the New Testament everywhere draws a clear and sharp distinction between death and sleep. What is the difference? you ask. There is a great difference, indeed! A dead man has no life, consciousness or being. But a sleeping man IS STILL ALIVE THOUGH UNCONSCIOUS TO THE WORLD AROUND HIM. And he is STILL CONSCIOUS ON ANOTHER PLANE. Thus, the martyr Stephen "fell asleep" while beholding the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, and crying with a loud voice into that bright world beyond the mortal, **"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! (Acts 6:54-60)**. As to the earth realm he was asleep; as to Christ in His glory at the right hand of the Father he was wondrously alive in the spirit. As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, **"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (I Thes. 4:13-14)**. This passage contains a two-dimensional truth. From the earthly aspect those who have gone by way of the grave sleep; from the heavenly aspect they come with Jesus when He comes, out of the heavenly and spiritual dimension of consciousness and being. Since Jesus came and brought life to men this thing we call physical death is merely a sleep, merely a divine provision on the way to the fullness of life whereby we lay aside this sin-cursed house of clay, to live in the spirit unto God. Paul understood this mystery and wrote of his own destiny: **"For me, to live is Christ—His life in me; and to die is gain. If, however, it is to be life in the flesh and I am to live on here that means fruitful service for me; so I can say nothing as to my personal preference—I cannot choose, but I am hard pressed between the two. My yearning desire is to depart — be free of this world, to set forth — and be with Christ, for that is far, far better; but to remain in my body is more needful and essential for your sake" (Phil 1:21-24)** (Amplified). Peter, too, knew that he had apprehended a life that transcends this physical, for he wrote: **"Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance" (II Pet. 1:13-15)**. No morbid tale here of the finality of death, of unconscious non-existence, of darkness and nothingness! Ah Peter knew that the body was merely a tabernacle, a tent, a house, a covering for the incorruptible life of God in his inner man, the new creation born of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. Hallelujah!

While it is gloriously true that Christ has given His life to all men, to the whole world, yet it is evident that there must be a progression in the development of that life in the experience of every man until every vestige of the death realm has been swallowed up, spirit, soul and body. To those who walk with Christ there is an ever-

increasing consciousness, growth, increase, unfoldment, maturation and triumph of that life. The mighty working of His power within is followed by this very precious and understandable result: "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (**Rom 8:11**). I believe I now see more clearly than I have ever done why it was that Paul, who, as you and I do, still dwelt in the hellish bondage of a mortal body cried out, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (**I Cor. 15:53-57**). We are, indeed, terribly and horribly in bondage to the body of this death, and with us the whole creation is groaning, waiting for the day when the sons of God will deliver them from the bondage of corruption. I do not need to argue with any man to prove our present mortality in the flesh. If you must sleep to live, you are mortal. If you must eat to live, you are obviously mortal. If you must breathe to live, you are unquestionably mortal. We are all aware of our constant and unremitting decay as the aging process etches its marks upon us. Our present mortality is naught but death, although we live in the spirit. Think of it! Meditate deeply upon it and cling to this realm of death no more. Reach up, my beloved, with the blessed arm of faith and embrace that bright realm above where that which is true in our spirit reaches down and takes hold upon our outer man, where this mortal puts on immortality, where death in all its aspects is swallowed up of life, where in that final victory of His life within the sons of God will upon this earth shout in triumph over both death and the grave.

Truly we yearn for this change, for our desire is not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon that mortality may be swallowed up of life (II Cor. 5:1-5). Yea, we groan inwardly for this transformation to take place. I continually meet up with brethren who confess that they have already put on physical immortality and incorruption, that they have already passed over the grave and cannot and will not die. I must be very honest and frank with you, my beloved brothers I have not one whit of a desire to live forever IN THIS BODY OF HUMILIATION. There is no more frightening thought, no more repugnant possibility, than the idea that I might live forever in this body of humiliation! Thank God, there is to be a change! "Who will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation to conform and to be like the body of His glory and majesty, by exerting that power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself" (**Phil. 3:21**) (Amplified). The thought of merely adding immortality to this body of humiliation, with no other change, the suggestion of such limitation, that I might have to bathe, anoint my body with deodorant, brush my teeth, and use Scope throughout eternity, the hint that I might retain this base form, that I might remain as I am unendingly, falls as far short of what I conceive of a body transformed and fashioned like unto the body of His glory and majesty as hell falls short of heaven! The body of incorruption shall resemble this vile body no more than does the oak tree resemble the chemical elements of the earth which were raised up into the substance of the tree by the mighty working of the subtle and mysterious life force sown in the earth as a seed.

Son of God! If we would be fashioned like unto Him, co-sharers of His glory and power and wisdom as the God-man, we must not simply rest content with the faith that trusts in the cross and its pardon; we must follow on to know the fullness of the New Life, the life of glory and power in human nature, injected into man through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, of which the spirit of the glorified

Jesus is the witness and the source. Now, practically everything in relationship to our sonship depends upon the clearness with which this great truth that I have stated is recognized. The Holy Spirit of God inspired the message of these words in **Rom 5:9-11**, "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being now justified by His blood, we SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE... and ... we joy.... in our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement." The double provision of Christ is here clearly set forth: reconciled by His death; saved by His life. Christ's death is the atonement, reconciling men to God, granting a full and free admittance back into Eden's lovely garden from which our disobedient fore-parents were once banished. But Christ's life is the Tree of Life in the garden, the source of the life which shall work in us the complete transformation into the divine nature. Sin, sickness, sorrow, fear and death are all part of a power in our life; let us fully understand that it can only be met by another higher power. The power of sin and death works all through our life. The death of Christ, which is the atonement, reconciles us to God, but only

the life of Christ can come against the power of sin and death and deliver our life from destruction. Reconciliation places us, in God's eyes, back in Eden's garden; but the Tree of Life is the power that delivers my life from the dominion of sin and death. He redeemeth my life, by His life, from death! Christ's life, not His death, living in our life, absorbing it, impregnating it, transforming it causes us to live. This is the meaning of that profound sentence in which Paul records the first great work of salvation and pointedly distinguishes it from the second great work of salvation, saying, "if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. The first is the dying goat; the second is the living fish!

"We shall be saved by His LIFE," says Paul. Paul meant no disrespect to the atonement when he said, "We shall be saved by His life. He was bringing out one of the great facts of salvation. If God gives atoning power with one hand, and power to save the life from destruction with the other hand, there is no conflict between these. Both are from God. If you call the one justification and the other glorification, God is the author of them both. If Paul seems to take something from the one work and add it to the other, he takes nothing from God. Atonement is from God! Reconciliation is from God! Power to conquer sin and death is from God. Christ is all in all, the beginning and the end. When the thing we want is deliverance from the guilt of sin, condemnation, let us appropriate the gift God has given us to remove our guilt—the DEATH of Christ. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins" (Col. 1:14). When the thing we want is power to redeem our life from sin, corruption and death, then let us apply the gift which God has given us for our life, the LIFE of the Son of God. "He that hath the Son hath life."

When an Israelite was bitten by flaming serpents in the wilderness, he never thought of applying manna to the wound. The manna was for his life. But he did think of applying the brazen serpent. The manna would never have cured his snake bite; nor would the brazen serpent have kept him from starving! Suppose he had said, now I am healed by this serpent, I feel cured, and I need not eat this manna anymore. The serpent has done it all, and I am well." The result would have been, or course, that he would have died. The man, to be sure, was cured, delivered from the judgment of his rebellion against God, but he has to LIVE, and if he eats no manna his life must languish, go to destruction, die. Without going to any trouble about it, simply by the inevitable process of nature, he would have died. The manna was God's provision to redeem his life from destruction, after the serpent has redeemed it from judgment. And if he did nothing to stop the natural progress of corruption, in the natural course of things, he must die. Now there is no contradiction between these two things—the manna is from God and the serpent is from God. But they are different gifts for different things. The serpent removed the judgment, but could not sustain life; the manna gave life, but could not deal with the sentence. To apply this to the case in hand. The death of Christ, on the one hand, is the brazen serpent. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up (on the cross)" (Jn 3:14). Christ's life on the other hand, is the manna—the bread of life. "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn 6:50-51). In the light of these remarkable words we can reach only one of two conclusions. Either all who have believed on Christ since that blessed day when these wonderful words poured from His divine lips have partaken of Him, eaten of His living flesh and have not died but have begun to live forever, or, else, NO ONE HAS EVER EATEN OF HIM FROM THAT DAY TO THIS, for all have continued to go by way of the grave. Either Jesus has given eternal life to all who eat of Him, and there is a life, consciousness and being that transcends the grave, or He lied and did not give His flesh for the life of the world, so that none has ever sat at His table and received the life of which He spake. Do you really believe that God is that wicked that He would send forth redemption and then withhold it for another two thousand years? Let me ask you a question, my friend. If you had the power of immortality in your hand right now, would you wait another two thousand years to use it while billions of mankind continued to go out into endless nothingness? Wake up! my beloved. Let us get beyond the fantasy of a merely carnal and earthly and physical understanding of truth! "He that hath the Son HATH LIFE," saith the Lord. "And we know that we HAVE PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE," add all who know and love the truth.

Of all the wealth of scripture truth nothing is more certain or clear than the fact that our sins are not forgiven by bread, nor are our lives nourished and supported by death. Our life is not made incorruptible and eternal by Christ's death, nor transformed from day to day from the power of sin and death by the atonement. Our life is

not redeemed from destruction by the crucifixion of Christ, nor is it brought to perfection from day to day by the death of Christ. But we are saved, as the Holy Ghost saith, "by HIS LIFE." We cannot live upon death. And after, by the atonement, we are forgiven, and have entered by faith through the gateway into Eden's fair garden, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, having acceptance before God, we shall then be saved, delivered, changed, transformed, perfected and fully glorified BY HIS LIFE. The atonement gives us the right to enter back into Eden but only the tree of life can make us live! To, sum up, therefore, it is one thing to be reconciled by the death of Christ, and quite another to be saved by His life. If reconciliation and justification could make men be CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD then all the baby Christians in all of Babylon's harlot religious systems would be well on their way to sonship. The death of Christ can make one a justified believer, bringing him to life, but only the mighty working of the indwelling life of God's Christ can enable us to put on the mind of Christ and be transformed in thought, desire, emotion, nature and body into His likeness. He redeemeth my life from destruction. How? By His life. This is the power of a full and complete salvation! Unspeakable are the blessings of the high and heavenly realm of God's incorruptible life which flow to the soul from the union with Jesus in His glorified life. Blessed Tree of Life! It is ours, for Jesus is ours. Blessed life of the ages! We have the possession within our earth of its hidden power, and we have the prospect before us of its fullest glory. May our daily lives, in all we think and say and do, be bright and blessed proof that the hidden power dwells within, daily preparing us for the glory to be revealed. May the eternal and incorruptible fruit of our redeemed life within be our power to live to the glory of the Father, our fitness to share the glory of the Son.

Beyond the fact of the revelation of the wonderful law of life out of death as wrought out in Jesus Christ, there is also the mighty operation of this principle in our own life and experience as sons of God. A dear friend of many years penned some precious and enlightening insights to the outworking of life from death in us which I am moved to share with my readers at this point. She wrote: "The carnal mind would have us to believe that the way Up is Up. Thus we have pressed our way into ministry, pressed our way into the things we have desired, 'stood on the promises,' demanded of God our 'rights,' sought to have our own way in both spiritual and physical things—forgetting that which was spoken by the Lord through the prophets saying, "My ways are NOT your ways neither are My thoughts your thoughts.' It is true, children of God, that God wants to take us UP — high into the realms of God — UP to Jerusalem — but God would have us to know that the way UP is always DOWN! If we would go up; we must first go down, for God is operating by the principle of death and resurrection. He has plainly stated that nothing is quickened (made alive) except it first die. In this walk, you do not gain by keeping — for you are able only to keep that which you are first willing to lose. In this walk you do not live by living — you live by dying. The laws of the Kingdom of God are in reverse to the laws of this natural realm. The way to life is death, the way to victory is defeat, the way to glory is shame, and the way up is down!

"We have all been soulish — viewing the things of God through the intellect of soul, through the emotionalism of soul, through the beclouding of the appetites of the flesh — and our concepts of heaven, of the Kingdom of God, of salvation, and of the purposes of God have long been contaminated with self's desire for comfort and blessing. God is changing all that, praise His name, and we are beginning to learn to give up some of our childish things that we might grow to the maturity of the Christ, the most outstanding characteristic of whom is utter SELFLESSNESS. We have hitherto been possessed of that old 'do-good-to-me' concept of the Kingdom of God. We were expecting great liberty — something that would, no doubt, gratify our senses and promote our ego — something, perhaps that would, no doubt, gratify our senses and promote us in the sight of men. And if you will be honest, saint, you will have to admit that such has been your concept of sonship, or Kingdom, or eternal life, or heaven, or whatever doctrine has been uppermost in your mind in recent years. The old concepts of heaven — with its streets of gold and pearly gales — surely we are able to see that there is nothing in that that would appeal to the spirit of a man. It is the flesh that is interested in gold, and pearls, and precious stones. God chose these things which are so highly esteemed among men to depict the far greater riches of a realm we cannot see with the natural eye. We interpreted them literally because we were so flesh-minded that we could not see beyond the symbol to the reality it represented. The riches typified by these precious things are far greater in value to the spirit of a man than the literal could ever be. As one said not long ago, 'Those things are too cheap.' What does the spirit care about such things? Does it really matter to the spirit what kind of a street it walks on? If we have not come to an understanding of this before, let us now ask God to elevate our thoughts and see with the spiritual eye the glory that is portrayed in these cheap earthly materials. Streets of gold? Jesus said, 'I am the way (the street).' Gates of pearl? We are that pearl of great

price for which Jesus sold all that He had. Precious stones? 'They (God's people) shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day that I come to make up My jewels!

Some will, no doubt, say, 'I passed those ideas by a long time ago. I have come to a knowledge of sonship!' Ah! But how soulish we have been in our understanding of sonship. Sons of God! Glorious thought! And in it we have seen great glorious ministry, miracle working power, people falling at our feet in awe of the presence of God manifested in our lives. Can you not see that that, too, is a desire of the flesh — EGO panting for recognition — SELF waiting to come into its own! If we have been thinking along those lines, we have never yet heard the Word of God — for he who hears knows that one does not come to glory through glory: one comes to glory through shame. Joseph became a mighty prince of Egypt — but do consider the pathway that brought him there: DOWN into the pit, DOWN into slavery, DOWN into the dungeon. He was on his way up, but the way up was down! Oh, that the saints of God in this hour might come to the recognition and understanding of the ways of God! 'That I might know Him,' Paul cried, 'in the fellowship of His sufferings, BEING MADE CONFORMABLE TO HIS DEATH, that I may (also) know Him in the power of His resurrection.'

"There was a time when the apostle Peter was faced with this dilemma, even as we are. It all began with a simple question: 'Peter, lovest thou Me?' Peter's reply was, 'Yes, Lord.' Then, 'Feed My lambs.' Again the question came, 'Peter? Do you love Me?' Peter was cautious as he answered, 'Yes, Lord. I love you.' Another command: 'Feed My sheep.' One last time, 'Peter? Do you love Me?' It was a frustrated Peter who replied this time, 'Lord, you know I love you!' And a patient Jesus who answered, 'Feed My sheep!' It was not insignificant that the Lord addressed Peter three times. There is something beneath the surface here. In the first realm, the realm of the flesh, the realm of the outer court ministry or the first heaven, the Lord asks, 'Do you love Me?' And the Christian answers, 'Yes, Lord.' Because the Lord knows the immaturity of one at that level, He gives only the instruction to feed the young ones, the lambs, the babies. That is all that is required of the first level of Christian experience. It was, however, a higher level to which the Lord referred in the second question, and with the question, He was bringing Peter's thoughts higher: 'Peter, do you love Me in the second heaven, in the holy place, in the Spirit filled level?' What else could Peter do but say, 'Yes, Lord. I love you here, too.' The lambs are beginning to mature in that realm, and the Lord, therefore, says to Peter, 'Feed My sheep.' There is yet a higher realm, and we dare not stop before we reach it. This is the realm of the holiest of all, the third heaven of which Paul spoke, and now the Lord is asking Peter, 'Do you love Me here, Peter? Do you love Me in the HOLIEST OF ALL?' Can we not feel Peter's emotions when he answers, 'Oh, yes, Lord I love you here, too!' Do we not also sense the cry of the Saviour's heart in saying, 'Then, feed My sheep.' He didn't stop there, however, for the Lord went on to say, 'When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.' These were the Lord's instructions to Peter as to HOW he would feed the sheep in the third realm, for the word continues in saying, 'This spake He signifying by what death he should die!'

"Because these words were spoken not only to Peter but unto us as well, there are some things that we must not fail to grasp. First, this event transpired on the THIRD occasion of Jesus' appearing to His disciples after His resurrection (Jn. 21:14), offering the clue that Jesus was giving insight into the condition of the THIRD REALM experience, the entry into, the Holiest of all, or Kingdom life manifestation. It must be remembered that that realm is seen in the tabernacle of Moses as containing only one piece of furniture: the Ark of the Covenant. The Hebrew tells us that the ark was a COFFIN — a wooden coffin overlaid with gold. To enter into that realm, then, is to enter into such a state of bondage that it is a condition of death. It was to this death that Jesus was referring when He said, 'When you were young (immature), you went where you wanted to go — you did what you wanted to do — you, in effect, did your own thing. But when you are old (mature) you will stretch forth your hands and another shall gird thee and carry you where you would not want to go.' This was the description of Peter's death — not a physical death that would plant his human body six feet under the ground — but a death to his own will, to his own way, to his own opinions and thoughts; and this, saint of God! is the only way that we shall ever, obey His command to FEED HIS SHEEP who are seeking pasture in that third realm experience. Those who have come to the door of that holy place will not hear a word that is contaminated with the will of men or the ways of the flesh. The sheep of that third realm pasture desire the ESSENCE, the FRAGRANCE of His knowledge, and will settle for no less than the SWEETNESS of the perfume of HIS NATURE and HIS LIVING PRESENCE upon us!

"It was pure LOVE who was hanging on the cross two thousand years ago — and it was as His own belly was ripped open by a Roman spear that the New Wine of the Kingdom of God began to flow. He was bound — not by nails — but in the spirit to a wooden cross, pouring out His life's blood that you and I might live through Him. In the words, then, that Jesus spoke to Peter was an invitation: an invitation to share His cross, partake of His sufferings, to come out of the liberty of self and into the bondage of love — that bread might be taken from the inner man and dealt out, broken and bruised, to the multitudes! Jesus says, also, to us as to those who walked with Him so many centuries ago: 'Give ye them to eat' (Lk. 9:13).

**“Broken bread—a love dealt out
To Adam’s hungry soul
Torn from the riven sides of those
Whom Jesus Christ makes whole.**

**A nature—binding deep within
A man to other men
That pours out life to share with them
Its liberty from sin.**

**Wounded hands—that serve e’en those
Who drive in them the nails
Living out the spirit’s truth
Of love that never fails.**

**A bondage—binding sons of God
To the Tree of Life, you see,
The living out of God’s great love
Thus setting mankind free.”**

—Connie Asbill

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 30 CAPRICORNUS-THE GOAT [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART THIRTY

THE PIERCED EAGLE
THE SOARING EAGLE
A TIME TO SOLO
ASCENDING AND DESCENDING

Capricornus, like all the Signs of the Zodiac, has three decans, or minor constellations, which surround it. The Decans belong to the Sign and their message is part of the Sign's message. The three Decans of Capricornus are Sagitta, Aquila, and Delphinus. Sagitta means "The Arrow," but this is not the arrow of Sagittarius, for that is an arrow intended for the enemies of God, to conquer and subdue them unto Him. Here the arrow is pictured in mid-heaven as having been shot by an invisible hand. It is seen in its flight through the heavens. There is a majesty and a mystery about it which startles and awes. The wonderful work which the arrow accomplishes is seen in the dying goat and in the falling eagle. It is a part of the great revelation of the life that comes out of death, or the death that issues forth into life. It is the arrow of God which wounds in order to release life. The Psalmist spoke of this in relation to the entrance of Jesus into this world of sin and death, "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and Thy hand presseth me sore" (Ps. 38:2). Isaiah revealed the deep meaning in this when he prophesied of Christ, "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. . . it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His Hand: (Isa. 53:4). Job the patriarch spoke of a similar thing when he lamented, "The arrows of the Almighty are within me" (Job 6:4). There is a spiritual piercing and slaying in the case of those who come to new life in Christ, akin to the piercing and slaying of the Christ Himself. Isaiah received a revelation of this arrow in the Lord's quiver, a wounding arrow which enters men's souls and brings them down into death of the self-life, that Christ may be revealed in His glory. The very arrow which poured out the life of Jesus our Saviour passes through Him to pierce also those who are joined in union with Him, also killing them to all that is contrary to God's purpose, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in them.

THE PIERCED EAGLE

One of the most prominent of the late summer constellations is Aquila. Aquila is an eagle, but always pictured in the old Zodiacs as a wounded and falling eagle. The eagle in this constellation is consistent with what we have noted in the whole Sign of Capricornus. The slain goat of the sin-offering is followed by the arrow of God's judgment and the pierced and falling eagle. Under the Sign of Sagittarius the Harp was seen held by an eagle, or a Harp placed over the eagle. The meaning was clear — praise shall ascend up as an eagle toward heaven. And this praise is associated with the splendor of the Christ who is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, who also sings praises unto God in the midst of the church. Praise is heaven bound. It has a power and a force that will bear you heavenward and carry you to the Throne. In the midst of praise one finds himself lifted out of himself and beyond himself and above himself into the heavenlies, into celestial places, into new dimensions of the spirit, into new heights of reality and life. In this place of ascension the praiser so becomes one with his praise that he BECOMES THE PRAISE of God in the earth.

The eagle is the highest form of bird, the only creature able to look as it were directly into the sun's dazzling radiance. Aspiring to heights far beyond the physical or grossly material, this great bird symbolizes the upward flight of our journey into God. The Lord Himself is referred to a number of times in the scripture as an eagle. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings and brought you to Myself" (Ex. 19:4), and again, "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him" (Deut. 32:11). Christ is that royal eagle, flying high, the One who is at the right hand of God; who thought it not robbery to be equal with God;

that glorious One, the Son of God from on high. Yet, that One humbled Himself and was pierced by the arrow of God's judgment, and is seen here plummeting to the ground, the One who was so high becoming so low that we might be raised up into His heights, praise His wonderful name!

THE SOARING EAGLE

In this message we shall meditate upon both the heights and depths of Christ the eagle—Head and body. It is one of the loftiest of scriptural emblems. The eagle's courage and farsightedness is stated in Job 39:28-30. Its swiftness is alluded to in Deut. 28:49. The remarkable phenomenon of the renewal of its youth is mentioned by David in Ps. 103:5. The likeness of one of the living creatures about the Throne was the likeness of an eagle (Rev. 4:7). The eagle was the standard of the camp of Dan, which included Asher, Dan and Naphtali. From the dawn of human history the challenge of flight has captured the imagination of man. The conquest of the air in the past century has imbued men and women with a sense of awe and romance unequalled in the annals of history. Somehow the ability to fly has epitomized the longing of man to rise above the confines of the earthly and the mortal and soar into the realm of the spiritual and the supernatural. God has made wonderful provision in His Kingdom for man to have this spiritual need met, and yet few believers ever discover the laws by which this escape is possible, few ever achieve the perspective of the eagle, an ability to rise high enough to see things that those on the ground can never see. How can a man break into the high realm of the spiritual and the eternal—to soar in the heavenlies with Christ? In response let us look at a beautiful illustration used by the prophet Isaiah. **“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa. 40:31).**

Come with me now to a scene set in the West. Black, ominous thunderheads move swiftly across a summer sky. Jagged streaks of lightning pierce the darkness, followed by long peals of thunder. Below, in the barnlot on the edge of the high sierra, two members of the feathered kingdom react in different ways. Appearing similar in some aspects, the birds are actually as different as day and night. The chicken, with her head down, scratches frantically in the barnyard soil, her beak picking up an assortment of grub worms, insects and scraps. Her movements become more excited as the storm moves closer. She knows that she must hastily finish her meal because soon she will have to take refuge from the storm. Strange indeed and very different are the actions of the other bird. The eagle sits on the naked limb of a dead tree, his head turning this way and that searching the scene, his sharp eyes piercing the clouds, scanning the heavens. Suddenly he spreads his great wings and waits—testing the winds. A gust of wind blows across his perch and he lifts into the air with a royal scream. He soars into the sky, circling higher and higher above the storm. On the barnlot below the storm breaks in all its fury. The chicken fearfully scurries about hunting for shelter. She darts, with all the other chickens, into the safety of the barn where they huddle together in their misery, fearing every lightning streak and thunder bolt. As the storm rages below the eagle rides calm and majestic in the bright world above.

True as this picture is in the natural realm, it is even more true in the spiritual realm. Eagles are symbolic of a certain class of Christians. The wise man said in the book of Proverbs that among those mysteries in the universe that were too hard to understand, one was the **“mystery of the eagle in the air” (Prov. 30:18-19)**. The symbolism of this passage points to the inexplicable potential of each and every son of God, which is like the eagle's, which can fly higher than any other bird without once flapping a wing. Did you notice that Isaiah said that eagles and eagle saints “mount up” and not “flap up”? Eagles were not made to go flapping about in soulish exercises, unprofitable self-efforts, or wasted fleshly energy—they were created to soar high and free. Eagles learn to fly without struggling because they instinctively understand the air currents. When the right wind is blowing he lifts effortlessly into the air with a shrill scream of triumph and freedom. **“But they that wait upon the Lord . . . shall mount up with wings as eagles.”** Herein is one of the eagle's secrets in being able to mount up—waiting. Those who wait upon the Lord, it is written, who trust in His moving, who respond to His promptings, who rest in His timing, who move in His purpose, will be the ones to mount up. The “mounting up” process is important and necessary to each son of God who would take his place in the heavenlies, filled with the precious mind of Christ, conformed to His wonderful image, and caught up to the Throne of God to rule and reign with Christ over all things. But it only comes to those who will wait in His presence until the glory that shines from His face changes them from the image of the earthly into the image of the heavenly. Should the eagle fail to wait for the current that lifts, he would never get off the ground. And the saint of God who does not wait for the moving of the Holy Spirit in the purposes of God will never get air borne or soar into the

heavenlies. Not everyone who receives Christ as Saviour and enjoys the blessings of His grace will forsake the idols of the earth's lowlands that stand in the temple of the heart, to pay the price to follow on to know the Lord in the heavenly places. But God has predestined those whom He hath foreknown, and has placed this instinctive and constant call within to rise to greater heights in the celestial realms above.

But not so with the chicken. If you were to search the Bible through and through you would discover that nowhere in the Word of God does the Holy Spirit applaud or honor the chicken. Sometime ago I read the following story. The writer said, "Five years ago when I was negotiating to buy our home in Mapleton, Utah, the owner gave me a tour of the property. Near the house was a pen with a four-foot fence. Inside the pen were some chickens. There was nothing on top of the pen to keep the chickens from flying out. I asked the owner if they ever flew out. 'No,' he answered. 'Did you clip their wings?' 'No. Their wings are perfectly good.' While I watched, one of the chickens fluttered a few feet straight up in the air, then settled back into the pen. 'Why don't they fly out?' 'Because they don't think they can. I once had a top on the pen, but after trying a few times to fly out, they quit trying.' 'Do they ever get out?' 'Yes, one of our kids left the gate open and they walked out. But we caught them easily. They didn't know they could fly"— end quote. Many people don't believe they can fly beyond the invisible fences they build around themselves. They snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Jesus said, "Consider the birds of the air." Don't look at the birds that just eat on the ground. The chicken doesn't fly. The eagle soars. They can rise. So can you! Ah, precious friend of mine, I do not hesitate to tell you that YOU CAN MAKE IT INTO SONSHIP, INTO THE HEIGHTS OF GOD. YOU CAN MAKE IT! I say. God is the God of eagle wings, and you are the sons and daughters of the Most High.

Some of you know what I'm talking about. You are stuck in a rut. Your life, naturally and spiritually, just isn't going any place. Some of you are trapped and stuck, mired down on your job, in your home, in your marital relationship, in family situations, in circumstances, problems, pressures, and limitations. These have all become a restrictive fence around you, which like the chickens, you think you can't surmount. The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the pleasures of life grow rampant in the lives of men and women today, choking the spiritual life of the Kingdom. The cares of this world have turned many people's lives into a pressure cooker. The strain of everyday living is steadily growing worse because of financial problems, higher taxes, inflation, government policies, the disturbing world situation, added responsibilities, sickness, hospital bills, rebellion in the home, unemployment, etc. The pressures and problems of "this life" are too numerous to mention, we are all faced with them every day. There are those seemingly needful involvements of daily living which we cannot shirk, but when they so OVERWHELM us that we find ourselves so fragmented and frustrated that we are not able to gather ourselves together to walk in the peace, joy and victory of the Kingdom— then we need to be loosed from these things, escape from them, soar high above them. Many of God's precious saints are so encumbered with the CARES OF THIS LIFE that prayer and waiting upon the Lord have been shoved back into some remote corner of their lives. They are utterly distracted by the responsibilities, pressures and problems of living until they are unable to serve the Lord with all their heart, mind and strength. Praise God! We find in Him a realm of freedom from all "these things", so that whatever state we are in we can rejoice and not be bound by them or to them. There is an escaping from the cares of this life—if we remember that we are eagles, not chickens!

There is another area of limitation that is a restrictive fence around the spiritual chickens also—and that is the religious realm which can cause one to be so caught up in its programs and works that it literally is a bondage. Well do I remember former years of pastoring churches when every weekend was crowded with a whirlwind of feverish activity, meetings, visitations, etc., that come Monday morning I was completely exhausted mentally and physically, needing another sabbath to rest and recuperate from the one I had just been through! I suppose I will make some enemies, but I must tell you the truth nonetheless. How much eager-beaver religious work is done out of a carnal desire to make good or appear successful! How many hours of prayer are wasted beseeching God to bless and prosper projects that are geared to the glorification of men! How much hard-earned money is poured out upon men who, in spite of their tear-in-the-voice appeals, nevertheless seek only to make a fair show in the flesh, building bigger and bigger castles in the sand! I have no hesitation in saying that a charismatic personality and a shrewd knowledge of human nature is ALL that any man needs to be a success in the religious circles today, including the "spirit-filled" ones. The church systems, for the most part, have accepted the monstrous heresy that noise, size, activity and bluster signify that something significant is being accomplished for God. The simplicity which is in Christ is rarely found. In its stead are

programs, methods, organizations, committees, board meetings, basketball tournaments, religious splash parties followed by devotions, Sunday School picnics, puppet shows, building fund drives, business men's banquets, revival meetings and a world more of feverish activities which occupy time, energy, and attention, but can never satisfy the deepest longings of the heart. The shallowness of the average Christian's inner experience, the hollowness of his worship, the immaturity of his walk, his incredible ignorance of God's great plan and purpose, the emptiness of his word, and the servile imitation of the world which marks the religious system's promotional methods all testify that the whole program, instead of being the divine out-roying of the Christ life, is naught but part and parcel of "the cares of this world."

So now man WORKS... and WORKS... and WORKS... diligently pursuing multiplied religious observances, external forms, activities of all sorts, and for all his effort he is able only to produce a pitifully small harvest of reality, eeking out but a meager spiritual existence! How incredibly busy he is scratching and picking up the grub worms, insects and scraps out of the dirt of his little chicken yard! Oh! to escape religiosity that we might learn to walk with God in the Spirit. And we rejoice to see how God is causing His elect to flee this realm. And let me assure you, my brother, my sister, I have no intention of assuming the burden of paying for men's programs, building men's kingdoms, or joining in their efforts to save the world, when God already has a plan for the salvation of all nations which will work, while men's efforts have failed. To hear some preachers tell it you would think that they had almost completed the job of world evangelization, and with only a few more millions of dollars, another TV network, an expanded relief program and a few more crusades the Kingdom will be here. The sad truth is, however, that the tidal wave of sin, sorrow, sickness, pain, ignorance, and death is greater in the earth in this hour than at any time since Noah entered the ark. But to remain continually bombarded by the appeal of all this activity and not become caught in its snare is an escape that only God can work in us and maintain for us. And only "the way of the eagle" can reveal it! Consider the birds of the air. You can be like them—you can soar like an eagle! Nothing is impossible to those who mount up with wings as the eagle. Whatever it is that is weighing you down, whatever it is keeping you from soaring; it is possible to break away. The ability to soar lies within—you don't have to go anywhere. You don't have to tear down the chicken fence or kill the chickens, or sit on the fence and frantically flap away. What I am saying is, YOU DON'T HAVE TO CHANGE ANY OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES ABOUT YOU. You can rise above them. The eagle is in you. You are the eagle. You can soar high above it all! There is a life within that transcends all the lowlands of the flesh—it will carry you high if you give yourself to it. It is the life of sonship, the power and glory and mind of the Christ within.

Many years ago Bill Britton wrote, "Chickens are symbolic of people. The only time chickens are referred to in the Bible, Jesus used them as a type of those people in Jerusalem who could not bear His message nor heed His call. They traveled in crowds, in broods, and they were earthbound. They kept their eyes upon the things of this world, scratching out a bare existence, and never lifted their heads to see Him who is from above. They ate the handouts that were cast to them, and searched greedily in the crowded barnlot for more to fill their bellies, much of it unclean, unspeakable filth. They are bound to their experience on the right and on the left by fences, and are satisfied. But not the eagle. For he has inherited a nature that cannot and will not survive in the confining capacity of the barnyard fowl. To be happy and to fulfill his purpose in life, he must be free to soar in the wide open spaces among the clouds of heaven. It seems lonely up there, for there are not many who will dare to rise to such heights, but the eagle does not care, for it is not in his nature to mingle with the multitudes or the majority. God is delivering many today from their earthbound existence, lifting them by the Holy Ghost into heavenly places in Christ. Things of earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. They do not fear the storm. The same persecution and tribulation that brings great travail upon a dead, backslidden church filled with earthly efforts, causes the eagle saints to soar to heights never before attained by man since the Pattern Son set the example. 'Fear not the storm, My little ones, for thou art not children of the storm. Look up. Lift up thy heads and rejoice, for thou art children of redemption, and thou hast inherited that heavenly nature. I have loosed the prison doors. Be thou free from thy captivity! Be not ensnared with the evil ways of this world's systems, but learn thou the ways of thy God, and follow Him alone. Thus shalt thou rise above that which cometh upon the earth, to try them which dwell therein. And thou shalt not fear, for I am with thee, saith the Lord'"—end quote.

"The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is he earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the

image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (I Cor. 15:47-49). “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open (unveiled) face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed (transformed, transfigured) into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (II Cor. 3:17-18). “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). “Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:20). “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6). “To the extent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:10-11). “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. . .” (Heb. 3:1) “But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly (spiritual): wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God” (Heb. 11:16). “But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22).

From these pictures we can readily see that our calling is a HEAVENLY CALLING. Let others tend the things of the earth. Let the dead bury the dead. Let the few who are called to this High Calling be about their Father’s business. WHEREFORE! “WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” As partakers in this heavenly calling let us consider Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. As our APOSTLE Jesus Christ proclaims and opens up the way before us that we may walk in the calling ordained for us. And what is that calling? TO BE PARTAKERS WITH HIM IN HIS OWN H-E-A-V-E-N-L-Y CALLING! Here are indeed great words! “Calling” here, as always in the epistles, has reference not to an invitation to go to some far-off heaven somewhere, but to a present heavenly state of being. For New Creation men, according to Col. 1:12, have already been made “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” and our “citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20), and God hath “raised us up together, made us sit together IN THE HEAVENLIES in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6). “Having therefore brethren, BOLDNESS TO ENTER INTO THE HOLIEST by the blood of Jesus. . .” We, the Royal Priesthood, DO HAVE BOLDNESS TO ENTER IN. We need not wait, and we do not have to go to some heaven far beyond the Milky Way. This thing is taking place within us right at this time, blessed be His wonderful name! For us it is a glorious privilege to enter into this heavenly realm, into this holiest place, because Jesus Christ, our High Priest and Forerunner, has opened the way and bids us enter. Multitudes know Jesus as their Savior, Baptizer, Healer, Sanctifier and Blessor, but do you know Jesus as your Forerunner? Do you know Him as the Forerunner of the MELCHIZEDEKIAN PRIESTHOOD, the eternal and heavenly Priesthood? Now we hear the word to us and it is that we are to come in with boldness. Come right in to the Holy of Holies. Come right in to that heavenly place where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Come right in to the presence of God. Come right in to the glory of God. Come right in to the authority and dominion of God. Come right in to that high and holy realm where only HIGH PRIESTS enter! We need not be afraid, for we have a High Priest who is now appearing in the presence of God for us, not in our place, but for us, ON OUR BEHALF, for that is the true sense of the words “for us.” This Apostle and High Priest of our profession abides in this high and exalted realm and we are to come right in.

You may stand without. You may wait for Jesus to return. You may wait for the “rapture.” You may wait for your mansion over the hill-top or your cabin in the corner of gloryland. Some dwell in the Outer Court while others tarry in the Holy Place. The Outer Court is crowded with Evangelicals and Fundamentalists. The Holy place is flooded with Pentecostals and Charismatics. But the Apostle and High Priest of our heavenly calling abides in the Most Holy Place and continues to invite us to come in. We have been standing outside and we have said to one another, “Isn’t that wonderful and glorious and mighty — that place within the veil! Multitudes do not dare because of fear to even look into the place. They don’t know that the veil was rent, that Jesus our Forerunner has entered in for us. And the word is to come right in, even into the Holy of Holies which is in heaven itself. Sit down in the presence of the living God. Sit down with the Christ as a Priest upon His throne. For the great High Priest is there ministering, and we are to minister with Him, the Royal Priesthood, those who are made PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING. If we can ever see this, if we somehow by God’s grace and the quickenings of the Holy Ghost can get ahold of it, we will not hesitate to yield ourselves unto the call of God to mount up with wings as the eagle and soar high into the heavens until we reign with Christ on high! Not in some future day, or age, or world—but here and now.

Eagles prefer the heights when they soar, and when they rest. His is a soaring spirit. The eagle is the jet plane of the bird family. It soars the highest, goes the fastest, and is superior to all other birds in this respect. You do not have to prompt the eagle to fly, once he has learned how. No need to sing a chorus twenty-five times, clap the hands, stomp the feet, in order to work up the spirit of soaring. If he cannot fly, he is in misery—he was made for altitude. He is born for the heights. And flying is just as natural as breathing. EAGLE SAINTS have their citizenship in heaven. They live in the world, but their feelings, affections, desires, aspirations, conversation and actions are above it. Their greatest impulses are upward, ever upward. They build their nests in the heights of the Mountains of God, and prefer and long to be where they are no more annoyed with the noises, mundaneness and dangers of this world order. Actually, we do not move in and out of heavenly realms at our whim. Our citizenship is in heaven, we exist constantly in the heavenlies. This is a spiritual state of constant existence, but because we are still in this flesh realm, we are not always conscious of the greater privileges of our heavenly existence. In the Kingdom of God the heavenly man is the only man—the man is Christ. **“If I have told you earthly things, and ye believed not how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things. And no man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which IS IN HEAVEN” (Jn. 3:12-14).** Jesus Christ while on earth was still in the heavenlies. That is not a strange statement to an eagle saint! “He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” He had eagle’s wings—the spirit of the heavenlies. His body was on earth and His spirit joined to the heavenly Father far above all. Those that have been swallowed up by Christ gravitate around Him. His life is their life, His joys, their joys, His peace, their peace. They have no other life. “For me to live is Christ,” said Paul. Paul was an eagle saint. Paul’s life was heavenly. He was above. He would not come down.

Carl Schwing has written, “Sonship is not a message. Those who proclaim such know nothing as they ought. Sonship is not something sought after, it does not come by a decision, man did not design it, cannot offer it and cannot attain to it. Sonship is a birthright predetermined by the Father, within His Holy Courts, before there was an age! However, there is a path which leads those ‘predestined souls’ to sonship. It is a lonely path of rejection, suffering, humiliation and complete abandonment. It is the path of the eagle! It leads beyond the natural realm, the religious realm, yea, even beyond the spiritual realm, to a place of unity with Christ and His Father. In this celestial realm of unity, we begin to learn and know Christ, beyond the scriptures. Too long, we, like the Jews of old, have sought the scriptures for in them we thought we had life. But now we are becoming one with Him whom the sacred page revealed. In the stillness of the Dawn our spirits possess a freedom from all other influences... a freedom to soar into the high and holy places known only to our Father. To enter into the storehouse of the Lord and learn the secrets of His wonders, to see the mysteries of the ages, far beyond the confusion of play-church, far above the strife of the land, and higher than the yearnings of the flesh, yea, even into the light of the Most Holy Place . . . the eagles soar!”—end quote.

In questioning Job the Lord said of the eagle, **“Doth the eagle mount up at thy command to make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From hence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off” (Job 39:27-29).** The eagle saint has the advantage, born of altitude. “Her eyes behold afar off.” She looks out to the regions beyond, to heights and depths in God. The call of God is upon her. The life of God is in her heart. There is response. There are commitments, born of heavenly life. Heaven is in control.

The saint and the Savior share the same life fly the same heavens, have the same destiny. Heavenly bounty fills all. Earth’s splendors are fading. Earth’s treasures hold nothing for him any more. Heavenly investments are sure. Eternal values are in view. “Her eyes behold afar off.” Fear does not plague the eagle saint. “She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock.” The rock is Christ. Her security is in the rock. She draws her life from above. Earth’s hopes must fade. They are made of poor stuff. The saints of all ages have known this. The Lord has taught them, in their hearts. The Lord cuts His elect saints off from the world, and the systems of the flesh, but in the same stroke, He grafts them on to heaven. They are to live in their new found life. The saints have found a new blood stream that will not be affected by death. This new life flows out of the very heart of God, like a river forever. It courses through the veins of the inner man, bringing life where ere it goes.

The heavenly life makes heaven. The life of God is heavenly life. The believer who says that should his body die, he will be dead like a dog, unconscious and non-existent, knows not that he has been born from above.

The born again one has life from above. The impact of this new heavenly life determines everything. This life governs the universe, and nullifies the kingdom of darkness. Satan is never in his stride, in the presence of heavenly life. This is raptured life, the life from above. Webster defines rapture as: "Extreme pleasure or delight, ecstasy." The eagle saint has raptured life, the joyful life, the glorious life, the satisfying life—he is not waiting for a "rapture" to come. Every step that the Lord Jesus took on earth was a raptured step. Every word that He used was a raptured word. Every work that He did was a raptured work. The life of Jesus Christ was a raptured life. He was caught up all the time. That's what gave Him the heavenly touch, enabled Him to hear the heavenly voice of His heavenly Father within. That's what made Him what He was—the heavenly man. The eagle saint does not need death, or a miracle, or a meeting, to get him on the wing. He is in the heavenlies all the time. That's all the life he knows. He shares with the raptured Christ, the heavenly life. The eagle saint knows extreme pleasure, ecstasy, heavenly delight. Those that are born from above move in the orbit of above life. The problem is that there is a temporary outer life, a physical life that confuses many—a make believe, illusion, a mist that the wind bloweth away. The earth bound life is very strong for expression. This fallen life wants an outlet. It is very aggressive and demanding. The heavenly life is meek and lowly and humble in spirit. The earthly life will force its way and scheme to gain its point. The heavenly life is not so, but will take a back seat and wait the Lord's appointed time. "They that wait upon the Lord shall mount up with wings as the eagle." Saints are laboring with a double life—the old life and the new in the same vessel. The low grade life must be given over to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. The milk and honey of Canaan is the heavenly life of the Lord in the saints. The newest cars, the finest homes, the most expensive clothing, the most beautiful furniture, the best paying jobs, and the largest bank accounts do not add up to heavenly life. "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. But seek ye first the Kingdom (realm) of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mat. 6:32-33). 'Things are not life. Life is not things. Heavenly life has a monopoly on the needs of the human heart and spirit. Abundant life has nothing to do with physical health or longevity or with financial prosperity, material blessing, or any other earthly thing. There is much religious activity that does not spring from heavenly life. The counterfeit life is also very religious. The eagle saint lives in the heavenlies in "the sweet here and now"; he is not waiting for something better in "the sweet bye and bye. The heavenlies is no higher than the floor beneath your feet. Life in the spirit is life in the heavenlies. Jesus carried the heavenlies all the way to Calvary. Before Pilot and Herod, Christ was never fearful or upset. The heavenly life was in control, the life that stood up against Calvary and the stone-sealed tomb, and overflowed. Heavenly life was governing Him from within, and because He had heavenly life within He could say, "I have power to lay My life down, and I have power to take it up again."

The heart of man is on a quest for a place where his heart is at rest and where there is life, peace, and contentment—the place called heaven. The best word to describe heaven is "glory," and glory has been defined by one as: "Like it ought to be." Those that know glory are in glory. They are in a state, "Like it ought to be." They are in Christ and fashioned in His likeness. They have tasted of heaven, for they have tasted of the heavenly One, and their hearts, have been ravished. Christ is heaven, and heaven is Christ known and experienced in a living way. Our measure of Christ is our measure of heaven. The heart filled with God is full of heaven. The more of Jesus Christ that is wrought in the saints by the Holy Ghost, the more heaven is come to earth. Heaven is as large as the universe and as small as the human heart. Heaven is both macrocosm and microcosm. There is room enough in man to contain the universe (black holes are proof of that), and it takes the universe to contain man—the man Christ Jesus and His body the church, the One New Man.

**Once heaven seemed a far-off place,
Till Jesus showed His smiling face;
Now it is here within my soul,
'Twill be while endless ages roll!
O hallelujah, yes 'tis heaven,
"Tis heaven to know the Son that's given;
O'er land or sea, what matter where,
Where Jesus is, 'tis heaven there!**

Learn to breathe the ozone of heaven—the rare, crisp, pure air of the heavenlies that is sweet to the nostrils and life to the lungs and body. Mountain air is good. There is too much grime and smog in this low altitude. There are so many respiratory problems. There is so much low living and difficult breathing. The environment

is wrong. It is good medicine to meet a saint that is above—a saint with eagle wings. They quicken and refresh. Spend time with those that live above. You, too, will learn how to stay above. Remember that the young eagles have to be taught to fly. If they refuse to learn they are destroyed. Learn to live the heavenly life if you would save your life. You may not be able to stand the strong winds of the upper altitude, but go as high as you can and stay as long as you can. Get away from the depressing order of the valleys. Learn to live in your habitat—your elements. Refuse to be embroiled in confusion and strife. There is nothing to gain. You may win the argument and lose the victory. Gossip—no profit! Tidbits of cheap news—no profit! We should not be glorying in other's shame. If the other fellow falls out of the heavenlies, just do not follow him down to chew on his flesh. If you stay in the heavenlies, you will help draw him back. The wings of the spirit are eagle wings. The Holy Spirit of God gives you these wings. Learn how to use them. "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Abide in your true element. Choose to abide. You need, rich, healthy blood if you are going to fly. Heavenly vitamins and minerals—the Word of God, spiritual conversation, prayer, praise, pure thoughts and holy living. From what table are you eating? From what well do you drink? Where do you get your food supplements? Jesus said, "He that eateth not My flesh and drinketh not My blood, hath no life in him." Feed upon Him. He is food to thy hungry heart, drink to thirsty spirit, and strength for flight in the heavens. This king of the air (the eagle) eats only live meat. You and I can scan the heights too, if we eat only live meat, the living word. We are what the life in us makes us. When the heavenly flesh of Christ becomes our life, life is no longer just an existence, or a religious exercise, it is heaven in manifestation, God in operation. As the peace of God settles down within man, man BECOMES THE MILLENNIUM—the day of the Lord!

A TIME TO SOLO

The sons of God must ascend to their heavenly environment. Here is the place for which they were made, the place that was made for them. They must be drawn above—forced above—driven above. Drastic means must be used if necessary. How can we get young saints out of Egypt into Canaan—the heavenlies? They still long for the flesh pots of Egypt. They still love the comfort of the nest—the church realm with all its meetings, activities, ministries, established creeds, security and mothering.

Picture with me a little eaglet snuggled cozily in a down-filled nest high in the mountain upon the crag of a rock. Everything is just beautiful; the parents sally forth daily and bring back choice tidbits for that ravenous young appetite. During the cold mountain nights the mother eagle settles over the nest and the eaglet snuggles securely under those warm, soft wings. In its spiritual application, this little fellow is newly born again and baptized in the Holy Spirit. He has learned about blessing, forgiveness, joy, gifts, healing, provision, and all the benefits of being a child of God. Hallelujah! Here life is wonderful and being a Christian sure makes life easy—no more problems or lack! Should any problem arise the pastor or the church will promptly take care of it. What provision! What security! What a wonderful arrangement! The problem is just this—the young eaglet grows too fond of its nest and everything being done for it. This must not be. He must be roused up and trained to face the rough world. He must learn to fly. He must grow up. He must become strong and mature. He must learn to soar and discover His identity and being in the heights. He must fulfill his destiny.

How can we teach the young eagle saints to take their position in the heavenlies? How can we force them up if necessary? If they will not ascend, then what? Will the Lord use drastic means? He built that trait into mother eagle. That is the way eagles meet the situation. If the young will not fly, they are destroyed. And yet—this rarely happens. One remarkable characteristic of the eagle is its tenderness toward its young. No member of the bird family is more gentle and attentive in watching over its young. It builds its nest high up on a mountain crag. Both parents bring food to the little eaglets (the spirit and the word), and when they teach them to fly, both parents are involved in the training program (the right and the left hand of God). Deuteronomy 32:11 tells us how the young eagle gets his introduction to the practice of soaring in the heavens. Let the eagle saints listen carefully. It says that the mother eagle "stirreth up her nest," "fluttereth over her young," "spreadeth abroad her wings," and "beareth them on her wings." The time has come for the young eagle to learn to fly and strike out on his own—but he does not want to fly, he is having it too easy up there in that nest. He is given breakfast each morning in bed! He is nurtured and protected by others! All he has to do is warm the pew and watch the show! Why should he want to leave? The mother eagle knows that it is time to start flying. But looking down from the dizzy heights of the mountain peak, he is not ready to begin such a new and

dangerous enterprise. He has “not passed this way before” and is reluctant to make a move. So the mother eagle begins to “stir up the nest.” She grabs a piece of the nest and drops it over the side of the cliff. Then she returns for another chunk, and another, and another. Finally all the down that made Junior feel so secure is at the bottom of the canyon. He is forced to sit on nothing but rough sticks with jagged ends. This is rough treatment, completely unexpected, and not understood by the eaglet. But there is a job to be done. It may seem blunt and cruel, but the lesson must be learned. She then takes the little one in her powerful beak and nudges him toward the edge of the ledge. The little fellow wonders what is happening now. The actions of his mother completely mystify him. His little heart is beating faster and faster, and as he is pushed closer to the edge he thinks, No, it can't be! Mother wouldn't do this to me! But she does. She takes him to the edge of the cliff. It is a long, long way down. Suddenly she pushes him over!

Bill Britton eloquently wrote about this amazing phenomenon in his book *EAGLE SAINTS ARISE*: “Oh, saints of God, does it seem that God is dealing harshly with you? Is he tearing up your soft, comfortable nest? Does the place in God that once met such need in your life now seem rough, tight, and uncomfortable? What is happening? The Lord is getting ready to push you off into heights you never dreamed of. Do the jagged edges of that which once was such comfort to you now stab you with grief and pain? Have you been wondering what the trouble was and perhaps doubt that you were ever in the will of God? Doubt no longer, but expect in faith for the next great work of God to come forth in your life. It is not the wrath of God trying to destroy you. It is the love and wisdom of our God making you willing to take another big step in the plan and purpose of God for His church. We, by nature, love security. So the Lord has to make us utterly sick of our ‘nest’ in order to make us willing to launch out into pioneer spiritual journeys in the heavenlies”—end quote. The mother does not push the young eagle over the cliff to destroy him. He screams with terror as he tumbles through the air—but instinctively his wings stretch out in an effort to catch the air. Down, down, down he falls as untried wings fail to function sufficiently to hold him up. But mother watches that little fellow as he falls and clumsily flaps his wings. When it appears that all hope is lost and he is about to be dashed on the canyon floor, she swoops underneath him and her mighty wings bear him up to the safety of the ledge from which he fell. “Praise God,” he shouts within, “what a relief!” Just as he is getting over his dizziness and decides that all is well, the bottom drops out again. The process starts all over and continues until eventually the little fellow begins to fly as she has shown him. Each time she flies a little farther and each experience brings a little more mastery of his wings. He becomes stronger and stronger, until one day he spreads those wings and rather than flapping discovers how to catch the currents of air and finds himself rising up and up, riding the mighty winds far above his ledge home and the nest that confined him. No longer a fledgling begging for tidbits, he is now one of the eagles—he is become a king!

Again I would share from the keen insight of Bill Britton on this beautiful theme of the eagle. “Those who rule with Christ must rule from the heavens. For that is where the throne is. Many sing ‘I’ll fly away. . .’, and dream of a rapture by and by that will carry them from this sin cursed earth, past the moon and into the wild blue heavens to some geographical spot in this physical universe to a big supper all set and loaded with goodies for them to eat. And they know nothing of the purposes of God for His eagle saints who will actually be caught up to the throne to rule and reign. But the time is at hand. And the Spirit is unveiling and revealing hidden secrets from His Word to those who are called to the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. So He is teaching us to move in heavenly places. And sometimes it is terrifying. But His glorious Presence is there, comforting, directing and reassuring. Praise God!

“The chicken yard is very confining. You can go so far, and no farther. The Plymouth Rocks stay in the Plymouth Rocks pens, and the Rhode Island Reds remain in their allotted place. It would be scandalous if Farmer Brown’s hens slipped over to Farmer Jones and ate his corn, or laid their eggs in the wrong place. It doesn’t matter if you are in the Methodist pen, or Baptist, or Pentecostal, or whatever. You may cackle and crow about the advantages in your particular chicken yard over the others, but just be sure and remain within your confines. Not so the eagles! No chicken yard could hold him. He can only live and find happiness in the freedom of the uncovered and uncharted heavens. There is lots of room where the eagles gather. Unlimited revelation. Truth flows like a mighty River. No creeds, bylaws, or static statement of beliefs to separate the body of Christ. Sweet fellowship with all who dwell in this place and no divisive man-made boundaries exist. The dull monotonous routine of a ‘chicken yard’ religious system is forever a thing of the past for those who

rise on wings of eagles into this place in God. What a variety of glorious treasures in the Holy Ghost there is for those who dare to believe and who ‘are called according to His purposes’”—end quote.

Israel was noted for two kinds of eagles in the Bible days—the golden eagle and the imperial eagle. The golden eagle bespeaks of us as partakers of the divine nature and the imperial eagle bespeaks of us as kings. The two go hand in hand, for none is qualified to move in the power of the Kingdom of God until he has first been possessed of the righteousness of the Kingdom. Many ministries have fallen because they sought Kingdom power apart from Kingdom righteousness. But no son will ascend the throne until he has been perfected in the character of God. The golden eagle and the imperial eagle will fly together or they will not fly at all. Our divine right as sons of God is to reign as Monarchs—and this heavenly dominion begins right within our own lives. The development of faith, rest, and triumph which lifts us above earth’s raging storms is very precious. The circumstances that frustrate, perplex and defeat the world become launching pads to new heights in God. All that would come against us to discourage, defeat, or destroy, becomes the snake which an eagle rips open with one slash of his mighty talons or drops from dizzy heights to be crushed on the rocks below. This is our inheritance!

Of the eagle the Lord said, “Her eyes behold afar off” (Job 39:29). The eagle is noted for great vision. They are great watchers, with far-sighted vision. And so are eagle saints. The eye is the figure of light and illumination and it is as we know the truth and walk in it that we are purified to see God; for only the pure in heart see God. They see the plan and purpose of God beyond the traditions and superstitions of religion. To them the treasure house of wisdom and knowledge and spiritual understanding is opened. The deep mysteries, the sacred secrets of divine wisdom are unlocked within as the Lord reveals His will, teaches them His ways, and show unto them His glory. They can believe for things in God that others, whose eyes are riveted to the things of earth, cannot see or even conceive of. There is keen vision—knowledge and understanding of the true nature of all things—with the eagle saints. They are the pioneers of faith that break through into new realms in God. And because of their sharp vision, it is difficult to surprise or deceive them. The enemy cannot penetrate their defenses. Jesus is the perfect example and pattern. No one ever deceived Him with smooth words or flattery. No pious hypocrite ever survived under the piercing gaze of the Christ of God. Jesus knew what was in man. Even one of His own apostles was filled with the devil and moved to betray Him, but Jesus was not deceived or taken by surprise. No matter that he was one of the leaders, and cast out devils in Jesus’ name! His innermost thoughts and the secret intents of his heart were laid bare in the sight of that great Captain of the Eagle Saints. One of the marks of true sonship is the ability to see the true nature of all things and to discern the hidden spiritual source of all outward manifestations.

ASCENDING AND DESCENDING

There is still much that could be said about the eagle saints, but I will close this message with one more word. Aquila—The Eagle—in the Sign of Capricornus is pictured as a wounded or falling eagle. The eagle in this constellation is consistent with what we have noted in the whole Sign of Capricornus. The slain goat of the sin-offering is followed by the arrow of God’s judgment and the pierced or falling eagle. First and foremost, our Lord Jesus Christ is that royal eagle, flying high; the One who is at the right hand of God; who thought it not robbery to be equal with God; that glorious One, the Son of God from on high. Yet, that One humbled Himself and was pierced by the arrow of God’s judgment, and is seen here plummeting to the ground, the One who was so high descending so low that we might be raised up into His heights.

If we could only begin to fathom what this meant! Being in the form of God and existing in the glory of His Father, He could have stayed there, He was the Word of God, He was Divine; but to leave the glory above to come down to this sin-cursed earth, this death-ridden planet, with all its sin, suffering and evil, was taking a giant step down. He was not spared the lowliest kind of birth. Jesus was not born to wealth, comfort or fame. Into the arms of a gentle peasant girl He came, in a smelly stable with oxen and donkeys, yonder in a little land despised by the world, whose people were the helpless subjects of a foreign power. If one has walked in Bethlehem and walked in Rome, he surely must be impressed by the contrast. And for reasons good enough. He came to found an Empire of which Rome, with her pride, and tyranny, could never be the symbol. He came to win an allegiance that no legions in shining armor could ever compel. That Empire is the Empire of Love and that allegiance the response that men can make to that which they know to be Love and which, because it

is Love, commands their bodies by winning their hearts. So down this costly route of unsparing Love Jesus came. His birth-chamber a barn, His cradle a feeding-trough, and His lot in life cast among the poor. Two thousand years ago God wrapped a human form around His dear heart and appeared among the sons of men that He might get a closer look at this tragic thing that was making havoc of man and earth. He looked into the face of sin's dark mystery; He gazed without any veil into the awful abyss of sin, sorrow, and death. It was the cry of the wounded eagle, outraged yet outreaching, as He fell down, down, down from the heights of glory to get beneath the lowest depth to which any soul can sink.

The first thirty years of His life we know little about, but it was through these years that He suffered, being tempted and tested. He had to learn obedience and be perfect as a man before He could start His ministry, and go to the cross. The Bible tells us little of those thirty years; only about His birth and when He talked with the leaders when He was twelve years old, in the Temple. But as a man, a human being, He lived through His childhood years, with all its problems and frustrations. He lived through the teen years, and had all the problems of growing up, and all the temptations any teenager has to face. He knows all about them. He went through His twenties the same way, and I am sure that during these years also He suffered through temptations. He was tempted in all points like we are, so He is able to succor those being tempted. **“For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted” (Heb. 2:18).** He knows all about it, for He suffered through it. He came down into this evil world unknown and unheralded, the masses of earth knew not that He had come during the years of His earthly walk. And those to whom He came did not want Him, **“He came to His own, and His own received Him not” (Jn. 1:11).** It is bad enough when strangers refuse to have anything to do with you; but when your own people turn you down and reject and cast you out, the pain runs deep. To be made in the likeness of sinful flesh, to be found in fashion as a man, to empty Himself, to strip Himself of all His former glory, must have been a dreadful experience. I doubt that we can begin to comprehend even minutely, the price He paid when He humbled Himself to fall into this dark world as the pierced eagle. Now He shares a common humanity with us. He became a man, not only to die on the cross for our sins, but after having redeemed us, to become the Captain of our salvation and lead man into the fullness of the divine glory. He became the falling eagle to lift us up high into His glorious realm, praise His name!

Consider the deaths to which He fell! At the last the deepest of all sorrows crushed on Jesus. “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!” Jesus then drank the cup He had asked to have removed. He then sounded the depths of death. The Father's face was hidden from Him; He had gone as far as human suffering could go. Sin and death had veiled the Father's love from Him. Sin could go no farther in its brutal demands than just that. Yet none of this was unexpected. The Bible tells of One who was to suffer. In the book of Psalms, you see the cross casting its shadow down the ages. There Jesus' death in amazing outline is vividly pictured. Read in the light of prophecy, who can ever forget the twenty-second Psalm? “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” “A worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people. All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying, He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him seeing that He delighted in Him.” “They gazed upon Me with their mouths.” “Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death.” “They pierced My hands and My feet.” “They part My garments among them and cast lots for My vesture.” The strangest thing of all is that Christ's death by crucifixion is pictured here and, yet, in David's time, death by the cross was an unknown way of sending a soul out of this world. It was left to the Romans, not the Jews, to invent that horrid method of capital punishment. The cross, the gambling, the cries, the insolence of the crowd, the physical and soul suffering of Jesus, are all pictured in the twenty-second Psalm. With gentle hands and sympathetic heart, we turn to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. If the twenty-second Psalm tells us of the cross, Isaiah fifty-three gives the reason for it. Seven long centuries before Jesus was born, in this fruitful chapter of Isaiah, we have Jesus' suffering, death, burial, and resurrection foretold and the why of it all. “He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.” “He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.” “He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death.” “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; HE hath put Him to grief; when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days.” What a description of what actually happened, told in detail hundreds of years before it ever happened. Surely it bears divine evidence in the very fulfillment of the validity and truth that the suffering One was the Son of God, the mighty One dwelling here on earth to save and restore, to bear us up on eagle's wings into the glory of God.

The following words from the pen of the late George Wylie graphically express the deep and precious meaning of Aquila—the Sign of the wounded and falling eagle. He wrote: “But this is not all, this is not the end of the story, not by any means—there is something more wonderful to come. A few years ago I was reading from John chapter twenty, and I read something that thrilled my heart, making me shout for joy as the significance of it dawned on my understanding. I could hardly believe it, but oh how it thrilled me through and through. It is the account of the time when Mary Magdalene went to the tomb where the body of Jesus had been laid, and discovered it was not there, and she wept. When she looked into the tomb where His body had been, and saw two messengers sitting there, one of them said to her, ‘Woman, why weepest thou?’ She said unto them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.’ Poor Mary, the One she loves so much, she wanted to be close to Him, even if it was only His dead body. So she turned away from the tomb with her eyes full of tears, and saw someone standing outside, and he spoke to her and said, “Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?’ She thinking he was the gardener, said, ‘Sir, if you have borne Him hence, tell me where thou has laid Him, and I will take Him away.’ Then Jesus spoke her name. He was just a blur to her as she looked at Him through her tear filled eyes, but when she heard that Voice speaking her name—she had heard it many times before, and it was the Voice of the One she loved, and when she heard it she turned to Him and said, Rabboni, which meant, My Master.

“I don’t know what she was about to do, whether she was going to run to Him and throw her arms around Him, or just kneel down and kiss His feet; but I imagine she was filled with joy and beside herself. But Jesus said, ‘Don’t touch Me; for I have not yet ascended to My Father, but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God’ (Jn. 20:11-17). How my heart thrilled when I read these words. I pray the Holy Spirit will make them as real to you as He did to me. He didn’t say, ‘Go to My disciples,’ nor did He say, ‘Go to My servants.’ Nor, ‘Go to My friends.’ No! This time it was something altogether different, something far more intimate; a new relationship with Him. He said, ‘Go to My brothers.’ He was no longer their Teacher; He was no longer their Master; no longer just a Friend; He was something more than that. Yes, He was still their Master and Lord, but He was something more—He was their brother. He said, ‘I ascend to My Father, and to YOUR FATHER, and to My God, and YOUR GOD.’ He was one of them. He is one of us. He wasn’t going to ascend just to His Father, but to their Father, and to our Father, and to our God as well as His God. I pray you can see this in the true sense of its meaning, and that it will thrill your heart as it did mine. He wasn’t going to ascend to God to present Himself as merely our Lord and Saviour, which He is, but He ascended as our BROTHER, as human being; the firstfruits of the human race. He represents us there at the right hand of the Majesty on High. He is one of us, one who has gone all the way through to the throne of God, the first man to do so. It is wonderful to think of Him ascending to the throne of God as our Lord and Saviour, one who is so far above and beyond us; but when we realize that it is our brother who is up there, and He has gone before to open up the way, how much greater is our assurance that we will get there also. There is a wonderful scripture found in **Rom. 8:28-29**. ‘Now we know that for those that love God He makes all things work together for good, for those who are called according to the Divine purpose. Those He has foreknown He has also predestined to share the likeness of His Son, that He might be the eldest in a vast family of brothers’ (Weymouth translation). Oh yes, we all belong to one family of many brothers, we are all brothers, and He is one of us, our elder brother.

“Before the eternal Logos left the glory above He was God. When He became man He stripped Himself of His Deity, to become a human being. After His resurrection and He had returned to His Father above, He did not put off His humanity that He had put on, He remained still a human being, still a man. But I want you to notice something that He prayed for before He left this earthly scene. In **John 17**, when He was praying to the Father, He asked to have the glory restored to Him that He had with the Father before the kosmos was. I draw your attention to His words, and want you to meditate on them. ‘And now O Father, glorify Thou Me, with Thine own self, with the glory I had with Thee before the kosmos was.’ He was asking to be glorified with the glory He had stripped Himself of, when He became a man. I want you to notice these words, ‘Glorify Thou Me WITH THINE OWN SELF.’ He was asking to be clothed with God, to be enveloped with Deity again, to be completely swallowed up and filled with all fullness of God. He didn’t shed His humanity, but He was going to put on the human being clothed with God, with the fullness of the glory of DIVINE BEING. He is no longer God’s Divine Son, nor is He still God’s human Son; He is now God’s DIVINE HUMAN SON, truly a GOD-MAN. This is the New Creation, not God and not man, but GOD-MAN. This is God’s man. This is God’s kind of man. This is the kind of man God purposed from the beginning when He said, ‘Let us make man in our image, and

after our likeness.’ And what our elder brother is now, we are destined to become. We too are to become just like Him. WE too are to be filled with all the fullness of God. ‘That you may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that YE MIGHT BE FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD’ (Eph. 3:18). We are partakers of the divine nature, the personality of the eternal, to be clothed and swallowed up into the divine, to be glorified with the divine personality as Jesus, our brother, has been”—end quote.

Truly it is IN HIM, in His ascension that we have power to ascend into the Mountain of the Lord. The victorious life of sonship is a matter of ascendancy. It has to do with getting above, and staying above. It is a matter of altitude. The sons have eagle wings. Man was made for that. He was made for altitude. He was made for ascendancy. He was made to be above and not beneath. This is why humanity in the lowlands is continually wretched and miserable, always searching and seeking for some reality beyond and above. If you want to stay out of trouble, rise up into the holy heights of God and don’t come down. If you find yourself in trouble, then you know you have come down. You can be beset on every hand by problems and pressures and still not be in trouble. No problem is a problems unless it is a problems to you.. No pressure has any power until you allow it to press you. Christ is above it all. The saints are in Him. The saints are above. Stay were you are. Stay with your life. Stay with the real you. Stay with that inner man who is risen with Christ at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1). Stay above. Defeat is to come down. You must not come down. Your position is in Christ far above all. Christ came down so that you and I can go up. Hallelujah! He is the Eagle of eagles, and we are the body of the Eagle. He descended to us that we might ascend in Him.

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 31 CAPRICORNUS-THE GOAT [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART THIRTY-ONE

THE OVERCOMER LEAPING OVER WALLS

The third, and final, constellation in the house of Capricornus is a lovely little cluster of stars named DELPHINUS, or THE DOLPHIN. It is always pictured as a great fish full of life, vigorously leaping upward, out of the water. In contrast to the dying goat, it conveys the idea of springing up again out of the bondage of death. This is the filling of the picture and the completion of the whole truth as set forth in the Sign of Capricornus. First and foremost our Lord Jesus Christ came as our sin-offering, taking upon Himself our humanity with all its sin, weakness, sorrow, limitation and death. We see, however, that He was not to be left there, but, rather, He overcame temptation, He overcame sin, He overcame the flesh, He overcame the world, He overcame the devil, and He overcame death, rising up again wondrously into the heights of glory from whence He came. The dolphin is notorious for leaping forth out of the waves, breaking the surface and rising majestically into the air. So Christ—suddenly emerges from the waves of death as the almighty Conqueror of sin, death, and the grave by rising again! But He is merely the principal Fish of a vast multitude of fishes. Here again Jesus is identified with His people—His elect saints. Unto these chosen ones He speaks the precious and powerful promise: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Father's throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne" (Rev. 3:21). He died to bring forth a living body, a body represented by a great school of dolphins, all of whom break forth out of the sea of humanity, leaping majestically into the air—viewing that higher world of the spirit to which they are apprehended.

THE OVERCOMER

The principle of the dolphin is the principle of overcoming. The reason so many people fail to attain to great heights in the Spirit is because they are unable to see God's purpose, and therefore they have no particular incentive to seek the great heights that are in Him. So many Christians are far too taken up with carnal ideas and childish notions about mansions and harps and sitting on clouds eating pork chops with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in, to be able to grasp the true purposes of God! There are certain basic principles of the Kingdom of God that must be a part of the frame of mind and the experience of all who press forward into sonship to God. We must learn to think like God. We must begin to RULE WITH CHRIST IN THIS LIFE. Too many saints are weak, frustrated and defeated. May the dynamite of God's Spirit blow us all out of the low places of lethargy, discouragement, oppression and defeat into a vibrant walk with Christ in the high places of peace, joy and triumph of His Kingdom. "Strength yourselves in the Lord and in the power which His supreme might imparts. Put on the complete armour of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with despoticisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world—the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Wherefore put on the complete armour of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground in the evil day, and, having fought to the end, TO REMAIN VICTORS ON THE FIELD" (Eph. 6:10-14) (Weymouth).

We are called to reign with Christ from the highest heaven. Such all-embracing majesty is far too vast for my feeble understanding, yet I know by the Spirit that the body of Christ is in practical preparation for the explicit purpose of UNIVERSAL DOMINION. But how can a man rule over principalities and powers and universes if he is unable to rule his own spirit? "He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32). The awful betrayal, trial, mockery, beating, and crucifixion of Jesus in the most shining example. It is difficult to imagine any humiliation more bitter than that. It is the worst indignity that anyone can be called upon to endure. Few have ever had to bear it. Never was dishonor less deserved, never was dishonor so bravely borne. Through that fierce and heated hour our Lord bore Himself with quiet dignity. Others were convulsed with uncontrolled passion, He alone was calm and self-possessed. His victory over Himself was greater than

His victory over His enemies. In such experiences of provocation, truly, "He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city." God is a God of principle. He does not do anything by chance. It is my deep conviction that what happens in your life and mine is a result of the use or abuse of the principles of the Kingdom of God. Learn this, beloved, and you will know one of the fundamental principles of reigning with Christ: OUR AUTHORITY IS OVER SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS F-I-R-S-T-L-Y I-N O-U-R-S-E-L-V-E-S! **"To him that overcometh will I grant (consequentially) to sit with Me in My throne." (Rev. 3:21)**

You can never rule anything until you first overcome it within yourself. To "overcome" means TO COME UP OVER THAT WHICH IS OVER YOU. The term implies the existence of obstacles in the pathway of the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Kingdom of God. When, within yourself, you rise up above the circumstance, the problem, so that it no longer controls or harasses you, you are then ready to begin to control it, to no longer be the victim of circumstances, but the master of them. Come up over what the religious systems have fed you. Come up over your own pride and inherent weaknesses. Come up over your desire to build a reputation for your name. Come up over the myriad pressures from within and without. Come up over the world of confusion and turmoil about you. You are called to be an OVER-COMER. Come over that wall! Come over into the Kingdom of God and a realm of complete victory. If we cannot come out victoriously over ourselves and over the little temptations and frustrations here, how can the Lord trust us to reign over that which is without? What kind of warriors would we make? How much could He depend upon us? He will give us the place for which we are prepared and qualified; we must set our faces to be overcomers if we are to sit with Him upon His throne and reign with Him.

As sons of the Most High, we have access to the same strength that enabled Jesus to live an overcoming life—and to conquer even death. He has given to us that same authority and power that gave Him victory over sin, death, hell and the grave. Have you ever wondered what would happen if Jesus would come and transfer places with you? If suddenly He would come to dwell in your body. I have often wondered what He would do if He had my circumstances, my weaknesses, my lusts, my pressures, my problems. If the Master came to me and said, "Move over, I am coming to live in your house for a season," I do not doubt that in a short period He would have all my problems straightened out and all of my weakness and turmoil under control. He would overcome all of the things that I struggle with. But the wonderful truth is, my beloved, HE HAS COME! HE DOES LIVE IN MY BODY! **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. . ."** (Gal. 2:20). **"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"** (Rom. 8:9). The problem lies in the fact that we fail to yield to Him totally.

I do not believe that any man can experience the victory of Christ except WHERE HE IS. I do not want to distress any soul, but you must know Him where He is. I have union with Christ where He is, in the higher than all heavens. You cannot live in the reality of overcoming if you have not gotten into that region of calm. Why talk of coming up over that which is over me if I do not do it in union with the resurrected and ascended Christ? Practically we have to learn what the frigate bird does. When a storm comes on it gets above the region of storms, above the clouds, where there is none, and there it stays even for days until the storm is over. I am placed beyond the reach of storms; I am a frigate bird, for I am with Christ in a scene where there is no storm and no clouds. I am united to an ascended Christ. The Lord says, "The glory which Thou has given Me I have given them." A person might say, I cannot get this now. I answer, I belong to the glory now; I possess Him now in glory, and I am changed into the same image by the Spirit. I belong to the glory. This is where we fully come up over all that is over us. There is a beautiful promise to the elect of God in Rom. 16:20. **"And the God of peace will soon bruise satan under your feet."** Stronger words than these are not to be found! Greater words than these do not exist! The greatest and best thing of all about these words is that they are true. If satan is bruised under your feet, dear reader, it does not mean that he no longer exists. It does not mean that the negative realm is destroyed and has no more power to mislead, damage, or dominate. That satan is crushed under your feet signifies that you have risen up above him, gained the mastery over him, assumed the authority of the Christ within. When this becomes a personal life-giving light in the very depth of your being, then sin and satan and darkness and death has lost its power over you. He still exists—under your feet! Crushed under your feet! It is Christ in you who does the crushing. And He does it as you yield fully to the victory HE IS within you.

A pastor by the name of Barnhouse at one time met a member of his congregation and asked him how he was. The member responded, "Well, pretty good under the circumstances." Barnhouse turned sharply and said, "What do you mean under the circumstances? What are you doing under the circumstances? Don't you know that you are seated with Christ in the heavenlies—way above the circumstances? What are you doing down there?" The man was obviously quite startled. And yet, a great truth is there for us to consider. I am reminded of the story I read once of Spurgeon, the great preacher of another day from London. He was very discouraged at one time in his ministry. He paid a visit to one of the elders with him in the church, who was a farmer. He shared his struggles with this supportive elder. When he had finished the farmer said, "Look, pastor, do you see what that cow is doing?" Spurgeon looked out over the lush English field. A cow was standing by one of the picturesque stone walls that criss-crossed the countryside. Spurgeon answered, "Well, he's looking over the wall." And then the farmer asked, "Why is he looking over the wall?" the pastor replied, "I don't know." "He's looking over the wall, because he can't see through it." There will be times when you won't be able to see your way through a difficult experience. When that happens, stop trying to look through and begin to look over! There is always a way out of every weakness, problem or circumstance. The way out is always OVER! There is also the story of the stubborn old Chinese man who had a little shop. One day, a developer bought up all the other shops, but this little old man in the middle didn't want to sell, He wanted to keep his shop just the way it was. The developer threatened him, "If you don't let us buy you out, we'll squeeze you out." So they bulldozed everything on each side of him and built two huge, modern department stores, filled them with the best merchandise, and hung the sign across the front, GRAND OPENING. The little Chinese man didn't let these huge department stores overwhelm him. He had a special sign painted and hung it across his store. In big bold letters it said: MAIN ENTRANCE. Ah, there IS a way to come up over that which is over you! The wisdom of God will show you the way.

When God gets ready to assume His rightful place in the universe again, He will say, "I have a people here who has been tested." How can we rule in the Kingdom of God unless we are tested first? How can God trust us to rule or to have dominion over the universe if He can't trust us with our own families. If God cannot trust us with ten dollars, how could He trust us with the wealth of the nations and the forces of the cosmos? Have you met the kind of person who can never keep a steady job? The first day that something goes wrong, they want to quit and look for another job. And usually the thing that went wrong was that the boss expected his money's worth! They might complain about the working conditions, but most folk simply want to complain about the work. The carnal mind is lazy. It doesn't want to work or exert itself. It is too slothful to OVERCOME! This is the kind of person who is unstable as water (Gen. 49:4). I do not hesitate to tell you that such cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. Man's first instinct under pressure is to run, to extricate himself from the situation. When we run from the problem immediately we FLUNK THE TEST. When we fail to overcome IN the problem, our character in that area is left weak, undisciplined, and undeveloped. Oftimes, so they can appear "spiritual," men divorce their wives, wives divorce their husbands, parents abandon their children, people move from place to place, from job to job, from church to church. Often people pray like this: "Lord, deliver me from this job where everyone is filthy and the boss so hateful; give me a job with the Full Gospel Business Men where everyone is spiritual and praises God and speaks in tongues!" A prayer like this reflects a view of the world which is not uncommon among God's people. IN this view, since the world is so unclean, it ought to be avoided as much as possible. Certain legitimate occupations are thought to be so hopelessly corrupt as to be shunned at all costs. For that matter, just about any ordinary job in the world would appear to be tainted. God's name, if used at all, is used in profanity. Co-workers drink too much at office parties. They tell obscene stories and circulate pornographic pictures. Cheating, lying, and stealing are commonplace. Overtly or covertly the men sexually harass the women workers. Gossip runs rampant, and deep-seated hostilities are cloaked with phony smiles. Selfish ambition and the love of money spur men to scratch and scramble over one another to reach the top. All this and more can be found in the typical workplace.

On the other hand, people who work in companies owned and operated by "brethren" are expected to live above all this. Working elbow-to-elbow with believers appears so clean and wholesome and spiritual in comparison to working in an ungodly environment! Ah, we seek an "environment" that is "conducive" to our "spirituality," little realizing that in that environment where all is so beautiful and harmonious we only appear to be spiritual because there is nothing to cross us, nothing to tempt us, nothing hostile, no adversities, no inconveniences, in short, NOTHING TO OVERCOME! You can run from the problem, my friend; you can isolate and insulate yourself from evil; you can position yourself in an environment where nothing is adverse to

you; you can even have faith where God will solve all your problems and pour down healings, prosperity and blessings; yes, you can do all this and be a Christian, a good Spirit-baptized Christian, and make it to heaven someday; but I would be remiss if I did not warn you that you cannot do this and BECOME AN OVERCOMER, you cannot do this and BECOME A RULER! Yes, you can achieve some peace by cutting yourself off from that part of your life which takes away your peace—but this is a cutting off from THE THRONE.

As I have stated previously, one can never become an overcomer while running from the battle. I never cease to be amazed at the number of believers who want to go through life without ever coming up over the things that are over them. Every time a hard place comes, the carnal mind drags them further and further into spiritual, emotional and mental bondage. They look for a way out. These folk will run to the next town, the next church, the next job, the next friendship. . . whatever is convenient. They refuse to mature. Anything negative that crosses their will is avoided with scheme after scheme energized by the fleshy mind that is hostile toward God. Some of you are running. Do you know what you will find when you stop. The thing which you have tried to escape is STILL THERE. You carried it with you. It is within you.. The moment you stop running and face the issue, the wisdom of God is going to catch up with you and help you become an overcomer. Turn to God with sincerity, and let Him help you and deal with you. The great tests or trials that we endure are not necessarily what bring about our development as New Creatures. The little things, the everyday experiences, the nitty-gritty where the rubber meets the road, are where the real trials, the true testings, take place. By way of example, perhaps not many of us remember the era back in the late '20's or early '30s, when the in thing was for men to do things that were unusual or bizarre. Some of you may remember the name, Barney Oldfield. He was considered an outstanding automobile racer of that time. He set a speed record from Los Angeles to New York, driving his racer across country about 50 miles an hour—extremely fast for the 1920's! There were also other accomplishments. There was a man who rode a bicycle for the first time clear across the country. And that was the era when they had dance marathons—young couples wanted to prove they could dance the longest amount of time. There was one man who walked across the country from Los Angeles to New York. It took him quite a while, but when he finally finished his journey he was given quite a welcome in New York. When he was interviewed he was asked how he had managed to endure all the hardships. "What was the hardest thing for you to endure? Was it when you were out in the desert and it was so hot—100 to 120 degrees?" "No," he said, "that was very hard, but I managed to survive that." "Was it when you went through the mountains and it was so cold and the high peaks were difficult to climb?" "Well, that was tough too," he said, "but I endured that." "Well, just what was the worst part of the whole trip?" He said, "The hardest part of the whole trip was that I had to endure having sand in my shoes." A little thing, but so constant and irritating! And thus it is with us also; the hardest thing we have to endure is the "sand in our shoes"—the little, unavoidable, grating experiences of everyday living. And that is the reason we have a wonderful and sympathetic High Priest, our Forerunner into the Holiest of all, the One to whom we can turn for grace to help in every time of need. He understands the "sand in our shoes" because He suffered the same small, persistent trials—and overcame!

Many people, if they do not run from or evade the problem, seek "deliverance" from it! There is a vast difference between what the present religious realms call deliverance, and the Kingdom principle of overcoming. What most people call deliverance today is an effort to escape out of their pressure and problem, not an overcoming. Overcoming means to GAIN THE VICTORY OVER THE SITUATION. In deliverance God takes something away from you, as you would take a knife from a child. But in overcoming God's sons are being processed, so that they will know the cause and deal with the root of the trouble within themselves. The knife is not taken away—you learn how to use the knife! The dealings and processings must be thorough, until HIS IMAGE be formed in us. If your car has difficulty climbing a hill, you can do one of two things: (1) make the hill less steep, or (2) increase the horsepower of the car. God usually wants to change us, not the hill. How many of my readers have had a battle with a bad temper? No need to raise your hand! Temper in balance is a godly emotion, God Himself possesses the emotions of hatred, jealousy, vengeance, anger, etc. Jesus was angry with a holy anger when He took a whip and overturned the tables of the money changers and drove them from the temple. Anger and emotion was part of the original equipment man was given to give him an aggressive drive so that he can accomplish worthwhile things in this life. For example, controlled, temperate, balanced anger will neither ignore a child's misbehavior nor abuse him. It will correct in the proper spirit of firmness and sternness—tempered with love. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12:6) Eph. 4:26 says, "Be ye angry, and sin not." In simple terms this means, "Be

angry—but let it be a controlled, balanced anger will will act effectively, not destructively." For you see, anger out of control is vicious, destructive, and often deadly. Uncontrolled or misdirected anger can devastate one's life. But let me make one thing very clear—God has absolutely no desire to "deliver" you from your temper! Anger is not on God's agenda for deliverance. He intends for you to OVERCOME it. God does indeed deliver people from things over which they have no control, or which they are ill-equipped to handle. God does take knives from children! But for sons emotion is not to be "cast out" like a demon; it is to be overcome and brought into its proper place in our lives in the mind of Christ. How many things believers seek God to deliver them from that He has ordained them to overcome! So many of us are like Helga in a story I heard. Helga and Henry were a Swedish couple. They were married for sixty years. They fought like cats and dogs every day of their lives. Finally, on their 60th wedding anniversary they began the morning with a terrible spat. They argued all day long. At the end of the day, Helga said to her husband, "Henry, tonight I think ven ve pray, ve better pray for peace. Ve been fighting each other for sixty years, Henry. May the Lord give us peace. So tonight, I think I'll pray that the Lord will take you home and I'll go live with my sister Olga."

True men never seek escape from the difficulties of the way, whatever the issue may be. Someone has said that difficulties faced are half conquered. At any rate one who evades the pathway of the will of God discovers greater difficulties, as the prophet Jonah soon realized. The world's greatest acclaimed men not only faced difficulties but conquered them; the pioneer fathers not only hewed their way through the trackless forests, but laid the foundations of what we today enjoy; Columbus not only sailed the stormy and uncharted seas, but he opened the gateway to hitherto unknown continents where, later, men might come and find their homes; Carey and Judson and Livingstone not only fought their way through the opposition of their friends, but also laid the foundation stones of all modern missions; Luther not only refused the advice of his friends to win a personal victory, but he set all Europe free in a religious reformation; George Washington and Abraham Lincoln faced tremendous odds, but steadfastly they went forward until a new nation was born and age-long wrongs were righted. It is how we learn to handle our challenges that separates the boys from the men—the children of God from the sons of God.

Do you feel overwhelmed with problems? Then let me show you how to discover the CHALLENGE that lies in every obstacle. I promise that if you look for the challenge, you will find it, and then you will be able to turn the stumbling-stone in your pathway into a stepping-stone to the throne! The divine principle of which I speak is found in the prophecy of Isaiah, "Out of the desert shall come streams of water" (Isa. 35:6). Out of every obstacle comes a new challenge—an opportunity to overcome. This is the point I want to make loud and clear. For if you want to overcome as Jesus overcame, you will need to tap into the dynamics of this principle. The only force that can cause weakness and failure is a challenge that is mistaken for a problem. But there will be no failure when we discover the challenge in the problem, grab hold of it, and use it as a stepping-stone to higher ground. On the other hand, we can never overcome anything as long as we allow some horrendous problem to blind us to the divine challenge that is inherent in every obstacle. In our Father's great school of sonship, in His effective training program for the future rulers of the world and universe, He knows just exactly which obstacles to place in our pathway for our development and processing. If we try to use our faith to "move the mountain out of the way," such action will not bring us to the place where faith can be perfected and OVERCOME the mountain—scale its heights, climb over it, and conquer it. On one occasion Jesus, after telling the people of dreadful events to come upon the earth, brushed aside their anxiety as a mother wipes away the tears of her infant and soothes the childish woes of the one she loves. "When ye see these things begin to come to pass," He said, "then lift up your heads and rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh." Forget for the moment the eschatological interpretations the church systems have attached to this passage, and look to the experimental and practical. Jesus was not underestimating the awesomeness of the things that would come upon us, but well He knew that there would be a people on the earth in the latter days who would so discover the divine purpose in the trouble, the divine challenge in the tribulations, the divine ability to rise up and overcome in it all, that in these very difficulties they would be able to lift up their heads and rejoice because IN THEM THEY FOUND THEIR REDEMPTION—their challenge to move into a realm of faith and victory where they could truly be overcomers, the masters of all things! When the trials wax hot upon the obedient child of "God it signifies that redemption is nigh—that the process is set in motion for the manifestation of a GREAT VICTORY. This is according to God's great law of manifested sonship—Father lovingly arranges the obstacles before us, then marvelously gives the wisdom and power to overcome them,

making us strong and victorious over all that appears so formidable and hopeless. Thus are born His warriors and kings who shall bring the kingdom of God to earth.

Some of you who read these lines and are facing severe problems today, are feeling frustrated, at this point, by my apparently trivial treatment of circumstances that tower so ominously and menacingly before you. You think I don't understand just how bad your situation really is, or how many times you have failed. Listen! I would not make the solution so simple, if it were not simple. These are principles I have proven in my own experience through years of walking with God. The answer lies so near—right there within you. The difference lies in whether you view your situation as a problem or a challenge. "What difference does it make whether I call it a problem or a challenge," you say. The difference is all important! Here's why: If you perceive an obstacle in your path as a problem, you will nurture negative emotions in respect to it—like anger, frustration, despair, hopelessness, and depression. These emotions are like grave diggers—they carve out the pit of failure and death in which to bury you! On the other hand, if somehow the Holy Spirit can give you the revelation of it, if you can see by the inspiration of the Almighty that the obstacle is God's challenge—you have received the spiritual attitude in which spiritual emotions are released—like faith, hope, confidence, peace, rest, joy, thanksgiving, encouragement, wisdom, knowledge, understanding and power. These positive emotions, the fruit of the Spirit, will energize you and propel you through and over and out of and above the obstacle, bringing strength and triumph! You see, precious friend of mine, the only problems in the world are problems that are perceived as problems. When the problem ceases (in your mind) to be a problem to you you have risen above it, come up over it, OVER-COME IT! Who cares how high a mountain is when he is flying high above it!

During World War II, a young bride from New Jersey followed her soldier husband to a U.S. Army Camp on the edge of the California desert. Her husband had advised her against going because he knew that living conditions would be primitive, at best. But she wanted very much to be with him and he was unable to change her mind. When the couple arrived at the desert camp, the only housing they could find was a run-down shack near an Indian village. The heat was unbearable: up to 115 degrees in the shade. The wind blew constantly, spreading sand all over everything. And, for the young bride, the days were long and boring. Her only neighbors were the Indians, none of whom spoke English. When her husband was ordered farther into the desert for maneuvers, the loneliness and wretched living conditions got the best of her. She wrote to her mother: "I can't take any more of this. I want to come home!" Several days later she received a reply. In it, the mother reminded her of the old family sampler on which the familiar lines were embroidered:

**Two men looked out from prison bars,
One saw mud, the other saw stars.**

The daughter read these lines over and over again. She began to feel ashamed of her response to the situation she was in. She really didn't want to leave her husband, and so she said to herself, "All right, I'll look for the stars." In the days that followed she began to make friends with the Indians. She began to take lessons in weaving and pottery from them. She became fascinated by their culture and history—everything about them. Moreover, she began to study the desert. In the process, she saw it wonderfully transformed from a desolate, forbidding place to a marvelous expanse of beauty. She studied the various forms of cacti, the yuccas, and the Joshua trees. She collected sea shells that had been deposited there perhaps millions of years before when the sands had been an ocean floor. Later, she became such an expert on the area that she wrote a book about it. A remarkable transformation had taken place. But what had changed, really, to make that possible? Not the weather. Not the desert. Not the lack of modern conveniences. Not the long days without her husband. Not the Indians. What had changed was her own attitude. Simply by changing her own attitude—"All right, I'll look for the stars," she said—she had transformed a miserable life situation into a highly rewarding experience. THIS IS THE PRINCIPLE OF THE DOLPHIN—THE BREAKING OUT OF A LOWER WORLD TO VIEW THE HIGHER. This principle is redemptive, restorative, creative. It works on the natural plane, as in the story just shared, but in that higher dimension of the Kingdom of God it is the key to the overcoming life—the way to the throne! Hallelujah!

A great number of people assume that the spiritual life will give them a permanent resting place and a constant peace. They become Christians with the idea of having all their problems solved for them and their burdens

eased. Their disillusionment begins when they discover that the walk with God is no Disney World experience, no eternal bed of roses. In fact it often seems just the opposite from gushing joy and undisturbed rest. It is the spur which demands that they move on higher than they intended to go and strive for a perfection and glory beyond the natural man's knowledge or expectation of attainment. The life of sonship to God is more concerned with the expansion of our life and the enlargement of our vision and the increase of our stature than it is to provide for us a resting place. This life is bent on breaking the shell of the limitations and protections we are at such pains to create, and opening us up to the dangers and pain of development. Any teaching which leaves this out is a snare and a delusion. There is a rest in sonship, but it is not the rest of childish ease, but it is experienced only when we have at last accepted it as a spur to urge us onward and upward. Just this week we received a letter from precious friends in the Northwest and even as I read it I felt constrained in the spirit to share it with those who are reading this writing. Brother wrote, "Your opening the Word to us has changed our lives and we are really excited about it. We could never go back to our old concept of God. We feel that we have a new and greater love for Him than we ever had before. Almost as soon as we heard the message of the sons of God we opened our hearts to it and began to ask the Lord to consider us. We knew that we didn't have the ability in ourselves but prayed that as we gave ourselves to Him He would give us what we had need of. Almost as soon as we prayed this way the trials and testings began like you could never believe. This was when Dorothy found that she had glaucoma and could be blind in three weeks. She lost of 90% vision in one eye, and while in for a check-up she slipped and fell and broke a leg. While recovering from the broken bone she learned that she could have a cataract surgery and recover some of her sight. After the operation her eye inflamed. After four months of this we went to another clinic and they discovered that the first lens implant had been put in wrong and the whole operation would have to be done over. While recovering from this last operation she lost her balance and fell and broke her arm. Now she will have to wear a cast for six weeks. All the medication that they have experimented with has taken a terrible toll on her body. I am taking too much of your time, but wanted to tell you how each Bible study month after month has seemed to be exactly right for the stage of testing we have been in. And now this last one has been a balm for our souls. We are encouraged and sense that the long night (nearly two years) is passing and we are BEGINNING TO SEE THE DAWN"—end quote.

The journey to the throne of the universe begins in that small and undistinguished place where you are. The Kingdom of God is within you. The enChristed who are to reign with Christ from sea to sea, then from planet to planet, and finally from galaxy to galaxy, are being prepared. Think not in your heart, precious one, that you may pass your life here careless, indifferent to the dealings of God, and seeking only the blessings and joys of Christ, suddenly to awake one fine morning to find yourself sitting with Christ on His throne governing the universe, because such a thing will not be. Begin today to live the life of the OVERCOMER! This present time is but a proving ground for those who through grace will reign with their Lord over all the endless vastnesses of infinity. He is raising us up to sit with Him in the higher than all heavenlies. He is teaching us to rule, to reign in life, to overcome all things and subject them to Christ. And the place which He is preparing for each one is not only a world to come, and a Kingdom of Life and Light, but a place IN HIM, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, nature of His nature, life of His life!

LEAPING OVER WALLS

Faith is the only ship that sails for the Kingdom. Faith is the door to the heavenlies. Faith is the key to the glory of God. It is by faith that we are saved. It is by faith that we walk. It is by faith that we enter into the Outer Court, on into the Holy Place, and finally into the Holiest of all. It is by faith that we face every obstacle. It is by faith that we overcome the myriad of temptations, trials and problems confronting us daily in this world. It is by faith that we conquer sin, limitation and death. There is a beautiful passage penned by that great and sweet singer of Israel, King David himself, wherein he says, "**For by Thee have I run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall" (Ps. 18:29)**. How are you at leaping over walls? You and I who are apprehended to sonship have not been made for defeat. We have been made to conquer! When the power of this truth grips us, permeates us, possesses us; when we live in this power then things that destroy others cannot conquer us, things that knock others down cannot floor us and things that cloud the vision of others cannot diminish our view. The apostle Paul put it very aptly when he said that Christ always leads us forth in triumph, and we conjure up before our minds a picture of a great Roman general coming back from battle, leading the vanquished foes in his train. Christ always leads us forth in triumph. We are not made for defeat! Why is it then

that so many saints are defeated? I am afraid it is because we never learn the secret of running through troops or leaping over walls. I think all of us have faced and do face and will face both of these.

Running through a troop and leaping a wall is a poetic way of simply stating the fact that we who are walking in the Spirit have discovered there have been circumstances which have arisen where we faced what appeared to be impossibilities, and by the living faith of the Christ within, we have been able to overcome them by our God. We have been surrounded by hostile troops and have been walled in by mighty walls. It seems that the adversary has taken the bricks of circumstance and built a mighty fortress of fear. With one brick of discouragement after another, the adversary has walled us in until it seems that there is no way out. There are overwhelming temptations, physical disablements, financial disasters, family turmoils and disappointments—all bricks that the negative realm uses to build what appears to be an evermore insurmountable wall that would close us in forever. If you, my friend, find yourself behind such a wall today, let the words of David be impressed upon your soul: "By my God have I leaped over a wall!" That is what God calls us to do! You will notice that it is no vain boast, no carnal self-conceit. This is trust in the living God: "By my God," David said, "I have done this," for David knew that cursed was the man who trusts in the arm of flesh. It was David who boldly declared to Goliath on that fateful day when he came against him that it was not in his own strength but in the name of Yahweh of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, who Goliath had defied. David was not such as trusted in himself; he trusted in the living God. In the preceding verse he declared that God would light his lamp. He faced what appeared to be an obscuring darkness that had crowded in upon him and the future, indeed, looked bleak. But there came an illumination in his soul and he said, "God will do this." And how did he know God would do it? David said, "For by Thee I have run through a troop: by my God I have leaped over a wall." And so we see that remembrance of past victories by the grace of God can be a great stimulus to present courage in the face of problems and temptations and overwhelming difficulties.

How about you, my beloved? Will you who are experienced saints in the Lord and have known His deliverance many scores or hundreds or thousands of times in the past, now lie down and die of despair because of some new threatening onslaught that seems as if it would engulf and overthrow you? And what about the most dreadful enemy of all—the last enemy, which is death? Who is this troop that comes against you now? What is this wall the adversary would build against you? Sound the trumpet of faith! Let the drums roll and the banners fly and watch that wall crumble as at Jericho! Leap over the remains and take the sword of faith and run into that troop as David did with the Amalekites who had kidnapped his wife and children and had taken them away. He had run through a troop and leaped over the walls of Jerusalem and captured that heathen city for the Kingdom of God. Are you a leaper and a runner? Or are you a crawler and a flopper? Some people who face not a troop but merely one adversary which indeed may only be a shadow then cry out, "There is a lion in the street!" and they are afraid to go out. As far as leaping over walls is concerned, the chalk line will do sufficiently to hem them in. They have never even so much as considered the fact that by God's power they are enabled to leap over every wall. How can we do that? How can we confront the hosts that gather around us so menacingly? How can we leap over walls that seem so insurmountable? Do we each not have our own walls and hosts? I do not know what temptations come at you like armed demons, overwhelm your spiritual resources, and cause you to fall and grieve in guilt and failure. I do not know what personal problems you have in your life. I do not know what is happening in your family, what walls of separation and division have been built so high that it seems nothing could surmount them. I do not know what problems you are facing in your business. I do not know what doubts or emotions plague you and hinder you from pressing on victoriously into the fullness of God. But it is my deep conviction that it is possible to run through those troops and leap over those walls because God has told us it is so.

How do we do that? We do it by Him—"by my God, through Christ," said David and Paul. We do it by faith. "Yes, but how?" some will say. "How do we do this by faith?" Consider, precious friend of mine, how it is that you have obtained your salvation; how it is that you have obtained the gift of the Holy Spirit; how it is that you have obtained blessings and answers to prayer. Is it not true that you came to the place where you rested your hopes for eternal life and the blessings and benefits of salvation upon the work and the promise of the Christ? In the trusting and in the believing it was done! As Jesus said, ". . . **whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive it**" (Mat. 21:22). And it is in the very believing that we can run through a troop, we are like David who takes up his sword and attacks the host of the Amalekites with a very small band and scatters them every which way. We are like David who with a mighty leap overleaps the wall that seems to be

impossible, because we believe that God will enable us to do it. In the believing, it is done. But you will notice that David also says, "I have run through the troop. I have leaped over a wall." David did not sit there and tremble at the thought of that troop. He did not walk up to the wall, feel it, and examine its height in despair. No! He took his sword in his hand, rushed into the midst of the fray, and his enemies scattered before him. He gathered himself together, he rushed at that wall, and he took a great leap which some might have thought would surely have killed him. To the astonishment of all who watched, David sailed over the wall by faith. That is the secret. If we will rise up to conquer our enemies of fear, limitation, bondage, sin, weakness, frustration, failure and death we will find that the wall will tremble before us and we shall find ourselves clearing it with ease. And in all that we shall give glory unto God and shall cause the unbelieving world to wonder.

In another place the Psalmist uses a similar metaphor, declaring, "It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like Hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places" (Ps. 18:32-33). Do you grasp the significance of this allusion? Hinds' feet are of marvelous swiftness and made to carry their owner over difficult places impassable to slower-footed creatures. The thought in the singer's mind is that of a divine endowment added to human weakness, an imparting of agility and confidence to the soul, whereby it springs up, so to speak, out of the dangers which assail it on the lower levels of life, and climbs lightly and surely to the uplands of the spirit. Some years ago I read the story of an Englishman who visited the West of our United States, in which he related the following incident. "It was in Colorado. Riding with a small party of friends through the picturesque scenery of that mountainous state, we came to a rugged defile which presently opened into a narrow glade wherein a herd of antelopes were quietly grazing. If I remember rightly another party coming in the opposite direction rounded the farther corner of the defile at about the same moment, so that the antelope were caught, as it were, between two fires. We didn't intend to do them any harm, but should greatly have liked a closer look at them. That, however, we did not get. The instant they caught sight of us they leaped up the side of the cliff to our right hand, at an almost incredible rate of speed, following one another gracefully and apparently without effort, from point to point in the giddy ascent, making scarcely a sound as they went, till they were finally lost to view amid the towering rocks and trees far above our heads. It was all over in a minute or two, and we were filled with admiration as we watched the rapidly moving feet of the pretty little creatures springing from crag to crag. It could hardly be called climbing; they were not pulling themselves up; they jumped and stood wherever they liked, in perfect poise, and without the slightest hesitation. No fear of their way being blocked! They could go where a man could not except with utmost caution and at considerable risk to his own safety. They were absolutely secure, and they knew it. Up they fled, and were gone"—end quote.

It is obvious that king David had witnessed some scene of this kind long millenniums ago in the land of Israel. And how appropriate is the use he makes of it! "He maketh my feet like Hind's feet"—the grace of God in the believing soul imparts to it a lightsomeness, a spiritual surefootedness, if one may so put it, a facility and confidence, whereby it is able to escape from any menace and find its way to heights where no evil can reach to harm or destroy. "He setteth me up on high." This is not to say that we shall never descend again, never mix with the rough-and-tumble of life on the lowlands. We must do so; but the point is that in every extremity there is always a way up. The way of escape is less often the way out than the way up. If our faith is real enough and strong enough, our feet shall be as hinds' feet, and God shall set us up on high. Nothing is less able to resist the assaults of its enemies than the gentle creature here referred to as typifying the child of God. It could easily fall a prey to those that seek its hurt; it has almost no power to defend itself against them; but it has one great gift which makes it superior to them, it can move swiftly for the everlasting hills, and no natural hindrance is great enough to bar the way. Are you caught like a helpless deer in a horrible pit of death? The sun has hidden his face behind the frowning eminences; darkness has fallen in terror upon your soul; there is no way out; it is hopeless to look for an escape; all exits are closed to human wisdom and human strength. Ah, yes, but there is a way UP; there is always a way up in every situation, however, desperate. God calls you, O son, daughter of the Most High, to take the way up. Now is the time to prove the revelation God has poured into your life; now is your opportunity to take the highest ground and save your soul alive. Are you afraid? Are you too weak to make the effort? Do your weary limbs refuse to work? Then lay firm hold upon the mighty indwelling power of the Christ and the Christ within will not fail you. Look not to this preacher, nor to that ministry, nor to another's gift. God will make your feet like hinds' feet, and set you on high! Others will not tell you this. They will tell you that if you will sit under their ministry, eat at their table, join yourself to their church, drink from their fountain, then they can lead you into Life. But I point you today only to the God who can do all. I have no ministry to

promote, no church to build, no following to gather, no movement to advance, no ego to inflate. My God, your God will make your feet like hinds' feet and set you up on high! This is what sonship is all about. Only go; spring to the Rock of ages and seek shelter there; mount to where wide horizons break before you, and shining skies surround you on the blessed table-lands of heavenly life. This is God's day, this is your day—arise and shine!

The Shulamite in the Song of Solomon received a revelation of this same sublime truth. The Shulamite symbolizes the bride of Christ, whereas her Beloved represents Christ the bridegroom. There is, of course, a corporate application of this truth, but on the personal level the Shulamite is the soul and her Beloved is the spirit, for "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." Christ the bridegroom is therefore within our spirit, wooing the soul into union with Him. The soul is that realm of our own mind, will, emotion and desire. The sharp contrast between our own human strength and ability and His divine life and power is described by the Shulamite in these graphic words: "**The voice of my Beloved! behold He cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills**" (S. of S. 2:8). Between the seven and eighth verses of chapter two, the Bridegroom has withdrawn. We are not told whether He withdrew Himself, or whether His withdrawal was caused by the carelessness and indifference of the bride. There are times when He withdraws or hides Himself that He may prod us into deeper depths of earnestness and abandonment as expressed in the old proverb, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." And there are times when we do not keep in touch with Him and are not quiet enough before Him, so that He can remain and unveil to us all His love and power. But now the bride hears the sound of His approaching presence; and before she sees Him, she rejoices in His return. As yet she has not seen Him, has not discerned His working within her, but she has heard His voice, and knows that He is coming. Suddenly she sees Him leaping upon the mountains; those impassable obstacles, which would prove insurmountable to any one else, are stepping places for His feet. He leaps from one to the other with the sure, swift feet of the roe or the young hart.

In the title of the 22nd Psalm, a Messianic Psalm, the meaning of Aijeleth hash-Shahar is, "The hind of the morning." Thus the title reads, "To the chief Musician—the Hind of the morning." And the word translated "hind," and the word that is rendered "hart," in the Song of Solomon, is the same word in the Hebrew. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the "Hind of the morning" and the "Chief Musician." As the first rays of the sun in a clear morning glance here and there upon this mountain peak and the crest of yonder hill, so Jesus Christ, the "Hind of the morning," came down to earth, leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills. How beautiful are the first rays of the sun in the early morning, as its beams touch first this and then that mountain peak. In the valleys, the shades of night seem to linger; and in contrast to these dark shadows, the touches of the sunlight appear all the more beautiful as they glance from hill to hill. So is the life of our Beloved in our spirit, as He arises within our consciousness to bring victory from within. He leaps over every obstacle, He disperses every shadow; He appears and disappears, now in sight and then not seen, but ever drawing nearer and nearer in our experience. Sometimes we see the difficulties in our lives and the hard things that seem impossible, we wonder if He can surmount them; for we know that we cannot. But He who could surmount the mountains of man's sin and separation within Himself, and the power of death and the grave, can surmount every mountain and hill that is in your life and mine. At first, we only look for Him in the joy and blessings; but He comes much oftener and more precisely as He leaps upon the mountains of difficulty. There are things so hard that none could undertake them but the Lord; but He will make these things stepping-places for His feet, and upon them He will reveal Himself to you in a deeper way than He has ever done before. He will come to you upon the things that are so hard you do not see how you are going to go through them; and you will wonder if even the Lord can lift you over them. He will come to you in the hard things in your life, in your disposition, in your weaknesses, in the testings in your body. He will come to you in the hardest surroundings and circumstances. And He will come leaping and skipping! He will leap over all the mountains of limitation and difficulty and skip along the hills of your fears and distress; and if your eyes are anointed, you will see Him revealing Himself in the power of a life that is irresistible and unconquerable, immortal and incorruptible.

The Shulamite speaks of Him coming leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills, and how our glad hearts rejoice and our mouths pour forth their pearls of praise in the sacred knowledge of the very first words uttered by the Beloved, wherein He cries to her, "**Rise up my love, My fair one, and COME AWAY!**" (S. of S. 2:10). Ah, He will leap over the sin and weakness in you, He will skip over the corruption and death in you, and speak urgently to you and cause you to arise and come away with Him to leap and skip with Him in

the immortal heights of the eternal mountains of God. Methinks you have heard the sound of His Voice, methinks you have been stirred in the deepeth depths of your being—arise, O beloved one, and ascend up into the heights of His victory and glory!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 32 AQUARIUS-THE WATER POURER

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART THIRTY-TWO

THE SIGNS OF AQUARIUS THE WATER POURER

Did you ever look up at night time and just gaze at the stars? I do; I am always enthralled by what I see. It was the Psalmist and King of Israel, David, who said, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" (Ps. 19:1-2). A study of the incredible glory and dazzling splendor of the star-studded heavens will convince any unbiased mind of the fact of the Creator. One would indeed need to be a silver-tongued orator with a golden pen to even begin to describe the breathtaking grandeur of the vast universe of myriads of raging infernos and swirling nebulae that stretch outward into infinity. It was Abraham Lincoln, once walking with a friend in the late evening, who looking up, said, "I could understand anyone up there in the heavens, looking down on this earth, and not believing in God: but I cannot understand anyone looking up to the heavens and seeing the glory of the stars, not believing in God." The import of the Psalmist's words, however, are freighted with meaning far beyond the heavens evoking a mere belief in the existence of the Creator. Well may we hymn God's praise because of the glory of the constellations and galaxies, but know this, oh man: God had in mind and purpose realms much greater than an acknowledgement of His greatness in creation when He inspired David with those weighty words: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork." The more our hearts bow down in meditation upon the eternal and heavenly and spiritual things of Him the more we are brought face to face with the wonderful truth enunciated by the apostle Paul to the saints in Ephesus: "For WE ARE HIS HANDIWORK, created in Christ Jesus with a view to good works which God prepared beforehand. . ." (Eph. 2:10) (Wuest). The Psalmist said, "The firmament showeth His handiwork." The apostle explained, "We are His handiwork, created in Christ Jesus." Neither by the eloquence of words nor by the clarity of phrases can we say more plainly or more emphatically than this that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows, reveals and demonstrates the nature and purpose of God's great creative work in and through His enChristed body, the elect saints, who are the new creation in Christ Jesus of which the natural creation is merely a faint shadow and a weak picture.

The Zodiac (Signs of the heavens) is the earliest revelation to mankind from his Creator. Each of the twelve Signs pictorially represents an aspect or the progressive unfolding of the dealings, plan and purpose of God in the grand scheme of creation and redemption. Each Sign portrays a dimension of SPIRITUAL REALTY wrought out, first of all, in the life of our blessed Forerunner and Head, Jesus Christ; and secondly in the life of each individual member of His body, the sons and daughters of God. The stars are distant lights. They shine in other spheres. There is no doubt that vast numbers of these stars are "suns" like unto our own, the centers of great solar systems, with heavenly bodies that revolve around them, perhaps populated by beings of which we know nothing at this present time. Thus will it be in the Kingdom of the Son, in the spiritual heavens of God's universal and eternal dominion. Each son of God will be a star, a sun, shining forth in living and everlasting luster. Each member of the elect will faithfully radiate his beams of life and light and love, shining in those spheres which the omniscient Father shall allot to them. Thus each shall become the central star of a spiritual solar system composed of myriads of creatures in God's glorious creation which revolve around them, unto whom they shine as the revelation of God's nature, glory, and power. These are the emanations of God Himself in whom the scripture is fulfilled: "Then shall the righteous SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Mat. 13:43). And again, "They that be wise shall SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; and they that turn many to righteousness AS THE STARS FOR EVER AND EVER" (Dan. 12:3). What glorious and ineffable prospects lie before us!

From the time when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God first shouted for joy, this universe, this eternal spiritual universe, this higher-than-the-heavens universe, this Kingdom of Heaven, has been the

home and heritage of every son of God. Each son belongs to it, and it belongs to him. He is in it, and it is in him. He holds himself in harmony with it, and it fills his soul with its song. He apprehends its truth, enjoys its beauties, and partakes of its holiness. There is no place in it where he has not a right to be; for it has been the Father's good pleasure to give him the Kingdom. His life is not measured by years, but by its possibilities and expansiveness. Divinity and eternity are born within him. The Signs of the natural heavens but picture the wonders of the spiritual heavens, the lights and configurations of which we are. Many saints wonder and stand in doubt of this message of sonship and the Kingdom of God, because they feel, Who are we that we should enter into such fullness, this measure of glory, grace and power that has not been known from the foundation of the world unto this day. But it is not a case of "Who are we?" It is a case of "How great thou art, O Lord!" God is the all-wise and almighty Creator, we are but His handiwork; He is doing this for His own glory and praise, and not because we have by our own wisdom chosen the glory or are anything of ourselves. Old creation or New Creation, "It is HE that hath made us, and not we ourselves..." (Ps. 100:3).

THE SIGN OF AQUARIUS

In our series of messages on the Zodiac we come now to the subject of AQUARIUS — THE WATER POURER. If you have a sky chart you will notice that the Sign of Aquarius is the figure of a mighty man holding a great urn upon his shoulder, from which comes a seemingly inexhaustible stream of water flowing downwards until finally it flows directly into the mouth of a great fish (Piscis Australis—the Southern Fish), which receives it and swallows it all. In the right shoulder of the Waterman is the star called SADELMELIK, which means The Record of the Pouring Out. The other shoulder bears the star SADALSUUD meaning He Who Pours Out. You have no doubt heard the song, "It is The Age Of Aquarius." What does that mean? Just as the stars have moved through the procession of the equinoxes, so we have moved in time and world history from one mansion of the Zodiac to another. Interestingly, about the time that Christ Jesus came into the world, we moved into the Sign of Pisces, which is the Sign of the Fish and a symbol of the people of God. That Sign has lasted for approximately two thousand years after which we are, even now, moving into the Sign of Aquarius, meaning a time of FULLNESS. There is no doubt whatsoever that the old age is ending and another more glorious age is dawning. The sacred knowledge of this fact burns brightly within the hearts of all Christians on all levels of spiritual development. The prophets of our generation have proclaimed it, and the constellations of the heavens declare it!

Aquarius means something far more than what the astrologers and others today think it means. As we have seen, Aquarius is the one who pours out the water upon Piscis Australis, the Southern Fish. Water, of course, is a great symbol of the Holy Spirit which God promised to pour out upon His people and the earth. It is a glorious symbol of life and one of the happiest in all of the world. Next to light, it is God's brightest element. Where waters come they bring gladness and rejuvenation, luxuriousness and plenty. Where they pour forth, sinking strength recovers, dying life rekindles, perishing nature revives, a thousand delights are awakened, and everything rejoices and sings with new-begotten vitality. In Aquarius that water is being poured out upon the figure of a fish. In the Sign Capricornus the dying goat is seen giving life to a fish emerging from its latter half. As Christ was the great sin-offering and through His death the Church or the fish was brought into life, we now see that fish sustained in life by the risen Christ, again in Aquarius, the Water-Bearer who is now pouring out the water of His Holy Spirit upon the living fish. This is a great picture of the outpouring of the fullness of the Spirit upon the sons and the daughters of God. The Lord Jesus said, "Whoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (Jn. 4:14). Again and again the scriptures testify of this mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit into and out from the people of God. Through Isaiah He declares: "For I will POUR WATER upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will POUR OUT MY SPIRIT upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thy offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses" (Isa. 44:3-4). David prophesied in spirit of the coming of the Messiah and described His coming in these words: "HE shall come down like RAIN upon the mown grass: as SHOWERS that water the earth. In His days shall the righteous flourish" (Ps. 72:6-7). Joel prophesied: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will POUR OUT MY SPIRIT upon all flesh and also upon the servants and upon the handmaidens in those days will I POUR OUT MY SPIRIT" (Joel 2:28-29). That our Lord is coming in a great spiritual outpouring of Himself is made plain in Hos. 6:3: "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the

morning; and HE SHALL COME UNTO US AS THE RAIN, as the former and latter rain unto the earth." Hallelujah!

There is a most remarkable incident which took place in relation to the glory cloud when the children of Israel came out of Egypt. This incident is little known by God's people, but it happened to testify to us of the great purpose for which God has enveloped His presence in a cloud. "Behold, He cometh with clouds....." It pointed forward to the great work of the Holy Spirit during this and subsequent ages. Paul refers to this event in **I Cor. 10:1-2**: "Moreover brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were UNDER THE CLOUD, and all passed through the sea; and were all BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES IN THE CLOUD and in the sea." Note that Paul says that the Israelites were "all BAPTIZED... IN THE CLOUD. And then in Exodus chapter fourteen it is repeated no less than four times, that they passed "on dry land" through the midst of the sea. Now, how can you pass through on dry ground and at the same time be BAPTIZED IN THE CLOUD AND IN THE SEA? The fact is, God baptized those Israelites on dry ground. The sea was indeed rolled back by a great wind and the ground became dry, but let us notice in **Ps. 77:15-20** what else happened at that time. "When Thou with Thine arm redeemed Thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. The WATERS saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. The CLOUDS Poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: Thine arrows also went abroad. Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." The CLOUDS P-O-U-R-E-D O-U-T W-A-T-E-R when the children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea by the hand of Moses! How many of my readers ever heard of that storm? Israel was thus "baptized" IN THE CLOUD, as they had been "baptized" in the sea!

THE WATER-POURER

The above story has not been understood because multitudes of the Lord's people equate "baptism" only with immersion, or one being dipped into or put under water. They claim that in every case of scriptural baptism the person or thing baptized is moved or put into or under the baptizing element. The truth is, however, that in the vast majority of cases in scripture, if not in every case, the baptizing element or instrumentality is moved and put upon the person or thing baptized. Contrary to the teaching of many, and contrary even to certain scholars, "baptize" does not mean to "dip." Ultimately it is usage that determines the meaning of words in any language. In classic Greek the word baptizo is never used in the modern evangelical sense of putting a body into water and then immediately withdrawing it. It cannot be denied by those who know and love the truth that the Sign of Aquarius tells us far more about the true "baptism in the Spirit" than all the modern-day preachers have ever learned from the Word of God!

Now, what saith the Lord as to the mode of this real Spirit baptism, and this symbolical water baptism? Open your Bible and look into this matter very carefully, with humility and reverence, and you will find that never once is the person represented as being "dipped," "plunged" or "immersed" into the baptizing element or agency, but uniformly the baptizing element or agency is "poured out," or in some way comes upon the person baptized. The apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4), and the Spirit was "poured out" on them (Acts 2:16-33); they were baptized with fire (Mt. 3:7), and a tongue of fire come down from heaven and "sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:2-3). The children of Israel were baptized with or by or in the cloud and the cloud "poured our water" upon them (Ps. 77:16-17; I Cor. 10:1-2). Noah and his family were baptized with the flood (I Pet. 3:20-21), and they rode safe and dry over its waves as it "rained" upon them for forty days and forty nights. Three thousand Jews received water baptism during the few closing hours of a single day, and in a city where there were no place the leaders and rulers would permit to be used for immersion. Paul was baptized in his own room (Acts 9:17-18). The inspired record says: "Anastas ebapisthe," that is, "having stood up, he was baptized." The jailer at Philippi was converted in the jail, at the midnight hour, and we are told that there "**he was baptized, he and all his, straightway**" (**Acts 16:33**). Cornelius and his household having had the Spirit fall on them and poured out upon them, water was brought and poured out on them, if the symbol is in any way to correspond to the reality (Acts 10:44-48). The Saviour was baptized with His sufferings (Lk. 12:50) and His sufferings were "laid upon Him" (Isa. 53:6). The Great Baptizer is Christ Himself, and He baptizes His people with the Holy Ghost when He "**pours out His Spirit upon them**" (**Tit. 3:5-6**).

In **Heb. 3:10**, the inspired writer, speaking of the Old Testament rituals, ceremonies and ordinances, says, "**Which stood only in meals and drinks, and divers washings imposed on them until the time of reformation.**"

The word translated "washings" refers to the ceremonial purifications under the law and is from the Greek word BAPTISMOIS, that is, baptisms. Can we ascertain the mode of these baptisms? Yes, with infallible certainty. In the very same chapter the apostle refers to the mode of these ceremonial purifications no less than three times and declares that it was by sprinkling. "For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh. How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13). "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people.... moreover he sprinkled.... both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry" (Heb. 9:19-21). In Num. 19:17-18 we read of a ceremonial purification, or "baptism," and we read: "A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels and upon the persons." In Lev. 14:5-7 we read how a leper was to be cleansed: "And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean." A leprous house was to be cleansed in the same manner, by sprinkling (Lev. 14:50-52). And so in the case of other ceremonial baptisms there is no case on record in which an Israelite administered any of the ceremonial baptisms by putting the person or thing under water. Not one! In every case the baptism or cleansing was by sprinkling or pouring out water. When the whole Israelitish nation entered into covenant with God at Sinai, Moses "sprinkled all the people" (Ex. 24:8; Heb 9:19). On the great day of atonement the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place, and sprinkled the Ark of the Covenant (Lev. 4:17; Heb 9:25). When the destroying angel passed over Egypt, only the blood-sprinkled were afforded protection (Ex. 12:7-13). When King David sinned he cried, "Purge me with hyssop," that is, sprinkle me with water or blood from the wetted hyssop, "and I shall be clean" (Ps. 51:7). When speaking of the spiritual cleansing effected by the blood of Christ, of which water baptism was the sign to believing Jews, Paul says, "the blood of sprinkling" (Heb 12:24); and Peter calls it "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:2). In all casts of the use of either water or blood in the Old Testament as a means of purification, sanctification or anointing sprinkling or pouring were the mode used. And in Heb 9:10 the apostle speaks of these ceremonial purifications, and calls them baptisms (baptismois). The Spirit's work is from Genesis to Revelation represented as a "pouring," a "sprinkling," a "coming down," a "shedding forth," and coming as the "rain" and the "dew". In the New Testament the Spirit of God is represented as descending, pouring out, shedding forth, falling upon, coming upon, sent from on high, to be drunk as water, anointing, sealing, breathed upon them, ministered to them, given to them, and received by them.

It is not my purpose in this writing to provoke a debate concerning the mode of water baptism. What you may or may not believe about external rituals, outward ceremonies, and natural ordinances is, in my opinion, but a paltry side issue of no spiritual significance and no eternal import. All natural things are but types and shadows to our understanding of spiritual things. Properly understood they open the door of understanding to the sacred secrets of God. All natural things have their spiritual counterparts, but I have absolutely no interest at all in seeking to establish or promote any external ritual, outward ceremony or carnal ordinance, for I declare to you that in this day, for those who have left the Outer Court and the Holy Place to find an entrance into the glory of the Holiest of all, the shadows have all passed away and reality has dawned within our hearts. Turn! oh sons and daughters of the Most High, from all these religious vanities, for the true light now shineth and the physical ceremonies having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with water, or formulas, or bread, or wine, or hands, or fleshly ministrations make the recipients thereof perfect. Depart from the carnal realm of empty and lifeless forms and flee away to the celestial heights in the mountain of God from whence streams the quickening and transforming river of Life from the presence of the Lord. One wonderful day, the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles in old Jerusalem, Jesus our Lord stood up and cried aloud to the people: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (Jn. 7:37-38). That, oh child of God is the secret to eternal blessedness. Not only does He pour the water upon us, but our faith and union with the living Christ of God makes us the source of rivers of living waters, ceaseless in their abundant flow forever and ever.

As Aquarius pours his water out from his urn, so the heavens pour down water upon the earth. When a cloud becomes so heavy with droplets that it can no longer hold them, it spills over, and we have rain. O Lord my God, thou art very great. . . who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters: who maketh the CLOUD HIS CHARIOT: HE WATERETH the hills FROM HIS CHAMBERS" (Ps.104:3, 13). The clouds are the chambers

of God containing the water of life. A cloud is full of water and water speaks to us of life. Water typifies the Word of God and the Spirit of God (Eph 5:26; Jn. 7:37-38). A cloud speaks to us of a vessel, as an urn, which contains water or contains life. Even so, God by His Spirit gives living water to refresh and impart life unto His creation. It is the nature of a cloud to empty itself. "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth" (Ecc. 11:3). When the cloud gets filled up, it rains. That is the nature of the clouds — rain pours out. All that God is was emptied into Jesus Christ. All that God is was poured into Him, He became a receptacle, a vehicle for all the fullness of God (Col. 1:19; 2:9). He was filled up with the life-giving properties of God. Now, all that Jesus Christ is, is being emptied into His body until we are filled with all the fullness of God—having all the life-giving properties of God. HE IS FILLING THE CLOUDS! The nature of each son will be to pour out that life just as God poured it into Jesus and Jesus poured it into us. If the saints be full of God they will pour Him out upon the earthy-natured, unspiritual ones. A true ministry has life to give, and is willing to empty himself in order to be a blessing to a dry and thirsty people. Pour out His life for others—that's what Jesus did! We must empty out that same life on a groaning creation and break the bondage. The whole creation is awaiting this son company of people who will be the clouds of glory, the strong man of Aquarius with the water jar. Their life giving waters will be emptied upon a dry and cursed earth just as the waters were first emptied upon them—creation itself will be released into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.

I mentioned that water is the symbol for both the Word and the Spirit (Eph 5:26; Jn. 7:37-39). The mystery of God is not far off in heaven somewhere. GOD IS THE WORD AND THE WORD IS GOD. Furthermore, THE WORD IS THE SPIRIT AND THE SPIRIT IS THE WORD. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (Jn 6:63). Words are the most powerful thing in creation. All visible things were created by God's Word. "And God said, let there be. . ." (Gen. 1:3). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (Jn.1:1,3). Let all men know that creation was not brought forth merely by the spoken word. The power of God's Word lies not in the act of speaking, but in the fact that it is a LIVING WORD. "For the Word of God is living and powerful" (Heb. 4:12). The Word is living because it is energized by the Spirit. "It is the spirit that quickeneth (makes alive).. the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The creation was not formed by the spoken word, but by the Living Word. "And the Spirit of God moved . . . and God said." The Word spoken emanated out of the Spirit—it was the Living Word. The scriptures state that we are born again by the Spirit and we are born again by the Word. Does that mean that we are born again twice, or on two levels? Not at all! It indicates that the Spirit and the Word are SO ONE that the Word is a LIVING WORD. The Spirit and the Word united are the Living Word. We are not born again by the spoken word—we are born again by the Word which is energized by the Spirit, the Spirit and the Word in union—the LIVING WORD. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23). The spoken word is not Christ, and the scriptures are not the Living Word. The people of Israel had the scriptures from the very mouth of God and thought that in that written word, in the mystery and magic of the word communicated in the Hebrew characters, they had life. They were wrong. Dead wrong. The word received at Sinai was THE MINISTRATION OF DEATH! There was no life in it! "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter: but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious...how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious" (II Cor 3:6-8). Consider how plainly and powerfully Jesus rebuked the Jews who trusted in the mystery and magic within the written word communicated to them in Hebrew characters. "And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him. . . .but Jesus answered them, search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (Jn. 5:15-16, 39-40). The Living Word is the LIVING CHRIST! And He always was the Living Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. IN HIM WAS L-I-F-E; and the LIFE was the light of men" (Jn. 1:1,4). I have witnessed many men speak and preach the word with great persuasion and nothing happened. There is no "magic" or "mystical power" in the words of the scriptures. The only power they have is that they testify of CHRIST THE LIVING WORD, they point to HIM WHO IS THE LIFE. One can preach great sermons and die! One can expound the sacred secrets and die! One can teach the deepest mysteries and die! But when men are ministered the DYNAMIC REALITY OF THE LIVING WORD transformation takes place. The same Living Word that by its almighty power brought creation into existence was made flesh and dwelt among us. The Word was not made an alphabet. The Word was not made a book. The Word was not made a teaching or a doctrine. The Word was made flesh, divine substance in human form, the Son of God. We are born of that

very same Living Word, the Christ; that Living Word is being poured out upon us and poured into us, we are drinking deeply of that Word and experiencing the living reality of the Christ within. The same Word that conquered sin and death in the person of Jesus Christ is being raised up in you and me in these days. Hallelujah!

There are many wonderful truths to embrace, endless revelations to inspire and thrill the heart of man, but you will never be gripped in your spirit by any more inspiring and encouraging than that penned long centuries ago by the prophet Isaiah. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto ME void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:8-11). Now, to what is God comparing His Word! To the rain and snow that fall upon the earth to water it, to give life and increase. God is saying that is just exactly what HIS WORD is sent to do. God's Word! God's Word coming down from heaven! God's Word is not letters of the alphabet. God's Word is the EMANATION OF HIMSELF. God's Word will come down in power from His high road, falling upon this lower road of the flesh realm. God's Word, or the Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos, the Living Word of God, will come as the former and latter rain unto His earth, or His people. He shall come upon those who are walking this lower road of the flesh. He will come upon our earth, and He will cause to spring up in our earth the seed of life that He has planted there. We are in the way or road of flesh, but down from that realm of SPIRIT, from God's way, God's state of being, He is pouring forth HIS VERY SELF upon humanity. God declared that His Word should not return unto Him void. Just as the rain and snow accomplish their purpose in the earth with unfailing certainty, so shall God's Word, His emanation, His anointing, His Christ not return unto Him void, but it SHALL ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE. There is a people in the earth in this hour that is letting that LIVING WORD rain down from above, and the New Creation is formed in them. And, sadly, there are those who are trusting in the "magic" within the written word or the spoken word, but are not touching the Living Word, and they shall die as men in spite of all their "deep sayings.

I hear a voice which we know well, speaking from the well of Sychar, and saying, "The water that I shall give thee shall be in thee, springing up unto everlasting life." It is the life of God in the Living Word; it is Christ Himself; and He has come to be in us, like a perennial spring, unstanching in drought, unfrozen in frost, leaping up, in fresh and invigorating beauty, like the cold refreshing spring that flows deliciously out of the earth into the desert heat. This is the picture presented to us by Aquarius, the Water-Bearer. It is the picture of a supply from a source so high, so abundant and unceasing, that it denotes FULLNESS. Our experience has been well expressed in the words of Paul, "for we know in part, and we prophesy in part..." (I Cor. 13:9). Throughout the past two thousand years of the age of Pisces, the age of the Fish, God has formed and fashioned His body, but it has been a thirsty fish. How we desire HIS FULLNESS! Yet we also praise God for those "times of refreshing that come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). If it is a long time between "showers," we get very dry. How we need that water that becomes an eternal and unfailing fountain within that springs up unto eternal life! That vital, essential work of imperative need is WITHIN—conforming us into His image, imparting to us His mind, developing His character, enriching us with the very nature of His peace, righteousness, joy and strength—then the more we shall become "a spring whose waters fail not."

I am saying all these things because I know that millions of believers have contentedly settled for the showers of blessings, knowing not that this state lies far beneath the provision of God for His people. Truly, "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. . ." (Eph. 1:13-14). God's people are yet lacking in understanding. The Holy Spirit, Paul says, is the earnest of our inheritance in Christ. The Greek word translated "earnest" (ARRABON) means merely a pledge or first installment, a down payment, money deposited by a purchaser to guarantee that he will pay for an item in full when it is delivered. The balance must follow. The fullness is guaranteed by the earnest. In modern Greek the word is used for an engagement ring, the idea being that he who gives a girl such a ring will complete his agreement to marry her—the wedding band will surely follow! When this word is used in scripture it speaks of the gift of the Holy Spirit as God's "earnest" or "engagement ring." In other words, the seal of the indwelling Holy Spirit is therefore an earnest or advance pledge from God Himself that those who are apprehended and receive THE

PROMISE will one day receive their inheritance IN FULL. The spirit-filled believer anticipates the fullness of God on the basis of this humble beginning. The "firstfruits" of the Spirit is at once a possession, a rich, blessed, and unquestionable reality, an initial endowment. As an initial gift, it stands in direct line to the expectation. The very fact of its reality is "the guarantee of our full inheritance." **"Who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (II Cor. 1:22).** This scripture tells us that a down payment has been made to us by God. When we put something in layaway at a store, we have to put down a certain percentage of money on the purchase. That money is the same thing as an earnest. Partial payment is given in anticipation of the complete fulfillment of the transaction. We have earnest expectations or foretastes of the Kingdom as we see it now within us on its very smallest scale.

Let us illustrate another way. In eastern lands it ever has been, and is, customary for there to be an intermediary in arranging a marriage. The Bible picture of this is in Genesis 24, where Abraham's servant Eliezer, goes on a long journey to find a wife for Isaac. He takes with him a good report of his master's son, and tells how that his father has made him heir of all his vast possessions, and he then shows the damsel and her friends samples of this wealth in camels and jewelry, and gives them some of the latter. Thus allured, Rebecca left her known circle and took a long, desert journey to become Isaac's wife, though she had never seen him. Thus did Paul the apostle speak to the saints: **"I have espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2).** Fulfilling the role of Abraham's servant, Eliezer, the apostle bestowed upon those who heeded his words a FORETASTE of the vast and unmeasurable wealth of the Kingdom of God, by imparting to them the gift and gifts of the Holy Spirit with its attending love, joy, peace, righteousness and power in the measure known by our present experience. How bountifully the table has been spread before us with His presence and divers gifts of the Holy Ghost! How rich and wonderful, beyond explanation, has been the blessing and glory so lavishly bestowed! And yet, precious friend of mine, all that we have received to this present time is but the "earnest" of the full inheritance which will be received when we have sufficiently matured to be entrusted with the balance of our inheritance—ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD! The earnest pertains to the age of Pisces—the church age. The fullness belongs to the age of Aquarius—the Kingdom age. And, bless your hearts, dear ones—THIS IS THE DAWNING OF THE AGE OF AQUARIUS!

Oh, what a grand and glorious realm lies before us in this expectation of the FULL INHERITANCE! The day of the full fruit of the Spirit! The day of Perfection! The hour of full and complete Redemption, spirit, soul, and body! The full and complete experiencing of HIMSELF! The fullness of Strength, Wisdom, Power and Glory! The Feast of Feasts! The strange part of the whole thing is this, that the whole purpose and plan of God for this day and hour is completely obscured and lost amidst the shout and euphoria over the "earnest," the "firstfruits," the "down payment," and most of the Lord's people have no idea or conception of what the full inheritance is all about. If they have any thought at all it is the foolish notion that the full inheritance is a mansion over the hilltop, or a cabin in the corner of gloryland. They can see the healings, deliverances, miracles, prophecies, worship, etc., and they understand not that it is God in His great mercy inviting His people to enter on in to their full inheritance. They do not realize that all this is not the end—it is merely the foretaste, the earnest of their inheritance, and that God bids them after sampling of His glory to arise and come away with Him to the Great Wedding Feast that lies before!

Completeness, perfection and fullness, however much desired, are not obtainable through an "in part" possession. Once we understand this one important principle, it becomes clear that we cannot reach the fullness in one grand leap. It would be like giving a farmer a pound of seed and a bag of fertilizer and then expect him to raise enough food in one short season to satisfy the starving millions of Africa. A partial supply cannot produce a full result. What I am saying is that the glory of God's fullness cannot be ministered unto us out of the ministry of the earnest. It must come from a realm BEYOND what we have received, even out of the Christ who has received the Spirit without measure. As children of God the Spirit of Christ dwells within us, we have received the earnest of our inheritance, but we are earnestly exhorted to **"Gird up the loins of your mind, and be sober, and hope to the end for the GRACE THAT IS TO BE BROUGHT UNTO YOU AT THE REVELATION (FULL UNVEILING) OF JESUS CHRIST" (I Pet. 1:13).** Christ ascended into the heavens and returned to indwell His body in a "firstfruits" measure of Himself. He came into us as it were in the limitation of infancy, just as a baby born into this world comes helpless, innocent and undeveloped, though containing the full potential of human life. The fullness of Christ remains locked up, as it were, in the unseen realm, locked up in His unappropriated, undeveloped, unexperienced life within ourselves. Thus, we must GROW IN GRACE

AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, the process of the unfolding of Himself out of Himself within us. Hallelujah! In spite of all the revivals, soul-saving crusades, the signs and wonders and miracles wrought through the ages, we are yet to see the revelation of HIS FULLNESS. But the hour is wonderfully nigh at hand, praise His name. Truly, this is the dawning of the age of Aquarius!

I want to take you back to that scene which transpired twenty centuries ago on the last great day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Let me briefly describe for you how that "last great day" was conducted. Early, early on the morning of that day a million people and more, who had been dwelling in tents and booths all around Jerusalem, arose, on the Last Great Day of the Feast. Early in the morning, Priests and Levites, singers and players on instruments, those that sounded silver trumpets, those that played on the golden harps, the tabrets, viols, wind and stringed instruments, the great orchestra of the great Temple, all gathered with the magnificent Temple Guard, with all the pomp and display of that splendid, most inspiring, most touching, and Divinely-appointed ceremonial. What was the scene! From the Temple there issued forth the High Priest, bearing in his hand the Sacred Golden Vessel. With him were all the attendant priests of the Sanhedrin, and all the pageantry and flourish of the Temple Guards. With the Urim and Thummim on his breast, and all his attendants following in train, he passed through the Temple and walked slowly and solemnly down the Temple Mount. The beautiful music that had come down through the ages swelled forth in mighty volume. The sweet singers sang this song with joy, "With joy shall ye draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation," as they went down the Temple Mount to the sweet, sweet stream of Siloam, that Sacred Stream which flowed out of the earth under the Temple Mount, and went away around Moriah and Zion, and then was lost in the gardens of Ophiel—a strange river. They went down to Siloam and the High Priest dipped the Golden Vessel into the clear, pure water. Then having taken the Sacred Water, he reversed the procession, and passed up with the water in his hand, while the choir sang, the instruments played, and the people chanted the great song, the twelfth chapter of Isaiah: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and song; and He is become my Salvation; THEREFORE WITH JOY SHALL YE DRAW WATER OUT OF THE WELLS OF SALVATION." They swept upward to the Temple amid the hush of the multitude, whose hearts were moved by the inspiring scene. Then came the last great ceremonial on that Last Great Day of the Feast, when the High Priest, in the presence of all the people, took the Water he had taken from the Sacred Stream, and poured it out upon the Altar, while a great shout went up from the people, "With joy shall ye draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation."

Just at that moment a young Man, humble, an untitled Rabbi, unexpectedly stood forth before the multitude. Stepping forward He took the place, doubtless, of the High Priest. Standing there beside the Sacred Altar, He lifted up His hands to the multitudes on Mount Moriah, Mount Zion, and Mount Olivet, and cried with a Voice that echoed and re-echoed down the Valley of Hinnom: "IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME UNTO ME AND DRINK. HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME, AS THE SCRIPTURE HATH SAID, OUT OF HIS BELLY SHALL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER! What a hush fell upon the people! What a wonder that any man should be so daring as to step forward and take the High Priest's place and declare that He Himself was the Sacred Fountain opened in Judah for sin and all uncleanness! There is a thirst in the heart of every man for the Fountains of Living Water. The vast majority of mankind has mistaken the thirst they have for Living Water to be a thirst for some temporal thing. Vainly they imagine that their thirst can be quenched by partaking of the stagnant waters of earth's cisterns. Like lost sheep they wander through the wilderness of life seeking satisfaction and finding none. Place after place they roam in their pitiful search for the Fountain that satisfies, but find it they never can until at last they come to the Living Christ. "If any man thirst," says Christ, "let him come unto Me and drink!" He becomes all in all to every searching heart. When Jesus comes, the thirsty soul finds the Fountain of Living Waters. There his thirst is slaked forever. Henceforth the River is in him, a literal Niagara of Living Water springing up unto eternal life. "The River of God is full of Water."

With reverent heart and bowed head I now direct you to the wonderful truth that it was on this Last Great Day of the Feast of Tabernacles, at the ceremony known as "The Pouring Out of the Water," that Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me . . . out of his belly shall now Rivers of Living Water." This He spake of the Spirit which they should receive. The time would come when men would no longer draw their experience from wells of Divine provision, but an artesian fountain of Living Water would rise up in the soul, and flow forth unto humanity in mighty Rivers of Blessing and Life. The Jewish people have always believed that their Messiah would appear on this last, Great Day of the Feast. In fact, they

still believe it. This is why Jesus had to be there on that Day. He had an appointment to reveal Himself to Israel on that literal, typical Day and He did. He was right on schedule. We must keep in mind that when Jesus appeared in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles two thousand years ago, He appeared as a physical man at a symbolic ceremony, and that ceremony was not the Feast of Pentecost, but the Feast of Tabernacles. It was at the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus presented Himself as the Giver, by the will of the Father, of the Holy Spirit as Rivers of Living Water. And yet, is it not true that we have always associated the Rivers of Living Water with the gift of the Holy Spirit received at the Feast of Pentecost? How dull of hearing and understanding is the carnal mind! We have looked to Pentecost as the source of the Rivers of Living Water, and in so doing have misappropriated the symbol entirely, and missed the larger fulfillment of the type! We have wondered why, with such a fullness of life, we have continued to be weak, limited, sick, oppressed, imperfect and dying. The answer is, of course, that we have tried to live an abundant life out of a trickling stream! I would not belittle or depreciate in any measure the wonderful life of the Spirit we have received; but at best it is merely the earnest, the sample, the foretaste, the pledge, the down payment, the first installment, the guarantee of the FULL INHERITANCE!

Let men now cast aside their pride of attainment. Pentecost is not the fullness. Pentecostal people love to call themselves "Full Gospel." There are people right here in El Paso who say, "We're a FULL GOSPEL Church!" No they're not! I am asked the question some times: What is the difference between what the Pentecostals and Charismatics preach and what you teach? Indeed, there are vast and varied differences! But fundamental to them all is the fact that they preach TWO FEASTS, while we proclaim THREE. They preach two Feasts and call them "FULL GOSPEL." The truth is, they are but two-thirds of the Gospel, at best! Passover is not the fullness! It is but the beginning—the appetizer before the meal. Pentecost is not the fullness—it is merely the introductory salad. There is yet another Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of the FULL HARVEST AT THE END OF THE YEAR—the balance of the meal! Pentecost is the Firstfruits of the Spirit and the earnest of our inheritance. The Feast of Tabernacles, on the other hand, is the Feast of ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD at the end of the year, at the conclusion of the age, at the consummation of God's dealings with His body—all the power and wisdom and glory and majesty of God to be manifested in the sons of God. This Feast will bring the fullness, and release to creation, and salvation to all the nations. The glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea! There will be a MIGHTY OUTPOURING! Praise God for the earnest—but let us follow on to receive the FULLNESS! Tabernacles is the Feast of fullness in the age of Aquarius.

God gave Ezekiel a prophetic vision of the glory of the Lord to be revealed at the end of the age. This vision revealed what the body of Christ would become as the Church age ends and the glorious age of the Kingdom comes in. It is so mighty, so overwhelming in scope that at the time Ezekiel could neither comprehend it nor explain its meaning. In fact half way in to this prophetic vision the Lord stops, turns to Ezekiel, and asks, "Have you seen this? (Eze. 47:6). It is as though the Lord is saying to him, "Do you comprehend the magnitude of what you see? Are you able to grasp the prophetic power of this vision? Do you yet see what the rising of the waters speaks of—how it is going to end? Do you see His glory coming, and the immensity of it? It is so awesome, so mind-boggling that I don't want you to miss the true significance of this revelation!" The Holy Spirit was shown to him as a small stream which periodically increased and continued to rise until it became a mighty river. In this vision the prophet was conducted along the river by the angel of the Lord—in the form of a man. Hear now the beautiful description of the River of God in the words of the prophet himself. "Then my guide brought me again to the door of the house of the Lord—the temple; and behold, water issued out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple was toward the east; and waters came down from under, from the right side of the temple, on the north side of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around outside to the outer gate by the way that faces east; and behold, waters were running out in a trickle on the right side. And when the man went on eastward with the line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he caused to pass through the water, waters that were ankle deep. Again he measured a thousand cubits and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that reached to the knees. Again he measured a thousand cubits and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that reached to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the waters had risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over or through. And he said to me, Son of man, have you seen this? Then he led me and caused me to return to the bank of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the

other. Then he said to me, These waters pour out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah (the valley of the Jordan) and on into the Dead Sea. And when they shall enter into the sea of putrid waters the waters shall be healed and made fresh. And wherever the river shall go, every living creature which swarms shall live, and there shall be a very great number of fish; because these waters go there that the waters of the sea may be healed and made fresh, and every thing shall live wherever the river goes. The fishermen shall stand on the banks of the Dead Sea; from Engedi even to Eneglaim shall be a place to spread nets; their fish shall be of very many kinds, as the fish of the Great or Mediterranean Sea" (Eze. 47:1-10) (Amplified).

What is the meaning of Ezekiel's vision? What is this rising river which flows from the Temple eastward to the Dead Sea? The entire scene is freighted with keen interest and deep significance when we realize the river is a prophetic picture. We are looking upon the stream of Divine Truth and Life. I have stood on the Temple site on Mount Moriah and from Jerusalem I have looked upon the same view which Ezekiel saw in his vision. It is an incredibly dry, lifeless, barren desert area that stretches down the Judean hills to the Jordan Valley and finally to the Dead Sea where nothing lives. How many times throughout the scripture God is spoken of as a flowing stream of water! "How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men. . . shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life" (Ps. 36:7-9). These words relate to one thing—that God Himself has flowed out and is still flowing on this earth into humanity AS LIFE. We may ask, in what form has God flowed out? He has flowed out first in His Son, in Jesus Christ; and then He has flowed out as the Holy Spirit. Let us see God's order: God Himself is the spring, the very source of the water of life; Jesus Christ, the first-born Son, is the fountain, the reservoir of this divine water; and the Holy Spirit, flowing through the body of Christ, the corporate son, is the living stream, the river flowing all the time. A river is a large stream of water that flows downhill through a channel, within banks. The water is the life, the outflowing of the Spirit. The banks are the earthen channel, the limits or direction of the flowing. The earth of your body, precious friend of mine, is the channel through which the stream of God's life flows. In nature there is water in every part of the atmosphere and in bodies of different magnitudes upon the earth, but a river is a concentrated and channeled current or stream of water. While God's love, and life, and light enfold and embrace all things, and all people, the River of Life is that River, that special provision and flowing of GOD'S CONCENTRATED and CHANNELED LIFE, intensified and magnified in its movement and power. These currents of God's Spirit which flow out through the people of God are the powers of heaven's own Divine Life and have the wondrous ability to wash away the very power and effects and results of sin and death! Every saint of God should seek that the Lord would open his eyes to show him that those who drink deeply of Him become the channel by which God flows out to humanity.

I would draw your reverent attention to the source of this river and how it increases as it flows. It begins at the altar in the Sanctuary of the Temple where the presence and glory of God is. It flows out under the threshold of the door. The source of the river is in the glory of the Lord in the heights of the mountain of God. Sir Samuel Baker, many years ago, was endeavoring to find the sources of the Nile. Suddenly, while he was traveling up the bed of a tributary of the Nile, he lost it completely. The river disappeared. There was no water. He kept on traveling day after day, day after day, but there was no water. It was simply a dry water bed—a water course where the water once had been. Where were the sources of the Nile? He was talking with Lady Baker about it one night, camping in the bed of the dry river, when suddenly in the middle of the night they heard a cry, "El Atbara! El Atbara!" and someone pulling at the tent poles. "Get out quick! The river! The river!" They all rushed up the banks, and scarcely had they gotten on high ground before they heard the thundering noise of the river coming down the dry bed in which they had camped. In a moment there was a mighty river filling the dry water- course, giving in a moment the answer to the question: Where are the sources of the Nile? Away in the distant mountains where snow had melted the water came down in floods!

In like manner, the glorious River of God is first seen flowing out from the heights of the Paradise of God. Since all rivers flow downhill until they reach the sea, Eden would necessarily have been located at a high altitude, in the mountains or on a plateau. This high altitude or "higher realm" of the Garden of Eden typifies the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. This Garden is Canaan, the Promised Land. "A land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deut. 11:11-12). God placed Adam the first in the Garden of Eden, or the Kingdom of Heaven, a place of light and beauty, from

whence flowed the springs of the fountain of the River of Life, the source of Living Water. Without the Garden lies the "lower realm" of earth, bespeaking the human condition apart from God, the whole dreadful realm of darkness and death in which is contained every sin, sorrow, tragedy, pain, trouble, sickness, heartache, fear and torment known to man. The higher realm of Eden extends upward into infinitude, glory ascending above and beyond glory, for Eden is the gate to the unbounded and inexhaustible heavens. The lower realm includes this world and everything that is beneath it. It descends into the lowest realms of the bottomless and embraces the outer realms of darkness. And flowing from the highest realm of the Kingdom of Heaven to the lower realms of the Kingdom of Darkness is THE BLESSED RIVER OF LIFE. Its incorruptible waters of Spirit and Truth are more real and sparkling and alive than any river of earth. It pulsates with righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost and vibrates with the sheer, exquisite beauty of the divine nature of our great and glorious God and His Christ that is impossible for my poor pen to describe. Its glory surpasses the shining of a million diamonds in the sun, for it is the glory of the Lord God Almighty.

I have shown that the River of Life is the stream of flowing of God's concentrated and channeled life through the river-bed of the body of Christ. The invisible, unapproachable and unknowable God is the eternal spring, the source of the life; Jesus Christ, the first-born Son is the fountain, the reservoir of this divine water; and the body of Christ is the out flowing, the living stream, the river flowing all the time. We have seen, as did Ezekiel in vision, that River flowing out from the Sanctuary or Temple of God. This is the Temple built of living stones, each son of God a stone in that glorious house not made with hands, an habitation of God through the Spirit. There is but one Temple, one great High Priest, and one Priesthood. The book of Revelation tells us that this stream of living water flows from the New Jerusalem, out of the throne of God and the Lamb (Rev. 22:1-2). This is another picture showing us the source of this living water and the channel through which it flows. The water (spirit) flows into us, through us, and out from us. This Mount Zion, this New Jerusalem, this City of the living God, this Temple of the Holy Spirit, this Kingdom of God is composed of MANY SPIRITS who have been quickened by HIS SPIRIT merged into ONE GIGANTIC WATERFALL—ONE GREAT RIVER OF LIFE! Take the shoes from off your feet, oh saint of God, for the ground on which we stand is holy ground. Put away all lightness and foolishness that with heads bowed down and hearts lifted up in worship God's Holy Spirit may reveal how the life of God flowing in Christ and the life of Christ flowing through His body is ONE STREAM OF THE WATER OF LIFE. This is the River flowing out from under the threshold of the Sanctuary and down into the desert and the sea. But notice, my beloved, at the center the living waters begin to rise and issue from "under the threshold" of the Sanctuary. Not an overflow, but an underflow: an under-current, deep, mighty, and strong, picturing the real power and depth of the Holy Ghost within, as it surges upward from our innermost being to flow out to the dry places. How silently it rises under the threshold of the house, the stream unperceived at first, but growing deeper and deeper as it flows on. How imperceptively the work of God begins in us! How silently yet steadily it increases from realm to realm! How mighty it becomes ere we are aware of its immensity!

As the River flows out under the threshold of the door, it isn't a very great flow to begin with, just a little trickle, though it comes from a mighty depth within. There was a man there with a measuring rod to measure this outflow of life and he measured out a thousand cubits and brought Ezekiel through the waters. They had increased but it still was not a great River, just ankle deep. He measured another thousand cubits and the waters were knee deep; they had increased more. Again he measured a thousand cubits and the waters were to the loins, up to the waist. "Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." Each measure was a thousand cubits. ONE THOUSAND is the number of the Kingdom of God, the DOMINION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD. The measure is the measure of the outflow of His life in respect to the power and glory of the Kingdom, the rule of His Day. As the grace of God flows through our lives it doesn't decrease with the flow, there is no loss or diminishing, it ever increases; the more we allow it to flow the greater it becomes and the more grace there is flowing. This is the law of God. In God's pouring out there is no diminishing of Himself, He is increased and expanded, just as parents are increased and expanded by the extension of their life into their children. This is the wonderful part of God's great purpose. There is never any diminishing, there is always an increase. This is the law of the River of His grace, His love, His life and His glory. We do not need to have an abundance of grace in our hands at any particular moment so long as we are connected with the source. There isn't a lake full of water in the faucet in your bathroom, possibly just a cupful, but if you turn it on and keep it running you can run a lake full through it.

Saints, Ezekiel was walking into the future—right into our time! It is my deep conviction, and I believe that I have the Spirit of God, that today we live in the last one thousand cubits of this vision, the very last measurement of water! Ezekiel stepped to the edge of it but it was too deep for him, too overwhelming! He said, "I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in." In essence he was saying, "This is over my head!" Can't you imagine the prophet's wonder, as he said to the Lord, "What is this sea that has risen? If this River is all about life and resurrection, who are the ones who will be so blessed that they can swim in such power and glory?" What Ezekiel is being shown is that the body of Jesus Christ, the sons of God, in the very last days will be more glorious, more victorious, than at any time in the history of the world. The church age will end in a blaze of power and glory, birthing sons of the Kingdom in the fullest revelation of Jesus Christ man has ever known! "The fish of the sea shall be exceeding many" (**Eze. 47:10**). Coming forth is a people who will be swimming in the rising waters of the Lord's power and life! Life and immortality shall be revealed in power over sin and death, and it shall come to pass that "everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live!"

As God has moved by His Spirit in these latter days there has been a tendency to look back to the early church and apostles as if those ancient believers had a better revelation and a superior manifestation of what the body of Christ should be! Many have emphasized the recapturing or imitating of their ministry and methods. Men have sought to "restore" the order of the five-fold ministry and to reestablish the so-called divine order of the early church. Let me remind all those who yet cling to the notion that the five-fold ministry will somehow bring the saints to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ and bring in the Kingdom—the early church had the five-fold ministry and they BROUGHT IN BABYLON THE GREAT AND THE DARK AGES! Make no mistake about it—the Lord does not want us to go back to the early church! He has planned something much better for this generation! Why go back to a trickle of water when you can have "waters to swim in?" Are you grasping this yet? If this river of living water is the Spirit and the Word, then the early church — with all its glory and manifestation—was just the beginning trickle of the flow out of the house!

What glorious prospects lie before us! Very near the Temple is the desert and the Dead Sea — the rough, jagged hills on which nothing grows and over which men stumble, and the sea in whose waters no fish swims, and on whose surface no ship floats. Round about the City of God is a dreary desolation. Is it not true, even today? The stream that Ezekiel saw, as soon as it left the Temple, made straight for the east, for the Dead Sea — for that was the region of death, the region that most needed life and blessing. The River flows out toward the east country — the roots of civilization, the power of the flesh life. It goes down into the desert — the land of drought where there is a famine of hearing the Living Word of God. It goes down into the sea — the raging, surging masses of humanity, and the restless, agitated, uncontrollable emotions of the soul — and everywhere it goes it brings healing and life. Beloved, let us look to ourselves that we do not receive the grace of God in vain, but be laborers together with God, letting the grace of God flow, which is the River of all Divine goodness, life, love and power. If we are to be a part of that River we must keep in contact with the source and get into the flow of the River, the River that will flow to the east country, go down into the desert, bringing life and health to these regions and continue to flow down into the sea bringing life and blessing wherever it flows. All glory be to God!

One cannot begin to tell the blessings to be revealed, the glory to be seen throughout the earth, the release to be ministered to creation, as Aquarius, the Water-Pourer, pours forth the eternal stream of the River of Life unto all the fish in the sea in this, God's NEW DAY. I speak as a prophetic voice in the earth in this generation. The manifestation of glory and power and righteousness which will be manifested within our generation will eclipse all former moves. Who can carry on with the programs of man anymore, who can wade in the shallows of the trickle of former visitations once they have received the vision of what shall be realized as God's people launch out into the deep. The last or most recent "shower of blessing" came during the great Latter Rain outpouring during the years 1948-1953. The effect and blessing of that outpouring is with us still. But the celestial deluge is yet to fall in GREAT POWER AND GLORY. Glorious beyond words to describe was that wonderful outpouring of God's glory at Pentecost, but no language of men below nor of mighty angels above can begin to describe the SURPASSING GLORY of the outpouring in these last days. The "waters to swim in" are coming, the manifestation of the fullness of the spirit and life of the almighty Christ of God, and compared to these waters the former outpourings were flickering candles before the burning brilliance of the noontday sun, or trickling streams compared to the vast ocean currents beyond the power of man to either produce or

control. Hear me now and believe me later — if you cannot believe me now — soon, very soon, there will come the manifestation of the sons of God, for which all creation has groaned for long millenniums and ages. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed from the living, completed temple of His body. His glory shall flow out and fill the earth. His power shall shake the nations and all nations shall come and worship before Him. The harvest of this age shall be gathered. Everything shall live, whithersoever the River cometh. As on the Dead Sea, where once reigned silence, are now boats and fish and nets and fishermen, when its waters are touched by the Waters of the River, so the church and the world shall be transformed, and this old earth of ours shall become the Paradise of God. I tell you the truth. I lie not. The day is at hand! Rejoice and arise, oh ye sons of the Most High! The glorious dawn is now painting the eastern sky, and the River of God is full of Water.

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 33 AQUARIUS-THE WATER POURER [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART THIRTY-THREE

THE SOUTHERN FISH
PEGASUS
THE SWAN

The Sign of Aquarius is the figure of a mighty man holding a great urn upon his shoulder, from which comes a seemingly inexhaustible stream of water flowing downwards until finally it flows directly into the mouth of a great fish, which receives it and swallows it all. Water, of course, is a great symbol of the Holy Spirit which God promised to pour out upon His people and the earth. It is also the symbol of the Word of God — Divine Truth and Reality. Christ is both the Spirit and the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn. 1:1). "Now the Lord is that Spirit" (II Cor. 3:17). All that God is was emptied into Jesus Christ, He became a receptacle, a vehicle for all the fullness of God. Now, all that Christ is, is being emptied into His body until we are filled with all the fullness of God — having all the life giving properties of God. The nature of each son of God is to pour out the living water of the Spirit and the pure, living Word of God just as God poured it into Jesus and Jesus poured it into us. Pour out His life for others — that's what Jesus did! We must empty out that same life on a groaning creation and break the bondage. The whole creation is awaiting this son company of people who will be the strong man of Aquarius with the water jar. Their life-giving waters will be emptied upon a dry and cursed earth just as the waters were first emptied upon them — creation itself will be released into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.

THE SOUTHERN FISH

We come now to the three Decans, or minor constellations, which surround Aquarius and which enhance or fill up the message of the Sign. The first constellation is a fish with a wide-open mouth into which flows the water from the huge urn which Aquarius holds. Its name is PISCIS AUSTRALIS, meaning The Southern Fish. This constellation is marked by a single bright star, FOMALHAUT, which means The Mouth of the Fish. The fish receives and drinks the water from the unlimited and unceasing supply of the waterman. It is the picture of the believing acceptance of the Living Spirit of Truth that Christ bestows upon all who come unto Him to drink. "If any man thirst, let Him come unto Me, and drink!"

In a previous Study I shared the great truth of the Law of Giving and Receiving which is the very law of creation and redemption. I showed that God in His eternal and immutable nature is love — all goodness. When we understand that God is love, we can then go on to discover the attribute through which we become aware of His existence — HIS DESIRE TO SHARE. This desire to share is the consequence, the effect of His goodness. A God of love without creation is unthinkable — impossible. Here we have the first principle of creation — God's infinite desire to impart led to the creation of a vessel to receive His blessings. The Creator's nature is love — sharing or imparting; however, there can be no sharing unless there is some object that can receive. So God's infinite desire to impart implies a desire to fulfill every possible dimension and quality of desires to receive. Can we not see by this that God's infinite desire to give demands AN AGENT WITH THE DESIRE TO RECEIVE! The very nature of God requires CREATION! So the first step in creation was to bring forth the manifestation of the DESIRE TO RECEIVE! The creation of this vessel with the desire to receive was the beginning and the end of creation. He therefore created the universe with all the hosts thereof, and this world with its inhabitants. Thus the Creator could now bestow upon the creation His infinite love and inexhaustible abundance. God is the Lover, creation the beloved! "For God so loved the world..." That is the first fundamental revelation of the law of God in creation — God gives and we receive.

There naturally follows the second stage in which we learn the great truth that God only makes us Receivers in order that we may become Givers! Ah, first He must create in us the desire to receive; second, He must

involve us in the grand purpose of the receiving — to mature us into His image until we have thoroughly learned the great law of His Being, of His Kingdom — it is MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE! This leads directly into the light of the truth set forth in the Sign of Aquarius and the constellation of The Southern Fish — Aquarius is THE GIVER; The Southern Fish is THE RECEIVER. From time to time and stage to stage the roles of Giver and Receiver change as the Receivers become Givers. But the Sign points to one thing — that God Himself has flowed out and is still flowing on this earth into humanity AS LIFE. We may ask, in what form has God flowed out? He has flowed out first in His Son, in Jesus Christ; and then He has flowed out as the Holy Spirit. Let us see God's order: God Himself is the spring, the very source of the water of life; Jesus Christ, the first-born Son, is the fountain, the reservoir of this divine water; and the Holy Spirit, flowing through the body of Christ, the corporate son, is the living stream, the river flowing all the time. On the one hand, the Lord Jesus Christ receives from God, we receive from the Lord Jesus Christ, and creation receives from the sons of God. On the other hand, God gives to Christ, Christ gives to us, and we give to creation. In each step Aquarius depicts the Giver, while The Southern Fish portrays the Receiver. This is God's divine order in the Kingdom of God!

PEGASUS

The second constellation in the Sign of Aquarius is PEGASUS — The Winged Horse. Here is the picture of a great horse galloping forward with full speed, with great wings spreading from his shoulders. The familiar figure of the flying horse moving swiftly has been made popular as the trademark of a well-known brand of petroleum products. A winged horse, however, is unknown to nature. It must therefore be understood as a figure. The meaning of this symbol is declared by the names of the stars in the constellation. There are 89 altogether. The brightest comes down to us with the ancient Hebrew name of MARKAB, which means returning from afar. Another bright star is called SCHEAT meaning who goeth and returneth; ENIF, the branch; AL GENIB, who carries; HOMAN, the water; MATAR, who causeth the plenteous overflow. Putting these thoughts together, we see Pegasus as One who returns from afar; He is the branch who carries the water, causing a plenteous overflow! In the first chapter of Zechariah the appearance of such horses are the symbols of those whom "God hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth," not merely to see and report the condition of affairs, but to shake and disturb nations, in order to bring deliverance and establish peace, righteousness and blessing upon all.

Pegasus was known to the Greeks as "the horse of the gushing fountain." He was a celestial horse, ever associated with glad song. Pegasus is winged; he moves with heavenly speed. On great wings he rides the winds. He is master of the air, god-like in his power. Pegasus is a prophetic revelation of the glorious coming of HIM who pours out the living water. In the religious systems of Babylon we have been led to think in terms of the first coming and the second coming of Christ, whereas the Bible speaks in terms of the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ. Our God does not talk about the "first coming" and the "second coming" — He talks about the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. For example, let us take a look at that thought in Micah 5:2, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee He shall come forth unto Me who is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting."

Notice, His "goings forth." The plural is used. The goings forth of the Lord speak about the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, the idea of "goings" has to do with the onward marching of God — the unfolding of the purpose of God, step by step. This is what is indicated here. This is what history is all about, the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the marching forward of God, the ever increasing unveiling of Himself to man. The unfolding of end-time events and God's order for the ages to come, which are the main contents of the last book of the Bible, are called THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

The average Christian's conception is of Jesus sitting upon the right hand of God for a couple thousand years, at the end of which time He leaves His throne to "come in the clouds of heaven. **"NOT SO! "HEREAFTER you will see the Son man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mat. 26:64).** So runs the King James Version, translating a Greek phrase which signifies unequivocally "from now on" --or literally, HENCEFORTH. But it is safe to say that the average reader, reading from the Authorized version, generally understands it to mean something very different - not "HENCEFORTH shall you see the Son of man

sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," but "in the hereafter," "at some point in the indefinite future," you will see the Son of man "sitting" and then "coming." The correct thought is, "HENCEFORTH — FROM N-O-W O-N you will see the Son of man sitting...and coming." These two events, the sitting and the coming, are simultaneous. They are co-extensive. They transpire at the same time. And they both happen "from now on." From now on He sits and He comes. He sits upon the throne of heavenly power and He comes in the clouds of heaven! He sits as our great High Priest and He comes to us as our transforming Saviour. He doesn't sit and then come, He comes while He sits. It is not two separate, independent actions, but a two-fold, interdependent action.

Has He not come to you, precious brother, sister, in mighty saving power and indwelling life even as He sits upon the throne on High? Like a choir of many voices and as the sound of many waters, the testimony of the Word of God resounds with abundant and stunning and inescapable evidence that the coming of Christ is not a single event, but includes many different manifestations. His coming to us is a many-sided experience. To multitudes He appears as Saviour. They find Him at the crossroads of their lives. He becomes their salvation but they never venture any deeper to know Him intimately. They have only a superficial knowledge of Him. To others He appears as Chief Shepherd and Bridegroom. These hear His voice and are moved by His love, and follow on to know Him in deeper measures of intimacy and union. To others He appears as a Thief. He comes into their world uninvited and unannounced, He overtakes them unexpectedly and breaks up their life style and smashes their religious games. And unto others He appears as Fire, consuming their hay, wood, and stubble, eliminating by the spirit of burning all that is of self and not of God. The coming of the Lord is as many faceted as the most dazzling crystal of earth or the most beautiful diamond known to man.

We dare not lose sight of the fact that our Lord has already had many comings, many appearings. We have limited the comings of Jesus strictly to two because of our unscriptural terms "first coming" and "second coming," but the truth is that He came; He continued to come; He comes; He continues to come; He will come; and He will continue to come! There are numerous "comings" and "appearings" of the Lord in the New Testament. BUT THEY DO NOT ALL REFER TO THE SAME EVENT. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty messengers, when He shall come to be GLORIFIED I-N HIS SAINTS, and to be admired I-N all them that believe in that day" (II **Thes. 1:7,10**). Jesus Christ is coming again, and He is coming to be glorified I-N His saints and to be admired I-N the sons of God who by His grace have come into His image throughout the ages. These sons are the body of the Son of God. This is the fullness of the Christ. Not for the world nor all that is in it would I for one moment miss the glory of the age and ages which are to come! To reign with Christ and with Him usher all creation into the glory of God, which has been the vision of the prophets, the dream of the sages, the cry of the sons, the purpose of God, and the longing and expectation of all creation is a prize of far vaster worth than all the power and glory and wealth of all the nations of earth combined. Though God's Christ is One, it will take the ages to come to reveal His manifold beauties and graces. He is the one Christ, yet His body is made up of many redeemed souls. He is the true Vine, yet there are many branches. He is the only-begotten Son of God, yet He is leading many sons to glory. He is the only Saviour, yet He is bringing a whole company of saviours up on Mount Zion.

I bring you good news. YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST. Not the "mystical body" as the theologians of Babylon are wont to define it, but you are T-H-E B-O-D-Y of Christ and Christ is I-N YOU of a truth, precious friend of mine, to manifest the fullness of Himself. We can think and know and act like God and not like men. Let us pray as did Paul: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again UNTIL Christ be FORMED in you" (**Gal. 4:19**). The New English Bible says, "I am in travail with you over again until you take the shape of Christ." The Amplified Bible reads, "I am again suffering birth pangs until Christ is completely and permanently formed (molded) within you!" Wuest's translation renders, "I am again striving with intense effort and anguish until Christ be outwardly expressed in you."

In looking at a piece of petrified wood we can see this. One time it was wood, NOW IT IS ROCK. For something has happened to it. Certain minerals entered into every cell of that piece of wood and wrought a complete change in it. The process continued until that piece of wood had become rock. Same shape, same size and it has exactly the same cell structure. But what a great change has taken place! THIS IS WHAT GOD IS DOING IN US. Something is happening to us. We do not understand all about it, but we know that there is a change going on in our innermost beings. It is God permeating us with Himself. God is impregnating us with

Himself. God is taking over, filling even our very cells with all He is and will be. This change is taking place in our inner selves, in our minds, in our spirits, and even in our bodies. This process shall continue until we arrive at the condition of being saturated with God. God's life within us produces a metamorphosis. God shall so fill us, shall so overwhelm us that we take on the very characteristics of God. The glory that fills our expectant souls today is born of the knowledge that the hour of His manifestation is at hand — the hour when the Christ shall come in fullness to be revealed IN HIS SAINTS, and they shall reign over the earth.

I am prophesying a new and fresh revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The night is falling on the present order. Already we are seeing evidence of the dawning of a new day breaking forth upon us and many thousands of the Lord's elect are even now arising to behold the first rays of the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. There is a mighty cry in our hearts for the Lord to move in a fresh and altogether new way in our lives and in the earth. Many things are happening in the Pentecostal and Charismatic realms today, but I do not hesitate to tell you that all of these things are but stale "left overs" from previous visitations. We are due for a fresh move and a new work of God in the earth today! So the night is coming, bringing an end to particular forms of the movings and operations of the Spirit of God. Though all the manifestations of the past have been precious and needful, yet our God in this hour is moving on. A new manifestation and revelation of the Christ is coming in the midst of us, and I hear and see the signs that He is beginning to come. We are living in the early dawn of another APPEARING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. This appearing will be in and through the long awaited manifestation of the sons of God. This truth is burning within my bones, pulsating within my bosom. I am being quickened by these things. My one desire is to be available to be a part of this appearing of the Lord that is preparing the sons of God for the wind-up of this age and the inauguration of a far greater age of glory.

All the comings of the Lord are set forth in the winged horse of the heavens riding triumphantly, the image of aggressive action, of a prosperous conquest. He comes as Deliverer and Blessor with great swiftness, power and joy. Pegasus typifies Christ as the horse of universal conquest. He goes on from conquering to conquer. He accomplishes this victory both within and through His people, His body, His many brethren, the enChristed. Experience His triumph in your own life, my beloved, then you, in union with Him, will ride the heavens victoriously in Him, and He in you. It is through us, precious saints, that the power of Christ's redemption is manifested upon earth. It is through us that this salvation is put to the test, and men see what it will do. It is in our lives, that its power to give speed, strength and victory is manifested.

THE SWAN

The last Decan or part of this story of Aquarius is CYGNUS — THE SWAN, the lordly king-bird of the waters. There is a cross in the northern sky, sometimes called the Northern Cross, in contrast to the Southern Cross. This star group is called CYGNUS, and it reveals a beautiful swan flying across the heavens. While it is called a cross, and appears as a cross, this beautiful shape is formed by the principal stars which outline the wings and the length of the body of the swan. Thus, it, is in fact, a swan-cross. But this mighty bird is not falling dead, like Aquila, but is seen here in rapid flight. In classic writings the swan was considered the emblem of poetic dignity, purity and grace. It seems to be flying down the Milky Way, in the same general direction with the river which pours from the heavenly urn. It is thus the bird of matchless beauty, purity, dignity and grace, bearing aloft the cross, and circling with it over the blessed waters of life. As the white dove is the emblem of the Holy Spirit, so the elegantly pure and graceful Swan, bearing the cross, and moving with the life-flow of the Holy Spirit, is the symbol of the blessed MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION — the MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT in mercy, grace, goodness and blessing. It is the ministry of the sons of God and the joyous and abundant life they bring to all men everywhere. It is the swift heralding and bearing of the glad provision of redemption and restoration to all people. It is the graceful holding forth of the reconciliation by His cross to the nations over which, with outspread wings, this ministry cries, "If any man thirst, let him come and drink!" "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely!" It is the ministry embodying both the cross and the river of God — reconciliation by His blood and transformation by His life!

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. He came to bring peace. Peace is alien to earth. When sin entered, peace fled. The moment that sin entered, peace fled, and Adam and Eve themselves were at strife with God and each other, so that their firstborn son had the spirit of the devil and was a murderer from the

beginning. He slew his own brother. The second Man, the last Adam, was the Lord from heaven. When He was once rejected, in the days of His flesh, His disciples, with indignation, besought Him to command fire to come down from heaven and destroy these evil people. His answer comes down to us through the ages: "**Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them**" (Lk. 9:55-56). The firstborn son of Adam was a murderer, but the firstborn Son of God was a Saviour. One was the peace-breaker shedding his brother's blood, the other was the Peacemaker shedding His own blood that He might make peace with God and man. Yet the Christ had power to destroy men's lives if He had the will. When He stood there with the cross in full view, He said to His persecutors that it was in His power to call twelve legions of angels. If that heavenly host which hovered about that Son could have once made itself manifest, oh, how they would have swept that doomed city. That accursed conclave of false priests and those wretched, blind and filthy-minded heathen soldiers! How the breath of those heavenly angels could have swept the life out of them and swept them down into hell and the grave. But that is not God's way in redemption. That is not the mission of the Son of God or of the sons of God.

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to RECONCILE ALL THINGS unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled" (Col. 1:17, 20-21). "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto US the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:18-20).

It is utterly impossible for any man or any creature on earth or in heaven to exclude himself from the work of this most precious ministry — the ministry of reconciliation. Before the reader can shut himself, or any other man or being out from the application of this grace, he must prove that he does not belong to either the earth or heaven, or that he is not a part of the "all things" that were created by and in the Christ in the beginning, and that therefore he is excluded from being reconciled, since he has no identification with any of the "all things" that were created and that are being reconciled unto God. This he cannot do, and hence he must see that God is beseeching him and all to be reconciled! Every foot of this earth and every man upon this earth belongs to Christ, for He made the earth and He made every man. On that wonderful day when God created "all things" in earth and in heaven He also said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness. Christ made every man and tasted death for every man, and therefore every foot of the earth and every man on the earth belongs to Christ my Lord, first by right of creation, and second by right of redemption.

I must emphasize that God is the Creator of ALL THINGS. Notice the things that the inspired apostle includes in creation. ALL things in the heavens, or all things that are in and constitute the RULING ELEMENT — "**the heavens do rule**" (Dan. 4:26). ALL the things on the earth, or all things that are in or constitute those elements which are ruled, or under authority. ALL things that are visible, or that are discernible to the physical senses — ALL that the eyes can see, ALL that the ears can hear, ALL that we can touch, feel, taste, or smell — has been created by God. ALL things that are invisible were created by our God — ALL the wisdom, ALL the knowledge, yea, even that which has not yet been tapped or conceived of by the mind of man — GOD CREATED. ALL of the myriad machines and devices that shall yet come out of the mind of man, were created by God. ALL of the vast forces and powers and universal laws that science has not yet discovered, were created by God. ALL the thrones, and the glory and the power of those who occupy them, were created by God. ALL the dominions or lordships, the mastery and the supremacy, were created by God. ALL the principalities and powers, angels, intelligences, chief ones, in heaven and in earth, invisible and visible, spiritual and natural, were created by God. And it is not just the fact that all of these were created by God that startles us the most, but it goes on to say that BY THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS ALL THESE THINGS ARE RECONCILED TO GOD IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. This implies that the principalities and powers in the heavenly realms needed reconciling and are reconciled by the blood of God's Son. This is why the Redeemer was both a HEAVENLY BEING and an EARTHLY BEING. He was the Word from heaven made flesh upon earth, heaven and earth blended into one, so that the Son could say, "**No man hath ascended up to heaven,**

but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (Jn. 3:13). Praise God, even the principalities and powers in the heavens are included in the glorious reconciliation and peace secured by the blood of His cross, the Man who was from heaven, born on earth, reconciling both realms into one IN HIMSELF. Glory! What more beautiful picture of this wonderful ministry of reconciliation could we find than the graceful Swan flying through the heavens in the configuration of the cross, following the life-giving stream of the River of God!

The most abusive and vindictive letters I have received through the years have come from people who claim to be in the sonship company through which God will set all creation free. One letter I well remember was from one of these "creation-delivering-sons" bitterly denouncing me and the teaching of the "reconciliation of all things." He said it is "destructive" and "satanic" and that he was sick of it all. When people call these precious and scriptural truths Satanic, they unwittingly blaspheme the Holy Spirit, for it was He and none other who inspired Paul to write these words: "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to RECONCILE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF." It was the Holy Spirit who said that "God was in Christ, RECONCILING THE WORLD unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation." And in the face of such wonderful and all inclusive statements as these, these have the brazen audacity to write to me and make such Holy Spirit-defying statements as: "I don't believe in the reconciliation of all things." The simple truth is, my beloved brethren, that until we are able to embrace God's immutable intention of reconciling all things unto Himself, we will never be able to clearly see God's plan for this present age nor for the other ages yet to come. And most certainly God will not entrust into our hands the blessed ministry of reconciliation as long as we remain hostile toward God's gracious purpose and vindictive toward men for whom Christ died and the creation we are sent to rescue and redeem.

The fact that we see and appreciate God's great and wonderful plan for all men leaves no room in us for a dilatory, don't care spirit. The elect of God are always conscious of their unique calling. We are given the high honor of being laborers together with God." Some day when the last devil has been subjected, and the last sinner broken in humility and contrition at the lovely feet of Jesus, we shall realize, as we may not now, just how great that honor really is, and how much we have missed if we fail to share in this task to which the Almighty has set His hand. I must confess that I am deeply grieved in my spirit when I meet these would-be sons of God who look with contempt upon those who still have a passion for souls and desire to see men delivered from the power of sin and satan. I am aware of the fact that the hour has not yet arrived when God shall deal with all nations, and multitudes of past generations, to bring forth His salvation in them, but it is my deepest conviction that one of the sure marks of sonship is THE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION. Why speak of our great hope of what God shall do in the ages to come if the spirit of that hope is not now alive in our hearts? It is not the doctrine of reconciliation that shall change the world and all things, but the ministry of reconciliation. The ministry of reconciliation springs from the spirit of reconciliation. If you would not walk across the street to see some poor soul delivered and converted by the redeeming power of Christ, don't waste your time relating to me how you are chosen of God to help in the delivering of the whole creation from the bondage of sin and death. The Spirit of Reconciliation must reign within our hearts. The Ministry of Reconciliation must issue forth from our lives. Rivers of living water must, even now, pour forth out of our innermost being, bringing hope and victory and life to all who will come and drink! May we soar and fly o'er the land in the graceful and gracious nature of the Swan!

This beautiful ministry of reconciliation is the activity of the Holy Spirit in and through those who are chosen, processed and equipped to bring life to the world. What a fitting symbol of the majesty, grace and power of this ministry is the image of the Swan flying through the heavens, displaying the cross, while moving with and by the flow of the river of Living Water. It has been God's purpose from the foundation of the world to indwell and express Himself through man. In the process of accomplishing this God has manifested Himself in three aspects of His Person. Electricity serves as an illustration of this threefold manifestation of God. It includes these three stages: the source, the manifestation, and the realization. These seem to be three different things, but in reality they are one. The source, the manifestation, and the realization are all three activities of the electricity. Electricity is energy, and if energy did not exist there could be no source, no manifestation, no realization. In the same way that you have electricity in three different stages, so there is one eternal Person of God expressing Himself in three distinct aspects and operations of His Being. At one end there is the source of the electricity —the generator producing it. Then there is the manifestation of electricity in a thousand different

ways: the hot coils of the stove, the lighted filament in the light bulb, the running engine in the machine, etc. Finally, there is the realization of electricity — the light coming from the light bulb and flooding the room, the heat coming from the stove, etc.

The light that you read or work by, the heat in the house which makes you comfortable, the sound of the doorbell when it rings, these are simply electricity realized. As you read and work in the light you don't think very much about the bulb on the ceiling, or about the generator miles away. You just utilize and enjoy the light in the room! And yet, without the bulb there is no light, and without the generator the bulb can produce no light. Each stage is necessary. Similarly, God as FATHER is the source of our divine life — the generator. God as SON is the manifestation of that divine life — the bulb. And God as HOLY SPIRIT is our realization of this divine life within — the light (life) filling our room: our hearts, minds, spirits and bodies. But these are not three different Persons! These are just three stages of the very SAME THING! The thing proceeding from the generator is energy, the thing flowing and manifesting through the bulb is energy, and the light filling the room is energy! Not three different energies, but the same energy. Likewise, the divine life in the Father is GOD, the divine life in the Son is GOD, and the divine life transmitted to us as the Spirit is GOD. Not three different Gods, but the one God! The Holy Spirit is in us as the very transmission of God, transmitting constantly all that God is in Christ to us. As the body of Christ we are the expression of God by the Holy Spirit to the creation. What a calling! What a potential!

The word "spirit," in the Old Testament, is the translation of the Hebrew word RUACH, the primary significance or root-meaning of which is WIND. The word "spirit" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word PNEUMA, whose primary significance or root-meaning is likewise WIND. The English word "ghost" used in the King James Bible, though now somewhat obsolete and not in general use, is derived from the Greek PNEUMA, its original meaning being exactly the same as the word "spirit," meaning WIND. But let no one hastily conclude that we are about to attempt to prove that the Holy Spirit is a holy wind, for nothing could be farther from our thought.

There are two basic characteristics of the wind which qualify it to so fittingly serve as the supreme symbol of the Holy Spirit. The wind is first of all a POWERFUL FORCE, and secondly it is INVISIBLE. *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the SPIRIT" (Jn. 3:8).* You cannot see the wind, and yet you are aware of its reality because of its power with the visible effects of that power manifested all around you. In earlier times the wind was used broadly as a source of energy. Man has always known how to use sails on a boat or ship. Later, he learned to use the same principle to construct a windmill, using the force of the wind to turn grindstones, pump water, and do many other kinds of work. In like manner, the invisible and powerful INWARD ENERGY AND FORCE which motivates and transforms our lives into the image of God is the HOLY SPIRIT! And God's ministry through us to creation is by the invisible but powerful energy and force of the HOLY SPIRIT. It is interesting to note that the Swan in the Sign of Aquarius rides the wind! The ministry of the sons of God, the ministry of reconciliation, is motivated, propelled and executed by the Spirit!

Jesus spoke a great spiritual truth when He said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." Nicodemus was unable to comprehend the idea of being "born again," even though Jesus used the wind as an illustration to help make it plain. The wind, as we have pointed out, is both powerful and invisible. It moves about, freely and powerfully, and while we may hear the sound and see the effects, we cannot tell from whence it comes, or whither it goeth, we have no control over either its coming or its going — "So is everyone who is born of the Spirit," Jesus said. Indeed, the way of the spiritual person, especially that of the Lord's elect, is as the wind that "bloweth where it listeth." That person becomes spiritual by encountering various growth experiences, passing through one stage of development after another, often involving one "church" and "fellowship" association after another, until ultimately they arrive at the place of spiritual stature called "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" where there are no religious trappings, no denominational characteristics, no sectarian attachments, and no adherence to the traditions of the elders, or to the rituals, ceremonies, doctrines, programs, creeds, structure, or methods of the popular church system. These blessed ones are now free to be LED BY THE SPIRIT for *"as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).*

The way of the Spirit is truly strange to the natural mind of man and the carnal precepts of religion, but to the spiritual person, His ways are life and truth and reality. The way of the Spirit-born person is as the wind that blows, and so also is the moving of the Spirit. The Spirit of God blows, first upon one, and then another, and another, touching the lives of those who are chosen for that hour in God. His Spirit is as the wind that "bloweth where it listeth," so that the sound thereof is heard, yet no one can control it or make a form or structure of it. That is certainly a different expression than one sees in the systemized programs of man! The blessed realm of the Spirit is a wondrous realm that cannot be intellectually learned or perceived, but we are experiencing the way of the Spirit by walking in that realm. Wisdom has declared, "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all" (Eccl. 11:5). The flowing of the precious Holy Spirit is spontaneous and unpredictable as the wind that blows where He wills. Therefore, we cannot expect to know the works of God except by that same Spirit. The mighty, omnipotent movings of the Spirit of God are truly a mystery. Not one among us, of ourselves, could predict what He will do next. But if we are truly born of the Spirit of God, and are flowing in union and harmony with Him, we will then be blessed with the experiences necessary and vital to our new identity and ministry as SONS OF THE SPIRIT — C-H-I-L-D-R-E-N O-F T-H-E W-I-N-D!

In order for one to know and properly understand the all-sufficiency of the Spirit of the Christ within, he must first see what Christ is. I do not say who Christ is, but what Christ is. There are many different titles and names ascribed to Christ in the scriptures; however, we will not here consider the names of Christ, but the substance of Christ, His very essence. My automobile, made of metal, is called an automobile, but its substance is metal. What is the substance of Christ? "Now the Lord is THE SPIRIT" (II Cor. 3:17). What is Christ? Why, He is the SPIRIT! He may be called by many titles and names, all descriptive of His various attributes, characteristics, ministrations and offices. He may be known as Saviour, as Redeemer, as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Comforter, Prophet, High Priest, King, Lord, I Am, and scores of other glorious titles. But what is His substance? "The last Adam was made a QUICKENING SPIRIT" (I Cor. 15:45). The message is clear — the substance of Christ is SPIRIT. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts" (Gal. 4:6).

Two things were essential before Jesus could return as the Lord, the Spirit. He must GO AWAY. He must BE GLORIFIED. "This spake Jesus of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified (Jn. 7:39). On our behalf, as man and the Head of man, Jesus was resurrected, and then ascended, being admitted into the full glory of the Divine, and His human nature received up into union and participation with the eternal Spirit (transcendent God), of the same essence and substance as the eternal Spirit, taking on the qualities of omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. Is He omnipotent? "ALL POWER is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Mat. 28:18). Is He omnipresent? In Eph. 4:10 we have this simple but instructive statement: "He that descended is the same also that ASCENDED UP FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS, THAT HE MIGHT F-I-L-L A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S." Having ascended in Being into the fullness of the SPIRIT the Lord Jesus could now come down as the Spirit of the GOD-MAN — most really the Spirit of God, and yet as truly the Spirit of Jesus the man. He could come down as the Spirit of the GLORIFIED JESUS, to quicken our spirit by His Spirit, making us one in Him. God be praised! Jesus has been glorified! He has ascended up far above all celestial realms! He has emanated from that realm to fill all things! And now, praise His name, He is being glorified IN US!

When Jesus comes into us, He comes within as the all-sufficient Spirit to make us all that we must be as God-men. Soon, now, there shall come that long awaited manifestation of the sons of God to this sin-cursed world. Creation shall be set free from its bondage to corruption. We shall behold the glory, wisdom, and power of the Son of God manifested in all fullness in a many-membered body body right here upon this earth. These sons are even now putting on the fullness of His divine life in spirit, soul and body. They are being transformed into His image, filled with His wisdom, quickened by His life. How the whole creation groans and travails for this! The work of preparation is even now in full swing; Paul tells us that this is when Christ shall come "to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day" (II Thes.1:10). Let us believe it, beloved; for He comes to be glorified in all them that believe (for it) in that day! Hallelujah!

Here I would share some inspired and challenging words from a brother we labored with some years ago. He began with the beautiful text from the Gospel of John, chapter six. "Jesus answered them and said, Verily,

verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed. I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; he that believeth on Me shall never thirst....it is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." In order to understand the great mystery that Jesus is seeking to reveal to us in these verses, you need to understand the word, "quickeneth," that is used in the King James translation. It is an old English word that the King James translators used to describe the original wording in the Greek scripture, which meant "to give life," or "that giveth life," or "that is the source of life." So what Jesus was really saying here is, "It is the Spirit that giveth life," or "It is the Spirit that is the source of your life." The next thing we need to understand in order to comprehend this great mystery is that when Jesus said, "It is the Spirit that giveth life," or "is the source of your life," He was not talking about the Holy Spirit of God alone, but He was talking about your own spirit, for, "**He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit**" (I Cor. 6:17). Your own quickened, regenerated, recreated, born-again spirit — which is the Son of God dwelling in you — is the source of your life.

The next thing we need to understand, to comprehend this mystery, is the meaning of the word "profit" Jesus used here when He said, "The flesh profiteth nothing." Now the profit on any investment is always the increase. It is that which was not, which is created out of the investment's creative powers of that which one starts with. If I invest a thousand dollars, and it brings back two thousand dollars, then the second thousand dollars is the increase, the profit, that is literally brought forth out of the creative powers that were in the first thousand dollars to increase itself, to double itself, when properly invested. Therefore, this word "profit" is a creative word. It implies the power to create, to increase one's self, or to reproduce one's self. Therefore, when Jesus said, "The flesh profiteth nothing," what He was trying to get over to us is that there is no creative power in the flesh — in anything that is physical and material in this earth. It cannot increase itself, it cannot reproduce itself; in fact, it can't even sustain the life that it has, for if our spirit was to depart from our flesh body, it would immediately begin to deteriorate and go back to the dust from whence it came. When Jesus said, "The flesh profiteth nothing," He was revealing to us that every visible, carnal, natural, material, physical thing in this world, including our own flesh body, is not creative. It has no power to increase itself; it doesn't even have the power to sustain its own life. All it can ever be is the visible manifestation or expression of the Life of Spirit, and of the creative power that is in Spirit.

On the other hand, when Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth," or "It is the spirit that giveth life," or "is the source of your life," what he was seeking to reveal to us is that the spirit is creative, that our regenerated spirit has creative power. Therefore, the great mystery and the great truth that Jesus was seeking to reveal to those who can receive and understand it is that it is our own spirit that is the source of our life, that we carry the source of our life around in our own beings; and therefore, our own spirit being the source of our life we are not dependent on anything outside of our own being for our life. For you see, when you are a source, you are the beginning. A spring from which a river comes out of the earth and flows into the earth is the beginning of that river. It is the source from which the water of that river comes. And therefore that's what Jesus was trying to get over to us — that since we have been born of the seed of God, and since Christ, who is the beginning and the end, is that regenerated, recreated, born-again spirit that is within us, it is your spirit that giveth life, or that is the source of your life, and being a source within itself, is therefore not dependent on anything outside of itself for its life. For when you are a source, you are the beginning; therefore you are not dependent on anything before you or anything after you, or anything outside of you for your life. The truth that Jesus teaches us is that we carry the source of our life within our own spirit and we are not dependent on any fleshly thing outside of our own spirit for life. It is because Jesus came to the revelation of this truth and the reality of it within Himself that He could step out into the world and say, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." Knowing that He carried the source, the beginning of His life within His own spirit, He could say, "I am the beginning." Knowing that the creative power that was in His spirit to bring forth His final destiny, and that that destiny was under the control of the creative powers that were within His own spirit, He could say, "I am the end."

When Jesus said, "The flesh profiteth nothing — it is the spirit that quickeneth, that is the source of your life," He was revealing to us the great truth that the source of our life is not in the flesh, not in the visible, not in the carnal, physical, material things, or anything that is of this natural world; but all those things are but outward

manifestations of the creative powers that are in the life of Spirit, and that the source of our life is in our own spirit. Now the problem with all of God's people, you see, is that they have not known this great truth. They have thought that they are dependent for their lives on the carnal, material, physical things of the flesh of this world — natural money, natural housing, natural clothing, natural food, natural body, natural abilities, the laws of nature. All of us have thought that those things were the source from which our life came. In fact, we have so been deceived that those visible, physical, carnal, natural things were the source of our life that we were so completely dependent upon them that if we were cut off from them — if we lost our job, lost our money, lost our housing, lost our food — we thought that we would die! For you see, this is the great lie that the devil deceived man with through the fall. When man lost the consciousness of his spiritual nature, and degenerated down into the consciousness of the carnal, natural nature, the devil convinced man that he was dependent upon the visible and the physical and the natural for his life — natural money, natural job, natural business, natural body, natural housing, natural clothing, natural possessions, natural food — natural, natural, natural! We have been so convinced that that is the source of our life that we have been scared to death that if we were cut off from that source of life, we would die.

Jesus, in our text, when He was out in the Wilderness with His people, and needed bread, by-passed the flour mill and sat down on the ground, and through the operation of that spiritual law of faith, drew right out from within His own spirit enough bread to feed five thousand people. For you see, beloved, there is a source of life, and all that pertains to life, including bread that sustains life, which is not dependent on the natural resources of this world. It is the source of life — SPIRIT. The Bible makes it very clear that all life, and every manifestation of life that is in this universe, originally came right of Spirit. Thus the apostle Paul says in Heb. 11:3 that through faith we understand that the worlds were framed, by the Word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. Therefore, the Bible says that everything in this world which is visible and physical — in the beginning, originally, was not made of something visible or tangible already existing — which does appear — but was made of the resources that came originally right out of Spirit, by the spoken word of faith. Therefore, you see, Jesus, as He sat on the ground that day and fed five thousand with five loaves of bread, had become a manifest Son of God who was not subject to the laws of nature, neither underneath them; and therefore not dependent on the natural resources for bread, but could by-pass them. He was a spiritual Son of God who was sovereign over all physical laws, and therefore could go right back to the original source of bread and draw it right out of His own spirit.

Do you notice how easily Jesus did this? The scripture says that Jesus instructed His disciples, "Make the men sit down." You see, when you get bread from this source, you don't have to get it standing up, with a plow or sickle in your hand, laboring and sweating, as men have for six thousand years, since they've been under the curse; but you sit quietly down and bring forth all things sitting down. The men sat down, and Jesus sat quietly down with them. The record states that Jesus just quietly took the loaves of bread, and when He had given thanks, He distributed it to the disciples — as much as they would. You see there was no shortage here. Everyone got to eat as much as he wanted, as much as he would! And Jesus did it so smoothly and so easily — He simply sat down, gave thanks, and began to hand it out. He didn't have to go through all the soulish and natural things that we do today, in order to work up a little faith. He didn't have to go through a thirty-minute praise service, dance around in the Spirit for ten or fifteen minutes, speak in tongues, prophesy, and then say, "In the name of Jesus, let there be bread!" This great truth that we're seeking to share with you, that it is the spirit — the Spirit of Christ in your own Spirit — that is the source of Life, had become so real to Him that, moving in the spiritual law of faith, He could draw it, effortlessly, right out of His own spirit.

Out of the experiential knowledge of this great truth Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life." Simply because He knew that through coming into the world and shedding His blood to cleanse us of our sins, and make us clean vessels, so the Holy Spirit could recreate us, regenerate us, birth us again, restore us to the consciousness of our true identity, grow us up in the Spirit to that place of manifested sonship that He was at, whereby through Him in us, we might go back to the original source of Life, and of Bread, and of Reality, for He is the Bread of Life to us; not this natural world system, neither the natural resources of this natural world system. It is the Spirit that createth Life, the flesh profiteth nothing. Jesus said it this way: "That which is of the flesh is flesh, and that which is of the Spirit is spirit." He set before us two ways of life. You can live your life in the flesh, or you can live your life in the Spirit. You can walk in the flesh, or you can walk in the Spirit. You can draw your experience out of the natural realm which passes away, or you can draw your existence out of the

spiritual realm which liveth and abideth forever. You can live your life according to natural law, or you can prepare your mind and heart to live your life according to Spiritual Law. To you today, as to men of old, Jesus says, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life." You see, beloved, the problem with us is that we have spent all of our life laboring for the meat that perishes; working in business and labor for the natural meat, wearing ourselves out, growing old and weary, our hair turning gray, sweating and toiling always for the meat that perishes, and often have not spent a balance of time and effort laboring for the spiritual meat that will endure when all the natural meat has perished. Yes, the bread that Jesus fed the five thousand was natural bread, although He drew it out of the realm of Spirit. But by learning and knowing and moving in that realm of the true source of Life He was able to go on and by the same law of faith overcome all natural things and, finally, conquer even the last enemy — death — and stride victoriously out of the tomb! Therefore it is time for all who have received the call to sonship to begin to labor for the Spiritual Meat that shall endure into everlasting life, when all the natural meat has passed away! (end quote).

The measure of life unto which we have been called has been seen in Christ Jesus. "Far it pleased the Father that in Him should ALL FULLNESS dwell" (Col. 1:19). "For in Him dwelleth ALL THE FULLNESS of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). Though we, the members of His body, have received "of" that fullness, yet the concern of the Father in this hour is that there come to pass a further enlargement of our capacities to contain Him, to live out of Him, and to minister Him, for He seeks a body through which He can manifest all the fullness of Himself to creation. Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers to this end: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints WHAT IS THE BREADTH, and LENGTH, and DEPTH, and HEIGHT (of capacity); that ye might be FILLED WITH A-L-L THE FULLNESS OF GOD" (Eph. 3:17-19). Only the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God can minister to our yearning hearts the full comprehension of what is the breadth, and length, and depth of the supply of God in the Spirit and of our capacity to express Him. But one thing God would have us understand in all simplicity — the increase of our capacity COMES THROUGH OUR GROWTH AS MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY. This point is made very plain in Eph. 4:15-16 where we read, "But speaking the truth in love, may GROW UP I-N-T-O H-I-M in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, MAKETH INCREASE (ENLARGEMENT) OF THE BODY unto the edifying of itself in love." Ah — there is an increase, an enlargement of the body, not numerically, but an increase of expanded capacity for manifesting Him!

It is right at this point that the average Christian sells himself short. Especially the Pentecostal or Charismatic! How many of the Lord's precious people who seek the Holy Spirit mistakenly seek a "blessing," or an "experience." To "speak in tongues" is often their highest aim, or to be "slain under the power," and if they can attain to that phenomenon then they are happy and satisfied in their belief that they have received all, or at least most, of what God has for them in this life. HOW PITIFUL IS SUCH AN UNDERSTANDING! How desperately short we sell ourselves when we seek the Holy Spirit as an "experience" that we are to attain instead of presenting ourselves as vessels to be filled with all the incomprehensible inexhaustibleness of GOD! This Spirit, who is God, and is sent forth by God, full of wisdom and truth, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, glory and power brings in His mighty fullness ever-increasing measures of His own unlimited and unfathomable abundance. May all who read these lines clearly understand that the fullness of which we speak is not quantitative — it is qualitative. It is not that we are filled with more and more of the same degree, but with higher dimensions, unfolding development, expanding heights and depths, maturity of life, reality more intense and perfect. Yes, God would fill us and then expand us that He might fill us the more, until we attain even that "measure of the stature of the FULLNESS OF CHRIST," which measure is nothing less than the full development within of HIM THAT FILLETH ALL THINGS!

I have observed in the ministry of Jesus that there was never a problem He faced that He could not solve, never a need that He could not meet, no victory He could not win, no realm of revelation, experience, or relationship to God that He could not possess. Some of us speak of the exploits we have done in Jesus' name, but we seldom mention all the times we have failed! Some of us fast and pray and wrest an answer from the Lord and then run squarely into another problem that we can't solve at all. If Jesus, the firstborn Son, needed the Spirit WITHOUT MEASURE, then we, His elect boy, need it too!

It is interesting to note that nowhere in the Gospels in the supernatural ministry of Jesus Christ ever associated with the gifts of the Spirit. No place does it ever say that Jesus received or operated in a gift of the Spirit. However, like most people, I assumed He did! And I could always make it fit. Every time Jesus healed someone I assumed that He exercised the gift of healing, although the scripture didn't say so. Every time He prophesied coming events I said that He moved in the gift of prophecy, although the Holy Spirit never said so. When He spoke to Nathaniel, revealing the secrets of his heart, I said that He spoke a "word of knowledge" although the record says no such thing. How is it that Jesus did not operate in the gift-realm? Because He moved in the fullness of the spirit of sonship. There is a world of difference between receiving a "gift" from God and possessing the SONSHIP ANOINTING. Jesus explained it this way" **"He that cometh from above is above all.... for He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loveth THE SON, and hath given all things into His hand" (Jn. 3:31-35).** How much greater is the Sonship Ministry than the gift-realm. **"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away" (I Cor. 13:9-10).** The ministry of Jesus was not in the gift-realm, not in the in-part-realm, not by measure — and therefore not even in the realm of New Testament Church economy. His ministry was the ministry of a SON OF GOD in the fullness of the power and glory of the Father!

For many years now there has been a great moving of the Spirit of God across the land and around the world. It has manifested itself through many movements on various levels. We have witnessed great evangelistic ministries, the divine healing ministry, the restoration of the New Testament Church order with its five-fold ministry, the nine gifts of the Spirit, the impartation through prophecy with the laying on of hands. But I can testify to you that none of these ministries has come within the range of the ministry of Jesus Christ the Son of God. No matter which of the healing ministries you watched, no matter what prophet you heard, matters not what miracle, sign, or wonder, it did not measure up to the ministry of THE SON OF GOD. We kept saying, "We have the same anointing, the same Holy Ghost, the same power, the same authority, and we can do all the works (or even greater) than Jesus did!" And as hard as we tried, as strongly as we wanted to believe it, as much as we rationalized it, it still just wasn't true! We had the same anointing, alright, and the same Holy Spirit — but we had it in the form of gifts — not in the fullness of the SPIRIT OF SONSHIP! Therefore creation continues to groan, and we ourselves do groan within ourselves, waiting for the MANIFESTATION OF THE S-O-N-S OF GOD!

How much greater is the sonship ministry than the gift-realm! The prophet Isaiah prophesied of the Son and the sons: **"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:1-2).** This does not say that Jesus would receive a "gift" or "the word of wisdom." It says that what He received was the S-P-I-R-I-T OF WISDOM. It doesn't state that Jesus had a "gift of healing" or a "gift of miracles." He received, instead, the S-P-I-R-I-T OF MIGHT. Jesus didn't have merely a "gift" or "the word of knowledge." He possessed the S-P-I-R-I-T OF KNOWLEDGE! Not a fragmentary word of wisdom here, or a fragmentary word of knowledge there, or a gift of healing working tonight, and a gift of prophecy operating tomorrow night. NO! Upon the firstborn Son rested all the fullness of the sevenfold Spirit of Sonship, just as the prophet declared, saying,

**"The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding,
The Spirit of Counsel and Might,
The Spirit of Knowledge and Fear of the Lord."**

This sevenfold Spirit of God is the fullness of the wisdom, glory, nature and power of God. This is the Spirit WITHOUT MEASURE. This is the SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD. This is the SEVENFOLD BRIGHTNESS OF GOD'S GLORY! This is why our Lord Jesus Christ could heal every disease, could cast out every kind of devil, could raise the dead — even after they were deteriorated and stinking — could discern every thought and intent of men's hearts, could command every element of nature, and even die and rise again! Some of us have been able to do a very limited amount of this. Some of us have had a gift of healing and have healed some sick people, but who has healed them ALL, even in one meeting? Some of us have been healed ourselves, but who among us has been healed EVERY TIME? Some of us have prophesied, have had a word of knowledge, but

who has had every word that he has ever spoken come to pass? The miracles we have witnessed and experienced have been glorious, indeed: gas put in our tanks, batteries charged, finances supplied from unexpected sources, etc. But who among us has walked on the sea or fed five thousand men with five small loaves and two fish? Some have had their countenances lighted with the glow of the joy of the Lord, but who has stood on the Mount of Transfiguration with even their raiment shining as the brightness of the noon-day sun? Ah — therefore creation continues to groan, and we ourselves do groan within ourselves, waiting for the MANIFESTATION OF THE S-O-N-S OF GOD!

The Spirit of God has witnessed to many thousands of saints around the world in this hour that a New Day dawns upon the horizon. The next great move of God is even now at hand. There will not be another revival. There shall not come another visitation. It is not the hour for the restoration of the Church. A new day dawns. God is marching on. He shall do an entirely new thing in the earth. A new age lies directly before us. The manifestation of God's sons is at hand. The Kingdom of God is at hand! In this New Day, in this glorious age of Aquarius, the Swan shall fly as the river flows — the ministry of the fullness of the Spirit of God shall be released through a people in reconciliation, blessing, and transformation unto all the ends of the earth! Praise His name!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 34

PISCES-THE FISHES

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART THIRTY-FOUR

THE FISHES
THE BAND
ANDROMEDA — THE CHAINED WOMAN
CEPHEUS — THE KING

As we move around the path of the sun, we now come to the seventh major Sign of the heavens: PISCES — THE FISHES. In the House of Pisces there are two fishes, one moving upward toward the North Polar Star; the other is swimming in the horizontal position along the path of the ecliptic, or the path of the sun. The two fishes are bound together by a band which is securely tied around the tail portion of the body of each fish. The band is also attached to the neck of Cetus, the Sea Monster; and Aries, or the Ram (or Lamb) has his paw across the band that connects the fishes. Directly above this scene is Andromeda — The Chained Woman. Andromeda is a line of bright stars picturing a woman with her arms and feet in chains, in misery and trouble, helplessly bound in the sky. Beyond Andromeda is the final scene in the House of Pisces, Cepheus — The King. Here we have the picture of a bearded man wearing a crown and a royal robe, seated upon a throne. In his uplifted hand he holds a scepter. He is a glorious king enthroned in the highest heaven and his right foot is placed firmly upon the North Polar Star — the central point in all of the galaxies and all of the heavens. In this strange picture set in the sky he is the Deliverer coming to liberate the Chained Woman.

THE FISHES

In Pisces the two fishes are a representation of the church, the called out, the people of God. At the beginning of His ministry, seeing Peter and Andrew casting a net into the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus said unto them, "**Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men**" (Mat. 4:19). **When God promised that He would bring again the children of Israel into their own land, His word was, "I will send for many fishers, and they shall fish them"** (Jer. 16:15-16). So in Ezekiel's vision of the great River of God the word was, "**And there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because the waters shall come thither**" (Eze. 47:1-9). Christ speaks of the members of His body as "**born of water**" (Jn. 3:5). The early Christians were accustomed to call believers ECHTHUES and PISCES — that is, fishes.

In His wonderful parable of the Dragnet Jesus said that the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea. It is the picture of a great net that is let down into the sea, and is left, and it swings to the moving of the waters, and there are gathered into it fishes of all sorts, all kinds. Then towards the close of day, or early morning more often, the fishermen draw the net in, and as it comes in it encloses a vast multitude of fishes. Some of them are of no use. Others are valuable. The fishermen are seen settled down on the shore, and their first business is to sort and sift, to take out the valueless and worthless, and leave in the good, gathering them together in vessels, after the worthless have been cast aside. Several of our Lord's disciples were fishermen; much of His ministry was passed by the Sea of Galilee; we find Him on various occasions making use of a fishing boat for crossing that inland sea or lake, and once at least He preached from one. Such a scene as that described in this parable might be seen there any day, and may be still. For fishermen still ply their business on those waters; their boats still cross from side to side; their nets are still let down for a draught, and at other times may be seen spread on the rocks.

Our Lord has made the spiritual meaning clear. The parable is meant to represent the realm of Heaven that is, the spiritual realm of God, or God's government on earth. What a fisherman does in gathering all kinds of fish into his net, and then bringing a separation between those that qualify for his purposes, and those who do not, is like what the almighty Father is doing throughout this age in the formation, development and manifestation of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the raging, restless, surging

masses of unregenerate humanity, tossed to and fro by the inner storms of the turbulent character of the carnal mind. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: "The wicked are like THE TROUBLED SEA, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described natural men when he said, "These are RAGING WAVES OF THE SEA, foaming out their own shame" (Jude 13). John, on the isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on many waters. The angel revealed the meaning of the "many waters", saying, "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, ARE PEOPLES, AND MULTITUDES, AND TONGUES" (Rev. 17:15). No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging carnal heart of unregenerate men that inspires every imaginable evil and devilish perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, immorality, faithlessness, falsehood, fraud, hatred, violence, greed, cruelty, wars and rumors of wars, bloodshed and oppression. Ah, the SEA is the LOWEST REALM on earth, and this vast sea of degenerate humanity represents mankind at his lowest point — as bad off as man can be!

The net is the Word of the Kingdom that reaches out into the vast sea of humanity and draws men, by the power of the Holy Spirit, into the sphere of the influence of the Kingdom realm of God. "A net cast into the sea," let down from a higher world, out of a different sphere — such is the dynamic of the Kingdom of Heaven. The net is, furthermore, the ministry of reconciliation — the authority of God's Word and the power of His Spirit by which He draws men out of the restless surgings of sin and death, and the darkness and futility of the world system, into the calm peace, enlightenment and reality of a realm higher and grander — life in the Spirit — the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. O glorious ministry of reconciliation! While the net is, to all appearance, the plaything of the waves, it is as a matter of fact held in the grasp of, and absolutely controlled by, One who stands upon the shore. See it as it is tossed about by the waves; they seem to do with it what they will, to bear it hither or thither as they please; to make or mar its shape and proportions; to all appearance its form and movement at any moment are the result of the action of the waters alone, they toss it from side to side, expand or contract it, bear it out to sea or dash it in their fury shorewards. Now it is borne with a rush in one direction, and now, in the grasp of some mighty wave, its whole course is altered. But as we watch we see the wondrous yet simple plan by which every thread of that mazy net is controlled by the Mind of Him who holds it in His hand. His intelligence, His Will, His Purpose, moves it and governs it, and runs along every delicate fibre, in spite of all its free play in the waters. He knows when to relax His hold and when to draw it in; He knows how to avoid undue strain from the force of the current or the rush of the captives within the net. At the time when all the cords are most lax, and all its movements most free, His hand gauges the strength of the pull, His Eye, His Mind is upon it all. That vast network of ministry and dealing by which men are gathered into the Kingdom of Heaven is but the Fisherman's Hand, its movements are the expression of His skill and purpose. The waters may have their way, but never so as to frustrate or hinder His Purpose.

That net floating amidst the waves, and tossed about so easily, betokens another world; it is the only representative of a mind acting from without. The natural man is incapable of thinking beyond the impulses of the sea. But when God sends forth His ministry of reconciliation with the authority of His Word and the power of His Spirit a higher will, a more intelligent purpose than the battling waves know anything about, is lying there in the depths of the sea, sometimes passive, sometimes active, and each delicate thread is the channel along which that will and intelligence are borne. Whether the net lies slack and shifts with every heaving of the sea, or whether it strains and pulls, it is equally the act of the Mind of Him who holds it! In saving men the first thing God has to do is to get our attention. And to do that He chooses to use events which are instruments of either His goodness or His judgment, according to the need. Ah, yes, God has a great net and He knows just how to GET OUR ATTENTION! He can get it here and now. If He doesn't get it here, He will get it in hell. If He doesn't get it in hell, He will get it in the lake of fire. He will get it by gracious words and tender mercies, if He can. He will get it by severe judgments and awful wrath, if He must. But, blessed be His name, He will get our attention! When we consider the wisdom, purpose and power of the One who makes and casts and gathers the net, with what new and wonderful significance does the proclamation of Jesus Christ echo through the corridors of our spirits as we hear the impelling words sound from His lips, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, WILL DRAW A-L-L M-E-N UNTO ME" (Jn. 12:32).

Beloved, when God chooses to bring a people unto Himself, He is well able to do so, even to reach out to them without the use of a human vessel, if need be. He is the greatest Fisherman with the most marvelous Net! The Christ has been lifted up from the earth and now has all power in heaven and in earth — the omnipotent One.

In due time He will bring His redemptive process into glorious fulfillment and consummation. If God wants to save Russians, He is well able to demolish the iron curtain and destroy the mighty bastions of communism, and cast His net into the sea of Russia. If He wants any number of Chinese, He is able to apprehend them in spite of the iron rule of an atheistic government. There is no continent too dark, no people too enslaved by

satanic powers, no man too incorrigible but what His power can penetrate them. Christ has been lifted up from the earth, and He will draw all men unto Himself. He holds the net in His almighty hands. Its work is to enclose a multitude scattered far and wide, draw them together, and skillfully bring them to the shore, to that region from whence the net came; and it would be impossible to conceive of anything better adapted to carry out this purpose. Such is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. What more vivid picture could be drawn of it than that drawn by the hand of our Lord when He says, "It is like unto a net that was cast into the sea; which, when it was full, they drew to shore." Such is the beginning of the Kingdom in our lives and in the earth!

But that is not the end of the matter. Gathered out of the sea the fishes are brought to the shore — the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. **"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" (Mat. 6:10)**. The highest realm known to man is called heaven. The interpretations of poor human beings are always childish in the extreme, for we know nothing yet as we ought to know. We have tried to picture heaven as a far-off place of many mansions, full of splendid temples and exquisite gardens, where idle inhabitants while away an endless eternity flitting about in white night gowns over golden streets and shouting hallelujah. The Greek word for "heaven" is OURANOUS, meaning "elevation, height, exaltation, eminence." This word has both natural and spiritual applications. In its spiritual application it bespeaks of the eternal and omnipresent REALM OF THE SPIRIT in which God and all celestial beings dwell — far above the realm of the physical, material, earthly, and mortal. It is not a geographical or astral location. It is not a place. It is a DIMENSION OF LIFE AND REALITY, A STATE OF BEING, A SPHERE OF EXISTENCE. Every spirit life-form lives on a plane of spiritual awareness and being. Each of these planes constitutes a "heaven", a spiritual realm above and beyond the physical and visible. Heaven is naught but the Biblical name of the REALM OF GOD'S SPIRIT, the invisible and omnipresent dimension of spiritual reality. And it is all around us. It is as near to us as the very air we breathe, yea, closer to us even than the blood coursing its way through our veins. It is just as real and near and invisible as the radio waves flooding the room where you are. We are one with it by virtue of our spiritual life. We touch heaven as we touch God. We behold heavenly things as we fasten mind and heart upon spiritual realities. We walk in heaven as we walk in the Spirit. Heaven is, furthermore, the realm of God's government — His infinite power and almighty authority. **"Thus saith the Lord, the HEAVEN IS MY THRONE, and the earth is My foot-stool" (Isa. 66:1)**.

God is now in the grand process of bringing men out of the lowest realm of the sea of vanity, sin and death, up into the highest realm of heaven, to the fullness of His life, nature, and wisdom, to His throne, to the sphere of His omnipotent power and resplendent glory. In contrast to these the "earth" is the symbol of yet a third realm, a realm higher than the sea, but lower than heaven; an in-between realm which at its highest peak kisses heaven, and at its lowest level embraces the sea; yet, in the true sense is not entirely heavenly or spiritual, nor absolutely carnal and degenerate. In simple terms, it is a realm of MIXTURE! And this, precious friend of mine, is the realm of Pisces — The Fishes, the church realm of the past two thousand years. Just as the net gathers all kinds of fishes, so the visible church (including the one you may attend) gathers people of every kind — true believers and mere professors, mature saints and babes in Christ, spiritual and carnal, heavenly minded and earthly minded, wise and foolish virgins, wheat and tares — all are gathered together.

A tremendous revelation was given to John the beloved on Patmos. He was shown the seven candle-sticks **"which are the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20)**. The seven churches represent THE WHOLE CHURCH REALM THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE CHURCH AGE. If you want to know what the church is like look at the seven candlesticks! There you have the divinely inspired portrait of the church realm during this age painted by the brushstrokes of the Holy Spirit of revelation. Were they not imperfect, carnal, childish, idolatrous, heretical, rebuked — a realm of mixture and duality? The Lord commends and praises them on the one hand, while warning and rebuking them on the other hand. Some of the saints are commended for their works and faith and love, while others are warned of impending judgment if they fail to repent, and some are even threatened with extinction. These churches reveal the true state and condition of the whole church throughout the age, and history and personal experience both testify conclusively that John was shown right. The early church was

a church of mixture and duality, flesh and spirit, truth and error, law and grace, spirituality and carnality. Even a casual reading of the New Testament reveals this! And from that day to this, make no mistake about it — ALL CHURCHES HAVE BEEN THE SAME! They are today! And should the church age continue on for another thousand years the church would not have changed, it would remain a church of mixture, imperfection and duality. The Word of God immutably declares it! The seven candlesticks are the seven churches, and the seven churches are the church throughout the entire church age. The "New Testament Church" realm can never be different from what John saw in spirit, for that IS THE CHURCH IN THIS AGE.

As soon as this point was made abundantly plain John heard a voice saying, "COME UP HITHER and I will show thee things that must be hereafter." After what? Why, bless your heart, after the candlestick realm! The promises had already been given, not to the churches themselves, but to "him that overcometh" — a company out of the church. "Come up hither," the voice commanded. John is now shown another realm HIGHER THAN THE CANDLESTICK REALM! It is the realm of the overcomer, of the throne, of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, and John is invited to leave the candlestick realm to ASCEND IN THE SPIRIT TO THIS HIGHER REALM where the Lamb is in the throne. This is what the brethren don't want to do! How they cling to the candlestick realm with its five-fold ministry, New Testament order, rituals, ceremonies, and ordinances, with its limitation, imperfection, weakness, mixture, duality, methods, structures, etc. This revelation was given to John in the year A. D. 96. The churches of His generation refused to leave the candlestick realm and rise to a higher place in God, and within only a few years the great apostasy set in, by the third and fourth centuries the apostasy was complete, followed by an awful night of great and terrible darkness. Even secular history refers to that time as "The Dark Ages". It was the great "falling away" which Paul prophesied in which the man of sin was revealed in the temple of God in all of his dread and stark reality. Today, my beloved, if we would be overcomers, pressing into sonship, caught up to the throne, we must hear the call "Come up hither" and forsake the limitation of the candlestick realm to become related to CHRIST IN THAT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WHERE HIS LORDSHIP SWALLOWS UP OUR LIVES, WHERE HE IS ALL IN ALL, WHERE HIS SPIRIT, MIND AND LIFE REPLACE THE OUTWARD STRUCTURE OF WHAT WE HAVE CALLED "CHURCH". Ah, the Lord is still out there in the candlestick realm, for John saw in the midst of the seven candlesticks "one like unto the Son of man." Oh yes, He is there, ministering on that level, blessing by His grace, saving and healing and helping, but I do not hesitate to tell you that HE IS N-O-T THERE TAKING MEN ON TO PERFECTION OR INTO THE FULLNESS OF SONSHIP TO GOD. The "up hither" realm is the realm of the overcomer, of the kings and priests who are given to sit with Him on His throne, even as He overcame and is set down with His Father on His throne.

If any brethren can show me any church order, including the early church, or their own, that has ever carried God's people on to perfection and fullness, I will be delighted to be a part of it. If any who read these lines can acquaint me with a church on earth today that is not a body of mixture — that has no division, no carnality, no childishness, no sin, no error, no fleshly methods or manifestations, no weakness, no sickness or limitation — I tell you before God that I will join myself to it tomorrow. If such cannot be produced, then let the immutable Word of God stand firm, and know and understand that I have no obligation to participate in that which is totally impotent to minister what I need in this hour to apprehend the vision set before. I would be remiss if I did not tell you that there is no single church, fellowship, group, or movement in the earth today which will enter into the fullness of God as a unit. Seek not, dear ones, for the perfect church, for truly I tell you that there is no such thing in existence upon earth. There never has been. I have attended fellowships which seemed so lovely — everyone and everything appeared so spiritual. There was naught but love and beauty and hospitality and depth in God all around. On the outside everything looked so perfect! But I discovered that if I stayed around for only a number of days or weeks an undercurrent would begin to be felt, the veneer would commence to peel and the hidden truth and dark reality begin to filter through. I soon found that beneath the glossy exterior lurked a seething cauldron of carnality and trouble.

Look not, my friend, to this preacher, nor to that ministry, nor to the other gift, nor to any movement. Many today will croon into your ear that if you will sit under their ministry, eat at their table, join yourself to their church, drink from their fountain, flow in their stream, embrace their revelation, you will make it into sonship. But I point you to the eternal and uncontrovertible truth that ALL churches, fellowships, movements and groups upon the face of the whole earth today are but mixtures, for the net STILL GATHERS ALL KINDS OF FISHES, and the almighty Lord STILL has somewhat against the candlestick realm. Only the deep dealings and

relentless processings of the Lord can separate the fishes and gather into the heavenly vessels those who shall reign in life in the Kingdom of God. Truly, many are called, but few are chosen! Multitudes are caught in the gospel net of salvation, but few are separated unto God's eternal purposes. The Lord knoweth them that are His! Those that shall be caught up to the throne shall not be called into that position of perfection, glory and power as indiscriminately as they were gathered into the church realm. Like as the mixed multitude of fishes in the net drawn to the shore is then submitted to a careful testing and separation, the good and useful being gathered into vessels, while the unqualified and useless are cast away, so there takes place a careful testing of all who belong to the present order of the church realm to determine their qualifications to be separated unto the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. If God has singled YOU out to be a "special object" of His grace, you may expect Him to honor you with stricter discipline and severer dealings than less favored ones are called upon to endure. If God sets out to make you a son of the Most High, He is not likely to be so gentle as with those fishes that are merely cast back into the water or tossed to other purposes. A sculptor does not use a manicure set to transform the rude, unshapely marble into a thing of beauty. The saw, the hammer and the chisel are cruel instruments, but without them the rough stone must remain forever formless and unbeautified. The heavy hand of God will be upon you, my beloved, ere you make the transition from God's chosen vessel to that fish ready to be served up as meat for the life of the world!

In the Sign of Pisces there are two fishes, one moving upward toward the North Polar Star, the other swimming horizontally along the path of the sun. These bespeak of the twofold operation of God in and through His people — the two-fold manifestation of the Kingdom of Heaven. To Abraham it was revealed as his seed (Christ) becoming as the stars of heaven, and as the sand of the seashore. The fish shooting upward exquisitely pictures the "heavenly calling" of which the Lord's elect are made partakers. It denotes our position, experience and reality in Christ, seated in the heavenlies, far above all the powers, limitations and contaminations of earth. A unique race of men ascend to celestial supremacy, those born of the last Adam who is the Lord from heaven. All men in the first Adam are related by blood; we are united to Christ by spirit. Heaven for those who have been born from above is not a future hope. It is a present reality. Jesus, in His spiritual body of resurrection, ascended up "F-A-R A-B-O-V-E A-L-L PRINCIPALITY AND POWER, AND MIGHT, AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED." He was made to sit at the right hand of God, far above the realms of all the other forms of spiritual life that inhabit God's vast universe; not above them geographically, but above them in rank, in quality of life, in eminence and power and nature and glory! Christ is enthroned in the highest heaven. All those elect sons whom the Father chose "in Him" in eternity past are now therefore enthroned WITH CHRIST in the highest heaven. Ah, it is really true God hath "quickened" us together with Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES WITH CHRIST JESUS! (Eph. 2:56). Our bodies may still be tied to earth, but the sons of God are discovering the glorious and eternal reality of HEAVEN NOW! "As is the heavenly, such are they that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:48).

Christ is now in the highest heaven in this universe. I believe most of my readers understand now what it means to experience the ascended Christ, to daily live out our lives in the triumph and victory of the Son of God, far above the sorrows, strife, sin, problems, limitation, struggles, fears, disappointments, and death of the carnal realm. THIS is sonship! Sometimes I hear people say, "Oh, I am so worried," or, "My, I am quite depressed" Do you know what that means? It means that they are under the power of death. But when you stand in union with Christ you are high above the mountains, not in the valleys. You will be in the heavenly places, far above the circumstances of earth. The problem is that far too often we forget that we are ONE WITH such a Christ who is ascended far above all! We do not appropriate Him. We do not come to Him. We do not contact Him in our spirit. We do take our stand in union with Him. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). The truth of who and what and where we are is spiritually discerned. When the truth is quickened in my spiritual consciousness I can shout, "Praise the Lord! Praise God! I am in Christ! I am raised up and made to sit together with Him in the higher than all heavens! All my troubles, all my distractions, all my problems, all my hardships, all my weaknesses, all my struggles and all my burdens are under my feet. They have become my footstool. I can rest my problems: I can rest my struggles. The more troubles I have, the more I appropriate the ascended Christ in my spirit. This is the experience of Christ! This is the reality of living in heaven — N-O-W! This is the fish swimming ever upward into that center where reigns the King upon the throne.

The second fish swimming horizontally answers to the fact that the Kingdom of the Heavens is established upon the earth — lived out by men walking in the flesh (body). Heaven must cast its shadow upon earth, heaven must come down to earth, heaven must seize hold upon earth, God's rule must come and His will be done in earth as it is in heaven. We reign from the heavens, but our reign is over the earth. Heaven and earth meet in us as they did in Jesus. Jesus the Christ, when a man on earth, was at the same time in heaven. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man WHICH IS IN HEAVEN" (Jn. 3:13). Our Lord was in heaven; He came down from heaven, and still was in heaven. It is something a person can be in, can descend from, and still possess. His outer man was conscious in the earthly realm and one with it, but the inner man was conscious in the eternal realm and one with it. The heavens were open to Him, He dwelt and lived and walked and manifested out of the divine sphere of life. But His rule was horizontal — upon the earth, through the earth, and over the earth. As the perpendicular fish He lived and had His being in the heavens, far above all earthly cares. As the horizontal fish He brought heaven's life to bear upon all things earthly. As the horizontal fish He taught and healed and cast out devils, commanded the winds and waves, fed the multitudes, raised the dead to life again, and revealed the glory of the Father through His human life. Right now, as the perpendicular fish, you can think and know and live within yourself in triumph as an overcomer; and right now, as the horizontal fish, you can minister love, joy, peace, understanding and victory to those about you in the home, in the neighborhood, on the job. The upward fish stands for what you are in Christ. The horizontal fish speaks of how that Kingdom life is brought to bear upon all things, people and circumstances in the natural world.

THE BAND

The first Decan, or minor constellation, in the House of Pisces is THE BAND. This band binds the fishes, being fastened around the tails of the two fishes so that these two are inseparably tied together, so that one cannot go on without the other. The message is clear — our heavenly life and our earthly life are connected in such a way that it is no longer we that live, but Christ that liveth in and through us. Now the band is also fastened to the neck of Cetus, the Sea Monster, denoting a state of limitation, restriction, oppression and persecution. However, Aries, or the Ram (or Lamb) has his paw across the band, portraying the fact that the mighty Christ takes the bridle in His own hand; all that happens to us in this realm is under His control and working together for our good. Throughout this long age of the church the people of God have been buffeted, persecuted, oppressed, tried and tested. We have been sustained and encouraged by the Word of the Lord to us, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you" (I Pet. 4:12). Our trials and testings are associated in the Word of God with the ministry of satan. You never thought of satan having a ministry? "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted (tested) of the devil. And when the Tempter came to Him, he said, if Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Mat. 4:13). "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, THAT YE MAY BE TRIED...be thou faithful...and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, satan hath desired to have you, THAT HE MAY SIFT YOU AS WHEAT: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren (Lk. 22:31-32). "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same AFFLICTIONS are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (I Pet. 5:8-9).

If we can realize that behind the acts of satan is the mighty hand of God working to bring forth gold from these earthen vessels, we can rejoice, as David, in our afflictions and trials and exclaim with him, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes" (Ps. 119:7). Praise God! When we begin to see the good that comes from the assaults of satan on our lives, we are able to appreciate all the more the greatness of our God and the depth of the wisdom of His great mind. Praise His wonderful name! He is truly a God of power and might, and ALL things are in His hand — even this adversary whom we call the devil.

May the Spirit of God grant understanding to all who read these lines to know of a certainty that there is purpose in adversity and in the adversary who brings it. Yes, my brother, my sister, there is purpose in the existence and work of Satan! Without this understanding all the work of God in all ages becomes a hit and miss, trial and error affair unworthy of our mighty God of whom it is written: "The Most High...liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His Kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the

inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and HE doeth ACCORDING TO HIS WILL in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and NONE CAN STAY HIS HAND, or say, What doest Thou?" Dear saints of God, don't believe for one moment that anything in God's great universe is out of control! God is GOD. He IS in control. The band of restriction in your life may be tied to the neck (will) of the Sea Monster, but the Lamb's paw is upon that band! HE is in control of every sphere of activity and all the interplay between good and evil that touches your life. Truly, as the inspired apostle has taught us, "the trial of your faith is more precious than gold that perisheth" (I Pet. 1-7). ADVERSITY builds strength of character. If we were never exposed to trials and tribulation, we would grow up weak indeed! The more we are exposed to adverse circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with our environment, the more we are challenged by the world around us, the stronger we become. Saints, if we would be the sons of the Most High we must be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! There is a great and magnificent future ahead for the sons of God, and a great work our Father has for us to do in the ages to come, and He is preparing us and making us ready for the high and holy place He has for us. Can we not see that all the opposing forces we now encounter are working together for our good — to develop the strength, character, wisdom, and power we must acquire? This is God's plan for us!

ANDROMEDA — THE CHAINED WOMAN

Andromeda is a line of bright stars in the House of Pisces picturing a woman with her arms and feet in chains, in misery and trouble, helplessly bound in the sky. Here is another picture of the church, this time not represented as a fish. It is interesting to note that in some of the ancient planispheres these fishes are depicted as having the face of a woman because another picture of the church frequently used in scripture is that of a woman, of a bride. The true church is the bride of Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:21-33; II Cor. 11:2). Here again is another picture representing the same great truth. Andromeda is the figure of a beautiful woman in what appears to be a sitting position, bound with chains upon her hands and feet. Her name in Greek (Andro-meda) means Man-Ruler. It is interesting that though she is bound and seems to be helpless, yet this "helpless" woman is to be ruler of men.

It is impossible for me to explain the glory of such a thing as this because we are blinded by the impenetrable mystery of a realm that long ago passed away. Nevertheless, the moment that we understand that man in the beginning was created male and female and that male and female IS the image of God, then we can understand for the first time the awesome glory, power and exaltation of the bride of Christ. When God formed the body of Adam from the dust of the ground, He did not make man and woman, for Adam was both in one — after the image and likeness of God. The image of God is not a body with a torso, two legs with two feet and ten toes, two arms with two hands and ten fingers, and a head with two eyes, two ears, a nose and a mouth. The image of God is the emanation of the nature of God. You see, the Bible states clearly that in the beginning there was only God — omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, holy, perfect, who is love. But because God had a Father Nature, He had to birth a Son: because when one has a father nature, the deepest craving of his nature is to beget and bring forth out of his own being an offspring in the likeness of himself. Therefore, because God had a Father Nature, He had to birth a Son; but the problem was He didn't have a wife. Now this would have been a problem for us, but it was not a problem for God, because He had His wife in His own side, for in that beginning, before human flesh was, God had both Male and Female within Himself. We know this is so because everything in the whole vast universe came out of God, and if God had not been Male and Female within Himself in the beginning we could not have male and female in the earth today — in His image.

When he that readeth can grasp the truth that God bears within Himself both the characteristics of male and female, of Father and Mother, then he can better understand the divine word spoken "in the beginning" when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: so...in the image of God created He him; MALE AND FEMALE created He them!" (Gen. 1:26-27). When Eve had been built by the skillful hand of the Creator and presented to Adam, he had an immediate name for what Eve obviously was. Not her given name, Eve, as we term it in English, but what kind of creature she was. Hebrew is simpler than English and more plainly explains exactly what a woman is: ISH is the Hebrew word for man, and ISHA is the feminine form of ISH or man. Adam said, "Now here is bone exactly like my bone, and flesh exactly like my flesh, because she was built from what was taken from me, I will call her "isha" — a FEMALE MAN! Adam merely added a single letter to the word which stood for himself, to define the quality of difference: sex. And God confirmed Adam's under-

standing that they were both exactly alike despite the obvious outward differences: "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called THEIR name ADAM, in the day when they were created" (**Gen. 5:13**). To both God and Adam it was ONE CREATION "in the image of God."

Ish. Isha. Male. Female. Both Adam. Both man. Both in the image of God! Isha signifies, no matter how uncouth the sound to our ears, MAN-NESS. So in the old Latin the word for man is VIR and the word for woman is VIRA — a FEMALE MAN! The English word "woman" also confirms this truth, for it is a contraction of the old Anglo-Saxon term "womb-man" — a MAN with a womb! When Adam said that Eve must be called "isha," it was as though for "wife" one would say "she-man." God blessed the union of ish and isha, this ONE CREATION HE CALLED ADAM.

Those who read these lines should meditate deeply upon the wonder of man's premordial glory — male and female — set together in splendor over the works of God's hands. All creation being set in order, one was needed to take the headship, to bring the authority and blessing of God's Kingdom over all things. "And God said, Let us make man in our image and after our likeness; and let THEM have dominion...so God created man in His own image...male and female created He THEM. And God blessed THEM, and God said unto THEM, Be Fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and HAVE DOMINION over...every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (**Gen. 1:26-28**). My reader will observe the change from him to them. We are not presented with the actual fact of the formation of the woman until the next chapter; though here we find God blessing them, and giving them JOINTLY THE PLACE OF UNIVERSAL GOVERNMENT. All realms from the lowest of the bottomless to the highest of the heavens were set under their joint dominion, as typified by the fish of the sea, the beasts of the earth, and the fowl of the heavens. These three realms symbolically encompass all spheres of existence from the lowest depths of darkness unto the highest dimension of light and exaltation. Jesus confirmed the true scope of man's dominion when, as the last Adam, He descended into the lowest parts of the earth and then ascended up far above all heavens. He liberated the captives in the prison house of Hades and ascended up above all heavens to reign over all things. ALL POWER is given unto Him, both in heaven and in earth. THIS, precious friend of mine, is the magnificence of that dominion given to Adam — male and female — in that long ago beginning.

Eve received all her blessings in Adam; in him, too, she got her dignity and position and power. Not yet called into separation out of Adam, she was, in the purpose of God, part of the man. Universal dominion was not given to Adam alone, it was not said, let him have dominion, "but let them have dominion." There was no other creature so near to Adam as Eve, because no other creature was part of himself. What affection did not Eve owe to Adam! What nearness she enjoyed! What intimacy of communion! What full participation in all of his thoughts! In all his dignity, and in all his glory, wisdom and power, she was entirely ONE. He did not rule over her, but with her. He was lord of the whole creation, and she was ONE WITH HIM! THEY were king and queen of the universe! All this will find its full antitype in the ages to come. Then shall the True Man — the Lord from heaven, the corporate man composed of "many sons brought to glory" — take His seat upon the throne, and in companionship with His bride — the New Eve, the cleansed and perfected Church — rule over a restored creation. This church is quickened out of the grave of Christ, taken from His riven side, being thus "of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." He is the Head and she the body, making ONE NEW MAN, as we read in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, "Till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (**Eph. 4:13**). And who is this "Perfect Man"? CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE, CHRIST MALE AND FEMALE — THE LAST MAN ADAM AND THE NEW EVE!

The sons of God are the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16; Rev. 11:1-2, 19). The bride of Christ is the city of God (Rev. 21:9-11). That city is the holy city, the New Jerusalem. Every stone of that city is a living stone, a glorified CHRIST BEING. Every stone is a living, ransomed soul just as every member of the body of Christ, which is the temple of God, is a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. We cannot fully explain nor understand a mystery so awesome as this, but the eye that sees by the Spirit sees the temple as a living thing, composed of living saints. In that temple redeemed men, the sons of God, are the pillars and foundations, and Christ Himself is the chief cornerstone, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom we also are

built to become the habitation of God through the Spirit. In holy vision the apostle John was transported in spirit to a great and high mountain, the majestic heights of the Kingdom of God, from which he was permitted to see the perfected bride of Christ in all her beauty and glory. From his lofty vantage point the eyes of John were ravished with the electrifying sight of the unequaled majesty and infinite splendor of the bride adorned for her Husband. Not a city of stone as was the Old Jerusalem, but a New Jerusalem, a living city, a bride beyond compare, a virgin pure and holy, composed of incorruptible saints brought forth out of the living substance of Christ. Words utterly fail me to describe the wonder of such unsurpassable glory, for ours are but the words of men, but that holy and beautiful city belongs to THE REALM OF THE SPIRIT. Now at last the perfection, the image of God, Sons and Daughters, Male and Female, Temple and City, of which Adam and Eve were but a frail shadowy type, has come; the many-membered Bridegroom, the last Adam, with the many membered Bride, the Holy City, Adam and Eve, the first and the last, in the image and likeness of God JOINTLY RULING OVER ALL THINGS! The nations shall walk by the light of this city and the rulers and leaders of the earth shall bring into it their glory. The tree of life is in the midst of it and the water of life flows from the throne of God in the midst of it. This is GOD, male and female, united with the image of God in man, male and female, ruling over all the endless vastnesses of infinity unto ages of ages! May the Holy Ghost unfold these things more fully and powerfully to our hearts, that we may have a deeper sense of the conduct and character which are worthy of the high vocation wherewith we are called.

One of the deepest mysteries of the ages is that this glorious bride of Christ, destined to rule over the nations and all things, is also Andromeda, the Chained Woman of the heavens! The names of some of the principle stars in this constellation mean "the weak; the afflicted; the chained" — an eloquent picture of the church throughout this church age which has been in affliction, weakness, bondage, and in chains. Joseph Seiss wrote of the bride of Christ in her chains: "And thus, again, we have a striking picture of the unfavorable side of the church's condition in this world. Jealous rivals hate her and clamor against her. The world-powers in their selfishness fail to protect her, and lend themselves for her exposure and destruction. Innocently she is made to suffer. Though a lovely and influential princess, she is hindered by personal disabilities and bonds. It will not be so always. The time will come when those bonds shall be broken and that exposure ended. But for the present affliction and hardship are appointed to her. She cannot move as she would, or enjoy what pertains to her royal character, her innocence, and her beauty. She is bound to the hard, cold, and ponderous rock of this earthly life. Born to reign with her Lord, apostles and prophets can only wish that she did reign, that they might reign with her. She is within the sacred territory, but it is as yet a place of captivity and bonds. She never can be truly herself in this mortal life" — end quote.

This present time is a time of trial, testing, proving, washing, cleansing, processing and preparation for the glory that shall follow the marriage of the Lamb. Bride of the lamb! do not repine when those who should understand your love for your Beloved, smite and persecute you; the Lord holds it all, and He hears all that is said. Do not grieve if your name is cast out as evil, and you are rejected and defamed by those who should tenderly care for you and bind up your wounds. Jesus knows it all; and if you look unto Him He will pour in oil that will heal every wound and ease every pain. Do not fret if your separation to your Lord is called fanaticism, and you are branded as strange and offensive; He knows it all. It was He who marked out the path for your feet, and who first journeyed over it to the cross. It was He who said that the gate is narrow and the way straightened that leadeth to life. As you press onward, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord; as you bear about in your body the dying of the Lord, and His life becomes manifested through partaking of His death, your hair will take on the purple of suffering and of the overcomer, and the King will be held captive by one tress of your purple hair!

There are, however, chains of bondage far more subtle and sinister than the hatred and persecution of the world. These chains are the Babylonian captivity into which the people of God have unwittingly sold themselves. Let me unfold for you the mystery. Under Old Testament economy God alone was King over His people until Israel demanded a human king in order to be like the nations around her. Before the time of these human kings, the government was a theocracy in the truest sense: that is, the government of the state was by the immediate direction of God Himself by the Spirit. Great was the condescension of God to thus honor the nation by becoming its political Sovereign, performing all the functions of an earthly monarch, and receiving the customary homage paid to a temporal king. Great was the dignity lent to the nation by the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth dwelling with them first in a tabernacle, afterwards in a splendid temple, there having His

table, His altar, and His ministers. Great was His condescension to tolerate their displays of external splendor and pomp, to go forth with and command the army in war, to legislate, to execute laws, and to do all things that pertain to the office of an earthly sovereign. And yet the Israelites were not satisfied. They wished to have another to rule over them, a human king, as the nations about them had. God granted them their desire, and Israel forsook the Lord, provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods and abominations, and sacrificed to devils, provoking Him to anger. Israel, under the old covenant, was the bride of Yahweh, and He their Husband. God was very lenient with them over a long period of time; but justice demanded judgment and He finally gave them a bill of divorcement, putting Israel away. Therefore, since Israel would not be in submission to God as their Husband and King, He decreed that throughout the time of His indignation they would, as a consequence of their folly, be made to serve the kings of their enemies.

Under New Testament economy the Christ of God was to be the one and only Head of His church. But the spirit of the world was for prostituting this church and causing her to commit fornication with the kings and governments of the world, in that she began to be joined with them as she only ought to have been joined to HIM. Under God's perfect order for the New Testament age, both emperors and beggars must meet on common ground. Both are sinners; grace alone can intervene. Both must acknowledge their guilt and plead for mercy. Both should then be equal in dignity, in authority, in meekness, and in charity, deriving all their spiritual stature from HIS WORK WITHIN, and possessing none by virtue of what they are naturally. In the days of the early apostles, men were made christians by the operation of God alone, and thereby they were taken out of the nations as a people for His name (Acts 15:14). The ministries in the body of Christ were sovereignly raised up and anointed by the Holy Spirit of God. With what power, signs, and wonders did they witness to the living presence of the Christ! There was no manmade organization, no carnal church boards, no dominating hierarchies, only the dynamic presence and power of Christ manifested in and through the living members of His body.

Even before the apostles had passed from this life, a spirit and system had set in among the saints of the Lord and many people were wearing the Babylonish garment. They were instituting rules and regulations, laying down laws, formulating creeds, observing days, establishing sacraments and ordinances, elevating human government, becoming disciples of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, and of many others. The captivity had begun and the mysterious chains of Andromeda had begun to shackle the feet (walk) and wrists (service) of the little virgin bride of Christ. Before too many years had passed men began to set themselves up as "bishops" and "lords" over God's heritage in place of the Holy Spirit. Instead of conquering by the power of the Spirit and Truth — as in the early days — men began to substitute their ideas and their methods. Soon the glory and power, the presence and word of God in the morning time church began to be eclipsed, and the power of carnal minded men gradually took the place of the awesome presence of God. Consequently, man's carnal understanding was put upon the scriptures, and as the Spirit of Christ fled from their midst, men established a vast and elaborate system of substitutes to take the place of reality. Dioceses and parishes were established. Ecclesiastical centralization commenced. The weapons of excommunication were forged. The festivals of the church were created, along the lines of pagan celebrations. Catechetical schools were created to teach the faith systematically. The formulas of baptism and the sacraments became of great importance. Costly and ornate edifices were constructed for worship. The services became ceremonialized and elaborate. Sculpture and painting were enlisted in the work of providing aids to devotion. Relics of saints and martyrs were cherished as sacred possessions. Religious observances were multiplied. The church, with its array of gaudily bedecked clergy and of imposing ceremonies, assumed much of the stateliness and visible splendor that belonged to the HEATHEN SYSTEM which it had supplanted. The mission of the church was lost sight of in a degrading alliance with the State. Christianity was now a pageant, a ritualism, a vain philosophy, a superstition, a formula, an ARM OF THE STATE! The little virgin bride of Christ had become a beautiful woman sitting in the heavens of power, exaltation and authority — CHAINED! She appeared to be ruling, but was in fact a slave to the system of religious Babylon!

The people of the Lord have long been held captive by the spirit of the world. Thank God, there has been a little light in Babylon, and there has even been the voice of the bride and the Bridegroom (Rev. 18:23), for the people chained in that horrible darkness have been the Lord's people. The Lord has, in mercy, allowed the least faithless of the popular churches to declare enough of the gospel to lead a few to the Saviour. A few of these receive and teach a genuine baptism in the Holy Spirit. These have in measure tasted of His reality and

received of His gifts. But from here on, practically everything that is taught is nothing but defilement and shame: nothing but the precepts of the elders, and the lies and deceptions of the antichrist. Organized religion today, while totally ignorant of the fact of there being an antichrist, is busy teaching his doctrines, observing his forms and ceremonies, and glorying in his shame. To His people who sit shackled in these chains of Andromeda the Word of the Lord commands: **"Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins...for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Rev. 18:4-5)**. Thank God, the chains of the Babylon system are doomed to destruction. This mysterious system is to be finally and irrevocably destroyed. Wherefore, the Lord saith, **"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: LOOSE THYSELF FROM THE BANDS OF THY NECK, O CAPTIVE DAUGHTER OF ZION. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for naught; and ye shall be redeemed without money" (Isa. 52:1-3)**.

CEPHEUS — THE KING

In this third and final constellation surrounding Pisces we have the picture of a bearded man wearing a crown and a royal robe, seated upon a throne. In his uplifted hand he holds a scepter. He is a glorious king enthroned in the highest heaven. He is the Deliverer for whom the Chained Woman waits. The Egyptians called him PEKUHOR, which means The Ruler That Comes. He is known as Cepheus today, which is a Greek name that comes from a Hebrew word meaning The Branch or Royal Branch. The Ethiopians called him HYK, The King. Star names add to the imagery. The star ALPHIRK in his belt means The Redeemer, while the brightest star in his body is called AL DERAMIN which means Coming Quickly. Do we need to ask with the Psalmist, "Who is this King of Glory?" We can respond as in the Psalm, "The LORD of hosts, He is the King of Glory!"

The hour of the final deliverance of God's people and the manifestation of His glory, majesty, wisdom and power upon them is at hand. The King is coming! Hallelujah! He is coming within to set His people free, that they in turn may deliver creation. The chains of the beautiful Andromeda shall now be broken. Her release from all bondage and captivity is even now under way. Once the church is cleansed from her idols and defilement, she will be in a position to bring deliverance to a sin-sick and judgment-weary world, when **"the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9)**. Only when Christ's church is cleansed from her idols can she ever hope to bring deliverance to the world. And that deliverance has to come. It will come through those who have given up their all, those who have lost everything to be married to their Lord, and who henceforth live only unto Him. The water of life must now flow from the city to bring healing to the nations. But before we may have any part or lot in the great work, we must forsake all and follow the Lord alone. No one can deliver men from the lies of the antichrist while continuing to preach those lies. No one can deliver the world from the bondages of sin, fear, carnality, limitation and death while himself remaining a captive of those things. And before God's true church can persuade men to give up their idols, and loose their bands, she must first get rid of all her own golden calves and march in victory out of Egypt's domain.

George Hawtin has ably written: "The hour has come far us to realize that only THE LORD knoweth them that are His. Only THE LORD can gather the tares out of the wheat. Only THE LORD can separate the sheep from the goats. Only THE LORD can call His sheep by name and lead them out. Only THE LORD can look into the four corners of the earth and call forth His elect. Who, then, am I to circumscribe anything? I must learn to know men not by what they say, what they believe, where they are, or least of all because they are members of a certain group, but by that strange witness that made Jesus say to Peter, 'Thou art Peter,' and by that same spiritual revelation that made Peter say to Jesus, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' How often we have been shockingly disappointed in men! It was because we knew them only after the flesh and we did not know them after the Spirit. We accepted them because they were inside a certain circle and said they belonged to 'The Move.' Yes, indeed, they may have been inside the circle and they may have been in the move, but where were they in God's eyes? That is the important question" — end quote.

The truth of the things I now write to the elect of God, which also has been inscribed in the Signs of the heavens from the dawn of creation, cannot be more graphically confirmed than by the remarkable vision given by the Lord to evangelist Tommy Hicks in 1961. He wrote: "I had hardly fallen asleep when the vision and the revelation that God gave to me came before me. The vision came three times, exactly in detail, the morning of

July 25th, 1961. I was so stirred and so moved by the revelation, that this has changed my complete outlook open the body of Christ, and upon the last — the end-time ministry. The greatest thing that the church of Jesus Christ has ever been given lies straight ahead. As the vision appeared to me, after I was asleep, I suddenly found myself in a great high distance. Where I was, I do not know, but as I was looking down upon the earth, suddenly the whole world came into view: every nation, every kindred, every tongue came before my sight, from the east and the west, from the north and the south. And I recognized every country and many cities that I had been in. I was almost in fear and trembling as I stood beholding the great sight before me. At that moment, when the world came into view, it began to lightning and thunder. As the lightning flashed over the face of the earth, my eyes went downward — and I was facing the north.

"Suddenly I beheld what looked like a great giant; and as I stared and looked at it, I was almost bewildered by the sight. It was so gigantic and so great in stature; his feet seemed to reach to the North Pole and his head to the south; his arms were stretched from sea to sea. I could not even begin to understand whether this was a mountain or whether this be a giant, but as I watched it, I suddenly beheld this great giant. I could see it was struggling for life, to even live. His body was covered with debris from head to foot. At times this great giant would move its body and act as if it would even rise up. When it did, thousands of little creatures seemed to run away — hideous looking creatures would run away from this giant. When he would become calm, they would come back. All of a sudden this great giant lifted his hand toward the heavens, and then it lifted its other hand. When it did, these creatures by the thousands seemed to flee away from this giant and go out into the darkness.

"Slowly this great giant began to rise, and as he did, his head and hands went into the clouds. As he arose to his feet, he seemed to have cleansed himself from the debris and filth that was upon him, and he began to raise his hands into the heavens as though praising the Lord. As he raised his hands it was even unto the clouds. Suddenly every cloud became silver, the most beautiful silver I have ever known. As I watched the phenomenon, it was so great, I could not even begin to understand what it all meant. I was so stirred as I watched it, and I cried unto the Lord, and said, "Oh, Lord, what is the meaning of this?" It felt as if I was actually in the Spirit, and I could feel the presence of the Lord even as I was asleep. From those clouds suddenly there came great drops of liquid light raining down upon this mighty giant, and slowly, slowly, this giant began to melt — began to sink, as it were, into the very earth itself. As he melted, his whole form seemed to have melted upon the face of the earth, and this great rain began to come down; liquid drops of light, as it were, began to flood the very earth itself. As I watched this giant that seemed to melt, suddenly it became millions of people over the face of the earth. As I beheld the sight before me, people stood up over the world. They were lifting their hands and they were praising the Lord.

"At that very moment there came a great thunder that seemed to roar from the heavens. I turned my eyes toward the heavens, and suddenly I saw a figure in white, in glistening white — the most glorious thing that I have ever seen in all my life. I did not see the face, but somehow I knew that it was the Lord Jesus Christ. He stretched forth His hand upon the peoples and the nations of the world, men and women. As He pointed toward them, this liquid light seemed to flow from His hand into these persons, and a mighty anointing of God came upon them, and those people began to go forth in the name of the Lord. And this is the miracle of it — this is the glorious miracle of it — those people would stretch forth their hands exactly as the Lord did, and it seemed that there was this same liquid fire in their hands. As they stretched forth their hands, they said, "According to my word, be thou made whole." As these people continued in this mighty ministry, I did not fully realize what it was. And I looked to the Lord and said, "What is the meaning of this?" And He said, "This is that that I will do in the last days. I will restore all that the cankerworm, the palmerworm, the caterpillar — I will restore all that they have destroyed. This, My people in the end-time, shall go forth. As a mighty army shall they sweep over the face of the earth.

"One of the things that seemed remarkable — after I had reviewed the vision so many times in my mind — I never saw a church and I never saw or heard anything of a denomination, but these people were going in the Name of the Lord of hosts. Hallelujah! As they marched forward, everything they did was the ministry of Christ. These people were ministering to the multitudes over the face of the earth. Tens of thousands, yea, millions came to the Lord Jesus Christ as these people stood forth and gave the message of the Kingdom — of the coming of the Kingdom — in this hour.

"Suddenly there was another loud clap of thunder that seemed to resound around the world. I heard again the voice, the voice that seemed to speak: "Now, this is My people. This is My beloved bride." When the voice spoke, I looked upon the earth and I could see the lakes and the mountains. The graves were opened and the people from all over the world, the saints of all ages, seemed to be rising, and as they rose from the graves, suddenly all these people came from every direction and they seemed to be forming again this gigantic body. I could hardly comprehend it, it was so marvelous — it was so far beyond anything I could ever dream or think of. But, as this body suddenly began to form — it took shape again in the form of this mighty giant — this time it was different. It was arrayed in the most beautiful, gorgeous white — its garments were without spot or wrinkle — as this body began to form. The people of all ages appeared to be gathering into this body. Slowly, slowly, as it formed up into the very heavens, suddenly from the heavens above the Lord Jesus came — became the Head. I heard another clap of thunder that said, "This is My beloved Bride for whom I have waited. She will come forth, even tried by fire. This is she that I have loved from the beginning of time" — end quote.

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 35

ARIES-THE LAMB

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART THIRTY-FIVE

THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB
THE CLEANSING OF THE BLOOD
THE LIGHT OF LIFE
OVERCOMING BY THE BLOOD

In our series of messages on the Signs of the heavens, we come now to the Sign of ARIES — THE RAM OR LAMB. Let us look at some of the names by which the constellation of Aries has been known from ancient times. Aries usually carries the symbol of the ram, but many of the oldest Zodiacs portray a lamb (with no horns), and in some ancient Zodiacs the lamb has a circular crown on its head. The presentation of a lamb instead of a full grown ram is confirmed by the meanings of the names associated with Aries. The Hebrew name is TALEH, meaning The Lamb Sent Forth. The Greek name is KRIOS, also meaning The Lamb. In Latin it is called ARIES (the name by which we know it) which means The Lamb, The Chief, The Head. The Arabic name, HAMAL, means Sheep, Gentle, Merciful. Furthermore, the Sign of Aries emphasizes that the lamb is also a sacrifice. The brightest star, ELNATH, means The Wounded or Slain. The nearby star, called SHERETAN, has a name meaning Bruised, and the other notable star is MESARTIM, whose name means The Bound. The ancient Akkadians called Aries BARA-ZIGGAR; BAR meaning Altar, or Sacrifice, while ZIGGAR means Making Right. The full meaning would be The Altar, or The Sacrifice of Making Right. Another truth conveyed by the names in Aries is that of kingship. The name Aries itself bears the meaning of Chief or Head. There are other names also indicating the idea of a Reign. In putting all these ideas together, Aries presents to us A LAMB SACRIFICED BUT REIGNING!

A Lamb is obviously a very familiar figure in the Word of God. The first blood earth's startled soil ever drank was shed in that primeval Paradise in Eden. Thousands of years later John the Baptist began the ministry of Christ by proclaiming, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (**Jn. 1:29**). In the last book of the New Testament we read, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing..." (**Rev. 5:12**). In the opening chapters of Genesis we read: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make COATS OF SKINS, and clothed them" (**Gen. 3:7, 9-10,21**). We would be totally void of understanding as to what kind of victim it was that provided this blessed covering for the sinning man and his wife, were it not that the Holy Spirit has shed precious light upon this wonder, revealing that Christ is "the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world" (**Rev. 13:8**) who verily was "a LAMB without blemish or spot...foreordained before the foundation of the world" (**1 Pet. 1:19-20**). I now invite you to meditate deeply upon my words. In the process of changing our garments, covering our nakedness, and clothing us in the righteousness of Himself God brings us to the LAMB, which has its base in the foundation of God before the world (kosmos - world system) began, for Christ the Lamb was foreordained before the foundation of the world, and He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and however you interpret "the foundation of the world" that certainly carries us back to Eden.

Redemption is not an afterthought of God by which He hopes to salvage a few of the broken and shattered pieces of His creation. Redemption is PART OF THE PLAN OF CREATION. If the fall of man is part of the plan of God, then the redemption of the fallen creation must also be a part of the same plan that issued forth from the fathomless depths of His omniscient mind. If Peter was speaking the truth when he wrote of God's Lamb, "Who verily was FOREORDAINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, but was manifest in these last times for you" (**1 Pet. 1:20**), then the fall of man must certainly be a part of the plan of the Creator. For what possible purpose was the blessed redemptive Lamb foreordained before the world began if redemption itself

were not already in the mind and plan of God? All Christians love to quote the Golden Text of the Bible, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son..." (Jn. 3:16). Yet what is the real message of this beautiful passage? Is it not that God SO LOVED that He GAVE His Son? Does not I Pet. 1:20 make it very plain that the actual giving of that Son was before the world began and before man was driven from the Garden planted eastward in Eden? Ah, the agonies of the cross were endured only two thousand years ago on Golgotha's hill, but the actual giving of the redemptive Lamb took place before the present world-system began and the actual slaying of the Lamb took place from the beginning of the world-system, in the mysterious mists of the sacred Garden of long ago.

It is clear that the plan of redemption was prepared in its fullness before ever the voice of God commanded, "Let there be!" It was not completed just in case man should fall, but because the fall of man and his redemption from sin and death was part of the process by which he would come into God's image and live in the eternal realm as a creature of experience and knowledge, completely redeemed, completely purified, completely perfected, completely matured, completely instructed, and completely incapable of sin or death forevermore. Is it any wonder that John on Patmos heard every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and all that are in them exulting in such a plan as this and crying out in ecstasy, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto THE LAMB for ever and ever!" (Rev. 5:13). Creation and redemption walk hand in hand through all the pilgrim journey from Eden to the new heaven and the new earth.

The glorious theme of the Holy Scripture is the Person and Work of Him whose lovely title is "The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." This gracious title for our Lord Jesus Christ is indeed one of the most charming symbols used in the Bible to describe Him who loved us and has washed us from our sins in His own blood. Whenever the serious seeker after truth explores the meaning of the various Semitic symbols used to depict the Person and Work of the Saviour he becomes aware that each stands for a specific aspect of truth. In the case of the "Lamb" it is with the truth of redemption that we deal, for redemption is by the blood of the Lamb. "Ye were not redeemed by such corruptible things as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:18-19). "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" — not the child that was born, though He was indeed worthy. Not the miracle-worker of the sea, or by the grave of Lazarus. Not the teacher whose words enthralled the multitudes on the mountain, or across the waters of blue Galilee. Not the healer restoring sight to the blind, or causing the lame to walk again. But — "Worthy is the LAMB THAT WAS S-L-A-I-N to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!"

We would have thought that in calling our Lord "the Lamb" this name would have been used only in respect to His humiliation in His earthly life. However in scripture it is most used in reference to His eternal glory in the heavenlies. Peter saw Him as the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world. John saw Him as a Lamb that had been slain from the foundation of the world, highly exalted, standing in the midst of the Throne. This slain Lamb is IN THE MIDST of everything: in the midst of the Throne, and of the four Living Creatures, and of the Elders. This Lamb is peculiarly the One who is IN THE MIDST, just as the tree of life was IN THE MIDST of the Garden of God. His eternal centrality is set forth in these significant words: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist...and having made peace through THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS, by Him to RECONCILE ALL THINGS unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col. 1:15-20)

The term "Lamb" is used of Christ no less than twenty-eight times in Revelation, and has two vital characteristics. Christ is the sacrificial Lamb and the conquering lamb. He is never presented this way except in the majestic scenes around the Throne. We see the Lamb marching to the ultimate throne of universal empire in complete triumph and as absolute victor. Confronting the power of the beast and the kings of the earth, and the hordes of hell, and the lewdness and deception of the harlot system, and the wars and battles and bloodshed that fill the soul with dread, is THE POWER OF THE LAMB, whose victory has been assured and whose glory is guaranteed. God has given the Lamb for a leader and a counselor; so He is both our leader — for we are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth — and He is our counselor and commander; a

counselor to counsel us concerning the things of God and His Kingdom, the Kingdom that hath no end. So glory to God and to the Lamb! Glory be unto God and the Lamb forevermore! And the Lamb shall have the victory! Of this we are assured, though all the wild beasts and the wolves, and the dogs, and the goats and bulls of Bashan, the spotted leopards, and all the wild heifers of Ephraim, the horses of Pharaoh, and the wild Ishmaels, profane Esaus, envious Cains, which may gather in a brotherhood, and Gog and Magog, professor and profane, if all these rise against the Lamb and His followers, without or within, yet I say the Lamb shall have the victory over the beast, the whore, and the dragon, over the flesh, the world, and the devil, for Christ is Lord over them all, for He was slain before they were, and will be reigning when they are gone, blessed be His wonderful name! He has conquered and shall conquer all who rise up against Him. For seventy years the ruthless, atheistic communist regime in Russia blasphemed the Lamb and jailed, tormented and killed all who proclaimed His name. They planned and purposed to eradicate His Kingdom from the earth. Today the communist government no longer exists in Russia and it is ironic that the Russian government, through its ministry of education, has invited a consortium of sixty American evangelical groups and Christian colleges to train educators in 120,000 Russian public schools on how to teach Christian and spiritual principles. In commenting on the invitation, Evgeniy Kurkin, the Russian deputy education minister told U.S.A. Today on November 10, 1092: "Seventy years ago, we closed God out of our country and it has caused so many problems in our society we cannot count them. We must put God back into our country and we must begin with our children. **"AND THE LAMB SHALL OVERCOME THEM!"** This is the great and beautiful message of the book of Revelation, and this is why the Spirit witnesseth **"Blessed (happy) is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).**

But the Lamb in the book of Revelation has another note. The word used for LAMB here is peculiar to this book. It is the diminutive form of the Greek word for lamb, and is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. It means a young lamb, or a lambkin, weak and small. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is THE LAMB of God, and joined to Him are the members of His body, His brethren, the younger sons of God, the lambkin company. To see this company as the body of the Lamb is not to magnify man, but to exalt Christ, for it is HIS LAMB LIFE formed in them and lived out through them, giving expression to the Lamb nature. We know that HE is the preeminent One, and that it is HIS LIFE which is given, and by that life we are conformed to HIS image, made partakers of HIS divine nature, becoming the revelation of HIMSELF in the earth. All the qualifications of The Lamb must now be found in this people who make up the body of The Lamb. As one has written: "THE LAMB beautifully took care of all the work on God's side towards man, and the lambkin will have a beautiful ministry from man's side, to bring things back to God. His kingdom shall come, His will shall be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. There are many paths through the sunshine and the shadows, but we learn to see His hand in it all, for He is preparing and fashioning those who shall become part of the lambkin, who are ONE IN THE LAMB, to be given for the salvation of the ends of the earth."

It is in keeping with this that in Revelation chapter fourteen, we find the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. Having been rewarded with "the glory that follows," He is now highly exalted. We are told that in eastern countries where, of course, this symbolic scene is set, when sheep and goats are left to roam where they will, the goats invariably climb to the tops of the hills, while the sheep ordinarily seek the low places, the valleys. So to John it must have seemed most unusual that a Lamb should be on Mount Zion. By this is brought to light a most important truth concerning Jesus, The Lamb of God. He did not attain to His high position on Mount Zion by means of self-exaltation, but because, sheep like, He had sought the low places." He humbled Himself, and because of this His heavenly Father exalted Him. It was because Jesus permitted Himself to be led as "a lamb to the slaughter" and did not open His mouth in self-defense or seek otherwise to justify Himself before His enemies that the Father, by resurrection and ascension, highly exalted Him. He had sought the "low places," and now we find the Lamb exalted to the Throne of the city of God! Our Lord does not sit enthroned in the heavens, as Ruler of the universe, because He was divine in His birth, and messianic in His office, but because He was a LAMB IN CHARACTER. It was because He "made Himself of no reputation." It was because, coming as a man, He "took the form of a servant." It was because, as a bond-slave, He "learned obedience." It was because, in obedience, He went all the way, even "unto the death of the cross." **"WHEREFORE, God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:5-10).**

Even now, as Christ sits enthroned at the right hand of the Father, He reigns in virtue of the fact that He is a Lamb. He reigns as a Lamb-King, because God is raising up lamb-kings in the earth, and it is the work of the Holy Spirit in the earth to establish in each member of the body of the Lamb in the earth the nature, and the character, as well as the authority of Him who sits on the Throne. "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (Jn. 16:14). It is the work of the Holy Spirit not only to impart unto His people the POWER of God, but ALL that pertains to the exalted Lamb, His very nature, and character, and life, that He might be here in the earth, dwelling in His body, to be to you and me, yea, to be through you and me EVERYTHING THAT JESUS IS UPON THE THRONE. The "lambkin" as a figure of Christ is indeed complete and perfect; yet it is a type of Christ in a limited measure and at the same time in the greatest measure. How strange this sounds to our ears, how curious to our minds! As far as the Lord Himself is concerned, He is not limited at all, but as far as our experience of Him is concerned, there is such a limitation. When we come to the Lord and receive Him as our redemption, the Christ we receive is whole, complete, and perfect; but as far as our experience of Him is concerned, we experience Him in only a small measure, just as the little lamb of salvation. From the time we experienced Christ as the Lamb, we have always been progressing and advancing; we have continually made progress in our experience of Christ and received of Him more and more. This does not mean that Christ has become greater and greater. No, Christ is the same, He changes not! But as we grow in our appropriation of Him He becomes greater and greater TO US AND IN US. Day by day in our experience Christ is becoming greater and greater. At the stage of our experience in which the total triumph of the Lamb is achieved within, Christ is unlimited to us, He becomes ALL IN ALL. It is His almighty strength in the heavens revealed through the weakness of our humanity on earth — the TRIUMPHANT LAMBKIN! Hallelujah!

THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

What is this stream of life from the Lamb upon the Throne, and why is the Lamb so highly exalted until eternity re-echoes the song of His praise: "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing!" The wonderful answer comes: "Thou art worthy...FOR Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy Blood. It is the blood of the Lamb that bestows this glory upon Him. By His own blood He has entered the Holiest of all, and is seated upon the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens. His blood has accomplished this. The blood of Jesus is the greatest mystery of the ages, the deepest mystery of divine wisdom. Let us not imagine that we can easily grasp its meaning. God thought four thousand years necessary to prepare men for it, and we must take time, yea, sacrificial time in His presence, if we are to gain a knowledge of the awesome and marvelous power of the blood. I know of no word in the Bible or in human speech that contains such glories! This great and eternal truth shines with ever increasing brilliance from Eden's fragrant Garden of long ago to the jasper walls of the New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven; from Adam's covering of skins and Abel's humble sacrifice of the firstfruits of his flock to the very Throne of God Himself where, glorious in power and might, the Lamb reigns and the seven Spirits of His divine Life are sent forth into all the earth.

The blood of Jesus Christ is of such vast importance to God the Father that He has decreed that there shall be (1) no remission, (2) no salvation, (3) no atonement, (4) no redemption, (5) no propitiation, (6) no cleansing, (7) no justification, (8) no peace, (9) no new covenant, (10) no sanctification, (11) no reconciliation, (12) no entrance into the Most Holy Place, (13) no sonship, without the blood of Jesus Christ whose blood is called by Paul the BLOOD OF GOD (Acts 20:28; Heb. 10:19-20).

Never forget, precious friend of mine that Jesus came as THE PRICE WHICH COVERS, the substance in the scale that replenishes all deficiency. He shed His blood — His divine life — pouring it out for us. Life and blood are synonymous. Spirit and blood are synonymous. Spirit, blood, and life are all different names for the same element. Jesus performed His mighty works by the shores of Galilee, but then He died, resurrected and returned in mighty SPIRIT POWER to be the MIRACLE WORKER WITHIN. Nothing less must become ours, than HIS LIFE — the divine life He lived in human flesh. "As I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me even he shall live by Me," Jesus said. The truth is so simple — He has poured out His blood-life to us to quicken us again to the glory of God that belongs to man. Our spirit is quickened by His Spirit and in union with Him we are brought to union with God. Christ gave Himself FOR US and TO US. Our spirit must be quickened by His Spirit. This is the power of His redeeming blood. That He might liberally pour His dear-bought treasures into

benighted human storehouses, was the inspiration of Jesus' intense human sacrifice. Some hold not to this truth, choosing rather to believe that they are a self-sufficient god within themselves, needing no Saviour beyond the development of their own inherent divinity.

There is a deep longing and intense hunger in the hearts of vast numbers of the Lord's people in this significant hour. They are earnestly searching for reality but the church systems and so-called revival movements have failed to meet their need. But the profound hunger, the intense need in their life cries loudly for satisfaction, their soul seeks ardently and resolutely after truth, life and eternal substance. Their great need is not being met by the churches nor by the television evangelists, nor by the crusades, nor by all the good meetings with their tongues, prophecies, healings, manifestations, and preaching of faith and prosperity. So these dear folk begin to look to other sources. Many of these "other sources" are dangerously deceptive, especially to those who desire "more knowledge," "deeper truth," or "the latest revelation." My beloved, there is an invasion right into the camp of those whose hearts have been moved by the call to sonship of "humanistic — new age" philosophy that is deceiving many precious people today. It was prophesied by the apostle Peter that this enemy of the Lamb of God should appear right in the midst of the very elect. **"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction (separation from the flow of divine life)" (II Pet. 2:1).** The key word is — "even denying the Lord that bought them." The denial is against the atonement, the ransom, the redeeming blood. They are offended at the Lord that bought them, though they may be devoted to the Lord that taught them. Ah, in very fact, they do not deny the Lord - they call Jesus Lord and esteem Him as the Son of God, the Christ, our Guiding Teacher, our Great Example, the Way-Shower, our Pattern. They speak effusively of His goodness, His love, meekness, unselfishness, understanding, compassion, mercy, power, and wisdom. They believe that His mission was to show us just how great is the potential of the true spiritual identity within every man, and the raising up of the Christ-consciousness within. They proclaim that Jesus became the Saviour by blazing the trail and showing the way of salvation to all who would follow in His steps. The only problem is that they are required to go in their own power, their own inward identity, their own godhood, their own inherent divinity, to follow Jesus into the fullness of the divine life. There is no reconciling, atoning, redeeming, cleansing, sanctifying, justifying, transforming power of His precious blood involved, no quickening of His life, no new birth, no washing of regeneration or renewing of the Holy Ghost. And yet, to the natural mind it all sounds so good — so very right! But we must truly allow the Holy Spirit of Truth to give wisdom and understanding that we may discern the difference between the precious and the vile. These satanic agents are described by the inspired apostle as those who appear to be teachers of the deep mysteries of God, yet they bring in damnable heresies, in all cunning craftiness and subtlety, consummating in the repudiation of the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ. It is not strange that there is resentment against the mystery of the blood which does not exist against any other thing in the vast panorama of Truth. It is not strange that the ministers of satan, appearing as the apostles of Christ and messengers of Light, should fortify their lies and hypocrisies by contending for almost every phase of revealed truth, including the bright hope of sonship; yet subtly omitting, or violently denying, the one and only point upon which the interests of God and satan divide.

In the testimony of scripture the order is ever: "Unto HIM that loved US, and WASHED US from OUR SINS in HIS OWN BLOOD." And, "to as many as received HIM, to THEM gave HE power to BECOME the sons of God." Break these links and the chain is gone. Let us never forget this! Some trust so strongly in their own divinity, in the raising up of the Christ-consciousness within every man that they need no Saviour beyond themselves, no sun or wind or rain from without to quicken the life within. The unwary are caught by it. All this time the blood of Christ is omitted or ignored. Not one word is said about it. The silence is ominous. Do let us understand truth clearly, for "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even DENYING THE LORD THAT B-O-U-G-H-T THEM and bring upon themselves swift destruction. The destruction is the drying up of the spiritual life, the aborting of the spirit of sonship, and ultimate separation from the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. Do away with the blood of atonement, the blood of remission, the blood of salvation, the blood of propitiation, the blood of reconciliation, the blood of justification, the blood of cleansing, the blood that gives eternal life, the blood of the new covenant, the blood that speaketh better things than Abel's, the blood by which entrance is made into the Most Holy — destroy, I say, this wonderful stream of the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot and every room within the towering temple of reality comes crashing down to earth! The love of God became a man, the love of God

became human flesh, the love of God in Jesus Christ has flowed into our souls as the precious blood of Christ to wash away the veil of carnal consciousness and quicken us again to our true heritage in God. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed by such corruptible things, as silver and gold from your vain manner of life received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." Hallelujah for the blood!

Multiplied millions of Christians in all lands hold the blood of Christ to be precious. The word precious means of great price or value, costly, of great desirability, honored, esteemed or beloved. But there must be a reason why the blood is precious! Through many years of my Christian walk I never learned of any reason why it is esteemed except that God counts it to be the most valuable and precious of all blood to Him. I was never told whether it was intrinsically valuable or if it was valuable because of what it could and did accomplish. To be intrinsically valuable or precious means that it is of itself precious and does not necessarily need to accomplish any work to get its value. For example, the value of precious gems is determined not so much from their usefulness as from their intrinsic value and the desire that people have to own them. My sincere prayer is that the spirit of wisdom and revelation may enlighten the eyes of our understanding until we clearly see that the blood of Jesus Christ was and is precious both in respect to its INTRINSIC VALUE and because of WHAT IT COULD AND DID AND DOES NOW DO.

The mystery of the blood is far too intricate for my little mind to fully grasp, but there is a most interesting statement found in the very first command which God gave to man after the awful judgment of the flood in the days of Noah. After the wickedness of man had reached its peak in antediluvian days, God, in order to spare the human race from complete corruption sent a great flood upon the earth and destroyed all men except one single family which by the grace of God had still remained "perfect in his generations." With this new family on a cleansed and renewed earth, the Lord begins a new chapter in the history of humanity. No sooner had God, however, released Noah from the ark, than He gave him some instructions concerning his conduct, lest another judgment fall upon them. Chief among these instructions was the commandment, "Eat No blood." "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, ye shall not eat" (Gen. 9:3-4).

Because life is in the blood, and not in the flesh of God's creatures, He permitted men to eat flesh but it must be without blood. God is very insistent, even in the New Testament, on this point. In giving the national dietary and ceremonial laws to Israel He repeats the prohibition of Gen. 9:4. "And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel...that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set My face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. FOR THE LIFE OF THE FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD" (Lev. 17:10-11). God says, "It is sin to eat any manner of blood." So serious was this sin that the transgressor was to be put to death! Meat which had not been thoroughly drained of its blood was unfit for food as well as all things strangled. Today, the orthodox Jew at least, still remembers this prohibition, and will eat nothing but kosher meat, that is, meat that is without blood and slaughtered according to the law. Every kosher meat market and every bit of kosher food is evidence of the sacredness of blood!

God's commands are never arbitrary but always logical, reasonable, and with divine purpose. Many reasons can be found for abstaining from blood. We might mention the reasons of health and hygiene, but there are two reasons which stand out most prominent. First, the life is in the blood — and life is sacred. It was God's special gift and the effect of His own breath. Moses tells us in Genesis this wonderful and little understood fact: "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and BREATHED into his nostrils the BREATH OF LIFE; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Truly do I declare unto you that a profound mystery lies here! Since life is in the blood, all flesh is lifeless without blood. Here then is Adam formed of the dust. Just a lump of matter without life. God breathes into his nostrils and lo, he lives. Now mark well, God did not cause Adam to begin to breathe the air in the atmosphere around him. It was not breathing air that made Adam a living soul. GOD BREATHED into his nostrils. God is Spirit. It was the very breath of God that entered into Adam, the very spirit of life from God. Since the life is in the blood, it is my deep conviction that it was blood which God added to that body when He breathed into him the breath of life! Not the mortal, corruptible, dead blood that flows in mankind's veins today. Adam's body was of the earth but his blood was DIRECTLY FROM GOD. Since the life of all flesh is in the blood, and in view of the fact that God typified the regeneration of man's blood by the slain animals of Israel's altars, God demands that we respect the life of all flesh and to eat blood, therefore, is to insult the life

of God! Ah, the power of the blood is in the worth of the life. In the blood of Jesus THE POWER OF THE DIVINE LIFE DWELT and worked — hence its intrinsic value. He came with a blood not unlike the first Adam's blood before he sinned and the spirit of life fled from him. He was the Son of God by conception but the Son of man by birth. He was a specially prepared body to contain a SPECIALLY PREPARED BLOOD that was to be THE LIFE of all humanity. This blood was precious from the fact that it was a unique blood which would do something for all humanity that no other blood could ever do. It was the Word that became flesh, who was made man. It was the life of God that dwelt in Him. That life gave His blood, every drop of it, an intrinsic value. The blood of a man is of more worth than that of a sheep. The blood of a king or a great general is counted of more value than hundreds of common soldiers. The blood of the Son of God! — it is in vain the mind seeks for some expression of its value; all we can say is, it is His own blood, the precious blood of the Son of God!

Jesus came as the Head of an entirely new creation. In fact He Himself WAS A NEW CREATURE, different from any that had ever been. I want to make it very plain that Jesus was in no way derived from the First Adam, either by flesh or by blood. If He had even one ounce of the first Adam's blood coursing through his veins, then He Himself NEEDED A SAVIOUR. Hear now what Paul says of the Christ: "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is THE LORD FROM HEAVEN" (I Cor. 15:45-47). Jesus was not fifty percent the first Adam and fifty percent the last Adam. He was one hundred percent the last Adam! He was not fifty percent the first man and fifty percent the last man. He was not fifty percent the man of earth and fifty percent the Lord from heaven. The second man I-S (100%) THE LORD FROM HEAVEN. To be the second man and the last Adam He could in no way contain any part of the first Adam. To be the man from heaven He must not be a descendant of the man of the earth. He must be an entirely NEW KIND OF MAN, separate from every other creation of God, as was the first man Adam in the day when he was created. The first Adam was truly without father, without mother, and without descent — he was not derived from the life of any other man who had ever lived. So the last Adam! Though He was conceived IN the womb of Mary, He was not OF Mary. He was not formed from the union of the sperm of God with the ovum of Mary. His genes were not half from Mary and half from His heavenly Father. "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD," declared the angel to Mary. Mary was merely a surrogate mother. That fact should settle for all time the morality of surrogate motherhood! Jesus was as truly man, as truly flesh, as was the first man, but He was also as truly a UNIQUE CREATION OF GOD as was the first man in Eden.

Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it! Jesus Christ was THE WORD MADE FLESH; He was not old Adam's flesh imbued with God's life. He was the second Man, the Man from Heaven, the God-man, Head of a new species of Men, a new creation of God in the earth, each member of which is a SON OR DAUGHTER OF THE MOST HIGH! The life is in the blood. As the value of this life, so the value of the blood. In Christ there was the life of God; infinite as God is the worth and the power of that blood! In Christ there was the life of man in its perfection; in His humility, and obedience to the Father, and self-sacrifice, that which made Him unspeakably well-pleasing to the Father. The blood of Jesus, God and man, poured out in death, that was a perfect fulfillment of God's will, and a perfect victory over sin and self, effected an everlasting atonement for sin, and put it forever out of the way, destroying both sin and death and him that had the power of it. Therefore it was, that in the blood of the everlasting covenant Jesus was raised from the dead: that in the power of that blood He entered the highest heaven; and THAT PRECIOUS BLOOD IS NOW AND FOREVER AVAILABLE TO US WITH ALL ITS INCORRUPTIBLE POWER. His blood is His divine spirit of life which has come into us — Christ in us, our hope of glory.

Beloved sons and daughters of God! The blood of Jesus! The blood of the Lamb! Oh, think what it means! God gave it for your redemption from Adam's race and your transformation into the image of God. God accepted it when the firstborn of the new creation entered heaven and presented it on your behalf. God points you to it and asks you to believe in its omnipotent energy, in its everlasting sufficiency. Ah, this heavenly Man was injected into a whole world full of men descended from the earth- man to impart something we had lacked from the day Adam was driven from Eden's portals. That something was LIFE, LIVING BLOOD, for He said He came to give life to the world. He could impart a life to the world that would change it completely.

When Adam transgressed, the life of God, which had been breathed into His nostrils, departed from him and all that was left was a residue, that mortal something which flowed as blood in the veins of his body. This blood

contains nothing of the life of God and in its composition and nature is similar to the blood of the animal kingdom, for when the glorious power of divine life departed from Adam, he entered into the kingdom of death. Adam was made a living soul. From the Greek the statement reads, "The first man Adam was made a zoe psuche (living soul)." ZOE is the word which throughout the whole of the New Testament is used of the life of God, divine life, eternal life. PSUCHE, on the other hand, is used of the natural life of animals and men. This life, ZOE, is the life Jesus promised to give to man when He said, "I give unto them eternal life (zoe), and they shall never perish," and this, beloved, is the LIFE THAT DEPARTED FROM ADAM when he transgressed, leaving him ashamed, fearful and dead. The life is in the blood, but our blood, being devoid of eternal life (zoe), is in reality dead blood capable of sustaining only physical, animal life (psuche), and that only poorly until man returns to the dust from whence he came. It is not without significance that, when the bodies of men are embalmed, the first act is to remove the corruptible blood that the dead body may be better preserved. To redeem this dead sinner, life must be again imparted. The only remedy for death is LIFE. This life is in the blood, and so blood must be furnished which is sinless and incorruptible. Now none of Adam's race could do this, for "in Adam all die." There was only one, yes, ONLY ONE, who could furnish that blood — the virgin-born Son of God, the Man from heaven, with a human body, but sinless supernatural blood, inseminated by the Holy Ghost.

Jesus came to bring life to the world. Here is where His blood differed from the ordinary blood or life of men. His blood was precious in that it was able to do something for all mankind which mankind's own blood or life could not do. The natural blood or life of mankind was only for a few years at most, but the blood of the Christ was the LIFE OF THE AGES. So there must somehow be a discontinuance of the blood of a few years that the blood or the LIFE OF THE AGES might be injected into mankind.

"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (**Heb. 10:4**). It was impossible for the blood of Old Testament sacrifices to take away sin because that blood was dead blood. There was no power of life in it. Nevertheless, because of the faith of the worshippers in that BETTER BLOOD which was to come, those animal sacrifices were accepted by God for the time then present or for the time being, and by this faith the worshippers were sanctified, and being thus accepted by God they patiently awaited the day when the BETTER BLOOD OF THE LAMB OF GOD, in which was eternal life, would not only remove their sin, but erase the sentence of death, quickening them in spirit and transfusing their beings with the incorruptible blood of the Man from heaven. We say, and rightly so, for the scripture says, that Christ died for us. There is marvelous significance in those words, however, for when He died He GAVE HIS LIFE TO US. The precious blood that drained from His body on the cross is now manifest as THE SPIRIT, the LIGHT OF LIFE. That eternal life, which two thousand years ago was confined to the blood of His body, now, being loosed by death, is SHED ABROAD to become available as life eternal to all who believe. By the shedding of His blood life was given. By the receiving of His life DEATH IS CANCELED. In the light of life darkness and death flee away. Hallelujah for the blood!

THE CLEANSING OF THE BLOOD

In the service of God as ordained by the hand of Moses for Israel, there were two ceremonies to be observed by God's people in preparation for approach unto Him. There were the SACRIFICES and the CLEANSINGS. Both were to be observed but in different manners. Both were to typify the redemption by which the Lord Jesus Christ would restore men to right relationship with God. As a rule it is only the sacrifices which are regarded as typical of redemption through Christ. The writer of the book of Hebrews, however, points out that the DIVERS WASHINGS as well as the SACRIFICES were figures "for the time then present" of the "good things to come" through the High Priestly ministry of Jesus Christ and through His blood. We are told in **I Jn. 1:7** that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." This word "cleanseth" does not refer to the forgiveness received when we first trust in Christ; but to the effect of God's grace IN God's children who WALK IN THE LIGHT. The word is: "If we walk in the light as He is in the light...the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, CLEANSETH US from all sin." That this cleansing refers to something more than pardon appears from what follows in verse nine: "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to CLEANSE us from all unrighteousness."

There are two kinds of functions of the blood of the Lamb. One is to take away or kill, and the other is to add or supply. On the one hand it takes away the negative elements we should not have in us, and on the other hand

it adds in the positive elements we should have in us. What is taken away is the element of Adam in us, and what is added is the element of Christ — the new creation life. What is taken away is old. What is added is new. What is taken away is earthly and carnal, and what is added is heavenly and spiritual. What is taken away is dead, and what is added is living. When the blood of the Lamb works within us, it has these two kinds of functions manifest within us: one is to progressively take away all of our old creation man, and the other is to continually add all of God's new creation man. In this way HIS LIFE within us gradually increases from glory to glory.

It is like the blood in our physical body, which contains two kinds of elements: the white corpuscles and the red corpuscles. White corpuscles have one function, to kill germs that invade the body; the red corpuscles also have one function, to supply nourishment to the whole body. When the blood circulates and flows within us, the white corpuscles kill and clean up the germs which have invaded our body, while the red blood corpuscles supply every part of our body with needed nourishment. Likewise, when the blood of the Lamb works within us, or when the life of God in the Lamb works mightily within us, the two elements, life and death, contained in the life of God have the function of killing and supplying within us — that is, killing the spiritual germs of the carnal mind and the fleshly nature, and supplying us with spiritual nourishment, which consists of the life and nature and power of God Himself.

Concerning the cleansing power of the blood of the Lamb, no greater statement of truth was ever made than that given by the beloved John on the rocky steeps of Patmos: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1:5). Some modern translations substitute the word "freed" for "washed", but a look at the Greek word shows that they are in error. The word is LOUO meaning "to BATHE THE WHOLE PERSON in the same way clothes are laundered in water." But praise be to God! this is not an outward washing but an INWARD CLEANSING. One aspect of the power of the blood of Jesus lies in its marvelous ability to ABSORB all that is in the blood or the life of the Adamic man. The apostle Peter by inspiration penned these words of deep and wonderful truth: "Who His own self BARE OUR SINS in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should LIVE UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS" (1 Pet. 2:24). This one who hung upon the cross possessed a life or a blood that would course its way through the veins of our inner nature and remove all our sins, infirmities and death. It is very wonderful and thrilling to many Christians to stand up and testify that they have been washed in the blood of Jesus. But if you would ask them to explain how they were washed in the blood, about the only answer many could give is that it was by faith. The Christian who has testified concerning being washed in the blood of Jesus has been unable to tell how because he has not understood the significance of one word that he was using. That word is WASHED. We have somehow in the past unconsciously given to that word "washed", as used in connection with the blood of Jesus, some special meaning. It must be that we have not been able to associate such a common and lowly procedure as washing clothes with the work done by the blood of the Lamb. And that is just where we have missed the whole point!

I would point you to this simple and self-evident fact: WHAT IS TO BE WASHED IS DIRTY. That is the reason for its being washed. It is filthy and contaminated and it needs to be washed. And the result of the washing is that the article becomes clean! Ah - what a good feeling it is after a day of sweaty, dirty work, to come home, take a refreshing bath, and get into some clean clothing. The dirt and grime and filth of the work has been washed away and we feel like a new person. All the members of Adam's race need washing! Not physically, but mentally, emotionally and spiritually. The mind, the heart and the nature of mankind are as full of the filth of the flesh as it is possible to be. The life of the blood is as full of filth and corruption as is the man, so it can do nothing to cleanse. Man's nature is literally saturated with sin, evil, fear, pride, self-righteousness, hatred, bigotry, weakness, anger, lust, sickness, sorrow, limitation and death. We know what it means to wash our clothes in water, how they are plunged into it and saturated with it, for several minutes agitated and moved about in it until the dirt is softened and loosened, it is then removed from the garment and SUSPENDED IN THE WATER and carried away. The water has TAKEN UNTO ITSELF all the defilement that was in the clothing. After some rinsings the clothes are taken out of the washer, sparkling clean, and with none of the filth that was in them in the beginning. How beautiful they look! How fresh they smell! Such is the process used today by millions in the washing of clothing. Yet this has not generally been associated with the wonderful washing process that mankind goes through in the blood of the Lamb.

Where does this washing take place, and what is it that is washed? It is the heart. It is in the deep, hidden, inner life of man that this effect of the blood, the life, the spirit of Christ is experienced. Sin has penetrated into

the heart, and the whole nature has become saturated with it. The blood too must PENETRATE THE NATURE; as deeply as the power of sin has gone, so deeply must the inner nature be cleansed by the blood. This is wrought by the daily experiencing of HIS LIFE in the nitty-gritty of everyday experience. This is not some mushy, sentimental, religious experience at the altar of some church, but the APPROPRIATING OF HIS LIFE in the crucible of each problem, trial, temptation, weakness, testing, and difficulty we encounter, until self and sin are completely dealt with, washed away, and the mind and will of Christ reign supreme in our lives. Clothes are agitated when they are being washed; in the old days and still in many areas of the world they are beaten with rocks to loosen the dirt. Ah, we hope to kneel on a thick carpet before a plush altar and experience the wonderful cleansing of the blood of the Lamb, but it can never be so, my friend. It is in the midst of all the agitation of the pressures of life, in the turbulence of crisis, trouble, pain and despair that we encounter HIS LIFE WITHIN as the answer, and submitting, receive a mighty and eternal cleansing. Where sin ruled, His life must rule. Where self reigned, His precious mind must reign. Where the flesh manifests its lively activities, there the spirit of the Lamb must conquer, bringing righteousness, peace and joy. It is in the minds and hearts of men that the cleansing of the blood must take place. Out of the heart "are the issues of life" — just in proportion as the heart is cleansed, so the entire life is cleansed, the whole man outwardly and inwardly is TRANSFORMED by the power of the blood!

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

There is a wonderful statement in the Song of Solomon wherein the Shulamite maiden, beautiful type of God's elect, says, "My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand" (S. of S. 5:10). This was in answer to a question put forth by the "daughters of Jerusalem." The daughters of Jerusalem represent those who are truly people of God, saved by grace but who never grow up to maturity, they fail to go on to perfection, and do not press into the depths of Jesus Christ. These are the children of God, not the sons of God. They are not quickened to enter into intimacy of fellowship and vital union with HIM — thus are no part of that blessed company standing on Mount Zion who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." These daughters of Jerusalem ask the Shulamite, "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?" (S. of S. 5:9).

The scene is set in the Shulamite's search for her Beloved. As she pursues her Beloved the flame of her love burns brighter; faster and faster she hastens through the streets of the city to find Him, all the while He appears more wonderful to her soul. In her marvelous description of her Beloved, she mentions, first of all, the combined, though contrasted colors of "white and red." To a superficial reader, this might signify only health and beauty. Let us bear in mind that the daughters of Jerusalem did not ask for a description of her Beloved. They inquired in what He differed from, or was more than another beloved. You see, the daughters of Jerusalem always have lovers other than Christ — lovers of earthly things, jobs, homes, cars, hobbies, lovers of men, personalities, preachers, someone whom they can follow and commit the care of their souls to; lovers of religiosity, denominations, movements, church systems, multiplied religious works, rituals, ceremonies, programs, sacraments, etc. — all of which supplant a living relationship with Christ alone. The Shulamite needs and desires nothing but HIM, while the daughters of Jerusalem find many other things just as important in their lives as Him. So they asked concerning the distinguishing features that belong to Him alone, what it is that the Shulamite sees in HIM that causes her to forsake all else and all others for the knowing and possessing of HIM. From the question asked and the motive in asking it, we see at once that "white and ruddy" do not have the significance of "health" when used by the Shulamite to describe her Beloved.

These two colors make her Beloved different from, and more than every other beloved. They, above all, make the Christ of God different from, and more than all others. They, more than all else, make Him the only fruitful Tree in all the forest of the sons of men. These two colors distinguish Him and mark Him out before all eyes; and because of which, every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. She knew, as some even who profess to be sons of God do not know, that all religions are not "a way" into union with God! The meaning of the word "white" is dazzling, bright, illuminated by the sun, sunny. Dazzling white, as the brightest sunlight. The meaning of the word "ruddy" is red, to show blood, to dye or make red. The one name above all other names, by which the Christ of God is known, is "the Lamb." This is the name by which He is known as the sacrifice of God. John the Baptist calls Him "the Lamb of God, which

takeh away the sin of the world." It is the pure, spotless Lamb of God to which the sacrifices of the Israelite worship pointed, and whom they foreshadowed.

The characteristics of the meaning of "white," namely, "dazzling, illuminated, and shining as the sun," were literally manifested in the transfiguration of Christ on the Mount. We are told in **Mat. 17:2** that "He was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as the light." In the ninth chapter of Mark, we are told that "His garments became glistening," which, in the Greek, means: "To lighten forth, flash forth like lightening." Within that form that was marred more than the sons of men, dwelt glory ineffable. As He prayed upon the Mount of Transfiguration, He opened a little way the robe of humanity with which He had covered Himself when He came down to earth, and His majesty and glory burst forth! None can overlook the precious significance here, when the scripture is compared with the clause that we are now considering in the Song of Solomon. The Shulamite declares that her Beloved is "white", or that He is dazzling, white as the light, shining as though illuminated by a might sun.

Ah — was this not a "breaking forth" of the glory of the incorruptible blood of God flowing through the veins of His perfect humanity? With this wonderful thought in our minds let us with humble reverence consider the words of the apostle John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In Him was LIFE; and the LIFE was the LIGHT OF MEN" (**Jn. 1:1,4**). Notice the words: IN HIM WAS L-I-F-E. Now: THE LIFE IS I-N T-H-E B-L-O-O-D. Finally: THE LIFE WAS THE L-I-G-H-T OF MEN. In these statements we discover three synonyms: life, light, and blood. In an article that has come across my desk are found these words of truth: "You have heard of the light of a candle. You have heard of the light of the stars. You have heard of the light of the moon. You have heard of the light of the sun. But this is the light of life. When men speak of the light of the sun, we understand. When they speak of the light of the moon, we understand. May we not now understand the truth of Christ's words: the light of life? I doubt not that my next sentence will be a disturbing jolt to the understanding of many, but the truth as I see it is simply this: Life and light and blood are one and the same thing, manifest on three levels just as vapor and water and ice are one and the same thing on different levels. I am well aware that what I am saying is entirely new and may come as a shock to many who read... a proper understanding of it will assist us to grasp the greatness of that prominent Bible theme, the precious blood of Christ. Not only will we better grasp its meaning, but we will know why that precious blood of Christ is THE LIFE OF THE WORLD. I see no way that we can avoid the conclusion that His LIFE is in fact RESURRECTION itself. It redeems from sin, because sin found man in life and brought him to death, but the blood of Christ, which is eternal life, finding man in death, brought life, and that is what redemption is."

The glory of the transfiguration was the momentary unveiling of the glorious heavenly light of Christ's blood-life. It was in truth the manifestation of the light of life promised by our Lord Jesus in **Jn. 8:12**: "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the LIGHT OF LIFE." It shone from His face. It glistened from His garments. It surrounded Him like a halo. It radiated from Him like the rays of the sun. His eyes were like lamps of fire — the light that swallows up all darkness and death of the carnal realm. There in the Mount of Transfiguration His disciples beheld Him in the glory of the light of life of His incorruptible blood. This was resurrection life, kingdom life, heavenly life, incorruptible life. And, my beloved, this beautiful picture tells us what OUR INCORRUPTIBLE BODIES WILL BE, the glistening light of life that Christ Himself actually is. What a powerful metamorphosis when this light of life has matured and bursts forth from within all the sons of God, vanquishing all that pertains to this mortal realm. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body, the inspired apostle tells us. Those who imagine that the incorruptible body will be a body that sleeps, drives a car, goes to work at a factory or office, and eats hamburgers have never seen by the spirit the glory of the resurrection. When Jesus burst out of the tomb in resurrection He came forth in the full brilliance of this divine light of life. In this glory Paul saw Him in his Damascus vision, a light brighter than the noonday sun (Acts 16:13-14), and in this way John beheld Him in the wonder of his Patmos vision (Rev. 1:16). This, my dearly beloved, is the full and glorious and eternal reality of the PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST. it is the blood, yea, the life the saints will possess when the fullness of His resurrection has been experienced in spirit, and in soul, and in body. It is the glory of the manifested sons of God!

OVERCOMING BY THE BLOOD

If your desire is to truly be an overcomer in all things, a part of the firstfruits of God's redemption in this important hour, a most wonderful key is found in I Jn. 1:7. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST GOD'S SON CLEANSETH US FROM A-L-L S-I-N." There is a way for the Lord's people to be freed from ALL SIN! "If we walk in the light." How? "AS HE IS in the light." Do not forget for one moment, dear ones that the life is the light and the blood is the life. To walk in the light as He is in the light means to walk in the LIFE as HE is in the LIFE. There is a great principle here!

Paul says in **Rom. 8:1-2**, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." What makes me free from the law (power) of sin and death? Why, the LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE makes me free! Do we not understand that life swallows up death and light dispels darkness? His precious life — blood (spirit) flowing through our lives accomplishes this. But haven't we always had it turned around in our thinking? How many of us have been struggling to "die" so we can live! How often have we told ourselves, "If I can get rid of my old man, if I can conquer this habit, overcome this temper, this unruly tongue, this lust, this nature, this...this...this...then I will have the life of Christ manifested in me!" We have tried to get rid of sin so we could have righteousness. We have made valiant efforts at conquering the death in us so we would have life. We have worked at eradicating the darkness from our lives so we could walk in the light. Dearly beloved friends, we have had the cart before the horse! It is like saying, "I will stand here in this dark room and rebuke the darkness, and when all the darkness has been chased away I shall have light." The simple fact is you can rebuke the darkness until men carry your dead body out to the mortuary, but THE DARKNESS WILL NEVER LEAVE UNTIL YOU TURN ON THE LIGHT. There is no vacuum that can suck up darkness, no chemical that disintegrates it, no force that can move it. The problem is not to get rid of the darkness, but to produce the light!

The LAW OF LIGHT is that it always dispels darkness. It never fails! So if you have been trying to get rid of the darkness of the carnal mind and the fleshly nature in you, by rebuking it, resisting it, struggling with it, fighting it, ignoring it, praying to be delivered from it, having hands laid on you for it — FORGET IT! These are one and all efforts at self-reformation. None of those methods has one iota of power to remove the darkness from a life. Only LIGHT is able to remove darkness! Brother, sister, TURN ON THE LIGHT in your life, expose yourself to the mighty presence of the Holy Spirit in your life, open yourself to the creative power of His Word within, thrust yourself into the living stream of His precious blood, and the LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF HIS LIFE working powerfully within will begin to make you free from the law of sin and death. You can't take death out of a corpse to make it live, but put life in it and it will live! And there is no way that you can remove the law of sin and death from heart and nature, but you take the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ into you and I tell you the truth — the death will be swallowed up!

I have had the experience of becoming so involved with the pressures of everyday living until the vital presence of God was crowded out of my life. When we spend all our time working and visiting and fellow shipping in carnal things, reading the newspaper, watching television, tinkering with hobbies, and multiplied other natural activities the Spirit is crowded out of our lives, the flow of His life-blood is hindered. How filled our lives are with EARTHLY THINGS! Constantly going, going, going, and doing, doing, doing. Occasionally we spend a few minutes in prayer, or in the Word, or in blessed fellowship with another saint, or time and effort wasted in some dead meeting, and then wonder why there is no power in our lives and we are not overcomers! There is a LAW OF LIFE that must be at work in us. But you don't really need to be concerned about the law of life, you just need the LIFE! The law will work naturally. When the life is there the law will work. When the law is working the power of darkness and death is annulled, the negative realm is neutralized. Therefore, seek LIFE! If the glorious presence of God, the light of life, can keep me in the spiritual state of overcoming victory for ten minutes...or for two hours...or for three days...then the same substance of HIS LIFE WITHIN can keep me in that condition of victory and transformation for as long as the flow of His life is maintained — this is the absolute unfailing key to overcoming! Death always sets in in any body member where the flow of blood is prevented. People have lost hands and arms and feet and legs when for some reason the blood circulation was cut off. Maintain the flow of the precious blood of Christ and you will have little trouble with the flesh.

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb" (**Rev. 12:11**). All who would be sons of God must overcome the dragon of the carnal mind and the beastly nature of old Adam. It comes not by "pleading the

blood," thinking positive, or confessing the promises. In proportion as we live in close and abiding contact with the blood we shall experience increasingly its powerful, omnipotent effects. He who gives himself up to continual intercourse with THE LAMB, joined in one spirit with Him, will experience through His blood a TRIUMPHANT LIFE beyond his conception. He will see the law of life at work. The old carnality, the old weaknesses, the old desires, the old thoughts, the old emotions, the old frustrations will begin to fade away, diminishing and diminishing in the cleansing of His blood. Ah, precious saint of God, try no longer to "get rid of," or "quit doing," or "kill," or "die," or "change," anything! Only expose your whole being to the light and you will begin to live by the life of God's dear Son.

The blood of the Lamb is described as a "fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness (Zech. 13:1). By the power of the Holy Spirit it streams through the heavenly Temple. I must in faith turn away from all that is seen, to plunge into that spiritual fountain, with the assurance that it will manifest its blessed power in me. WE ARE BEING CHANGED — even as by the Spirit of the Lord." God is seeking the fully developed life of His Son in us in order to manifest HIMSELF through us as the central revelation of Himself to the Whole Creation. God in the Lamb IN YOU is His purpose! So let us with childlike, persevering, expectant faith, open wide our souls to an ever increasing experience of the wonderful power of the blood of the Lamb.

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 36

ARIES-THE LAMB [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART THIRTY-SIX

TWO WOMEN – TWO CITIES
FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW JERUSALEM
CASSIOPEIA — THE ENTHRONED WOMAN
COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN

In this Study we come to the first Decan, or minor constellation, in the house of Aries — CASSIOPEIA — THE ENTHRONED WOMAN. Cassiopeia is the figure of a queenly woman, matchless in beauty, seated in exalted dignity. She is seated on a throne, high and lifted up. With one hand she is arranging her robe; in the other she holds the branch of victory and triumph, at the same time arranging her hair. She seems to be making herself ready for some presentation or great public manifestation. Near her sits King Cepheus on his throne. In Arabic this constellation is called EL SEDU, which means the freed. Albumazer, an ancient authority, says this woman was anciently called the daughter of splendor, hence, the glorified woman. Her common name is CASSIOPEIA, meaning the beautiful, the enthroned. This woman is obviously the Bride of Christ, the Lamb's Wife, the New Jerusalem of whom John the apostle said, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7). This scene is in stark contrast to what is seen in the constellation of Andromeda. In Andromeda the woman is bound, in chains, cast down. For two thousand years the bride of the Lamb has been in bonds and disabilities, in weakness and limitation, despised by the world, chained within the harlot system of religious Babylon, under affliction and attack, and even in danger of being destroyed. But here we see the same woman at last freed, delivered, exalted and enthroned! The whole picture in Cassiopeia is that of deliverance, preparation, and heavenly triumph — the church triumphant, the queen who has made herself ready to reign in splendor with her husband, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

One will never be able to understand the deep mystery of Christ and His bride until first he understands the great mystery of God Himself. I have previously pointed out in this series that man in the beginning was created male and female in the image of God. The moment we understand that male and female IS the image of God, then our hearts will throb with heavenly rapture at the awesome glory, power and exaltation of Christ and His bride. When he that readeth can grasp the wonderful truth that God bears within Himself both the characteristics of male and female, of Father and Mother, then he can better understand the divine word spoken "in the beginning" when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: so...in the image of God created He him; MALE AND FEMALE created He them" (Gen. 1:26-27). Most people speak of God and His Son without even giving thought as to how it is that God has a Son. All nature with unified voice reveals that one male, or two males, or a thousand males, or a billion males can never produce an offspring. The invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead (Rom. 1:20), and creation immutably proclaims the mystery that it takes both a male and a female to produce life. This simple law of life is a divine revelation of the GODHEAD! God is within Himself both a Father and a Mother and it was within this unique reality of His Being that God brought forth His Son and His sons. I would not for one minute nor in any way seek to dishonor or diminish the glory, the honor, or the majesty of our Father — the Lord God Almighty. But He is completely pleased to have me declare to you the reality of Himself which is male and female. Motherhood is a most profound revelation that is rooted in the deepest essence of God Himself.

"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (Gen. 5:1-2). Male and female. Both Adam. Both man. Both in the image of God! God made His image exactly alike, yet opposite. From the very beginning we can journey into the depth of God's Being in the revelation of His image and nature as male and female. Adam is a figure we are pressing through to know

God. With what divine clarity does the inspired apostle teach us that Adam himself was but a type of the Christ. "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come" (Rom. 5:14). This presence on the earth of man — male and female — is the glory of God emanating out of the sphere of His invisible substance and the figure, the symbol, the picture, the prophecy of the last Adam and His wife — Christ and His bride! It is not important how man was created, nor even when he was created — but to see the mind of God radiate and descend and express itself into human form, He made His invisible nature of male and female into a model creation could see and comprehend, though the female at creation was still hidden within the man, just as the female nature of God was hidden within Himself from eternity. As God separated Eve from Adam, giving her form and raising her up into an identity, and exalting her and setting her together with Adam over all the works of His hands, so God is separating out of Himself through Christ the wife He has in His own side, giving her form and raising her up into an identity, and setting her with Christ on the universal throne of authority, glory and dominion over all things in all realms. This glorious God-Woman is Cassiopeia — The Enthroned Woman — the Lamb's Wife, the Bride of Jesus Christ! God's agenda is to get this woman into her own identity, to give her form and substance, to raise up the consciousness of this woman, that she may find herself and fulfill herself in God's great Kingdom.

TWO WOMEN — TWO CITIES

Why does God want to bring forth in the earth a spiritual woman — the bride of Christ? The answer is found in the typology of the first woman, Eve. "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20). The mother of all living! The mother of all living is the image of God — the mother of all mankind in the image of God is the revelation of the feminine reality in God. Let us find this woman, this mother of all living in the revelation of God. "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond maid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. Far this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise" (Gal. 4:22-28). Here Paul is telling us about two distinct and different women, two distinct and different Jerusalems, which are two different and distinct covenants. Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, Isaac and Ishmael are used as illustrations. In the allegory, Abraham represents God, the Father. Sarah, as his wife, represents the original promise and covenant God made with Abraham to bring forth in the earth a people, a race, a nation. This promise and covenant preceded the giving of the Law and the raising up of Israel as a nation under the Law.

Just as Sarah was old and barren and had no son, so there were no children by this covenant, there was no nation birthed out of the first, the Abrahamic Covenant. When the Egyptian bondservant, Hagar, was given to Abraham as a wife, she pictured the second covenant — the covenant of the Law given by Moses. Thus, Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman, typified the natural Israel, the nation of people developed under the Law Covenant after the time of Moses. Finally, Isaac, the seed of promise was born, picturing a spiritual people developed out of the spiritual promise and covenant — without Law, thus the covenant of Grace. Then Paul made a comparison of Hagar to mount Sinai (the Law) and the capital city of Jerusalem in the land of Israel, declaring, "For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." Sarah, on the other hand, typifies the freewoman, the spiritual covenant which brings forth the promised seed — Christ. And this Sarah is also Jerusalem — not the earthly Jerusalem, for that is Hagar — for the apostle explains, "But Jerusalem WHICH IS ABOVE is the mother of us all." "Jerusalem which is above" pertains to the heavenly promise and the spiritual seed — the enChristed. Ah — the Jerusalem "which now is" is the one with which the saints in Galatia were well acquainted in that day, the natural city there in Palestine built on seven mountains and surrounded by a great wall, and containing a magnificent temple that was first built by Solomon and later rebuilt by Zerubbabel. It was the center of Jewish worship, as well as their governmental capital city. It was the central place where the Law given to Moses on mount Sinai was administered to the people. In other words, it represented the "law" system which is in "bondage" and all the natural seed which serves God "under law." But he contrasts that Jerusalem which

represents the natural seed and the law system that regulates the flesh of the outer man, with another Jerusalem, "Jerusalem which is above." This second Jerusalem is a free system, not a bondage, and she represents a spiritual seed and she is our spiritual mother! The prophet said she would dangle her babes (converts) on her knees and let them nurse at the breasts of her consolation — mother care.

Two women. Two cities. Two covenants. Two seeds. The covenant of Hagar, the natural Jerusalem, is the Law of Mount Sinai with its darkness, tempest, and lightnings. It makes people servants, fearing the wrath of God. How sad that the churches today still major in that covenant! Nevertheless, what saith the scripture? "Cast out the bondwoman" and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." The bondwoman is Jerusalem the natural, the law, bondage, ritualistic religion, the flesh, sin and death system. But the Jerusalem which is above is also a covenant — the New Covenant. It is free and is our mother. She gives birth to our being, our sense of reality, bringing us out of the natural sense and into the spiritual, out of the earthly consciousness and into the heavenly. This woman is a covenant and a people birthed of that covenant, and to her covenant she contains a promise in her womb, in which the seed has come to bear again the Christ, for the Christ is birthed in us; that is the way He comes to us. We are the children of the freewoman, and her consciousness is being raised up in us — the feminine side of God. This is the realm of freedom in Christ into which we have been birthed. Thank God, we do not dwell in a place of law, nor of commandments and outward ordinances anymore! We are children of the heavenly Jerusalem. We are not waiting to enter through the pearly gates in the sweet bye and bye on some distant shore, for "We ARE COME unto Mount Zion, and unto the CITY OF THE LIVING GOD, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM...to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven...and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:22-23). Yes, beloved, we are come. This entrance into the realm of the heavenly city is not future, not off in space: this is where we NOW have come. We are now seated in the heavenly places, we have now entered in through the gates of the city, we are now walking the streets of gold — walking out the divine nature of God. We have a right to the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. While multitudes look for a literal city from outer-space, we are come to the New Covenant City of inner-space, where Christ in us is our hope of glory! How few realize this precious truth! And this city to which we are come, this heavenly Jerusalem, IS THE M-O-T-H-E-R OF US ALL!

Let us UNDERSTAND! The reason there is this mysterious attraction between the masculine and the feminine is because the feminine was taken out of the masculine. The woman was taken right out of the man, and something you (women) are is uniquely what we (men) are, and therein lies the phenomenon of why male and female seek union. Jerusalem above is the mother of us all. What does that mean? There is a divine quality of God that is feminine that has birthed ALL SPIRITUAL LIFE and it is the same divine quality of God that is birthing us in this realm of sonship to God. All Jerusalem's children are born of the spirit, and led by the spirit of God. And now in this heavenly light, power and spirit, they come to be heavenly Jerusalem's children that is from above. So they are heavenly Jerusalem's children, born from above, of the spirit and the light.

This heavenly Jerusalem is the mother of all them that are born of the spirit and walk in the spirit, who gives them power to become the sons of God, and they that believe in the light that the spirit brings are the children of the light, and walk in the light of their mother, New Jerusalem. And you may read how this New Jerusalem is garnished with pearls, symbolically, and there is written on the gates the names of the twelve tribes, and on the foundations the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there. So here you may see that there is no night here, but always day, in the holy city, new and heavenly Jerusalem that is from above, that is from the higher realm of the spirit. All the children of the light, of spiritual understanding, that are born of the spirit from above, see it as their mother; and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of this city, New Jerusalem, that is from above. And all Jerusalem's children, that have overcome, have right to the tree of life, and drink of the water of life, which flows out from Christ and out of our innermost being in this new and heavenly Jerusalem. And in this heavenly Jerusalem there shall be no more curse and no more death; all who wait for another city shall die and not live, but all who dwell in this city may eat of the tree and drink of its quickening water. And he that overcomes, saith Christ, "I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name" (Rev. 3:12). We understand by now, do we not, that the Jerusalem which is above and is free and is the mother of us all is God's high realm of the spirit,

wherein we may walk in perfection, intimacy of fellowship, and vital union with God. The New Jerusalem is the Kingdom of God, which is another way of saying the rule of God within us, by which Jesus Christ has become sovereign King of both our thought-life and our actions. The New Jerusalem is that condition described by Paul when he spoke of "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5). She is a city that is not located away out there somewhere in the blue, but in the heavens or exalted places of the human spirit. To walk in her light is to walk in the state or kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The church has been called the mother. Why? Because the church is the dispenser of the life-giving seed of the Spirit and the Word, and the church is the formation of God's divine nature within a people on the earth. The first concept that calls us out of the world unto Himself is a woman. Long millenniums ago the mighty Moses brought this word to the Lord's people: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Ex. 20:12). What blessings accrue to those who honor their father and their mother! Again and again we are told to honor our father and our mother, and this is the first commandment with the promise of life. We have this as a natural law — and I am not seeking to diminish that natural law — for verily I say to you that he who truly values the heavenly Father and the heavenly Mother will ultimately value his earthly father and his earthly mother as well. We have learned to honor God the Father, but it should be obvious to all who read these lines that few have learned to honor God the Mother — that unique aspect of His own Being that births all spiritual life and reality.

FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW JERUSALEM

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:8-16). The scriptural, spiritual, heavenly symbolism of truth is illustrated in simple terms for our understanding. In this magnificent passage we are told that Abraham looked for a city. He did not want Babel, for he departed from the land of Babel. He wanted a city that has eternal foundations. He did not want a man-built city; he looked for one whose builder and maker is God. When he looked for it he left kindred and country, and wandered about homeless in the very land which he was to inherit. Did he ever find it? No. But by faith he saw it afar off, and he will find it, he will see it really.

All who follow in the steps of faithful Abraham are strangers and pilgrims on this earth — in this present world-system. This outer fleshly realm is not their home, their realm of dwelling, their state of being. They are looking for that city that is being built by God, for they are citizens of the New Jerusalem which is of heavenly, spiritual quality. Those who are looking for a heavenly, spiritual city know full well that they are only strangers and pilgrims in this present carnal, mortal world. They endure their life, living as in a temporary state. They have no desire for the things of this realm of dust, for they seek a better country than this. No nation, civilization or system built by man can make claims of permanency. Nations we know once existed, not a cobblestone of their existence can be found. World empires, during my brief time on this planet, have folded up their tents, pulled down their banners, and they are lost. Men whom we thought could never leave us died, and we wept when they did. Others whose names we feared and who held life and death in their hands for millions, like the withered grass are but dirt, a haunting memory in the minds of their victims. The plastic film replays their pomp and threats with the cavalcade of military might, which is but a story, like Grimms' fairy tales. Nothing permanent, nothing lasting exists in this material realm. Egypt with her mammoth stone structures of a glory long lost, testifies to the centuries that man can make nothing permanent. I have watched men build large churches and mighty religious organizations expecting them to be permanent, now they can't be found. Their death was the end of the large following and the movement disintegrated.

Abraham leaked for this permanent order. I look for this permanent order. This was the city of God that the man of faith looked for, not a vast earthly empire. All sons of God look in the same direction. "Those who are

born of the spirit," Jesus said, "SEE the kingdom." Not of this world, but something far in excess, the real of the real, the permanent of the permanent, the eternal abiding place, the city of refuge, the Holy of holies, the promise of all promises, from corruption into incorruption, from mortality to immortality, from death unto life uncreated, from time into eternity where measurement has totally lost all its sense. As God's elect walk with the Lord in this strange land, God is preparing for them a city, a sphere of dwelling, a state of being of eternal substance, raised up within by the glorious mind of Christ. do not mean by this that the city of God is located in some far-off heaven somewhere. It cannot be too strongly emphasized here that the New Jerusalem is not heaven (as that term is commonly understood) in any sense of the word, nor is it a literal city made with brick, mortar, stone, wood, or gold someplace out in the vastnesses of infinity. This glorious city of God is a spiritual city made up of living stones forming a spiritual house, a heavenly people, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh — the bride of Christ. It is heavenly in character, but is found here in the world, though not of the world.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3). Jerusalem, Jerusalem! There is probably more confused and erroneous teaching on Jerusalem than on any other name in scripture. One of the major sources of confusion in the preaching in the popular churches comes from preachers and teachers who are unable to separate the natural from the spiritual. Because the old city still exists and still carries its ancient name, they assume prophetic Jerusalem must have something to do with the old city of Jerusalem. Perhaps you are acquainted with the history of the ancient city of Jerusalem. It had its origin many centuries, yea, millenniums ago. Rich in history, drenched in tradition, sanctified by religion, and stained with blood, Jerusalem remains forever young, forever old. Here David and Solomon reigned gloriously, Jesus of Nazareth walked, the apostles preached; here Muhammad is believed by the Moslems to have ascended to heaven; here the Saracens, Turks, and Crusaders fought; here the Israelis have exuberantly returned. In ancient times Jerusalem came not only to be the capital of the kingdom of Judah, but also came to be almost universally looked upon as the symbol of Divine Kingship. As a real city of marble and stone, it became already in antiquity one of the major world centers. In Second Temple times, Jerusalem's fame spread westwards through Europe and reached as far as Indochina in the east. Its population then is estimated at 300,000 - 400,000, a very large city in those days. Jerusalem has endured throughout history, surviving wars, the deaths of empires and countless attempts to destroy it. Even its appearance speaks of its age and timelessness. Throughout the centuries, stonemasons have worked the quarries of the Judean hills for the distinctive rose-colored stone with which the city is built. Even in this modern generation, by law every building in Jerusalem must be built of this same "Jerusalem stone." How beautiful it is! Yet, in spite of its enduring and romantic quality, far too many people place too much stress, where prophetic events are concerned, with the physical city of Jerusalem. The church world has somehow missed the fateful edict of Jesus Christ against that historic city. The Lord Jesus saw and predicted His rejection by the Jews and the long night of wandering in unbelief that would follow. In **Mat. 23:37-38** we have depicted the Lord Jesus Christ standing on the Mount of Olives. He was weeping over the great city of Jerusalem that lay just below Him, and the great love of His heart for the Jews was poured out in most tender and sympathetic words. He exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

What a beautiful figure Christ is using here to express His tender love for His own people according to the flesh! "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah" (Heb. 7:14). When the mother hen sees a storm brewing, immediately her first concern is for the fluffy little chicks that compose her brood. She gathers them under her wings, and protects them from the storm or from the hawk that may be flying overhead. Close to her breast they are sheltered and can feel the very heartbeat of the mother bird's love for them. This is the picture of the MOTHERHOOD OF GOD revealed in Jesus Christ. So He expressed Himself concerning the Jews. He would have gathered them to His bosom, and they would have felt His heartbeat of love for them, if they had only given Him a chance to do so; but they had rejected Him and were just getting ready to cry, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" He knew all about it. Jesus could foresee the whole scene of trial and crucifixion, and as He stood there upon the mountaintop weeping over them He was forced to exclaim, "Your house is left unto you desolate." The great and beautiful temple would soon be a desolation and a mass of debris. The service that had been the center of the worship of Yahveh for centuries was about to come to a close. Great Zion, the glory of the whole earth, would soon be a heap of ruins, lying in the dust.

They have been rejected and despised as they have gone from nation to nation, until the Jewish name became a byword in almost the entire world. Just a few Jews continued to dwell in the city of Jerusalem during the centuries, and from week to week they came and continue to come out to a spot called the "Wailing Wall," and there they have wept, longing for the return of those wonderful days of the long ago when Judah and Jerusalem were basking in the sunlight of the favor of God and they were considered the joy of the whole earth. But although twenty centuries have passed by, their tears and prayers have been of no avail, for their house is still left unto them desolate. The city, in spite of its dazzling beauty, and in spite of its sentimental memory; the land, in spite of its lush natural productiveness; the religion, in spite of its outward ceremony and pageantry; all is completely empty and void of spiritual life, there is no living reality, no quickening spirit, no righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and no way for them to pass over again to the old days of glory. The halo of glory has faded off those ancient stones, and has passed to rest on the true city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, which rises beyond the mists and clouds of time, in the light that shines not from the sun or moon, but from the face of God. In other words, in this universe there is a holy society of men and women, pure and lovely, the elite of the family of man, gathered in a realm which the hand of man has never touched, and the sin of man has never soiled. Into this holy realm nothing can enter that defiles or works abomination, or deals in lies. The patriarchs caught sight of this city in their pilgrimage, it gleamed before their vision, beckoning them ever forward, and forbidding their return to the country from which they had come out. And the Seer of Patmos beheld it descending from God out of heaven, bathed in the divine glory.

There is a most instructive proclamation in **Rev. 11:19** wherein the beloved John describes a scene in the heavenlies thus: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an Earthquake, and great hail." These words point us to the passing of the old and the inauguration of the new. At the very moment of the doom of old Jerusalem, when city and temple perish together — when all the ceremonial and ritual of the earthly and transitory are swept away, the temple of God in heaven is opened, and the ark of His covenant is seen in the temple. That is as much as to say, the local and temporary passes, but is succeeded by the heavenly and eternal; the earthly and symbolical is superseded by the spiritual and the true. We have in this representation a fine comment on the words of the epistle to the Hebrews, "The way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing. But no sooner is the "first tabernacle" swept away than the temple in heaven is opened, and even the sacred ark of the covenant, the shrine of the divine Presence and Glory, is revealed to the wondering eyes of men through the new and spiritual and heavenly temple of living stones. Access into the Holiest of all is no longer forbidden, and "we have boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus."

In the book of Revelation John is carried away to an exceeding high mountain and there he is shown that which is called both a bride and a city. From the top of that high mountain John looks out and sees a most wonderful city, coming down out of heaven from God, filled and flooded with the glory of God. The description that follows sets forth to the uttermost bounds of human understanding the grandeur and beauty of the glorified bride, represented by this great city. Its dimensions are perfect in proportion and in their outer relations. Its foundations are adorned with the costliest, most precious stones, the walls are built of jasper, and each gate is one immense pearl; but the city itself is builded of a gold as transparent as pure glass. The name of the city is New Jerusalem. Now why is this city called New Jerusalem, instead of New York, New Providence, New Brunswick, or some other name? Well, Jerusalem of old was known as "the city of the Great King." The expression "new" stands for another order, a new dispensation and economy in which only the transformed body of Christ takes part. The glowing description of this city indicates the excellency and perfection of the new heavens and the new earth ruled by the new capital city. Its lofty gates of pearl upon which are emblazoned the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, its twelve foundations of precious stones, upon which are inscribed the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and its jasper walls and golden streets are merely representations faintly shadowing the transcendent majesty of that new and perfect government. In the midst of the city is a river of water of life clear as sparkling crystal, signifying every life-giving blessings and benefits of the Kingdom of God flowing out to mankind from this grand city.

That city for which Abraham looked is a city formed of Christ people which has no need of the sun, or of the moon, nor the light of any candle, for the Lord God is the light thereof. These Christ people have no need for the outward light of creeds, doctrines, laws, ceremonies, rituals, ordinances, baptisms, organizations,

programs, etc., for the very presence and life of God Himself within is their illumination. The nations walk in the wondrous light of this city's reality, and the kings of the earth bring glad tribute of their glory into it. Through the open gates no evil thing will ever enter. Within its precincts stands no temple made with hands, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of it, those who abide in Him are its priests and its sacrifices are those spiritual sacrifices offered up from within by Christ Jesus. On each side of the river is the tree of life yielding continual fruitage. And the leaves of the tree are the word which brings healing to the nations. The heart never fails to respond with a quickened beat to the lines: "His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads" — that is, His nature and character shall radiate out of their lives. Description is far beyond the utterance of my poor tongue! Its majesty and fame and power and blessing escape me! Methinks that we can but tarnish its exalted glory by our frail attempt to describe it. It will abide forever and through those wide gates that never close will flow forth to all nations the illumination and quickening and dominion until God has gathered together in one all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth.

Rare indeed is the man or woman in the religious systems of earth who has a true and spiritual understanding of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem Bride of the Lamb, but alas, all view it as some kind of new constellation which will come from the skies into close proximity to earth and be near or upon it. As one has written, "No doubt the sudden coming into sight, from heavenly space, of a glittering object, unknown to astronomers, self-luminous, above the brightness of the sun, steadily approaching, till it enters our atmosphere, and comes in close proximity to, if not in actual contact with this globe, transcends all human experience, and defies all natural phenomena." Men seem intent upon calculating the city in cubic miles as though it were nothing more than a huge metropolis slightly more wonderful than those at present on earth. According to Rev. 21:16-17 the city lies foursquare, 1,500 miles each way with a wall around it that is one hundred and forty four cubits high. That makes the wall 264 feet high. I can just imagine a city 1,500 miles square that lands and covers the earth from the Mississippi river to the Atlantic ocean! It smashes all the farms, villages, cities, people, cattle and industries over 2,250,000 square miles! Now just what might be the population of such a city? If each individual was given one cubic mile of this city, the population of it would be 3,375,000,000 people — more than half the present population of the earth. But again, if each individual were given one cubic acre, the population of the city would be something like this: 51,840,000,000,000! What a city! Another waxed eloquent about the size of the mansion each inhabitant would possess, replete with space for gardens and fountains and other such childish nonsense.

Until our spiritual minds are able to grasp the truth that the body of Christ is the temple of God and that every room and mansion in that temple is a living son of God, a literal habitation for God through the Spirit; and until we understand that the city of God is the bride of Christ, and that the stones of that city are all living stones, as Christ Jesus Himself is a living stone and the only foundation that can be laid, we have understood nothing at all. The book of Revelation shows the development of this Bride-City from glory to glory. Each view is a fresh and further comprehension of the grandeur of the purposes of God for all who are called to the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. The total victory for all the elect is detailed in all its glorious and eternal reality. This is the beauty of the Church Triumphant! This is that glorious church that is without spot or wrinkle. It is so great and mighty! It stands in the age and the ages to come clothed in the awesome majesty of the glory of the Almighty! It is seen in all of its splendor and heavenly beauty. It was birthed into the earth at Pentecost and has been processed and matured during the 2,000 year church age. It comes into its final divine perfection and is viewed in the ultimate eternal triumph and purpose of God. Thus we see that the New Jerusalem, contrary to the driveling childishness that is taught, is not a fanciful monstrosity some fifteen hundred miles high, which will one day come floating or crashing down out of the clouds to settle and rest on the earth like a bump on a little boy's head, throwing it out of balance and off its course. God made this earth complete and as it should be long, long ago. He created it a perfectly functioning reality, and "nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it" (**Eccl. 3:14**). Truly, unspiritual men, who walk after the flesh and its imaginings, can invent many fairy tales. Thus saith the Lord: "And they shall call THEM, the HOLY PEOPLE, the redeemed of the Lord; and THOU shalt be called, Sought Out, a CITY not forsaken" (**Isa. 62:12**). It is evident that a PEOPLE are the CITY. There can be no doubt that the city in Revelation is not a literal city, but rather those who have adorned themselves with the very nature, the very qualities, that their Husband requires. Those qualities are the very characteristics, the very nature of God. "But ye are come unto mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...to the general assembly and church of the firstborn" (**Heb. 12:22-23**). The message

is clear — the bride doesn't live IN the city: the bride IS the city! To that city we have come. It has come down into our hearts; day by day we walk its streets; we live in its light, we breathe its atmosphere, we enjoy its rights.

CASSIOPEIA — THE ENTHRONED WOMAN

Jerusalem of old was the capital city of the national Israel; and as that old order was but a type and shadow of the new (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:16-17), therefore the New Jerusalem must be the capital city, or the ruling element, in Israel today, which is Christ's Kingdom and of which our Lord said, it "is not of this world" (Jn. 18:36). In other words, the New Jerusalem is the ruling class, the kings and priests unto God: those who have attained unto the highest position of honor and might and true greatness in grace. It comprises those who rule with Christ upon His throne. We, therefore, who have been accounted worthy to suffer with Christ (II Tim. 2:12), are the New Jerusalem which shall rule over God's infinite realm far evermore. We are the city four-square, which is the bride of the Lamb. This is the Jerusalem from which, in the age and the ages to come, the Word of the Lord shall go forth to all the earth (Isa. 2:3; Mc. 4:2). In fact, it is even now going forth. This is the Jerusalem from which even now the Lord has uttered His voice (Joel 3:16). This is the Jerusalem from which, during the age and the ages to come, living waters shall go forth to the whole world (Zech. 14:8). "And everything shall live whither the river cometh" (Eze. 47:9).

In the Bible a city pictures a government. Abraham was seeking for a government — the heavenly arrangement, a divine rule by the Spirit upon earth. Cities of old were nations in themselves. They had walls and were self-sufficient. Some of the great cities of ancient times were Babylon, Athens, Rome. The city was representative of the nation. Some cities were nations within themselves, others ruled over territories beyond their walls. The power and might of the land flowed from the city. They were not intended merely as dwelling places, because most people were involved in agriculture and were self-sufficient. As man multiplied, some of the people began to live in cities; and then cities became centers of power and ruled the surrounding area of the land in which they were located. It did not avail an enemy much if he conquered the land surrounding the city. The city itself had to be conquered for the victory to be significant, and only then could it be said that the land had been taken. The real seal of government, power, and authority resided in the city. The walls of the city were formidable protection. Armed with this understanding, we can see the use of an illustration by Solomon in **Prov. 25:28**, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." A city without walls was an easy prey for the enemy. Likewise, anyone unable to control his emotions and passions is an easy prey for his enemies (the flesh, the world, and the devil) and can be overrun by them.

Oh glorious city of God! In the 48th Psalm we read the description of the city of our God, and we begin to see deep meanings in these comparisons. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness." It is in this city that praises to God ascend day and night. The bride rejoicing in the Lord in light and in darkness, in easy things and in hard things, offers unto Him the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving continually; and thus she is like Jerusalem. We are told that she is "beautiful in elevation (situation)." Jerusalem was not builded in low swamp lands, but upon a beautiful elevation. Neither are we built up so that we are "comely as Jerusalem," when we remain upon the low lands, amid the fogs, and vapors, amid the miasmas of earthly swamp lands, bogged down in carnal understanding, fleshly wisdom, or in negativism, fear or despair. Upon the high lands, the air is clear, and as we climb higher and higher upon the mountains of God, we become "beautiful in elevation" — full of grace, faith, wisdom and might.

This is "The city of the great King," and "God hath made Himself known in her palaces for a refuge. How high is our calling when God has chosen us to be a part of "The city of the great King," "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22). Truly in this city of the great King God hath made Himself known in her palaces for a refuge — a high tower. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and are safe" (Prov. 18:10). Has He not made Himself known in every palace of this heavenly city, as the Strong Tower and Rock of Defense to every tempest-tossed and tested soul? Only in Him is there safety; only in Him is there protection; only when we are consciously in Him, and continually reckon upon our union with Him can we turn and withstand the enemy victoriously. Praise God! He is more and more making

Himself known in the palaces as the days go by, and victory and life become our portion, swallowing up all darkness and death. "Out of Zion the perfection of beauty, God hath shined forth" (Ps. 50:2). But before He can shine forth from the palaces of the New Jerusalem, He must command light to shine out of darkness, and He must shine into our hearts, "To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

We read that "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compacted together, whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of Yahweh, for an ordinance for Israel, to give thanks unto the name of Yahweh" (Ps. 122:3-4). The word translated "compacted" has most precious meanings, which more perfectly apply to the heavenly Jerusalem, than to the earthly city. We need not think that this is strange, when we bear in mind that the earthly Jerusalem was the figure of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all. And we are melted before God when we apprehend the full import of these meanings when applied to the bride of the Lamb. "Compacted" means "to join together by means of fascination; to be charmed and thus bound together; to have fellowship." This sets forth the harmony and the beauty in architecture of the earthly Jerusalem, with its lofty walls, its beautiful palaces, its glorious temple. But it sets forth the harmony, the fellowship, the perfect unity of the living stones of the New Jerusalem. These stones, which are built upon the only foundation, Jesus Christ, are compacted together in Him, through the drawing and welding of the Holy Spirit. It is not the unity promoted by commitment to a preacher, a ministry, a church or a movement, but the love of Christ, the power of His Word, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit which draws them together, and they are made steadfast through the deep dealings and processings of the Lord. It is God Himself who joins member to member and builds all together as an habitation of God through the Spirit. Ray Prinzing has shared a thought which is most fitting here. "Thus Abraham sought — looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. This was in great contrast to Cain — we read Cain went out from the presence of the Lord...and he builded a city" (Gen. 4:16-17). If we walk after the way of the flesh, of the world, we seek to build our own city, we seek to establish our own righteousness — and all we have wrought is a magnification of VANITY. But when we cease from our own works, and SEEK HIM who is the Builder and Maker — then HE builds the city. Indeed, 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it' (Ps. 127:1). How many yet 'LABOUR IN VAIN!' Here the Hebrew word is SHAV meaning: vanity, falsehood. They think they are building something true, but it is useless, fitted for destruction, a counterfeit to the real. Only Christ can live the CHRIST-LIFE through us. Only GOD can do the works OF GOD! So it is imperative that we come into UNION WITH HIM, to be led by His Spirit, so that whatever we do is "not by might, nor by power, but BY MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord" (Zech. 4:6)" — end quote.

Yes, Jerusalem is a city compacted together. Any number of houses without inhabitants would not be a city, and on the other hand millions of people turned loose on the prairie would not be a city, for don't you see a city is a compound structure of houses filled with people and of streets? The houses form the material framework and the people form the living soul, like the soul in the body. In this glorious city the outer man, the outer ministry is the house — the inner man, the life-flow out of the spirit is the inhabitant. Both Paul and Peter referred to their body as a "tabernacle." The two united together as the expression of HIS GLORY make the city of God. Body and soul united with spirit form a palace in the city of God. "And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house (temple). And Solomon's builders, and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers, so they PREPARED TIMBER AND STONES TO BUILD THE HOUSE" (I Kings 5:17-18). "And the house (Solomon's temple), when it was in building, was built of stone MADE READY BEFORE IT WAS BROUGHT THITHER: so that there was neither hammer nor ax, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building" (I Kings 6:7). "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (II Cor. 6:16).

Truly the glory of the latter house shall exceed the glory of the former, as the New Jerusalem exceeds in glory the old Jerusalem — a whole new dimension of His glory and an entirely new arrangement is at hand. The primary work of this hour, I believe, is an INDIVIDUAL work. It is like Solomon's temple. Long before there was the "putting together" of all the members of that magnificent edifice and the filling of the house with Glory, there was an extensive and extended preliminary INDIVIDUAL WORK wrought meticulously upon each member. The giant cedars of Lebanon were cut down; each board was hewed and shaped. The gold was mined, refined, and beaten into form. The exquisite tapestries were cut and sewn. The stones were individually

quarried and chiseled to perfection. Only when all the INDIVIDUAL WORK was completed was the building raised up and compacted together WITHOUT THE SOUND OF A HAMMER! Seems to me many brethren have tried to put the body of Christ together as a visible organism and expression before the deep work of preparation has been accomplished upon each "living stone." That is why we continually have divisions, church splits, groups that fall apart, and ministries that self-destruct. If you try to build this city by carnal strength and soulish manipulation you will hear the sound of many hammers — but it still won't stand! If your "group" has fallen apart, if your "church" has split, if your "congregation" has changed then nothing you have done represents the "building up" of God's house — it is still merely the INDIVIDUAL WORK that precedes the raising up of the temple of God. In the fullness of time God's temple of sons and God's bride-city WILL come together — by a sudden, powerful, sovereign move of God!

Jesus walked among the people, calling twelve, and seventy, then multitudes of disciples, teaching, preaching, healing, doing signs and wonders, demonstrating the Kingdom of God. There were vast multitudes of people who followed Him, but there was no cohesion, shape, or form. It was an unstructured Kingdom. It was a great company of stones not yet assembled. But when the day of Pentecost was FULLY COME, SUDDENLY... God put something together, stood it up in the earth, and revealed His glory. We stand today in an hour not unlike the days preceding the day of Pentecost. The next great Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles is about to "fully come." The Christ is among us in a fresh manifestation, there is a new message going forth, a declaration concerning the next step and phase of the Kingdom of God, there is a unique dealing of God, and a manifestation of ministry. The greater glory to come, the bride adorned for the marriage of the Lamb, the manifested sons of God upon the heavenly mount Zion, the city foursquare coming down from God out of heaven, the tabernacle of God among men, the new order for the new age will be birthed suddenly and sovereignly BY GOD HIMSELF when the fullness of time has arrived. This greater temple will speedily arise in glory and majesty and power in the earth without the sound of a hammer — with no carnal efforts of soulish works to produce it. In the meantime we must individually submit ourselves to Father's dealings, and the word and ministry He sends our way, continuing to press experientially into Him, in preparation for the manifestation of His life without measure.

Sometime ago Sister Alma McClure sent out this timely word of wisdom in her paper THE WINNOWER: "In one sense, we are each an individual temple, for Christ dwells in us by His Spirit. But as a corporate body, each one is a separate stone. Separate, but not to STAY separate! When we are PREPARED IN THE QUARRY, fully ready for joining, we 'as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ' (I Pet. 2:5). Yes, we are to be JOINED TOGETHER! So why have we so often found ourselves alone, on the backside of the desert, not fitting in with any group, even when we tried to do so? George Warnock has said, 'You will recognize that you can't make it alone, that you need the body. God WILL join you with the body. But don't get under condemnation in the meantime, as God works PREPARATION within you! Because He is joining PREPARED member to PREPARED member! Often it takes the isolation, the separation, the ostracism, to prepare you to be a temple stone truly fitted and shaped by the Lord, to be effectually joined to that stone that God has in mind to set you next to!' Each stone was 'made ready at the quarry,' that there need be no hammer or any iron tool needed when the stones are put together! Does that help you to understand the 'strange path' that you have been required to travel? Yes, the hammer, ax and iron tools of the Lord's choosing have struck us in our place of preparation, and we have cried out in pain, not understanding why the trials have been so great, and seemingly without end! But, be of good cheer! It has been a necessary PREPARATION to FIT IN OUR PLACE, in His glorious temple, not made with hands! Ray Prinzing has written, "They who have ears to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to His called out ones, are coming out of Babylon, and leaving the woman (harlot religious systems) behind. They will no longer give their strength unto these women, nor pour their resources into her coffers. They refuse to be defiled by her whoredoms, and will not play her games. It has taken some tremendous purgings to become free from the taints of the spirit of religious institutions. We find that many, upon first being called out, literally go through a time of withdrawal pains spiritually speaking. They feel great pains for fellowship, yearning to be with people, to get another high from a service, etc. And it takes much time ALONE WITH GOD to be cleansed until their spirit is pure, and wholly joined to His.' It seems that many who have been much alone are now finding other lone stones who have been in their own desert preparation, and a joining is beginning to take place, more and more! Hallelujah! Rejoice! God's timing and His purposes are perfect! PREPARED STONES are coming together, and the Temple shall be complete ON TIME" — end quote.

COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN

One of the beautiful symbolisms given us in the book of Revelation is the Holy City "coming down from God out of heaven" (Rev. 21:2). When John said this city comes down from God out of heaven, he wasn't talking about coming forth past Mercury, Saturn and Mars. He meant not that it would settle down over the Mount of Olives or any other geographical location. As previously pointed out, in the Bible a city represents a government and the "holy" city is a righteous government. It is not a man-made government. It doesn't have a "Democratic" or a "Republican" or a "Labor" or a "Socialist" party. It emanates from God, out of heaven, and is established on earth through a heavenly people. May the blessed spirit of revelation grant us the clarity to see that this city shall never rule until it has in all truth become the "holy" city, prepared, adorned, and "made ready." She comes down from heaven. Her origin is divine, her nature, her character, is heavenly — "out of heaven from God." One is reminded of the scripture, "As IS the heavenly, such are they also THAT ARE heavenly...we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:48-49).

"And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new (Rev. 21:25). My beloved, John saw the city descending down from God to earth. He did not see us going out into space somewhere. God is going to perfect the church right here upon the earth and it is going to reign upon the earth. We are not going off to some celestial city somewhere in space. Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men! God is coming to dwell in and with mankind. Yet millions of Christians vainly imagine that they are going to a city up in the sky to live there with Jesus forever and ever. Multitudes believe that somehow they will escape "The Great Tribulation" by being raptured and snatched up to heaven. The testimony of scripture is just the opposite of man's childish superstitions. God has always come to man. In the sacred mists of long ago Eden the Lord God came dawn and walked and talked with Adam. In another place we find that the Lord appeared on the plains of Mamre and walked and talked with our father Abraham. God instructed Moses to build the tabernacle in the wilderness so that He could have a dwelling place in the midst of our Israelite forefathers. Long centuries later "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14). John saw the city descending down from God, and it is descending down from God. With every message from God that is preached, the Holy City is coming down to earth. With every person that is born from above and becomes a part of that city, it is coming down to earth. With every person who receives the anointing of the Holy Spirit and grows up another step toward perfection, the Holy City is coming down to earth. With every new revelation that comes to us from the Spirit of God and that takes us on into the fulfillment of God's perfect plan for our lives, the Holy City is descending down to earth. As the principles of the Kingdom of God — righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost — are established in our lives, the Holy City is coming down from God out of heaven. Every time an individual steps up another step in God, the Holy City is descending to earth. When the nature and character of our heavenly Father are formed in us and His precious mind rules in our hearts, the Holy City is descending down to earth. With every victory over sin and sickness, over limitation, darkness and death, the Holy City is descending down to earth. Beloved, it will continue descending with the development of the body of Christ into its full stature. It will descend and descend until the prayer that Jesus taught for sons is fulfilled: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

While writing this message an article arrived in the mail from Terry and Tykie Crisp. How timely the thoughts they share! "Why is it that this Great City is coming DOWN OUT of heaven? It's because of the burdened appeal of creation! Beloved, there is coming a GLORIOUS CHURCH in these last days, a church which has been caught up to the highest heaven, to the very throne of God...but who, because of the spirit of sonship in their hearts, will not be able to ignore the groaning of the prisoners! They will come down from the heavenlies in High Priestly attire, bearing their gem- studded breastplate, which is the burden of mankind upon their hearts... with deliverance, with power, and with authority, to set the captives free! Imagine, if you will, a church so virtuous and bright that the nations of the world will walk in the light thereof, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor to it, submitting themselves to her authority, and seeking wisdom from her mouth!" — end quote.

This Great City, the Heavenly Jerusalem that started coming down on the day of Pentecost, shall continue to come down from God out of heaven. That is, it shall continue to descend from out of the divine consciousness and life of the Lord into the receptivity and consciousness and experience of His people on earth. It shall persist until all that dwell upon the earth shall walk in its light and enter in through its gates. Then shall the whole earth be filled with the glory and the knowledge of the Lord. Even now the new heavens — THE NEW MIND — is descending into our hearts, our nature, creating within us a new earth for the tabernacling of God. Everything that God sends down out of heaven is infinitely good and glorious. Nineteen hundred years ago He sent Jesus as His best gift, and all the world has been blessed by that gift. When He brings heaven down to us we know that He is bringing His best. A king once gave a diamond to one of his friends, and the friend said, "Sir, this is too great a gift for me to receive." But the king answered, "it is not too great a gift for a king to give." In like manner, if the full manifestation of the life and glory of God in you, His elect, seems beyond what you deserve or are capable of, remember! it is NOT TOO MUCH FOR GOD TO GIVE AND DO!

According to the beloved John everything on earth IS going to be transformed. He speaks of a new heaven and a new earth. At present heaven and earth are quite separate states of existence, but in the new city of God which John beheld in spirit they are no longer to be two but one. It is my conviction that the veil between seen and unseen is a very flimsy one, and that this seemingly solid matter which forms our prison- house is not so very solid after all. Probably it is nothing more than our own thought exercised upon a very limited plane, a darkened perception. It is quite conceivable that we might wake up, as it were, from a sleep, and realize that there never has been a material and a spiritual, but that we have all the time been living at the very center of reality, only we did not know it. If men were only endowed sufficiently with the spirit of wisdom and revelation, and ready for the change, the veil between heaven and earth would be taken away, the heavens would be opened, and the two would be seen as one. This is what John means by the city coming down; it is heaven taking possession of earth and absorbing it into itself.

The world is to be won for God; there is to be a transformed society of men on earth; in the end earth will become heaven. Death will be abolished, and sin and sorrow will flee away. When John used the language of Isaiah about the city needing no light of the sun he meant it in even a grander way. Henceforth God in Christ is to be the light of every man's life, all the nations are to walk in that light, and love and brotherhood be all in all. But he makes a bold stroke at this point by departing from the Old Testament dream of the Jerusalem Temple. He says that God Himself will be the Temple, and men shall worship Him in spirit and in truth. Looking back, as it were, upon the desecration and destruction which had fallen upon the temple that was formerly the pride and glory of Israel, he says in effect: Well, let it go! At the best it was only a beautiful symbol for a still more beautiful reality. Nothing is lost by the ruin of that which was built with hands. God Himself is our Temple — God in Christ! We need no other. The whole earth is full of His glory, and in Him we live and move and have our being. By destroying the outward it throws us back upon the inward; it removes the local and temporary to fix our gaze upon the universal and eternal.

**We are builders of that City,
All our joys and all our groans,
Help to rear its shining ramparts,
All our lives are building stones;**

**But the work that God has builded,
Through our bleeding hands and tears,
And in error and in anguish,
Will not perish with our years.**

**It will be at last made perfect
In the universal plan;
It will help to crown the labors
Of the toiling hosts of man;**

**It will last and shine transfigured
In the final reign of right;**

**It will merge into the splendors
Of the Kingdom of the Light.**

J. Preston Eby

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 37

ARIES-THE LAMB [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART THIRTY-SEVEN

THE GLORY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

THE WALLS
THE GATES
THE FOUNDATIONS
THE STREET
THE TREE OF LIFE
THE RIVER

In last month's Study on the Signs of the heavens we considered the first Decan, or minor constellation, in the house of Aries — CASSIOPEIA — THE ENTHRONED WOMAN. Cassiopeia is the figure of a queenly woman, matchless in beauty, seated in exalted dignity. She is seated on a throne, high and lifted up. With one hand she is arranging her robe; in the other she holds the branch of victory and triumph, at the same time arranging her hair. She seems to be making herself ready for some presentation or great public manifestation. Near her sits King Cepheus on his throne. In Arabic this constellation is called EL SEDU, which means the freed. Albumazer, an ancient authority, says this woman was anciently called the daughter of splendor, hence, the glorified woman. Her common name is CASSIOPEIA, meaning the beautiful, the enthroned. This woman is obviously the Bride of Christ, the Lamb's Wife, the New Jerusalem of whom John the apostle said, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7). In the book of Revelation John is carried away to an exceeding high mountain and there he is shown that which is called both a bride and a city. From the top of that high mountain John looks out and sees a most wonderful city, coming down out of heaven from God, filled and flooded with the glory of God. The name of the City is New Jerusalem.

THE GLORY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

When John saw the Holy City descending down from God, the Spirit was giving him a vision of the bride of Christ as she would be in her perfection. If we follow John in the magnificent view that was given him of the Holy City, and study the various parts of the City as John saw them in the vision, and if we let the Spirit of God show us the spiritual realities of which these parts or portions of the Holy City are symbols, then it shall be revealed to our hearts how true it is that the Holy City is the Bride in her perfection. Until our spiritual minds are able to grasp the truth that the body of Christ is the temple of God and that every room and mansion of that temple is a living son of God, a literal habitation of God through the Spirit; and until we understand that the city of God is the bride of Christ, and that the stones of that City are all living stones, as Christ Jesus Himself is a living stone and the only foundation that can be laid, we have understood nothing at all. The book of Revelation shows the development of this Bride-City from glory to glory. Each view is a fresh and further comprehension of the grandeur of the purposes of God for all who are called to the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. The total victory for all the elect is detailed in all its glorious and eternal reality. This is the beauty of the Church Triumphant! This is that glorious church without spot or wrinkle. It is so great and mighty! It stands throughout the ages to come clothed in the awesome majesty of the glory of the Almighty!

This City, John says, has THE GLORY OF GOD. What is the glory of God? The literal meaning of the Hebrew word for glory is weight or substance. In the eyes of men this literal meaning frequently lent itself to the idea that a person possessing glory was laden (heavy) with the substances of this world. Jacob's flock was his "glory" (Gen. 31:1). The Assyrians' power was their "glory" (Isa. 8:7). Joseph's high position in the kingdom of Egypt was his "glory" (Gen 45:13). But when the word was applied to God, it was meant to bring out the weightiness of God's nature, character, attributes and power. His love, His wisdom, His knowledge, His righteousness, His justice, His truth, His power — these weighty spiritual substances are the "glory" of God! His glory is the emanation of what He is. To me it is a wonderful thing to hear John say that the New

Jerusalem "has the GLORY of God." It speaks to us and of us. For has not the Lord "called us to His kingdom and glory" (Col. 2:12)? Paul says in II Thes. 2:4 that we have been called "to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Again, "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day" (II Thes. 1:10). "And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them...that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me" (Jn. 17:22-23). Can any doubt remain in any open mind that the saints ARE INDEED the Holy City, New Jerusalem "which has the glory of God"!

When God reveals this New Jerusalem people in all His fullness the world will know this wondrous fact, that "the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them." The glory of God is the LIGHT of this great City. Not only is it the light of the City, but also of the whole world, for "the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it" (Rev. 21:24). This is that true light which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (Jn. 1:9). "His life is the light of men" (Jn. 1:4). "YE are the light of the world" (Mat. 5:14). The light of God is pure light, total white light, for "in Him there is no darkness at all" (I Jn. 1:5). The light of God is the light of the City. All through scripture we find that light has been a symbol for the truth. When the Bible says of the Holy City that her light shall be like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, it simply reveals the true church as having come to all light, perfect light, all truth, purest truth, absolute understanding, and walking and living in absolute light and truth — the perfection of the mind of Christ within.

The revelation of the Christ within brings illumination, understanding, perfect clarity about the true nature of all things. This is that light that "shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). The light of this City is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal — that is, transparent. To live in that City, and in the light of it, is to walk in a state in which we "see right through" the illusion of this world, the external form of it, and the denseness of the lower, outer meanings of the letter of the Word of God — to see right through into the mind and heart of God by the spirit. It is the revelation that carries one beyond doctrine and the external forms of religion right into the glorious and eternal reality of God Himself. It penetrates beyond the denseness of carnal understanding and natural comprehension to behold the substance of God's person and the glories of a realm not seen by the human eye. This is the realm beyond the Outer Court and the Holy Place — the most inward realm of the Holiest of all. Moses raised up the Tabernacle in the wilderness, but of this glorious City of God the Spirit testifies, "Behold, THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God" (Rev. 21:3).

The witness of the Holy Spirit is that this City, New Jerusalem, corresponds in symbol to the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon — but there is no veil there. As I recall the layout of the old Tabernacle, the Outer Court had no covering, so its light was the sun and the moon. In the Inner Court, the enclosed area just within the Outer Court, lamps were used as the source of light. But in the innermost Sanctuary, the Holy of holies, the Shekinah, the glory of God was the only light. The New Jerusalem does not need the sun or the moon nor the light of any lamp, because in this Holy of holies dwells the eternal presence of the Almighty God and His Son who are the light thereof (Rev. 21:23). This City has no Outer Court or Holy Place. The Holy Place of Moses' Tabernacle was oblong in shape, being thirty feet in length, fifteen in width, and fifteen in height. The Most Holy Place, on the other hand, was fifteen feet in length, width, and height, or a perfect cube. The only other cube described in the Bible is the Holy City, New Jerusalem! The perfect cube of the Holy of holies now finds its fulfillment in the City of God! "The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal" (Rev. 21:16). Now a cube is the most perfect figure, being equal on every side — finite perfection. It has what you call finality, it is the most comprehensive, and holds the most — nothing contains as much as a cube — and therefore, it is given here, as the expression of perfection and fullness. It is divinely inwrought perfection and fullness — the very glory of God — and therefore it is spoken of as a cube. The message is clear — you can never know the glory, illumination and power of this City in the Outer Court of popular religion, nor yet in the Holy Place of Pentecostal, Charismatic, or "New Testament Church" economy. Only those who by faith enter beyond the veil into the glorious and eternal reality of the Most Holy Place can even begin to touch and know the surpassing glory — perfection and fullness — of this realm of God's life.

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27). No one whose nature has not been transformed shall enter into this City. Since this City is the true church in perfection and fullness, only those who have been born again of the Spirit of God and are walking in the Spirit of God until He has changed completely their nature, so that they have come to perfect purity, perfect wisdom, perfect knowledge and perfect love, shall arrive at this STATE OF PERFECTION AND FULLNESS which IS the Holy City. This is the wonderful plan that God has devised whereby nothing that defiles can enter into this City. For all who come to this state will have arrived at perfection and fullness and there will be no sin, lack, limitation, darkness or death left within them. The Bride, the Lamb's Wife, the New Jerusalem, the Holy City with all its foundations, wall, and gates are then in reality the total unveiling and manifestation of the mystical revelation of the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ in His church for the age and the ages to come.

John measured the City and it was twelve thousand furlongs or fifteen hundred miles: the length and height and breadth were equal, as I have pointed out — a cube. The measurements are in multiples of twelve which are a symbol and signature of God's purposes in His elect. Twelve is the number of divine government. One thousand is the number of the Day of the Lord (II Pet. 3:8). Twelve times one thousand is God's light and illumination multiplied by God's authority and rule — the perfect and full dominion of God by the revelation of His glory without mixture, limitation or darkness. The Holy of holies of God's eternal Kingdom is, therefore, in type, 528,000 TIMES MORE GLORIOUS than the Holy of holies in the Mosaic Tabernacle that was a cube of only fifteen feet each way! The true measure of the City is the Lord Jesus Christ: "...unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). The people who come to this measure will be the glory of God and the light of the world in the fullness of what that means, and will bring the total restoration that God, who cannot lie, has promised to all creation. Hallelujah!

This, my beloved, is the hour of preparation. "And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2). The Greek word for "adorned" is KOSMEO and is here used of the "adorning" of the bride of Christ for her Husband. She is now fully processed and matured, qualified to be the Queen of Heaven, glorified as His Wife upon His throne. By right of marriage she takes His name (nature), is the complement of Himself, has joint-ownership of all His possessions and co-dominion over all His realms. From this word KOSMEO, comes our English word "cosmetics." The noun form is KOSMOS, which means "order, arrangement," and is translated in our Bible as "world." The meaning is just this: The world is to be MADE BEAUTIFUL! But it will be made beautiful by a beautiful people! There is a vital connection between the adorning of the Bride and the restoration of creation to the life of God. The latter shall spring from the former. The Bride is clothed, as she chooses the Lord in the midst of earth's pressures. Therefore, she is arrayed with all manner of precious jewels. In Isa. 61:10, we see the Bride adorned in precious jewels, which speak of the process of refining in fire, and of anointing. The wood, hay, and stubble are gone and her adornment is only that which is of the heavenly nature of her Bridegroom lover. What we build in our lives is either gold, silver, and precious jewels, or wood, hay, and stubble; and all shall pass through the fire! These terms refer to our works, the outer expression of our inner being. These works are not what we do for God, not the keeping of the law, rules, regulations, precepts, and traditions. Our works are the expression of the fruit of the spirit (or the lack of it) in our lives. Pressure will cause us to be either a precious jewel, or a heap of ashes. There can be no restoration of creation, precious friend of mine, no demonstration of the Kingdom, indeed, no manifestation of the sons of God apart from the Bride. By marriage she is joint-heir with the King of kings. The throne (sons) of God is in the midst of her. The fragrant tree of life nourishes in her street for the healing of the nations who hitherto walked in darkness and the shadow of death. The river of life flows from her midst, the foundations of God are laid in her, and the glory of God is revealed upon her. Out from her we hear the sweet strains of a new message, never heard before in all the history of the world. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." Hitherto the Spirit of Christ has invited the chosen, the elect, to come. From henceforth the New Jerusalem bride will be the vehicle of the Spirit's call, saying, "Come," to all the kindreds, and nations, and tongues, and peoples of the world, and the restitution of all things will begin. The twelve gates of the City will be opened by day and never closed, for there is no night there. In response to the glad message, "Come," proclaimed by the Spirit through the Bride, the nations in glad procession will bring their glory and honor into the City, a procession which will never cease until every descendant of Adam who has ever lived or died has entered through the gates of the City back to God from whence he came. No words from human lips could ever fully describe the wonder of this thing. Only the Holy Spirit can carry us away and

reveal it to our hearts. Christ will not rule without His bride, for His throne is in the midst of her. She rules and reigns and redeems and restores in the authority of His wonderful name. She dwells with Him in the union of eternal love, devotion, purpose and fellowship. The Bride alone can give to Him that which His heart longs for. She has the capacity to satisfy the very heart of the Almighty! She is His wife, His beloved, the completion of Himself! Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the glory of it!

THE WALLS

Another of the beautiful symbols given us in the New Jerusalem is that of its majestic wall. "And had a wall great and high. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper..." (Rev. 21:15-18). According to this passage the City lies foursquare, 1,500 miles each way with a wall around it that is one hundred and forty four cubits high. That makes the wall 264 feet high. Now, if this is a literal city in heaven, who are the enemies this wall is designed to keep out? What would be the purpose of a wall 264 feet high? Or, if we understand this City carnally, will the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness be so wicked that walls are needed to protect and defend it? Even in our time, what protection would a wall 264 feet high provide? Would such a wall hinder jet planes loaded with bombs or missiles carrying warheads?

The literal interpretation of these beautiful symbols cannot explain any purpose for this wall. But understood spiritually, the walls have deep meaning and wonderful significance. The walls of this City are SALVATION. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks" (Isa. 26:1). "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise" (Isa. 60:18). "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her" (Zech. 2:5). "The name of the Lord is a strong tower (literally: a walled place)..." (Prov. 18:10). The mighty power of God's salvation in our lives is the wall of the City of our God. God is raising up this wall within us from glory to glory. The wall has a measurement — there were an hundred and forty four cubits, according to the measure of a man. The man is Christ Jesus! That is the measure of the angel of the Lord. That is the measure of the last Adam, the perfect man, the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ (Eph. 4:13). This measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ IS THE SALVATION that shall bring the believer into that safety where no enemy can harm. As we come into the perfection of Christ we dwell within the walls of His salvation. The power of the Lord formed within is our defense; HIS LIFE becomes the strength of our life. It is the formation of His life in us that overcomes sin, defeats Satan, dispels darkness, and conquers death. This is the eternal salvation that has been brought to us by Jesus Christ. "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. 127:1). Thank God, the Lord Himself is the keeper of the Walls of Salvation in the City of God! This Wall of Salvation has nothing to do with so-called "coverings," elderships, headships, fellowships, rules, regulations, laws or doctrines. If there was really "safety" in any of those orders you wouldn't see so much division, church splits, disgraced ministries, and fellowships falling apart. The Wall of Salvation reflects the glory of God in the life of the child of God as the faith and strength and power of God is formed as a nature in him.

There is another aspect. Walls are not for protection only, but for exclusion. Everything is excluded that defiles. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27). Nothing can come into this City but that which is the life of Christ. Anything that is not of His life must be excluded. Those who inhabit this glorious realm are separate from the filth of Babylon and the flesh-pots of Egypt. They abide in union with Christ. They put on His glorious mind and are transformed into His wonderful likeness. Nothing else is permitted entry into their world.

THE GATES

"And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north

three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it" (**Rev. 21:12-13,25-26**). Rare indeed is the man or woman in the religious systems of earth who has a true and spiritual understanding of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem Bride of the Lamb. In one remarkable prophetic word the prophet Isaiah carries us beyond the symbol to the reality, saying, "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy WALLS SALVATION, and thy GATES PRAISE" (Isa. 60:18). How clear that the idea of a material city is but a product of carnal minds and childish understanding, as the Holy Spirit pulls aside the veil and identifies for us just what the walls and gates of the City of God really are. The WALLS are SALVATION and the GATES are PRAISE. Salvation and Praise are wrought out through a people — not through stone walls or pearly gates. There are twelve gates of praise — twelve aspects of HIS PRAISE lived out through the lives of those ministries by which men are ushered into the realities of the City. Twelve is the number of divine government, thus the rulership of the Spirit in our lives evokes that praise by which HE is glorified. Jesus, our elder brother and pattern, was ruled by the mind and will of the Father at all times and in all things. His life was a praise to God. His life, in all its words, attitudes and actions GLORIFIED GOD. Praise is often associated in our minds only with singing, thanksgiving, and noise — but true praise lies beyond what one speaks — it is a state of being. Christ's life was a praise to God. It was in harmony with the purpose of God and revealed the character and glory of God.

The gates are the entrance into the Kingdom realm of God. "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it" (**Job 28:7-8**). "It shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err and go therein" (**Isa. 35:8-9**). It is only by and through the wisdom, grace, and Spirit of God that we can find an entrance in through the gates of the Holy City. Nothing that is unclean or that defileth, nothing of the world, the flesh, or the devil can enter into this eternal divine relationship with the Lord. This Holy City and Divine Government of the Lord is composed of only those that have been made fully ONE IN HIM, filled with His fullness, invested with His nature. They have laid aside the corruptible things of this life and have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, being granted an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ. These are they whose life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ, who is their life, appears, they will appear with Him in His glory (Col. 3:3-4).

The twelve gates of the City bear the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. This fact has led some to erroneously assume that the natural Israel, the fleshly seed of Abraham, the multitude of nations that have come out of his loins, the thousands of millions of physical descendants of Rebekah and Leah, are the bride of Christ. But such can never be! The book of Revelation is entirely a book of symbols. A symbol is never the reality, it merely points to the reality. The City as seen by John in holy vision is not a literal City — it is a symbolic city — a people. The gates are not literal gates — they are entrances into the presence and glory of God. The river of water of life is not a babbling stream like the rivers of earth — it is the eternal outflowing of the life of God in the Spirit. The wall is not like that wall which surrounded the ancient Jerusalem — it is the almighty defense of His salvation- power in our lives. The throne is not a golden seat in some far-off heaven somewhere — rather, it is a symbol bespeaking of the realm of His omnipotent power and universal authority. Thus, when we read of the names of the tribes of the children of Israel upon the gates of the City it cannot mean the literal names written with letters of the alphabet, nor can it signify the fleshly Israel — else the symbolism here breaks down and what is intended as merely a symbol becomes in fact the reality. It must point beyond the outward and physical to the inward and spiritual. The things pertaining to the Tabernacle of God are heavenly — not of the earth, earthy. They belong to the new creation — not the old.

The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are deeply meaningful to us in the Spirit. An understanding of the tribes reveals to us ways and means by which we are able to enter into the New Jerusalem today. The first is RUEBEN, meaning "Behold a son." God is perfecting the spirit of sonship in a people, and this spirit is one of the entrances into the governmental realm of God. The Throne (sonship, government) is within the City. The second tribe is SIMEON, meaning "Hearing." The admonition to the overcomer is: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (**Rev. 2:7**). Faith comes by hearing the Word of God — the Living Word — and this spiritual capacity to truly hear is another of the gateways into the High Calling of God. LEVI, the third of the tribes, means "Unity" or "Joined," and truly "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (**I Cor. 6:17**). It is the principle of abiding in Christ. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in

him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5). Those of the spiritual tribe of Levi have discovered the secret place of the Most High. The fourth is JUDAH, and means "Praise" — a people transformed to show forth HIS virtues and excellencies, to become His praise in the earth. The fifth tribe, ZEBULON, means "Dwelling." It speaks of possessing our possessions, of apprehending that for which we also have been apprehended, entering into and laying hold upon that which has been promised. This principle is another mighty door of entrance into the power and glory of the City. The sixth tribe, ISSACHAR, means "Bearing a reward." This bespeaks of attainment — that which surpasses grace and gifts and imputation — something bestowed in recognition of actual accomplishment and qualification. Issachar becomes — it is the development and maturity of the new creature. GAD, the seventh tribe, denotes "A seer" — the spirit of prophecy, the opened heavens, divine wisdom by which one understands the true nature of all things. Without doubt this is an important prerequisite for rulership in the Kingdom! ASHER, the eighth of the tribes, means "Happy." "The joy of the Lord is our strength" — not soulish joy worked up by singing and clapping for fifteen or thirty minutes, not the bubbly, giddy, superficial excitement of spiritual children over God's goodness and blessings; but that deep, confident, abiding joy of the spirit which is undisturbed by anything that happens in the outer world of appearances. This is the Kingdom Attitude that is unmoved and unshaken by events, a fundamental quality that admits us into the inner calm and stability of the Christ. The ninth tribe is NAPHTALI, meaning "Wrestling." This denotes victory in spiritual warfare — OVERCOMING — for "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high (heavenly, spiritual) places" (Eph. 5:12). The tenth tribe, EPHRAIM, means "Double fruit" — that which becomes provision for all men out of the abundance of HIS LIFE. It is provision and ministry. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (Jn. 15:8). The eleventh tribe, MANASSEH, means "Forgetfulness" — representing the ministry of reconciliation, mercy, forgiveness, and blessing, even that beautiful characteristic of God's nature wherein He says even to the rebellious, "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for ALL shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I REMEMBER NO MORE" (Heb. 8:11-12). The twelfth tribe is BENJAMIN, meaning, "Son of the father's right hand." Benjamin is the youngest son and the figure of authority and power, revealing the great truth that all the foregoing principles and characteristics must be thoroughly established in one's experience and life before he qualifies to share the dominion of HIS THRONE!

There are twelve gates to the Holy City — three gates on each side — and each gate is one great pearl (Rev. 21:13,21). Think of it, beloved: the Seer of Patmos does not tell us that the gates are made of pearl, but that each of the gates IS ONE PEARL! Why is every gate a pearl? You remember the heavenly merchant man in Jesus' parable of the pearl of great price. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Mat. 3:45-46). You may say, "That is the sinner seeking the Saviour. Jesus is the one Pearl of great price, and we must sell all we have and are to obtain that priceless stone. Indeed! a sinner selling? What has old Adam got, what has the natural man got to sell but his sin, lack, limitation, darkness and death? What has the carnal, baby christian got to sell but his wood, hay, and stubble? Nay, the pearl of great price is not Christ Jesus, but the Church! Not that filthy harlot system which calls itself the church, but the true elect of God born from above.

I do not hesitate to tell you that the Christ went and sold all that He had, He emptied Himself, made Himself of no reputation, being made in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of sinful flesh, laying aside the glory He had with the Father before the world was, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross — truly He paid ALL for the Church! The inspired writer has borne divine witness: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves...to feed the church of God, which HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD" (Acts 20:28). "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25,27). The pearl of great price is the Church in her unity, beauty, perfection and completeness — the Bride adorned for her Husband, the Wife of the Lamb, the exalted Queen of Heaven, the glorious City of God! This Bride so fascinated the Lord Jesus, was of such value and preciousness unto Him, that He parted with "all that He had," to get that pearl.

The pearl was the most precious substance known to the ancients. A large pearl is almost priceless. A single ordinary pearl's worth may be as high as \$200,000. And there is a reason for the pearl's great value. Some one

hundred years ago, a common mussel living in the Tennessee River, began feeling mighty uncomfortable. A fragment of shell from some other mussel, long since dead, had washed into its housing. This shell fragment became an irritant within the mussel. Immediately the mussel began a response, a healing response, to the irritation. Because of the irritation and hurt, a juice or fluid began to be exuded by the mussel to "coat" the foreign substance. Secreting streams of pearly saliva or nacre — one of the things mussels as well as oysters do best — this particular mollusk managed to cover all the rough edges of the fragment. This provided some temporary relief. But each time the substance hardened it again created suffering, renewed pain, on the part of the mussel. Another layer of nacre was added. As the years passed, it added more and more coats of nacre until the fragment became deeply hidden in the pea-like object. Each layer added hardened into a spherical form of lustrous beauty. Thus was born an authentic North American fresh-water pearl.

The value of a pearl more than an inch in diameter is fabulous. The world's largest natural pearl found anywhere (recorded by Guinness) turned up in a giant killer clam off the coast of the Philippine Islands. It weighed a little more than 14 pounds. The pearl is baroque in shape, a little bigger than a man's head, and was valued at \$4,080,000 a few years ago. How staggering is the statement that the portals of the New Jerusalem are each a single pearl! Each one represents the wealth of a world. Twelve of them matched! It stuns the imagination.

The pearl is formed within a living creature by a living process. Pearls do not grow in the open air, or exposed to the outer elements. Most are formed within an oyster, hidden away within the depths of the seas. The oyster is certainly not a beautiful creature on the outside, yet God has ordained a spiritual lesson for us in that on the inside of the oyster, through processes that He has ordained, something BEAUTIFUL and of GREAT VALUE can be formed. Thus a pure heart, a divine mind, a heavenly nature is formed in the center of the ugliness of an outwardly earthly creature. It is a living thing — a living process — and has its seat at the very center of the life. The creation of the pearl is initiated by the introduction of an irritant — and in the life of the overcomer that irritant is THE CROSS. It is produced out of suffering, and the crucifixion of a life. The "sea" is a type of the soul, and the living process involved in making the pearl is the living, dynamic work of GRACE that flows out from our spirit joined to His Spirit, in response to the inworking of the cross, producing the beautiful character qualities that give us an entrance into the higher dimension of God's Kingdom. Our hearts are made pure, the new creation life is formed in soul and body, through the crucifixion of the natural life and the outflowing of His grace. The cross enters our lives as something that hurts — we may see it as a trial, a difficulty, a hard place, a crisis experience — but it pierces the flesh-life, evoking streams of the pearly nacre of HIS LIFE AND GRACE, forming the beauty of the Christ within.

Never forget, precious friend of mine, that each gate, each means of entrance into that City, is a PEARL — we cannot be admitted to the Heavenly Jerusalem unless God has produced something in our lives akin to the beauty and value of the pearl. As someone has pointed out, pearls can be found anywhere in the world, even in waters that are somewhat shallow, but the best quality pearls are found in the depths of the sea, speaking to us of a deep work of God in our lives. **"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep" (Ps. 107:23-24).** Without a doubt a pearl is one of "His wonders in the deep." As God does a deeper work in us, piercing to the very depths of our life, then truly **"deep calleth unto deep at the noise of the waterspouts" (Ps. 42:7).**

Leland Earls wrote: "A pearl cannot be produced without suffering in the oyster. Heb. 2:10 says that Jesus was 'made perfect through suffering.' The Greek word used here is PATEMA, meaning 'something undergone, i.e. hardship or pain.' Another Greek word is used in Heb. 5:8 where we read that Jesus 'learned obedience by the things which He suffered.' The word in this passage is PASCHO, which means 'to experience a sensation or impression.' Thus it was ALL the experiences that Jesus went through which prepared or perfected Him for His role or ministry as KING-PRIEST in the Kingdom of God. And remember — Jesus is not only our Saviour, but also the PATTERN SON for all the sons who are to be brought to His same glory and share in His King-Priest ministry and rule. We are now being prepared for future roles of responsibility. And the experiences of life correspond to the 'irritants' that 'invade' the oyster! How we respond to them is important. If we let the Spirit of God 'exude' divine grace within us, even as the oyster exudes a living substance to form a pearl, then our right and grateful response to every experience can be used of God to form the pearl-like beauty of His nature and character in us. Pearls may be rose, cream, white, bronze, brown, or pastel shades of lavender, blue, green,

etc., depicting the various 'hues' of the Lord's work in us by His Spirit. It is not the 'irritants' (experiences) themselves that make us overcomers, but rather our drawing upon His grace — His divine life substance, that builds layer upon layer of pearl-like beauty in us. The appealing iridescence and the luster for which pearls are prized are due primarily to the reflection and refraction of light on the surface of the translucent gem. Ah, beloved, the light of the New Jerusalem is the GLORY of God. Can we be ready for that City unless when that glory shines upon us there is a reflection and refraction of HIS OWN beauty and image developed within us?" — end quote.

In ancient times, pearls were regarded as a symbol of perfection. This came about because of their pure color — predominantly white with some rose, pinks, lavenders, delicate purples, greens and tones of gold. Their appearance was also regarded as softer, more feminine, than that of mineral gems such as diamonds and emeralds. Because they are softer and vulnerable to scratches, pearls need gentle treatment. A modern comparison of pearls and other precious gems, made by a woman's magazine some time ago, stated in a mock-serious vein that, while diamonds make a woman appear harsh and mysterious, pearls make her more sexy and sensuous. Is it not remarkable, in the light of this worldly evaluation, that two millenniums ago the Holy Spirit used the pearl as a symbol of entrance into the company of the prepared, adorned, beautiful and glorious bride of the Lamb! She is prepared, perfected, matured, adorned with goodly pearls as a bride for her Husband. Corporately, it is the feminine qualities of God formed in a people and united to Himself. Individually, it is the soul cleansed, sanctified and transformed, made one with the spirit. Oh glorious City of God!

THE FOUNDATIONS

"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth, the twelfth, an amethyst" (**Rev. 21:14.19-20**). As we read these wonderful words it becomes at once clear that the use of gems in the description is not by chance but instead by divine purpose, because it specifies the kind to be used in relation to each foundation and the gates. What wealth of joy and instruction for God's elect is contained in this highly figurative language! Here we are told that the twelve apostles of the Lamb are the foundations of the City. This alone should be ample evidence to us that God never intended to present the idea that this New Jerusalem is a literal city. For it says that human beings, the twelve apostles of the Lamb, are the foundations of the City! In Eph. 2:20 we are told that we who are the temple of God are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. So we see that the apostles and prophets are the foundation and that we are to build upon this foundation. We, the body of Christ, are God's building; we, the body of Christ, are God's Holy City that He is building.

There are twelve foundations — not separate foundations apart from one another supporting different parts of the City, but twelve foundations laid one upon another, giving perfect and full support to the whole. Since these foundations are adorned with dazzling stones it is evident that they are not beneath the ground, but underneath the City in a heavenly realm, clearly visible for all to see. Jewels are brilliant. How often the clear sparkle of a gem set in a ring or as an ornament of adornment catches our eye, and almost without thinking our gaze follows its every movement. We are fascinated by the delightful way facets reflect in varying hue the rays of light that fall upon them. Oftentimes the large, well-cut gem seems to possess an inner light apart from that which strikes it. However, this we know is only an optical illusion, because no jewel possesses light within itself. So with the saint of God and the gifts and graces that are conferred upon us. Apart from God we are nothing, even as the brilliance of the jewel darkens and dies when taken from the light.

Jewels are beautiful. Precious stones have a beauty of form and color that delights the eye. Visualize spread out before you on a cloth of midnight blue velvet, some jewels of beauty. The clear, icy sparkle of the diamond, the warmth of glowing red of the ruby, the cool green of the emerald beside the regal purple of an amethyst. See also a sapphire reflecting the blue of heaven; a chalcedony, pale blue, translucent, and wax-like; and interspersed among them all, lustrous pearls, warm glowing spheres so strikingly different from the sharp facets of the other gems, all reflecting the same light in gloriously different hues, none detracting from the

other, but all enhancing the beauty of the whole. Those many-hued stones bring out the varied qualities of God, made known through His people. There will be different rays of His glory revealed through them, illustrated by these different precious stones, which are the emblems employed, to set forth the luster of God's elect, in heavenly glory, and the way in which He displays the beauty which He has formed in them. Put a light through an emerald, and it is quite different from that of the ruby, and although we are all partakers of the grace and glory of God, that grace and glory will shine through each differently, and no two are alike. It would be an immense pity if all the saints were like a truck load of bricks — all the same shape, and color. What a dull, drab City it would be! Just as there are not two leaves of the forest alike, so there are not two saints of God alike. All are alike in being perfected in His image, but all are different in the expression of that image, just as children are different expressions of their parents.

My heart has been thrilled and stirred beyond measure as I have mused upon the glories of the Holy City of God's great and eternal Kingdom. It has stood out to me that the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are inscribed upon the twelve foundations of the City. Time and space do not permit us to explore the deep meaning within each of the names of these apostles, but each bespeaks of a foundational principle in the governmental realm of God. In the various symbols of this City we see different representations of truth and the purposes of God in His people. The walls speak of the strength of the Christ within as our defense against every enemy of the spiritual life. The gates portray those precious truths and experiences in God by which we are given an abundant entrance into the High Calling of God. The foundations figure for us those foundational truths, experiences, ministries, and characteristics upon which the whole economy of God's Kingdom rests. The Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. This means that Christ is foundational in the life of the New Creation — there is that of Him which is laid in us as the basis, underlying principle, substratum, and support of all that is raised up in our lives. Christ Himself is the apostle of our profession, says the writer to the Hebrews. The apostles that is, the apostolic ministry, is one of the underpinings of God's house.

Our English word "apostle" transliterates the Greek word APOSTOLOS which means one who is sent. During the earthly ministry of Jesus twelve disciples were called "apostles". In Rev. 21:14 these are called "the twelve apostles of the Lamb. This means that the twelve were specifically those who followed Jesus and were sent forth by Him during the days of His earthly walk as the Lamb of God come to live among men and be slain in sacrifice for them. The scriptures clearly show that the twelve were uniquely the apostles of Christ to the Jews (Acts 1:15-26; Acts 1:8; Gal. 2:8). Thus, the twelve were an entirely different order of apostles than those set forth in **Eph. 4:7-11** where we read: "Therefore He saith, **WHEN HE ASCENDED UP ON HIGH, He...gave gifts unto men...and He gave some apostles...**" These apostles were not given by the Christ during His three and a half years of ministry while He walked the earth in a flesh and blood body as the Lamb of God. This order of apostle was given by the RISEN and ASCENDED Lord, and given not to the Jews, but to THE CHURCH which is His body. This order of apostle went beyond the twelve and included Barnabas and Paul (Acts 14:4), Sylvanus and Timothy (I Thes. 2:6), as well as Andronicus and Junia (a woman!) (Rom. 16:7) among others. These were all apostles to the early Church, even as the twelve were apostles in Jerusalem among the Jewish believers.

May the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God grant us understanding in this unique and momentous hour at the end of the age! It is my deepest conviction that God is raising up and sending forth an entirely NEW APOSTOLIC MINISTRY in this present day. I do not hesitate to declare to you that the apostle's ministry has always been essentially that of bringing in a NEW ORDER. A friend has shared the following insights into this great truth: "Apostles build where NO OTHER MAN HAS BUILT. So if a man is doing what others have done for years before him, or what was done two thousand years ago, I do not see that as a true apostolic ministry today. Moses, as an apostle, brought in an entirely new order. He went up into the mountain and brought down the 'house-law' for the new dispensation. Jesus, as the 'apostle of our profession' ushered in a whole new age, and the Church Age apostles established that new thing. Apostleship is associated with NEW THINGS, foundation layers, those who CRACK THE FORM OF THE FORMER AGE and bring forth the essence of it and build the essence. Jesus, as an apostle, cracked the form of the Old Covenant and brought forth the essence of it in Himself.

"Many brethren have felt an inward call to apostolic ministry in this hour, and not yet understanding the fullness of what the Lord is doing have tried to apply that call in the wrong realm: moving under Church Order in an

attempt to fulfill it. The sun is now setting on the Church age and the transcendent glory of that brighter and greater age when the body of Christ has been brought to its fullness, the manifestation of the sons of God, and all nations brought under the dominion of the Kingdom of God, is even now dawning upon us. It is now time for the APOSTLES OF THE KINGDOM to be sent forth, and these apostles will CRACK THE FORM of the Church age and bring forth its content as an essence that the Church has never yet known. These can be naught but the FIRST of the FIRSTFRUITS COMPANY. These must be brought forth prior to the establishing of the Kingdom, as the foundations of the Kingdom are laid in them."

THE STREET

Can we not see that all natural things have spiritual counterparts? John on the Isle of Patmos, beholding these glories in the Spirit, wrote, "And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Rev. 21:21). Here I would share the comments of another on this passage which eloquently sum up the very truth the Spirit has quickened in my own heart. "In the symbolism of scripture, gold is the symbol of the nature of God. As much as gold is the perfect metal that cannot be tarnished, so God's nature is perfect and it cannot be tarnished. From times immemorial men walked on streets. So the street of the City speaks of our walk. The fact that the street of this City was pure gold reveals to us the truth that in our walk, we will have come to the perfect walk in the nature of our God, having attained to the perfect nature of our God, walking in perfect purity, perfect holiness. We cannot overemphasize the truth that the idea that so many Christians have in their spiritual immaturity — that some day they're going to go to a literal, physical city, in space somewhere, with streets paved with literal gold and buildings made out of jewels is merely a notion that is the product of spiritual childishness. There is no physical city anywhere in God's vast universe having streets paved with gold and buildings constructed of jewels. There never will be any physical city with streets paved with gold and buildings made out of jewels as our 'heaven.' Our heaven is revealed to us in Eph. 2:1,5-7, where the scripture says, 'And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...but God...when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS: that in the ages to come He might show (display) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ.'

"To become exactly like Christ — this is our 'heaven', no matter where we happen to be in God's great universe. 'Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren' (Rom. 8:29). This is our final dwelling place, our final state of being, when we have come to our glorified spiritual state, come to perfection in Christ Jesus, and have become the Holy City. Then we will not go to this city or that city or any city, but God's whole universe will be our dwelling place. We will be free — free from the limitations of flesh, free from the tyranny of sin, free from the power of death, and therefore free to live in God's universe as citizens of God's universe. Of what benefit would streets paved with gold be to us after we have attained our glorified body? We will have no need to walk on any kind of streets then. We will have come to the resurrection life of Jesus. After the Lord Jesus was resurrected, we don't find that when He wanted to go somewhere He had to walk down streets. When He wanted to go to the upper room where the disciples were gathered, He simply appeared to them there in the upper room. When He wished to join some of the disciples walking on the road to Emmaus, He simply appeared to them there. When He wanted to meet with the disciples in the hills of Galilee, He simply appeared there. When the disciples were fishing on the lake and He appeared to them on the shore, He didn't need to walk there, He just was there.

"When we have attained to the resurrection power of Christ and we want to transport ourselves from one place to another, we won't have to walk down any literal street paved with gold, or asphalt, or anything else. We will simply think the thought in the will of the Father and we will be there. So streets paved with gold would be of no value to us, or buildings of jewels, because we won't live in physical buildings. Our dwelling place will be in God by the Spirit! The only reason that gold and jewels are so attractive to us now is because we are still physically in our carnal state and these things are beautiful on this plane and have real monetary value. They have carnal value here on earth. When we have attained to our spiritual state in spirit, soul, and body, such things will mean nothing to us because all things will be ours. Not one physical thing will have more value than another to us. So we see that there never was, and never will be, any literal city in heaven someplace with streets paved with gold. These are simply symbols which God uses to present to us spiritual realities. That

spiritual reality is the Holy City which is the Church in perfection. With our spiritual mind we see that the street paved with gold is a symbol of a perfect walk in the Spirit of God, having attained to the perfect nature of God. We see that street of gold walked out in the lives of our brothers and sisters who walk out the nature of God even here on earth."

THE TREE OF LIFE

"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2). What would you expect to find in the midst of the street of a great city? Without doubt, the din of endless traffic, and the hurrying of eager feet. But was there ever half so beautiful a street as that seen by the aged eyes of the Seer of Patmos? In a loving description of the New Jerusalem, he noticed that in the midst of the street there was a river, and on either side of the river there was a tree — the tree of life. A tree in the street! And what a tree! Ever young and fair, bearing fruit all the year round, and dressed in leaves which were able to heal the sick and torn nations of the world as soon as they entered this street of the City of God and plucked thereof. Beautiful street of a glorious City! If only our unbelieving eyes could catch a sight of such a street with the magic, beneficent tree in the midst of it, how eagerly we too would run to pluck its leaves and heal our distracted hearts!

Thank God, the work of God upon the world is not yet done. The nations of earth are sick, even today; the mind and the heart are not sound; they need healing. And they find it on the leaves of the tree in the street of the City of God. So it would seem as if the vision that sustained the aged heart of this true Seer was that of some heavenly City in this world. True, there lies upon this City a wondrous light, such as never was upon sea or land; and no city that has ever been built by human hands can compare with it for the nobility of its inhabitants. But it seems, after all, to be a City set up upon the earth, inhabited not by angels but by living men, with the living God among them. The Word does not say "trees" of life, but the "tree" of life. You see, there is only one tree to give life to all of the City, and healing to all the nations of the world. It says that this tree was on either side of the river. On both sides of the river. How could one tree be on both sides of a river? Because it is the tree of life, my beloved. It is simply PERFECT UNION WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD. In the blessedness of Eden, back in the beginning, man walked in perfect union with the Spirit of God, and therefore he was feeding upon the tree of life. He was partaking of the tree of life continuously. When he followed the serpent in his temptation and turned away and broke his communion with the Spirit of God, he ceased to partake of the tree of life, and began to partake of the tree of the carnal realm — the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As man comes back into that perfect union with the Spirit of God that he knew in the beginning, he once again has perfect access to the tree of life. The one tree is on either side of the river of life — it is only through union with the Holy Spirit, who is the river of life, that we have access and are partakers of the tree of life. It is as we are continually beside the river of life, yea, in that river, that we know the power of that tree.

Notice that the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. There has never been anything given to mankind for the healing of the nations, healing of the dread sickness of sin and death under which all are cursed. There has been no medicine, no philosophy, no governmental arrangement, no social order, no set of laws, no religious system — nothing that has or can heal. Healing comes only through the Word of God. So the leaves of the tree are the truths of God's Word that are given to us by the Spirit of God, which is the river of life, by which we partake of the tree of life, and of its leaves which are the eternal truths of God's Word, truths which alone will bring the healing of the nations. Let me make it as plain as possible. The river is the Spirit — the tree is the Word. The Spirit and the Word! It is out of the Spirit of God that the Word of God issues forth. The Spirit is life. The Word is an incorruptible seed planted within the river. We are born again of the Spirit, and we are born of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. We drink of the Spirit, whereas we eat of the Word. When the ministry of the Spirit in the Lord's body brings forth the Word of life in all its power and authority — the nations will be healed!

The tree of life bears twelve manner of fruits. Twelve is the number of divine government, and the fruit is the fruit of the spirit. Therefore the twelve manner of fruits that the tree of life bears simply represents to us the fruit of the spirit borne in our lives in POWER AND DEMONSTRATION. The Kingdom (rule, government) of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. When the fruit of the spirit is

produced out of our lives until the nature of God is revealed powerfully and communicated effectually to men producing change and transformation — there is the blessed fruit of the wonderful tree of life!

THE RIVER

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1). This wonderful river is called the "water of life" because of its life-giving properties. Earthly streams usually have their source in some mountain spring, but this river of living water, has its source in the throne of God and the Lamb. This stream originates unpolluted, incorruptible, and undefiled in all the power, all the authority, and life of Christ. This is the river and the water that Jesus spoke of to the woman at the well, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (Jn. 4:14). "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come onto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water...this spake He of the Spirit" (Jn. 7:37-39).

This pure river of life of the Holy Spirit brings unto every believer the divine life and nature of God that is made available unto us by the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has made us partakers of His divine nature. He has given us His own divine life. This Holy City flows with ALL that God is; even NOW this river and all that it possesses is flowing through the channel of our lives by the Holy Ghost. This is the eternal river of the Spirit and Life that flows in the heart and life of every believer and eternally from the throne of God and the Lamb until all creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Praise God! Already we are beginning to drink of that water of life; we are able to overcome death; the tears are being wiped from our eyes. Already we do not weep as those who have no hope. The spirit of the New Jerusalem is in us; therefore, death has no power over us. We have victory over death, the last enemy we must conquer. The complete and final fulfillment of these things is yet to come because we are still growing and maturing. Now we are beginning to experience a foretaste of the glory that lies before us. Hallelujah!

J. PRESTON EBY

HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 38

TAURUS-THE WILD BULL

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART THIRTY-EIGHT

THE SWEET INFLUENCES OF PLEIADES
ORION
ERIDANUS

As we continue our study on the real meaning of the Zodiac, we come now to the Sign of TAURUS — THE WILD BULL. Taurus, The Bull, has the same meaning in virtually every language in which it is known. It is a picture of a great beast, a bull or ox, with his head lowered and his horns pointed forward. He is untameable and irresistible. He is charging forth — rampaging, raging, bringing destruction to all that is in his way. It is interesting to note that the Sign of Taurus is only the forepart of the bull: actually, as it is seen in the heavens, it appears to grow right out of Aires, the Lamb. The picture is of a lamb that changes into a Bull. In a previous constellation we saw Capricornus, half goat and half fish, giving birth to the Fish, the body of Christ; the slain lamb giving birth to the people of God. Here we see the gentle and redeeming Lamb taking on a different form and character — now giving rise to the Christ coming in great glory and in swift and powerful judgment. In salvation and deliverance we meet and know and experience Him as the Lamb, but to all that is contrary to Him — the world, the flesh and the devil — He becomes the irresistible Lord of Judgment.

The chief star in Taurus is Al Debaran, located in the bull's eye, and means The Captain, The Leader, or The Governor. Then there is the cluster of stars known as Pleiades which means The Congregation of The Judge. Also the second Decan of TAURUS is Eridanus meaning The River of The Judge. So there is no doubt as to the significance of TAURUS — judgment! This character of the bull, as denoting the Christ coming forth in judgment, is presented by the pen of inspiration in these enlightening words: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thes. 1:7-8). Long millenniums ago the prophet Isaiah declared, "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter. For My sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of My curse, to judgment. For the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood...for it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion" (Isa. 34:1-8).

What a picture of divine judgment! The subject of judgment is a large one in the Bible, running through scripture from Genesis to Revelation, and it is so manifold in meaning, purpose, and application that it eludes simplification. The judgments of God run deep and are so vast and multi-faceted that they lie completely beyond the comprehension of the carnal mind and beyond the grasp of mortal man. As exclaimed by Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how UNSEARCHABLE ARE HIS JUDGMENTS, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33). David prophesied, "...for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" (Ps. 96:13). Paul urged the Athenians to repent "because He hath appointed A DAY in which He will JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He has raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Judgment is inseparably related to the coming of Christ and His Kingdom. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord, Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom" (II Tim. 4:1).

We have met some brethren in this word of sonship and the kingdom of God who have exaggerated the bright side of the love of God out of all proportion to its other aspects. The love of God has been presented in such a

way that it is a weakness rather than a strength. It has been presented on the sunny side of the street with nothing on the other side ever mentioned. There is a "love" of God preached that has become such a one-sided, mushy, gooey, sugar sweet thing that it contains nothing of the vital and vigorous concern of a Father for the best interests of a son — it would never love enough to chasten, scourge and correct that son! They have perverted love, making it sickening rather than stimulating, causing it to slop over on every side like a sentimental feeling rather than expressing an abiding concern for the object of love. The kind of God we have revealed in the scriptures is a God of both love and judgment. He is not a nebulous nonentity of sentimentalism. He is a God of character. We thank God today that He is a God of love, forgiveness and mercy — and there would not be one of us alive today to breathe His fresh air, if it were not for His amazing love toward us. But those who do not want to believe that God will administer a sufficient amount of corrective judgment upon the disobedient and rebellious, should be reminded that God is exactly that kind of Being. In the very cradle of human history, we find God pronouncing a curse upon our first parents on account of their transgression. He even pronounced a curse upon the earth itself on account of their sin.

There is going to be a unique and different unfolding of this One we call Jesus Christ! We have known Him as the Saviour of the world — but He is about to go forth bringing His judgments to the whole earth, to the entire bestial order that the carnal mind of man has erected. In the book of Revelation we see the Christ riding forth on a white horse with the armies of the sons of God following in His path, "judging and making war. In Revelation 6:16 it is called "the WRATH of the LAMB. What an amazing divine paradox! The "Lamb" of God who "takes away the sin of the W-O-R-L-D" on the one hand, and the "wrath" of the Lamb on the other hand. The Lamb — precious embodiment of meekness, mildness, lowliness, gentleness, patience and sacrifice — coming upon the world for which He died in the hot fury of vengeance, until men are found fleeing from the wrath of the Lamb! Ah, this is Aries, the Lamb, who becomes Taurus, the Bull! Is it not written in the heavens?

This dual nature — the meekness of the Lamb and the vengeance of the Wild Bull — makes Him what He is, both the SAVIOUR and the JUDGE of the universe. In His redemptive activity His face is set against sin and death. Nothing can ever alter that. He will go to all lengths to turn men from evil, and restore them into harmony with the mind and heart of God. The sheer simplicity and sincerity of His passion is enough to melt and win the most sophisticated or the hardest of men. The wrath of the Lamb is beyond our understanding. But the Seer of Patmos was shown the unveiling of the wrath of the Lamb. I want to declare that God is going to come forth in these last days in a revelation of Jesus Christ with the judgments and wrath of God. This shaking and purging will affect the very church of the living God. The hour is come when judgment must begin at the house of God, but the whole earth will reel violently under the overflow. And do not think, precious friend of mine that this judgment that begins at the house of God pertains to Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggert. The judgment of these brethren is the judgment of God revealed against that great city, Babylon. The judgment that begins at the house of God comes first to those who have received the call to sonship, to those apprehended to the high calling of God, to those predestined to be conformed into the image of the son of God that they may rule and reign with Him in His Kingdom! The Lord comes suddenly to His temple as a refiner's fire and as fullers soap. He shall thoroughly purge His floor, and purify the sons of Levi.

There is a two-fold working of God in the lives of the Lord's apprehended ones. First, SELF must be dethroned, and in the accomplishment of this Christ is the Wild Bull, clothed with strength and majesty and terribleness. As the Wild Bull He will crush every bone in the body of your self life and tear away and destroy every vestige of your flesh. But as the Lamb He wondrously imparts of HIS LIFE that you may live by the spirit. The Wild Bull is Christ warring, destroying, conquering all that pertains to the nature of old Adam. The Lamb is Christ AS OUR LIFE that we may appear with Him in glory. But further — these same qualities and characteristics must be fulfilled in the elect as we are conformed into His image, made ONE IN HIM. The company of the sons of God shall bear both the image of the Lamb and the Wild Bull. The strength and ferocity of the Wild Bull nature shall function through the sons in perfect unity with the gentle and ministerial character of the Lamb. These two streams of the divine nature, working together as one, in judgment and in mercy, shall flow mightily and great, and will cause the very earth to shake, will move heaven and stir hell, and bring the triumph of God's Kingdom among men. Hallelujah to the Lamb! Hallelujah to the Bull!

I pointed out previously that the chief star in TAURUS is Al Debara, located in the bull's eye, and means The Captain or The Leader. Then in the constellation of TAURUS there is a cluster of stars known as PLEIADES

which means The Congregation of the Judge. Ah — God is revealing not only the righteous judgments of our Lord and Leader, Jesus Christ, but He is preparing and forming His WILD BULL COMPANY, those blessed ones made one with the heavenly Taurus and the Lamb on Mount Zion. This glorious ministry shall prevail in the earth and restore all back into God again. The scriptures reveal that the church is the body of Christ, and God's blessed Christ must include both the Head and the body. All true saints must be aware of this sacred secret — that the body is the body of ALL THAT THE HEAD IS. If Christ the Head is Saviour, then the body of Christ the Head is the body of the Saviour — a body of SAVIOURS. If Christ the Head is King, it follows that the body of the Head is the body of the King — a body of KINGS. And armed with the knowledge that Christ the Head is the great and universal Judge, it should be perfectly clear that the body of the Head is the body of the Judge — a body of JUDGES! The purpose of the firstfruits being judged is that they in turn may be qualified to judge. The judgments of God shall be executed upon the human family and the ages to come by this glorious CORPORATE CHRIST, Jesus Christ the Head and all the sons and daughters of God, His body, the completeness of HIS THRONE which shall smite the dark kingdoms of this world, and the saints shall take the kingdom and reign with Christ in power, authority and glory.

God is preparing a mighty COMPANY OF JUDGES whose responsibility it shall be to JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness! **Daniel 7:21-22** sheds much light upon this subject. "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN TO THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." Again, "And he that overcometh...to him will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (**Rev. 2:26-27**). "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN UNTO THEM" (**Rev. 20:4,6**). The apostle Paul adds, "Do ye not know that the SAINTS shall JUDGE THE WORLD? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that WE shall JUDGE ANGELS? how much more things that pertain to this life" (**I Cor. 6:2-3**). Jesus spoke of this same beautiful truth when He said to His disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father has appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in the kingdom, and SIT ON THRONES JUDGING THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL" (**Lk. 22:28-30**). Most of the Christian world is waiting for Jesus to come at "any minute" and bring judgment upon the earth. In the greater light of present truth we now understand that the judgment which HE IS, and which is now wrought out in His saints, the firstfruits of His redemption, will ultimately be manifested to creation in and through the sons of God. The judges for this day are now in preparation for their awesome task. Yes, YOU shall judge the world, saints...but you will do it in humility and with a broken heart full of compassion and love. Taurus, the Bull, emerges out of Aries, the Lamb. The first aspect of the ministry of the judges in the coming age is JUDGMENT. This work, however, shall be swiftly followed by the second ministry of MERCY and RESTORATION, for God's judgments are ever by correction unto redemption.

THE SWEET INFLUENCES OF PLEIADES

In the neck of Taurus is a cluster of stars called PLEIADES, also known as the Seven Sisters or the Seven Stars. Pleiades, as I have pointed out, means The Congregation of The Judge. In the thirty-eighth chapter of the book of Job God asked Job some very pointed questions. One of the most suggestive of all these questions, and one that may well cause the reader to ponder deeply, is found in the thirty-first verse. Here the query is raised, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" A gentleman who spent the first forty years of his life in ancient Mesopotamia, the land where Job lived, brought some light upon this rather fascinating query. He said that though they are, of course, close together in the sky in that far-away eastern land, the Pleiades and Orion are the constellations which introduce the spring and winter seasons. So this is a pertinent question that God asks of Job, nor can it be answered by any man since Job, including the present generation. When the Pleiades shone in the sky at night, the men of that land knew that spring had come. Note, then, this question carefully, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?" That is to say, when sap has begun to flow, when the leaf has appeared on the bough, and the tree has put forth her blossoms, when the grass springs forth from the sod, and the brooks begin to sing, is there any human influence which can lock them again in the still bands of winter? In a word, when God begins to make a spring, no man can hinder or retard. In the same sense of finality, when Orion flamed in the sky of that land, winter had come. How utterly fantastic for man to seek to reply in the affirmative to this question of the Almighty, "Canst thou loose the bands of Orion?" No man can loose the bands of winter. When the blossom and the leaf

disappear and all the singing waters are locked in the icy manacles of winter, who can hinder God in the progress of the season?

Spiritually, no one can hinder or stop the ongoing seasons of God as He brings forth His purposes in the earth. Historically, the purposes of God have marched forward triumphantly from age to age, from dispensation to dispensation, from dealing to dealing, unfolding God's Kingdom in the earth from realm to realm. The New Testament record begins at the period just before and at the time of the coming of Jesus into the world. Just like the seasons, "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son" (Gal. 4:4). He came into the world to do away with the old dispensation and covenant of law, which had no power to bring life to dead souls and is symbolized by winter, and to usher in the new dispensation of grace, which is symbolized by spring. The law of God has never been fulfilled excepting in Jesus Christ. That which man could not do, Christ came and did as He walked upon earth and when He died upon Calvary. The darkness and winter of condemnation and bondage which rested upon man, were done away by the Lord Jesus Christ, who satisfied every demand of the law. The rain of the Holy Spirit which came with the doing away of the law softened the ground and prepared it for the bringing in of a better covenant.

As we think of the faint light that the people of God had under the old dispensation, we see that it truly was winter. It was like the warmth of the sun in midwinter, when its rays can scarcely penetrate and disperse the frost in the air. There was no more power in the law to give life to one soul, than there is power and warmth in the midwinter sun and atmosphere, to bring out the flowers of spring and the fruits of summer and autumn. Not through works of the law or religion, nor of himself, is man saved; but it is the gift and work of God. He has given unto us eternal life, and the life is in His Son. He that hath the Son, hath the life; and he that hath not the Son hath not the life. In the individual, this is a picture of the soul who is dead in trespasses and unbelief; full of deadness and darkness, full of fruitlessness; whose life is bleak, cold, and dead, like midwinter. When the breaking up comes, and the rays of the sun begin to fall upon the winter of death and unbelief, the clouds of doubts and fears and ignorance begin to roll away; and the warmth of the "Sun of righteousness" brings life and warmth to the soul. It is the rain that comes when winter begins to break up that prepares the ground for the seed and fruitfulness. It is the breaking up that comes in deep conviction and dealing, with godly sorrow and repentance, that prepares the heart of man for the seed of Christ and fruit-bearing. The rain cannot bring fruit any more than can the snow and winter; but it prepares the ground for the germination of the seed, which has life in it, and has life more abundant.

As the summer comes on the flowers appear upon the trees and upon the vines of the heritage of the Lord. As yet there is no fruit, but the blossoms give promise of a rich harvest from every shrub and plant, from every vine that the Father has planted in His vineyard. This is the beginning of the setting up of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. Everything is either in blossom or in flower; upon the olive tree and upon the vine appear the bud, the blossom, the green fruit. Though the fruit has not yet ripened, though the "many brethren" have not yet come fully into the likeness and image of the Firstborn Son, yet the fragrance and beauty of the first days of spring cover the Lord's vineyard; the sunshine of God's approval is over His heritage. The warmth of His grace and the light of His glory are wooing the buds to burst forth into flowers, the flowers to give place to the tiny fruit, and the immature fruit to go on to perfection. And, blessed be God! none can hinder or stop the mighty working of God in this hour to bring forth His sons and the manifestation of His Kingdom. "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?" Can you? Can any one?

The wonderful truth is: NO ONE CAN HINDER OR STOP THE PROCESSES OF GOD! God has a plan! At the beginning of the church age the world was visited by events so momentous in their power and glory that all things were changed from that time onward. In the eternal realm before the ages were formed, and ages before man first saw the light of earth's day, the almighty Lord set in motion His omniscient and immutable purpose for the ages which were to follow. As a year is filled with weeks and a week is filled with days and a day is filled with hours, so time is filled with ages and ages with dispensations. Let it be thoroughly known that our all-wise heavenly Father planned the events of each successive age from the very first age unto the ages of ages far beyond the comprehension of mortal man. It is not by accident nor by natural evolution that the world has progressed from the darkness of paganism to the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It is by divine design. The plan of the ages conceived in the heart of Him who purposed all things after the counsel of His own will is being worked out one step at a time in each succeeding age in like

manner as people who read these lines have often planned in advance the work for each successive day of a week or each week of a year. Is it not true that many of the wives and business men now reading this paper have plans in mind for today and tomorrow and perhaps even months and years in the future? Whether consciously or unconsciously we all plan ahead, daily and hourly working toward some human goal. There is nothing that opens the wellspring of love, of faith and understanding, in the human heart like the knowledge of God's purpose. What infinite joy, what satisfaction and assurance flood our souls when for the first time in our lives our great and wonderful Father is seen to be a God of purpose, knowing the end from the beginning because He planned the beginning and planned the end! He created all things by His omnipotent power that His glorious purpose might be fulfilled. And the power that made all things and brought forth all things into being is the same power that upholds all things and controls all things and shall almightily bring to a successful conclusion the divine purpose in all things.

My dear brother in Christ, Stacy Wood, recently shared with us the following word which masterfully sums up the point I am making. "Two millenniums ago God began a work in His people, and in the book of Revelation He recorded it through His servant John. 'These things,' He says, 'must shortly come to pass' (Rev. 1:1). The Greek word here translated 'shortly' doesn't mean that these things would come to pass within a few days; it means that when they begin they will continue until they have been fulfilled or brought to completion. I am persuaded that we are in the fulfillment — we are in the days when things are 'shortly' coming to pass — when the purposes of God are marching forward to their fulfillment and completion. We are in the days when events are suddenly happening about us, God has set into motion events which have been progressively unfolding in His body from age to age, each age becoming brighter and brighter and better and better until finally God pulls the veil off from who we really are and causes us to BE. God started something that HE is completing, and that is where our confidence has to be.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). It is GOD who began the work in you, beloved. I did not begin it, it was not a preacher that began it, it wasn't our ability to grasp hold of some light that began it. It was the Light Himself, who is the Light of our being, who dawned upon our consciousness and began a good work in us. Since He began it, we must trust Him to finish it. We may think we know what He has in mind for us, but the One who drew up the plan and began the work is the One who really knows what the finished product is all about. So we must rest upon, confide in and trust that the One who began the good work in us will bring it to completion.

"I do want to define this term 'good work.' In the English language when we think of 'good' we relate it to that which feels good, tastes good — what we like. If we don't like it, it's not good. If it pleases us, it's good. But that would be an inaccurate understanding of this word 'good.' A better English rendition of the word would be WORTHWHILE. God has begun a WORTHWHILE work in you! And He will complete it! The word worthwhile bears wonderful significance for me because I realize that with the good there is also the bitter and difficult, but it all works together for good. I do not look at everything that comes my way as being 'good.' In fact, the vast majority of things that come my way, if I were to judge it as being good or bad, I would say is bad, not good! But you see, now I've learned that it's not a matter of good and bad — it's a matter of worthwhile or worthless. I'm learning that everything that comes my way by the hand of the Father is certainly WORTHWHILE! Sometimes it's very bitter, but it's worthwhile. So God has begun a worthwhile work, a worthwhile endeavor — in us. And He is capable of bringing it to its fullness, its completion, unto the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" — end quote. Thank God! He shall complete the work in us. To us, as to Job of old, the question comes, Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" No way! God's truth, God's will, God's purpose, God's seasons, God's new creation march relentlessly and inexorably onward.

The prophet Amos spoke the word of the Lord concerning the heavens and their relationship to the elect when he said, "Seek Him that maketh the seven stars (Pleiades) and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: the Lord is His name" (Amos 5:8). Paul Mueller has written concerning this beautiful and significant prophecy: "Not only do the heavens 'declare the glory of God,' but also 'the firmament showeth His handiwork.' God's present work involves making or creating 'the seven stars.' 'Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion.' These 'seven stars' represent the remnant gathered out of the seven periods of the church age who shall come forth in the fullness of their brilliance to begin the kingdom age. Not only is the Lord

making the 'seven stars,' but He is also making or creating 'Orion,' as the prophet Amos has declared. The prophet mentioned both the seven stars and the constellation Orion as having special prophetic significance. This is not the word of a man, it is the word of the Lord. Therefore, Orion, as well as the seven stars, must have particular importance for the elect in this hour. As we read the Bible, we will find that the Lord has veiled His truth in parables, allegories, types and shadows. Such is the case with the truth of Orion, which is a constellation in the heavens associated with Taurus, the bull.

"When doubts assail and fears dismay, we should look to the heavenly example, and see Christ Jesus, our faithful High Priest. He is completing the circuit in the heavens, thus giving us a clear picture of the victory that is ours in the fullness of time. He is running His course as a strong, happy youth, starting from the distant skies and whirling through the full extent of it, just as we are doing in this world. We are seen as stars in that heavenly realm. We are the 'seven stars' that are in the Lord's right hand, thus indicating that we shall complete this course in the strength, power and authority of His right hand. Let the blessed words of truth be a constant encouragement, for as He is in His heavenly sanctuary, so are we in this present world of carnality and corruption. This is the truth of 'the mystery of the seven stars' that are in His right hand. The mystery of the seven stars and of the gloriously adorned Orion in the heavens presents a picture of great hope for all the apprehended ones, and for the whole creation. As the seven stars are a part of the great Orion Prince in the heavens, so are we essential parts or members of the Princely Christ Company who is destined to rule the world.

"This Christ company of today is far greater than the resurrected and glorified Jesus. All during this age, a vast company of sons has been joined to Him by the Spirit. Therefore, John saw Him as being 'like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength' (Rev. 1:13-16). Seven stars are seen in His right hand which He holds with honor, dignity and hope. We are the seven stars that He proudly holds in His right hand, for He has purchased our salvation, and is also leading us to the fullness of sonship. He who is 'the great First Cause of the universe' is 'guiding His many children (sons) to His glorious salvation' (Heb. 2:10) (Smith-Goodspeed). And again, 'These things saith He that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars' (Rev. 3:1). He who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks holds the seven stars representing His holy remnant. This Christ company is anointed with the seven spirits of God, illustrating their divine power and authority. They are made up of the remnant gathered throughout this age. The union of these seven stars into the one body of Christ is depicted in the heavens as Great Orion. In the fullness of time, the Lord will 'loose the bands of Orion,' and the manifestation of the sons of God will take place.

In His discussions with Job, the Lord asked him where he was when He laid the foundations of the world, and also, 'when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy' (Job 38:4-7). The implication given here is that the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, when the Lord was laying the foundations of the earth. Why did they/we sing on that blessed, primeval occasion? Because the Father taught us the wonderful truth of the deliverance of the creation, and of our part in that magnificent work of restoration, as stars in union with Christ, who is the primary Star. This is the mystery of the seven stars in His right hand. The 'mystery' of this great truth is becoming less of a mystery as the Spirit reveals the truth of it. When we come into the knowledge of the fullness of all truth, the mysteries will no longer be mysteries, but will be fully revealed and known by all the wise. The truths found in this portion of the book of Job are deep mysteries that call only be understood by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. But when the Spirit reveals them to us, we feast on its glories and rejoice in the magnificence of the Father's great plan of redemption and restoration" — end quote.

Brother Mueller has touched on a most precious and significant point in his writing quoted above. God is "making" both the seven stars (Pleiades) and Orion. Let all who read these lines know that the seven stars of which the prophet Amos spake and the seven stars in the right hand of the One like unto the Son of man in John's vision on Patmos are the same seven stars. "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels (messengers) of the seven

churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20). It is significant to note that the word "angel" in both Hebrew and Greek simply means messenger, which in no way limits it to celestial beings of a different order than men. "Angel" means messenger: one sent with a message, who is both the message itself and the personal representative of the Sender. The Hebrew word MALACK equals messenger. The Greek word AGGELOS means messenger. Anyone sent with a message is a messenger — an angel. If there had been Western Union messengers in Bible times they would have been called "Western Union Angels," for "angel" means messenger.

The very same word is used of those sent by men, those sent by satan, and those sent by God. Any messenger sent by a king, or any other person, is in both the Hebrew and Greek languages, an angel of that person, viz: a messenger. If sent by a human being, the messenger-angel was the personal representative of that one, in the message he was commissioned to bear. **Luke 7:18-28** speaks of the messengers of John the Baptist as angels and in verse 24 we read, "And when the messengers (angels) of John were departed..." These same messengers are called disciples in verse 18. If sent by God, the messenger-angel was the personal representative of God, in the message he was given to bear. In **Luke 7:27**, John the Baptist is denominated as an angel, "Behold, I send My messenger (Greek: "aggelos" — angel) before thy face..." It could just as well have been translated, "Behold, I send My angel before thy face..." The context always decides whose angel the messenger is. John was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, to bear a message from God, and accomplish a mission for God and His Anointed One — the Christ. In the anointing, the word, and mission, John was a man-angel of God, the greatest prophet born of women!

The mystery of the seven candlesticks is that they "are the seven churches." The seven churches represent THE WHOLE CHURCH REALM THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE CHURCH AGE. Some say they are seven church periods or ages, and I do not doubt there is truth there. But the seven churches also represent the entire church within any given period of time. All the states and conditions within those seven churches are with us in each and every generation. If you want to know what the church has been like during the past two thousand years — look at the seven candlesticks! There you have the divinely inspired portrait of the church realm during this age painted by the brushstrokes of the Holy Spirit of revelation. The Lord commends and praises them on the one hand, while warning and rebuking them on the other hand. These churches reveal the true nature of the whole church throughout the age, and history and personal experience both testify conclusively that John was shown aright. And from that day to this, make no mistake about it — ALL CHURCHES HAVE BEEN THE SAME! They are today! And should the church age continue on for another thousand years the church would not have changed. The word of God immutably declares it! The seven candlesticks are the seven churches, and the seven churches are the church throughout the entire church age. The "New Testament Church" realm can never be different from what John saw in spirit, for that I-S THE CHURCH IN THIS AGE.

In the vision there is One who stands in the midst of the candlesticks and in His right hand are the seven stars. Not only are the seven stars in the right hand — they are the right hand. This meaning is often expressed in common speech: "He is my right hand man," meaning the one who carries out my instructions, accomplishes my will, and does things in my place. The seven angels are a messenger company in the realm of the spirit, a revelatory people, having the seven spirits of God, the seven-fold intensified spirit of the Lord formed within as the Knowledge, the Wisdom, and the Power of God. Each of these seven stars are a SPIRIT, a HOLY SPIRIT, personified as the WORD OF GOD. Altogether they are the arm of the Lord, the hand-ministry of God in the midst of His people and in the earth. The seven churches are one church or body of the Christ. The seven spirits are the Power and Knowledge and Wisdom of God flowing through a spiritual ministry to that body. The seven messengers are the spiritual instrument through which the deep things of God are communicated to the churches. They are not so much persons as the anointing, the spirit of wisdom and revelation, the spirit of prophecy, the dispensation of God out of the realm of the Spirit. The seven messages are seven dimensions of the revelation of Jesus Christ to those who are called to sonship — the overcomers. The seven messages are the complete and perfect revelation of Jesus Christ. Each of the seven messages is given BY Jesus Christ THROUGH the angels, the messengers, the anointings. Each message concludes with the combination warning- call, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what THE SPIRIT saith unto the churches." Each individual message has a word to all the seven churches as well as to the individual church which is named. Those seven churches are still in the world today. Every believer who dwells in the candlestick realm is part of at least

one of them, and a part of them all. And God has a special and challenging message for the churches in this hour, for we have come to the end of the church age when ALL MUST BE FULFILLED. That message is embodied in a hand ministry — the seven stars in the right hand of the One standing in the midst.

When he that readeth can grasp the mystery of the seven stars, which are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven spirits of God, he will better understand why the word of the Kingdom is committed to an elect company of saints in this significant hour, and not to the run- of- the- mill believers in the popular church systems. Not all have the spirit of prophecy or the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God. Now I would draw your reverent attention to a most significant point. The King James Version of the Bible prefaces each message to the churches with these words, "Unto the angel of the church at Ephesus...or Smyrna...or Pergamos...or...write." It sounds as though John is writing TO the messengers of the churches. But such is not the case. John is by no means communicating the message TO the messengers, but BY or THROUGH the messengers. In an even deeper sense John is receiving the message FROM the messengers. The messengers are not the recipients of the message from John, but with John and in John they receive the message from the Lord Jesus and give it to the churches.

Let us UNDERSTAND! The term "unto" in the command of the Spirit to John is, in the Greek, in the dative case. Greek is different than English, and in the Greek language of the New Testament the dative case is used to signify not only "to" and "for," but also "in," "with," and "by." Let me give you a couple examples of such usage. Indeed, there are many! "Of His own will begat He us WITH the word of truth" (**James 1:18**). The construction here of "the word" is in the dative case and is translated by the preposition "with," as the means of begetting us. He does not say "to" the word of truth, rather, He begat us WITH the word of truth, or BY the word of truth. Again, "Blessed are the poor IN spirit..." (**Mat. 5:3**). The Greek here is in the dative case, and is translated "in," rather than "to." It would make no sense at all to say, "Blessed are the poor unto spirit." This is the identical form of the definite article "the," which is used in each of the messages to the seven churches and is translated "to" — "Unto the angel...write." But the meaning is "in" or "by" or "through" the angel, and not "to" the messenger. The Emphatic Diaglott correctly renders this phrase: "By the messenger of the congregation in Ephesus, write." There is a lot of difference between writing TO a messenger and writing BY or THROUGH a messenger. The true sense of the action is reflected in the following passage: "Until the day in which He (Jesus) was taken up, after that He THROUGH THE HOLY GHOST had given commandment unto the apostles whom He had chosen" (**Acts 1:2**). In other words, "BY the anointing, BY the spirit of revelation, BY the spirit of prophecy, BY the dispensation of God unto the church at Ephesus...write!" The anointing within the seven stars, the spirit of prophecy within the hand ministry, was the MEANS by which "the Voice" communicated the message. And today, my beloved, unless we, too, are quickened by these same seven spirits or seven angels or seven stars we will understand absolutely nothing of what we read in the book of Revelation! Only as we become identified with the seven stars and the seven spirits will mind and heart be quickened to truth as it is in Jesus.

The message of the book must come to us, not merely from the pen of the beloved Seer, not by carnal comprehension of the words written on paper, but from the seven spirits — the seven-fold intensified spirit of the Lord! The book apart from the illuminating messengers, the seven stars, is empty, dead, unintelligible and unprofitable. You see, precious friend of mine, John was "in the Spirit" in the day of the Lord when he received the Revelation. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia" (**Rev. 1:10-11**). So many are looking today in the natural for the events unfolded in the Revelation to come to pass, but John was in the Spirit when he wrote the book — he wasn't in the natural! He was in a realm beyond the natural, and beholding events in a realm beyond the natural. These things are written in a language that only the spiritual mind (the seven angels) can understand. A natural mind produces a natural concept. It should be obvious that only a person who knows French is able to read a book from France written in French. A Frenchman is the most likely person in the world to understand the most difficult treatise in the French language. In like manner, the book of Revelation was written IN THE SPIRIT, in the language of the Spirit, and it requires a spiritual unfoldment to understand it. Only the man who lives and walks in the Spirit can receive from it. You must be a citizen of the land — the heavenlies — where the language of the book is known. You must read and understand it in the language in which it is written. You must know the language of Spirit. We must be quickened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God, the

spirit of prophecy which is the testimony of Jesus, for the message to be comprehended. A spirit message must be spiritually discerned. We must penetrate into the realm of the seven stars, the seven angels, the seven messengers, the seven spirits, by whom and through whom the message is communicated to the seven churches! Nothing less will avail. Each message concludes with that awesome and significant admonition. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the churches." That is what is meant! These are deep and very sacred principles of God. May the Lord grant unto all who read these lines understanding to grasp the vital significance of this great truth.

ORION

The first Decan, or minor constellation, in the house of TAURUS is Orion. It is one of the most magnificent of all the constellations of the heavens. Of Orion Kenneth Fleming has written in his book, *GOD'S VOICE IN THE STARS*, "Orion, is, without doubt, one of the most spectacular and wonderful sights in all the heavens. The brilliance of Orion is seen both in its starry wonder and in its prophetic significance. It is magnificent. Two of its stars are of the first magnitude: Rigel, a pure white star, and Betelgeuse, an orange-red color. All the other leading stars are white. Orion is a mighty hunter with a tremendous club raised high in his right hand. In his left hand he holds the skin of a lion which he has killed. The lion skin is marked by a curved line of small stars. His belt and sword are well known and his head is marked by a small triangle. His left foot is raised to crush the head of his enemy, Lepus. The scriptures mention Orion as a constellation, twice in Job and once in the prophecy of Amos (Job 9:9; 38:31; Amos 5:8). The Hebrew name means A Strong One, A Hero. The Egyptian name means This is He Who Triumphs. The hilt of Orion's sword is the figure of a Lamb, and He is thus identified with the Lamb that was seen in Aries. Orion means Coming Forth as Light. Historians and scribes have sought to flatter earthly heroes by comparing them to Orion, from Nimrod to Napoleon. However, all these heroes pale into insignificance before HIM of whom Orion truly speaks — the Prince of Glory. Orion pictures His glorious coming: **'Who may abide the day of His coming?' (Mal. 3:2)**" — end quote.

The aspect of Orion that portrays the Lord coming forth as light confirms the prophet Ezekiel's vision of the presence of the One whose voice John described, in the book of Revelation, **"as the sound of many waters" (Rev. 1:15)**. Ezekiel associates that appearing with the Glory of the Lord, stating, **Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and His voice was like the noise of many waters: and the earth shined with His glory" (Eze. 43:2)**. The result is that the earth is bathed in the Glory of the Light, of which Glory the prophet said that it **"was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (Eze. 1:28)**.

Of the Glory of God revealed in type by the constellation Orion one has written: "One of the most inspiring and thrilling of the secret disclosures of astronomers is that there is a great empty space in the north in the Nebula of the Constellation Orion — a cavern so gigantic that the mind of man cannot comprehend it, and so brilliantly beautiful that words cannot adequately describe it. But, surpassing the immensity of its size, its exquisite beauty and luminous colors are unlike any on earth. Professor Learkin, at Mt. Lowe Conservatory, gives us the following descriptions: 'These photographs reveal the opening and interior of a cavern so stupendous that our entire solar system would be lost therein. I have watched it since the days of youth in many telescopes of many powers, but never dreamed that the center is the mouth of a colossal cave. Pen of writers and brush of artists alike are lifeless and inert in any attempt to describe this interior. The depths of the Orion Nebula appear like torn and twisted objects, and rivers of shining glass, irregular pillars, columns of stalactites in glittering splendor and stalagmites from the mighty floor. The appearance is like that of light shining and glowing behind the clear walls of ivory and pearl, studded with millions of stars.' There must be some reason why all this grandeur is lavished on this one spot in the heavens. The colors are a hue peculiar to the Orion Nebula and studded around the opening so that they appear as a pavement of starry sand. No wonder the astronomers say that they feel some Almighty 'Presence' while scanning this part of the heavens, and become speechless before this great outburst of grandeur extending for trillions of miles through space" — Howard B. Rand.

Paul Mueller has shared the following beautiful observations concerning the glory of Orion. "The astronomers' knowledge of Orion's glory is nothing compared to the reality of the anointed company that is represented by Orion. This company is still in preparation, but the hour of their manifestation is near. The astronomers have little or no understanding of the plan and purpose of God displayed in the heavens, yet they are thrilled and

excited by what they see. They use the most expressive terms possible to describe what they see. We believe the constellation Orion specifically illustrates the coming manifestation of the sons of God. Orion therefore represents the body of Christ coming forth out of the wilderness of this world in the very light and glory of God. This manchild company is the Glorious Prince who comes forth triumphant. In Orion, he is seen as coming forth in great light, prepared and anointed to judge and to rule. Every one among this anointed company has overcome the mystery of iniquity. This 'man' is gloriously adorned like unto the 'Son of man' just as John saw him in vision. He is 'girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters' (Rev. 1:13-15).

"Our triumphant, omnipotent Lord of all is making the 'seven stars' and 'Orion.' He is preparing each one who makes up the 'seven stars' so that He may join them in the holy bond of divine love into one body, thus making one corporate company with Christ their Head. Orion depicts the body of Christ coming forth in the image and likeness of Christ, for Orion means, the coming of a mighty, triumphant, glorious prince, he who triumphs, who comes forth as light. This complete Christ body is represented in the heavens as Great Orion, the mighty, majestic prince who shall both judge and rule. He is made up of the saints who are in union with Christ their glorious Head. And we who have joined Him 'outside the camp' are privileged to be partners with Him in His great redemptive work. Nothing is lacking of armor, power, wisdom, authority and strength, for he is anointed with the seven spirits of sonship. His sword is the word of God. His breastplate is the breastplate of righteousness. He is girt about with truth. He has the shield of faith, not a man's faith, but the very faith of the Son of God who is represented as a lion lifted high in his left hand. He is wearing the helmet of salvation, for this company has partaken of the fullness of salvation, which is the transformation of their bodies. And whether we realize it or not, this anointed prince company IS NOW warring in the Spirit (Eph. 6:12-17). We are now wrestling in the Spirit against the rulers of the darkness of this world, for the kingdoms of man are coming down with lightning like speed.

"Here is another vital truth displayed in the heavens. Every time Orion comes to the meridian, or to his highest point, he is accompanied by several adjacent constellations of great splendor. The manifestation of the sons of God will be much greater than Orion's display in the heavens now, greater than the glory of God at Sinai, greater than the transfiguration of Jesus and His appearance with Moses and Elijah, and greater than the tongue of mortal man can tell. The hour of manifestation is approaching. This Christ body shall soon come to his meridian. The hour of culmination is at hand. We shall soon reach the point of high noon, the highest point in the heavens. Then the whole Christ body will be at its meridian, which is the highest point of spiritual attainment. When the sons of God are manifest, the angelic hosts and all creation will then explode in praise and worship of Him who has wrought such a grand deliverance. As Orion is accompanied by several adjacent constellations of great splendor when he comes to his meridian, so the sons of God shall be accompanied by the hosts of heaven in a glorious display of the light and power of God that will overshadow all other previous events. Christ, the mighty Stone, soon will appear to complete our salvation, and launch our glorious unveiling" — end quote.

If you can receive it, it was from such a realm of glory and eminence and blessing that Adam fell! Since the transgression in Eden long ago, men's spirits have been fallen. They have no power but to receive light and reflections from without, but in the beginning the spirit of man was designed, not only to RECEIVE light, but to BE light and to GIVE light. This is now a wonderful reality in Christ, for, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now ARE YE LIGHT in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8). Ah, WE ARE NOW LIGHT IN THE LORD, but the measure of light we now are is small indeed, in comparison with the light that shall be revealed at the manifestation of the sons of God. For the sight of this glorious unveiling the whole creation stands on tip toe, and it shall come to pass that all that is looked upon by these glorious sons of God will be FLOODED WITH THE LIGHT OF LIFE, for the creation shall then be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

We have passed through a time of great darkness. It has been a long night of travail — yearning, waiting, longing. Darkness has blinded the minds of men, a deep sleep has been upon the Adamic race, the death of the carnal mind has kept earth's inhabitants in the regions of the shadow of death. But let it be shouted from the housetops — THE LIGHT IS COMING! It is time to cast off all works of darkness, now to be clothed with the armor of light. CHILDREN OF LIGHT, STARS AND SUNS, THE DAZZLING BRILLIANCE AND

LUMINOUS BEAUTY OF ORION, WE ARE TO BECOME. Birthed into the new age, to bring forth the glory and triumph of His Kingdom. Thank God, the first rays of light of the new day are painting the eastern sky! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the glories of the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn!

We are appointed to shine with the exquisite beauty and glittering splendor of Orion. The glory of Orion is unequalled by any other sight in the heavens. We have now come to mount Zion, to the city of the living God as a shining scene of great splendor and brightness and dazzling beauty. It is not our desire to merely see the light, or tell of it, or paint it, or live in it — as fine as all that is. We must BECOME THE LIGHT. "YE ARE the light of the world." "YE ARE light in the Lord. How unworthy and unprepared for such a calling we feel at times! But, my beloved, you may be poor, despised, unlettered; but if, through grace, there is a link in the heavenlies connecting you to the grandeur of Orion, then you are, in very deed, a son of light, and destined, ere long, to shine in that celestial sphere, that region of glory, of which "the Lamb" will be the central sun forevermore. This is not your own doing. It is the Lord Himself who maketh the seven stars and Orion. It is the result of the counsel and operation of God Himself, who has given you the light of life, joy and peace, triumph and glory, in Jesus Christ. But if you are a total stranger to the hallowed action and influence of divine light, if your eyes have not been opened to behold any beauty in the Son of God, and no attraction to that place where He holds the seven stars in His right hand, then, though you had all the learning of an Einstein, though you were enriched with all the treasures of human philosophy, though you had drunk in with avidity all the streams of natural science, though your name were adorned with all the learned titles which the schools and universities of this world could bestow, though you were piously devoted to the grandest creeds, traditions, rituals, ceremonies and service of the revered religious systems of earth, yet you are A SON OF THE NIGHT, A SON OF DARKNESS, and are just as dark, just as void, just as formless and empty, just as dead as was the desolate earth, from which you came, before that memorable day in which God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

ERIDANUS

The second Decan, or minor constellation, in the house of TAURUS is Eridanus, meaning The River of the Judge. It is pictured as an immense, fiery, molten river that flows out from before the glorious Orion, running past Cetus, the Sea-monster, and disappearing finally into the extremities of outer darkness. This Sign speaks again of judgment, associated with fire. This same picture is presented in the Psalms. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him" (Ps. 50:3). "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory" (Ps. 97:1-6). Also, we read in Isaiah: "Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with His anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue as a devouring fire. And the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones" (Isa. 30:27, 30).

Again the scripture testifies of this fiery River of the Judge, "HE is like a refiner's fire...and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver" (Mal. 3:22-23). Nothing is more certain than the fact that Jesus Christ has already come, or shall yet come into the world of each of us in FLAMING FIRE! Because of the gross misunderstanding of almost all people concerning the fire of God, I would draw your reverent attention to the natural process of fire. In the book of Revelation the Holy Spirit describes the manifestation of God as fire under a remarkable symbol. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the LAKE WHICH BURNETH WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE..." (Rev. 21:8). The word "burn" means combustion, or to consume. To consume does not mean to annihilate, for the law of the conservation of energy precludes any such thing as annihilation. You can annihilate a form, but not a substance. When fire consumes the charcoal in your grill it does not destroy any of the elements within the charcoal, it merely changes their form. Combustion is the process by which chemicals combine to form new chemicals. For example, a tree might be cut down, sawed into fire wood, and burned. In the first place, the tree

was formed by drawing chemicals out of the earth and air and rearranging them into the form of a tree. Now, when the wood burns, the heat causes those same chemicals to vaporize, mixing with the oxygen in the air to form new chemicals, including water and the gas carbon dioxide. So what was formerly a tree can no longer be identified as a tree, but it still exists in its entirety — the substance thereof is now simply changed, transformed into a DIFFERENT FORM! Thus, to burn means to CHANGE. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that fire does not burn down; it always burns up; it seeks the highest level. And all that it consumes (changes) "goes up in smoke," to exist in a new form in a higher dimension. Even if you take a pan of water and place it over a fire, before long the water will take on the property of the fire and will begin to go up in steam. To burn means to change, and the change is always upward in motion.

FIRE is the heat and light you feel when something burns (changed by heat). It takes heat to start a fire, but once the fire is started it produces heat that keeps the process going. Thus, fire is really heat and light. In my study of the lake which burns with fire and brimstone (which lake is formed by the fiery River of the Judge) I was very much helped and impressed by the understanding given by Charles Pridgeon, and I would like to quote from his scholarly work on the subject of BRIMSTONE. He says: "The Lake of Fire and Brimstone signifies a fire burning with brimstone; the word 'brimstone' or sulphur defines the character of the fire. The Greek word THEION translated 'brimstone' is exactly the same word THEION which means 'divine.' Sulphur was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks; and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. In Homer's Iliad (16:228), one is spoken of as purifying a goblet with fire and brimstone. The verb derived from THEION is THEIOO, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god (see Liddell and Scott Greek- English Lexicon, 1897 Edition). To any Greek, or any trained in the Greek language, a 'lake of fire and brimstone' would mean a LAKE OF DIVINE PURIFICATION. The idea of judgment need not be excluded. Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in ancient Greek. In the ordinary explanation, this fundamental meaning of the word is entirely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is associated with it" — end quote.

I realize that the above thoughts define the subject very briefly, but let us summarize the meaning thus: BURN means combustion, to change the form of. FIRE means heat and light. BRIMSTONE means divine. Putting these three together can we not see that the lake burning with fire and brimstone is, actually, DIVINE HEAT AND LIGHT PRODUCING AN UPWARD CHANGE! If you think the Kingdom of God is rosewater, or eau-de-cologne, you are mistaken. You cannot war on the devil with that. You cannot war on the carnal minds of men with that. You have to make war on the world, the flesh and the devil with weapons that are mighty through God. You have to make war on the carnal mind and the fleshly nature with fire, divine fire that must burn up every inherent altar of Baal, and lick up the very dust around. Make no mistake! OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE! He is man's "horse breaker" and He will break you, my friend, and bring you to the foot of the cross of Jesus no matter how hot He has to build the fire around you! Even if long ages of fiery judgment and tormenting darkness fall upon you, they will last no longer than till the Great Fire of God has melted all arrogance into humility, and all that is self has died in the bloody sweat and all-conquering cross of the Christ, which shall never give up its redeeming power till sin and sinners have no more a name among the creatures of God. This mighty River, this fiery River, this River of The Judge shall flow and flow and flow until all things have been made new and God becomes all- in-all. Praise His name!

There is no better way to deal with filth than to deal with it by fire. The human heart, according to the testimony of scripture, is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. The heart is the filthiest of all things in God's great universe. The punishment by penal fire leads back to the beginning of things. The final work of God in this world will be the destruction of the world (order) by penal fire. That will change all things. That will melt all the elements, so that no man can tell you where his original grab was. It will burn up all the governments, institutions, systems, and fruitage of the carnal mind. It will melt all the customs, cultures, traditions, and practices of society and make of this earth a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Every man's work will eventually be tested in this fire. The fire will try every man's work of what sort it is. If you and I build into our walls wood, hay, and stubble, that fire will find it out, and the wall will come tumbling down. We will be saved though as by fire, saith the Lord. When God turns on the HEAT, the BLAZING LIGHT OF HIS SPIRIT AND WORD — some things begin to change! The fire is never sent to destroy the person, but to purge out all that hinders and separates him from his God, to consume the pride, arrogance, hostility, defiance, and rebellion of

the flesh and the carnal mind, that he might then be wooed and drawn by the Holy Spirit of Love unto the Father of Spirits and live.

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**HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 39
TAURUS-THE WILD BULL [Cont'd]**

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

**KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"**

PART THIRTY-NINE

**THE GOOD SHEPHERD
THE SHEPHERD LEADS
HEARING THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE
THE SHEPHERD SEEKS THE SHEEP**

In last month's Study on the Signs of the heavens we considered the Sign of TAURUS — THE BULL. It is a picture of a great beast, a bull or ox, with his head lowered and his horns pointed forward. He is untameable and irresistible. HE is charging forth — rampaging, raging, bringing destruction to all that is in his way. It is interesting to note that the Sign of Taurus is only the forepart of the bull; actually, as it is seen in the heavens, it appears to grow right out of Aires, the Lamb. The picture is of a Lamb that changes into a Bull. Here we see the gentle and redeeming Lamb taking on a different form and character — now giving rise to the Christ coming in great glory and in swift and powerful judgment. In salvation and deliverance we meet and experience and know Him as the Lamb, but to all that is contrary to Him — the world, the flesh, and the devil — He becomes the irresistible Lord of Judgment.

This dual nature — the meekness of the Lamb and the vengeance of the Wild Bull — makes Him what He is, both the SAVIOUR and the JUDGE of the universe. In His redemptive activity His face is set against sin and death. Nothing can ever alter that. He will go to all lengths to turn men from evil, and restore them into harmony with the mind and heart of God. The sheer simplicity and sincerity of His passion is enough to melt and win the most sophisticated or the hardest of men. The wrath of the Lamb (as the Wild Bull) is beyond our understanding. But the Seer of Patmos was shown the unveiling of the wrath of the Lamb. I want to declare that God is going to come forth in these last days in a revelation of Jesus Christ with the judgments and wrath of God. This shaking and purging will affect the very church of the living God. The hour is come when judgment must begin at the house of God, but the whole earth will reel violently under the overflow. The judgment that begins at the house of God comes first to those who have received the call of sonship, to those apprehended to the High Calling of God, to those predestined to be conformed into the image of the Son of God that they may rule and reign with Him in His Kingdom. The Lord comes suddenly to His temple as a refiner's fire and as fullers' soap. He shall thoroughly purge His floor, and purify the sons of Levi.

We come now to the third Decan, or minor constellation, in the house of Taurus — AURIGA. We have seen the picture of a mighty Bull rushing forth in judgment, followed by Eridanus, the fiery River of the Judge; and now we see AURIGA — THE GREAT SHEPHERD. He is seated upon the Milky Way, holding up on his left shoulder a she-goat, who has her paws around the neck of Auriga. The goat is looking down in fear and apprehension at the terrible, raging, rampaging Bull. On his lap, and held by his left hand, Auriga supports two little kids, apparently new-born, and bleating, affrightened and trembling, but obviously safe and secure in the strong embrace of the Shepherd. The name Auriga is derived from a Hebrew root which means "A shepherd." Is not this the celestial portrayal of the Good and Great and Chief Shepherd gathering the lambs in His arms, and carrying them through all the judgments, disciplines, purgings and processings of God — in His bosom? Is He not saying, "Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. 40:10-11). Furthermore — the exceptionally bright star in the foot of Auriga is called El Nath which means "wounded" or "slain." Is not this indeed He who was once bruised or wounded in the heel (Gen. 3:15)? He is the "GOOD Shepherd," who gives His life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11), and He is "the GREAT Shepherd," brought again from the dead (Heb. 13:20), and is now "the CHIEF Shepherd," seen in the day of His glory among the sheep of His fold who hear His voice and follow Him all the way to Mount Zion (1 Pet. 5:4).

It should not be surprising to find Auriga, The Shepherd, connected with Taurus, The Bull — the constellation denoting judgment. Judgment begins at the house of God and the Great Judge of all is also the Great Shepherd of all. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps; O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in Thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing" (**Jer. 10:23-24**). What security, what safety — and what peace fills the heart of the trusting child of God who understands the great truth that it is not in man to try and direct his own way, the responsibility is not cast upon him, but upon GOD. It is true — "all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way..." as the prophet declares in Isa. 53:6, the Lord has allowed us to wander off this way, knowing that we shall have awesome experiences by which we shall learn vital lessons which later shall be used in our instruction and correction. A story is told of one who talked with a shepherd in the high Alps. While talking, the shepherd gathered a handful of the best grass and went to a low shelter nearby. "I have a sheep there with a broken leg," he said. "How did that happen?" queried the visitor. "It did not happen," answered the shepherd. "I broke it intentionally. That sheep was headstrong and unruly. It did not love me and was always leading the other sheep astray. Now it knows its dependence on me and loves to eat from my hand. When it is well again, it will keep nearer to me than any of the sheep."

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Among the many emblems of our Lord in the Scriptures and in the Signs of the heavens, I think there is none more beautiful than the one in which He said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. The writer to the Hebrews says, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will..." (**Heb. 13:20-21**). "The God of peace who brought again from the dead the GREAT SHEPHERD..." It means that He already was the Great Shepherd before He entered the tomb, for it was the Great Shepherd that was brought back from the dead. In the Hebrew Old Testament the God of Israel is designated as "The Shepherd of Israel," or Pastor and Leader of the nation. When our Lord Jesus Christ declared Himself to be "The Good Shepherd" the Jewish leaders knew that He was claiming to be Yahweh in-the-flesh. Although the hierarchy rejected His claim, the elect gladly accepted it. Those who followed Him, who heard His voice, and were fed and guided and taught by Him knew Him experientially as the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd and the Chief Shepherd.

Just how great is the Great Shepherd? Great through His creative power? Yes. Great through His miracle-working power? Yes. Great through His preaching and teaching power? Yes. Great through His nature, His personality, and His attributes, human and divine, that were combined in Him? Yes, He was in the days of His flesh the greatest in that respect that ever walked this planet. But in **Heb. 13:20** there is the unfolding of actual greatness. The Greek text reads, "Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead that Shepherd of the sheep, Great by the blood of an aionian Covenant, even our Lord Jesus Christ." He is Great through sacrificial love, He is Great through sacrificial power, He is Great through the out-pouring of HIS LIFE on behalf of, and unto, His sheep. To have given us a Shepherd was much; but to have given us such a Great Shepherd is marvelous! More is meant than the mere quickening of the dead body of Christ Jesus. There is included, also, His exaltation by the right hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour, a King and a Redeemer, a Forerunner into the Kingdom of His Father. This, my beloved, is the grandeur of Auriga seated in the heavens high above the Milky Way with the kids upon His shoulder and on His lap!

George Wylie shared some precious insights into the Shepherd ministry of the Lord Jesus, of which I would share a portion. "What a Shepherd He is! What I have been impressed about is His care for the individual sheep. He is not just a shepherd of a vast flock of sheep, He knows each individual sheep and calls them by name and His care for the individual is just as great as for the flock. This is illustrated in the parable of the one lost sheep. When He brought His flock into the fold for the night one sheep was missing. What would that matter! What was the value of one sheep among the multitudes that He had. Who would miss one little sheep:, HE did — He left the rest of the flock in the shelter of the fold and went out to find the one lost one. It meant just as much to Him as did the rest of the flock."

"'He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. And he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out' (**Jn. 10:2-3**). To know them by name means that each has a separate identity and

possesses characteristics peculiar to the individual. In the natural sphere this is true also. It is remarkable, but has often been verified, that however large the flock, the animals are individually known to the shepherd who recognizes each one by its face. This almost incredible fact has been proved again and again in courts of law, where the testimony of the shepherd that a stolen animal is his, because recognizable to him by face, has been accepted as proof of ownership. The humble child of God must never suppose that he is only one among many. Though untalented and undistinguished he is of equal consequence to Christ as those distinguished for gift and activity. All are equally precious to the Shepherd, and His most particular care is reserved for those who need Him the most.

"The 23rd Psalm has become very precious to me in the last few months. It starts out by saying, "Yahweh is my shepherd." Now I know this is referring to God, the Father, but the Son is the manifestation of the Father to us. He takes the Father's place in all things. So what is said here of Yahweh also applies to His Son YeHoshua. David wrote this Psalm, and what impressed me was the individual tone he used in writing the Psalm. Yahweh was known as the Great Shepherd of Israel. David could have said, 'Yahweh is our shepherd; we shall not want. He maketh us to lie down in green pastures...' but he didn't. He said, 'Yahweh is MY shepherd, and all the way through the Psalm he emphasized the individual care he received from God. Just notice: 'He maketh ME to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth ME beside the still waters. He restoreth MY soul; He leadeth ME in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with ME; thy rod and thy staff they comfort ME. Thou preparest a table before ME in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest MY head with oil; MY cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow ME all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of Yahweh forever.' All the way through the emphasis is on the individual care he received from the great Shepherd.

"'Yahweh is my shepherd; I shall not want.' When I went to Sunday School as a child one little boy in the class was quoting this Psalm. We had to learn it by heart. He said, 'The Lord is my shepherd, that's all I want.' With a shepherd as He is what else do we need or want. He is the supply of every need. He doesn't just supply our needs, He isn't just the supplier of our needs; HE is our need, our only need. He doesn't supply our needs out of His storehouse or pantry; He gives of Himself to us. What He gives is not something He has an abundance of in His great storehouse; it is Himself He gives to us, of His own person and being, something of what He is. This is our need, our only need — more of HIM. We will never be in need while He is our Shepherd.

"Let us look at some of the things mentioned in this Psalm that we will not have any want or lack of. 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.' This is a picture of a sheep lying down contentedly in a field of luscious verdant grass. It has partaken abundantly of the luscious green grass and is full and satisfied. I can picture it lying down in this lovely pasture, resting and contentedly chewing its cud with not a care or worry in the world. This tells us that we shall never want for rest, provision, contentment and satisfaction. 'He leadeth me beside the still waters.' I can imagine this beautiful setting, a beautiful green meadow with a lovely little lake at the end of it, the waters reflecting the clouds drifting by and the trees growing along side casting their cool shade. I used to like to find a place like this for myself on a nice summer day and stretch out on the grass and watch the clouds as they slowly made their way across the sky, constantly changing shape; looking at times like animals, ships, people and faces. There is a place in the Spirit with the Good Shepherd just like this, a place of rest and calm in ones' soul where nothing disturbs the tranquility of the spirit, where all is peace and rest and confidence. Though the world around may be falling apart, millions starving and thirsting for lack of the necessities of life, the Good Shepherd makes His sheep to lie down contentedly, at peace in the green pastures of His abundance, and beside the still waters. The waters of life may be turbulent, they usually are; but in the spirit we are beside the still waters.

"I should say something here that may be helpful to some. We have here a picture of a sheep that will never know what it is to feel the pangs of hunger or thirst; there is always an abundant supply at hand. The Lord said, 'He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst,' yet we also have the scripture that says, "They that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. There are times we will be hungry and thirsty for the things of God; in fact I always am. I eat and eat and yet I hunger for more, I drink and drink and yet am still thirsty. Why should this be? Jesus said we would never thirst again, and yet I do, all the time. One thing good for us to know is that most things in the spirit are diametrically opposed or opposite to the natural. Natural laws

and spiritual laws are different. For instance, in the spirit realm, up is down and down is up. By that I mean if you want to make something of yourself in the natural, you aspire to great things. You climb the ladder of human ambition, striving for the top and caring not how many people you trample under foot to get there. In the Spirit realm it is different; if you want to be great in the Kingdom of God there is only one way, and that is down. You must humble yourself and become the servant of all, not the head and ruler and oppressor of others. The law of God is, 'Humble yourself in the sight of God, and He will lift you up.' Try to lift yourself up in pride or self-assertiveness and you will be brought down. So up is down, and down is up.

"In the natural when we eat and drink until we are full we are no longer hungry or thirsty, but in a few hours we will be — we always get hungry and thirsty again. This is hard to explain, but in the Spirit, like the sheep that is lying down in green pastures and beside still waters, we can be satisfied and contented, yet there remains a strong desire for more. This is a different kind of hunger and thirst than we have in the natural. We can be full, satisfied, and contented, and yet at the same time hungering and thirsting for more. My experience is, the more I partake of the things of the Shepherd, the greater becomes my hunger and thirst for more. So I am full, satisfied, contented, and at the same time hungering and thirsting for more of the deep and glorious things of God. This is a paradox and hard for the natural mind to comprehend — but so it is in the realm of the Spirit. We will never hunger and thirst again as we do in the natural — because we lack — and yet, we will never cease to hunger and thirst after righteousness until we come into the fullness of Him. In the natural, when we eat and drink we lose our hunger and thirst for a time; if we don't eat and drink for a season we will soon get hungry and thirsty again. It is just the opposite in the realm of the Spirit. I find that the more I eat and drink of the bread of Life and the water of the Spirit the greater my desire for more. If I neglect to eat and drink regularly of the things of the Spirit of God, I do not get more hungry and thirsty; rather, I begin to lose my appetite for God and my thirst for the things of the Spirit diminishes. This is just opposite to how it works in the natural! I have never been more satisfied, full and contented in my spirit than I am today, and yet I have never been more hungry and thirsty for more of His life and reality. Try to explain that in human terms! There are many paradoxes in the spirit — 'As deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things (II Cor. 6:8-10).

"He restoreth my soul. What has really blessed me is the knowledge, brought out by this Psalm that He is not just the Shepherd of a great flock of sheep, but that He is my personal Shepherd; totally involved with me in all my affairs, taking care of me as though I was the only sheep He had. Have you ever been in the place where you needed your soul restored? Because of the trials, tribulations, adversities, pressures, reverses, battles against the powers of darkness; when things seem to have gone all wrong and nothing seems to be right; when the thick darkness has settled all around you, and there seemingly is no light at all; when you are hemmed in by the multitude of trials and troubles and there appears no way of escape, all hope is vanished, even the Lord seems to have forsaken you; you are disillusioned, despondent, and in despair you cry out in your distress, Lord, where are you? Why is all this happening to me? I don't understand it! He's there, beloved. He is never far away. He is the Tender and Good and faithful Shepherd. He is at hand to restore your soul, to lift you up out of your distress and despair and to restore you again to that joy and peace and confidence and power that you once have known.

"'He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.' There is much said about righteousness in the scriptures. What does righteousness mean? God is righteous; He is righteous because He does all things right and is never wrong. This is what God is — righteous, right. We are exhorted in the Word to seek and receive this same attribute. This is part of our inheritance as sons of the Most High. **'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS' (Mat. 6:33).** 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness...he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief but was strong in faith giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what HE had promised, He was well able to perform. Therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead **(Rom. 4:3, 20-24).** So by believing in Yahweh who raised our Lord from the dead we have righteousness imputed unto us. It is wonderful to have our sins forgiven and not imputed against us any more, and to have the righteousness of God reckoned to us; but having righteousness imputed to us doesn't make us righteous;

we are only counted righteous for His sake. We can have His righteousness imputed to us and still be very unrighteous, doing many things wrong, and few things right.

"God doesn't want to leave us in this unrighteous state; He wants to make us righteous. He wants to impart His righteousness to us, not just impute it. **'For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD in Him' (II Cor. 5:21)**. We are to possess and become the righteousness of God. To be righteous as He is righteous, to be holy as He is holy. Who wouldn't want to become this righteousness? To always be right in all we think, in all we say and in all we do. To never again think anything wrong; to have no wrong thoughts or ideas. To never again say anything wrong, and to never do anything wrong; but to be always right in everything. What a blessed state! Impossible? No! It is what He has planned for us and is working on in us. Of this very truth the Psalmist wrote when he said, 'He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's (nature's) sake. He leads me in the paths that will bring me to this glorious state. HalleluYah!' — end quote.

THE SHEPHERD LEADS

Recently the revelation of Jesus Christ as a Shepherd with His flock caught my attention in a special way. One particular aspect that struck me as I read the parable in John's Gospel is where Jesus says that the rightful Shepherd "entereth in by the door" to where the sheep are, and "leadeth them out." He leads them out! These days the idea seems to be to get behind the flock, see which way they're heading (via opinion polls), and then hurry in that direction! Real leadership, of course, isn't a matter of finding out what the conventional thought is, or what the sheep imagine is right, then going along with it. The Kingdom of God is not a democracy. We need to follow something higher. We need the real leadership provided by our "Good Shepherd," Christ the way, the truth and the life. Think how Jesus illustrated this Christly leadership. Virtually all that He said and did ran counter to popular opinion. But His words had the spiritual power to break through conventional concepts. The apostle John records, for example, that officers sent to take custody of Jesus returned without Him, saying, "Never man spake like this man." The true leadership of the Christ has its source in God, the Spirit. So, Christ shepherds us with spiritual wisdom and love. Even the most intimidating, complex questions in our lives find answers when we seek guidance from the omniscient indwelling God.

What Christ says about God, man, and our own lives never simply follows human convention, worldly philosophy or popular religious theology. What Christ says comes from the perfection of God's Being and tells us — in ways just right for us at that moment — of God's real nature, His true ways. God can't be seen or understood by the physical senses or the human intellect. Because the man God creates is spiritual, that new creation which we are depends on God alone. God gives His man everything. So we should be looking to the Spirit for everything that's necessary in our lives. And this is especially true when it comes to the spiritual principles and realities we need to learn and know. If it is truly the mind of Christ within that is leading us, we'll have the courage and strength we need to go forward even though the way may be challenging. It's not necessarily easy where Christ leads, but the rewards are sure. And when Christ leads we need not be concerned over whether others are doing the same thing.

"And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice" (Jn. 10:4). These words of our Lord Jesus Christ are a great blessing and comfort in these days of uncertainty and rapid change. Our blessed Lord does not push His sheep ahead of Him into uncharted wilderness — He goes before them. The sheep do not know the way. How could they? They have never come this way before! But HE knows the way! As the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night went before the children of Israel as they crossed over to the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land, so our Lord Jesus Christ has gone before us as our forerunner who has not only entered into heaven itself and the Most Holy Place within the veil, but He has walked out every step of that great and terrible wilderness that lies between. There are no uncertainties or uncharted wildernesses with Him. And "He goeth before them." So, a worried sheep is a foolish sheep. A worried sheep must be listening to other voices than that of the Good Shepherd. A worried sheep must have forgotten that he is not leading, but following. No enemy can touch the sheep unless He can first overcome the Shepherd. What confidence this evokes in our hearts!

Shepherding isn't an easy job. Sheep don't just take care of themselves. They require a considerable amount of guidance and attention. The flock needs fresh pasture, clean water, and protection from extreme exposure

to the elements. And the sheep must be provided with a safe place for the night. In Bible times, this sometimes meant piling stones in a circular arrangement as a protective wall of sorts. The shepherd would lie across the opening, guarding the entrance so that wild animals or thieves couldn't get at the sheep. A reliable shepherd would not allow himself to become drowsy or fall asleep if there was danger. The welfare of the flock would always be uppermost in his thought.

Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep" (Jn. 10:1-2). The sheepfold is for defense and has but one door, none is to enter by any other way. And none is to enter but the shepherd and the sheep. As someone has written, "If any one 'climbs up,' showing by so doing that he is superior to the sheep — if he goes by another nearer or higher way, in which the sheep, being only sheep, cannot follow him — he may prove that he can do what they cannot, but he proves also that he has not a shepherd's heart, and would never lead the sheep whither he goeth. Such an act shows that he is a thief. For in meddling with sheep a man will either be a shepherd or a thief. Men do not meddle with them without intending either to serve themselves or serve the sheep. The true shepherd serves the sheep. Therefore he goes by the way they can go. If they are in the field, he with them is in the field, consumed by day with drought, by night with cold. If they need a door, he stoops to enter by the door; a ceaseless toiler for lower natures, who knows not what he gives up and bears in such a service. In a word, this is Christ's service; that wondrous coming down by which the Son of God stooped to the place of brutal erring men; not helping us afar off, but coming to us right where we are; sharing our sleeping and waiting, our weakness and our lacks; that by His humiliation He might meet our folly and our need, and in due time bring us safely home to God and His Kingdom. He leads from where we are to where He is, praise His wonderful name!

HEARING THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

The following words by Ray Prinzing are a pertinent and powerful admonition to all those apprehended to sonship. "My sheep hear My voice... MY sheep hear — the Greek word for 'hear' used here is AKOUO and while there is included in its meaning the thought of 'to give ear' because you discern a sound, it also includes the meaning of TO HEARKEN, a responsive action to one's hearing. This goes beyond the outward hearing of the natural ear, when Jesus said, 'My sheep hear My voice!' There is a LISTENING to hear the sound thereof, a receptivity within, and a responsiveness to follow in obedience. 'He goes before His sheep, and they follow Him, for they KNOW His voice.' Now we have another Greek word for 'know,' this one being OIDA, absolute knowledge. Praise God, we are to have absolute knowledge of His voice — without doubts or questionings. The sheep — the mature ones, shall come to a place where they unmistakably know His voice. And they know that they know that they know! But as for STRANGERS — they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.

"And now we have an allegory, with the shepherd, and the stranger, and there is a sense in which we have them both within us. The Shepherd is the VOICE OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, the stranger is the voice of the carnal mind. I dare say, our spiritual maturity is evidenced by the 'voice' which we hearken to, and follow. God is SPIRIT, and He contacts us through our spirit. 'There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding' (Job 32:8). It is interesting to watch a gathering of various levels of spiritual growth. When the Spirit of God is moving deep into the hearts of those who HEAR HIS VOICE, others seem to withdraw and almost appear bored with the service. Then if another voice begins to speak — appealing to the soulish realm, they suddenly come alive and respond accordingly with their manifestations. And finally, as another voice simply speaks that it is time for the 'pot-luck lunch to be served' there are those who endured all the service thus far, now they begin to respond. Each has heard a 'voice,' whether of the Shepherd, the stranger, or just the flesh. As for the physical, earth realm, obviously there is a time and place for its voice and message, HE placed us in this realm for a purpose, to be exercised and trained thereby. The natural is not 'sinful' until it becomes perverted and out-of- place. But there are those, as Paul wrote, 'many walk...whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things' (Phil. 3:18-19). When we hear the physical voice for a drink of water, some food, some sleep — and the needs are met, the voice remains silent. But when the voice keeps on, LUSTING AFTER MORE, then it has certainly entered into the realm of the unholy stranger; may God help us to flee from it, and not know it.

"There is something upsetting about the voice of the stranger, once you have determined before God to follow only the VOICE OF THE SPIRIT. Yet, uniquely enough, often times you cannot tell others that the voice being heard IS TO YOU the voice of a stranger — for in their response to that voice they are blessed in some degree and manner. And we would make it clear, we praise God for ALL, that HE is doing on any level, and through whomever, and whatever means He has purposed to work. However, our personal experience is such that we find more and more the voice of the 'charismatic move' has become to us the voice of a stranger. The projection of human personality, even though clothed with its charisma and religiosity, rings shallow and strange when one has heard the call of God into the depths and heights of the vision that leads to the realm beyond.

"The inspiration (in-breathing) of the Almighty giveth understanding.' How we yearn for more and more of that DIVINE IN-BREATHING. For far too long we have relied on the proper atmospheres for our breath. The singing had to be just right, the praise service, the favorite preacher or teacher, and when conditions were just right to form that particular atmosphere, we breathed deeply and enjoyed it. But there is a dimension wherein one does not rely on the outward atmosphere, for they live by the CHRIST WITHIN, and they hear HIS VOICE, and become, as Paul so aptly stated it, 'I have come to learn, in the circumstances in which I am placed, to be independent of these and self-sufficient' (Phil. 4:11) (Wuest Expanded). '...with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early' (Isa. 26:9). I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search' (Ps. 77:6)" — end quote.

A. B. Simpson was a man of deep spiritual experience. I quote the following from his article LISTENING. "A score of years ago a friend placed in my hand a book called TRUE PEACE. It was an old medieval message and it had but one thought — THAT GOD WAS WAITING IN THE DEPTHS OF MY BEING TO TALK TO ME IF I WOULD ONLY GET STILL ENOUGH TO HEAR HIS VOICE. I thought this would be a very easy matter and so began to get still. I had no sooner commenced than a perfect pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamoring notes from without and within, until I could hear nothing but their noise and din. Some were my own voices, my own questions; some were my very prayers. Others were suggestions of the tempter and the voices from the world of turmoil. In every direction I was pulled and pushed and greeted with noisy acclamations and unspeakable unrest. It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them and to answer some of them; but God said, 'BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.

"Then came the conflict of thoughts for tomorrow and its duties and cares; but God said, BE STILL. And as I listened and slowly learned to obey and shut my ears to every sound, I found after a while that, when other voices ceased, (or I ceased to hear them), there was a still small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness and power and comfort. As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, the voice of wisdom, the voice of duty, and I did not need to think so hard or pray so hard or trust so hard. That still, small voice of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God speaking in my secret soul; was God's answer to all knowledge and all prayer and all blessings, for it was the living God Himself as my life, my all. It is thus that our spirits drink of the life of the risen Lord and we go forth to life's conflicts and duties like a flower that has drunk in through the shades of night the cool and crystal drops of dew. But, as dew never falls on a stormy night, so the dew of His grace never comes to a restless soul. Oh, the calm! The rest! The peace which comes as we wait in His presence until we HEAR FROM HIM!" — end quote.

It is all-important in this crucial hour that the sons of God truly hear and follow the Shepherd, for those who hear the voice of the Shepherd, the Son of God, will LIVE! I cannot do better than share from the anointed pen of Paul Mueller in this regard. "As Jesus continued to teach the people, He emphasized the need to HEAR HIS WORD. He said, 'But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and THE SHEEP HEAR HIS VOICE: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: FOR THEY KNOW HIS VOICE' (Jn. 10:2-4). I trust you are as blessed by this passage as I am. It is thrilling to realize that the Lord of all the universe knows my name, and that HE LEADS ME OUT to His green pastures. He takes me out of the confinement of the Babylon system and into the abundant pastures of His truth and life. When He wants to get my attention, He calls me by my name. And with this intimate communion and relationship with my CHIEF SHEPHERD, I no longer need the shepherdship of men. To whom then could I go for guidance in these times

of darkness? Beloved, there is none other, for He alone has the words of life. Indeed, Christ is our Apostle, our Prophet, our Shepherd, and our LIFE. HE IS ALL WE NEED.

"The life of Christ — to possess His image and likeness, is the promise before us. Christ came that we might have LIFE, and that more abundantly. And it is by hearing His voice that we shall attain unto His fullness. Jesus said as much, when He said, **'Verily, verily, I say unto you, HE THAT HEARETH MY WORD, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death onto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you. The hour is coming, and now is, when THE DEAD SHALL HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD; AND THEY THAT HEAR SHALL LIVE. For as the Father hath LIFE in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have LIFE in himself (Jn. 5:24-26).**

"Throughout all the clamor and clutter of these times, there rings forth the glorious truth of God which is as a clear trumpet sound to all who trust in Him. The prevailing message and truth of this hour is found in this passage: **'THE DEAD SHALL HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD; AND THEY THAT HEAR SHALL LIVE.'** Repeat it often and believe its inspiring words of divine truth, for there is a people now abiding in the death of this life who shall HEAR the voice of the Son of God, **AND IN HEARING THEY SHALL LIVE.** Now, in the end of this age, we have come to the set time when the Lord has set **'a definite day, a new Today'** (**Heb. 4:7**), when He shall speak to His elect, and those who HEAR shall LIVE.

"When Jesus spoke this truth, He made reference only to those who would be able to HEAR, when He said, **'AND THEY THAT HEAR SHALL LIVE.'** And those who will hear the voice of the Son of God are the elect who will be raised to His life. Let us now see the clear distinction Jesus made between the elect who will be raised to His life by hearing His voice, and the dead who are to be resurrected later. In John 5:24-26, Jesus spoke of the elect, while in verses 28-29, He referred to those who are in the graves: **'Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming (which is not now, but future), in the which ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES SHALL HEAR HIS VOICE, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation'** (from the Greek 'krisis', not damnation, but more properly judgment as in vs. 22 & 30).

"SOME MUST ENTER the rest of God and partake of the life of Christ IN ADVANCE of others, thus establishing that PATH for those who are to follow. The Lord's elect of this hour will HEAR HIS VOICE and will come up out of this death to be among those 'alive' ones who are **'alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord'** (**I Thes. 4:15, 17**). The goal is before us and the challenge great, but the Lord is able and by those 'two immutable things,' that is, by the infallibility of HIS OATH and the life of HIS PERSON, we shall attain unto that foreordained purpose in Him. This is the message of that Prophet, even the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom Moses referred when he prophesied of One to come who would be a true Prophet. Peter quoted the prophecy of Moses, who said of Christ, the anointed Prophet of the restitution of all things, **'Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you'** (**Acts 3:22**). Let us then HEAR HIM. He is our Shepherd, our Apostle, and our Prophet. And if we are the sheep of His pasture, we will surely hear Him and will follow Him unto LIFE ABUNDANT, thus beginning the times of the restitution of all things" — end quote.

THE SHEPHERD SEEKS THE SHEEP

In a most precious and unique sense the Lord's believing people are the sheep of His pasture and fold. But in a broader and just as scriptural sense all mankind are His sheep, for **"the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1)**. Truly, **"ALL WE like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on HIM the iniquity of us ALL..." (Isa. 53:6)**. If the Christ indeed died and bore the iniquity of every man, then every man is part of His great flock that has gone astray, and for whom the Good Shepherd gave His life. Yes, the Good Shepherd is going about on earth still calling His sheep, seeking His sheep, rescuing His sheep, leading His flock, feeding His flock and protecting His flock. And who are His flock? They are the poor, the weary, the downcast, the sick, the sad, and the sinful who have strayed far from Him and His love. Long ago He was moved with compassion upon them as He saw them scattered abroad, fainting, tired and wandering as sheep without a shepherd.' Humanity is His flock...sin-cursed and disease smitten and death-bound humanity is the great flock for whom Christ died.

Lost sheep! Can you not see them? They fill the world today. They have wandered away to browse on some sweet grass that looked greener and enticed them forth; they have been separated from the care of the Shepherd and scared and driven by dogs, till at last they bleat hopelessly alone, or fall into pits, weakened by exposure and fatigue, the easy prey of lion or wolf. Far from the fold, torn, wounded, bleeding, covered with filth, frightened and certain to perish, unless rescued by the Shepherd. Such were all of us. "We were as sheep going astray." How shall we sufficiently thank and praise the Good, Great, and Chief Shepherd of our souls, that He did not leave us to our hapless fate, but came after us — down mountain slope, through thorny bush, over jagged rocks, seeking until He found us, and pressing us to His bosom, brought us back. We "are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (1 Pet. 2:25). Safe sheltered in His fold we bear His name branded on us and He calls us affectionately by our name, and we are now confident in the certain knowledge that "when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them; and His sheep follow Him."

In Luke 15:4 we read, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost UNTIL HE FIND IT!" In this passage we find that at the end of the day, the shepherd finds that he is just one little sheep short of completeness. There is only one outside — so why bother to go after that one, for perhaps that one is one of the rebellious ones anyway and will not choose to come back! But the Shepherd we are dealing with in this story is not an ordinary shepherd. This is the Great and Good Shepherd of the sheep and nothing will stop Him or prevent Him from finding that last sheep. This Shepherd will not be content with even an extraordinary effort to find the sheep and then give up, feeling that He has done His duty. Neither does He "call" the sheep, and then wait to see if the sheep "decides" to come, and if not, just leave him there in his lost condition to die. This Shepherd searches UNTIL HE FINDS. And the FINDING of this Shepherd is not only the locating of the sheep, but it also includes the bringing back into the fold of that sheep.

If you know anything at all about sheep, you know that a sheep is helpless to find its way back to the rest of the flock. Not only that, but it becomes subject to every danger that is near to it, yet it never recognizes that danger. This is exactly the condition of mankind today. Mankind, being dead in trespasses and sins and in rebellion against God, does not know how to get to God. In fact much of humanity does not even think of getting to God. They have come to the point where they are quite satisfied with their condition just as the sheep is satisfied with its condition as it feeds, knowing not that it is lost. Mankind does not know their way back to God. Mankind must wait until it is found. He does not even know he is lost. He accepts his sad state as the norm. How will the lost ever come to God of himself, of his own "free will"? If he were able to come HE WOULD NOT BE LOST. Men do not even know they are lost, or where they are going. Ah, the Shepherd must find the sheep, not the sheep find the Shepherd! And Jesus said the Shepherd would seek until. Jesus said He came to seek and to save those lost ones. Not the lost ones seek God, but God seek the lost!

Most of the religious teaching today would have us believe that Christ has done all He can for the sinner, so He has now gone back to His heaven and is seated upon His golden throne waiting for all who will to be saved. According to this thinking, God through Jesus has done all He can possibly do and has now left the work of saving souls to the church, hoping that some, at least, will be persuaded to accept the Saviour. The church must go out and contact all the sinners they can and see if they cannot get them to "accept Christ." But, of course, if the sinner does not want to be saved, then even God in all His omnipotence cannot intervene and nothing is left but eternal hell fire and damnation for that sinner. But just what does this line of reasoning reveal? The tragedy of it is that it shows us nothing but the SOVEREIGNTY OF MAN'S WILL and the IMPOTENCE OF GOD'S WILL. The will of the sheep to remain lost exceeds the will of the Shepherd to rescue him and carry him back to the fold.

Another thing this line of teaching suggests is that God, having finished the work of redemption, then turns it all over to a rather carnal church that does not walk in the Spirit, does not even understand God's great plan of the ages, and cares far more about making proselytes to a denomination or sect than in bringing people into a living relationship with Jesus Christ. The average church today cares more about its programs, its doctrines, its rituals and ceremonies, its buildings, its committee meetings and its budget than it does about making known to the world the glad news that God has reconciled the whole world to Himself and He shall not rest until every heart has surrendered and the very last sheep has been carried back to the fold. Nothing stops or hinders this Shepherd, for if He did fail in this effort, He could never rest knowing that one of His sheep was eternally lost

and doomed. He does not send anyone else or leave it to the sheep to find its way back. HE HIMSELF GOES UNTIL HE FINDS.

Let us have these things right and straight in our minds. Let us see these things correctly. Let us believe the word of the Lord Jesus, the Shepherd-Saviour. Nothing is left in any way to chance. The Shepherd sends no one out to look for the sheep, but goes Himself. Granted, HE GOES THROUGH HIS BODY, but He is not sitting idly by to see what will happen. His mission goes on until it is one hundred percent successful and the last one is found. Nothing will stop the work of the Shepherd until that last sheep is made to correctly know the Shepherd, who He is, and His great love for him. The Shepherd does not seek until He finds the last one, no matter how long it takes or to what depths He must search! He will search through this age or through the ages to come. He will search through earth or He will search through hell. Time or place means nothing to this Great and Good Shepherd — only the lost sheep means much to him.

Someone will ask, "But doesn't God command sinners to choose this day whom they will serve and to seek the Lord while He may be found?" ABSOLUTELY NOT! Oh yes, the scripture does say, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the god of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell. but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Jos. 24:15). But those words were never spoken to the unsaved man, without God and without hope in the world; these were the words of God's prophet to Israel, God's people, as they possessed the Promised Land! God has nowhere, in all the pages of His blessed Book, commanded unconverted sinners to "choose" between Him and anything else. DEAD MEN DON'T MAKE CHOICES.

And yes, the scripture does say, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, and He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:6-7). But again, these words were never addressed to the unregenerated man who has no relationship with the Lord. They were thundered by the prophet Isaiah to GOD'S BACKSLIDING PEOPLE in a time of spiritual declension and apostasy. It is God's own people who must "choose" between God and idols, who must "seek" the Lord, and "return" unto the Lord; not the man who is lost and cannot find his way. Saints must return unto the Lord, but lost sheep must be found by the Shepherd. Thus it is that Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST" (Lk. 19:10).

In the true and eloquent words of another, "Christians blindly strive under the mistaken idea that, if they will only meet certain conditions, God will reply by bringing every man into the fold of Christ in this present age. My friend, this is a very great error. It is about as far from the truth as anything could possibly be. God does not intend to bring all men into the fold now. If that were His intention, He could do it with but one word of His omnipotence. When God's eternal voice speaks, saying, 'Let there be light,' then light immediately floods the universe as it did in the beginning. There is no need for a candle nor the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light. That light could not be matched by ten thousand suns, for the light that shone out of darkness in the beginning is the same light that lightens every man that comes into the world (Jn. 1:1-10). It is the light that shines into the benighted souls, bringing the life of the ages to men who are sleeping in death. 'Lazarus, come forth!' called the Lord, and a dead man sprang from his tomb to reply. 'Saul! Saul!' Jesus called to a disconsolate and determined persecutor, and he quickly replied, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do!' And so will it be when He calls you, your child, your husband, or your wife with His still small voice, speaking to the inner ear. Whether it be John, George, Henry, Joan, Phyllis, or Louise, all will fall at His feet in penitence and brokenness the moment He speaks, crying, 'Here am I, Lord! What wilt Thou have me to do?' — George Hawtin.

To tell me, as I find in the Westminster Confession of Faith, that God had, by a predestined plan, so constructed man that he was born, and from all eternity designed to be wicked, and a vessel of wrath, that God Almighty might show His power by sending him to everlasting hell — that is the most infernal lie that man's tongue could utter, or type could print. That my God, the infinitely good and holy God, was the predestinator, and creator of multitudes of harlots, whoremongers, thieves, murderers, liars, to let them grow up, and to live and lust and die, and then glorify Himself by torturing them in eternal hell fire. Horrible! Blasphemous! I tell you that all the divines that ever hatched a cocatrice egg could never make me swallow that.

Write it between your eyes and never forget it. The Good Shepherd who came from heaven, and gave His life, will seek, and seek, and seek, and save, and save, and save, until He has brought all men back to God. This is the work of the Redeemer and the redeemed. I desire to make this perfectly clear, because it is necessary to do so. When Jesus came He sought for sinners, wherever satan had gone. He sent His disciples into the world to seek even farther for them. He seeks for sinners still. And He shall seek for them throughout ages yet unborn. The Good Shepherd shall seek them until He finds them. If He didn't, He wouldn't be the Good Shepherd! He will seek them on earth and in hell. "Whither shall I go from Thy presence?" the Psalmist asks. That question is unanswered and unanswerable. It has stood upon the page of scripture for three thousand years, and no one yet of all the myriads that have read it has been able to devise a reply. Heaven says, Not here. Hell says, Not here. It is not among angels, or demons, or the lost, or in the vast silent spaces of eternity. There is no creature anywhere not manifest to His sight. He who made vultures, able from immense heights to discern the least morsel on the desert floor, has eyes better than they. Then David says, 'If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there!' Someone once said, "I did, and He was!" Thanks be to God that He will seek His lost ones through all the Universe — through all the Earths and all the Hells until He has found and saved them all. He must seek until He finds.

"Where are you going, Shepherd?"

**To find My sheep.
How far will you go?
As far as My sheep.
How far may that be?
To the World's end.
How long will you seek it?
Until I find it.
When you find it, will it come to you?
No, it will flee from Me.
Where will it go then?
To the rocks and the sand.
When will it stop?
When it can run no more.
What will you do then?
Carry it home.**

Friends, you will never get away from Jesus. Jesus will follow you everywhere and demand your heart's surrender. I am so glad for a Gospel that is coextensive with, and greater than, the devil's work in spirit, soul, and body. I am so glad for a Gospel that is not limited to this age, but reaches out to all ages. I am so glad that this is not the last age; there are yet ages to come, and then that glorious age of ages, the dispensation of the fullness of times. In the dispensation of the fullness of times, the immutable Word of God has declared, God will gather all things into Christ, both which are in heaven and in earth, even in Him (Eph. 1:10). In that wonderful age of all ages every missing sheep will be accounted for as God gathers together in one the all things into Christ. I am so glad for a Gospel which tells me that God has made a way by which even His banished may return. I am so glad for a Gospel that is not limited to earth, but reaches into the depths of death and hell. I am so glad for a Gospel of Everlasting Hope, of Everlasting Expectation, and for the conviction and divine revelation that the miserable and the wicked shall at last be brought to repent of their sin, and to find their God and Father. I should not want to be an elder, or pastor, or leader, or teacher, of a people that would wish me to preach eternal damnation. I could not preach it, for it contradicts the plainest statements of scripture. It contradicts what I know of my Father's heart through personal relationship with Him. And beyond this, I could not preach it, for high in the heavens sitting upon the Milky Way is the blazing Sign of AURIGA, THE GREAT AND TENDER SHEPHERD, who throughout all ages of time and the vast endlessnesses of infinity will seek and save until the storm of judgment is ended and all men and all creatures in all realms are safe in His loving arms. Hallelujah! What a Shepherd! J. PRESTON EBY

HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 40
TAURUS-THE WILD BULL [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART FORTY

THE SHEPHERD
THE UNDERSHEPHERD
THE HIRELINGS
FALSE SHEPHERDS

The third of the Decans (minor constellations) in the house of Taurus is AURIGA — THE GREAT SHEPHERD. He is seated upon the Milky Way, holding upon his left shoulder a she-goat, who has her paws around the neck of Auriga, The Great Shepherd. The goat is looking down in fear and apprehension at the terrible, raging, rampaging Bull. On his lap, and held by his left hand, Auriga supports two little kids, apparently new-born, and bleating, affrightened and trembling, but obviously safe and secure in the strong embrace of The Shepherd. The name Auriga is derived from a Hebrew root which means "a shepherd." Is not this the celestial portrayal of the Good and Great and Chief Shepherd gathering the Lambs in His arm, and carrying them through all the judgments, disciplines, purgings and processings of God — in His bosom? Is He not saying, "Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd: He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. 40:10-11).

THE SHEPHERD

In the Old Testament the God of Israel is designated as "The Shepherd of Israel," or Pastor and Leader of the nation. When our Lord Jesus Christ declared Himself to be "The Good Shepherd" the Jewish leaders knew that He was claiming to be Yahweh in-the-flesh. Although the hierarchy rejected His claim, the elect gladly accepted it. Those who followed Him, who heard His voice, and were fed and guided and taught by Him knew Him experientially as the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd and the Chief Shepherd.

Because God has a Shepherd's heart, He is greatly concerned about the "sheep of His pasture" and in this hour He is sending forth the Voice of the True Shepherd to lead His sheep back into the pastures of truth and righteousness. "My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not My flock; therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and, I will require My flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouth...for thus saith the Lord God; BEHOLD, I, EVEN I WILL BOTH SEARCH MY SHEEP, AND SEEK THEM OUT. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that; he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I WILL FEED MY FLOCK, AND I WILL, CAUSE THEM TO LIE DOWN, saith the Lord God. I WILL SEEK THAT WHICH WAS LOST, AND BRING AGAIN THAT WHICH WAS DRIVEN AWAY, AND WILL BIND UP THAT WHICH WAS BROKEN, AND WILL STRENGTHEN THAT WHICH WAS SICK...I will feed them with judgment." (Eze. 34:6-16).

George Warnock has commented on this passage: "Notice with what, emphasis of truth the Lord declares that HE ALONE is the True Shepherd, and that HE ALONE will take the responsibility for shepherding the Flock of God in His ways. 'I will, I will, I will....' is constantly repeated in this passage, and He has even confirmed His intention with an oath: 'As I live, saith the Lord...; True, He will use men to fulfill His purposes, as He has always done...but when we understand that GOD ALONE is the True Shepherd of the sheep, then we will

come to understand that true shepherds here in the earth are only true shepherds insofar as they walk in the ways of the True Shepherd, and speak the words of the True Shepherd, and do the works of the True Shepherd. They are not true shepherds in their own right, in virtue of some office that has been conferred upon them by God or by man.

"When Jesus came forth from the heart of God He was God's answer to the needs of the scattered sheep of God...the One that the prophets spoke about, who would come to gather together the scattered flocks of God's pasture, and cause them to lie down in quiet resting-places. He had the heart of the Shepherd-God, and therefore as He looked upon the multitudes who thronged about Him to hear His Word and to be healed of their infirmities, He had compassion upon them, for they were 'as sheep not having a shepherd.' They were nevertheless God's sheep...and Jesus knew that all whom the Father had given Him would come to Him and hear His voice. They would not follow the stranger. The "stranger" tried many times to get a following, and for a while there may have been a certain amount of perplexity, but the voice didn't sound quite right. Jesus said, 'A stranger they will not follow.' For Jesus came forth from the heart of God to gather unto Himself the sheep whom God had given Him, and to take them back into the very heart of God, where there would be ONE fold, and ONE Shepherd. It seemed almost impossible...for even in that day there were sects and divisions amongst God's people. There were scribes and Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians, and Zealots. All wanted to be heard, and all called for a following, but the true sheep did not hear them. Jesus also told the sheep whom He had gathered that He had many other sheep that did not belong to their fold...but that He would bring them also, so that there would be ONE fold and ONE Shepherd" — end quote.

Originally the New Testament Church was filled with truth and reality and spiritual power. The book of Acts gives an account of those glorious days. Unnumbered multitudes of men and women have experienced a supernatural encounter with God since that wonderful day more than 1900 years ago when the first one hundred and twenty disciples were assembled in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Suddenly a sound was heard like the rushing of a mighty wind coming straight down from the sky, and flaming tongues of divine fire crowned the heads of those humble saints gathered there. This little band of believers, filled with the Holy Spirit, was ushered into the glory, the awe, the reverence, the holiness, and the power of the Kingdom of God as Christ the Lord returned to them in mighty Spirit, to indwell their believing hearts and reign upon the throne of their yielded lives. How they sang the songs of deliverance! How the praises of God echoed down the corridors of their souls and reechoed among the battlements of celestial realms! With what power, signs, and wonders did they bear witness to the living presence of the Christ! God through them began to shake the entire world. The Word of God, anointed by the Holy Spirit, swept the world like a prairie fire. It encircled the mountains and crossed the oceans. It made kings to tremble and tyrants to fear. It was said of those early Christians that they had turned the world upside down! — so powerful was their message and spirit. In spite of persecution it grew and multiplied, for God dwelt mightily in the midst of His people. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord covered the earth as the waters cover the sea. Day after day, month after month, year after year the celestial wonder continued, thousands upon thousands came to drink at the ever-flowing fountain of life, and it looked for a time as though all the kingdoms of men would be broken down, and the whole world would come marching to Zion.

But, alas! the Church had progressed only a few years into the dispensation of the Spirit when the flesh began to rear its ugly head and men began to add carnal means and methods to the pure flow of HIS LIFE. I do not believe there is any way to explain, imagine, or understand the many ways the carnal mind works. Even before the apostles had passed from this life, a spirit and system had set in among the saints of the Lord and many people were wearing the Babylonish garment. They were instituting rules and regulations, formulating creeds, observing days, establishing sacraments and ordinances, elevating human government, becoming disciples of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, and of many others. The babble had begun and a whole multitude of fleshly administrations was making its appearance upon the body of Christ. Before too many years had passed men began to set themselves up as "lords" (today it is called "pastor," "shepherd," etc.) over God's people in place of the Holy Spirit. Instead of conquering by the power of the Spirit and by Truth, men began to add their ideas and their methods. Soon the glory and power and the presence of God in the morning time Church began to be eclipsed, degraded and debased by the idolatrous inventions of carnal minded men. The saints no longer moved by the power and glory of the indwelling Spirit, but became subservient to the rulership, dominion and lordship of their leaders who claimed that they alone knew the mind of the Lord, understood the word of God

and possessed the wisdom of God. That which had once been beautiful and glorious became unsightly, illshapen, deformed, uncomely, disfigured, hideous, monstrous, and loathsome. As these false shepherds ministered among the people of God the Spirit of Christ fled from their midst and the pure vision and experience of CHRIST LIVING AND SHEPHERDING IN HIS BODY was lost to them.

In both the Old and New Testament the word for "shepherd" and "pastor" is the same word in Hebrew and Greek. A pastor is simply a shepherd, and a shepherd is a pastor, both naturally and spiritually. The Spirit of God has dealt with me severely and consistently through many years that the Lord's people should purge their conversation, purify their terminology, and remove from their consciousness the multitude of un-scriptural and extra-biblical expressions carried over from Mystery Babylon. We have both parroted and coined a great many unscriptural terms that have been so misleading and have led us astray in our understanding of the scriptures and the wonderful plan of God.

How often we, like the babes in the harlot's house, refer to a minister of the gospel as "the pastor" of our church or some other congregation of saints. To hear all the Christians today constantly talking about "our pastor," "their pastor," "your pastor," "my pastor," and "the pastor," one would certainly be led to believe that this position of "the pastor" must indeed be one of the cardinal doctrines and most highly acclaimed offices in the New Testament! The fact is, precious friend of mine, the phrase "the pastor" is entirely foreign to the Word of God and non-existent in the early church. It is an un-scriptural and extra-biblical term. There was no one single man in the whole New Testament church who ever occupied a position called "the pastor." Not one church raised up by the twelve apostles or by Paul had any such ministry as "the pastor." Oh, yes, there were "pastors" plural (Eph. 4:11), but no single minister of God in the New Testament record was ever elevated to the position of "the pastor" of an assembly.

The truth is that in every case in the Greek New Testament where the word for pastor (POIMEN) appears in the singular accompanied by the definite article, it is used in reference solely to our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is THE PASTOR of the flock, THE SHEPHERD of the sheep! The sweet singer of Israel stated it so aptly in his lovely Psalm when he sang out under the spirit of inspiration, "The L- O- R- D is MY SHEPHERD (pastor)!" Can we not see by this that any man who takes to himself this title "THE PASTOR," thereby usurps the place and headship of our precious Lord. And those groups who have plural ministry, but one among them is designated "the senior pastor," "head-elder," or some other such title, usurp even more blasphemously the position of our Lord Jesus Christ, since these terms are the spiritual equivalent of "Chief Shepherd". I instructed the brethren among whom I labored in years past that they should never call me "the pastor" or "their pastor" because the Lord alone I-S THE PASTOR. I may be "a pastor," but never "THE pastor." The saints were taught that if anyone came inquiring after "the pastor" they should be told that the pastor is the Lord. If they were asked, "Who is the pastor here they should reply, "The Lord is the pastor here!" Should the inquirer pursue the point they could then explain that Bro. Eby is one of the servants, an under-shepherd, along with elders and ministries; but THE LORD IS T-H-E P-A-S-T-O-R. We have been so completely saturated, so thoroughly brain-washed in the errors of the religious systems that we do by rote and speak by habit the ridiculous absurdities imbibed in the pews of Babylon. How astounded we are when once we learn the truth and discover that the cherished teaching or hallowed practice we have unwittingly assumed to be godly and spiritual is not only unfounded in the Word of God, but is actually an abomination in the sight of God! And should any who read these lines doubt what I say about the absence of the ministry of "the pastor" from the New Testament church, I invite him or her to look up the term in Strong's Concordance.

An article which has anonymously come to my desk elaborates most beautifully upon this significant point. "It will require a considerable perversion of scripture to justify any concept of 'the pastor'. Have you ever observed how the writers of the Epistles greet the various churches to whom they address themselves? For example, 'Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle...to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.' This much from the first chapter of Romans. It should be observed that Paul addresses himself to 'all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.' Paul makes no reference or greeting to 'the pastor' or to 'pastors' in Rome. This omission is significant, to say the least. Had there been a 'pastor' in Rome, Paul's failure to recognize him would be inexcusable if considered in the light of present-day custom in our churches. No one of acceptable deportment in our times would think of addressing a local church without first addressing himself to 'the pastor' thereof. We cannot suppose that Paul made a breach of courtesy, so, we assume that

there was no 'pastor' in Rome. Again, 'Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth.' This much from the first chapter of First Corinthians. Once more. Paul un-gratiates himself with 'the pastor' at Corinth, by completely ignoring him. Paul's spiritual stature among the churches was not sufficient to warrant his intentional or unintentional oversight of any 'pastor' at Corinth. There was at Corinth no pastor such as we have today. It is in this chapter that Paul speaks against Diotrophes' spirit — 'everyone saith, I am of Paul; and I am of Apollos; and I am of Cephas...is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you?' It is not at all stigmatic in our day to say 'I go to Pastor So- and- so's church,' and 'pastors' invite this sort of thinking by being known as 'the pastor' of such- and- such a church. But it was not so in the beginning.

"It will come as a surprise to many of our readers that the word 'pastor' occurs but once in the entire New Testament. The word 'pastor' does not occur once in the entire book of Acts, that record of the founding of the first Christian churches. Only in **Eph. 4:11** does it appear (and then in the plural). 'And He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.' Does not this one single mention of this word in the entire New Testament seem all out of proportion to the position of the pastor' as known in our times? The word 'pastor' means 'shepherd or feeder.' This same Greek word which in Eph. 4:11 is translated 'pastor' is elsewhere in the New Testament translated 'shepherd' seventeen times. Now, that this word which is but once translated 'pastor' should be used only eighteen times in the entire New Testament is indeed significant, in view of the popular usage it is given today. I have heard pastors refer to themselves as 'the pastor' almost as many times in just one sermon! It is quite a big word in our churches and in our thinking, but not so in the scripture. And it is time we did some serious thinking about this. It is just possible that on this point we have demonstrated again that that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination to God.'

"It is difficult to make a study of the pastor without taking into account also the present false, carnal, unscriptural structure of our present-day 'churches.' The church and the pastor of our day go hand in hand, and if someone asks 'how can you run a modern church without a pastor?' the answer is simple — you can't! You cannot run a modern church without a pastor any more than you can have a church (in the New Testament sense) with a pastor. Let us here observe something basic. 'Christ is the head of the church' (**Eph. 5:23**). This does not mean that Christ is only nominal head of the church, but that He is the actual and functioning head of the church. 'For the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church' (**Eph. 5:23**). Christ is resident with the church. Where two or three meet, there He is in very fact. He is there to feed, to comfort, to admonish, to manage. This thing is real, it is not just imagination, not just fancy. Christ's people are given to understand that they are to have the presence of the Lord Himself among them. That the average church does not even begin to understand this is obvious by the position that they accord 'the pastor' and also by the resulting ignorance that prevails among the 'laity' concerning spiritual things in general. In order for Christ to be head of the church, the usual democratic machinery would have to be abandoned in favor of a direct spiritual control by the Lord Himself, a thing which our pastors, boards, committees, synods, hierarchies, cannot understand. It is amazing that we continue to try and make the old lifeless machinery produce life among us!" — end quote.

THE UNDERSHEPHERDS

My beloved, if ever you hope to reign with Christ YOU MUST BECOME SUBMITTED TO THE AUTHORITY OF GOD, THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL. And I'm not talking about coming to El Paso and submitting to my ministry, or to any other man, or group of men. It is amazing how "man" conscious even many who have received the call to sonship are! They are looking for a man, a ministry that can bring them into the Kingdom of God and into eternal life. There IS such a man, my friend — His name is Jesus Christ. Certainly we must walk in all humility with our brethren, "submitting ourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21). But true SONSHIP SUBMISSION is SUBMISSION TO THE FATHER THROUGH THE HEADSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST, for God has "put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (**Eph. 1:22-23**). "And He is the Head of the body...who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things HE might have the preeminence" (**Col. 1:18**). How tragic that there are so many in this hour who are "not holding the Head, from whom all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (**Col. 2:19**).

There are multitudes across the land who loudly profess to have received the call to sonship who, rather than submitting themselves UNDER THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD, submit their walk with God into the hands of others who persuade them that they are more capable than themselves to watch for their souls. The land is filled with men calling themselves apostles, elders, teachers, shepherds, etc., who desire to lord it over a flock or other men's lives, telling others what they can or cannot do, esteeming themselves spiritual enough to discern for everyone else what the will of the Lord is, though they bear no credentials other than their own word that they possess such authority. Some claim that they alone have the words of life; they among all God's prophets have the true, deeper, spiritual, mystical revelation that will lead the sons to perfection and immortality. Not discerning the Lord's body, and elevating their word and their ministry above all the Lord's brethren, they draw disciples after themselves. But I tell you the truth and I lie not when I say that no man can minister to you that which he himself does not possess. If a man tells you that he possesses the secret and the truth by which you can save your life and enter into physical immortality, yet he himself has neither stopped nor reversed the aging process, only a fool would commit their lives into his hands. Ah — there is ONE, precious friend of mine, who HAS STOPPED THE AGING PROCESS, WHO HAS CONQUERED DEATH, WHO IS ALIVE FOREVERMORE, and this One holds the Key, He knows the Secret, He Himself IS the Truth, and I must tell you today that HE, AND HE ALONE, HAS THE WORDS OF LIFE! Yes, those words are ministered through His many brethren. Certainly there are many precious under-shepherds, true ministries HE has set in the body, humble examples to the flock, with a flow of HIS LIFE, bearing the true Word of the Lord for this hour, a source of encouragement, confirmation, and strength unto all to whom they are sent, and we praise God for them. All such true ministries bear one signal mark of distinction: they do not draw followers after themselves, they POINT ALL MEN TO THE LORD; they do not ask you to blindly submit to them, or follow them to the exclusion of the other ministries in this present truth, but they present you unto HIM WHO IS THE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH.

I speak the truth when I say that the greatest need in this hour is for the people of God to begin to KNOW THE LORD FOR THEMSELVES. Let all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship begin to seek God, and walk with God, and know God, and hear from God, and submit to Him in all His ways, and to His will and to His word, and GOD HIMSELF will be YOUR FATHER and you will sup with HIM and He with you. Ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit, thrust yourself in utter abandonment upon His love and care, and before you realize it you will find yourself digging deep in the storehouse of God's treasures of wisdom and knowledge and sitting with Him at His banqueting table. He will spread a table before you in the presence of your enemies, He will lead you through green pastures; He will reveal to you fountains of living water flowing from within; He will cause you to rest beside cool, still streams; and HE, the Great Shepherd of the sheep will abide with you and your cup will overflow with the unspeakable riches of His grace and the wonder of His glorious and eternal reality.

How many are submitted to men but not to God! How many will travel or move thousands of miles across the land to receive from man, but have never discovered the well within which springs up into eternal life! Their obsession with "a man" reveals their own inner desolation. If you would keep the position of order in God's house of sons you must remember that "Christ is a Son OVER HIS OWN HOUSE; whose house we are" (Heb. 3:6). He is the Head, He is the Good Shepherd, and the Great Shepherd, and the Chief Shepherd, He is the Lord, He is the forerunner, He is the firstborn who has entered in for us and opened up the way. I can assure you, dear ones, that to the degree that you KNOW HIM in intimacy of fellowship and vital union, and submit to Him in all His will, ways, and dealings, you will know His authority in your life and be strengthened to reign with Him and He will be able to reign through you in all things! It is not enough to know how God would have us think, act, and be as sons of God. There must be submission to Him, with daily inworkings of His nature, mind and power. When we obey men our authority comes from men. When we obey God the authority comes from God. And when we obey God — we REIGN!

Our Lord Jesus Christ is THE SHEPHERD and THE PASTOR. It is also true that He has under-shepherds who assist in the care of the flock. An under-shepherd of the Chief Shepherd is merely a slave of God going about the business assigned him by the Master. There is a wonderful lesson Jesus taught in **Luke 17:7-10** wherein He says, "But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth

he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

When Jesus speaks of the role of a servant in this passage He uses the Greek word POIMAINO which means "to act as a shepherd." God does not approve of pastors who conceive of their role as giving them the right to push the sheep around! And even more importantly, it is not the business of the under-shepherds to lead the flock! Only one shepherd can lead. Only one shepherd is The Shepherd. The Shepherd leads the flock. The under-shepherds merely flank the sides and bring up the rear in order to make sure that all the flock FOLLOWS THE SHEPHERD. It is not God's will for any one person, pastor or pope, to rule or lead a group of people: but neither is it His will for any number of persons to rule or lead a group! In other words what is worse than a one-man ministry is a many- man ministry. We have made this mistake so often. We say we believe in plural ministry, but in so doing we create a monster by making the ministry many-headed, instead of Christ being the one Head over all. A true spiritual ministry will never seek to draw people to himself, but rather to Christ. There are many movements in the earth today stressing "divine order" and "authority" and "submission," and one of the tests of what they teach is whether the people are being released to draw their life and substance from the Christ within or not. Many leaders and movements seek to bind people to their group and lead their followers to believe that they are the choice, select group God has chosen to complete His work in the earth, manifest sonship, and bring the sons into immortality and incorruption. Unless you are joined to them and submit to their ministry you just can't make it in! When someone leaves the group or that leader, they are made to feel as if they are missing the purpose of God, have left the body of Christ, and have repudiated the High Calling of God. You must be spiritually wise to discern the spirit of any group or individual that usurps the headship of Jesus Christ by the in-dwelling Spirit over His people.

Truly, the most faithful under-shepherd is not the Great Shepherd of the sheep. The brightest reflection of His beauty that is seen upon a servant is not the revelation of Himself. Those who are closest to the Lord, who know Him best, and are more deeply conformed to His image, can only direct the searching soul to the Lord. They can never satisfy the hunger of the heart that is going out after Him. How we praise God for all the help we have received through every chosen vessel that He has used to draw us on toward Him, and into a deeper relation to Himself. With what gratitude to God, do we remember those whom He has used to point out to us a nearer approach to our glorious Lord. How tenderly do we look back upon every faithful servant and child of His, who brought us new light, who stirred within us a deeper hunger for God, who opened to us an understanding of His great plan and purpose in us, who provoked us to holy jealousy and emulation through their godly lives. How we praise God for those who warned and instructed us through the exhortation and admonition that they gave in the hour of need, or in times of weakness and immaturity. How our hunger for Reality, and abandonment to God's will and desire to follow Him all the way to Mount Zion, have been increased as we have seen that mysterious light which shines upon the faces of those who have soared with Him into the heavenly heights. While we thank God for every instrument He uses in our lives, how little one or all of these precious ones can be, compared with our Beloved, if in any way they take His place and draw us to themselves rather than to Himself. We must esteem every servant and instrument of God "exceeding highly in love for their work's sake," but we must never permit them to usurp the place of the Good and Great and Chief Shepherd in our lives and affections. Therefore the elect of God in this hour have no desire for an under-shepherd to lead them; and when they do not yield to them, they appear as though they were a stranger. But that is not it at all — it is that the Lord Himself is becoming ALL to us!

Oh, let us once for all grasp this one great fundamental truth. Christ's church is not an organization, but an organism, a body, a living reality. He and He alone, is the Head. But when man builds an organization, or a movement, or an assembly of which he himself is the head, and when he begins to legislate and pass church laws, and formulate creeds, and institute rituals, he is merely manifesting that both the system and he himself are spurious. Of course there are Christians in these organizations: let us not lose sight of that fact. And let us not lose sight of the fact that many of the founders of these organizations were honest and sincere Christians. Yet they were ignorantly sincere. The whole trend of organization is to lead away from Christ the Head of the organism, away from the Christ within each member as the way, the truth, the life, the wisdom, the knowledge, and the righteousness of God and it induces men to look to man, the head of the organization or movement.

THE HIRELING

It is time for the elect of God to sit up and take notice. The true sheep or the true fold are those sons of God who love to be led by God's Spirit. The Great and Good Shepherd, Jesus, tells us, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (Jn. 10:11-14). A "hireling" is simply one who has been "hired." Someone has well written: "We say that the 'pastor' is 'trained and authorized' in view of the fact that in just about all churches 'the pastor' must be a seminary graduate and must be ordained by a body of men acceptable to the local church. An untrained and unauthorized man would not be acceptable in the average church. We say that the 'pastor' is 'employed' in view of the fact that he came to the local group after the offer of and acceptance of a certain consideration of monies, or, somewhere along the line it was determined that he would receive for his services a certain amount of money called a 'salary.' We therefore consider him 'employed.' We say he is an 'outsider' with the express purpose of implying that for all practical purposes that is just what he is. The group is at any time free to replace the 'pastor' or apply for his replacement, depending upon the type of political structure of the group. And the 'pastor' is free at any time, upon reasonable notice, to pack up and leave. We say that 'the pastor' is 'hired' to perform the function of 'management' over the group, and to do the feeding (preaching and teaching), and this function of management is very piously called 'service.' A pastor says, 'I served such and such a church,' when the fact may more correctly be that he made them serve him" — end quote.

When and where was there a Catholic Priest or a Protestant Minister who was not "a hired servant"? The only exceptions have been the occasional simple and devout saint, taking it upon himself to obey the call of the Spirit and go forth by faith to do the work of the Kingdom of God. The Lord Jesus said in substance, "The hireling does not care for the sheep because they do not belong to him!" Consequently, this sad fact has ever held true ever since organized religion came into being: the hired priest or minister is told in seminary the precise theology he must set forth. And he — like hired men in other professions and trades — has had sufficient sense to do as told; otherwise he is OUT OF A JOB! As George Warnock has pointed out, "In this hour of comparative security and ease, there are thousands of hirelings ruling over the sheep. But let persecution come our way, or let some difficulty arise in the assembly that is apt to prove dangerous to the minister — and the hireling will flee because he is a hireling and careth not for the sheep. But the true shepherd will lay down his life for the sheep. The size of the congregation, the amount of money one is to receive, the kind of place a man will have to live in — these will not matter to the true shepherd. He will as readily preach to the ones and the twos, as to the hundreds and thousands."

Let all the saints of God thoroughly understand! There is but one Shepherd, and one fold, and the sheep know the Shepherd's voice, and follow Him, and He gives them eternal life. They are all led by the Spirit of God, and are the sons of God; and they have the Spirit of Christ, and they are His. And whether they live or die, or eat or drink, they are Christ's, for He died for them, and has purchased them with His blood: and therefore, they are not their own, but Christ's and so they are to glorify Him with their bodies, and souls, and spirits, which are His.

But in the world there is a multitude of shepherds, and they have their several flocks and folds; and the shepherds fall out with themselves, and with their flocks about victuals, clothes, days, times, laws, creeds and doctrines; and for a while one shepherd gets the flock, and for another while another shepherd gets the flock; and by these doings the flocks are almost plucked to pieces by the hireling shepherds, which leave the sheep in time of trouble, when they have gotten all the wool they can get off their backs, because the sheep were not their own. And thus the sheep are tossed up and down, and starved; and every shepherd shears the sheep, and plucks the wool off their backs. But Christ lays down His life for His sheep, He pours out His life to them, and abides with them, and dwells within them, in all their troubles, and persecutions, and sufferings, and wanderings, He suffers and is persecuted in His flock of sheep, when the hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep, for they are none of his own. And you may see as many flocks as there are in the world, there are so many hirelings knowing them, and keeping them in the world, which the devil has made a wilderness, and a desolation, among whom it is always winter to the elect: we that are taught of Christ, and know His voice, and follow Him, Christ is to us the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd and the Chief

Shepherd. Ah, my beloved, cease in God's name from searching for shepherds and pastors to lead you; cease, I say from looking for a man to lead you, and learn the reality of truth in these words, **"I am the good Shepherd; the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:39)**. Learn that He is not only the Shepherd, but also the door to the sheepfold (Jn. 10:2), by which the Shepherd enters that He might call all His sheep by name and go before them that they should know no other voice but His (Jn. 10:3-6).

FALSE SHEPHERDS

We have heard much over the past two decades about having a "local group for a covering," whatever that is supposed to mean. This so-called "truth" usually refers to a pseudo-spiritual submission to men calling themselves elders, or shepherds, who desire to lord it over a flock or other men's lives, and tell others what they can and cannot do. They esteem themselves spiritual enough to discern for everybody else what the will of the Lord is, though they themselves are missing the point entirely. My brother, my sister, hearken to the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, BUT NOT OF ME; and that cover with a covering, BUT NOT OF MY SPIRIT, that they may add sin to sin" (Isa. 30:1).

COVERING! By many this term is used to mean that each believer, being a "dumb sheep," needs the "covering" or protection of a group, or fold, presided over by men who are "shepherds". Every one is in "submission" to someone higher in the pyramid, until the whole structure becomes one vast hierarchy with just a few men or one man at the top. Each "shepherd" of a local group is "in submission" to some other higher "shepherd" and all these are ultimately submitted to an "apostle" somewhere in the world. Some rule more strictly than others over their "dumb sheep," but in general the individual believer is taught that he cannot trust his own ability to hear from the Lord, or understand the Word of God, or order his own life, but must look to his earthly shepherd to hear from the Lord for him. In many cases one dare not change jobs, move from one place to another, marry, go on vacation, or make any other decision without checking it out with his "shepherd" or the "elders." The counsel of the "shepherd" in many cases **MUST** be followed! Women have often been told that they must always obey their husband's wishes, even if he requires something illegal or immoral! Some are instructed as to how much of their means to "give" to the "body."

In some assemblies if a prophecy is to be given, the one who has heard from the Spirit Himself is required to gain permission from the 'pastor' or 'elder' or 'shepherd' in order to prophesy. If permission is granted, that one is then required to leave his seat, march down front, take the microphone, and then prophesy. By then I think that the Spirit's message would be, "Quench not My Spirit and touch not My prophets." Such false shepherds instruct God's people, "Submit to church government — **NO MATTER WHAT!**" "Obey your leaders — even if they are wrong!" "Don't judge the ministry!" "God placed the ministry over you. You don't second-guess their decisions. They are God inspired!" Are YOU victim to this kind of "inspired teaching"? If so, danger is stalking your eternal life. Isn't it time you asked yourself, "What is behind such totalitarian rhetoric?" The tactic is simple. You are being intimidated. Through raw and robust fear tactics, you are **SCARED INTO OBEDIENCE TO MEN** — not to God. Your mind is being conditioned to accept — without thinking and without proof — everything such preachers say. You are being brainwashed to behave like spiritual zombies. The mind of Christ in you is being raped!

Now, not all who teach "the covering" are that extreme, but for many of them the half has not been told. There is a great emphasis on the term "covering" as being necessary for each member, for protection from harm and deception. If we do not have this "covering" of the local fellowship, or elders, or shepherds, then, we are told, we cannot discern the will of the Lord, cannot understand the Word of the Lord, will be overcome by our adversary, will fall into sin or delusion, or the present world system will destroy us. I am frankly appalled at the shallowness, gullibility, and lack of spiritual discernment and maturity among the people of God, for they give heed continually to the voice of such strangers, but the voice of the Good Shepherd they do not know. Why are the children of God so ready to blindly accept every subtle and plausible teaching that is thrust at them, without earnestly seeking the help of the blessed Spirit **WHO ALONE HAS BEEN SENT TO GUIDE US INTO ALL TRUTH**. Any preacher today who can come up with some fantastic notion can corral God's people under his authority, and the more fantastic the notion the more people run after it. I do not hesitate to tell you that I know of no greater deception that has entered in among the Lord's sheep during the past twenty years than the error of the "covering" teaching.

Where, I ask, WHERE DOES THE SCRIPTURE GIVE EVIDENCE THIS APPLICATION OF THE WORD "COVERING" IS LEGITIMATE? I know of no place! Where in the whole Bible, I ask, is the husband called a "covering" for his wife? Where in the entire Bible are elders called a "covering" for the church? In what place is the church spoken of as a "covering" for believers? Where is the chapter and verse to be found that refers to an apostle as a "covering" for other ministers? Where is the scripture that teaches that unless a traveling ministry is under the "covering" of some local assembly he is not to be received? WHERE DOES IT SAY IT! Ah, my friend, you may search long and hard, you may burn the midnight oil, you may read and study until your eyes are red and vision blurred, until you lapse into fitful sleep with Bible and reference books scattered on the desk before you; and I can assure you without fear of contradiction that your most diligent and persistent efforts shall prove fruitless and in vain! We are blind readers indeed if we do not readily see that the fact of the matter is that the "covering" doctrine in all of its ramifications is foreign to the Word of God! You will have to tear the Bible all to pieces if you teach such doctrine.

The time has come when people no longer endure sound doctrine but are turned to fables. Many false Christs and false prophets and spurious forms of religion are going forth into all the world. Some time ago a dear sister stopped to visit with us for a few hours, and during the course of our conversation she asked a most momentous question. She wanted to know what, in my opinion, is the greatest danger present among God's people in this hour. I could only reply that the greatest danger I perceive today is that of God's saints being BROUGHT INTO BONDAGE TO MEN. And I will tell you frankly that there are a thousand and one different schemes and distortions of truth and departures from living reality being concocted by subtle, clever, conniving and power-hungry preachers to bring the saints into bondage to men.

"For at one time you were darkness itself, but now IN UNION with the Lord you are light itself. You must live like children of light" (Eph. 5:8) (Williams translation). A dear brother has aptly written: "The word of emphasis right now surely must be upon the word 'UNION', for it is only by virtue of our union with Him that He in us is this light so vitally needed. And it seems that all the negative forces in the world today are arrayed against this union, so that we would turn away from Him for the allure of the world. But while they promise light and freedom, 'of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage' (II Pet. 2:19). So subtle are the devious ways of the adversary, that if you cannot be enticed into outright sin and forsaking of the way of truth, then the enemy would cause you to become so religious, working a spiritual pride, or a false humility, or perhaps the allure of one to be your shepherd, or covering, or spiritual mentor, just anything to keep you from that vital, personal UNION with Christ as your HEAD, so that in ONENESS WITH HIM you are led by His Spirit. If ever we live like children of light, it will be because of our UNION WITH HIM WHO IS LIGHT."

I feel to share further from another precious brother to whom the Lord has given great wisdom for this hour: "God is always faithful to send forth true ministries to bring His people into new ways in God, when the time comes for His people to enter in. And God is faithfully doing this today. That is why it is so important that the ministry, as well as the people, 'hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches...' lest the ministry on the one hand assume a place of carnal authority and leadership that has no relation to what God is doing today... and lest the people on the other hand submit to such authority under the false notion that it is the highway to the Kingdom of God. The ministry has amply fulfilled its purpose on earth if it succeeds in declaring HIM, speaking about HIM, and leading others INTO DIRECT UNION WITH HIM. And having fulfilled this divine objective they should be willing to just fade away', as it were, as Moses and Elijah faded away on the Mount of Transfiguration... that the people of God might 'HEAR HIM' and see 'JESUS ONLY'. Moses and Elijah have an important part to play... and the ministry that is sent forth from the throne as God's gift to the body of Christ has an important role to fulfill. But they are important for one purpose only, and that is TO BRING MEN INTO CLOSER UNION WITH CHRIST, WHERE THEY CAN HEAR HIS VOICE, AND SEE HIS FACE, AND HAVE PERSONAL AND INTIMATE COMMUNION WITH HIM WHO IS THE HEAD.

"As the government of Christ increases in the hearts of His elect, then the messengers of Christ must decrease. As the heart of a true son begins to develop and mature, then the servant (under-shepherd) must be quick and anxious to loosen the ties of allegiance that somehow may have come into being as he sought to lead God's sons into maturity, and encourage them to walk ALONE WITH GOD. Alone, I say, because no matter how many thousands there are who are walking with you and with God... your walk with God is intended to be very individual and unique. Ministry in the Holy Place must give way to sonship in the HOLIEST OF ALL,

as Faith gives way to Hope, as Hope gives way to Love, as the Blade gives way to the Ear, as the Ear gives way to the Full Corn in the Ear, as bondage in Egypt gives way to a walk of discipline in the Wilderness, as the Wilderness gives way to Fruitfulness in the Land of Canaan. In other words, the ministry has fulfilled its purpose if it has been successful in bringing the people of God into direct, intimate union with the Lord!

"The purpose of all ministry that proceeds from the exalted Christ is to so minister the Truth that the sheep of God's pasture might come into direct, unhindered personal union with the Lord. They make disciples FOR CHRIST, BUT NONE FOR THEMSELVES. In still another analogy, God's ministers are gardeners: those who plant the seed, or those who water the growing plant, or those who reap the harvest. They must not meddle with the seed, or with the growing plant. GOD IS THE HUSBANDMAN, and He it is that giveth 'the increase.' So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; BUT GOD THAT GIVETH THE INCREASE!' (I Cor. 3:7)" — end quote.

Ah, yes, we do need a "covering"! The Spirit has revealed this over and over again in numerous ways, through types, and shadows, and forms, and inspired utterances through all His holy prophets since the day that Adam and Eve were clothed by the Lord God in Eden's lovely Garden. One cannot help but notice with what emphasis the Lord declares that HE ALONE is the true covering and the true coverer: "And I have put My words in thy mouth, and I HAVE COVERED THEE IN THE SHADOW OF MINE HAND, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art My people" (Isa. 51:16). "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord...for ME HATH CLOTHED ME WITH THE GARMENTS OF SALVATION, HE HATH COVERED ME WITH THE ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Isa. 61:10). "HE SHALL COVER THEE WITH HIS FEATHERS, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler" (Ps. 91:4). When our Lord Jesus Christ came forth from the heart of God He stood in the temple and wept over Jerusalem as He reproached the people with these sorrowful words: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Mat. 23:37). Oh, child of God, I pray that the truth of these things will grip your heart! Let every saint of God who treasures the bright hope of sonship RECOGNIZE THE LORD A-L-O-N-E AS THEIR COVERING!

Why, oh why, is it not possible for the Lord's people to see that any "covering" except THE LIFE OF THE LAMB is naught but withering fig- leaves which in due time fall away and fail to cover sufficiently, leaving the flesh exposed. To say that we need men, or pastors, or elders, or shepherds, or anyone at all other than the Lord Jesus Christ to "cover" us or "lead" us will surely bring spiritual stagnation, or worse, spiritual death. Nothing will avail but the ANOINTING OF LIFE which comes alone from the Holy Spirit within as we seek the Lord with all our hearts. After more than forty years of ministry among Spirit-filled saints I testify to you that never, in all these years, have I witnessed a quickening flow of HIS LIFE, never have I seen saints being truly conformed to the image of Christ, never have I observed a people approaching spiritual maturity, never have I seen saints coming to KNOW GOD FOR THEMSELVES, and never have I beheld sons coming to glory in any group where MEN OR ELDERS RULE OVER GOD'S PEOPLE, OR BECOME A COVERING FOR THEM, OR SET THEMSELVES UP AS 'THE SHEPHERD' OR 'THE APOSTLE' OR THE ANOINTED MINISTRY' ORDAINED TO BRING GOD'S SONS INTO LIFE AND INTO THE KINGDOM. In every case they are only successful at bringing horrible bondage, delusion, and spiritual stagnation to the people of the Lord. These words may be difficult to receive, my friend, but they are the plain, simple, powerful truth.

Invariably, in the history of God's dealings, the Lord's people have grown weary in pursuing the full inheritance of God for themselves, and as the vision grows dim before their drowsy eyes they become impatient in spirit and are willing to turn their walk with God into the hands of others whom they deem more capable than themselves to possess the land. This is what happened in the early days of Israel, after they had become settled in the land of their inheritance. God had been their Lord and King from the time He called them out of bondage, and drew them apart into a special relationship with Himself. But now in the time of Samuel, with many enemies about remaining to be subjected, and much development of the kingdom still before, they began to grow weary with it all, and desired a king, like the nations about them. How this grieved the heart of God! All along, and right from the beginning, their very existence as a nation was by reason of the fact that God longed for an inheritance of His own in a people that were separate from other people, and very much unlike the nations. He desired to lead them, protect them, feed them, teach them, rule over them, bringing

them into union with Himself, to walk in His truth, in His ways, in His holiness, in His life, clothed upon with the indescribable majesty of HIMSELF — ONE WITH HIM in all things. "Make us a king!" they demanded of Samuel, "someone to go out before us, and to fight our battles for us, someone head and shoulders above us who can secure the victory for us." Pursuing the vision of God, and seeking out His will for our lives has become burdensome to many people. "Give us a leader," they clamor, "someone who will tell us what we are supposed to do, someone who will preach to us, study for us, pray for us, prophesy to us, find the will of God for us, and unfold the way into sonship in ten easy lessons!"

God will let them have it! If you want a covering other than the Christ within, if you want a shepherd other than the spirit of the Good and Great Shepherd within, God will let you have it. If you want men to rule over you, rather than learning to know God for yourself and walk with God in the Spirit, you will get it! There are many around who would just love to RULE YOU! There are many waiting in the wings to become your MENTOR, your PROPHET, your GURU, your LEADER! I can direct you to quite a number who would be delighted to become YOUR SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM - YOUR COVERING! "Jonestown" and "Waco" with all their horrible extreme of the dominating authority of man, should be warning examples to all Christians who give blind obedience to their leaders or who are looking for "a man" to be their spiritual authority, instead of looking to the CHRIST WITHIN as the hope of glory. And let me share a further word. Any counsel or advice or supposed "Word of the Lord" through man MUST BE CONFIRMED TO O-U-R H-E-A-R-T-S before we accept it! If someone — even one you revere as a prophet — tells you that God wants you to do this or that concerning an area wherein you (not that someone) have the RESPONSIBILITY for the action and the outcome, then politely listen, but do NOT do what they say. Wait for God to confirm the order through someone else and, more importantly, within your own heart and spirit. If there is no witness — no knowing within yourself — forget it!

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage... for, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:1,13). "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth IN YOU, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (I Jn. 2:26-27). Oh, yes! The adversary loves it if he can make us afraid to hear from God ourselves! Afraid to trust the CHRIST WITHIN! But, "My sheep hear My voice (not the voice of strangers or hirelings) and I know them, and they follow ME. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (Jn. 10:27-30). I rejoice with exceeding great joy and my soul shouts unending hallelujahs, for I have found THE SHEPHERD! His name is Jesus Christ. He lives in me, speaks in me, leads in me. I tell you today that He alone is MY SHEPHERD. I shall never seek another.

I will close this message by sharing an anointed word from the pen of Sister Alma McClure. "Don't be deceived or intimidated by those who say you must have a 'spiritual covering' of MEN or WOMEN! Or an organization! We have the best covering there can be in our Lord. The arm of flesh will fail, whether it is called apostle, prophet, pastor, bishop, elder ... or pope! Was everyone in the scriptures under the spiritual oversight of some man or group? Consider! Abraham heard God and obeyed Him. He had no other spiritual covering. Moses forsook Egypt and all of man's authority, and had his commission and his step by step instructions from the Lord alone. God spoke to him, mouth to mouth. David's preparation for rulership began on the lonely hillsides, keeping his father's sheep, and playing his harp, communing with the God of heaven. Later, he received further preparation as he endured the lonely days in the dens and caves of the wilderness, with those who joined him there, as he fled from the persecution of King Saul, who sought his life. Joseph, betrayed by his brethren who hated him, had no earthly 'spiritual covering' of man, but learned by the processings of the Lord, and had his times of close communication with Him, as a slave, and as a prisoner of the king. Job's communication with God was direct, without man's 'covering'. In fact, the three 'friends' who tried to give him advice (and condemnation), were brought down in shame, as they were reproved by God, and had to accept prayer from Job, in order to be forgiven and accepted of God, for their words were not right. Enoch had no earthly 'covering', but walked with God, and found favor and acceptance with Him, and was not for God took him. Elijah walked alone with God, responsible only to HIM! God spoke to and dealt directly with Noah, who was obedient and found favor with God, while all others, aside from his family, were destroyed. Daniel and his

three friends had no group as a 'covering'. They simply remained true to the Mighty One of Israel and heard from HIM. We could list a multitude of others, including Deborah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, etc., etc.

"In the New Testament, the outstanding example is the apostle Paul. Hear his testimony: 'The gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem (to the church leaders) to them who were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus' (**Gal. 1:11-17**).

"Beloved, God has a company now, called out of man's religious systems, who are separated UNTO HIMSELF, that He alone may lead them, and teach them, and process them, and use them for His glory, as Firstfruits, to minister love, mercy and deliverance to creation!" — end quote. To which I add a hearty "Amen!"

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 41

GEMINI-THE TWINS

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART FORTY-ONE

THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD
THE TWO SIDES OF LOVE
THE TWO HANDS OF GOD
THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

On leaving the island of Melita, the apostle Paul took a ship of Alexandria whose Sign, we are told, was Castor and Pollux. "And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux" (Acts 28:11). Perhaps you have wondered just what the name of this ship means. It is a reference to the tenth Sign that we come to in our study on the Zodiac — the Sign of GEMINI. Gemini is the picture of two youthful twins seated side by side and at rest, with their feet placed upon the Milky Way. Their heads lean against each other. The one on the left has a club in his hand, but even the club is at repose, leaning against his shoulder. The other twin, on the right, has a harp in one hand and a bow and arrow in the other. Both the bow and arrow are in repose, the same as the figure who holds them. The picture portrays a readiness for warlike action, but at the same time a peaceful repose in the knowledge of a great victory either already gained or ready to be gained. It speaks of absolute confidence of victory, certainty of triumph in warfare, the successful conclusion of purpose or battle.

Gemini is a perfect illustration of the pagan perversion of the Gospel God originally set in the stars. Dr. Kennedy has written, "Here is a picture of those who have been mighty hunters or warriors, who now are seated in joyful repose. Their names in Latin were Castor and Pollux. The Greek names for them were Apollo and Hercules. Castor and Pollux are also the names of the two bright stars found in the heads of each of these two figures. In Grecian mythology, Apollo and Hercules, the twin sons of Jupiter, were great heroes and had accomplished great exploits. They had supposedly cleared the seas of pirates. That is no doubt one of the reasons the name of the ship Paul referred to in the book of Acts was Castor and Pollux, the Latin equivalent of Apollo and Hercules. These two were very important to seamen. In fact, their names gave rise to the then vulgar form of cursing or swearing, a practice carried over today in the exclamation, 'By Gemini,' or the more modern 'By Jimminy.' That epithet came from this particular sign and from these two heroes who had supposedly cleared the seas of pirates.

The twins of Gemini introduce us to the great law of duality that exists first of all in God Himself, and also in all of His ways and dealings in creation. All nature is a revealing of the Creator as Paul explains in **Rom. 1:20**, "For ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity have been seen and made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made — His handiworks" (Amplified Bible). The universe unmistakably reveals the awesome fact that there is polarity in God. What exactly, is polarity? Webster defines it as "the condition of having magnetic poles, one positive and attracting, the other negative and repelling; the having of two contrary qualities, powers, etc., as both wrath and mercy." Polarity is something much more than simple duality or opposition. For to say that opposites are "polar" is to say much more than that they are far apart: it is to say that they are RELATED AND JOINED — that they are the terms, ends, or extremities of a SINGLE WHOLE. Polar opposites are therefore INSEPARABLE opposites, like the poles of the earth or of a magnet, or the ends of a stick or the faces of a coin. Though what lies between the poles is more substantial than the poles themselves — nevertheless the three are undivided, constituting a single whole.

One fundamental law of the universe is that all things have their opposites. There can be no consciousness without opposites, and no means by which anything can be manifested except by the interaction of opposites — the one "swallowing" the other in "rhythmic balanced interchange." Each positive has its negative as its necessary reverse. Light and dark, sweet and bitter, hard and soft, good and evil, right through to the ultimate

negative of the material realm in the positive and negative of electricity, and the electron and proton of the atom. This law of opposites takes its conscious form in us as persons. Sooner or later it must occur to each of us that we are in fact polarizations of the same forces we have detected throughout the universe. This positive and negative magnetic polarization is an intimate property of electrical phenomena. All matter, organic and inorganic, participates in and depends upon the flow of these energies which, as Einstein pointed out, are actually matter in motion. A battery, in order to be effective, must have a negative and a positive pole. Both poles of the battery must be operative in order for the battery to function. The negative, in itself, can do nothing. The positive, in itself, can do nothing. Both must be interrelated in order for the power and purpose of that battery to come into fulfillment. Let us remember that pleasure and pain are polar forces. When we demand a world without pain, we may be asking for the removal of pleasure as we know it. The same faculties that are capable of pain are capable of pleasure, and the Bible speaks of both as being functions in the nature of God. God was "pained" in His heart because of the wickedness of man, and Paul speaks of "godly sorrow." Pleasure, in fact, can never be truly known or appreciated apart from pain. In the natural world many pains are automatic danger-signals, without which we would mutilate or kill ourselves without knowing it. The burnt child suffers, indeed, but for the pain it would probably burn its fingers off. Reason itself would be a poor substitute for this sharp reminder.

Thus, the twins of Gemini speak to us of a duality in God that carries the sense of "fullness" and "unity" rather than that of "division. The accomplishment of both twins is needed to bring completion and perfection; they do not represent partition, incompleteness, or opposition. The ancient names associated with Gemini reveal this principle. The old Coptic name for this Sign was Pi-Mahi, which means THE UNITED, as unified in fellowship or brotherhood. The Hebrew name for this constellation is Thaumim, meaning THE UNITED or JOINED TOGETHER. A derivative of this Hebrew word is used in connection with the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, where boards were "coupled together" (Ex. 26:24). It is also connected with the Thummim stone which the high priest wore, meaning "perfections," and by which, with the Urim stone, the will of Yahweh was ascertained by the high priest.

In the light of this principle of duality in unity let us consider a grand statement of infinite truth which fell from the lips of God's spokesman, Moses, more than thirty-five centuries ago: "**Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is ONE LORD**" (Deut. 6:4). For long centuries men have read this amazing declaration about God and have supposed it to be nothing more than a doctrinal statement of the fact that in all the universe there is only one Lord or one true and living God. That this passage may become clearer to our minds, scintillating in heaven's light like the ray which is broken into many prismatic hues, consider now the glorious things concealed in this mighty word of the Lord. The Lord our God is ONE. One, in the numerology of scripture, means UNITY, UNITED, UNDIVIDED, UNFRAGMENTED. One is the primary number, denoting beginning or source. Unity being indivisible, and not made up of other numbers, is therefore independent of all others, and is the source of all others. One means unity and unity comes from the word "unit," meaning a whole.

In reference to His substance, God is SPIRIT. In reference to His state of being, God is ONE. That which is ONE is that which is UNITED, UNDIVIDED, UNFRAGMENTED. Oneness speaks of unity, harmony, singleness, concord, solidarity. God is ONE! The fact that there is ONE GOD must not be confused with the truth that GOD IS ONE. There is a great difference. God is truly one, undivided in Himself, or in His will and purpose. And surely HE alone is God! But this One God IS ONE. It is a great and blessed fact that God is ONE. He who is united, undivided and unfragmented in every aspect of His nature and state of being cannot be influenced, affected, moved, upset, frustrated, changed, altered, damaged, destroyed, made discordant, confused or set at variance in any way. The character of God is eternal, changeless, unaffected. The love, joy, peace, righteousness, wisdom, justice, power and will of God do not rise and fall, rise and fall, rise and fall. Matters not what happens nor what men or devils say or do, the love of God, the purpose of God, the power of God are steadfast, unmoved, unquenched, unaffected, without fluctuation. He is Yahweh — the SELF-EXISTENT ONE. He is ONE. No power in the universe can cause any deviation whatsoever in God's nature, will or action.

There can be no doubt that each aspect of God's being moves in perfect harmony and accord with every other part of His being. Here in the physical world there are contradictions in our value system because there are contradictions in moral philosophy, limited by finite and faltering human nature and reason. What is the ultimate

contradiction in moral philosophy? In moral philosophy the ultimate contradiction is between justice and mercy. The judge, if he is a good judge, will be just. He will not let somebody get off, without paying their dues. Moral justice demands that evil be punished. Because if evil goes unpunished, then the judge is a participant in the crime, by letting it go unchecked. Justice is one side of the coin. The other side, the other value is mercy. Mercy says, "I want to forgive you, when you don't deserve it. And the more undeserving you are, the deeper my mercy runs. This is a contradiction. How can you possibly combine these two creatively? We speak of law and love, of truth and grace, of justice and mercy, and so long as sin does not exist there is no controversy between any of these. If there be no sin, law and love are never out of harmony with grace or each other; truth and grace go ever hand in hand; justice and mercy sing a common anthem. If the law be broken, what is love to do? If truth be violated, how can grace operate? In the presence of crime, how can justice and mercy meet? This is the problem of problems. It is not a problem as between God and man. It is not a problem as between God and angels. It is a problem between GOD AND HIMSELF.

Justice and mercy can only be harmonized by making them ONE. And this can be done only in the realm of the God who IS ONE. Every facet of God's nature is unified, so that His justice is not warring against His mercy, neither is His judgment set against His grace. Herein lies the mystery and the wonder of it all — there is no conflict in God, no contradiction! In God, and in God alone, we see the contradictions combined, and justice and mercy kiss each other. Christendom has spoken of God's justice being satisfied, as if He were an incorrigible tyrant that must somehow be appeased. They speak of eternal punishment as a self-evident result of God's eternal, unchanging nature of infinite justice. Apparently, according to this crude theory, one is to think of two parallel lines, divine mercy and divine justice, two divine properties, running close beside each other but diametrically opposed to one another, each in its own right, continuing on into infinity. Not only love, but also justice must run its full course, and thus justice and mercy are isolated from each other endlessly. In this view God is both INFINITELY JUST and INFINITELY MERCIFUL at the same time — but never the twain shall meet! This crude theory is responsible for the ridiculous doctrine of eternal life for some and eternal torture for others.

I am constrained by the Holy Spirit of God to cry out against such a blasphemous absurdity! Our God is not schizophrenic. He does not have a split personality. He is not both INFINITELY MERCIFUL and INFINITELY VINDICTIVE! The Lord our God is ONE, all attributes and powers of His Being are working together in perfect accord, each harmoniously synchronized in the same purpose and toward the same end, without any contradiction. In the scriptural view, HIS JUSTICE is linked inherently to HIS SALVATION. "There is no God else beside Me; a JUST God and a SAVIOUR; there is none beside Me" (Isa. 45:21). He is a SAVIOUR because He is also JUST. His righteous nature requires that He be our Saviour. He "knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust," and He knows right well that "the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope" (Rom. 8:20).

Yes, HE WILL CORRECT US, and by this very correction make the necessary changes in us, and then He will bring us into the fullness of salvation. IN HIM "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness (justice) and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10). These are never to be viewed as OPPONENTS to each other, they are gloriously WORKING TOGETHER to fulfill God's redemption in us. Where mercy alone cannot produce the needed change, God applies His judgment. And when judgment has accomplished its full work, "in wrath He remembers mercy" (Hab. 3:2). His wrath and His mercy COOPERATE one with the other, both designed to play their role in bringing man to one expected end: reconciliation to God and deliverance from sin and death. There is no conflict between the two — the objective of each is redemptive, not vindictive or destructive. If we have a concept where the judgment of God is pitted against His mercy, or where the justice of God becomes greater than His love, or where wrath triumphs over grace, then we have a distorted and wicked concept of God. We have not yet learned this one simple but sublime truth: The Lord our God is O- N- E!

I have never believed that by teaching the ultimate salvation of all men we were pitting one group of scriptures against another, or one aspect of God's nature against another, for it is my conviction that the solution can only be found in the HARMONIZATION of all the scriptures and all the characteristics within God Himself, not ignoring one while advancing the other. God's justice and His mercy, God's judgment and His salvation, must MEET TOGETHER AS CO-AGENTS IN GOD'S REDEMPTIVE PURPOSES, else there is eternal warfare and

irreconcilable conflict between the two. I find all the judgments of God to be disciplinary and correctional rather than vindictive and final. Therein lies the harmonization of which I speak. According to the Word of God, God is at the same time the JUDGE OF ALL and the SAVIOUR OF ALL. He is not the Judge of some and the Saviour of some, but both Judge and Saviour of ALL! "Judge of all" must mean that He judges all; none escape. "Saviour of all" must mean that He saves all; none are left out. Within that one wonderful fact can be seen the beautiful HARMONIZATION of the justice and the love of God — His judgment leading to repentance and a knowledge of His mercy. Praise His wonderful name! The judgments of God can never be rightly understood apart from His nature of love. If God's judgments spring not from His love then they come not from God at all, for God IS LOVE. What ought this to teach us about His judgments! The pen of inspiration wrote, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord LOVETH He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth...for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12:5-10). God doesn't go ground purposely punishing or vindictively torturing any of His creatures. But He does go about precise paths of bringing forth correction UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS, as the prophet says, "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Isa. 26:9). Thus God's judgments, whether upon saints, nations, or the wicked in general are all corrective in nature, accomplished by the motivation of His nature which is LOVE. Truly, the Lord our God is ONE!

Do you recall the story about the wind and the sun arguing over who was the stronger? They decided that whoever could take the coat off a man walking down the street was stronger. The wind tried first. It blew and howled furiously. Twice it knocked the man off his feet, but the coat did not come off. In fact, the harder the wind blew, the more the man buttoned up. Finally the wind gave up. Next was the sun's turn. It started to shine, and the man, glad with the change in weather, unbuttoned his coat. But the sun grew warmer still, till finally the man took off his coat. The sun won. One of the hidden morals of this story is that both the wind and the sun had the same objective — to take the coat off the man! While, in this case, warmth won out over violence, there was no conflict between the two. And so it is with God's judgments and His mercy. He will send what is needful to work the necessary changes in our lives and in all creation — but ALL THINGS are of God and all things WORK TOGETHER for our good. The Lord our God is ONE!

The understanding of this great principle gives the answer to the all-important question, "Is God this, or is He that? Is God a God of wrath, or is He a God of mercy? Is He absolute love, or is He absolutely just?" The answer to such questions is simply that He is BOTH! God is not one OR the other. He is the perfect harmonization and balance of POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE. God has TWO HANDS! "The works of HIS HANDS are truth AND judgment" (Ps. 111:7). We will never understand God or His dealings aright until we grasp the truth that many experiences, values, qualities and powers which we have believed to be contrary and distinct are, after all, TWO ASPECTS OF THE SAME THING. God does not pit His judgment against His mercy, neither does He show ONLY MERCY to some and ONLY JUDGMENT to others. The sweet singer of Israel intoned these enlightening words: "I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing!" (Ps. 101:1). The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the ministry of the Christ, declared of Him, "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto TRUTH" (Isa. 42:3). Judgment unto truth — how unspeakably blessed! This kind of judgment can never be characterized as unrestrained, unappeasable, implacable, sadistic rage inflicting purposeless, merciless, unending vengeance upon mankind — but corrective, redemptive judgment to break the rebellion of men, and BRING THEM ALL INTO TRUTH AGAIN. As the apostle beautifully confirms, "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for ALL MEN...for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who W-I-L-L HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:1-4). We do not minimize the workings of wrath, but we do rejoice in the beautiful balance and purpose between the work of God's LEFT HAND and that of His RIGHT HAND — both leading to righteousness. "For the Word of the Lord is right; and ALL His works are done in TRUTH. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the GOODNESS of the Lord!" (Ps. 33:45).

The two hands of God are not the only example of the unified duality in God and His dealings. The same principle is clearly seen in Christ's divinity and humanity, in Christ the Head and Christ the body, in the image of God as male and female, in the sons of God and the bride of Christ, in the Spirit and the Word, in the sons and daughters of God, etc. Beside these, there are many others! The Bible is full of these unified opposites.

And all are represented in the heavens by Gemini, The Twins — who in unity and confidence secure the victory.

THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD

There is not a man on earth who is qualified to teach or speak God's Word until that Word has been quickened to him by the Spirit. And no word uttered by man will ever be effectual in the lives of the hearers until that word is energized to go forth as a Living Word. There is a tremendous value in words even in the natural realm. All words are either creative or destructive. All that happens everyday in the world is accomplished through the power invested in words. All the business and transactions of men and nations are carried on by the power of words. All the political and economic ideologies that have shaped movements and determined the course of history and the destiny of billions of people and races and empires have first issued as words which form their consciousness within the minds and wills of men, who then actively create out of them the external form and substance of them. The whole Communist empire, for instance, with all its legislative, judicial and military institutions and powers was inspired and produced by the power and out of the energy of words spoken or penned by a man by the name of Karl Marx. Words printed or written on paper are powerful enough to imprison or put to death a man or to release him. Words on paper are powerful enough to join a man and woman in marriage, or separate them by divorce. Mere words on paper are sufficient to make one exceedingly wealthy or to make one penniless, to start a war or to bring peace, to establish a kingdom or dissolve an empire. Everything works and moves by and through the power of words. All words spoken form some level of consciousness within man which in turn forms the world you live in. But none of these words produces life unless they are energized by the spirit of life from God. Many words gender death.

In scripture water is a symbol for both the Word and the Spirit (Eph. 5:26; Jn. 7:37-39). The mystery of God is not far-off in heaven somewhere. GOD IS THE WORD AND THE WORD IS GOD. Furthermore, THE WORD IS THE SPIRIT AND THE SPIRIT IS THE WORD. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (Jn. 6:63). Words are the most powerful things in creation. All things, visible and invisible, were created by God's Word. "And God said, Let there be..." (Gen. 1:3). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (Jn. 1:1,3). Let all men know that creation was not brought forth merely by the spoken word. The power of God's Word lies not in the act of speaking, but in the fact that it is a LIVING WORD. "For the Word of God is living and powerful" (Heb. 4:12). The Word is living because it is energized by the Spirit. "It is the spirit that quickeneth (makes alive), the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The Spirit was not created by the Word, rather, the Spirit quickens or gives life to the Word causing it to be a Living Word. Not all words are living words. The Spirit and the Word united are the Living Word. We are not born again by the spoken word — we are born again by the Word which is energized by the Spirit, the Spirit and the Word in union - the LIVING WORD. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23). The spoken word is not Christ, and the scriptures are not the Living Word. The people of Israel had the scriptures from the very mouth of God and thought that in that written word, in the mystery and magic of the word communicated in the Hebrew characters, they had life. They were wrong. Dead wrong. The word received at Sinai and through Moses (Torah) was THE MINISTRATION OF DEATH! There was no life in it. "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious...how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious" (II Cor. 3:6-8). Consider how plainly and powerfully Jesus rebuked the Jews who trusted in the mystery and magic within the written word communicated to them in Hebrew characters. "And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him...but Jesus answered them...search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (Jn. 5:15-6, 39-40). The scriptures if taken mechanically or magically can lead us astray, for they are interpreted as a "system" rather than in the illumination that the Spirit brings. Systems are carnal; revelation is spiritual. Systematic interpretation of scriptures genders a dead word; the quickening of the Spirit brings life. The Living Word is the LIVING CHRIST!

Christ is the perfect speech of God. When the invisible and unknowable God desired to reveal Himself and communicate Himself to mankind, He placed the substance of Himself in His Word, and made that Word flesh,

and caused that Word made flesh to dwell among men and speak as God to men. Christ the Word contains the pure essence and power of Life. The words of Christ will form the consciousness and sense of HIS BEING WITHIN and His world so that you may live in it forever. The presence of Christ places us in a position to hear the voice of God. This is the voice we want to hear, not just any voice, but the voice of the Living Spirit. I have witnessed many men speak and preach the word with great persuasion and nothing happened. There is no magic" or "mystical power" in the words of the scriptures. The only power they have is that they testify of CHRIST THE LIVING WORD, they point to HIM WHO IS THE LIFE. One can preach great sermons and die! But when men are ministered the DYNAMIC REALITY OF THE LIVING WORD transformation takes place. The same Living Word that by its almighty power brought creation into existence was made flesh and dwelt among us. The Word was not made an alphabet. The Word was not made a book. The Word was not made a teaching or a doctrine. The Word was made flesh, divine substance in human form, the Son of God. And that same Word is being made flesh — divine substance in human form — within us today! The same Word that conquered sin and death in the person of Jesus Christ is being raised up in you and me in these days. Hallelujah!

He in whom the Word is made flesh becomes the Word. He who becomes the Word speaks the words of God. He speaks both by what he is and by what he says. Words are not mere sounds or symbols, but are the sheaths or cases of spiritual life, and on this ground we at once see the force of the Lord's declaration, "**the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life**" (Jn. 3:63). "**Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for HIS SEED (the Word) remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God**" (I Jn. 3:9). The inherent nature of the life expressed is that which is contained in the SEED. While we know that THE WORD is the seed, the word "seed" here is the Greek word SPERMA, that LIFE-GERM that is sown into us by His Spirit. HIS "WORD" is that life-force that brings forth after His own kind. "**For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it**" (Isa. 55:8-11). Now, to what is God comparing His Word? To the rain and snow that fall upon the earth to water it, to give life and increase. God is saying that is just exactly what HIS WORD is sent to do. God's Word will come down in power from the high realm of His Spirit, falling upon this lower realm of the flesh. God's Word, or the Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos, the Living Word of God, will come as the former and the latter rain unto His earth, or His people. He will come upon our earth, and He will cause to spring up in our earth the seed of life that He has planted there. Just as the rain and snow accomplish their purpose in the earth with unfailing certainty, so shall God's Word, His emanation, His anointing, His Christ not return unto Him void, but it SHALL ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE. There is a people in the earth in this hour that is letting that LIVING WORD rain down from above, and the seed of the New Creation is being raised up in them.

In a message recently received from Bro. Carl Armstrong he shares the following penetrating insight into the mystery of this truth of which I now write. "There is a story about a sea port that had very treacherous, rocky reefs at various places in the entrance to the harbor. It seemed that just when commerce would begin to flourish, there would be a terrible shipwreck and the harbor trade would drastically fall. The seamen and merchants of the harbor knew that something had to be done. So, they erected two lighthouses, one at the very mouth of the harbor, and the other further back on the land. These lighthouses were very strategically placed, so that when a ship at sea saw one light, rather than two lights, they knew that they were lined up to come into the harbor in the channel of safe passage. If they saw two lights, they were not lined up correctly. In like manner — if we are weighing a decision in the balance and the word (our understanding) seems to be saying one thing and the spirit (the still small voice) another, then we know to continue to look until our perceptions of the Spirit and the Word agree. Because the Spirit and the Word agree and are given to us by the Father that we might have guidance in our decisions. It was through the interaction of the Word and Spirit that the worlds were created. The worlds were framed by that alphabet of the spoken word...filled in by the Spirit. '**And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left**' (Isa. 30:21). Thus, our seeing and hearing shall be increased and we shall be balanced to walk in that perfect balance of word and spirit. If we turn too much to the right or toward the left, we will be corrected by our just balance which becomes a delight to the Lord" — end quote. The Spirit

and the Word are not antagonists — they work together in perfect harmony as the twins of Gemini to secure the victory in our lives!

THE TWO SIDES OF LOVE

There is a theme about which every son must have a clear understanding if he is to walk in the Father's dealings with full assurance. It is the fact of the dual aspect of God's nature and His workings — the two sides of love — God's love. And in order to make this clear, perhaps we should share an illustration we heard some years ago from the lips of another, in which he described a most terrifying scene. "It was late at night in a suburban area of one of our great cities in America. A child lay restless in her bed. A man, with a very severe and stern countenance, stealthily entered her bedroom and softly approached her bed. The moment the little girl saw him, a terrified expression came over her face, and she began to scream. Her mother rushed into the room and went over to her. And the trembling child threw her arms about her. The man withdrew to the telephone, called someone, who was evidently an accomplice, and in whispers made some sort of arrangement. Hastily the man re-entered the room, tore the child from the mother's arms, and rushed out to a waiting car. The child was sobbing, and he attempted to stifle her cries. He drove madly down street after street until he finally pulled up before a large, sinister and foreboding building. All was quiet, the building was partially dark, but there was one room upstairs ablaze with light. The child was hurriedly taken inside, up to the lighted room, and put into the hands of the man with whom the conversation had been held over the telephone in the hallway. In turn, the child was handed over to another accomplice — this time a woman — and these two took her into an inner room. The man who had brought her was left outside in the hallway. Inside the room the man suddenly plunged a sharp knife into the vitals of that little child, and

"Your reaction at this point may be, 'I certainly hope they will catch the criminal who abducted the little girl and is responsible for such a hideous crime.' However, I have not described to you the depraved and degraded action of a sick mind. I have not taken a chapter out of the life of a man in cell 2455, death row. I have not related to you the sordid and sadistic crime of a psychopathic criminal. On the contrary, I have described to you a tender act of love. In fact, I can think of no more sincere demonstration of love! You see, that little girl had awakened in the night with severe abdominal pain. She had been subject to such attacks. It was her father who rushed into the room. He had talked to the specialist about it, and when he saw the suffering of his little daughter, he went to the telephone, called the family physician, and arranged to meet him at the hospital. He had rushed his little girl down to the hospital and had handed her over to the family physician. The doctor had taken her to the operating room and performed emergency surgery. Through it all, every move and every act of that father was of tender love, anxious care, and wise deliberation. I have described to you the dark side of love — but love, nevertheless.

"The father loved the child just as much on that dark night when he took her to the hospital and delivered her to the surgeon's knife as he did the next week when he brought her flowers and candy. It was just as much a demonstration of deep affection when he delivered her into the hands of the surgeon as it was the next week when he brought her home and delivered her into the arms of her mother. My friend, love places the eternal security and permanent welfare of the object of love above any transitory or temporary comfort, or present pleasure. Love seeks the best interests of the beloved — at any cost!" — end quote.

We have met some brethren in this message of sonship who have exaggerated the bright side of the love of God out of all proportion to its other aspects. They have conceived of the idea that the God of this universe is a Person of all love and mercy. They do not want to think of Him as One who would punish individuals or nations. They do not want to think of Him as a God of judgment. They do not want to think of Him as One who is capable of administering a fiery retribution on those who trample under foot His holy laws and abuse His spirit of grace. To these people God is a one-sided Being — a God of pure love and goodness, and not a God of wrath. Now, just think of this for a moment: If He were such a Person, He would be a God without character. Our God is a God of holiness who hates sin. He is a God of justice, whose very nature demands that He must punish (correct) sin. It must be quite convenient, and soothing to one's conscience, to have a God who will always overlook sin, and who will never punish the sinner. But such a God could only exist in the figment of the imagination of a deluded soul. Such a God could never be a reality, because we all know that sin is a reality; and a God who is righteous and just would never eternally condone that which is so totally antagonistic to His

nature. In order for God's love and God's Kingdom to be fully manifest there must be corrective judgment and remedial retribution against all that is evil in God's universe.

The kind of God we have revealed in the Holy Scriptures is a God of both mercy and judgment — the two sides of love. He is not a nebulous nonentity of sentimentalism. He is a God of character. We thank God today that He is a God of love and mercy — and there would not be one of us alive today to breathe His fresh air, if it were not for His amazing love toward us. But there is a purpose in judgment, and it is always a purpose of love. There is a deep, clear purpose in everything God does. And His love for us, deep and tender, is the fire burning under that purpose. The character of God must be kept ever in mind. The leading trait of His character is expressed, not by the word "purity," nor "righteousness," nor "justice," but by the word "love. Though if we knew the real meaning of "love" we would find it includes these others, and more. The purpose in judgment is two-fold. It is a purpose toward sin, to get rid of it. And God's attitude here is uncompromising. No exceptions are ever noted. And there is a purpose toward men. Now regarding the purpose toward men — it is disciplinary. The whole thought is to change the man. It is love working, love for the man. As we have already pointed out, the purpose is the same as the surgeon's. He thrusts in his keen-edged blade, not to destroy life, but to save it. He is driving hard against the disease. The knife that cuts and hurts is held steady by the kindly purpose in the heart.

Let each and every man and woman who treasures the beautiful hope of sonship to God know that there is the DARK SIDE OF GOD'S LOVE! Ah, the Great Physician will put His child on the operating table. He will use the surgeon's knife when He sees a tumor of self-will or a deadly virus of carnality sapping our spiritual lives, or when He sees the cancerous growth of sin. He does not hesitate to deal with us severely. We must learn this fact early: He loves us just as much when He is subjecting us to surgery, as when He sends His blessings and gifts and brings us into the sunshine of His glory. Precious friend of mine, He loves us most when He is dealing severely with us, "for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth (prunes) it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (Jn. 15:1-2). We must remember that the Father reaches into your life and mine and prunes out that which is not fruitbearing — and it hurts! But, as some Puritan divine said years ago, "The husbandman is never so close to the branch as when he is trimming it." The Father is never more close to you, beloved, than when He is reaching in and taking out of your heart and life those things that hinder the development of HIS LIFE and the manifestation of HIS NATURE.

Consider now these profound words from the pen of one who has expressed some illuminating thoughts concerning love: "Know you not that hate sprang out of love? If there is no love, then neither can there be hatred, for hatred is the balance of power in a scheme where sin and death are manifest. It is said of God that He hates but it is also said that He is love. How can these two opposing statements be true? It is because HE IS LOVE that He can hate! It is not said that God IS HATRED. Nay! For if that be true, then hatred would be His nature, in which case He would not be Yahweh Elohim, but a fiendish despot. Nevertheless, because God is love He can manifest this love in a righteous hatred against all evil, that it might result again in pure love. And, let me add, this righteous hatred IS the DARK SIDE OF LOVE! Another has said, "In one sense, love is the highest vibration, hatred is the lowest vibration. God, being all righteous, can move on the lower vibration without perversion, using His righteous hatred to turn evil once again into good. But man, being unrighteous, receives love, and by absorbing it into 'self', in turn manifests a perverted love. How we need to be 'partakers of His holiness', being made ALL RIGHTEOUS, then we will not pervert that which is pure, but we will be able to take that which has been perverted and restore it to purity once again." Love and hatred are but the two sides of love — the Gemini twins — that unified duality within God that works to bring redemption, restoration, completion and perfection. Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it!

THE TWO HANDS OF GOD

Almost all churches and most Christians are not aware of it, but for the most part we have made God to be a one-armed or one-handed Being. Of course we realize that God is spirit and has no body of material substance and consequently no arms or hands such as we have. But spirit is real, God is real, and the eyes of God are omnipresent spirit eyes, His universal ability to see by the Spirit, and the arms and hands of God are

omnipresent spirit arms and hands, His universal ability to act, touch, and perform by the power of His Spirit. The thought of God having a right hand and a left hand should not be strange to us, although the preachers have so often presented God as a one-handed Being. In the scriptures we find the right hand of God mentioned a great many times, and the left hand of God is mentioned on a number of occasions. A great deal has been said as to the meaning of the right hand, but few have seemed to have any understanding or revelation of the significance of the left hand.

First, let us look at the meaning of these two words, right and left. The word "right" as used with "hand" is generally the Hebrew word *yamiym* meaning STRONGER, MORE DEXTEROUS. The word for "left" is *smowl* meaning DARK. From the meaning of these two words it is very easy to understand that God's right hand is His strength and dexterity, or His wonderful ability to do all things. The implication is that the right hand of God is the GOOD HAND of God, doing GOOD things. The Psalmist confirms this when he says, "In Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11). Again, "The voice of rejoicing and salvation in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted" (Ps. 118:15-8). To which the prophet Isaiah adds his inspired testimony, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (Isa. 41:10). In the Old Testament, whenever God is pictured as manifesting His power, it is done so with His right hand or arm. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power" (Ex. 15:6). "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory" (Ps. 98:1). "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me; Thou shalt stretch forth Thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and Thy right hand shall save me" (Ps. 138:7). Numerous other Psalms express the same thought. In the New Testament, after His resurrection, Jesus was by the right hand of God exalted, and made to sit at His right hand (Acts 2:33-34; Heb. 1:3,13).

But, as we have noted, the left hand in the Old Testament means DARK and from this we can readily understand that it signifies the opposite — what we call bad or evil. The left hand of God represents the DARK SIDE OF GOD. This is the hand of God so little understood. The distinctive work of these two hands is graphically portrayed in the wonderful parable Jesus told of the sheep and the goats. "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, When saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat...then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Mat. 25:31-46).

There are many precious and important truths contained in this parable, but we must restrain ourselves from pursuing them at this time in order to deal briefly with two points. First, it is important to note that this separation of the sheep from the goats was brought about, not on the basis of whether one had accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, but solely on the basis of WORKS. Everything depended entirely upon what the sheep or goats had DONE or NOT DONE. There was nothing of faith or a spiritual experience connected with this separation. The sheep were set on God's RIGHT HAND because of the fact that they had done something — given meat and drink to the Lord's brethren, clothed them, visited them, and comforted them. And note — in the whole parable there are only three companies: the sheep, the goats, and the Lord's brethren. The Lord's brethren are the body of Christ. This has nothing to do with winning souls, or visiting the people in the wards at the hospital, or giving food and clothing to the poor or to the derelicts on Skid Row. It is not a ministry to the

lost or to humanity but a ministry unto the body of Christ, the Lord's brethren. It is not about what the saints do for others, but what the nations do in regard to the people of God. It is not individuals that are gathered at the right hand and the left hand of God, but all the nations. All these things the Lord said they had DONE TO HIM. But the sheep (good nations) confessed that they had never seen Him, so how could they have done these things to the Lord? He answered, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of one of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. All of this is a kind of ministry unto the Lord Himself, and it brought these nations of people into a separation unto the RIGHT HAND of God!

This meant an entrance into a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. This kingdom was not some far-off land of ivory palaces, golden streets, white night gowns, wings and harps, where there is nothing to do and all eternity to do it in. THIS IS A KINGDOM. And because it is a kingdom it denotes rulership and advancement of all kinds. It indicates the bringing of a great many people into a higher realm in the Spirit than they have ever known. It means the salvation of nations with a most favored status in relation to the kingdom of God; it means WORK and RESPONSIBILITY and a place of ministry and authority to bless.

But the people of the nations who had never done all these things mentioned by the Lord were separated unto the LEFT HAND of God! They received no kingdom, no status in the order of God for the age to come. There were no rewards for work done or attainments reached. Rather, they were set on the dark side of God, they were put under a kingdom and under authority and they were placed in a process of fiery judgment to receive correction. There is much subtle truth in these words of Jesus: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." The word "punishment" is from the Greek KOLASIS which means simply that — punishment. But it comes from the root KOLAZO which sheds precious light upon the nature of the punishment. KOLAZO, according to Strong's Concordance, bears only two shades of meaning, namely, "to curtail" or "to chastise." To "curtail" means to restrain as a person is restrained in jail or a child is restrained when he is "grounded" for a week because of some disobedience. "Chastise" has one simple meaning according to Webster's New World Dictionary: "to punish in order to correct, usually by beating." It should be clear to any thoughtful mind that the subject here is not meaningless, sadistic, unending torture, but PURPOSEFUL CORRECTION. The Diaglott says, "Depart from Me, you cursed ones, into that aionian fire...and these shall go away into a cutting-off age lasting." The Bible in Modern English by Farrar Fenton reads, "And these He will dismiss into a long correction." Rotherham's New Testament says, "These shall go away into age-abiding correction." Young's Literal translation says, "And these shall go away to punishment age-during."

How sobering these meaningful words of truth: "And He shall set the sheep on the RIGHT HAND, but the goats on the LEFT. Then shall the King say unto them on His RIGHT HAND, Come, ye blessed of My Father...then shall He say also unto them on the LEFT HAND, Depart from Me, ye cursed!" But just what or who are these TWO HANDS OF GOD? The two hands of God represent two aspects of God's dealings, two ways in which He moves and acts to accomplish His purposes. We can readily see from the parable of the sheep and the goats that God deals through both POSITIVE and NEGATIVE forces. Beautiful truths come lighting like a covey of doves in my heart, begging to be expressed, but there is not room for them all in any message, so much truth will have to abide its time. In closing this article, however, I wish to point out that the right hand of God bespeaks of God moving and acting through POSITIVE FORCES, while the left hand of God denotes God moving and acting through NEGATIVE FORCES.

A key to this vital truth is found in the words of David in **Ps. 111:7** wherein he states, "**The works of HIS HANDS are verity and judgment.**" We have already mentioned that God is not a man, He possesses not body such as we have, for He is omnipresent spirit; but God has ordained the visible realm to serve as an allegory to convey the realities which pertain to the higher realm of the invisible. So for just a moment, consider God with two hands, one of verity, and one of judgment. The word "verity" is actually the Hebrew word for TRUTH. Thus we see with one hand He is bringing forth truth (living reality), and with the other hand of His judgment He is moving to bring us into harmony with truth. What beautiful co-ordination in all the works of His hands! Every time God initiates a new phase of His purpose, He then brings forth the measures needed to bring us into alignment with that purpose. If He can do this through POSITIVE forces He will, in the dealing of His right hand, but if corrective measures are needed He will stretch forth even His left hand and bring NEGATIVE forces into action to teach us the necessary lesson. How often we pray for God to stretch forth His right hand of VERITY, we are hungry for blessing and truth and reality, and He graciously imparts, but it has

been my experience that He does not make it a one-sided working, always piling up blessing upon blessing and revelation upon revelation until we are out of balance. In His love, yea, the dark side of love, He takes His other hand and graciously disciplines, corrects, forms, molds and shapes, until we become one with that truth, to His glory and praise. We will never understand God correctly until we see that His two hands are ONE — LOVE. Our language betrays the fact that the average person sees God as an antagonist. When high tides and strong winds shatter beach front homes, what do we call it? An act of GOD! True enough, but why don't we call a bumper crop or a surplus an act of God? The tendency to see (and fear) God in adversity as some kind of ogre is a symptom of the reasoning of the carnal mind and is as old as civilization. But the actual message of the Bible is just the opposite. Its main claim is that God utterly cherishes you. He is for you. God loves you. And if you look beyond your circumstances to God revealed in Christ, you will see solid evidence of just how deep and strong and true His love is and even now **"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).**

In speaking of the corrective judgment brought upon Israel by Babylon, the prophet cried, **"Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand" (Jer. 51:7).** God used Babylon as a NEGATIVE FORCE in HIS HAND and as HIS HAND to discipline His people. But the beloved John beheld quite another scene, **"And He had in His RIGHT HAND seven stars...the seven stars are the messengers (ministries) of the seven churches" (Rev. 1:16-20).** Again we see the working of His TWO HANDS. In the one hand is Babylon, a golden cup of fury and judgment, a vessel of wrath; and in the other hand we see seven stars, light bearers, positive ministries, vessels of mercy with a quickening word, through whom He shall reveal His truth and glory to all nations!

THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

Those elect saints who press forward toward the mark for the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus are becoming related to God in His right hand. **"Therefore being by the RIGHT HAND of God exalted..." (Acts 2:33).** This speaks of Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son, our Forerunner. He is exalted to the RIGHT HAND of God. He is the POSITIVE FORCE of God in the universe **"who is gone into heaven (spiritual realm of government) and is on the RIGHT HAND of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (I Pet. 3:22).** Contrary to popular theology, the right hand of God is NOT A PLACE. I know that many have an idea here of Christ, looking like the Jesus you see in pictures, sitting beside some kind of a throne, along side of another figure who is supposed to represent God. How unspeakably childish! The throne of the God who is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent spirit is not a material or localized one, but bespeaks the REALM OF HIS SUPREME AUTHORITY AND RULERSHIP; and our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted to the glory of that rulership. The RIGHT HAND of God is a REALM OF POWER AND AUTHORITY, A POSITION OF EMINENCE, A CONDITION AND STATE OF BEING. It is the assumption of the almighty power and universal dominion of the Father. **"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Mat. 28:18).** It is the dispensing of HIS POSITIVE ENERGY FORCE into His creation through Jesus Christ.

The Queen of England is on the throne of England, we say, yet we do not refer to the "royal bench", and as a matter of fact she seldom occupies it. When we say she is on the throne, we mean that she rules as the royal sovereign of England. The "right hand" signifies the chief place, position of excellence or favor, next to the chief ruler. Historically, Prince Bismarck was exalted or seated at the right hand of power, by the German Emperor; and Joseph was the right hand of Pharaoh in the kingdom of Egypt — not literally, but after the customary figure of speech.

There is no greater prize than oneness with Christ. The inspired apostle exhorted the saints in Colosse, **"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the RIGHT HAND of God" (Col. 3:1).** The message is clear — the elect of God are to SEEK THE THINGS OF CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. Seek the things of the right hand! What a word is that! Some of the greatest truths of the Word of God are the ones that lie hidden like pearls of great price, unnoticed by the careless but available to all who will search beneath the uninviting surface of the ground. What wonder and glory are to be discovered in these magnificent words of our Lord spoken so long ago in the hearing of John on Patmos' lonely isle: **"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).** Those who share His throne are God's RIGHT HAND MINISTRY. Paul Mueller has written of this company: "This company of the sons of God are called to be priests after the order

of Melchizedek and they are to offer the sacrifice of their lives, to intercede for all mankind, so that they may eventually join the Lord in that grand benediction, the final blessing of creation's deliverance. The Psalmist pictures the corporate Christ as a COMPANY OF MEDIATORS, standing between mankind and the divine resources, when he says, 'I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers' (Ps. 89:25). In other words, the hands of the body of Christ are placed with the left hand in the great sea of mankind, and the right hand in the rich and abundant rivers of divine life (Eze. 47:1-9), ready to channel the abundant life of God from His river of life into the great sea of mankind, thereby bringing healing and restoration to all mankind. And when we realize that the corporate hands of the body of Christ link us to the multitudes of earth's needy as well as to the mighty and abundant RIVER OF DIVINE LIFE, we will then intercede for all mankind so that we might one day bless all creation in a glorious manifestation of the life of God" — end quote. What harmony, what glorious unity shall fill the universe as this company of kings and priests, a royal priesthood (the Gemini Twins!) flows together, to gather together into Christ all things, until God is indeed ALL- IN- ALL, everything in everyone everywhere!

How truly the whole creation waits and groans for the manifestation of the sons of God! How we ourselves do groan within ourselves! Does it seem that months turn into years and years pile up into decades and all things continue as they have been? Ah, my friends, I can tell you that our God shall move again! It is not another "revival" we seek, and it is not another revival that God shall give. He shall come, He shall move in and through His body, the enChristed ones, in the fullness of the power and glory and authority of which His coming at Pentecost was but the firstfruits! And then "the kingdom, the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heavens SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE OF THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom and ALL DOMINIONS SHALL SERVE AND OBEY THEM. This was the end of the matter" (Dan. 7:27-28) (Goodspeed). This company IS the manifestation of GOD'S RIGHT HAND OF BLESSING in the earth today, and this right hand shall do even much more valiantly as the sons of God press on in to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Those who dwell in this exalted realm of the right hand shall not only REIGN upon the earth, but they shall RAIN upon the dry, parched earth and all peoples and nations shall be watered and given life through the gracious and bountiful outpouring of the RIGHT HAND OF GOD! Praise His wonderful name forever!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 42

GEMINI-THE TWINS [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART FORTY-TWO

THE TWO HANDS OF GOD
THE HIDDEN HAND
REIGNING AT THE RIGHT HAND
THE TRIUMPH AT THE RIGHT HAND

We continue in our study of the Sign of GEMINI — THE TWINS. Gemini is the picture of two youthful twins seated side by side and at rest, with their feet placed upon the Milky Way. Their heads lean against each other. The one on the left has a club in his hand, but even the club is at repose, leaning against his shoulder. The other twin, on the right, has a harp in one hand and a bow and arrow in the other. Both the bow and arrow are in repose, the same as the figure who holds them. The picture portrays a readiness for warlike action, but at the same time a peaceful repose in the certain knowledge of a great victory either already gained or ready to be gained. It speaks of absolute confidence of victory, certainty of triumph, the assurance of the successful conclusion of a purpose or warfare.

The twins of Gemini introduce us to the great law of duality that exists first of all in God Himself, as well as in all of His ways and dealings in creation. Both the Word of God and nature unmistakably reveal the awesome fact that there is polarity in God. What exactly, is polarity? Webster defines it as "the condition of having magnetic poles, one positive and attracting, the other negative and repelling; the having of two contrary qualities, powers, etc., as both wrath and mercy." Polarity is something much more than simple duality or opposition. For to say that opposites are "polar" is to say much more than that they are far apart: it is to say that they are RELATED AND JOINED — that they are the terms, ends or extremities of a SINGLE WHOLE. Polar opposites are therefore INSEPARABLE opposites, like the poles of the earth or of a magnet, or the ends of a stick or the face of a coin. Though what lies between the poles is more substantial than the poles themselves — nevertheless the three are undivided, constituting a single whole. A battery, in order to be effective, must have a negative and a positive pole. Both poles of the battery must be operative in order for the battery to function. The negative, in itself, can do nothing. The positive, in itself, can do nothing. Both must be interrelated in order for the power and purpose of that battery to come into fulfillment. Thus, the twins of Gemini speak to us of a duality in God that carries the sense of "fullness" and "unity" rather than that of "division." The unified accomplishment of both twins is needed to bring completion and perfection; they do not represent partition, incompleteness, or opposition. There are manifold doubles throughout the scriptures which set forth this great principle of duality in unity. For example, there is Joshua and Caleb, two men strong in faith to inherit the Promised Land, two men representing the ONE MAN — the CORPORATE SON OF GOD.

Then there is the Decan called CANIS MINOR, meaning The Lesser Dog. But again, this is a modern picture. In the ancient Denderah Zodiac, it was depicted as a human figure with a hawk's head and was called Sebak. The brightest star is Procyon, meaning "the Redeemer." So here we have in these two hawk figures confirmation of the same thing which we had in the Sign of Gemini — pictures of the two aspects of the work of God's Christ: the Prince, the One who comes to destroy the serpent, and the One who comes bringing redemption.

One of the Decans, or minor constellations, in the house of Gemini is CANIS MAJOR and another is CANIS MINOR. CANIS MAJOR means The Greater Dog. This constellation tells of the glorious Prince who will subdue the serpent and reign. Dr. Kennedy tells us, "In the Denderah Zodiac, the oldest planisphere, which was found on the roof of a temple in Egypt, Canis Major is called Apes, which means the head. He is pictured as a hawk, the natural enemy of the serpent, coming down upon it. The name of the star is Naz, meaning caused to come forth, coming swiftly down. It has on its head a pestle or mortar, reminding us of the fact that Christ is going to thoroughly crush the head of the enemy, as the hawk comes down upon the serpent. The

brightest star in all the heavens is Sirius, The Prince and it is found in this constellation of Canis Major. It is a magnificent star which can be seen at night if stars are visible at all. The word Sirius comes from the word Sar or Seir, from which root we get the words 'Sire,' or 'Sir.' It means Prince. Isaiah tells us about the gift of the Son of God. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Christ is frequently referred to as the Prince of princes, or the Prince of the kings of the earth. He is the Sar or Seir, the Prince of all the earth. It is very interesting that when the names of this constellation (Naz — hawk) and its major star (Seir) are combined we get the words Naz-Seir. Jesus Christ is called the Naz-Seir-ene. Naz means 'sent or caused to come swiftly,' and Seir means 'Prince.' Naz-Seir means 'the sent Prince,' the One who is sent forth quickly, a Prince of all the earth who is to come into the world. And in this Naz-Seir, or Naz-Sirius, we are to see Him of whom Matthew said, 'He came and dwelled in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called NAZ-SEIR-ENE' (Mat. 2:23). It is interesting that Biblical scholars were at a loss to explain by what prophet or in what sacred prophecy it was said that Christ should be called a Nazarene. They had looked in vain in the Old Testament for some reference which would indicate just what that was referring to without finding it. So, though they have said, referring to the fact that He came from Nazareth that He would be a Nazarene, there is no prophecy of that in the Old Testament or any other ancient writings. Yet the prophecy that He would be the 'sent Prince' come into the world for us HAS BEEN IN THE SKY FROM THE BEGINNING OF CREATION!" — end quote. So here we see a picture of the Christ of God who comes to bring destruction to the serpent in the world.

Then there is the Decan called CANIS MINOR, meaning The Lesser Dog. But again, this is a modern picture. In the ancient Denderah Zodiac, it was depicted as a human figure with a hawk's head and was called Sebak. The brightest star is Procyon, meaning "The Redeemer." So here we have in these two hawk figures confirmation of the same thing which we had in the Sign of Gemini — pictures of the two aspects of the work of God's Christ: the Prince, the One who comes to destroy the serpent, and the One who comes bringing redemption.

THE TWO HANDS OF GOD

This brings us to a most awesome and significant point. Ancient astronomical records also speak of the names of other stars in Canis Major which are no longer identifiable. One of these is an Arabic name, Alshira Alijemeniya, meaning PRINCE OF THE RIGHT HAND, and refers to its identity with the right-hand twin in Gemini, with which it is associated. There is a clear connection between the Sign of Gemini and these two attending constellations, CANIS MAJOR and CANIS MINOR. In Canis Minor there is also a star whose Arabic name is Ashira Alshemeliya and means THE PRINCE OF THE LEFT HAND, and refers to its identity with the left-hand twin in Gemini, with which it is associated. The right hand and the left hand are thus the two twins of Gemini. This, my beloved, can be nothing else but a picture of THE TWO HANDS OF GOD!

In the previous Study of this subject we have noted that in the scriptures we find the right hand of God mentioned a great many times, and the left hand of God is mentioned on a number of occasions. The word "right" as used with "hand" is generally the Hebrew word "yamiym" meaning STRONGER, MORE DEXTEROUS. The word for "left" is "smowl" meaning DARK. From the meaning of these two words it is very easy to understand that God's right hand is His strength and dexterity, or His wonderful ability to do all things. The implication is that the right hand of God is the GOOD HAND of God, doing GOOD things. But the left hand in the Old Testament means DARK and from this we can readily understand that it signifies the opposite — what we call bad or evil. The left hand represents the DARK SIDE OF GOD. This is the hand of God so little understood. That there is both the bright side of God and the dark side of God, manifested through the works of His two hands, in blessing on the one hand and in judgment on the other, is strikingly illustrated in the extraordinary story found in I Kings chapter twenty-two. The wicked king Ahab is persuading the good king, Jehoshaphat to go to battle with him, and all the false prophets of Ahab have prophesied that they should go to battle, that the Lord will give them victory. But Jehoshaphat asks for a prophet of the Lord and Micaiah is brought with instructions to prophesy like the rest, but he refuses. Micaiah at first mocks Ahab, by prophesying in just that way, but Ahab knows that it is not right, and commands him to prophesy in the Word of the Lord.

So in verse nineteen Micaiah begins thus: "Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him ON HIS RIGHT HAND AND ON HIS LEFT. And the

Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. There came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth AND I WILL BE A LYING SPIRIT IN THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS PROPHETS. And He said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; GO FORTH AND DO SO." Now this is God's Word as He sought a way to cause Ahab to be defeated. Out of the heavenly realm came such a spirit, who made himself to be lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets with the consent and authority of God! He caused the prophets to prophesy falsely and bring about the fall of Ahab, even as he was given commandment of God. We do not always understand some of God's workings, but they are in the scriptures, and we cannot build a pathway around them, for ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine.

But does it not seem incredible that the Holy Spirit should take such care to record that all the spirits making up "the host of heaven" were standing at God's RIGHT HAND and His LEFT HAND, if this fact is not extremely pregnant with meaning? Beloved reader, ponder, if you will, this weighty consideration: From which of the two hands of God came the lying spirit which brought judgment to King Ahab? After years of reverent meditation upon this challenging question my heart is satisfied with this answer: The lying spirit came from the LEFT HAND of God — of course!

Many of the Lord's precious people have great difficulty in reconciling a God of LOVE with the atrocious accounts of His actions in the Old Testament which included various plagues, famines, earthquakes, floods, massacres of women and children, genocide and indeed all the sordid and bloody episodes of violence and destruction that He imposed. This may come as a shock to some who read these lines, but GOD DID NOT CHANGE AT CALVARY. God has always had two hands, and in the Old Testament times, especially under the law, He revealed more prominently His left hand of judgment, whereas in the New Testament times, under the covenant of grace, He has revealed more strikingly His right hand of goodness and mercy. In Jesus Himself, however, there was not always the sweet, gentle, kindly attitude that most of us have come to appreciate and expect; for in His confrontations with the Pharisees, the Chief Priests, Elders, and teachers of the law, and when in anger He made a whip of small cords and drove the money changers out of the temple, overturning their tables, and pouring out their money...the LEFT HAND OF GOD becomes manifest!

You might get the impression, upon reading the multiplied judgments of God sent upon Israel and the nations in the Old Testament, that God hates His people and His creation. You would think that He is vindictive in His judgment; that He is cruel, brutal, and unfeeling as He moves forward against mankind. Perhaps the liberal, who some years ago made the statement that the God of the Old Testament is a big bully, had read only the first half of the story. I wish he had read all of it. He would have found that the God of the Old Testament is not a big bully, but that we are shown the DARK SIDE OF HIS LOVE. We have also noted that with His left hand God moves and acts through NEGATIVE FORCES such as satan, wicked men, false prophets, calamities, etc. to accomplish His purposes. It comes as a startling revelation to some that God uses the wicked, even such as Nebuchadnezzar and the king of heathen Assyria, to discipline and correct His people. They are HIS instruments in HIS hand, and they serve His purpose. "Behold...I have created the waster to destroy" (Isa. 54:16). For "the Lord made all things for Himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov. 16:4). "O Assyrian, the rod of MINE ANGER, and the staff in their hand is MINE INDIGNATION" (Isa. 10:5). The more we come to understand the SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, the more we realize that HE ALONE controls the interplay of good and evil, and works all things after the counsel of His own will. We shall not rail against His instruments, but learn to submit to the disciplines until we are turned fully to Him, to cleave to Him with our whole heart and fulfill all His will.

There were times when Jesus seemed to be completely unyielding in His attitude toward men. Yet there are other times when we can hardly understand His willingness to show mercy. On the occasions when it would seem beyond our ability to forgive, Jesus shows a kindness that seems unlimited and beyond human comprehension. Perhaps the crowning example is His word from the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." How could a man in the painful agony of death forgive the fickle crowd which one day had hailed Him as Messiah and then turned on Him like a beast? It is because Jesus knew how to keep the balance between judgment and mercy. We need to be taught by His spirit how to believe in judgment and at the same time practice mercy.

It is during the discipline process that we are so likely to forget the love of God and misunderstand His judgments toward us. We will be inclined to think that, because God allows many failures, pressures, and misfortunes to befall us, He has forgotten us or turned against us. Christian friends will be at pains to tell us that our suffering is a sure sign of God's displeasure with our life. Nothing could be further from the truth! He has forgotten nothing, but while we in our childishness want nothing but His blessings, at the same time trying to build up and establish our own desires, plans, and programs, which are fleshly, God's purpose is to LAY IT ALL WASTE, bring it to nought, and teach us HIS WAYS. The childish Christian wants to build up the natural, the visible, the audible, and just enjoy all the wonderful blessings of God forever. But God has purposed that we become PRINCES WITH GOD, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. This requires the development of divine wisdom, character, and power. Therefore in love He lays waste the immature and undisciplined ambitions within us.

The right kind of parents do not allow their children the privilege of doing whatever they want to do. They are not permitted to be "free moral agents", to make their own decisions and have their own way, until they have reached an age of maturity. Until they can make their own way, the parents must do it for them. The children may complain and cry and rebel a long time, but the proper parent holds them to their decision that is for their betterment. The parents know what is best for the children, although the children are unable to understand or appreciate it. Ah, we hear a lot about our being "free moral agents", but if you treasure the beautiful hope of sonship you will forget all about that for our heavenly Father makes the decisions for us, and although many of His children do a lot of fussing and crying, HE HOLDS US TO IT, and how thankful we should be that He does! WHEN WE HAVE BEEN TRIED WE SHALL COME FORTH AS GOLD.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," said the writer to the Hebrews. May I reverently add — Yea, but it is a more fearful thing not to fall into His hands! King David understood this quite well. At a time when David ruled in peace, when his kingdom stretched from the river Euphrates to the border of Egypt, and from the Great Sea on the west to the great desert of the east, David committed a grievous sin against the Lord. He gave orders to Joab, the commander of Israel's army, to send officers throughout all the tribes of Israel and count all the men who could go forth to battle. Now the Lord had expressly commanded that the soldiers in the army of Israel should not be numbered so that Israel might not trust in the arm of flesh, but in the power of God. Even Joab, the general, knew that it was not right to do this, and he said to David, "May the Lord God make His people an hundred times as great as they are; but are they not all the servants of my lord the king? Why does the king command this to be done? Surely it will bring sin upon the king and upon the people." But David was firm in his purpose, and Joab obeyed him, but not willingly. He sent men through all the twelve tribes to take the number of those in every city and town who were fit for war. They went throughout the land, until they had written down the number of eight hundred thousand men in ten of the tribes, and of nearly five hundred thousand men in the tribe of Judah, who could be called out for war.

But the numbering was never finished. It was left unfinished because God was angry with David and with the people on account of this sin. David saw that he had done wickedly, in ordering the count of the people. He prayed to the Lord, and said, "O Lord, I have sinned greatly in doing this. Now, O Lord, forgive this sin, for I have done foolishly." Then the Lord sent to David a prophet by the name of Gad. Gad came to David, and said to him, "Thus saith the Lord, You have sinned in this thing, and now you and your land must suffer for your sin. I will give you the choice of three troubles to come upon the land. Shall I send seven years of famine, in which there shall be no harvest? Or shall your enemies overcome you and win victories over you for three months? Or shall there be three days when pestilence shall fall upon the land, and the people shall die everywhere?" And David said to the prophet Gad, "This is a hard choice of judgments to come upon the land; but LET ME FALL INTO THE HAND OF THE LORD AND NOT INTO THE HANDS OF MEN; FOR GOD'S MERCIES ARE GREAT AND MANY." Then the Lord's angel of death passed through the land, and in three days seventy thousand men died. And when the angel of the Lord stretched out His hand over the city of Jerusalem, the Lord had pity upon the people, and said, "It is enough; now hold back your hand, and cause no more of the people to die." Then the Lord opened David's eyes and he saw the angel standing on Mount Moriah, with a drawn sword in his hand, held out toward the city. Then David prayed and the Lord heard David's prayer, and took away the plague from the land.

A mystic from another century penned these inspiring words: "O God, Thou living God, let me fall into Thy hands; it is only in Thy hands that I can be perfectly safe. I know that to fall into Thy hands is indeed a fearful

thing; I know that is the beginning of all my fears, for it is the beginning of all my responsibilities. In Thy hands I shall learn the awfulness of my spiritual being, in Thy hands I shall learn how little it has fulfilled its destiny. Nevertheless, it is in Thy hands alone that I would be; the fear that comes from contact with Thee is indeed the beginning of wisdom. There would be no penalty to me so great as to fall out of Thy hands; to be out of Thy hands is to be dead. There is a pain with Thee, which is not found without Thee, but it is the pain of love which is the pain of the life Divine. Translate me into that life. Lift me into union with Thine own Divine being. Raise me into fellowship with that power of Thy love which is the power of Thy suffering. Take me into Thy hands and hold me in Thy fear. Let me learn in Thy life how solemn is my own, let me see in Thy glory how poor is my own."

It should not seem strange that God, who made man in His image, should have both a bright side and a dark side, manifested through the works of His two hands, in blessing and glory on the one hand, and in discipline and judgment on the other. The right hand of God, as we have seen, bespeaks of God moving and acting through POSITIVE FORCES, while the left hand of God signifies God moving and acting through NEGATIVE FORCES. This reveals the beautiful balance in God's nature, as in all His works, and the whole creation is a revelation of this balance that exists first in the Creator Himself. There must be a balance. There must be the negative as well as the positive. That is but a natural law and we see it all around us.

In **Prov. 25:16** we read, "Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith and vomit it." In other words, for us to eat nothing but honey will make us sick. Too much of anything can become a curse, like flood when the blessed rain keeps on falling. There must be balance in all things. And as in the natural, so in the spiritual. And so it is with the TWO HANDS of God! Have we found the pleasures at the RIGHT HAND of God? Have we received His blessings, so lavishly bestowed? If so, eat just enough and let it be balanced with something from the LEFT HAND of God. Even if you think it is not good for you, accept it as from God, for we must not become sick from too much goodness from God. How can too much goodness sicken us? If God gave us only good things, we would never become strong. If Job had never known anything but God's blessing unto him, he would have continued to be so weak that God would always have had to enclose him in a hedge. But after God's LEFT HAND was through dealing with Job he was an entirely different man, a man who not only was perfect, but tried, tested, and proven; a man who had been in a great deal of adversity, sorrow, and loss, but now he knew the strength that comes with overcoming as well as the satisfaction that comes from God's blessing. Now God could bless him with twice as much as before — and with NO HEDGE!

There is a wonderful lesson in nature observable by the biophysical scientist. When one adjusts the lenses of his microscope to watch the individual cells of an organism, he sees tremendous struggles going on within those cells with only particular successes and failures, victories and defeats, in what appears to be a ruthless "dog- eat- dog" battle. But when he changes the level of magnification to observe the organism as a whole, he sees that what was conflict at the lower level is harmony at the higher: that the very health and well being, the ongoing life of the organism is precisely the OUTCOME of this microscopic turmoil. Ah, my brother, my sister, when our consciousness is raised high enough in the spirit to see the WHOLE PICTURE, to SEE AS GOD SEES about all the circumstances and events that touch our lives, rather than dwelling upon the particular events themselves with their apparent negativeness, becoming irritated, worried, and upset by what is happening, we will see and know by the understanding HE GIVES that indeed, all these things ARE WORKING TOGETHER FOR OUR GOOD, and the ongoing development of our spiritual life is precisely the OUTCOME of all the conflict. Praise His name!

THE HIDDEN HAND

In the New Testament the Greek word for "right" as used with "hand" means THAT WHICH USUALLY TAKES. That is, it is the one that reaches out to take and we can also know that it is the one that usually reaches out to give. It is the far more active hand of the two in the vast majority of people. There is a wonderful and meaningful statement made by Jesus in **Mat. 6:3**, often passed over unnoticed. Jesus said, "But when thou doest alms, let not thy LEFT hand know what thy RIGHT hand doeth." In other words, keep your LEFT HAND in the dark as to what your RIGHT HAND is doing! And remember, the right hand is the one that reaches out either to take or to give. Jesus said that the Pharisees and hypocrites gave their alms openly to BE SEEN OF

MEN, and the joy of being seen WAS THEIR REWARD. Such people had their reward already and no further reward would be given them. Their left hand, as it were, had full knowledge as to what their right hand had done and their ego and self-righteousness were fully rewarded in the praise of men received.

But Jesus cautioned His disciples to not let their left hand have knowledge of what the right hand was doing. Their reward would come from God and not from men. Therefore their left hand, or their ego, self- nature with all its self-interests and self-love, would be kept in the dark, left unsatisfied and unfulfilled in the good that was being done. Thus the left hand could in no way deprive them of the far greater reward THE FATHER HAD FOR THEM for their deeds of compassion and love. In applying this principle to the actions of God's two hands, we find that Satan, wicked men, and all the forces of the negative realm have absolutely NO UNDERSTANDING of what the right hand of God is doing. Those of the left hand cannot perceive or know the purposes or intentions of the right hand in doing what it does. With this in mind, what a world of truth opens to our understanding from these inspired words of the apostle Paul, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which NONE OF THE PRINCES OF THIS WORLD KNEW: FOR HAD THEY KNOWN IT, THEY WOULD NOT HAVE CRUCIFIED THE LORD OF GLORY" (I Cor. 2:6-8). None of the princes of this world knew! They were the negative force in God's left hand moving against the Christ, that the purpose of God in giving His beloved Son for the redemption of the world might be fulfilled.

"Him being delivered BY THE DETERMINATE COUNSEL AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD, YE have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). Pilate said to Jesus, "Speakest Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have power to release Thee?" Hear the answer of Jesus! "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were GIVEN THEE FROM ABOVE" (Jn. 19:10-11). For God to bring His redemptive and reconstructive plan into effect, there must be a balance, there must be a negative force opposing the positive power and force of God in Christ Jesus. There must be a Judas, chosen to bring all things to a head in the fullness of time when Jesus must be crucified. There must be a Pilate, given power from above, to take care of the legal side of all that happened on that dreadful night. There must be the soldiers selected to nail Jesus to the cross. There must be those who ridiculed Jesus, who scorned and mocked and cursed Him. Without a satan, without a Judas, without self- righteous and vindictive religious leaders, without a rebellious, hateful nation of Israel, there would never have been a blessed Redeemer DYING FOR US!

Yes, GOD was doing this thing, GOD was in control of each and every action, it was all the work of HIS HAND! But those He moved upon at His left hand moved in darkness and did not know anything of what the right hand was doing, they knew not who the Christ was, why He was here, or what He was doing or would do. Never did they dream, in their wildest imaginations, that He really was the Son of God, that He truly was the Lamb they were slaying for the sins of the world, that He actually would rise from the dead, that He would pour out the Holy Spirit in mighty wonder-working power and spread His Kingdom from pole to pole! They were doing what God had raised them up to do but they walked in darkness, they didn't KNOW! The left hand was at a great disadvantage. Today, as then, these evil forces do not even realize that it is the hand of God that is directing all of their actions. The forces of evil and the people under their control, have the false idea that they are directing their own steps and doing all things of themselves, and God allows them to think so! So we see them going their way boasting of all they are doing and believing themselves to be the masters of their own destiny, marking out their own pathway!

The right hand of God is the ANOINTED HAND of God, for Christ (The Anointed) sits AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. It is this hand of God, the Christ, Head and body that reaches forth to all mankind bringing redemption, restoration, and blessing. How we praise God for HIS RIGHT HAND, HIS POSITIVE FORCE, and that it is the more active and the stronger of the two! While the left hand is kept in ignorance of what the right hand is doing, the right hand is not always ignorant of what the left hand is doing "lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (II Cor. 2:11). "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children (sons) of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (I Thes. 5:4-5). When we realize we are in the light of God and know at least a little something of what is going on, then it is amusing, at times, to be able to watch the foolish moves being made by those on the left hand of God. Foolish, perhaps, but so necessary to God's plan! How we

rejoice to be able to stand by in assurance and confidence, watching GOD at work, knowing that God is the one who is the author and finisher of all that happens in between. It is wonderful to be able to walk in at least a measure of light during all those times of testing, trial, proving and judgment.

There is a further and enlightening application of this truth which we would share briefly. In the Song of **Solomon 2:6** the Shulamite maiden says of her Beloved, "His LEFT HAND is under my head, and His RIGHT HAND doth embrace me." The meaning is clear — the left hand of God is under our head, it is hidden, unseen, the less visible working of God upon our lives, upholding and undertaking for us in all the ways and circumstances in which we do not see the hand of God. God has manifested Himself in history in the figure of the "left hand" — unseen and invisible, when men did not recognize Him. Elisha's servant (II Kings 6:13-17), as well as the prophet Habakkuk (Hab. 1:14), and many others, did not see the hidden hand of God, behind the head, away from the front of the eyes, working His plan and will. However, there are other times when the "right hand" of God works in an obvious fashion, before the eyes, in front of the face, performing the supernatural and the miracle right there for all to see. But keep in mind that if we had eyes in the back of our heads, so to speak, we could see both the right and left hand manifestations. We would see that God is there working all the time. And all those blessed ones who have the "eyes of their understanding enlightened" do see HIM IN ALL THINGS!

How often, in the midst of testing and trouble, we, like Peter, look at the billowing waves and behold not the Lord! When the blessings come pouring in and the glory waves sweep through our souls, we know it is the Lord and we acknowledge and bless Him. But when trouble surrounds us, when adversity comes, calamity strikes, and all hell breaks loose, we fail to see where God's hand can be in that! But, without that, we could not receive all He would give and do for us with His right hand. The right hand is the hand of His manifest grace and power, His inward love and joy, the smile of His approval with which He encourages and equips us. The left hand, under our head, holds us fast and secretly deals and works upon the clay of the earthen vessel in ways we understand not. The embracing of His right hand is so precious, as He lets His love fall upon us like dew, as He leads us into deeper revelations of Himself and of that which He has prepared for us. And we behold the King in His beauty as He perfects that which concerneth us and gets us ready to shine forth in His image.

While we rejoice in the embrace of God's right hand of love, let us not despise His left hand; let us yield to Him though He would use the knife upon us and pour the wine into the wound; for He will then pour in the oil and soothe us; He may wound, but He will heal us. Let us not forget, however, that He not only holds us fast and comforts us in trial, but He holds us fast in the fiery furnace, and on the swiftly moving wheel of His purifying and molding processes. How many times we would get out of His hands if He did not hold us fast when He puts us into the purifying furnace, out of which we would take ourselves if it were possible. It is His precious unseen left hand that holds us still as the dross is being consumed.

REIGNING AT THE RIGHT HAND

The scripture tells us that "there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the MAN Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5). Seated at the right hand of God today is a MAN. God came down from heaven and invaded humanity, He took upon Himself the nature and the body of a man, so that when He went back to the throne, He would take humanity back to the throne. There is no mystery to it that God sits on the throne, He belongs there; but to think now that MAN is sitting on the throne of almighty and universal power! "Jesus of Nazareth, a MAN approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs...this Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore BEING BY THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD EXALTED..." (Acts 2:22, 32-33).

Some people have the impression that the New Testament Church was in a constant expectation to meet Jesus around every corner or to see Him appear during their gatherings, but that is not true. That happened only for forty days after His resurrection. Then one day He wanted them to know that they must not look for Him around corners or the next time they went fishing, so He took them up on a mountain, blessed them, and allowed them to see Him in that body one last time, not disappearing as He had done on many occasions, but ascending slowly up into heaven, surrounded by the Shekinah cloud of glory, caught up into life on a higher

plane, raised up into transcendent glory, so that they knew, as Paul later wrote, that we have one mediator between God and man, the MAN Christ Jesus, yet a man ASCENDED and EXALTED, SITTING ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. So we do not look for Him in any physical appearance for "henceforth (from now on) know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more" (II Cor. 5:16). But it is still a MAN at the right hand of God!

There is beautiful confirmation of this in Acts 7:55-56 where we read concerning Stephen, "But he being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and JESUS STANDING ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. And said, Behold I see the heavens opened and the SON OF MAN standing on the right hand of God." The right hand of God, as we have previously pointed out, is the realm of ALL AUTHORITY, POWER, DOMINION, WISDOM, AND KNOWLEDGE. It is the realm of God's OMNIPOTENCE. It was rank blasphemy in the minds of Stephen's persecutors for him to say that he saw JESUS, the SON OF MAN, standing at the RIGHT HAND of God. Such words were for him to seal his doom at the hands of the high priest and all the council. If Stephen had said he saw the SON OF GOD there, it would not have been so grievous, perhaps, but when we realize that it is the SON OF MAN seated in such a place, then it assumes proportions beyond the comprehension of mortal mind.

The right hand of God is not a geographical or astral PLACE. The throne of the God who is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent Spirit is not a material one, but bespeaks of the REALM OF HIS SUPREME AND UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY AND RULERSHIP; and our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted to the glory of that rulership. The RIGHT HAND of God is a realm of power and authority, a position of eminence, a condition and a state of being. It is the assumption of the almighty power and universal dominion of the Father. It is the dispensing of HIS POSITIVE ENERGY FORCE into His creation. Exalted to that high realm Jesus no longer walks in a limited physical body, for He now indwells the church, which is His body, the FULLNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL (Eph. 1:22-23).

And, blessed be God! We now have a share in the REALM OF THE RIGHT HAND. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. Set your affection on things above, and not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:13). Paul tells us in Eph. 2:5-6 that "when we were dead through our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up with Him, and made us SIT TOGETHER WITH HIM IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES." This shows that as we come to know the resurrection life of Christ, we are also made to experience the ascension of Christ. We are chosen of God not only to be made alive from the dead and have God's life, but also to sit in the heavenlies as ascended men. He causes us to ascend with Him and sit with Him in the heavens — NOW! A truth so high and holy as this is absolutely meaningless to those who contend that we have no life except that which is in the body — that when a saint dies he is dead like a dog without either being or consciousness. Such know not that they were dead but are now alive, that they have been raised into the heavenlies and given joint seating with Christ. Such should sorrow as the world sorrows, for they have no hope beyond physical existence. But ascension truly is the position of those who live in Christ Jesus the Lord! The position of ascension rests not only on the fact of Christ's ascension, but on the LIFE OF ASCENSION WE HAVE OBTAINED WITHIN US. The Christ who dwells in our hearts, and who has quickened our spirit by His Spirit, is THE ASCENDED CHRIST, and His life is ascended and heavenly, and is given from heaven, and is now our life. It is a life which reaches heaven. Therefore, once we obtain this life, we have fellowship with heaven and are joined to heaven and dwell in heaven. Although according to the conditions of the outer man we still live on earth, yet according to the INNER MAN we are already living in heaven. The situation is just like our Lord's during His time on earth. He said then that though He "descended from heaven" He was still in heaven" (Jn. 3:13). This was due to the fact that His life was heavenly and one with heaven.

Man in God's image, man in Christ at the right hand of God, is God's government in the Kingdom of God. When God created man in the beginning, He gave man authority to have dominion over all the creatures in the sea, in the air, and upon earth, representing in figure all realms from the lowest of the bottomless, to the highest of the heavens. At that time, man was submitting to God's authority; hence, God's authority was in him, and all things were made to submit to man. But once man rebelled against God, unwilling as he was to submit to God's authority, he then lost the authority of God. As a result, all the creation under man was no longer in subjection to man's authority. Therefore, not only can sin, sickness, sorrow, pain, and death harm man today;

even the snakes, wild beasts, mosquitoes, and fleas can bite and torment us! It was upon this very Edenic type, as reiterated by the prophet David in the eighth Psalm, that the writer of the book of Hebrews enlarged when by the Spirit he wrote, "For unto the angels hath He not put into subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOUR, and didst set him OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS: Thou hast put A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S in subjection under his feet. For in that He put ALL in subjection under him, He left N-O-T-H-I-N-G that is NOT put under him!" (Heb. 2:5-8).

You won't quite grasp that at first. It's too overwhelming! To be crowned means to be given KINGLY RULE. To be crowned with glory and honour is to be given such rule as Jesus Christ has NOW, and of that rule we read, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus Christ every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). We have already shown that MAN in God's image, MAN IN CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD is God's government in the Kingdom of God. Paul said it this way, "Who (Jesus) IS THE IMAGE of the invisible God...by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers...and ye are complete IN HIM WHICH IS THE HEAD OF A-L-L PRINCIPALITY AND POWER" (Col. 1:15-17; 2:9-10).

Our English Bible states that man was made "a little lower than the angels." The Greek and Hebrew texts, however, read a little differently — "Thou madest him for a little while lower than Elohim (God)." It denotes not our original state as being a little lower than Elohim, but a lowering into this gross and limited material realm, with the hope of return to that glory we had with the Father before the world was. This beautiful picture of an ancient departure from the Father's glory, followed ultimately by a blessed return, is nowhere set forth more graphically than in Jesus' beautiful Parable of the Prodigal Son. Norene Nicholls shared a precious word in this connection: "Now we come to Ps. 77:10,'... but I will remember the YEARS of the RIGHT HAND of the MOST HIGH.' This statement was prefaced by the psalmist telling about the overwhelming experiences, troubles, afflictions and castings off, but always there is the thought that he recalls the Father's mercies, and though the above statement is partly in italics showing it was supplied by the translators, the thought remains that he is remembering something from the past to encourage him in the present. In this case it is the YEARS OF THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MOST HIGH that is being recalled in the midst of the afflictions. The Hebrew word for 'years' literally means a FOLD, a DOUBLING, a CYCLE, a REVOLUTION. It does not necessarily mean a year of 365 days, but also it refers to greater periods of time, to cycles of His unfoldings, to revolutions of His power. This then could not simply mean the psalmist was recalling past days or years of his mere lifespan, but rather a calling to mind of something of greater proportion than that. This takes us back into the cycles of God's purposes prior to the earth or even prior to this little time we call the lifespan. This goes into antiquity when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy at the laying of the foundation of the earth. It is away back there when we consented to this lowering into a body of flesh, into this grueling experience under the powers of this present world system. Even then we said 'yes' to the Father's plan and came here with a volume inscribed within us telling us all that was past, present, and future. Back in the rolling cycles before the world was we foresaw all that was to be both in misery and then in consequential glory. Therefore, in the midst of our perplexities we remind ourselves of this and are encouraged. It is the YEARS (cycles) of the RIGHT HAND (the place of blessing and power of the MOST HIGH that we remember. You may state that you do not remember it yet, but we have the assurance that we shall know all things, and this includes all past, present, and future. Revelation is but a remembering. It has been well said that KNOWING IS REMEMBERING, and the fullness of knowledge is the fullness of remembrance. Take courage, for the sons and the priests of the MOST HIGH shall fully know and remember all things!" — end quote.

All who in Christ come to God's image are destined to share that awesome dominion, seated together with Him, far above all principality and power. The reason so many people fail to attain to great heights in the Spirit is because they are unable to see God's purposes, and therefore they have no particular incentive to seek the great heights that are IN HIM. So many Christians are far too taken up with carnal ideas and childish notions about mansions in the skies and harps and white nightgowns and sitting on clouds eating pork chops with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in, to be able to see the true purposes of God at HIS RIGHT HAND. Simply speaking, the purpose of God is that we might reign with Him, and to reign is to exercise authority for

God — to rule all things. Paul tells us that we are to seek those things which are ABOVE — WHERE CHRIST SITS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. This means that we are to SEEK THE THINGS OF THE RIGHT HAND! Reigning with Christ must become one of the great goals in the life of every man or woman who has received the call to sonship.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE RIGHT HAND

Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power" (Ps. 15:6). While it is difficult for us to conceive of God becoming something more than He already is, and as to His nature there can never be any change, yet the Spirit reveals that the RIGHT HAND of God had not previously been all that it was when the children of Israel triumphantly marched dryshod through the Red Sea, for the prophet speaks of a day wherein the right hand of the Lord "is become glorious in power", denoting a process in the UNFOLDING of the power of His right hand in the midst of men. And, while the right hand of God is first and foremost the realm of God's almighty power and authority, His right hand became glorious in power when it was revealed in mighty signs and wonders through the person of the man Moses. Now there has been a wonderful enlargement in the revelation of God's right hand, for Jesus Christ has been exalted to the realm of the right hand, and there shall be a further enlargement, for the promise is sure, "To him that overcometh will I grant to SIT WITH ME IN MY THRONE, as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). Thus Jesus was able to say, "ALL POWER is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Mat. 28:18), and again, "But YE shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). God's right hand is BECOMING A PEOPLE, the Christ, Head and body, a many-membered SON OF THE RIGHT HAND, and the manifestation of God in this RIGHT HAND COMPANY shall BECOME even more glorious in power as the appointed hour for the unveiling of the sons of God arrives. These shall not only declare His Word, but have authority and ability to see it established in the earth and in all realms. When the power of God arises in all fullness in His body of sons, and He is exalted in the people He has prepared, how unspeakably glorious and honorable He will be in the eyes of His creation!

"O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things: His RIGHT HAND and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory. The Lord hath made known His salvation: His righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the heathen. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hand: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity" (Ps. 98:1-3, 7-9). Think of it — His enemies submit, the nations are ready to worship Him, and sing to His name, the ends of the earth all shall turn to Him, because His right hand shall do marvelous things, and He shall make known His salvation to all!

Truly, beloved, this RIGHT HAND COMPANY will get Him the victory! There is no doubt about it — no devil, no wicked men, no hostile nations, no massive armies can stop this company from doing the things God has declared they will do, and because of their ministry, the nations will be joined to the Lord and sing His praise. As the work of restoration progresses, what harmony, what glorious unity shall fill the universe, as this order of KING-PRIESTS flows together, to gather together into Christ all things in one, till all has been set in array, and God is indeed ALL IN ALL.

How sweet shall be the influence of this RIGHT HAND COMPANY, the POSITIVE FORCE of God's energy, ministering His life, His love, His joy, His peace unto creation. How thankful we are not to be numbered among those called to the LEFT HAND, to walk in darkness, and be vessels of wrath. There is no harshness in the ministry of the right hand — oh yes, even the right hand "dashes the enemy in pieces" — but it is the destruction of the negative qualities that there might be LIFE. These bring correction MINISTERED IN LOVE leading all mankind to the Fountain of Living Water, feeding them in green pastures, causing them to lie down and rest, and not be afraid. Ah, we would SEEK THE THINGS OF THE RIGHT HAND! J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 43

GEMINI-THE TWINS [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART FORTY-THREE

THE TWO HANDS OF GOD
THE SON OF THE RIGHT HAND
THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

Gemini, like all the Signs of the Zodiac, has three Decans, or minor constellations, which surround it. The Decans belong to the Sign and their message is the Sign's message. The three Decans of Gemini are Lepus, Canis Major, and Canis Minor. The first Decan, Lepus, is the figure of a hare or rabbit, which is under the foot of Orion, whose foot is about to trample him. This, however, is a relatively modern picture. Going back to the picture of the ancient Zodiacs one sees that it is not a picture of a rabbit but, rather, a picture of a serpent. Here again we have a picture of the serpent being trodden under foot of Orion — another representation of God's Christ. Orion was the slayer of that lion that goes about "seeking whom he may devour. In his left hand he holds up the skin and head of a slain lion, and holds a mighty club in his right hand. But now we have another picture representing the Christ who slays the evil one. And so with His right foot, He is about to step upon — not the hare — but the serpent.

In previous messages on the Sign of Gemini we have shown how the Gemini Twins represent a united duality that exists in God and in all His ways and dealings with both creation and His people. The second Decan in the house of Gemini is CANIS MAJOR. CANIS MAJOR means The Greater Dog. This constellation tells of the glorious Prince who will subdue the serpent and reign. In the oldest Zodiacs Canis Major is not a dog but a hawk, swooping down upon the serpent, to destroy him. It has on its head a pestle or mortar, signifying that Christ thoroughly crushes the head of the serpent. So here we see a picture of Christ as the Prince who comes to bring destruction to the serpent nature within us. Then there is the Decan called CANIS MINOR, meaning The Lesser Dog. But again, this is a modern picture. In the ancient Zodiacs it was depicted as a human figure with a hawk's head. The brightest star in the man's body is Procyon, meaning The Redeemer or Redemption. So here we have in these two hawk figures the very same thing we have in the Sign of GEMINI — pictures of the two aspects of the work of Christ: the Prince who comes to destroy the serpent, and the One who comes bringing redemption to the people. These are clear representations of THE TWO HANDS OF GOD!

THE TWO HANDS OF GOD

That "all things are of God" is declared over and over again in the Bible. Did not the Lord say to Pharaoh, that wicked man of rebellion against all that was of God, "Even for this same purpose have I RAISED THEE UP, that I might show MY POWER in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth?" (Rom. 9:17). The infinite wisdom of God's mind cannot be ascertained by these carnal little heads of ours. We must banish our childish theology and our superstitious concepts of God and bring our minds into harmony with the mind of Christ. We must begin to peer through the mighty telescope of divine wisdom as it looks through the vast universe of good and evil until heavenly light bursts with blazing brilliance upon our inquiring spirits and we see with crystal clear vision that God is in all things, and is responsible for all things, including all the so-called evil things as well as the good things. Is it not a fearful thing to say that evil is of God? There is nothing fearful about this view unless the TRUTH be fearful! I would not be surprised if some of the compatriots of the prophet Amos may have thought he was speaking blasphemy when by the Holy Spirit he said, "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and THE LORD HATH NOT DONE IT?" (Am. 3:6). There are untold tens of millions of Christians who do not like to believe that A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S A-R-E O-F G-O-D — including evil. They much prefer to believe, as the harlot system has taught them, that God created good, and the devil created evil!

There is a great and magnificent future ahead for the sons of God, and a great work our Father has for us to do in the ages to come, and He is preparing us and making us ready for the high and holy place He has for us. Can we not see that ALL THE NEGATIVE OPPOSING FORCES WE NOW ENCOUNTER are working together for our good — to develop the strength, character, wisdom, and power we must have? The chastening and judgments of God, too, are negative, though they do bring forth a positive result. The positive work of God from His right hand lies in the inner anointing, guidance, enlightening, etc., and in the precious outward ministries, those the Lord sets in the body for our exhortation, edification, and comfort. The scriptures speak much of these positive ministries, which are all wonderful, sweet, and of great importance in the eyes of God. However, there is the work of purging, pruning, discipline, dealing, and training which must be accomplished in each and every one of God's sons; therefore in the work of God there is an additional part, the negative, opposing forces, from the LEFT HAND OF GOD!

The positive work of God's RIGHT HAND is wrought directly by the Holy Spirit within or by the Spirit through His anointed agencies. The negative work of God's LEFT HAND is brought about by Satan (the adversary) and his instruments, the whole negative realm of evil. All the people, things, and happenings used in the chastenings and judgments of God are of Satan's manipulation. For example, if someone is opposing us for righteousness' sake and causing us trouble, this opposition or trouble is directly the work of Satan — or the adversary. Again, the thief who steals our money, or the fire which burns down our house, is the work of the adversary. The word "Satan" simply means ADVERSARY. Adversary means "one who opposes or fights against another; opponent; enemy." Satan is not a monster out of control, as multitudes of Christians imagine. Nor is he the adversary of God. God is OMNIPOTENT and has no adversary! But God has ordained an adversary in our experience for our development. If someone is obstinate, rebellious, and sins against God, and as a result becomes seriously ill, or suffers some loss or complication, this trouble is a work of Satan — the adversary. Therefore, all the people, things, and happenings involved in the discipline and judgment of God are measured to us by God according to our need. But the one who is manipulating or acting upon us in order to harm us is satan. BUT — that which is acting BEHIND all the people, powers, things, circumstances, and events is the HAND OF GOD, CONTROLLING all the play and interplay till HIS PURPOSE IS ACCOMPLISHED and HIS NAME IS PRAISED! The purpose of our experiencing the disciplines of the Father is that we know the fullness of HIS LIFE. If there was only the discipline, but not the manifestation of His life, it would be meaningless. Thus, the two hands of God bring beautiful balance in the lives of all God's elect!

We see the left hand of God revealed in the life of Job. God had blessed this man with great wealth and a large family. He had seven sons and three daughters. He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses. His household was very great with many hired servants so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. The only reliable testimony we have of Job's true state of being is that spoken by the Lord Himself, for the testimony of Satan, the testimony of Job's friends, and at times even the testimony of Job himself as he reasons in the crucible of testing, are not to be trusted. The all-wise God Himself declared that Job was a PERFECT AND UPRIGHT MAN, one that feared God and eschewed evil. And may I add — perfect yes, but UNTRIED, UNTESTED, and UNPROVEN, as Job himself admitted in the midst of his ordeal, declaring, "HE knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). His perfection remained to be fully proven, tested, and demonstrated.

Now, what does God do but deliberately hand over this perfect man into the hand of Satan to do his worst upon him. It was because God desired to test Job that He brought forth "the smith to blow the coals upon the fire." Please note that it was not Satan's idea to persecute poor old Job! Oh, no! It was God Himself who brought up the subject. There Satan was, presenting himself before the Lord, appearing for duty, and God asked, "Where have you been," Satan replied, "Walking up and down in the earth" (no mention of Job at all). "Well, Satan," the Lord asked, "have you considered My servant Job? Have you noticed that he eschews evil, and fears God? Have you noticed that, Satan?" You can be assured, dear ones that Satan had noticed Job, but he wasn't doing anything to him. Satan responds, saying, "Hast Thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth THINE HAND now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face!" And the Lord said unto Satan, "Behold, all that he hath is in THY POWER; only upon himself put not forth THINE HAND." Having received these orders, Satan departed from the presence of the Lord. Hear it! "But put forth THINE HAND now." What was that that Satan said? Did he ask permission to put

forth his OWN HAND and touch Job? Not at all! He said, "THY hand, or "God, you put forth YOUR HAND and touch him. He is not even asking to be allowed to touch Job. Satan is initiating nothing in this exchange. But in response to God's question put to him, Satan challenged God to stretch out HIS HAND, and that if HE touched Job and took away his blessing, Job would curse Him to His face. Then the Lord said to Satan, "All that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth THINE HAND. Can we not see by this that Satan was the NEGATIVE FORCE THROUGH WHICH God was moving upon Job, and is it not clear that this was the LEFT HAND of God as He was working with Job to bring him into yet a higher place than he had occupied hitherto? Furthermore, is it not true that the hand of Satan stretched out against Job was also the hand of God? Though Satan moved swiftly against Job, GOD WAS DOING THIS and His intention was to do Job good. This was not Satan acting out his own little plan of intrigue and rebellion against God, but this was Satan as the LEFT HAND OF GOD doing it!

In the second chapter of Job we find all this repeated. Again the sons of God have come before God to report on their activities, and again Satan comes among them. Again Job is presented to Satan by God as a perfect and upright man. And again Satan suggests, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth THINE HAND now and touch his bone and his flesh and he will curse Thee to Thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, "Behold, he is in THINE HAND; but save his life. Job has already suffered the sudden and catastrophic loss of his sons and daughters, his houses and lands, his cattle, sheep, camels and oxen. Now Job's body will be wracked with disease and tortured with pain, and he will lose his reputation before all men. His good works will be forgotten and he will become the object of ridicule from those who were formerly his friends.

I would now draw your reverent attention to the magnificent words which reveal Job's reaction to all this. "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die! But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the HAND OF GOD and shall we not receive evil? IN ALL THIS DID NOT JOB SIN WITH HIS LIPS" (Job 2:9-10). Notice! Job never did recognize any such person as Satan in all his trouble. He recognized ONLY GOD in this and said that even as he had received good from the HAND OF GOD was it not logical that he should receive evil also FROM GOD? What faith! What marvelous understanding! Job actually attributes all this evil to the work of God. He doesn't even recognize Satan as doing anything, no sitting on the ash heap moaning, "The old devil has been after me all week!" It will be an appalling shock to many precious people to learn that in ALL this Job did NOT SIN (miss the mark) with his lips! We have every right to conclude from this that Job was speaking the absolute truth when he attributed all this evil to God. He was, in fact, "right on!" What he had said was right in the sight of God. No place did the Lord rebuke Job for his words in any way. In fact, in the end of the experience God said that Job had spoken rightly of Him and ALL OTHERS HAD NOT.

Job has yet a further word on this to which we do well to take note. "Have pity upon me, O ye my friends: for THE HAND OF GOD HAS TOUCHED ME" (Job 19:21). The hand of whom? The hand of God! WHICH hand of God? Why, beloved, it was the LEFT HAND of God! Job knew that the hand of God had not been laid upon him for good, but for evil. Yet he recognized it as THE HAND OF GOD. Prior to this experience, Job had known nothing but the RIGHT HAND of God in goodness and blessing, in the anointing of God. There had been no adversity. There had been no adversary. There had been no testing. No severity. Now God has begun using His left hand in His dealing with Job, yet Job still recognizes it as God's hand. What wisdom and understanding! Would God that the Christians of our day possessed such understanding! The nominal church and its preachers and teachers try to make us believe that Satan conspired to do all this to poor old Job by his own design. But it was God, my friend, and Satan was merely the LEFT HAND of God, or the negative means God used. These people have no knowledge at all of what they are talking about. They know nothing of the ways and the workings of God. They are blind leaders of the blind. They have exalted Satan to godhood, giving HIM the glory for all he does, and, indeed, in most things, they attribute more power to him and praise him more than they do God! Ignorantly these foolish ones talk about poor little God "trying" to do this and that, while the shrewder and smarter devil slips up on God's blind side and demolishes His whole work. "Rubbish!" saith the Lord.

The left hand of God is manifested through a people, those in the kingdom of darkness. The right hand of God is likewise revealed through a people, the sons of the Kingdom. Thank God! we are not called to be a part of

the left hand company. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). "Him that overcometh will I grant to sit WITH ME IN MY THRONE, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the RIGHT HAND of the Lord doeth valiantly, the RIGHT HAND of the Lord is exalted" (Ps. 118:15-16)

Although at this time there is humiliation and suffering, there is coming a time of exaltation, already experienced within. Although today it may seem as though not much is happening outwardly, yet there is a time approaching when GOD'S RIGHT HAND COMPANY shall step forth in the fullness of the power of His throne and there shall be a manifestation of the "greater works" Jesus spoke of. When on earth, the firstborn Son suffered reproach and finally death — but where is He now? Exalted to the RIGHT HAND of the Father, far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but in that which is to come. He passed through a season of shame and reproach, but dwells now in a glory that can never fade. And there is a place with Him and for all who overcome, a place of glory and eminence and power at the right hand of God!

Yes, my beloved, God has TWO HANDS — the RIGHT and the LEFT. The only way we can ever know what is "right" and what is "left" is by becoming properly related to God, positioned in Him, to SEE AS HE SEES! Right and left is never determined in relation to us, from where we sit or how things appear to the natural mind, but only in relation to God, from where HE sits and how things are to HIM! "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on HIS RIGHT HAND and on HIS LEFT" (I Kings 22:19). "Therefore being by the RIGHT HAND OF GOD exalted...He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33). "GOD...set HIM at His OWN RIGHT HAND in the heavenly places...and hath raised US UP TOGETHER, and made US SIT TOGETHER in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:20; 2:6). Ah, it is there IN CHRIST JESUS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD that we are positioned with God, to see as He sees, the things at His right hand becoming the things at our right hand and the things at His left hand are at our left hand. How can we know, in any circumstance or situation, just what is needed? Should God deal with His right hand of blessing, or His left hand of judgment? Should we rebuke the devil that the captive be set free, or remain silent in the knowledge that this one is, for a season, delivered unto satan for the destruction of the flesh? If we render a decision based on some stock set of "promises" in the Word, or on how things appear to us outwardly, apart from the mind of the Spirit, we will invariably take the wrong action! Then we will wonder why our commands in Jesus' name produce no results and our prayers go unanswered. The natural mind always has things reversed. You see, precious friend of mine, if you stand looking at God (as a spectator) His right hand will be at your left hand, and His left hand will be at your right hand. Right and left will become confused. Only in proper relationship to God, in union with Him, receiving the mind of Christ, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, can we comprehend God's purposes, our spirit saying Amen, and our actions flowing in harmony with what the Father is doing. It is only as we are SEATED WITH HIM AND IN HIM AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND that His right hand becomes our right hand and His left hand becomes our left hand. Only there can we discern and know as God knows what is left and what is right, and when and how to move therein. We must reign AT HIS RIGHT HAND!

Once we thoroughly understand the dual ministry of God's two hands we will thank Him for ALL THINGS He sends into our lives. We will thank Him for adversity — not just for blessing. And we will thank Him for every problem, every disappointment, every faithless friend, every heartache, every false accusation that has ever been made against us. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you..." (I Pet. 4:12). When God by revelation has made this very real to our hearts we will say, "Oh, God, I thank Thee for putting me on the operating table, for cutting out that which was hindering me." You and I are being trained and disciplined in order that in wisdom and righteousness and power and love we may reign with Christ at God's right hand.

What is your response to the dealings of God in your life? Are you angry and bitter at your circumstances, filled with resentment and rage? Are you inwardly shaking your fist at God, demanding, "Why does this happen to me?" Or are you broken and humble? What is your spirit? What is your attitude? What is your deepest sentiment? There is a verse in the Old Testament that beautifully clarifies these truths. "I will mention the loving

kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His loving kindnesses. For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their Saviour. In all THEIR AFFLICTION HE WAS AFFLICTED, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He remembered them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore HE WAS TURNED TO BE THEIR ENEMY, AND HE FOUGHT AGAINST THEM" (Isa. 63:7-10).

Everything that happened to Israel in the Old Testament happened for our example and learning (I Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4). When Israel rebelled against the Lord, He became their ENEMY! God becomes your enemy when you walk after the flesh, for the carnal mind is hostile toward God (Rom. 8:7). The Lord's people, then and now, rebel and grieve the Holy Spirit. Then God becomes your adversary — your Satan! Whenever the believer frustrates the grace of God by being bull-headed in his conceit, or stubbornness, or pride, or bitterness, or resentment, God becomes his enemy. In that moment the LEFT HAND OF GOD becomes the adversary against that unholy attitude or action. And for our good, God will fight with us — to correct us. God will discipline and mold us as sons. This will produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness in us. To be carnally minded is death. God wants us to live! God will trouble us, pursue us, and put His sword at our throat until we break and learn that God's way is the best way! I know what is happening to you who are crying out in your spirit to be like the Lord: you are being processed and changed and trained and matured! One extreme in the land proclaims the great things, prosperity, healing, miracles and abundant life, bountiful blessings from God's right hand. The other tangent can only project the terrible things, doom, gloom, judgment, darkness, tribulation and the work of the cross, the dealings of God's left hand. But God has TWO HANDS and He works in a balanced way. We rejoice in the faith and goodness and prosperity from God's right hand; but we do not shrink from the chastenings and dealings from His left hand that will make these truths work themselves out in reality and practicality.

The carnal mind says, "I see no value or purpose to all this trouble and tribulation." The carnal mind is shrewd as a lawyer looking for a loophole. The carnal mind doesn't like it or want it. The mind of Christ, the spiritual mind of Rom. 8:1-6, knows that the servant is not above his Lord. The disciple is not above his Master who learned obedience by the things He suffered. God is preparing a people who cannot be moved or upset or frustrated by anything. The cry of His heart is for a people who can share His throne and shepherd the nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:26-27). We cannot afford the luxury of our personal feelings. WE HAVE NO "RIGHTS". If we do, we'll lose them under the dealings of God's left hand! Your testings will last as long as it takes to change your mind, attitude, and actions. Can we walk around in the furnace without complaining? Can we sing and dance in the fire? Can we shout praises in jail at midnight? The key to God's whole program operating in your life is your spirit and attitude of response to HIS WILL in your life. When your attitude and conduct become right, then the dealings of God's left hand will cease.

How beautiful the knowledge that both of God's hands are WORKING TOGETHER to produce in us the life and righteousness and glory of God. "Thy people also shall be all righteous...the branch of My planting, the WORK OF MY H-A-N-D-S, that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:21). And how wonderful, too, the knowledge that God shall in due time so deal with all mankind. How important that we enter into such intimate relationship and vital union with God that we see all things AS HE SEES THEM. Some years ago I read a sermon by a brother who gave this precious experience which, to me, wonderfully reflects the purpose in the dealing of the two hands of God. The brother said, "On Mother's Day I sat and listened to a fellow minister preach. It was a wonderful word, and while listening I sat there and looked at the folk in a very relaxed sort of way. I saw a mother wearing a lovely corsage sent to her by her son in the East. He is a prominent business man, high up in government circles, but he is not a Christian. She is praying for him. She has asked others to pray for him. She said to me one day with tears streaming down her cheeks, Oh, Bro. _____, I pray that God will save my boy. I pray that He will save him even if He has to put him on a sick bed; EVEN IF HE HAS TO KILL HIM — I pray that He will save him! If the FBI heard her plotting like that, would they arrest her? No, sir! She loves her boy! She loves him with all her heart, and if giving her own life would save that boy, she would give it immediately" — end quote.

Even in judgment, dear ones, God is love! May all who are called to be KINGS AND PRIESTS of God be possessed of such a divine love for the whole world! "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only

begotten Son" (Jn. 3:16). God so loved that He was willing to pay the very highest price to redeem all unto Himself. God gave His blessed Son to be slain for us, and now He says to us, "I will save you and I will conform you to My image and share with you My glory — even if I have to KILL you to do it!" "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand" (**Deut. 32:39**). Praise God! this is how His righteous hands work, He kills only to make alive and wounds only to heal. He kills only those things that should die and makes alive the things that should live. What beautiful co-ordination in all the works of HIS HANDS!

THE SON OF THE RIGHT HAND

Just as there are twelve Signs of the heavens, so in scripture are there twelve sons of Israel. "And he (Joseph) dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying" (**Gen. 37:9-11**).

Norene Nicholls has written: "It is not the whole interpretation of this dream in which we are interested at this time, but for the purpose of this study let it be pointed out that Joseph saw his eleven brothers as eleven stars or constellations. If each of them was a star and eleven stars represented the eleven brothers, then Joseph as a brother must have been the twelfth star or constellation. This immediately brings us face to face with the twelve signs of the Zodiac, each son of Israel represented by one sign of the Mazzaroth or the Zodiac. Furthermore, the promise to Abraham was that his seed would be as the stars of heaven which certainly corroborates this. Let me remind you that the stars are for SIGNS according to Genesis 1:14. This same word is used in Numbers 2:23, 'Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ENSIGN of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle shall they pitch. And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the STANDARD of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies...' Here the Hebrew word is translated as ENSIGN whereas in Gen. 1:14 it is translated as SIGNS. It simply means a sign of reality or even at times as a sign of things to come. In the wilderness Israel encamped and marched in a certain God ordained order with every individual camped under the ensign of his own particular tribe. An ensign was a pole on the top of which was a sign depicting that particular tribe. So it was and is that for each of the twelve tribes there were and are twelve ensigns — the twelve signs of the Zodiac. There is a Zodiacal sign for each tribe. We do know that the ensign of Judah was Leo, The Lion, and our Lord Jesus Christ is called, 'The Lion of the tribe of Judah.'

"BENJAMIN'S individual tribal sign is GEMINI, the sign of their particular ensign. The name GEMINI in Hebrew means doubled, for Gemini is known as THE TWINS, whom the Greeks called Apollo and Hercules but the Romans called Castor and Pollux. Thus it is we see Paul even sailed in a ship whose sign was Castor and Pollux. In considering that Gemini means the twins or doubled, it is easy to see how Benjamites do things not by ones but by twos. In other words, if a thing is good, Benjamin has a tendency to repeat it. Benjamin means SON OF MY RIGHT HAND which is a position of honor and power, as the right hand speaks of the strong hand. Christ Himself is seated at the right hand of God, showing His position of power and authority. The three associate constellations of Gemini bear out the picture of Benjamin even further. The first one is Lepus meaning the ENEMY TRODDEN DOWN. Benjamin will never cease until both feet (another double) are on the enemy and the enemy conquered. True spiritual Benjamites are warriors indeed, warriors in the spiritual battle against wicked spirits in the heavenlies. The second constellation associated with Gemini is Canis Major, and the third one is Canis Minor. As can be seen by the names, they are closely allied. Canis Major means a big dog or wolf whereas Canis Minor means a little dog or wolf. Again the doubling of Benjamin is recognized, discerned in this, for he has to deal with two wolves — a big one and a small one. This fits so beautifully with Jacob's dying prophecy to Benjamin: 'Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf...' (Gen. 49:27). If you look carefully, you will see that the word 'as' is in italics in the King James Bible, showing it was supplied by the translators who figured it made more sense that way. But leave out that little preposition and see what the real meaning is — BENJAMIN SHALL RAVIN A WOLF! It means just the opposite of what most of us think, for Benjamin doesn't ravin as a wolf, but rather he ravins the wolf itself. In Eze. 22:27 the false PRINCES or RULERS are referred to as wolves. In Hab. 1:8 the BABYLONIANS are called wolves. And Zeph. 3:3 states that the backslidden

PRIESTS are as evening wolves. Furthermore, in Mat. 7:15 Jesus refers to 'ravening wolves' which literally means 'wolves of extortion'. Taking these scriptures together, it is easy to see that spiritual Babylon (confusion) is full of backslidden princes and priests who confuse and extort the people. Against such Benjamin arises in righteousness and will never cease until both the little wolves and the big wolves are ravined by him and defeated" —end quote.

The book of Judges is the account of Israel's history after they had been brought into the promised land and after Joshua and all the elders, whom God had brought up out of Egypt, died. There are several key events about this time in their history that speak powerfully to us about our walk in God and possessing our inheritance in Christ. You would suppose that, after all that God had done for the people of Israel, and after their own promises to serve Him faithfully, they would never turn to the idols which could not help or save their own people, the Canaanites. Yet, when Joshua was no longer living, and the men who knew Joshua had also died, the people began to forget Yahweh and to worship images of wood and stone. Then, too, you remember that the Canaanites had not been driven out of the land. They were there still, in their own cities and villages everywhere, and their idols were standing under the trees on many high places. So the Israelites saw idols all around them and people bowing down before them; while they themselves had no God that could be seen. The Tabernacle was far away from some parts of the land; and the people were so busy with their fields and their houses that few of them went up to worship.

And so it came to pass that the people began to neglect their own worship of the Lord their God and then to begin the worship of the idols around them. And from idol worship they sank lower still into wicked deeds. For this the Lord caused them to suffer. Their enemies came upon them from the lands around and became their masters; for when God left them, they were helpless. They were made poor, for these rulers who had conquered them robbed them of all their grain and grapes and olive oil. After a season of suffering the Israelites would remember what the Lord had done for them in other times. Then they would turn away from the idols and call upon God. And God would hear them and raise up some great man to lead them to freedom and to break the power of those who were ruling over them. This deliverer they would call "a judge", and under him they would serve the Lord and be successful once more. As long as the judge lived and ruled, the people followed the Lord. But when the judge died, they forgot God again and worshipped idols and fell under the power of their enemies as before, until God raised up another judge to deliver them. And this happened over and over again for two hundred years after Joshua died. Seven nations in turn ruled over Israel, and after each "oppression" a "deliverer" arose to set the people free.

One of the powers that ruled over Israel was the Moabites who came against them from the land east of the Dead Sea. Their king at this time was named Eglon, and he was very severe in his rule over the people of Israel. The record states, "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees. So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years" (**Judges 3:12-14**). Again they cried to the Lord, and God called a man named Ehud, who belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, to deliver the people.

Eglon, the king of Moab, spiritually represents the power of the carnal mind. He gathered the children of Ammon and Amalek together and possessed the city of palm trees. Ammon was a son of Lot whose name means inbred. Amalek has always served as a symbol of the flesh. Eglon speaks of that which surrounds or encircles. Thus, this three-fold league symbolizes the carnal mind and the flesh strengthening themselves to surround and possess that which only belongs to the Spirit Son. This bondage Israel suffered for eighteen years (6 + 6 + 6) is like having the carnal mind and the flesh completely imprison your spiritual life within vain, restricting and extremely carnal concepts. It is sad that among the Lord's people today the true purposes of God are rarely understood. The rich inheritance of sonship, of our spiritual kingship and priesthood, is hidden from the multitudes. The purpose of God to reconcile all things to Christ and deliver the whole creation from the bondage of corruption is ridiculed as being either heresy or a fairy tale. The manifestation of the sons of God to effect this glorious deliverance is not even comprehended — the spiritual minds of the people have become dull and frozen by dead doctrines and static creeds and carnal hopes about almost everything. There is no end

to the childish ideas flowing through the churches — none bears any relation whatever to God's true plan and purpose in the earth.

There are so many deep and powerful mysteries hidden within these words of the Lord strengthening the hand of King Eglon. But they all point to the awesome power of the carnal mind and the flesh which captivate and imprison the true value of our inheritance in Christ, bringing the high things of the Spirit down to the carnal, natural, humanistic plane of consciousness. Instead of living out of the high realm of spiritual life and reality as new creation men who were dead but are now made alive and raised up and made to sit with Christ in the higher-than-all-heavens, King Eglon binds saints to the crude, unspiritual notion that immortality, incorruption and eternal life are experienced and known only in the body realm — thus, there is no spiritual consciousness of life apart from the flesh body; so, though the scriptures and the Holy Spirit bear witness with our spirit that we have been born from above and are the children of God possessing eternal life, King Eglon tells you that the new creation man, the inner man, the resurrected man, the quickened man, has no enduring substance or eternal reality and should your body die you have no life at all, you are just as dead and unconscious and non-existent as a dog lying on the highway! Rather than being caught up now to the throne of God in the power and glory of the spirit, King Eglon bids you wait for a future "rapture" when your body will go soaring through the air to some beautiful Isle of Somewhere to strum harps and wave palm branches on golden streets forevermore. In place of now supping with Christ in spirit and in truth, feeding from the divine substance of His Word and drinking from the living fountain of His eternal Spirit, King Eglon would have you eat wafers and drink wine or grape juice, imagining that in some mystical way that natural, perishable substance ministers spiritual reality into your life. I do not hesitate to tell you that such a practice is not one whit less superstitious and pagan than the customs of the heathen who bring offerings of food and drink to offer to their gods of wood and stone, supposing that in some magical way the gods are able to partake of it! The applications are endless — but I trust you get the message. King Eglon always takes the high and holy and spiritually real things of God and drags them down to a carnal, natural, physical, limited, earthly and mortal level of consciousness and experience.

Ehud, the Benjamite deliverer, was a left-handed man. In Judges 20:15-16 we find that there were 700 chosen men, Benjamites, who were left-handed men that could sling stones at a hair breadth and not miss. Why was Benjamin's left hand so anointed? When he was born, his father called him Benjamin, which means "son of my right hand." But since this son of Israel's right hand was left-handed, it was his left hand that grasped his father's right hand as they stood together, bringing right and left together, into union. Thus Benjamin, Ehud the deliverer, and the 700 left-handed Benjamite sling masters, were one and all LEFT HANDED SONS OF THE RIGHT HAND! What can it mean? It can only be understood in relation to the "double" we have already seen in the Sign of Gemini! The name EHUD means "united, union." In him the left hand and the right hand of God are UNITED AND JOINED in that perfect balance which can deal redemptively with all things. Ehud represents the divine wisdom, knowledge, understanding, authority, power, grace and love that are being raised up in perfect balance within each son of God. He is a type of the many-membered man, the enChristed, the manifested sons of God in whom the power of the carnal mind and the flesh is dethroned and destroyed in every realm, and through whom perfect and complete deliverance shall be brought to creation. Historically, he is a type of Jesus, our Forerunner, who truly destroyed within Himself the king of flesh. In our present He is the agent and power of Christ's accomplishment of this same victory in the saints. In our future, he shows forth the long-awaited ministry to creation of those who have walked into the high realms of God's purpose hidden in Christ Jesus the Lord since the world began.

Let us now consider how Ehud gained the victory for Israel. Ehud came one day to visit King Eglon, who was ruling over the land. He said to the representatives of the king, "I have a present from my people to the king. Let me, I bid you, go into the palace and see him." They admitted Ehud into the palace, and he gave to the king a present; then he went out, but soon came back and said, "I have a message to the king that no one else can hear. Let me see the king alone. As he had just brought a present, they supposed that he was a friend to the king. Then, too, he had no sword on the side where men carried their swords. But, of course, Ehud was left-handed, and he carried on the other side a short, sharp, two-edged sword which he had especially made. The sword was out of sight under his garment on the side they did not anticipate. He went into the room where King Eglon was sitting alone, and he said, "I have a message from the Lord to you, and this is the message." And then he drew out his sword and drove it up to the handle into the king's body so suddenly that the king

died without giving a sound. Ehud left the sword in the dead body of the king and went out quietly by the rear door. The servants of the king thought he was asleep in his room, and for a while did not go in to see why he was so still; but when they found him dead, Ehud was far away. Ehud blew a trumpet and called his people together, and led them against the Moabites. They were so helpless without their king that Ehud and his men easily drove them out of Israel and set the people free.

Ehud's two-edged sword with which he slew the king of the carnal mind represents the continuing development of Christ by His Word which is sharper than any two-edged sword. This is the Christ within who is THE WORD OF GOD. He is the LOGOS. "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made" (Ps. 33:6). This is He who was in the beginning. "In the beginning was the Word" (Jn. 1:1). This is the Word that was God. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. This is He of whom it is written, "He sent His Word, and healed them." This is the Word that is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. In the book of Revelation He is represented as being armed with a sword, two-edged and sharp, passing out of His mouth, representing that His chief force lies in the action of His lips uttering words. His force is truth — truth expressed by His mouth in words. He goes forth to battle wielding only the weapons of truth. Christ comes not to avenge blood or slay in battle as other conquerors have done. His Words smite all who hear them. As someone has said, it will smite them with conviction, and bless them with conversion. The spirit which animates Him is the warrior spirit. His object is the conquest of the world. He has formed the resolution never to cease from His campaign until the whole world, a conquered realm, bows devotedly before Him as its rightful Lord and Master, and only true King.

As the Christ of God is a many-membered body, so is the sword that goes out of His mouth. The Word of God is spoken in the world today by the body of Christ on earth, and that Word flows forth as the sound of many waters. There are not to be two swords — one out of the mouth of the Lord, and the other out of the mouths of His ministers. There is one sword, and it is HIS. And this sword does not come out of the mouths of only one or two of God's ministers, special ones who claim a higher revelation than all of God's prophets! Our quotation of scripture, our knowledge of the Bible, our study of ancient mysteries and teachings, and even our understanding of truth is not the sword of the Lord. The sword of the Lord is that Word which proceedeth only out of His mouth and out of ours as we are MADE ONE IN HIM. The sword of the Lord bespeaks a purified people, holding forth the Word of Life in the power of the Holy Spirit, and how we praise God for this company!

This is not some carnal battle fought with carnal means, but the utterance of the Living Word of Truth which no man shall be able to disannul. Ah, how fleshly have been the swords by which the religious systems have conquered! In contradistinction, the Spirit of God is forming and fashioning a people, a glorious company, from whose lips flash forth that CLEAR WORD OF THE LORD which shall cause the traditions and unrighteousness of man to utterly come to nought. It was said of our Lord and elder brother, "Never man spake like this man" (Jn. 7:46). "What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? "FOR WITH AUTHORITY commandeth HE even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him" (Mk. 1:27). "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" (Mat. 8:27). That which was manifest in Jesus Christ shall also be seen in His many-membered- brethren- company. There are preview glimpses of this even in God's servants in the Old Testament. With what boldness did Elijah the prophet pronounce unto Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, BUT ACCORDING TO MY WORD" (I Kings 17:1). The pure and powerful Word of God shall cause His servants to ride victoriously. Nought shall be able to stand before the two-edged sword of H- I- S- W- O- R- D. How glorious shall be the advance of this mighty company!

Fear not, my beloved. Have hope. Believe in hope! It is God's good pleasure to yet renew the face of the earth. Surely all these things shall come to an end. Sin shall end. Strife shall end. Pride shall end. Lust shall end. War shall end. Misery shall end. Sickness shall end. Sorrow and suffering shall end. Crime and violence shall end. Ignorance shall end. Tyranny and oppression shall end. Evil shall end. Death shall end. All the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. The mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the tops of the mountains. All the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our God and His Christ. Then they shall not hurt nor destroy in all His holy place. The rivers shall flow with His Life and the heavens shall drop down with the distilled dew of His Word. All the inhabitants of the world shall be without spot and blemish, loving one another,

even as Jesus has loved us, for the lion nature shall lie down with the lamb nature. You, precious friend of mine, are called to be a part of the firstfruits of this victory, even if the total harvest has not yet come. You are to love your neighbor as yourself. You are to love your enemies and bless them that curse you and do good to them that hate you and stand as a priest on behalf of all creation. You are to wield the mighty sword of the Spirit. You are to eat abundantly and drink deeply of HIS incorruptible life and ride forth in majesty as the expression of God's Kingdom on earth. You are to utter His burning Word of authority, smiting the earth with the rod of His mouth. You are to speak judgment to all evil and life to all men everywhere. **ARISE, EHUD, AND DELIVER THE PEOPLE!**

Ehud hid his sword on his right side, the side of the spiritual mind or positive revelation of the Spirit. It was hidden in the mind of Christ. It was concealed within the spirit of hope and faith and understanding. After King Eglon had been slain, the servants of the king (flesh) did not know that their king was dead. While they waited around, Ehud (union) escaped and passed beyond their power. This tells me that while the world is waiting to see if Jesus really did conquer sin and death and hell, and while the church is waiting for a "rapture" to take them out of this world, there is a company of Left-Handed Sons of the Right Hand that is escaping the corruption that is in the world and moving spiritually beyond the limitations of the boundaries we have known, into the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ. It is one thing to make a sword and it is another to use it to slay King Eglon. Another way of saying this is, it is one thing to hear the word and revelation of God, and quite another dimension of experience to personally appropriate it and use its authority to make an end of the king of carnality and death in our lives. Everything begins to change when the Christ of God reveals Himself from within your very being, leading you into the truth and vision that will deliver you from the bondage of old Adam and all the corruption he is subjected to. Christ will grow up IN us and AS us into His full stature and triumph. This is sonship, this is salvation, this is our hope and the hope of the groaning creation, praise His wonderful name!

THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

The right hand of God is the ANOINTED HAND of God for CHRIST sits at the RIGHT HAND OF GOD, and CHRIST means THE ANOINTED. Paul tells us that we are to seek those things which are above — WHERE CHRIST SITS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. This means that we are to SEEK THE THINGS OF THE RIGHT HAND! Reigning with Christ must become one of the great goals in the life of every man or woman apprehended to sonship to God. What is the power of the right hand? Paul tells us something about it in **Eph. 1:16-23**. "...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, WHICH HE WROUGHT IN CHRIST, WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, AND SET HIM AT HIS OWN RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is HIS BODY, THE FULLNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL."

We find in this passage that there is an exceeding greatness of power that is toward us. This is God's inheritance in the saints and it is rich in glory! We do not naturally know or realize just what this power is or just what it can do, so in these words Paul by the Spirit gives us a measure by which we can have a little idea of just what this power is and what it is able to do for us, in us, and through us. Let us see! The power that is directed to us is according to a power that God wrought in the Christ. It is that power by which God raised up the Christ from the dead and SET HIM AT HIS OWN RIGHT HAND. By this power God set the Christ far above all principality, all power, all might, all dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world but in the ages to come. This power that God used for the raising up of the Christ has put all things under His feet and made Him to be the Head over all to the church. And the church, His many-membered body, is the FULL DEVELOPMENT OF GOD, as we read in the translation of the Diaglott.

The power of God that Paul describes is the rule by which is measured the power God has for all who will follow on to be filled with all the fullness of God. The power that God has for us is just the same in quality and

character and quantity as is the power of God used for the raising up of the Christ and the placing of Him at the right hand. Therefore, be assured, beloved, that the power that God has toward us and for us will do for us JUST EXACTLY WHAT THAT POWER THAT GOD HAD FOR JESUS CHRIST DID FOR HIM. In other words, the power God has toward us will also RAISE US FROM THE DEAD AND SET US AT HIS OWN RIGHT HAND. It will set us far above all principality, all power, all might, all dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this world or age but in the world and ages to come. It will put all things under our feet and give us dominion over all the works of God's hands, both earthly and heavenly, visible and invisible. This in no way detracts from the glory, authority, or preeminence of Jesus Christ. Rather, it is the FULFILLMENT OF HIS MINISTRY as HE moves in and through His many-membered body, the "many brethren" brought to His very own glory.

There are certain basic principles of the Kingdom of God that must be a part of the frame of mind and the experience of all who press forward into sonship to God. We must learn to think like God. We must begin to rule with Christ in this life. Too many saints are weak, frustrated, and defeated. May the dynamite of God's Spirit blow us all out of the low places of lethargy, discouragement, oppression, and defeat into a vibrant walk with Christ in the high places of peace, joy, and triumph of His Kingdom. "...strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power which His supreme might imparts. Put on the complete armour of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with the despotisms, the empires, the forces that govern and control this dark world — the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Therefore put on the complete armour of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground in the evil day, and, having fought to the end, TO REMAIN VICTORS ON THE FIELD" (Eph. 6:10-14) (Weymouth).

Once the believer embraces the truth that he is now seated with Christ at the right hand of God in the higher than all heavens, his heart will find rest and joy and confidence in the face of all situations and circumstances. The right hand of God is the place of omnipotent universal power and dominion — FAR ABOVE ALL THINGS! Such all-embracing majesty is far too vast for my feeble understanding, yet I know by the Spirit that the body of Christ is being formed and prepared for the explicit purpose of UNIVERSAL DOMINION. But how can a man rule over principalities and powers and empires and universes if he cannot rule his own spirit? "He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32). God is a God of principle. He does not do anything by chance. It is my deep conviction that what happens in your life and mine is a result of the use or abuse of the principles of the Kingdom of God. Learn this, beloved, and you will know one of the fundamental principles of reigning with Christ: OUR AUTHORITY IS OVER SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS F-I-R-S-T-L-Y I-N O-U-R-S-E-L-V-E-S!

Our first great battle is within ourselves. For if our dominion over our own spirit is to be perfect, then every thought, desire, and impulse must be brought into subjection to Christ. This discipline will be an attribute of the mind of Christ within, and when this is in effect, then we will be able to expel every mutineer, or every thought, attitude, and emotion which rises up against the knowledge of God. Our great training in throneship authority takes place in the bringing of our own selves into conformity to the Christ. We have got to look at and deal with ourselves first. Then as we are victorious overcomers in the different phases of our own lives, there comes a very real sense of victory and authority over other powers, whatever they may be and wherever they may be found. It is a great fact — deliver yourself of it first and then you will have complete AUTHORITY over the same problem or spirit or power anywhere else! You will never have power over spiritual wickedness in the high places of this world order and the cosmos, you will never be able to deliver your brethren, or cities, or nations into the Kingdom of God until first every wicked and rebellious spirit within your own nature has been subdued to the Spirit of the Christ within.

Simply speaking, the purpose of God is that we might reign for Him and as Him, and to reign is to exercise the authority of God — to rule all things. All who in Christ appropriate the fullness of His life and glory and exaltation are destined to administer that awesome dominion, seated together with Him at the right hand of God. This is the blueprint and strategy for the triumph of His Kingdom in all realms, from the lowest hell to the highest heaven. Ah, dear ones, we shall reign throughout the ages of the ages over all the vastnesses of infinity until every enemy everywhere is conquered and Christ is all in all. But we must begin to reign with Him here and N-O-W! You may be at the right hand of God and yet not have walked out all the reality and potential

and power and authority of that realm. You must begin to walk out that reality right in that small and undistinguished place where you are. The thing that limits and frustrates and troubles you most — right where you are, in the nitty- gritty of everyday experience — is the place to start! Reign with Him there! It may be an attitude, a habit, a weakness, an emotion, a lust, or the sin which so easily besets — but it was not placed there by God to destroy you — it was designed to be your STEPPING STONE TO THE THRONE!

Thank God! there is a RIGHT HAND COMPANY, those indwelt by THE SON OF THE RIGHT HAND, daily growing and increasing in the nature, wisdom, and power of HIS LORDSHIP. This company is the manifestation of GOD'S RIGHT HAND OF BLESSING AND DOMINION in the earth today, and this right hand shall do even much more valiantly as the sons of God press on in to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This present time is but a proving ground for those who through grace will reign with their Lord over all the endless vastnesses of infinity. He is raising us up and teaching us to sit with Him in the higher than heavenlies, gaining victory upon victory as we learn what it is to reign. And the place which He has prepared for each one is not only a world to come, and a Kingdom of light and love, but a place IN HIM, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, nature of His nature, mind of His mind, wisdom of His wisdom, power of His power — LIFE OF HIS LIFE! Glory to His wonderful name!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 44

CANCER-THE CRAB

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART FORTY-FOUR

URSA MINOR

The eleventh of the twelve Signs to appear on the starry stage is that of CANCER — THE CRAB. In the midst of the Sign of Cancer is one of the brightest nebulous clusters in all of the heavens. This cluster of stars is called Praesepe, meaning The Multitude, The Offspring, The Innumerable Seed. The church is this vast heavenly multitude which has sprung from the faith of Abraham.

Long millenniums ago God told Abraham to look unto the heavens and if he could count the stars, so would be the number of his seed. It is important to understand that the divine plan of God in redemption begins with Abraham. Before Abraham, God dealt with several important individuals. But God did not deal with them in the light of His ultimate and eternal purpose, only in relation to the time in which they themselves lived. Abel was a righteous man and offered sacrifices in accord with the will of God, but he offered for himself alone. He was not specially chosen in relation to the ultimate and eternal purpose of God. Enoch, too, walked with God, but only in an individual walk. In Noah's day all mankind was living in the depths of corruption, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and survived the deluge, but yet we do not find that he was chosen or called in relation to the ultimate and eternal purpose of God, but only in relation to the situation and need of his own day.

But it is when we come to Abraham that we encounter the first example of a man specially chosen of God with the future in mind — the eternal purpose of God in consideration. This is why we say that the divine plan of redemption begins to be worked out with Abraham. When Jesus came to confirm or ratify with His own blood the promises to the Fathers, it is not said that these were the promises to Able or Enoch or Noah, but the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And when Jesus came to confirm and ratify with His own blood the promises to the Fathers, it is not said that He took upon Him the seed of Adam — but **"He took on Him the seed of ABRAHAM" (Heb. 2:16)**. He came not as Adam's "seed," but as Abraham's "seed." All the promises of God which embody the redemptive and eternal plan and purpose of God were made to two specially called and chosen people — Abraham and his "seed" (Gal. 3:16). So everything begins with Abraham; he is the starting point of everything in the redemptive and eternal purposes of God.

There is neither time nor space to examine the many facets and ramifications of God's promises to Abraham, but you can read of them in the book of Genesis and ask God for wisdom and understanding. He was to become "a great nation." He was to become "a multitude of nations. God said, "Kings shall come of thee." Abraham's posterity was to "spread abroad to the west, the east, the north, and the south." Abraham was not only to have a multiplicity of seed or offspring, but one particular "seed" through whom ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH WOULD BE BLESSED. This singular seed "is Christ" and yet it is a corporate seed composed of many members — the sons of God (Gal. 3:16; I Cor. 12:12). When Abraham received these staggering promises, what did he do? He believed them! **"...to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all; (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:16-21).**

When Jesus Christ came to this world of the seed of Abraham, He came as a seed. Abraham was the seed from which sprang the millions of the house of Judah and the hundreds of millions of the house of Israel. But

Paul, in unfolding this great mystery, fastens the hope of all creation not on Abraham himself, nor on the hundreds of millions of Judah and Israel, but on one particular seed, and that seed is CHRIST. This he does in **Gal. 3:16** by saying, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which IS CHRIST." Therefore of all the vast multitudes as the dust of the earth, the sands of the sea, and the stars of heaven in number, the one seed of greatest importance, and the only seed which is made the heir of all the promises given to Abraham, is Jesus Christ.

It is a thing of magnificent wonder that our Lord is called the seed of Abraham! It seems a most singular thing that in that long ago Eden the Lord God told the serpent that the seed of the woman would bruise his head. Why did He not say that the man that should come from the woman would bruise the serpent's head? Why did He refer to that man as "her seed," the seed of the woman? It will be a great blessing to your heart to understand the vital truth that "seed" is not only the product of some other life before it, but seed is also that which reproduces itself and its kind many thousand fold from generation to generation. On a certain day some Greeks approached the disciples of Jesus with the request, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." This request was promptly carried to Jesus by Andrew and Philip, and our Lord gave this strange and very remarkable reply, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (**Jn. 12:23-24**). In this cryptic statement Jesus likened Himself to a seed, a grain of wheat, which was to fall into the ground and die. He would be sown as a seed into the earth and be raised again. Not only would He be raised in glorification, but in centuries yet to come this seed, which was Jesus Christ, would produce a vast harvest of many sons of God in His exact image and likeness. No seed is raised from the earth as just a singular seed, there is always an increase, the natural law of development being "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." Only one seed was planted in the earth, and the Christ who came out of that Palestinian tomb was not the harvest — merely the blade breaking the ground. The multitude that will appear in the time of harvest will be the seed of the seed, the increase, the full corn in the ear, every one bearing the image and likeness of that Christ seed which was planted in death.

I am certain that our Lord's reply was a mystery to those men to whom He spoke. They made their earnest request, "Sirs, we would see Jesus," and He responded with His mysterious dissertation. We are not told whether Jesus ever consented to have these Greeks interview Him, but in answer to their request He gave the strange reply, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." His message to them was simply this: If they saw Jesus at that time they would see only one seed, one grain in the image of God — the man Christ Jesus. But there would be more, much more to Christ than appeared to them that day! A whole universal field of ripened grain was to follow in His likeness, born of that original seed, imbued with the very same life, raised in the same resurrection, who would be the SONS OF GOD and THE CHRIST even as He is a Son of God and the Christ of God. The many sons would form ONE CHRIST, Head and body, each having the seed of life in himself. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham, appeared as the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). And you, my beloved, will understand a great mystery when you understand that ALL who are products of and partakers of the life of Him who is the seed of Abraham themselves become T-H-E S-E-E-D OF ABRAHAM.

Those in these last days whom God is giving, by His Spirit, understanding of the whole mystery of God in Christ that is in the scriptures, know that the whole mystery and purpose and plan of God in Christ is revealed in the family of Abraham, and in God's dealings with the family of Abraham, from Genesis through Revelation. This mystery begins in Genesis 12, where God called Abram from Ur of the Chaldees, and gave Abram a promise saying, "Leave your home, your country, and your father's house, and go into a new land that I will show you, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Few of God's people today and not very many of God's ministry fully understand this promise that was given by God to Abraham. What God was really saying was that some day, yea, in these last days He would ultimately bring forth a perfect seed, a many-membered perfect seed, a descendant from the line of Abraham who would rule and reign and govern this earth, solve all the world's problems, and bring perfect blessing to all the families of the earth.

Now the apostle Paul, in the book of Galatians, tells us that when God gave this promise to Abraham, if He had said seeds, instead of seed, singular, then the promises of God to Abraham would be fulfilled to the Jews in

the State of Israel, or in the great Israel nations of Europe and America, the natural descendants of Abraham according to the flesh. But the apostle tells us by the Spirit, that since God said seed, singular, and not seeds plural, then the seed that God was referring to which would bless all the families of the earth is THAT SEED WHICH IS CHRIST, and since we are the body of Christ, then we the body of Christ are that ultimate seed of Abraham that God promised in the long ago would come forth in the earth, and ultimately govern the earth, solve all the world's problems, and bring blessing to all the families of the earth. Therefore, the whole Bible from Genesis 12 through Revelation 12, is just the divine record of God progressively working in every generation through the family of Abraham to purify and perfect the line of Abraham, until ultimately in these last days He would bring forth from the line of Abraham a perfect seed, a many-membered perfect seed, who would govern this world, rule and reign in the earth, solve all the world's problems, and bring perfect blessing to all the families of the earth.

When once one's eyes are opened to this mystery in the scripture it is very easy to follow the lineage of Abraham, generation after generation, down through the ages, and see how God has been working in each generation to progressively purify the line of Abraham more and more, to ultimately bring forth that perfect seed. Therefore, when we follow the line of Abraham down through the scriptures we find that out of Abraham came Isaac; and Isaac was the seed in his generation. Then out of Isaac came Jacob; and Jacob was the seed in his generation. Then out of Jacob came twelve sons, a many-membered seed; and they were the seed of Abraham that God worked through in their generation. Then out of twelve sons came twelve tribes of Israel, and they were the seed that God worked through in their generation. Out of them came twelve more tribes in the next generation, and they were the seed in their generation.

Finally, two thousand years ago, out of the twelve tribes came Jesus, and HE WAS THE SEED while He was here. Then Jesus, while He was here, purchased a bride with His own blood, the woman the Church (Eph. 2:22-32), and on the day of Pentecost His Spirit roared back into this Church which is His body (feminine), and this people were born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word (Christ) of God, which liveth and abideth forever. The first generation of spiritual Israel was born, and they were the seed of Abraham in their generation. The ministry of that generation planted into the spiritual womb of the Church the incorruptible seed, the Word of God, and the second generation of spiritual Israel was born, and they were the seed in their generation. Out of them came the third generation of the true Israel of God, and they were the seed in their generation. Finally now, in these days, out of them has come us, the present generation of Israel, the seed of Abraham. We are the seed of Abraham that God is working through in our generation, and out of us is going to come a many-membered manchild who will grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, be changed into the incorruptible, immortal, eternal nature of God, and become that perfect masculine seed through whom Christ will reign throughout the age and the ages of the Kingdom of God on earth, solve all the world's problems, and bring perfect blessing to all the families of the earth, even as God promised Abraham in that long ago.

All the wonderful promises of God made to Abraham were given to only two people — Abraham and his seed. That seed, according to Paul, is Christ. Then follows the enlightening proclamation: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:21). No wonder Paul cries out in the very next verse: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for YE ARE ALL ONE in Christ Jesus. And IF YE BE CHRIST'S, THEN ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED, AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE" (Gal. 3:28-29).

We are still talking about the Sign of Cancer, The Crab —The Multitude, The Offspring, The Innumerable Seed. It is interesting to note that crabs are hard-shelled animals with roundish, flattened bodies and five pairs of legs, the front pair of which end in large claws. Most crabs live in the sea, some of them swimming with paddle-shaped legs. A few are found in fresh water, and some spend most of their lives on dry land. The land crabs of the West Indies are found even on top of high mountains, but they return to the sea once a year to breed. Thus, the crab is an animal born of the water, as the Church which is His body is "born of water and of the Spirit." Its many legs indicate multitudinous development and numerous members, as the family of God has multiplied exceedingly. The name CANCER comes from a Latin root meaning To Hold or Encircle, and the Greek equivalent is about the same. The term was chosen for the crab because of its ability to take hold of something and hold it firmly with its large claws. And so it is with the elect of God. Having like Mary of Bethany,

"chosen the good part," or, like the patriarchs, "embraced the promises," or, like the apostles, "laid hold of the hope set before us," they apprehend by faith the incorruptible and heavenly inheritance, and embrace the promise and hope of His glory with a grasp so firm and strong that it shall not be taken away.

Like the crab which lives in two elements — water and land — so the elect of God lives in two elements: the earth and also the heavens. This is a great mystery which only the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God can unfold to our hearts in this hour. In that long ago beginning, at the dawn of our Creator's omniscient plan of the ages, "**The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed**" (**Gen. 2:8**). Memories of Eden, exquisite as dreams, weave their threads of light into the traditions of all peoples. There is not a nation under heaven which does not date the beginning of our race from some distant period of purity, peace, and concord with nature and with God. The hieroglyphics of Egypt, the clay tablets of Assyria, the Edda of Scandinavia, the legends of Tibet, and the bas-reliefs of Rome, tell the same story of primitive blessedness. All go to prove the truth of the statement that the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and put there the man whom He had formed.

When we come to the Garden of Eden it is evident that it is more than merely a piece of real estate somewhere over in Mesopotamia! No such place has ever been found, neither the angel with the flaming sword to keep men out. No wonder that men have sought for it, but they have sought for it in vain. The Garden of God is not a physical place located on this or any other planet. It is a STATE OF BEING. It is a higher existence for man than this cursed state we find ourselves in by physical birth. It is the state of being that man was in when he was first brought forth from the creative hand of God and placed here upon earth. It represents man — in the presence of God! Man with the incorruptible life of God accessible to him! Man as master and lord over all things! Man living above sin, sickness, pain, limitation and death! Blessed realities, one and all! And yet — the Garden also represents man together with all the factors and conditions, both internal and external, of being and environment, which ultimately were to lead to his ruin and alienation from God. In one sense, man was the Garden. And yet, man was in the Garden. The Bible reveals it as a "Garden within a Garden." Man both in a state of being and an environment — the two corresponding. Ah the conditions that surrounded man were also obvious realities within the heart of man. The original man with his nature, characteristics, capabilities and potentials is what we see in the Garden of Eden. This was man in the Garden! It is a Garden within a Garden, a world within a world.

Some years ago Gene Edwards shared a word of revelation with which I heartily concur. In the following paragraphs I will share as faithfully as I can the concepts he set forth. In that wonderful day when the Lord God planted a Garden in Eden for the man in His image, God stood in the boundary between heaven and earth and did a most incredible thing. He stretched forth His hands of omnipotence and took this terrestrial ball in one hand as with the other He grasped the heavenly realm. He moved the two toward one another. He brought the spiritual realm, the timeless realm, the dimensionless realm toward planet earth and moved earth toward the heavenly realm. The two moved closer and closer until they kissed each other. The two realms touched — entering into union with one another. The area where heaven and earth met together and overlapped He called Eden. The place where these two realms met, overlapped, and interfaced became unlike earth and unlike heaven, that which had never existed before — not heavenly and not earthly — the Kingdom of Heaven on earth! The only thing it can be likened to is the resurrection body of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was visible, but utterly spiritual. He brought His physical body out of the tomb and appeared in a body possessing an earthly form and appearance, but it was a glorious metamorphosed body limited neither by time or space. Here in this realm where heaven and earth meet and mingle all that is visible becomes spiritual, and all that is spiritual becomes visible. Everything upon this earth which is seized upon by the spiritual is transformed by the spiritual, and there is created here the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. When you take the heavenly and the pristine earthly and join them together, what is formed by that blessed union is far more beautiful and glorious than either.

Man, formed of the dust of the ground, lay just outside this realm of the interface. God came to man there — just beyond the shining Eden, just outside the glorious spiritual-physical realm. God came to man in the lowlands of the earth realm. He breathed into the man, so magnificently formed of the earth, He breathed into him the spiritual realm, the life-giving winds of heaven, the breath of divinity. Out from the mouth of the almighty Creator came a brilliant, dazzling, sparkling effervescence like living stars that surged with divine

power into the nostrils of Adam and flowed through his body and soul, permeating every cell of his being. That wind, that spirit, that breath, that celestial air, that divine and heavenly life animated the clay model, creating within a dimensionless quality, condition, and state of being. All the animal kingdom and each of the myriad life forms on earth has a "breath of life" — the air of earth's dense atmosphere. Man is the only being into whose nostrils GOD BREATHED THE BREATH OF LIFE. Man's "breath of life" is not air — it is the Spirit of the Almighty which giveth understanding — intelligence and wisdom! Only the light that God IS was more glorious than this exquisite creature — man in God's image! And the magnificent wonder is that this man could see right into the heavenly, spiritual world. The animals can't peer into that realm, the birds are unable to communicate with that realm, the fish have no knowledge of that realm — no creature on earth can see beyond this gross material realm except the man in God's image. Please mark this! Here is a physical, visible creature who can see the unseen. He is not frightened by it, nor is he intimidated by anything or any creature he beholds in that glorious realm. He is at home with who he is and who they are. He looks around and all things are open to him. He sees all, perceives all, understands all. The face of God bent down and looked into the face of man, and man looked up into the face of God, and they looked like each other! They looked like Father and son. They bore an incredible, remarkable resemblance. God stretched forth His hand, Adam stretched forth his hand, and stood up from the dust and faced his Creator. He belonged to this planet, but the winds of heaven were within him. He belonged to the heavens as well as the earth. He is the only creature which has ever been, is now, or ever shall be that BELONGS TO BOTH REALMS!

Consider with me, precious friend of mine, What is the natural habitat of man? He is spirit — his natural habitat is the heavens! He is dust — his natural habitat is the earth! Both? No! Neither? Yes! Neither. And yet, in some strange, mystical way — both. This glorious creature God created — where is his "home? Ah — God prepared the place for man as soon as He created man. He created a place that corresponds to man's true state for man to inhabit. The earth, dear one, contrary to all that you may have been taught, is not the natural habitat of man. And neither are the heavens the natural habitat of man! The Garden — and only the Garden — and no place but the Garden is your natural habitat. That's where you belong — that is your true world, your homeland, your motherland — that unique realm where heaven and earth meet and mingle — the Kingdom of Heaven on earth! The Garden was not heaven, neither was it earth. It was a realm where God could walk, and where man could walk and talk with God. It was the dimension of the spiritual body — spirit and body, heaven and earth, visible and invisible, celestial and terrestrial, blended into one. The greatest of the glories of heaven was in that Garden — the tree of life was there. And that was man's habitat. It was not merely where man was — it was what he was.

This great truth of man's STATE OF BEING constituting the Garden of God is one of the tremendous themes which courses its way like a mighty river through the scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. In the book of Revelation the Garden of Eden finally becomes the wonderful City of God — which City we are (Rev. 21:9-11; Isa. 60:2,14). "And I saw the New Jerusalem ...having the glory of God: and her light was like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. 21:10-11; 22:16).

How do you suppose the tree of life was transferred from the Garden of God to the City of God? The simple truth is — it wasn't! The Garden still exists. The Garden is in the City. The Garden IS the City. In this City two realms interface once more — the new heavens and the new earth — not two separate entities, but that place where heaven and earth are joined, the Land of the Interface! This is where righteousness dwells — the new mind and the new body. That is your world, my beloved. You and I belong to an interface. We are an interface. We are part heavenly and part earthly; part spiritual and part physical; part visible and part invisible. What is the New Jerusalem? It is the place of union with God in the interface where heaven and earth overlap. We are a colony from the heavens inhabiting the earthlies. We belong to neither and we belong to both. We are of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are in the Lord Jesus Christ. He, more than any other man, is an interface of these two realms. He is the second man, the last Adam. He reveals in Himself the true purpose of God in man. Only in

Christ can one understand the true nature of all things. He is of both these realms and He is in both of these realms. He is in both and He is in neither. It is a great mystery. Oh, the wonder of it! He is a MAN seated in the higher than all heavens! We who have been born of water and the spirit are of His species. We are bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, mind of His mind, spirit of His spirit, life of His life. We belong to His realm. We walk with Him today in the Garden of God, in the City of God, in the LAND OF THE INTERFACE, for it is the only place where we can comfortably move in both realms. And yet it is not both realms — nor is it either realm — it is a combination, a union of the two — a NEW CREATION IN CHRIST JESUS! That's what you are! You are spirit and you are body. That is our destiny — to be both in union in one! That is our habitat. And redemption progressively brings us into our inheritance in this blessed Land of the Interface. The salvation of the soul, the redemption of the body, will complete the work. Let us press on, saints of God! The full splendor and bountifulness of this precious Land lies just before us! As the crab lives in two elements — water and land — so the New Creation Man lives in two elements: the earth and also the heavens!

Dr. Seiss wrote: "In the progress of the crab's development and growth it undergoes important changes. The most marked of these is the periodic throwing off of its old shells and the taking on of new ones. It has to shed its hard shell every so often, for the shell stops it from growing. In its earlier life these changes involve alterations of the whole form and shape of the animal." And so the body of Christ, in the process of its growth and development into the image of God again, passes from processing to processing, from change to change, and from glory to glory! God's purpose in redemption is not to just deliver us from the penalty of our sins, but to re- create us, to make a new creature of us, a new kind of man in the image of Him who created us. This marvelous change involves the whole man, spirit, soul, and body. Many seem to think that a spiritual body is not a LITERAL body. In other words, that it is not a REAL body, or not actually a body at all, but a consciousness or a spirit. "Literal," says Webster, means real; not figurative or metaphorical. "There is a NATURAL BODY, and there is a SPIRITUAL BODY," saith the Lord. Does any one suppose the apostle here teaches that there is a "real" body, and there is a "figurative" or "metaphorical" body; and as we have borne the image of the "real," we shall also bear the image of the figurative? One would suppose they so read, from their exceeding blindness in not recognizing any but the animal body as the "true" body. These seem fearful lest, if the idea be entertained that Christ was resurrected in any other than an animal body, it will lead to the rejection of a LITERAL resurrection. We do reject the idea of saints being raised "a NATURAL body;" and if that is rejecting a LITERAL resurrection of the saints, we must plead guilty, and beg to be excused simply on the ground that the Almighty has said, **"It is raised a SPIRITUAL BODY" (I Cor. 15:44).**

Now will someone inform me why it is unscriptural, or fanatical to maintain that Jesus Christ has a SPIRITUAL body; and, as the saints are to be like Him, that they are raised spiritual bodies. I hear some talking about coming into immortality in their present body, living for a thousand years or forever in a body that eats, drinks, sleeps, drives, and goes to the bathroom. It will never happen. Because some seem to think that a spiritual body is not real, but is only a metaphorical body; and that nothing is real except it be "of the earth, earthy," is no reason why those who can discern spiritual things, which the natural man cannot, should remain in darkness. The realm of the spiritual is a realm which, to those who touch it, is ten thousand times more real than the natural world. Man has been excluded from this heavenly realm ever since that calamitous hour when he stretched forth his inquisitive hand to discover by his natural senses that which is good and that which is evil. On that unhappy day his eyes were closed to the celestial world to discover the physical and the natural and to be instructed in this barren realm of death. And yet that heavenly realm is as close to us today and it was then, the only difference being that our darkened vision cannot see it!

By His resurrection from the dead Jesus opened up to man again the spiritual- physical realm — the Land of the Interface. **"The same day, at evening, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in their midst" (Jn. 20:19). "And after eight days, again His disciples were within, then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in their midst, and said, Peace be unto you" (Jn. 20:20). "And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight" (Lk.24:31).** Such language was never applied to the movements of Jesus before His crucifixion, and is used only in speaking of spiritual beings. The spiritual body of Jesus, and its clothing, which appeared suddenly while the doors were shut, did not go out the door, but simply disappeared or de-materialized into the same elements from which He had fashioned them but a few moments before. He vanished out of their sight, and was no longer seen of them on the physical plane, though doubtless He was still with them — invisibly present; and so

also much of the time during those forty days. Jesus only demonstrated TWO BODIES WHILE HE WAS ON EARTH: the natural body and the spiritual body. There were no others. The first was a body of limitation that grew hungry, thirsty, weary, and died. The second was the body of the resurrection, a body of glory, unlimited, spiritual, supernatural. He never demonstrated a physical body that put on immortality but remained the same. Many brethren today are expecting PHYSICAL IMMORTALITY; they look in the mirror to see if the aging process has slowed or stopped; they count the wrinkles to determine whether there may be fewer today than before; they are expecting LIFE in an UNSPIRITUAL BODY! Again I say, It will never happen! No man can be physically immortal who has to either eat, drink, or sleep in order to sustain his life. No man is immortal as long as he can drown in water, burn in fire, be crushed under the wheels of an eighteen-wheeler, have his head severed by sword, choke on a piece of meat, bleed from a cut, or be buried in the earth. Hear it! There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. Those are the only two choices you have, my friend.

It follows of necessity that man's being, under the curse of sin and death, because it is unsuited to the spiritual world, must be changed by the power of God. A bird would need a mighty change to be able to live under the water, or a fish to live in the air; but the Lord promises a much more striking change to those who are predestined to be manifested as the sons of God with power. Unknown millenniums ago Job uttered an inspired statement as he sat among the dust and ashes of his desolation and affliction. "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait UNTIL MY CHANGE COME. Thou shalt call and I will answer Thee; Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thy hands" (Job 14:14-15). Never did Job utter a statement which bears out the absolute faithfulness of God to His creatures than in this passage. He says, So what? If a man comes to the point where he goes by way of the grave — shall he live again? Is that the end? And then he answers his own question. He made reference to an APPOINTED TIME OF WAITING, through which we must pass until OUR CHANGE COME. We will not be left in this "unfinished state." We will not be forgotten in this low realm of the earthy, this side of the Land of the Interface. There is much more work to be wrought in us before we are fully changed. But even physical death will not deny us that fulfillment, because sooner or later, HE WILL CALL, and we will answer, because it is not dependent upon our state or condition, but upon HIS CALLING AND PURPOSE, and He has a desire to the work of His hands, the end is secure in the FAITHFUL CREATOR'S DESIRE to finish the work of His hands; His desire is towards us and that is the guarantee of our full redemption.

Paul sets forth the majesty of that supernal glory that now appears like a beckoning beacon before the anointed vision of the sons of God: "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:49). We are to bear both — made one. He also explains exactly how this ineffable change is to take place within the elect. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are CHANGED into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18). "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour ...who shall CHANGE our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

Literally Paul says that we are being METAMORPHOSED into the image of the heavenly, and that God will METAMORPHOSE even our vile bodies. The Greek word METAMORPHOO means simply "to change into another form." It comes from two words: META — which means "beyond," and MORPHE — meaning "form." "Beyond form" — or changed into another form. From this Greek root comes our English word "metamorphosis," which means to change from one form, shape, or substance to another. Our Lord through death and resurrection was changed or transformed — metamorphosed — from the lowly Jesus of Nazareth they had known to the glorified Christ of resurrection, ascension and exaltation. And this is just the word that is used with reference to the experience of believers who are to come into the same image of Christ Jesus. The metamorphosed body is not a body that looks like our present body infused with life while it continues to eat, drink, sleep, sweat, and do all the other things natural men do. IT IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF BODY, IN A DIFFERENT FORM. IT IS A SPIRITUAL BODY, FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY.

Metamorphosis is that change which takes place from within. We are not transformed by external forces acting upon us, but by the breaking forth of a new inner life from within, the very life of Jesus! Let us carefully consider the wonder of this thing, because it is certain that METAMORPHOSIS has already begun in us and

will continue until the complete transformation has taken place. Too many of the Lord's people sit with folded hands, waiting for a change in some sweet bye and bye, when God's Word clearly shows that this process of change has already begun. This is what must take place in us: we must be changed from what we started out to be, into a creature vastly different in form and nature. But do not look first for the change in the outward. Look not at the skin tone, the wrinkles, physical strength, healing of the body, as signs of metamorphosis. The change begins within, in spirit and soul, in nature and character, in mind and understanding, in consciousness and manifestation.

There are certain times and seasons when God brings to life truths that have been allowed to lie in grave clothes for ages and dispensations. As a seed lies dormant in the winter months and then bursts into life in the warmth and rain of spring, so also has the truth of God been allowed to lie in death throughout the wintry night of our walk in Babylon's religious systems now at last to burst into a fruitful harvest in the spring of God's purpose to bring many sons to glory. There came a wonderful day when Christ came into our lives. "What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, since Jesus came into my heart," we sweetly sing. But did you ever wait in holy reverence for the Spirit to reveal the eternal truth of those words to your deepest heart? Oh yes, we received Him — as a saviour, as a thought, as an idea or an ideal, as a truth, as a presence, as an experience, as an ethereal kind of spirit, something vague and intangible dwelling by faith in our hearts. The Spirit of the Lord is quickening, however, that there is SUBSTANCE to that MAN within us. When the incorruptible life of the Christ conceived within us, we must realize that He was conceived within as the EMBRYO of a SPIRIT- BODY. Not just a spirit, but a SPIRIT- BODY! This is the Man who belongs to the Land of the Interface — where heaven and earth are merged and fused.

When Paul speaks, then, of being strengthened with might in the INNER MAN, he is speaking of SUBSTANCE within us. When Peter speaks of the HIDDEN MAN of the heart, he is speaking of GLORIFIED FLESH that has been born into the believer but is hidden beneath the veil of Adamic flesh. A MAN is not a spirit. A MAN is spirit, soul, and body. The first MAN was of the earth, earthy. The second MAN is the Lord from heaven. The first MAN was of the earth, imbued with the wind of heaven. The second MAN was from the heavenly realm, and took upon Him a body. It is this second MAN who has come into us in His life. Jesus never said, "Except you receive My Spirit, you have no life in you." Rather, He said, "Except ye eat the FLESH of the Son of man, and drink His BLOOD (spirit), ye have no life in you" (Jn. 6:53). As we feed that man within with the FLESH SUBSTANCE and the SPIRIT LIFE of the resurrected and glorified MAN, this infant spirit- man begins to grow and when he is fully formed he will burst forth from the cocoon of Adamic flesh and stand in splendor and majesty as a NEW CREATION MAN — body, soul, and spirit! This man will then live fully in the Land of the Interface.

All our lifetime we have been subject to the bondage of corruption and death which is rooted in the CARNAL MIND. Ah, "to be carnally minded IS DEATH" (Rom. 8:6). That is God's own definition of death, and according to inspiration death is IN THE M- I- N- D! "It's all in your mind," they say, and though it may be spoken in jest, it is a wondrous and divine truth, nonetheless. In the same chapter a truth is introduced showing that the transformation of the body begins with the renewing of the mind, for, says the apostle, "to be spiritually minded IS LIFE..." (Rom. 8:6). Ah — life, also, is in the MIND! And he continues, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also QUICKEN YOUR MORTAL BODIES BY HIS SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH IN YOU" (Rom. 8:11).

If ever a reason was given for a change of mind, a change of thinking, a raising of consciousness, this must be it: "Be ye metamorphosed BY the renewing of your mind." It is the termination of our old way of thinking — of the carnal consciousness of sin and death — and the activation of a new way of thinking — the spiritual consciousness of LIFE IN CHRIST that brings the change, works the change, and completes the change until our transformation into the heavenly is consummated in spirit, soul, and body. Make no mistake about it! Paul declares forthrightly in Rom. 12:2 that this transformation, this change, this metamorphosis begins with the casting off of the corrupt and carnal mind which carries the mentality of sin, limitation, and death, and replacing it with the mind of Christ which is the mind of life and glory and virtue. We have heard a great deal about the corruptible putting on incorruption and the mortal putting on immortality. We have embraced many theories about how this would be accomplished, but in one majestic sweep of inspiration the apostle brushes aside all theories to tell us that we shall be transformed BY THE RENEWING OF THE MIND.

Mind means thought, intellect, reason, understanding, sense, thinking principle. Thought is thinking. The renewing of the mind means renovation, reconstitution, re-programing of our thought patterns and processes. It means a new mind- set. A new consciousness, awareness, reality. The old mind, carnal and human as it is, is always thinking thoughts of sin and death. It leaves us mortal, corruptible, and unchanged. The new mind is the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is the intellect, the thought patterns, the thinking principles of Him who has conquered both sin and death and abides forever in the life and immortality of the Land of the Interface. The mind of Christ is a transforming mind! It renews not only the mind, but the body as well. Our minds, our THINKING must be raised from the level of the natural, carnal minds we were born with, and it must be spiritualized. This is not an instant change, it is not attained with one grand leap, but a continuous renewal as the voice of the Spirit unfolds within us the mind, thoughts, and outlook of God. These are thoughts of love, of righteousness, of life and light and power and incorruption and glory which transform into the image of God. If we wait in holy reverence in God's divine presence He will teach us how to think out of our divinity instead of our humanity.

Every life has a certain nature and consciousness. The higher the life, the loftier its nature and its consciousness. The law of a life belongs to the realm of its consciousness. For example, our youngest son, in his teen years, was a lover of hamsters. He had a hamster which from the time of its birth had never eaten anything but hamster food. One day he gave it an insect. Immediately, the hamster bit off the insect's head and then proceeded to eat it. Now this unique action of biting off the insect's head before eating it is a feature of the "instinct" of the animal. It is in his nature, a part of his consciousness. Though you breed countless generations of hamsters, and not one of them ever sees an insect, the moment you present one of those distant descendants with an insect he will promptly bite off its head and then eat it. He requires no training whatever. This is the LAW of its life — its innate nature and consciousness. It is programmed in its mind to think and act a certain way. Nature abounds with tens of thousands of examples of this law of life- consciousness in the marvelous life- forms God has created on this planet. The law of the physical life pertains to the order of consciousness. Everything is what it is and acts as it acts out of CONSCIOUSNESS. Old Adam thinks and acts out of the consciousness of sin and death. "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3).

The law of the spirit of life is the life of God Himself, which is the highest life; therefore it is the richest in consciousness. This life within us causes us to be full of divine consciousness, and this consciousness is the consciousness of DIVINE LIFE. The law of life within us is this consciousness. So — as we put off the carnal mind which is filled with the consciousness of limitation and death, and are renewed in our mind into the mind of Christ which is the consciousness of life, our spirit, soul, and body will become infused with not only the life of God, but also with the law of God's life — divine nature — and we will walk in righteousness rather than sin, and we will think thoughts of life instead of death.

As soon as we are regenerated, awakened to the life of God within, this law of life definitely causes us to have a certain consciousness. Our responsibility is to obey the sense of the law of life, thus thinking and acting out of the consciousness of life rather than death. In the beginning, the consciousness of this law of life may be comparatively weak and infrequent. Yet if we are willing to obey the first sense, though it be weak, the consciousness following will be stronger and stronger. We have to begin by submitting to this first weak consciousness and continue to submit. In this way the law of life can work within us unceasingly until it reaches every part of our whole being. Thus the life within us will be enabled to expand outward and increase in depth and height until corruption is swallowed up into life in every fiber of our being. The cry is ever, Thou mighty Christ, come forth in me! Few believe that the spiritual body can be put on here and now even as we stand upon our feet. Do you? Do you believe it is possible for you to be changed, transformed, metamorphosed in your whole man here in this life? "We shall not all sleep, but we SHALL ALL BE CHANGED, " saith the Lord. Since you cannot by any natural process perform this for yourself, are you willing and ready to come under the deep secret law of letting the mind of Christ cancel out the carnal mind, of letting the law of life nullify the law of sin and death in the secret chambers of your consciousness?

Just as the crab is altered in its whole form and shape, and sheds its old shells and takes on new ones, so we, in the process of our growth and spiritual development, pass from dealing to dealing, revelation to revelation,

consciousness to consciousness, experience to experience, victory to victory, putting off the old man with his deeds, putting on the new man which is renewed after the image of Him that created him, laying off this "body (consciousness) of death" in order to be "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." In like manner we put off the hard shells of former religious dogmas, forms, exercises, etc. The old religious outlook, the immature spiritual mentality, the limited understanding of yesterday is a shell which restricts our growth and prevents us from "going on to perfection." For this very reason the apostle exhorted the saints, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit" (**Heb. 6:13**). How we resist crawling out of those old shells! But these very changes are being mightily wrought out in us in this significant hour under the spiritual Sign of CANCER — THE CRAB!

URSA MINOR

The first Decan, or minor constellation, in the house of Cancer is URSA MINOR — THE LESSER BEAR. However, The Lesser Bear is not the ancient meaning of the constellation of URSA MINOR. No bear ever existed with such a long uplifted tail as is shown in modern atlases of the constellations! No traces of a bear are to be found in any of the ancient Zodiacs of Chaldea, Egypt, Persia or India. Rather, what we have is a SHEEPFOLD — the original meaning of Ursa Minor. It was the Greeks who changed it into a bear. The second Decan in the house of Cancer is URSA MAJOR and these two constellations refer to a little fold and a great fold. Far away in the depths of my spirit I receive the witness that the sons of God are the "little flock" while the church at large is the gathering together of all the people of God of all classes and companies, the "larger sheepfold" — URSA MAJOR.

The most important star in the whole heavens is also the major star in the constellation URSA MINOR, the company of the sons of God. It is called Al- Ruccaba which means "the turned" or "ridden on." It is known today as "Polaris" or the "Polar" or "North Star" and is the star upon which the entire heavens now seem to turn. This central star does not appear to revolve in a circle as does every other star. The North Star draws the attention of navigators and surveyors all over the northern hemisphere as a fixed point outside earth to establish direction and angle. This lustrous star can be none other than our Lord Jesus Christ who is Himself the brightest star in all the glorious constellation of God's sons, and the fixed point outside our earthiness from whence we derive our sense of direction and destiny in God. "And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all HE MIGHT HAVE THE PREMINENCE" (**Col. 1:18**). "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we ...speaking the truth in love, may grow up INTO HIM IN ALL THINGS, WHICH IS THE HEAD, EVEN CHRIST" (**Eph. 4:13-15**). "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that HE MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN" (**Rom. 8:29**). "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION perfect through sufferings" (**Heb. 2:9-10**).

It is interesting to note that Polaris has not always been the North Star. In ancient times (approx. 6,000 years ago) when the constellations were first mapped, the Pole Star was not Polaris, but, rather, it was the star Draconis, the main star in Draco, the constellation of the Dragon. This is a fact fraught with deep meaning. At that time the Dragon, that ancient Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, deceived mankind and brought them into the fall, precipitated their banishment from the Land of the Interface, from whence they were driven into the lowlands of the earth, and from that time the Dragon became the Pole Star which marked the central gate, or hinge, or governing point of earth's motion. So it seemed that even as they looked up into the heavens, all of the heavens rotated around the Dragon. And yet the Dragon was in for a surprise! With the gradual procession of the equinoxes, that has changed— the Dragon Star is now far away from the Pole, while the Lesser Sheepfold, with its super- star, Polaris, has come into its place and the whole heavens now revolve around, and the earth receives its direction from, the mighty Christ of God! Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

The Pole Star, our Lord Jesus Christ, has been revealed from heaven. We are coming ever nearer to the long-awaited reign of URSA MINOR — the manifested sons of God. The whole creation for six thousand years has ceaselessly groaned for the manifestation of the sons of God. That blessed manifestation has been long in coming, but it will surely come. The heavens declare it! God's immutable word proclaims it! And the prophets of God across the land and around the world in this significant hour bear blessed witness to the imminence of this wonderful event. Once in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer and die for the world, and when the fullness of time comes once more, nothing will hinder the manifestation of the sons of God. The Lord Himself will bring them forth in the manner so vividly described in Revelation, chapter twelve. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And she brought forth a manchild, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne" (Rev. 12:1-2,5).

It is my conviction that the key to this symbol of the birth of the manchild is to be found in the sixty- sixth chapter of Isaiah, which is the original source from which the figures are derived. Jerusalem is there represented as a woman in travail, who is delivered of a manchild (Isa. 66:7-8). "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." As the manchild, or the children of Zion, in the prophecy, signify the faithful in the land, or in Jerusalem, so the manchild born of the woman in Revelation denotes the faithful disciples of Christ who overcome all things to grow up into the fullness of Jesus Christ. As Israel brought forth the faithful remnant who was the salvation of the nation, so shall the church bring forth the sons of God to deliver not only their mother, but all creation. The true church is personified as the persecuted parent of a persecuted offspring; she gives birth to a manchild, but a manchild who is also a government. This manchild is destined to "rule the nations with a rod of iron, and is caught up unto God, and to His throne." These are statements which seem to many only applicable to the Son of God Himself; but they are in truth affirmed in the book of Revelation to be the privilege and reward of every elect saint called to sonship: "To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26-27). "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne" (Rev. 3:21).

Nothing is dearer to the heart of God than sonship. Father has on hand a work greater than His original creation — He is bringing many sons to glory. The way may be rugged and tedious; but its end is glory. And it is the way along which our Father is bringing us; for, since we believe on the Son, we have the right to call ourselves sons (Jn. 1:12). And there are many of us. Many sons, though only one Son. We do not go solitarily along the narrow way. We are but part of a multitude, a vast company. The glory of which we now speak, and into which Jesus has entered, is not for Him alone, but for us also. "Many sons" are to be His joint- heirs; reigning with Him on His throne, sharing His unsearchable riches and His everlasting reign.

The great Italian sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini, told of receiving a block of marble with one flaw. Because of this flaw, no artist would submit a design — except one. In the public square of Florence a fence was built around that piece of marble, and a little shack was erected for the artist. For two years the sculptor labored. Then on a certain day a vast multitude of the citizens of Florence assembled in the public square; the fence was torn down, and the shack was taken away. At this unveiling all of Florence beheld the result and marveled. Since then, Italy and all the world has marveled at Michelangelo's "David. I myself have stood in awe and amazement before the incredible beauty and majesty of the statue now in a Museum in Florence. In that block of marble was a statue; others did not see it, but Michelangelo did. And, precious friend of mine, in the lump of clay which is you, the almighty Father sees an image too — the image of Jesus Christ! And God is working unceasingly and tirelessly to form the image of His Son in you. No truth has come with more soul- gripping force and power to the elect of the Lord than the beautiful hope of sonship to God. Well indeed may we yield ourselves into the hands of heaven's skilled Sculptor that HE may form His Son in us, for the mind of omniscience has ordained that that sonship should be the HOPE OF ALL, CREATION.

No truer words have been penned by the hand of scribe or prophet than the following words from Douglas Wilson. "We do not know the full potential and power of what we have within us. Someone says, 'But I do know, and it is the Christ in me. Yet again I say that we do not know. We do not know the Christ. We know that

the seed of His life is planted within us, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS COMING FORTH. Some of us know a bit of sensation within us now and then, but we have yet to come to a full revelation of the Christ in us, THE HOPE OF GLORY. This is the birth that will yet take place and it will happen as surely as there is a God who is in all authority. When this birth takes place, WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO HIDE IT. For many days Mary could hide the fact that she was pregnant or with child, but there came a day WHEN IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO HIDE IT. It was possible for Egypt to hide for years the fact that it was pregnant with a growing child of God, but there came a day when Egypt could hide it no longer. We read in the book of Acts that when the time of the promise drew near, THE PEOPLE GREW AND MULTIPLIED IN EGYPT. When life began to come to the child, Egypt was uncomfortable, and the child was uncomfortable, and in consequence of this there was a great struggle until the birth was accomplished and Israel, the son, was delivered.

"Do not wonder at the struggle the world is passing through. Do not wonder about the struggle that is going on within your own self. God is preparing now to bring this great manchild to the birth. And we shall see it. Mary could have gone on for seven or eight months saying, 'I do not believe I am with child. I do not believe I am pregnant.' She could have declared herself with such words right up to the last minute, BUT THE BIRTH TOOK PLACE AS GOD HAD PLANNED. God's people all over the world can cry, 'We do not believe it. We do not believe it. It cannot be true.' BUT IT WILL COME TO PASS. We still have a sovereign God. Israel was God's son, born out of Egypt. Jesus was God's Son born out of Mary. This next man is the son of God born out of God Himself. We have seen that there are at least seven great revelations of God. The first was Adam. The second was the ark of Noah. The third was the tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness. The fourth was the temple of Solomon. The fifth was Jesus Christ. The sixth was the church and the seventh is the combination of God and man. This is by far the greatest. God and man as one creature, or THE NEW CREATION. This is what is even now coming to the birth. Jesus was God's pattern and we are all to be like the pattern that God first showed forth. We will be like the pattern in nature and character, but we will be given our own works to do.

"When this is brought forth, we will then see that God was keeping the world busy as He was preparing to bring to pass this birth that would bring forth a royal priesthood to administer God's Kingdom to creation. This is the man in God's image presented in the very first chapter of Genesis. This is the great corporate man possessing the life of God Himself. It will be the consternation of the orthodox preachers and teachers of the Bible. This is the thing to be seeking God about in this hour. This is no day in which to be promulgating doctrines and creeds and religious activities, or to carry on business as usual, for the time is upon us in which God will bring onto the stage of history HIS SONS" — end quote.

The realm of sonship is the realm of the interface — the shimmering Garden of Eden, the glorious City of God. It is the dimension where God and man become one, where heaven and earth overlap, where eternity and time are joined, where the invisible and the visible merge, where the spiritual and the physical are interfaced. The outer life of the sons of God — their external form and visible ministry — are likened to the trunk and branches of a tree. It is, so to speak, an upside-down tree whose visible exterior is seen in the earth realm, but whose invisible roots come from heaven. The Land of the Interface must be understood by the "ascending roots" of the sons of God!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 45
CANCER-THE CRAB [Cont'd]
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
“Studies in end-time Revelation”

PART FORTY-FIVE

THE GROANING CREATION
THE MINISTRY OF THE SONS OF GOD
ARGO – THE SHIP

The first Decan, or minor constellation, in the house of Cancer is URSA MINOR — THE LESSER BEAR. However, The Lesser Bear is not the ancient meaning of the constellation URSA MINOR. No bear ever existed with such a long uplifted tail as is shown in modern atlases of the constellations! No traces of a bear are to be found in the ancient Zodiacs of Chaldea, Egypt, Persia or India. Rather, what we have is a SHEEPFOLD — the original meaning of Ursa Minor. It was the Greeks who changed it into a bear. The second Decan in the house of Cancer is URSA MAJOR and these two constellations refer to a little fold and a great fold. In the depths of my spirit I receive the witness that the sons of God are the "little flock or fold," and the church at large is the "great sheepfold" (Ursa Major) composed of the people of God of all classes, companies and realms in God. We are drawing ever nearer to the long- awaited reign of URSA MINOR — the manifested sons of God. The whole creation for six thousand years has ceaselessly groaned for the manifestation of the sons of God. That blessed manifestation has been long in coming, but it will surely come. The heavens declare it! God's immutable Word proclaims it! And the prophets of God across the land and around the world in this significant hour bear blessed witness to the imminence of this wonderful event.

All who have ears to hear must hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. The Spirit is saying today that He is preparing a people, He is preparing a body, He is preparing sons who shall be conformed to the image of His Son, who shall be partakers of the divine nature, who shall have the mind of Christ, who shall be brought to glory and who then shall become the very express image of the Father. These shall become the very brightness of the Father's glory and the very express image of the Father's person. Even as the first Son, who went into the ground and died as a grain of wheat to produce other sons in His likeness, bearing His image — He was the brightness of the Father's glory and the very express image of the Father's person — and God sent Him to be the Saviour of the world. God is now preparing sons, God is now preparing a body for that first Son, we are the body of the first son, the body of Christ. We are the body of the Christ and in and through these sons, when all have grown up into His fullness, His salvation shall be manifested unto the ends of the earth. The Lord is saying unto His people in this day: **"For this cause have I raised thee up and sent thee to be a light unto the nations, and thou shalt be My salvation to the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:6; Acts 13:47).**

God is not talking to babies today. God is not talking to spiritual children today. Spiritual children have a little knowledge that puffs them up. Spiritual children fight among each other. "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas. Spiritual children pride themselves — who shall be the greatest. Spiritual children want to know which side of the throne they will be sitting on, "What am I going to get out of all this. Spiritual children like to play adult, imagining that they possess much more than they actually have and that they have attained a stature far beyond their experience. God is not sending children today, He is sending sons, whose only desire is that the Father may be glorified, that the pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand, that the will of the Father may be done. What happens to us has no bearing on the situation. Christ says, "As My Father has sent Me, in this total commitment to His will, so that I desire only to reveal the Father, so I am sending you, in a total commitment to the Father's will, that the Father may be revealed in the multitude of sons." And let me assure you, precious friend of mine, if through one son in the Garden of Eden who disobeyed, the whole creation came into bondage and death because of disobedience, and if through one Son in the Garden of Gethsemane and the Mount of

Calvary, God was able to provide a salvation through the shedding of His blood for all humanity, if God could bring such a revelation of Himself through one Son, a Son who was crucified and rejected, whom God raised again and set at His right hand — what will happen in these days, when through a multitude of sons who have

been identified with Him, buried with Him in His death, raised again in the likeness of His resurrection, ascended with Him, seated with Him in the heavenly places, glorified with His glory, anointed with His Spirit, invested with His wisdom, nature and power — what is going to happen in all creation when many sons are revealed in the glory of God?

The future the Father has planned for His sons is away beyond our ability to comprehend or even imagine. I am overwhelmed with awe when I think of what is ahead for us. **Rom. 8:18** reads, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Phillip's rendering of this is beautiful: "In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us." Oh! the glory of it. Who can express it! Who can articulate the wonder of it! Paul said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (**I Cor. 2:9**). I have heard preachers attempting to describe the future glories with the most eloquent language; but it didn't come anywhere near the truth. The human mind is incapable of conjuring up a picture of what the omniscient Father has prepared for His own. We can let our imagination run as wild as the wind and it will not come anywhere near comprehending the grandeur of what the Father has in mind.

Paul prayed for this understanding for us when he wrote, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling..." (**Eph. 1:17-18**). Can we know what this glorious hope is? Is there any way we can begin to comprehend it? Yes, but I doubt that we can begin to grasp the glory of it in its fulness; but the scripture says, "God reveals it to us by His Spirit." As we are able to receive some small measure of the wonder of our calling the Spirit will reveal it to us in a measure. As the Spirit begins to open the eyes of our understanding how different it is from what the preachers have been telling the people for centuries, of a glory land where all is eternal day with nothing to do but sit on a cloud, strum a harp, flit about in a white night gown, and own a mansion over the hilltop or a cabin in the corner of gloryland.

The manifestation of the sons of God has not yet taken place. There are the "normal" workings of God — as if anything God does could be considered "normal"! But there are the on- going, day to day activities of the Holy Spirit — all of them supernatural happenings, but all of them that which we are accustomed to experiencing. The ongoing salvation of souls, the continual manifestation of gifts and ministries in the church, the healing of sick, answers to prayer, meeting of needs, changing of lives, the progressive revelation of truth, the processings of God to conform us into the image of the Son. Then there are the "interventions" of God. The interventions of God are sudden happenings of God in which the course of human history is literally changed because God comes on the scene in an unexpected and accelerated fashion. The scriptures usually announce an intervention of God by using the word "suddenly."

In **Lk. 2:13**, of the birth of Jesus, we read, "...and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host..." The annunciation of the Incarnation was a divine intervention. Here's a great one: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (**Acts 2:14**). There in that upper room, united in their faith in Christ and in their holy mood of expectancy, these humble disciples received their marching orders and were empowered to carry them out. They had had a long period of teaching and preparation; they had spent many hours in prayer and holy waiting. The great day came for them on Pentecost, and they were ready to march. March they did, straight into the heart of the pagan world. The Holy Spirit guided them step by step. He told them where to go, what to say, what to do. He walked in them and worked with them, confirming their word with mighty signs, wonders, and miracles. Armed with the word of God, the love of God, and the power of God, they were unconquerable and turned the world upside down and changed the course of history!

Then there was poor Saul of Tarsus, who ran headlong into a blinding suddenly: "It came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great

light round about me" (Acts 22:6). In Mal. 3:1 we read of another intervention of God - one reserved for our day: "And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple..." This is a divine intervention — when God suddenly comes to His elect in a manner different from, and infinitely more powerful and glorious than His normal workings throughout the past age. We stand today in an hour not unlike the days preceding the day of Pentecost. The next great Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, is about to "fully come." The Christ is among us in a fresh manifestation, there is a new message going forth, a declaration concerning the next step and phase of the Kingdom of God, there is a unique dealing of God, and a manifestation of ministry. The greater glory to come, the manifested sons of God upon the heavenly Mount Zion, the City foursquare coming down from God out of heaven, the tabernacle of God among men, the new order for the new age, will be birthed suddenly and sovereignly BY GOD HIMSELF when the fullness of time has arrived. Let no man deceive you! The Feast of Tabernacles has not yet begun. The revelation of it has come, the hope has been birthed, the preparations are in progress. But all who currently proclaim the Feast of Tabernacles are still walking in the old order of Pentecost with their church meetings, praise service, preaching, gifts of the spirit, etc. A new revelation has come, but not a new order. The Lord of glory will suddenly appear in His greater temple in the manifestation of incorruptible life and nature and immortal power and glory — with no carnal efforts or soulish works to produce it. In the fullness of time God will send forth His sons and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed before the face of all nations, tongues, tribes and peoples— by a sudden, powerful, sovereign move of God!

THE GROANING CREATION

The jubilation, gladness and joy that will take place at this ultimate Feast of Tabernacles is beyond our wildest expectation. The Christ body, the sons of God, will experience great joy at their change from mortal to immortal. And the creation will also express the ecstasy that will be theirs' when they are released from 6,000 years of bondage and servitude. The songs of victory and glad tidings will be greater far than on that first glad occasion when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38:7). "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:20-22).

"The whole creation groaneth..." The word "groaneth" signifies to sigh, to pray, to be moved with inward feeling. Creation is depicted as a slave in bondage, groaning in its captivity, crying out to be free. Today the world is full of broken hearts, the hospitals are crowded, the cemeteries are being filled, and all nature is groaning under its bondage to corruption and death. You go down to the seaside and you can hear the sob of the waves, you go to the mountains and you can hear the low sigh of the wind in the tree tops. Can we not hear the sigh and groan of nature in the meow of the cat, in the yelp of the dog, in the shriek of the captive, in the bleat of the sheep, in the lowing of the cattle, in the roar of the lion, in the hiss of the serpent, in the cry of the vulture, in the hoot of the owl, in the wash of the sea, in the rush of the storm, in the tremor of the earthquake, and in the exclamation of pain?

"The bondage of corruption." The word "bondage" means more than being bound, it means servitude, slavery; and "corruption" signifies ruin, decay, death, to perish. The servitude of decay resulting in death conveys the meaning. The latter word is rendered "perish" in Col. 2:22; and the former comes from a word which means to serve as a slave and is rendered "serving" in Tit. 3:3. Creation is said to be longing with "earnest expectation." Those longings which are implanted by God will surely be met by Him. It is a fact in nature that God never puts an intuition within, without meeting it without. Therefore while creation is in bondage it is not in despair, for an earnest expectation throbs through it and makes it to be like one who is looking out with intense longing for someone who is expected. The Greek word rendered "expectation" is made up from apo- kara- dokia. Apo signifies from, or from afar. Kara means the head, and dokia means to wait for, or to look with intense expectation. This compound word at once suggests a striking figure, namely, one whose head is raised, and who is looking out on the distant horizon with intensity on the countenance, and longing in the eyes, as one expecting to receive something from another.

The whole creation is joining with us in unutterable groans and birth pangs, earnestly looking forward to its release with ours, out into full and free and eternal inheritance. EVERY CREATED THING is waiting, looking

anxiously and with a kind of universal travail — waiting for what? A great manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit? More missionaries? More Bibles and gospel tracts? Greater evangelistic crusades? Another televangelist? Or are they waiting for the combined efforts of all churches to get together in an all-out assault against sin, sickness, and evil? Are they travailing for another preacher, another ministry, another revival, or even another "sonship" convention? NO, NO, A THOUSAND TIMES NO! Creation is not waiting for any of these things to take place. The whole of creation, without exception, is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God which is that FULL SONSHIP, THE TRANSFORMATION OF OUR BODIES. It is full and complete and eternal victory over sin, sorrow, limitation, sickness and death. It is the life and glory of the Father fully revealed in a people.

Paul Mueller has written: "The principal purpose which is uppermost in the mind of the Father at this time is the growth and coming to maturity of His chosen remnant. Every other purpose under heaven is secondary to this greater purpose during this exceptional time. Therefore, it is essential that all who are members of this Christ body, the sons of God, should concentrate on their own spiritual maturity. Strive not to do the religious works of man, but seek rather for the fullness of Christ in your own heart and life. There is no other purpose under heaven that can equal this grand and holy purpose of the Father. Put away all the desires and appetites of the world and of the flesh, and seek only to please the Lord. And if you really care for the masses of the world who know not God and His wonderful grace and mercy, then you will seek for His fullness in your life. If you have really heard the groans of a creation that is suffering under the burden of sin and shame, you will cease all your religious activity, which is really only the works of the flesh, and will follow hard after the Lord. Let us seek to please God as Enoch did, and we will witness a glorious manifestation of His life that will set every captive free. God, in His great wisdom, has linked all of creation's needs and travails with the glorious transformation of the bodies of the sons of God into bodies like unto Christ's body. And it is quite possible that when this glorious transformation does occur, the stones, the trees, shrubs, and grass of the field, as well as all animal life, will lift their voices in praise to Him who has fulfilled His word and satisfied the inherent hope within every created thing" — end quote.

The story is told of a little boy who couldn't play outside because it was raining. His father, who was trying to take an afternoon nap on the sofa, became annoyed. "Go to the other room, son; Daddy wants to sleep. Find something in there to play with." "Like what?" "Anything," snapped the father. "There isn't anything, replied the lad. Grabbing the newspaper, the man tore out a page with a large map of the world printed on it. With the scissors he cut it into dozens of odd-shaped pieces like a puzzle. "There, see if you can put it together, and don't bother me till you're done." The father settled down on the sofa thinking his problem was solved, but ten minutes later there was a tug on his shirt. "You can't be done yet" But there on the floor was the neatly constructed world. "How did you do it?" he asked. "Easy," said his son. "A man's picture was on the back, and when I got the man together right, the world was right." Ah, yes — when God gets HIS MAN put together in the fullness of Christ all the problems of the world will simply fall into place! Let us not expend our energies trying to get the world straightened out and ordered aright in this hour. Let us give ourselves to apprehending that for which Jesus Christ has apprehended us — to grow up unto a PERFECT MAN, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Then the whole creation will fall into place. Let us not sell creation short!

If Alexander the Great could march his armies across the earth and conquer the whole civilized world before he was thirty-three years old; if Hitler could change the world for evil; if the Communists could march forth to enslave one-third of the world's population, weaving a hundred million into the vortex of communism each year — it is not presumptuous to believe that the sons of God, armed with the immortal life and glory of Christ, can turn all nations to God, deliver the whole creation from the tyranny of sin and death, and bring the Kingdom of God to pass under the whole heaven, from pole to pole and sea to sea in power and glory. As Ray Prinzing has written: "What glory, what wonder awaits the revelation of that true character and quality which HE is producing in His new creation species. Resurrection life shall burst forth, Babylon's shame and corruption shall be ended. Holiness is to be personified in a people. Religious racketeers will come to nought. Light will dissipate the darkness. No more will there be wells without water and falling stars that fade into the darkness. HIS SONS will be a revelation of such character and quality as to satisfy all that men have waited for" — end quote.

THE MINISTRY OF THE SONS OF GOD

We have not yet witnessed the magnitude of ministry that shall be revealed through the manifested sons of God. God is preparing His perfected and matured body, anointed with the seven-fold Spirit of God, and this enChristed company shall appear on the cosmic stage of history in these last days with ten thousand times more power than a Luther, a St. Patrick, a Wesley, a Whitefield, a Finney, a Moody, a Billy Sunday, or any of the revival showers of this century. God has moved deeply upon my heart in these days to prophesy to God's elect that there is coming a great and glorious MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST before the face of all nations and the whole earth. There will be a fresh revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's going to come in the midst of a people who truly love His appearing, and I see and hear signs that already He is beginning to come. We are standing on the threshold of a new and fresh and transcendental manifestation of our Lord. These things are burning like a furnace inside of me. I am being quickened by these things. I know God is on the move, and my deepest desire is to be a part of this manifestation that will usher in a new day for this sin-cursed planet. The Lord wants to reveal Himself in our midst in a new way and through us to creation.

The church order has been an order ordained of God for this age when the Lord's purpose was to bring men to Christ by "the foolishness of preaching" (I Cor. 1:21). We rejoiced to see many gathered together to hear the anointed messages of preaching and to be saved and blessed by that means. That has been God's method for this age of the formation of His body. But to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption GOD HAS A MORE PERFECT WAY! The old order of meetings, of an hour of singing and worship, of clapping and dancing, of the manifestation of the gifts, followed by the foolishness of preaching, will never deliver creation. This has all been good, and is still good for saints growing up into Christ. Let no man say that we are opposed to it! But it is not sonship ministry. The Pattern Son was never "meeting oriented." Meetings "happened" but they were not called, announced, planned or organized. Jesus never announced that He would be speaking or ministering in the temple, or at Peter's house, or in the upper room, or at the Coliseum. No date was set for a meeting on a certain day to commence at 7:30 P.M. There was no place and no time. All was entirely spontaneous. Jesus ministered at all times and in all places. He taught and healed in the streets. He ministered in the homes. He ministered in the places of business. He taught by the sea. He ministered in the fields. He spoke to multitudes in the mountains. He proclaimed the Word of the Kingdom in the temple. He ministered to one person alone. He ministered to ten people. He ministered to crowds of many thousands. It made no difference. Buildings, dates, and order of meeting were all completely irrelevant to His sonship ministry. He ministered wherever He was, day or night. He ministered to whomever the Father sent Him — one person or a thousand mattered not. He never congregated a people and set up a "meeting." He never organized a "crusade." He never rented an auditorium. He never advertised — He didn't need to! He never started His meetings with a "praise service." Peter never led the singing. James never made the announcements. John never received the collection. There was absolutely no "meeting" mentality in the life of the firstborn Son of God. God was God in Jesus at all times, in all places, to all people, in a perfectly natural expression. And, my beloved, JESUS IS THE PATTERN OF SONSHIP — not Paul, or Peter, or the apostles, or the Church Fathers.

When the sons of God are manifested, instead of announcing a meeting, rather than inviting people to a building, in place of opening the service with prayer and the singing of hymns and choruses, the transformed saints will appear amidst many on the streets, in the business establishments, in the restaurants, on speeding trains and flying airplanes, on the highways and in the byways, or in a shopping mall. The appearing will be supernatural, the spoken word will be with power and demonstration of the Spirit, the secrets of men's hearts will be revealed, and all needs met then and there. Imagine the wonders of the mighty moving of the Spirit of God as He is outpoured upon ALL FLESH! Instead of a church meeting or organized crusade, or a revival campaign, the Spirit of the Lord will move upon an entire body of people wherever they may be and the whole group will be converted without a "building," without a "song service," or any of the trappings of church-age "meetings." It may be difficult for some to understand, but that new manifestation of God in His sons will transcend a million times any glory we have witnessed in the past. God will do more in one minute by His Spirit than a man has been able to do in an entire lifetime of ministry. In times past the Lord worked and moved in the thirty and sixty-fold degree, but in the days before us He will move in a hundred-fold manifestation of power and glory. And all of this will be the result of our growth into sonship! It will be the manifestation of the fullness of His life within us. Multitudes will then find the peace, joy, deliverance and salvation of Christ, and will embrace the fullness of His Kingdom and dominion. When the sons are manifested, I believe the Spirit will then echo the words of Winston Churchill, "Never have so MANY owed so MUCH to so FEW!"

When God roars out of His Zion Company in the fullness of His life and glory and presence, the old drunk will rise up out of his drunken stupor and know that there is a God upon the throne. All will know, kings and presidents and prime ministers and members of congress and parliament and rich men and mighty men everywhere will be made to know that there is ONE to whom they all owe their allegiance. The church has not yet started on world evangelization. This has been the age of "calling out a people for His name, not saving the world. Now God is laying a ground work and processing, preparing, equipping and empowering His people for the coming invasion of all the world. He must do something unprecedented for us first so that we will be ready. We don't have all we need for this work, but God is quickening us for it. We still put too much dependence in money, methods, and materials, but God wants us to move out of that old order into His new realm of fullness. It is my deep conviction that the sonship ministry will be something like this. The word came to Phillip in Samaria to go down into the desert and meet the Ethiopian eunuch. Phillip didn't say, "Lord, I haven't got a helicopter, how can I get down there? Give me time to mail out a newsletter to my partners and raise the money for the trip. How am I going to find one man in all that desert, and anyway, Lord, I've got a big revival going here in Samaria." Phillip did not argue with the Lord at all, but obeyed the voice of the Spirit and went immediately. You see, he had no program to perpetuate. God transported him by the Spirit to the desert and pointed out the chariot and commanded, "Go join yourself to that chariot." Phillip had to run and outrun the horses to get into the chariot. When God was through with him, the Spirit took him up and he was "found" at a place called Azotus.

Do not doubt for one moment, precious friend of mine, that when God wants any of His sons in any place, He will put them there. God need pay no attention to iron or bamboo curtains, or boundaries between nations. He need not take into consideration immigration, consulates or custom houses. I am talking about the miracle working power of God to be manifested when the sons of God arise as King-Priests after the order of Melchizedek. We really know little of the Melchizedek order. We are not yet equipped, but God is working! We have yet to see a pure, unadulterated moving of the Spirit with everyone moving on the plane of incorruption, doing just what the Father wants them to do, but we are going to. It must come in this hour. Today, before a great evangelist gets to town, his advance agent comes and takes care of the advertising and makes all the preparations so that everyone knows that "Rev. So and So" is coming. The auditorium is rented, the crusade organized, they get all the altar workers lined up and teach them a few scriptures and train them for the BIG MEETING. But even Billy Graham has been quoted as saying that with all these vast crowds and all that goes with it, "We haven't yet had revival." Ah, this is one work the Holy Spirit desires to do — to be the ADVANCE AGENT for God's ministries! HE will prepare the way for us. No better means of advertising can be found than that of the Spirit. When God begins to spread everywhere what He is doing, whole cities and entire nations will know, and His fame will spread far and near and men will flock to receive from God. Not one dime of money will need be spent on buildings, stadiums, staff or advertising.

I emphasize again that the scripture declares that the Spirit shall be poured out upon ALL FLESH. In the cities, on the plains, in the jungle paths, in the deserts, in all the dwelling places of men the Spirit shall flow. In the time of which I speak God will not leave one place on the earth where the adversary can rally his forces. If God did not cover the seas with His Spirit, and move upon all flesh upon the seas, the adversary would have a place to rally his forces. If God did not pour His Spirit out and flood the desert, the adversary would have a place for recruiting his followers. But, thank God! the glory of the Lord shall cover the the earth as the waters cover the sea. God will have this time, this day to do His mysterious work in all the earth and all the kindreds of the earth shall turn unto the Lord. All nations and all peoples will come and bow down before Him. The saints of the Most High shall take the Kingdom (government) and possess the Kingdom and reign forever and ever. Hallelujah!

Again I would share blessed words of insight and revelation from the anointed pen of Paul Mueller. "Imagine ourselves freed from the need to scrounge for money to buy food, clothing, housing, and all our earthly needs. Imagine a people who are transported from one place to another by the Spirit without using any of man's inventions. Imagine a people whose minds receive and whose lives express fully the mind of Christ, unhindered and unfettered by earthly, carnal desires, ambitions and needs. Imagine a people who speak with one mind, the mind of Christ, and who minister only the things of the Spirit, and that which is of the Kingdom of God. Imagine a people who have graduated to the highest realm of spiritual activity, who function in the one-hundred-fold realm exclusively and always. This people will never revert to the flesh or the things of it. They

have been delivered of the carnal nature that binds us to the flesh realm. They will never do anything for personal gratification. Their sole objective is to do Father's will and promote the Kingdom of God. They never consider any other way but the way of the Spirit. They never minister from the thirty-fold or sixty-fold realms, for the power that has held them in bondage to the lower realms has been destroyed in their lives. They function from the Spirit realm of true Life, and with the authority of His Name. Think on these things, beloved, and you will then comprehend what your life will be like when God's purposes for this 'day' have been fulfilled. And all who are apprehended of the Father to rule and reign with Christ as sons will have no desire to cling to the old, dead church order of the past after thinking on these things with wisdom. Firstfruits must be set free first! Firstfruit saints shall be the first to make the transition, and we will do so in the victory of Christ as we surrender to the workings of His Spirit within. But we will not make this transition by clinging to the old church order of the past. The Lord is establishing a higher order which is the new order of the Kingdom of God. This is new wine! New wine can only be contained in new wine skins! Therefore, we repent of the old wine skin of the past order and surrender our lives to Him. Then He will make us into new wine skins, ready to receive the new wine of His Spirit to be poured out to the multitudes" — end quote.

There was a little boy who came home from Sunday School. His Mom said, "What did you learn in Sunday School today?" The little boy answered, "Oh, we learned about Moses." "Oh? And what did you learn about Moses?" He answered, "Mom, if I told you, you wouldn't believe me." "Well, try me," she responded. So the little boy began. "Well, Moses was in a terrible situation. He had all of these soldiers coming at him on chariots and he was pinned at the Red Sea. So he prayed to God, and suddenly, all these tractors came rolling along and workmen and steel crews appeared, and within half an hour, they built a bridge that spanned the Red Sea. Then Moses and the Israelites walked across it safely, to the other side." His mother looked suspiciously at him and said, "Son, I don't believe you learned that in Sunday School today." To which the little boy muttered, "Mom, if I told you the TRUTH, you really wouldn't believe it!" And I do not hesitate to say that when we speak the truth of the glory and power of manifested sonship it is impossible for the carnal mind to comprehend it or the religious mind to accept it. Because men cannot see or believe the purposes of God in sonship, or the power and triumph of the Kingdom of God, they have spun fanciful and ridiculous tales of a rapture for the saints and eternal damnation for the billions of earth's inhabitants. But be it known unto all who read these lines that the impact Jesus made on the world of His day and the environment in which He lived sent such shock waves throughout the universe that twenty centuries later the effects and effectiveness of His ministry is still felt by multitudes throughout the world. If only one Son of God can so impact society and change the course of history — how stupendous would be the impact of 144,000 in His likeness! Yes, it shall be, praise His name!

Many years ago an aged prophet of God shared the vision God gave him of this ministry. "In that vision which lasted all night, the most wonderful vision I ever had, in which I saw the sons of God in action all over the world, ministering to the multitudes in every tongue and nation, to all people, I saw both men and women ministering. I saw them standing in mid air, in the midst of a busy intersection of a large city, with all traffic stopped, and thousands of people seeing them with their eyes, and hearing them with their ears, regardless of distance, and without the aid of mechanical devices. I saw them speaking to a people of one language, and in a moment's time I saw them transported to another people of another language, speaking to them in their own language, having power over all mechanical devices, so that they could cause everything to cease, and every eye to be fixed upon them, until their message had been delivered. I saw them walk upon the water; I saw the terror in the faces of the wicked, at the sound of their voices. I saw the professing Christians fall down in true repentance, calling out for mercy, and I saw them being genuinely converted. I saw the skeptics being convinced, and the blasphemy of the wicked, as they would rail and mock, only to be struck dumb or blind at just a word from the manifested sons and daughters of God.

"The vision lasted all night, as in my spirit I was living in that time when God will be manifested in His sons and daughters, while my body was back there in a bed alongside my wife. Sometimes the scenes would make me weep, I would sob, my body shaking with pain and agony; then another scene would cause me to laugh with holy laughter. I'll never forget the vision of the young girl (the daughters of God) who spoke with the voice of many waters. Human language could never describe the quality of her voice. All I can say is, it was so filled with love and compassion, it would break the hardest stone, and at her command every infirmity, every sickness was healed. Every one was made perfectly whole, the blind, the lame, and even those who had been

lunatic from birth. Sister Britain (this was a cousin of Brother Bill Britton) got no sleep that night, and finally, when it was near daylight, she asked me why I didn't get up and write it. I did try, but could not hold my hands on the key-board of the typewriter. Some unseen force held them aloft over my head. I walked the floor and wept, and begged the Lord to let me write some of the visions I had seen. Finally He did, and I wrote just a very few of the visions I had seen, for a large book could not contain them all.

"What did it do for me? That vision set my soul aflame! Should I publish what I had written? What would people think of me if I did? Surely they would think me mad! I was just getting started in the writing and publishing ministry, and surely that one message would cause all men to lose confidence in me! Those were my thoughts. At last, with tears streaming, I said, 'I'm going to publish it, regardless of the cost. I know it's true! I know it is going to come to pass, and if all men turn against me for it, I'm going to publish it anyway!' And so we did. We waited anxiously to hear the reaction of the people. To our surprise, it thrilled their hearts. THEY BELIEVED IT! They still believe it! Immediately we were besieged with orders for many copies of it to pass out to others. Our limited production facilities could not handle it, so God gave us new, bigger equipment" — end quote.

I am deeply impressed to share here the testimony of Sis. Lura Grubb, a friend of ours from many years ago — one of the most remarkable testimonies I have known in my lifetime. The following is transcribed from a message she delivered to a Convention some years ago, along with other materials. "I believe that my restoration to life in 1932, was a sign of a sort of LIFE into which God plans to bring His sons for manifestation in the end time. I was a Baptist girl when God healed me and raised me from the dead. After three years of serious health crises I was seized with horrible convulsions which continued for six days. Again my family doctor consulted with the surgeon from Marks, Mississippi. His verdict was grave this time as before. There was no hope for complete recovery. There was little possibility of sustained life. He said that I was in too serious a condition to be removed to the hospital, that I would not live to get five miles. I was to remain where I was. And if I should recover enough to undergo an operation, he would perform it, and perhaps relieve the condition partially.

"The family physician returned early the following morning. He was not sure that he would find me alive. He found me in the continuous convulsions and unconscious, just as I had been for the past six days. Again he examined my uncontrollable body. With a note of hesitancy in his voice, he said to mother, 'Mrs. White, I hate to have to tell you this, but Lura is dying now. We have done all we know to do. I will call in any specialist you suggest, but it will do no good. We have done all that medical science has to offer in a case like this. Lura is dying, and if you have any messages to send to relatives, you should send them immediately. These convulsions will continue until she passes away. She may die in the next one, but she might last until midnight. But she is dying and cannot pull through the night. With your consent, I can inject a fatal sedative into her vein which will stop the convulsions, and she will die a peaceful death. If not, she will continue to have convulsions, and die in just as pathetic a condition as she is in at present.'

"Mother consented for the injection to be given. Her compassion could not endure the thoughts of my dying in such a pitiful state. The doctor prepared the medicine and administered it to my body. It was too late. I was too far gone already. My circulation was so poor by that time, that it circulated no further around the injection than a spot the size of a quarter. The doctor shook his head, and told mother to make me as comfortable as possible. Mother looked up to that tall man of medical skill, and with a spark of faith still flickering in her soul, said, 'But doctor, can't God?' That fearful tone called forth all the sympathy within the kindly soul of that good man. He looked her straight in the eye, and encouraged, 'If anything is done now, it will be from a Higher Power than medical science.'

"That evening, the godly, white-haired, Holiness Baptist evangelist came to the house. He had been coming to see me and to encourage mother every day. This was the last day of the revival at the church, but not in mother's heart. That last visit was a lighthouse in a storm for my mother who had prayed and fasted without sleep nor rest for six days and nights. She remained close beside my bed those six days and nights of convulsions. That day he told mother that he had had a revelation while in prayer that morning, and that God showed him that her daughter would live and 'be a shining light for Jesus.' The veil of sorrow enshrouding her despairing soul was parted by that message of hope. Her faith revived, and she took another tenacious hold upon God and fortified herself against the doubting taunts of Satan. The convulsions continued until midnight

— the crisis hour, beyond which the doctor predicted that I could not live. Everyone was tense as thirteen strong men and women held my convulsive form on the bed and waited for the final hour to strike and the curtain to fall.

"The fatal hour struck — it was midnight. I became conscious for the first time in six days and nights. But the consciousness was not earthly. I was yet unaware of the things transpiring about my bed in the darkened room. I had become fully conscious of the heavenly. I beheld a great shaft of light, more brilliant than the noonday sun, stream to me directly from heaven. A blinding radiance, very large in diameter, circumscribed the beam of glittering glory which terminated at my bed. The bed seemed afire with its brightness. I will not recount all my experiences during the time I was dead, in which I saw the Lord Jesus and was commissioned to come back to earth because the Lord had a work for me to do. Down — down — down I drifted until I reached the small frame farmhouse in which lay my lifeless physical form. Then, suddenly, the corpse sat up — the miracle took place! The miracle was not the result of any personal knowledge I had of healing, to say nothing of being raised from the dead. My humble, farm- woman, mother was a Methodist, that fasted six days and nights and prayed for my healing, and finally my resurrection from the dead. I was pronounced dead, and preparations for my funeral were already underway. My mother would not submit to death, even as she stared it in the face of her dead daughter.

"Sometimes I think that we Kingdom people do an injustice to our testimony by so readily submitting to death. We do not contend for the faith of the Son of God. I believe that there is a vast area that we are failing to march into and possess, of the Kingdom provisions. We proclaim Kingdom, but God expects us to have more than revelation. We are called upon to go beyond revelation to manifestation. We are tempted to dwell on a platform of revelation. Revelation is wonderful, but it will never amount to much until it is translated into manifestation. The manifestation of the sons of God is what groaning creation is waiting for, and not just revelation of some mystic character. Some have thought it to be some special revelation for which groaning creation is waiting, but this is not the case. They wait for a manifestation. They want deliverance from their bondage to corruption. We also groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of our bodies.

"Now this redemption of the body is interesting. Before we ever heard that there be a Holy Ghost, my mother prayed for my restoration to life in 1932 in Mississippi. Before she committed me to God like Abraham did Isaac, God spoke to her, 'Will you give her to Me if I restore her to life?' When He got her commitment, He said to her, 'Get up, I have heard your prayer. See what I have done.' When He instructed her to come to my room and look again into my cold, dead face, she obeyed in faith, believing, without any hesitation. She believed God. I tell you, our faith must go beyond what we are expressing today. She had to go in obedience to the Word of God, and look at me with no life in me, until she saw me begin to breathe and open my eyes. That obedience was her faith in action. For twelve days and nights after God raised me from the dead, I walked in a resurrected body. It was not a glorified body. It was still mortal, not glorified, but resurrected. When you begin to talk about these resurrections and these proofs of Life, people immediately say that we are talking about glorification. No. The Spirit by the pen of Paul in Romans 8 tells us that, 'If that same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He shall also make alive your mortal body' - not glorified body. We shall not need quickening when we receive our body of glory like unto His glorious body. A resurrected body and a glorified body are two different things.

"The same power which raised Jesus from the dead raised me from the dead. I was also miraculously healed of multiple afflictions instantly and restored to life after the spirit departed my body. We really do not need long, drawn out healing services. We just need God to come on the scene. As I looked into the face of Jesus, I was instantly healed. I never became hungry, sleepy or tired for twelve days and nights after I was healed and restored to life. When my feet touched the floor, a supernatural phenomenon occurred. I felt myself being raised to my tiptoes, and my arms being raised heavenward. The power of God enveloped my body, and I felt so light I hardly had my feet on the floor. Many times during the twelve days and nights that followed, I would unconsciously grab the furniture to hold myself down to the floor. I can describe it as none other than the resurrection power of God — the power that restored my spirit to the body — the power that raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. When my hands were down, it was by force. My feet would rest flat on the floor only by force. My natural position those days was on tiptoes and hands upraised. When I forced myself to an arms-down, flat-footed position, I was unable to take a step. This supernatural sign convinced the newspaper

photographers and reporters. This was at the conclusion of three years of illness and six days of convulsions and lockjaw. After the miracle, I ministered to thousands of people who came from all over the country, having seen the news story in all the major press service papers in August of 1932. It reached as far as the Shanghai, China newspapers. One hundred fifty three of the largest city newspapers of America carried a full page story in the Sunday Magazine Section of this miracle God performed in Mississippi.

"The thing that is so wonderful to me is the fact that God performed this miracle. We must point the groaning creation to God. He is the miracle worker. In all these years I have enjoyed life and strength from God to preach the Gospel of Divine Life to forty-nine nations. During those twelve days and nights I saw all types of healing and miracles. I did not know how to pray for the sick. As the Spirit led me to touch sick ones who were brought, God performed the miracles, not I. God wants to show forth His glory and ability. God is not looking for people who have excessive knowledge and understand mystical truths. He is looking for a people who are committed that He can fill with Himself and manifest Himself through to the world. He is looking for people who will yield, people who will obey Him, a people who have faith and will allow Him to just flow through them. The vessel is not the important thing. It is God who must perform His work and express His power. Only through committed vessels can this be done. God chose a cotton picking girl in Mississippi, who had no formal knowledge and education to perform this miracle through. He is doing what He will in this hour and manifesting His glory through 'the base things of the world' as the apostle Paul declared. 'Not many mighty, not many noble,' respond. God can take nobodies who are submitted to His will and reveal Himself through them to the world. People of low degree are going to make up His Joel's Army Company in this endtime hour.

"During those twelve days and nights, I would sense my spirit leaving my body, and being present in other locations. For example, I found myself in one car of skeptics coming to the farm house where I was ministering to the sick. I heard their conversations. When the auto drove up some time later, I informed them of what they discussed on the way. They recognized that it was a phenomenon of God. They were made believers by the supernatural manifestation of God in the event. Many times I was transferred out of my body while I stood praying for the sick and was conscious of that which was transpiring many miles away. Many were made believers by this miracle manifestation.

"God is going to have a manifestation of Himself in this endtime. I can take no credit for having been raised from the dead. But I do expect to be 'alive and remaining' and see it all through to the climax of this church age. The Bible says that it is appointed unto man once to die — I have met my appointment and do not expect to set another appointment with death. Some may mark me as heretic, fanatic, or off-brand doctrinally. But it is still true. From the day I was raised from the dead, I started declaring the generation that would never have to die to be the one in which we are now living. I believe that my generation is being offered this victory over death. And I believe I happen to be one of the 'living and remaining' ones unto the coming of the Lord. Death holds no fear for me. But God is ordaining this thing for this generation. We will never be able to convince mankind just by preaching. We will have to begin demonstrating the presence of the supernatural God in manifestation. It must take the Spirit of God to draw men unto Him. The scripture declares that 'it is unto Shiloh (Christ) that the gathering of the people shall be.' It was not an unlearned, unimportant, cotton picking girl unto whom was the gathering of the people in 1932. It was unto GOD who performed the miracle in this life which could take no credit for it.

"I believe the full manifestation of God into earth is closer than we can believe. We know that God is going to have a company in which to make this revelation of Himself. He did so with me, one who knew nothing about miracles. He is going to show that the power is of God and not of man. It is unto Christ that the Father purposes to draw mankind. Although I knew nothing about the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit, God manifested each one of them through me at that time. It was not my doing. Our heavenly Father is bringing a company of believers to the place of commitment to Himself that He can manifest Himself in a way in which no man will receive the glory. It must be a company of sons who are dead to self, filled with Christ, manifesting God life and God power only. It must be a manifestation of God in His many-membered body of sons. God is going to begin to speak through his sons. And when the dead hear the voice of the Son through the sons they shall live! That is the thing that will bring the dead out of their graves. That is the thing that will loose the captives. The son company will not consist of just one select group of believers. No preacher or church has a corner on God! It will be the qualified ones from all of God's groups of believers. The dead shall

hear the voice of God through His sons, and they shall live. This must be the company who will submit to God, step out in faith and believe what God has promised. We have preached this for many years. But unless we start manifesting it, we shall not participate in it. We have to believe that God is ready to do it, and it does not depend upon our abilities. It depends on Him. It is time for His sons to rise up and possess their possessions" — end quote.

ARGO - THE SHIP

The third and final Decan, or minor constellation, in the house of Cancer is ARGO. Argo presents the figure of a large ship. Argo means The Ship. Here we have a picture of pilgrims safe at last in harbor. In this ship, the sails are rolled up. It is not a ship in the midst of a journey, but it is a ship which has completed its journey and is now at rest in a safe harbor. Ah — Christ is our ship! And the Father is our safe harbor at home! We are brought at the end into that peaceful harbor and haven of rest, by the glory and power of our great Redeemer and Captain, Jesus Christ. **"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (Jn. 14:6).** All we are mariners, spiritual voyagers. Each and every son of God is a navigator on the sea of life. And the voyage upon which we all embarked had its origin in God. When we came into this world of sin and death we were thrust out upon a tempestuous sea, there to maneuver our tiny bark to another shore. Winds, tides, and currents swept us out to sea, and carried us on. We were lost and hopeless until we discovered the Captain of our bark. We eventually must land on that other shore. There is no alternative. Day by day we are being swept on, ever nearer to journey's end. There is one safe and commodious harbor. How happy is the man who knows that Christ is his ship, and the bosom of the Father is the harbor! Jesus came into the world that through death and resurrection He might bring us to God (I Pet. 3:18). It is in Him that we have access to the Father.

Paul's favorite expression for man's union with Christ is surely the phrase "in Christ." One hundred and sixty-four times it appears in Paul's writings. He creates a symphony of language out of it. The Lord Jesus in the last night with His disciples used this word more than once. "In that day" — when the Spirit had been poured out — "ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me." And then follows "Abide in Me; he that abideth in Me beareth much fruit." "If ye abide in Me, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." But the child of God cannot appropriate these promises unless he first prayerfully accepts the word: in Christ. Paul expresses the same thought in Romans. "We are buried with Christ." "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." And in Ephesians: "God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ; hath chosen us in Him; hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in Him we have redemption." And in Colossians: "In Him dwelleth all the fullness; we are perfect in Christ Jesus; Walk ye in Him; Ye are complete in Him."

Precious phrase! sweeter than honey to our soul, we would adore the Holy Spirit for revealing such a wonder to those elect ones called to sonship. The word translated "complete" is used by Demosthenes in describing a ship fully manned — and truly our ship is well manned by her Captain who Himself steers the vessel, and brings all safe to their desired haven. His glorious life is the dwelling place of all sufficiency for in Him dwelleth all the fullness.

While Christ is our ship bringing us to God, Argo pictures a ship in which the sails are rolled up. It is not a ship in the midst of a journey, but it is a ship which has completed its journey and is now at rest in a safe harbor. The pilgrims are safe at last in the harbor. At home in the bosom of the Father! Returned from whence we came! But returned with what wisdom and riches and glory accrued by experience along the way! As Carl Schwing has written: "So lovely is the place of our dwelling. It is high and holy... it is beyond compare. It far exceeds the dreamings of heaven. It is unknown, unseen and untouched by all that is less than spirit. Spirit has no depths, nor heights... no time or limitations. The universe is but a path that leads to it... even infinity is but its threshold. This is the place where all things were planned. It is the substance of all matter, the source of fire and light... it is the birthplace of love and wisdom... it is the heart of the Eternal One. Here, in the 'secret chamber' of His Being, is our dwelling place... it is here that He shares the secrets, the mysteries and the purposes of the ages. It is here that we partake of His mind, His abilities and His attributes: and it is here we become the dwelling place of all the creations and all the ages yet to come. Should it seem strange that like Father, like sons? Can religion forbid God to give us the mind that was in Christ Jesus? Can the clutter and chatter of a dead order keep us from a life in the Spirit? The Spirit is showing us things to come... do not cling

to things that are past. God is not going to 'revive' a lifeless Christianity. 'Come out of her My people' is a call of the past... the message of 'Israel' only wearies the spirit. The Father makes all things new; a new age, a new order and a new gospel. The seed of the Church, the seed of Israel and the seed of the Gospel of the Ages is in the SONS... and, as you know, the Sons are in Christ Jesus.

"I do not write of a vision or a dream, I write of that which our spirits have moaned for, have longed for, sensed, and now reach out for. I do not write of someday, rather of our place in Him today. I do not write of somewhere... it is not a place far off... it is all around us, brothers. Seek it and you will find it... knock and it will open to you... enter and you will possess it! In this holy place all of Adam's race and all of God's creation will hear these purifying words of love and grace: 'Be ye reconciled to God.' It is in this holy place that death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire which burns forever, ages without end, within the depths of our Father's glory. It is in this holy place that the sons shall return all things to their Rightful Owner; and it is in this holy place that the Age of Fullness shall begin. Praise the Lord!

"This is truly the glorious Sunrise of a New Day. All that dwell in the heavenlies behold the glory of the Morning Son as He shines from the faces of His younger brothers. Even now His transforming rays burn deep within us, awakening the 'new creature' and calling him forth to 'Resurrection Life'. One by one He calls us, each in his order, each in his time. If we be in a grave, in the flesh or in a steeple-house, means little... when the voice of the Living God is heard, our spirits rise and 'go out to meet Him.' Things visible mean less than nothing. Death shall not hold its prey... and the stronghold of Babylon, like a great rock, is cast into the sea of oblivion. There are regions far beyond the knowledge of man, even beyond the knowledge of sons. Regions reserved by the Father for the dawning of an Infinite Age... regions that exist on the other side of the Great White Throne... regions to be given to the Lamb and His Bride... an Eden for the Spirit's race... sons and daughters born of God's Christ..." — end quote.

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 46

LEO—THE LION

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
“Studies in end-time Revelation”

PART FORTY-SIX

LEO—THE LION
THE KING
KINGS AND PRIESTS

We come now to the twelfth and final Sign in our study of the Zodiac — God's Bible in the sky. The last Sign is LEO — THE LION. Kenneth Fleming has well said in his book GOD'S VOICE IN THE STARS: "The great drama of the universe started with the sign of Virgo, and in Leo we reach the last scene of the last act. In the Zodiac we have come full circle, for the tail of the Lion touches the head of Virgo, the correct place to start and end in the interpretation of the twelve signs. This fact was, we believe, the chief purpose of the great Sphinx of Egypt, which was the head of a woman and the tail of a lion. We have pointed out previously that the beginning point of prophecy in the first book of the Bible concerns the woman and her Seed, which would destroy the seed of the serpent. The sign of Virgo clearly showed this. The ending point in Biblical prophecy, in the last book of Scripture, describes the Seed of the woman as **'the Lion of the tribe of Judah...who has prevailed'** (Rev. 5:5). Thus the start and finish of the Zodiac coincide with the start and finish of the prophetic story of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Word of God" — end quote.

How glorious it is to see that in the night sky this picture is portrayed for all the world to see — the old, old story which is ever new; that story which is wondrously portrayed, not only in the Zodiacal figures and in their names, but even in the intricacies of the detailed names of all the ancient stars in these constellations. These are pictures that go back beyond the recorded history of men to the very God who flung the stars from His fingertips... who sprinkled them across the sky... who numbered and named them all... and who painted for us in the galleries of the dome of the heavens, the glorious plan of God for the ages. How wondrous He is! I am well aware that when we embarked on this unknown journey through the Zodiac almost four years ago, many were skeptical of any involvement with the Signs of the heavens — for all they had heard of them were the perversions of the carnal mind and pagan religion, namely, astrology. I do not hesitate to tell you that the vast majority of astrologers and those who adhere to astrology have changed the truth of God into a lie and worship and serve the creation more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Rom. 1:25). The carnal mind is the great deceiver who has deceived people into trusting in the Sign rather than the thing God has signified by the Sign — the revelation of Jesus Christ. But after examining all the Signs under the searchlight of the scriptures and divine wisdom, can there be any doubt in our minds but that God intended the constellations to bear a message?

As you examine the drawings of the ancient star charts, and observe how each and every scene corresponds precisely with all the major themes of scripture and God's great plan of the ages, can you doubt that the original purpose was to proclaim the ultimate triumph of the Son of God in the conflict of the ages? As you read the ancient names of the stars, beginning with Virgo, the Virgin, and learn of "the Seed" and "the Branch" revealed in these names, and compare scripture with scripture where these names are found, are you not convinced that the very names of the stars in the Signs of the Zodiac preach the Gospel? As you behold the strong man restraining the serpent while crushing the perverse scorpion, are you not transported right into the heart of God's wonderful plan of redemption? Either these remarkable Signs from antiquity were designed by the wisdom and purpose of our great Creator and Redeemer — or they are the most colossal and astounding coincidence in the universe! Surely the child of God must stand in awe before the sovereign and almighty Father who has declared the history of creation and redemption in the stars along the path of the sun before He ever placed man upon this planet! Ours is not a Creator who has had to solve His problems with man or satan moment by moment, as though He were caught by surprise. No! Ours is a God who is omniscient and omnipotent and who reigneth, despite worldly evidences to the contrary. He planned it all, ordained it all, and

has declared the end from the beginning, and ordered it so, and nowhere in all the reaches of infinity is this more beautifully illustrated than in the SIGNS OF THE HEAVENS!

LEO - THE LION

The name of this constellation, Leo, The Lion, means virtually the same, whether you look at it in Arabic, Hebrew, Coptic, or Syriac. It means He that rends, that tears asunder. The lion is a noble, majestic and kingly creature, strong and courageous, fearing nothing, and so fierce and powerful that no other animal can stand before him. Mankind from the dawn of history was impressed by what he saw and knew of this awesome and terrible beast and so awarded it the title of "king of beasts." Dr. Seiss has described the lion: "It scarcely has an equal in physical strength, which is further combined with extraordinary quickness and agility. Ordained to feed on flesh, it is fitted for the work of capture and destruction, and is supplied with the most powerful physical machinery conceivable for the purpose. It can easily kill and drag away a buffalo, and it can crush the skull of a horse or break the backbone of an ox with one stroke of its paw. Its claws can cut four inches in depth at a single grasp. It has great ivory teeth capable of crunching a bullock's bones. The fall of its fore paw in striking is estimated to be equal to twenty-five pounds in weight, whilst it is able to handle itself with all the nimbleness of a cat, to whose family the lion belongs. The possession of such powers, with its instincts for blood, renders this animal wonderfully daring, bold, and self-confident, and the great terror of men and beasts in the vicinity of its haunts. When the lion is assailed and thoroughly aroused, and lifts himself up in proud contemplation of his foes, though banded in troops around him, his composed, majestic, and defiant mien is described as noble and magnificent beyond conception; whilst the terribleness of his growl and the thunder of his roar contribute to make the picture almost superhumanly impressive" — end quote.

And this is the image we are called to contemplate in John's vision describing the character and majesty of Christ in connection with the loosing of the seals of the scroll and the clearing of our earth from all enemies and usurpers: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev. 5:5). It is the king of beasts in the jungle who typically represents the King of kings in His triumph over all things. The book of Revelation contains the revelation of the majestic inheritance of God, which seemed to have been forfeited by the sin of man forever and which is sealed up and withheld from man throughout the ages. Stacy Wood has said of this: "The word 'sealed' in this passage is from a Greek word that in one of its meanings corresponds to our English word 'foreclosure.' Thus, the phrase 'sealed with seven seals' may be rendered 'foreclosed with seven insignias.' This book was bought, then sealed up or foreclosed upon, and set up on a shelf. It is my conviction that this book is us — mankind. We were foreclosed on by our forefather — Adam. Adam sold humanity for nothing. He brought us to naught. We were 'sealed up,' living without the knowledge of, or relationship to, the God who visits us in the Garden. Being sealed, John looks and wonders that there is no one in heaven or earth that can break the foreclosure — no one who can break the seals and look into the book. The prophet begins to weep. He is sad that no one can get into the reality of what life is. The next scene reveals an angel, a messenger, a word out of the heavens that addresses the prophet John, proclaiming that there is One. Weep no more! There is a Lamb in the midst of the throne, and this Lamb is a Lion, and HE is worthy to break the seals, HE is worthy to reverse the foreclosure, HE is worthy to redeem or buy back that which was foreclosed upon, HE is worthy to open the book, HE is worthy to pierce into and reveal the true value of man's life! The seven seals represent the fullness of the foreclosure upon us, and God is breaking every area of this foreclosure upon our lives. He is dealing either with that which is negative in our life that has prevented us from seeing the Christ, or the Christ being seen in us — Or He is dealing and accentuating the positive of the Christ-life within that we may become free to follow, express and reveal HIM" — end quote.

The One who is able to accomplish so mighty a work within us is the LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. And the Lion of the tribe of Judah is CHRIST THE KING! When the dying Jacob blessed his sons, he prophesied to his son Judah that he would be a lion, whom his brethren should praise, whose hand should be in the neck of his enemies, and before whom his brethren should bow down (Gen. 49:88). What he spoke to Judah indicated the warlike and victorious energy which was afterward demonstrated in that tribe. In Judah's illustrious descendant, David, the lion — nature was strikingly exhibited, and his boast in the Lord was, "I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again until they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. For Thou hast girded me with strength unto the

battle: Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me. I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets" (Ps. 18:37-42). While David penned these inspired words out of his own experience, they are also a messianic prophecy looking forward to a still mightier King "who sprang out of Judah" as David's lineal descendant and heir, who at once is David's Lord and David's son, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Root and the offspring of David. The Lion is a Lamb — for He conquers not by brute force but by the power of His poured out life. The wonder of it is that THIS LION- LAMB IS WITHIN US! The worthy One is within! When you begin laying hold upon the worthy One within you, the One within you begins unsealing the book within. Out of that unsealing comes the triumph of the Christ in every dimension of our lives. He makes war against every false and fleshly thing that there might be the revelation of Jesus Christ in us. There will be the expression of what is true in us (the Christ within) coming forth into manifestation in our outer realm. It is not a nature that ignores the corruption of our outer man — it is a nature that is capable of dealing with the corruption of that outer man that the Spirit be revealed. Oh that our eyes might be opened to behold HIM! HE is the most powerful, terrible, courageous, bold, daring, self-confident, composed and majestic Lion of all! HE is worthy to open the book, to fulfill in Himself all the requirements, and now to fulfill IN US all the reality of our redemption. In absolute power and strength He shall reign until every enemy in us is destroyed and the Christ is fully and forever formed in us, formed from the inner to the outer — the image of God.

THE KING

We first meet Jesus the Saviour as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. But at length He takes on the character of the Lion within us to tear away the flesh of our carnal nature and crush every bone of our resistance to the rule of His Kingdom of righteousness. The Lamb is our Saviour — the Lion is our King! Kingship is the highest, and most respected and powerful position in a kingdom. In ancient times the king was supreme and his word was law. Life and death were in the words of a king. Kings are not in great demand these days. In most of our western countries, kings no longer rule. We've fought for democracy — government of the people, by the people, and for the people, as Abraham Lincoln said. Yet we're not really free or truly happy. Now we talk of creeping socialism. The nasty kings of the past have turned into the nasty "big governments" of today. Thus it is almost surprising when we hear the Bible say that true joy and blessing is found, not in democracy, but with a King in charge!

The kings have had their day, it is said, but there is one King whose day is shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. "Behold, thy King cometh," the Old Testament declares (Zech. 9:9). Time and again in the Word of God we find prophecies of a glorious and universal Kingdom ruled by a great and eternal King. So well was this understood in the time of Christ that even John the Baptist, after introducing our Lord to His public ministry, asked, "Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?" (Lk. 7:19). The promised King did appear, but His own people wouldn't receive Him. One of the most profound and awe-inspiring statements of all scripture was penned by the apostle John: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" (Jn. 1:11-12). Isaiah paints a picture of people from all over the world coming together like tidal waves of water. And where are they flowing? Right up to heaven and the throne of the Lord God. "Teach us your ways! Give us your laws! Reign over us!" they cry. These people have learned that when they rule their own lives, they end up with a world full of hatred, violence, sin, perversion, strife and death. Only when they get off their little thrones and let the great King of the universe reign is there peace and joy and righteousness.

As we now move out of the "church age" on into the "kingdom age" God must purge, purify, and update our conversation. Vocabulary is perhaps the most odious garbage we bring with us from the old order into the new. We have all obtained along the way of our walk in God a religious vocabulary. As God moves us from glory to glory and realm to realm we find again and again in our speech antiquated words and terms that were never godly, spiritual, or biblical in the first place. Ever since we have awakened to come out of religious Babylon we have labored under false concepts of God and a phony vocabulary by which we continue to speak the language of Babylon. But, praise God, by the spirit of wisdom and revelation God is giving us a whole new terminology that corresponds to the truth of His Kingdom and the reality of His Life in this new day. It is a new vocabulary — the language of the Kingdom of God.

Today we hear much about the need for "revival." Preachers sometimes say that they went to a certain church and "preached a revival." Multitudes of believers are praying and interceding for revival. Some teach that there is yet to be a great world-wide revival in the last days. But I do not hesitate to tell you that when I hear someone say, "Lord, send a revival," my spirit cringes within me. Hearing that is like eating little green apples. "Lord, send a revival!" we plead. Indeed — revive what? If God energized what we have now we would merely have the biggest and most powerful BABYLON that ever existed! Every revival in history has eventually produced another monstrous form of Babylon. What do you mean "revive" this? Let us not labor under the delusion that somehow God is about to refresh, revive, restore, quicken, and refashion the old ecclesiastical structures so that the new thing He is doing can be accommodated in some old wine-skin that has been rejuvenated with "kingdom" oil. Oh, no! God is not in the business of either reviving, blessing, restoring or remodeling Babylon — He is calling His sheep that are scattered in the mountains, calling His elect ones by name, and there is a response. A new sense of hearing is coming to those called to sonship and a new day arises from their hearts — not the old cry, "Lord, send a revival," but the cry of this day has become, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven!" I can assure you, and I believe that I have the Spirit of God when I say it, that there will never be another revival. The day of revival, like the days of kings, has passed away. The next thing on the agenda is not another revival — it is the manifestation of the sons of God. It is the manifestation of the Kingdom of God in power and glory. God is about to shake the world, and the desire of all nations shall come. Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in this day as the peoples of all the earth are swept into the Kingdom of God. This is not revival — this is the KINGDOM OF GOD!

The following words from the pen of George Warnock are truly words of wisdom and revelation. "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. All kingdoms recognize this, and any division that appears in a kingdom is certainly cause for immediate alarm; and I think this has much to do with the fear that seems to be mounting higher and higher in the ecclesiastical realms... that some of God's people are getting to be just a little to free. The fact is that God has been bringing division into the midst of the kingdoms since the day kingdoms began... for the simple reason that God has an 'everlasting kingdom' in mind, and any kingdom that does not give way to the everlasting kingdom is doomed to failure. It is not difficult to recognize this when it concerns the kingdoms of this world, but as Christians we find it difficult at times to recognize that God often brings divisions into the ranks of the ecclesiastical kingdoms. They are not called kingdoms, of course... we use different names, more religious names... like Pentecostal, Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopalian... and we just stop here for lack of space and time. But God has one Kingdom in mind, even 'The Kingdom of His dear Son.' The heirs of this Kingdom have for the most part been scattered throughout the other kingdoms... but God's plan is for 'one fold, and one Shepherd.' This is what the ministries are for... to gather together the scattered sheep of God" — end quote.

In praying for revival we develop a revivalistic mentality which contradicts the purposes of God for this Day. When one examines revivals historically, he finds that when you live in the revival mentality you are like a person who gets "high" on a drug — you soon need another "fix". Revivals throughout history are recurrent activity — activity that returns from time to time. Revivals are those kinds of divine intervention which bring about awakening, followed by spiritual declension and apostasy. It is a vicious, never-ending cycle. Awake, asleep. Awake, asleep. Alive, dead. Alive, dead. Delivered, bound. Delivered, bound. Refreshed, sluggish. Refreshed, sluggish. Filled, empty. Filled, empty. Revivals are oscillating in nature, swinging back and forth between two extremes. Furthermore, revivals are occasional and variable. They occur now and then. In and out, up and down, here and there, now and then, back and forth, awake and asleep — do you feel yourself getting motion sickness? In the 1800's there was a revival called "The Great Awakening. As someone has pointed out, unfortunately it was followed by "The Great Asleepening." We don't need another Great Awakening so that we can have another Great Asleepening so that we can have another Great Awakening... What the world needs in this hour is not another revival. No revival has brought the ultimate triumph of God's Kingdom. No revival has brought the universal defeat of sin, sorrow, sickness, limitation and death. No revival has brought an end to war, strife, hatred, corruption, fear, tyranny, pain, hunger, or any of the other problems and curses that blight mankind. Our prayer should be, "Lord, don't send another revival!" Our prayer should be as our Lord taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come!" I am not a revivalist. I am a Kingdomite! I am a son of the Kingdom, an announcer of the Kingdom, a proclaimer of the Kingdom, an ambassador of the Kingdom of God. A Kingdomite is the opposite of a revivalist. Instead of advocating and praying for a move of God that returns from time to time, the Kingdom Ambassador views the presence and rule of God as perpetual, constant,

progressive — never vacillating and never retrogressing. Our God is abiding and progressing from glory to glory, from realm to realm, from age to age — not sleeping and awaking. The Kingdom sons are builders who build a place for God to inhabit permanently — not a resort for Him to visit occasionally. I want to be a builder! Jesus said, "We will come and make our abode with him." What God desires in this hour is a place to stay, a temple to dwell in, a throne to sit upon, a nature to be formed in, a Kingdom to rule from.

The focus of the New Testament is upon Christ and His Kingdom — not revivals. You don't read about revivals in any of the writings of the apostles. The word revival does not appear in the dictionary of Kingdom terminology. So far as New Testament economy is concerned, revival is an unscriptural and extra-biblical concept. You won't find the idea anywhere! Jesus didn't promise revivals. The apostles never taught or exhorted or gave any instructions about revivals. Amazing, isn't it, how much of the language of Babylon we still speak over here on Kingdom territory! When John the Baptist announced the Messiah's approach two thousand years ago, every thing concurred to give weight to his testimony. Guided by the signs of the times, and by the chronological predictions of the prophets, expectation was everywhere awake for the first sound of Messiah's footsteps. From all parts of the country they flocked to the man of God, who cried alone in the wilderness, "Repent ye! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His paths straight." With profound and breathless attention the motley group listened to the exciting tidings; and harsh as were his words, rougher though some of his speeches were than the camel hair garment which he wore, they gladly received them and were baptized by him in Jordan, confessing their sins. Presently the Lord Himself appears upon the stage; and John the Baptist, having dutifully fulfilled his role as the herald of the Messiah, retired and was little more heard of. Thus heralded, the Lord's ministry opened with every advantage; and vast crowds followed Him, as they had John, "trusting that it was HE who was to redeem Israel — saving them from their enemies, and from the hand of all that hated them.

Israel was looking for the Messiah to come and deliver them from ROME! They looked for Him to come with the glamour and pomp and power of an earthly Potentate, with the flashing of swords and the snapping heels of His army, to deliver them from their enemies and from the hands of all who oppressed them. They wanted a glorious, wealthy kingdom with prestige and honor for themselves. The prophets had plainly declared that a Deliverer would come out of Zion. There could be no mistake about that, but their unregenerate hearts did not understand that the first work of the great Redeemer would be to deliver them from the curse of their sins and to transform their wicked hearts by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which deliverance could only be accomplished by the shedding of His precious blood and the renewing of the Holy Ghost within them. What value would it have been had the Saviour come only to deliver them from the power and authority of Rome if there was to be no change in their hearts? God's Word is full of accounts of His mighty acts of deliverance on their behalf, but no sooner were they delivered from their enemies than they utterly corrupted themselves and forsook the Lord.

The corruption of the human heart is incredible beyond words to express and it would have been completely useless had the Lord sent His Son to be the deliverer of His people from enemies without while leaving the enemies within unchallenged and undestroyed. The men of Israel could have believed in Jesus as their Saviour from the Romans. As their Saviour from their carnal hearts and fleshly natures they could not believe in Him, for they loved their sins. The King of heaven came to offer them a share in His Kingdom; but they were not poor in spirit, and the Kingdom of Heaven was not for them. Gladly would they have inherited the earth; but they were not meek, and the earth was for the humble children of the perfect Father. The whole problem with Israel as a nation in the days of Christ was that they were unconverted. There was no birth from above. There was no new heart and no new spirit placed within by which men are transformed into new creatures and conformed into the image of God. They wanted the Christ to come and rule from without over their outward enemies, but they had no desire for Him to march triumphantly into their inner life to deliver them from the kings of corruption and idolatry that ruled upon the throne of their hearts. They wanted deliverance from ROME, but were uninterested in the cleansing of their OWN DOMAIN.

The same crowd is all about us today. They want deliverance from the government, from persecution, from communism, from the antichrist, from the tribulation, from problems and troubles, from taxation, from crime and violence, from vast political conspiracies they imagine are steadily pushing the world into a nightmare of godlessness and tyranny. But I do not hesitate to tell you that none of these are the problem. The most

powerful kings that rule in the world today are those that rule between your ears and between your rib-cage — and it is only as the Kingdom of God takes its rightful place in our inner lives, that these kings are subdued and brought to naught. In the soul-realm we have the dominant king of self-will, which has usurped control and ridden roughshod over the ways of God. There are religious kings of static creeds and dogmas, traditions and commandments of men. There are kings of passion bringing the dominion of the flesh. Emotions which usurp unholy sway over people. There are kings of ruling thoughts and imaginations which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. But, praise God! there is a King who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the prophetic symbol of righteous conquest and dominion. I have heard the patter of the paws of the Lion of the tribe of Judah stalking through the corridors of my soul as He has marched into my land conquering and to conquer, bringing all into submission to Him.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an ass it pointed forth to a time when the presence of the King and His Lordship would be conveyed into our midst by the Spirit. There is something that is radically missing from most Christian's lives, and from most Churches, and that is a true sense of His Lordship. We sing, "He is Lord," but we have no conception of the full weight and significance of that word — He is Lord. If you want to know what He does in the city, what He comes there for, then meditate deeply upon the joyful and impressive shout of the multitude on that long ago day. "Hosanna: blessed is the KING OF ISRAEL that cometh in the name of the Lord!" There is no way to hear the message of the King and the principles that put that message into operation in the home, in the church, on the job, at school — there is no way to hear that message — and remain the same. There is no way you can come into contact with the King and not change! It is my deep conviction that His presence and His power and His ministry and His authority is being set in the midst of His elect, under His dealing hand, within that blessed company that has received the call to sonship.

Most people are Christians because they want to go to heaven and escape hell. If all the preachers one day called a press conference and announced to the church world, "We have discovered that there is no heaven or hell," how many would stay in the church after that? How many would any longer abstain from worldliness and fleshly lusts? Most of the people would ask, "Why are we coming then?" They were coming for heaven, not because JESUS IS LORD AND EVERYBODY MUST SUBMIT TO HIM. And why is He Lord? Because all His ways are righteous (right) altogether. In the hour in which we live the vast majority of Christians are more miserable than most other people in the world. They are only enduring this life in order to eventually get to heaven where they imagine they will spend the next billion trillion years or so singing, strumming harps, and dancing. I am quite sure that if such people would admit the truth, they would admit that even a thousand years of singing, shouting, playing harp music while dancing about in white robes would become very boring, to say the least. The fact is — most of these people can't endure five hours in a meeting even if the glory is falling all around! Most of them start examining their watches about noon on Sunday morning and their minds have already escaped to the upcoming dinner or the Sunday afternoon ball game on T.V! The problem is that their theology leaves them with nothing constructive to do and all eternity to do it in! They know nothing about the KINGDOM OF GOD. A kingdom denotes rulership and advancement of all kinds. It means WORK and RESPONSIBILITY and a place of ministry and authority to bless.

Christ is the great King of kings and Lord of lords. The Lord our God is the King, and His Kingdom rules over ALL. And praise His name, He is even now bringing forth in the earth a KINGDOM PEOPLE — the firstfruits of His redemption — who are discovering His Lordship over all of their lives. When all hell assails us, when the power of death all around crowds in upon us, when the pressures of this world would frustrate and vex and suffocate us, when our own passions and emotions and self-will would drown us in a sea of carnality and ungodliness, then HE STANDS UP WITHIN AS KING — in Kingly authority. When the world, and our own flesh, would tear us apart and smash our lives and our hope of sonship upon the rocks, HE IS THERE, the still small Voice, the deep inner Consciousness that all is well; that He, the Lord of glory is with us still, and all is secure in His loving hands, for He ordained our path and made provision for the hour. He is Himself the provision, the indwelling Christ, the anointing, the authority inherent in the spirit moving in our lives. Thank God, in every situation and circumstance of life HE IS PRESENT TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS unto Himself, thus reigning as King over our domain. As surely as we are God's Israel, so certain is it that He is enthroned within our hearts upon the throne of His father David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even forever. Blessed be the KING! It is HE that is revealed in the Sign of LEO, THE LION!

On August 10, 1945, the surrender of Japan brought World War II to an end. After an atomic bomb was dropped on each of the Japanese industrial cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan had had enough. The nation sued for peace through the Swiss government, stating that the terms of the Potsdam ultimatum would be acceptable if Japan's political structure could be preserved. On August 11, the United States transmitted a reply stating: "From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, who shall take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms." On August 15, 1945, Emperor Hirohito of Japan made a dramatic broadcast, announcing the surrender to his people. It was unconditional surrender subject to the victor's dictates. Unconditional surrender — a complete capitulation signaling the end of hostilities, a total release of all rights, claims and privileges. It was this type of surrender that concluded the greatest war in human history. And, precious friend of mine, it is exactly this type of surrender that God demands of each and every subject of His Kingdom! Do you realize what God requires of us? Complete capitulation — the end of all our hostilities toward God's authority and way of life — total release of all rights and claims to our former, self-serving ways and carnal ambitions — absolute acceptance of all God's terms. However, instead of captivity and an uncertain future, which result from surrender in human wars, our surrender to God produces life and blessing and glory forevermore! And not only that — but a place of authority and power with Him in His Kingdom over all!

The story is told of a king who was famous for his abhorrence of waste — so it was quite surprising when he came into the room where his aides were assembled carrying a breathtakingly beautiful pearl in his hand. Showing it to the first of his aides, he asked, "What do you think this pearl is worth?" "Oh, many trunks full of gold, your majesty," he replied. The king said, "Smash it." "It would be an insult to the king to destroy such a beautiful pearl," replied the aide. The king turned to a second man and showed him the pearl. "How much do you think this pearl is worth?" he asked. "One cannot put a price tag on such a beautiful pearl as this," replied the second man. "Smash it," said the king. "Such senseless destruction is unthinkable," replied the aide. The king turned to a third man. He was a humble laborer who, in return for a kindness he had shown the king, had been invited to live in the palace. "What do you think this pearl is worth?" he asked the man. "More than all the gold I have ever seen in my entire life," he replied. "Smash it," said the king. Without a moment's hesitation, this man took the pearl to where there were two large rocks and in an instant, reduced the pearl to a thimbleful of useless dust. "The man is mad," cried the others in the room. Holding up his hand to quiet the murmurs, the laborer said: "Which is of greater value; a beautiful pearl or obedience to the king's command?" The king responded by elevating the aide to be his right-hand minister with authority over all his treasures, possessions and estates — subservient to no one but the king himself. This, my beloved, is the obedience of sonship! Such obedience is the stepping-stone to the throne!

Jesus Christ our Lord is the great King of kings and Lord of lords. There are some whom I have heard from time to time speak of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and soon-coming King — as if to deny by this that the Christ has any Kingdom at all at the present time. Such ignorant statements always leave me cold. What could be farther from the teachings of God's Word, which teaches that Christ already rules and reigns over His Kingdom and that we are already citizens of that Kingdom? We are told in Colossians that He "hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son." Already it has taken place, already we are in that Kingdom, already Christ has a Kingdom and is its King. The word "kingdom" comes from the two terms "king" and "dominion" — king's dominion. It exists wherever the dominion of the Christ rules and holds sway over the hearts of men. Christ is the great King right now, ruling all things for the well-being of His subjects and bringing absolute perfection and completion to His plans which He ordained before the foundation of the world. He is the King of the ages and invincible. He shall yet arise in power and glory and majesty in His completed and perfected body — the manifested sons of God — and reveal Himself as the great conquering King, bringing deliverance to the whole creation, reconciling all unto Himself, and then shall all know the glory of His Kingdom as every tongue confesses and every knee bows and all in that day declare that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD — Yahweh of hosts, the Lord of glory, the King of the universe!

When the Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God should come, He answered them, "**The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation...**" That is, the Kingdom of God does not come with outward show, with external pomp, being outwardly observed by all, "**neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you**" (Lk. 17:20-21), or as the Diaglott gives it, "God's Royal Majesty is among you."

The wonderful and rich truth the Lord presented here is that "the Kingdom of God is within you." He was telling us that the King is among His people, or more personally and intimately, Jesus was revealing, "THE KING IS WITHIN YOU, and if anyone says to you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not" (Mat. 24:33). He then states that false prophets and false Christs should arise, and we have seen this come to pass in our day as others have seen it in their day. False prophets and false anointed ones will attempt to tell us that Christ may be here or there, or that He is coming in 1988 or 1998; but we know they are deluded, for Christ, the King, IS WITHIN US.

KINGS AND PRIESTS

Do not for one moment suppose that because we sometimes speak of the Kingdom age that we mean by that that there is no Kingdom of God on earth until some future day. The Kingdom is a glorious, present, and eternal reality and has been since Jesus brought it into the earth by the authority of His Spirit. It is a wonderful fact that during this present age God is forming His body of King-Priests to reign with Him in His Kingdom. There are two errors among the Lord's people respecting the Kingdom. One error says that the Kingdom is still future — it is coming, but not here today. The second error says that since the Kingdom is here, a present reality, all things will continue the same generation after generation, age after age, the Kingdom and the world will continue to co-exist, with those who are quickened and enlightened walking in the Kingdom, and the world continuing to abide in darkness and bondage to sin and death. The truth is that since the Kingdom has come and is here — it must ever progress and expand until it consumes (takes into itself) ALL OTHER KINGDOMS. Some contend that there will never be the ultimate triumph of Christ's Kingdom over all — but that is not the revelation of God's Word. HIS KINGDOM WILL CONSUME ALL OTHER KINGDOMS, HE MUST PUT DOWN ALL RULE AND ALL AUTHORITY, HE MUST PUT ALL ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET, HE MUST GATHER ALL THINGS TOGETHER IN ONE INTO CHRIST, AND GOD MUST BECOME ALL IN ALL. That, my friend, is the testimony of scripture! God has a plan of "ages" in which to accomplish His grand purpose. There is this age, the age to come, and the ages to come all set forth in the scriptures. This age is for the development of the church which is His body. In the glorious age that lies before us the Kingdom shall be extended and expanded beyond the church — over all nations until the scripture is fulfilled, "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain (kingdom) of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains (kingdoms), and it shall be exalted above the hills (smaller kingdoms); and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. For all the peoples do now walk in the name of their god, but shall walk in the name of Yahwey our Elohim for ever and ever" (Zech. 4:15).

In that day there shall be no more godless, atheistic nations; no more pagan nations whose people bow before false gods; no more radical, Christ-hating Islamic nations; no more affluent, pleasure-mad, crime-ridden, self-seeking nations who have forgotten God; for the word is sure: "Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him" (Ps. 72:11). Again, "Let the people praise Thee, O God; let ALL the people praise Thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let ALL the people praise Thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him" (Ps. 67:3-7). "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and He is the governor among the nations" (Ps. 22:27-28). "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father" (Rev. 2:26-27).

It is a great mystery, but it is a grand fact of truth nevertheless that Christ first reigns IN us that He may consequently reign THROUGH us. "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, INHERIT THE KINGDOM prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34). "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor

covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (I Cor. 6:9-10). "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD..." (I Cor. 15:50).

The word "kingdom" indicates the richness of the heritage of the saints. It is no petty estate, no happy corner in obscurity. I heard a good man say he should be content with a cabin in the corner of gloryland or a spot just inside the gate. I shall not be! The Lord says we shall inherit a KINGDOM. We could not be satisfied to inherit less, because less than that would not suit our character. "He hath made us kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 5:10) and we must reign for ever and ever, or be as wretched as deposed monarchs. A king without a kingdom is an unhappy and unfulfilled man. If I were a poor servant, a servant's quarters would be a boon, for it would correspond with my condition and degree; but if I am made a son of God, and heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus; if I am made a priest and a king, I must have a kingdom, or I shall not have attained to a position equal to my nature. He who makes us kings gives unto us a Kingdom to fit the nature which He hath bestowed upon us.

Beloved, do strive after, more and more, that which the Spirit of God will give you, a KINGLY HEART; do not be among those who are satisfied with the miserable nature of ordinary humanity or the childish hopes of the babes in Christ who throng to the churches which are merely nurseries for the birthing, care and educating of babes and which then stifle and threaten to suffocate the life out of these little ones with their own static creeds, lifeless traditions, and infantile programs. They eagerly look for mansions and harps and golden streets and wings and white nightgowns in that glory world above, unable to comprehend that such glittering diadems are only nursery toys to God's true kings; the true riches are ETERNAL SPIRITUAL REALITIES; the true treasury wealth looks down upon the stars. Do not sell yourself short, ye sons of the Most High! Get a kingly heart — ask the King of kings to give it to you, and beg of Him a royal spirit. Act royally on earth towards your Lord, and for His sake towards all men. Go about the world not as mean men in spirit and action, nor yet in false humility as paupers and beggars, but as kings and priests of a race superior to the dirt-scrappers who are on their knees, crawling in the mud after fleeting earthly riches and transitory worldly fame. What incredible loss shall be suffered by those who imagine that financial prosperity in this life is the sign of great faith, blessing, and spirituality!

What Christendom in general cannot comprehend is that the Christ does not rule alone but through a many-membered body. Man in God's image, man in Christ at the right hand of God, is God's government in the Kingdom of God. I have met men who professed that they had no desire, no ambition whatever to rule and reign with Christ. It is enough, say they, to know that we are saved by grace and shall make heaven at last. In fact, I have been greatly criticized and abused by some for my hope of inheriting the Kingdom of God and sitting with Christ upon the throne of universal dominion. In the eyes of these accusers I am vain, conceited, self-righteous, presumptuous, heretical and power-mad, suffering delusions of grandeur because I cherish the beautiful hope of sonship and rulership in the Kingdom of God. But I do not hesitate to tell you that Christ Himself has graciously bidden us to overcome and share with Him in His authority over the nations and all things. He would both be King IN US and exercise His regal power THROUGH US. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). Such reward to His faithful followers is merely the tangible expression of the approval of God, and we may no more deny Him the pleasure of expressing that approval than we may renounce it once it is conferred. HE WHO DESPISES A THRONE DESPISES HIM WHO CONFERS THE THRONE. It was one of our Lord's rebukes to the Pharisees — "The glory that cometh only from God YE SEEK NOT" (Jn. 4:44).

As one has written, "God is exceedingly rich. He is like a successful business man who has an enormous amount of capital. God has a business in this universe, and His vast wealth is His capital. We do not realize how many billions, countless billions, He has. All of this capital is simply HIMSELF, and with it He intends to 'manufacture' HIMSELF in mass production. God HIMSELF is the Businessman, the Capital, and the Product. His intention is to dispense Himself to many people in mass production. Therefore, God requires such a divine arrangement, a divine management, a divine dispensation in order to bring Himself into humanity." Praise His name! As His kings and priests upon His throne the elect sons of God are the governmental arrangement by which and through which God dispenses Himself into His creation. What an opportunity to change things! What an occasion to bless and heal and lift and transform the world! It would be a crime against humanity, my beloved brethren, to carelessly neglect and thus despise, as Esau despised his birthright, the position of

responsibility and opportunity to bless and restore creation proffered to us by the illustrious King of kings and Lord of lords! It would be a mean and despicable crime against humanity to settle for a cabin in the corner of gloryland!

"Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for THY POSSESSION," says the Messianic Psalm. Christ conquered, and He is conquering, and He is to conquer. I claim this earth for God, for He made it. I claim this earth for God, for the earth is the Lord's. The sea is his, and He made it. His hands formed the dry land. His power pushed up every mountain, and His fingers scooped out every valley. By His wisdom all things were established. I claim everything that comes out of the bowels of the earth for God, for "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" and "all the gold and the silver is His." I claim every man in El Paso, and in Miami, and in New York and in Hong Kong, and in Beijing, and in Moscow, and in Baghdad and in the whole wide world for God, for "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" and "it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." I am not willing to wickedly cede even one thing or one person to the devil, as do some, for the Christ came to reconcile all things and He is the Saviour of all men.

I proclaim to you, as the minister of God, that the body of Christ is here in this world for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Our destiny is something more than being a little group of people waiting to die and go to heaven. The body of the Christ IS the Kingdom of God in this world and its King-Priests must reign until all things are under His feet. I can never be satisfied, the heart of God can never be satisfied, until I see the Kingdom of God in every heart, the Kingdom of God in the home (how the nations need this!), the Kingdom of God in the workshop, the Kingdom of God between employers and employees, the Kingdom of God governing the civic affairs of the city and county, the Kingdom of God in the government of the state, the Kingdom of God ruling in every nation and every land. I proclaim the Kingdom of God, and I tell you that God has sent salvation not primarily to save us from hell, but to save us from the kingdom of men, and of devils. The rule of men will never meet the needs of men. The rule of men will never please God. The rule of men will never deliver the world from hate and war and sin and death. And the great truth is that Christ came to be the Saviour of the world! The foolish statement that you so often quote: "That government of the people is to be by the people and for the people" is a fallacy that must be destroyed. The government of the people is NOT to be by the people — that is just the problem — the people are wicked at heart! The government of the people is to be BY GOD and FOR GOD. Not by the people and for the people, but government of the people by the great God who made them, and came and died for them, and they are to live for Him. The government of God is not an external government of laws and bureaucracies and armies and guns, but the internal rule of His Spirit as He sits enthroned upon the throne of men's hearts. Transformed into the image of Christ, indwelt by the mind of Christ, filled with the attributes of Christ, men need NO EXTERNAL FORCE to manipulate, control, direct, or govern them. **"The Kingdom of God is within you" (Lk. 17:21).**

Because all the earth is His God is raising up a Kingly Priesthood to reign in mighty spirit power and authority over the earth, not to be little human dictators, or an external kingdom of laws and systems headquartered in Jerusalem or Washington, but with an outflow of life and light and love, touching God with one hand, and humanity with the other, bringing the two together, that God may indwell men by His Spirit and live and rule in them in power and glory. The kingly nature in us is not to dominate over men's lives, but to deal with and break the power of selfhood and rebellion and sin and the devil that men may be reconciled to God. Kings have power and authority, priests reconcile in mercy and love. But once the reconciliation has taken place, and Christ is enthroned, we deliver men up to God, even the Father, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL. That is the principle of the Kingdom. We rule only to subdue men to God — then GOD RULES IN THEM. He rules first THROUGH US, that He may rule finally IN THEM. The manifestation of the sons of God for which all creation is in travail is nothing more nor less than the full manifestation of God's fully developed and empowered body of KING-PRIESTS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. In this age the Holy Spirit is forming and equipping that body. In the next age that body shall be given power and authority over all nations and all things. In the ages yet to come the Kingdom shall be expanded from realm to realm, from the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, for of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end.

God is not setting up His throne in us, just to make us kings. But He is establishing His throne in us — "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto

God" — He is making us kings in order that He shall now be able to appear and manifest Himself in the midst of the kings as THE KING OF ALL THE KINGS. The world will never know Him as the King of kings until there are kings among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as King of kings. The world will never know Him as Lord of lords, until there are lords among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as THE LORD OF ALL THE LORDS. Why is God bringing many sons to glory? That in the midst of all Jesus Christ might appear as the pre-eminent One, THE SON among the sons. As long as we remain children, He cannot appear as the Son in the midst of children. How are you going to have a Son that is preeminent among a group of babies? That is no preeminence at all, that gives Him no eminence whatsoever, it gives Him no honor. You cannot say, "He is the first-begotten, the first-born among many babies!" He must be first among equals. That is what "King of kings" and "Lord of lords" means. As God brings us into maturity, and brings many sons to glory, He appears as the pre-eminent One, as the first-born among MANY BRETHREN. Why does God want us to grow up into the fullness of sonship? So that the Son of God can be revealed in all His glory, wisdom, virtue, and power in and through the sons. Do not think you will be puffed up in pride or use the power for your self-interest when you become a king. That is what the childish ministries in the gift-realm do today. We need to know that we can never conquer with Christ until we have been conquered by Him. We will never reign with Christ until we are REIGNED OVER BY HIM! I want to tell you that that is a life-changing concept, yet, some who read these lines have never even begun to touch the hem of its garment. Our Captain, our King, has WON the victory! He has conquered sin! He has conquered death! He has conquered hell! And, praise God, He is conquering US! And now, we partake of His victory.

"Well," you say, "why does He not appear as King of kings?" Because most of us are beggars. "Oh, God, please bless us; Lord, do this, do that; give us this, give us that." And if He appeared as King of beggars, we would be ashamed before Him. In all our poverty, in all our need, in all our self-pity, in all our limitation, foolishness and carnality, should suddenly the Majesty of the heaven, the blessed and only Potentate appear, why right away we would fall with our faces in the dust in shame before Him. But if we are standing as kings in the presence of God, reigning in life, undefeated and victorious, overcomers and conquerors in all things, rejoicing in His throne in our hearts, then we welcome the King of kings in the midst of the kings.

"Who shall stand when He appeareth?" I tell you in truth that it is those who have been MADE ONE IN HIM in that in which He is appearing. Those are able to stand tall with Him when HE appears. God is teaching us the way of overcoming, the reality of His authority and Lordship. Why is He establishing that authority and that Lordship in the hearts of His people? Because He is the Lord and the Head of the body, the church. Of course you will never know His Lordship, except by the Holy Spirit: "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." The Lordship of Jesus Christ must be set up in our hearts, where His will becomes our delight. Why does He want us to come into lordship and authority? So He can appear in the midst as THE LORD OF THE LORDS! If we are not lords, He cannot come as Lord of lords. He is not Lord of slaves. He is Lord of lords. As long as we remain down on some spiritual plane below this calling, even though He is greater than we, He has to condescend and limit His manifestation in and through us to the level we are on. What condescension! To what a level He condescends every Sunday as He appears in the churches, to confirm His Word in the spiritual baby food fed the people, and to appear in the midst of candles and altars and choirs and robes and man-made orders — and there He meets and touches and blesses men on that level. Don't say He is not there! for He is. He appears in the midst of WHAT WE ARE IN HIM. He comes as El Shaddai, the breasted One, bearing the milk of the Word in the midst of all the babes in Christ. And that is the only form He can appear to those on that level. They never behold the King in all of His beauty. But as the Church of the Firstborn rises into the heavenlies to occupy the place God has ordained for it, in the place of glory, then Christ can be revealed in greater glory, in greater majesty, and in greater might.

Do we love His appearing? Do we want God to make us a people for Himself, so that in whatever form He desires to appear, He can appear in the midst? The inspired apostle John has taught us that when HE APPEARS, WE MUST BE LIKE HIM. It says, "We shall be like Him," but it also means, "We must be like Him." Can we not see that if we are not like Him in the way He wishes to appear, He cannot appear in that form? We are the body, the vehicle, the expression and manifestation of the Christ. Because we are His body, whenever He manifests Himself, He will manifest Himself in the form of that body, in whatever form the body is. Among the saved He appears as Saviour. Have you not noticed that the only manifestation of the Christ through saved people is salvation? Go to any church on any corner where all the people have experienced of Christ is the gift

of salvation, forgiveness of sins, and what will they be preaching and ministering? Why, salvation, of course! And how does the Christ appear there in the midst? As Saviour! And as nothing more. But go among people who have found Him as Healer, and in what form does He appear in the midst? Why, as the Healer! Among those baptized in the Spirit, He appears as the Anointed and the Anointer, the baptizer in the Holy Ghost, and His anointings are manifest in power and glory.

If He must appear as Saviour, He must appear among saviours. If He must appear as Deliverer, He must appear among deliverers. If He appears as the Chief Cornerstone, He must appear among living stones. If He appears as the Son of God, He must appear among many brethren conformed to His image. If He comes as Lord, He must be Lord among other lords. If He comes as King, He must be King among other kings. If He is going to be revealed as God, He must be revealed among the gods (Ps. 82:2,6). And if ever creation is to see and know Him as the great High Priest of the heavens, He must be revealed among the priests.

"Who shall stand when He appeareth?" When He appears as King, only the kings can stand with Him, everybody else has to fall before Him. When He appears as Lord, only the lords are able to stand with Him, the rest will bow before His appearing. When He appears as Judge, only the judges (I Cor. 6:2; Dan. 7:22) can stand with Him, all the rest will cringe before Him. And when He appears as High Priest, only the priests, those elect saints born of a priestly heart, possessed of a priestly nature, are able to stand with Him. HE is the Head of the body — the body of the Priest, the Judge, the Lord and the King. Hallelujah to LEO, THE LION — THE KING OF GLORY!

J. PRESTON EBY

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HEAVENS DECLARE, PART 47

LEO—THE LION [Cont'd]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Studies in end-time Revelation"

PART FORTY-SEVEN

HYDRA—THE SERPENT DESTROYED
CRATER—THE JUDGMENT OF BABYLON
CORVUS—THE RAVEN

Last month we plumbed the depths and scaled the heights of revelation in the glorious Sign of LEO, THE LION — the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is none other than our blessed Lord Jesus the Christ. In this Study we reach the last scene of the final act in GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY. We now draw to a conclusion these meditations on the great drama of the ages which started with Virgo, the Virgin, and comes full circle in Leo, the Lion — to pass on to other vital truths the Spirit is speaking to the elect of God in this significant hour.

No doubt whatever exists about the meaning of Leo. In this Sign we see for the fourth time the symbolism of the Christ in triumph crushing the head of the serpent. It was seen in the Sign of Scorpio, where Ophiuchus the mighty man holds his foot over the head of the Scorpion, the deadly enemy, about to crush him. Again the triumphant victor, Hercules, was seen, crushing with his foot, the head of the terrible dragon, Draco. Further, in the Sign of Taurus, we noted Orion the great hunter with his foot on the head of Lepus, the enemy. Now, finally, the truth is repeated in this last Sign, Leo. Leo brings the whole story to completion by showing the final end of the adversary. The almighty Christ of God has come within us as life and wisdom and strength and victory to tear away the flesh of our carnal mind and nature and crush every bone of our resistance to His Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Christ is Leo the Lion! Christ is the mighty King! Christ shall triumph within! And Christ shall triumph everywhere in all realms unto the endless vastnesses of infinity forevermore! Praise His wonderful name!

It is another mystery, but it is a grand fact of truth nevertheless, that Christ first reigns IN us that He may consequently reign THROUGH us. "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, INHERIT THE KINGDOM prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34). "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (I Cor. 6:9-10). "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.... (I Cor. 15:50).

I have met men who professed that they had no desire, no ambition whatever, to rule and reign with Christ. It is enough, say they, to know that we are saved by grace and shall make heaven at last. In fact, I have been greatly criticized by some for my hope of inheriting the Kingdom of God and sitting with Christ on the throne of universal dominion. In the eyes of these accusers I am vain, conceited, self righteous, presumptuous, heretical and power-mad because I cherish the beautiful hope of sonship and rulership in the Kingdom of God. But I do not hesitate to tell you that Christ Himself has graciously bidden us to overcome and share with Him His authority over the nations and all things. He would both be King IN US and exercise His regal power THROUGH US. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). Such reward to His faithful followers is merely the tangible expression of the approval of God, and we may no more deny Him the pleasure of expressing that approval than we may renounce it once it is conferred. HE WHO DESPISES A THRONE DESPISES HIM WHO CONFERS THE THRONE. It was one of our Lord's rebukes to the Pharisees - "The glory that cometh only from God YE SEEK NOT" (Jn. 4:44). The Spirit of the Lord has been speaking to my heart. He is urging me to become a true partaker of the HEAVENLY CALLING.

It is a wonderful truth that Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and you will understand a great mystery when the Spirit makes it real to you that we are the body of Christ — therefore, we are the body of Leo the Lion, we

are the body of the all-victorious King of glory! For those who are growing up into the image, stature, and fullness of Christ, the Sign of Leo is the classroom in which we have special opportunity to learn to live as kings and priests in the government of God. Every child of God called to sonship is now in school. We may feel that we graduated from school long ago, but that is a mistake; we hadn't even started to school at that time. When you received the call to sonship and went out in the world on your own, you really, then, started to school. When God drew you out of the Babylonian religious system and separated you unto Himself you may have felt you "graduated" into a new realm — and you certainly did. You graduated from kindergarten! And immediately you were enrolled in the first grade of God's SCHOOL OF SONSHIP. In this school there is only one course taught, and that is the course of overcoming, which is the hardest course to master and finish known in any curriculum in the world today. This matter of disciplining one's thoughts, desires, emotions, habits; of training one's spirit and soul and body to function on the level of the mind, nature, wisdom and power of Christ is of the greatest importance and spells the difference between success and failure in the Kingdom of God. To finish this course marks the difference between being in the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus, or remaining a babe in Christ, a nominal citizen in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The reason so many people fail to attain to great heights in the Spirit is because they are unable to see God's purpose, and therefore they have no particular incentive to seek the great heights that are in Him. So many Christians are far too taken up with carnal ideas and childish notions about mansions and harps and sitting on clouds eating pork chops with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in, to be able to grasp the great realities of the Kingdom of God! There are certain basic principles of the Kingdom that must be a part of the mind-set and experience of all who press forward into sonship to God. We must learn to think like God. We must begin to RULE WITH CHRIST IN THIS LIFE. Too many saints are weak, frustrated and defeated. May the dynamite of God's Spirit blow us all out of the low places of lethargy, discouragement, oppression and defeat into a vibrant walk with Christ in the high places of peace, joy, and triumph of His Kingdom. "Strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power which His supreme might imparts. Put on the complete armour of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world — the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Wherefore put on the complete armour of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground in the evil day, and having fought to the end, TO REMAIN VICTORS ON THE FIELD" (Eph. 6:10-14) (Weymouth).

We are called to reign with Christ from the highest heaven. Such all-embracing majesty is far too vast far my feeble understanding, yet I know by the Spirit that the body of Christ is in practical preparation for the explicit purpose of UNIVERSAL DOMINION. But how can a man rule over principalities and powers and worlds and universes if he is unable to rule his own spirit? "He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32). The awful betrayal, trial, mockery, beating, and crucifixion of Jesus is the most shining example. It is difficult to imagine any humiliation more bitter than that. It is the worst indignity that anyone can be called upon to endure. Few have ever had to bear it. Never was dishonor less deserved, never was dishonor more bravely borne. Through that fierce and heated hour our Lord bore Himself with quiet dignity. Others were convulsed with uncontrolled passion, He alone was calm and self-possessed. His victory over Himself was greater than His victory over His enemies. In such experiences of provocation, truly, "He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city." God is a God of principle. He does not do anything by chance. It is my deep conviction that what happens in your life and mine is a result of the use or abuse of the principles of the Kingdom of God. Learn this, beloved, and you will know one of the fundamental principles of reigning with Christ: OUR AUTHORITY IS OVER SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS F-I-R-S-T-L-Y I-N O-U-R-S-E-L-V-E-S! "To him that overcometh will I (consequentially) give power over the nations: and he shall rule them..." (Rev. 2:26-27). "To him that overcometh will I grant (consequentially) to sit with Me in My throne" (Rev. 3:21).

As I have pointed out many times before, the journey to the throne of the universe begins in that small and undistinguished place where you are. The Kingdom of God is within you. The enChristed who are to reign with Christ first from sea to sea, then from planet to planet, and finally from universe to universe, are being prepared. Think not in your heart, precious friend of mine, that you may pass your life here careless, indifferent to the dealings of God, suddenly to awake one fine morning to find yourself sitting with Christ governing the galaxies, because such a thing will not be. Begin today to MAKE WAY FOR THE KING! This

present time it but a proving ground for those who through grace will reign with their Lord over the endless vastnesses of infinity. He is raising us up to sit with Him in the higher than heavenlies. And the place which He is preparing for each one is not only a world to come, and a Kingdom of Life and Light, but a place IN HIM, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, mind of His mind, nature of His nature, life of His life!

Years ago an IBM junior executive made a mistake that cost the company several million dollars. IBM's founder, Thomas J. Watson Sr., summoned him into his office. Assuming the worst, the sullied young executive said, "I guess you want my resignation?" Mr. Watson replied, "You can't be serious. We've just spent millions of dollars educating you!" God is the founder of the most important enterprise of all — the Kingdom of God. God is now in the process of hiring, educating, and developing His management team. He is training us to become powerful rulers in that Kingdom in the day when He initiates the next phase of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. How much has God already spent on your training and education? God has made a supreme investment in us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Without that price, none of us could even enter into the Kingdom of God much less attain the high-ranking positions God has waiting for those who overcame - who graduate from His school. But God doesn't stop there. He invests in us daily through His guidance and processings, and through the continuous gracious outpourings and deep and vital dealings of His Spirit.

In a very real sense, God owns us. The apostle Paul reminds us, "For ye were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:20). The great King of this Kingdom expects to see a profit for all His time, effort and sacrifice. God, of course, is not interested in making money. He already owns everything. God is in the business of developing His family — sons with character. If those of us who are called now succeed in qualifying for positions of rulership, we will in turn be able to help millions of others become citizens of the Kingdom. To put it in business terms, our future profit to the Kingdom of God will more than make up for any of our present losses — if we stay with the organization and apply the new lessons! Saints, like the junior executive at IBM, are capable of making costly mistakes. Have you ever felt that God has given up on you? Do you feel like you are wasting His time? Sometimes our mistakes are very costly to us, too! Have you ever felt that the cost is too high, and that you are wasting your time? Let's see what God says: "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

God will never give up on us. He is investing in us with every intention of making a profit and expanding His Kingdom. Our all-wise Father sees our potential. He knows our capacity to grow and develop. He is keener at discerning it than we are. He is also well aware of our weaknesses, and is ready to help. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," said Paul (Phil. 4:13). The children of God make a lot of mistakes, for children are children. Our ability to learn from our mistakes is part of what God uses to build character in us. In the book of Revelation, we read that it is the overcomers - those who don't leave God's school or resign from His purposes — who ultimately are given power in His Kingdom. "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every one according to his work" (Rev. 22:12). "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more" (Lk. 12:48). Have you made costly mistakes? Have you been stumbling and seemingly wasting God's time? Don't resign! Don't drop out of God's school! His investment in you is too great! He will see you through! Graduation day is coming! The positions in His authority and glory are waiting! Learn the lessons that will help you to better serve in the Kingdom of God. If you do, great heavenly wealth and power and opportunity lie ahead for you in the age and in the ages to come. Through you creation will be lifted, redeemed, restored to life and liberty and glory - and that's where the real profit begins!

Let us learn our lessons well — and let us never presume that we have attained to something in God that we have not yet qualified for. And let us never grasp after a place or position the Father has not conferred upon us. There is no need to DECLARE OUR SONSHIP - the Father Himself declares His sons: "This is My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. This is My son, hear ye Him." Some today have grown weary of waiting for the manifestation God has promised, so they have "watered-down" the hope and settled for a lesser reality, and are declaring themselves sons of the Kingdom on a lower plane than God has called us to. Some have settled for a 'revival' realm and now speak disparagingly of what they term "classic sonship". These anxious souls just can't wait for the Father's appointed time. The place that God has called us to will be in His

time, not ours. "The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father" (Gal. 4:1-2). The story is told of a fifteen year old boy who stole his father's car keys. The father's plan was to give the keys to his son a year later. The boy, however, thought that he had all the attributes necessary to drive the car. The father knew better; he understood the law, insurance liability, driving skills, and such like. As a result, the court will not let the boy drive a car until he is twenty-one. Let us earnestly seek wisdom from above to avoid such a costly error of SELF-MANIFESTATION!

It is my deep conviction that the time appointed of the Father for the manifestation of the sons of God is nigh at hand. The King is coming. Hallelujah! Sons of God shout it loud and clear! Let the earth know her redemption draweth nigh. The Deliverer is coming, the whole Christ-body is being prepared, and the time is at hand. In ancient times when a great monarch was entering a city, a herald always went before him, blowing a trumpet and shouting, "The king is coming!" This was to prepare the people for the entrance of the king so they would give him the proper welcome, and pay him homage. Two millenniums ago John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord by bringing the people to repentance so they would be ready to receive the Lord. The voice of one crying in the wilderness was the trumpet call announcing the arrival of Israel's King. But He did not come as their King in the manner they expected. He came first as their Saviour. He is now coming as the KING. Before the Lord went about the towns and villages of Israel, He sent His disciples to preach the gospel of the Kingdom and to prepare the people for His coming. First He sent the twelve, and then the seventy. In like manner, there is an advance company now being prepared to herald the coming of the King; to prepare His way before Him and to make His paths straight. The royal heralds are going forth blowing their trumpets, proclaiming the message of the Kingdom in the power of the Spirit, preparing the people for the appearing of the KING in a vast company of the sons of God — the King in the midst of the kings! This is the day of Leo, the Lion. What a glorious and mighty victory lies before us!

HYDRA — THE SERPENT DESTROYED

In the beginning of our study of the Zodiac we noted that all the Signs of the heavens portray a progressive unfolding of truth that was hidden, like the bud of a flower, in the ancient promise God gave in Eden: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). We have seen the different stages of this conflict presented to us under the various Signs. For example, in the beginning of the story, Virgo, the Virgin, is seen bringing forth the Seed, who is going to be engaged in the redemption of mankind, represented in Libra, the Scales. Then immediately we see the conflict beginning and the price to be paid as Scorpio — the first picture of that ancient serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan — stings the mighty man Orphiuchus in the heel, but is crushed beneath the right heel of this mighty man. Again, we see the Devil portrayed as a serpent, struggling and wriggling in the hands of Orphiuchus, reaching up to try and take the crown away from God and those who inherit the Kingdom. We then see Satan represented as Cetus, the Sea Monster, who was seeking after Pisces, the Fishes, representing the people of God, as he attempts to destroy them. This scene is symbolically described in chapter twelve of Revelation: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, which is called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the manchild. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:9, 12-17)

Again we have seen Satan in the head and skin of the lion that was destroyed by Orion, who holds in his hand the dead carcass of the lion, who goes about seeking whom he may devour. Finally, he is represented here by Hydra — the Great Serpent, who covers so much of the sky. But now in the final scene of the last act, the Serpent is triply destroyed (1) by the feet of Leo, the Lion (2) by the outpouring of the Cup of wrath (3) and by the devouring fowls of the air, depicted by Corvus, the Raven.

The first Decan, or minor constellation, in the house of Leo is HYDRA — THE GREAT SERPENT. Hydra is the largest separate constellation in the sky, stretching more than 100 degrees across the sky below the
HEAVENS DECLARE, Part 47, Leo-The Lion [J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY 4

constellations of Cancer, Leo, and Virgo, and outside the ecliptic (path of the sun). Hydra is the figure of a snake, a massive snake. The name Hydra symbolically means The Abhorred. Hydra is the symbol of the evil one who has at last reached his end — for his head is beneath the feet of Leo, the Lion. The conquering Lion pounces on him, and this marks the end of the reign of sin and death. As one has written: "The great Serpent was first seen at the center of the ecliptic. One of the stars in Draco, the dragon was originally the Pole Star located at the very center. And that is where Satan was after he had insinuated his way into the Garden of Eden and had cast his slime across the path of the history of man, deceiving and destroying mankind, and bringing all of the world into subjection to his vile will. He was at the center of all things; the Prince of this earth, the Prince and Power of the air. But now we see that Satan is cast out. He is outside the great circle of the ecliptic. He is about to be finally destroyed by the Christ and cast out into utter and final darkness."

Now it was in the midst of the Garden that man first encountered the ancient Serpent. It's not news to any of us that we are in the midst of a war between two kingdoms: the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Neither is it news to us that WE are the battleground! More particularly, the major focal point of the battle is our mind. There the battle rages at its greatest intensity, because the war is a struggle for our hearts and loyalties — the very souls and lives and beings of men. The simple but dreadful fact is — the Serpent dwells within us. It is that force within us that opposes the ways of God in our lives and tries to keep us from seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

This brings us to the curse laid upon the Serpent in that long ago beginning: "**Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life**" (**Gen. 3:14**). These terms are symbolic and spiritual. This is not speaking of a literal snake dangling from a tree limb in some historic Paradise. This is a symbol, and the great Deceiver, Satan that ancient Serpent, the Devil, has to eat dust! He was cursed to this low realm of eating dust because that is exactly what he was doing when he tempted mother Eve. Adam was formed of the dust of the ground and bore the image of the earthy — and as such became the rightful food for the Serpent. The Serpent — the negative spirit realm — now finds its base of operation and fulfillment of its nature, desires, activities, and purposes IN AND THROUGH MANKIND — the dust realm. By the very nature of things, when the Serpent eats, he seeks to satisfy his appetite and gratify his desires. Today, as in Eden, the sphere of Satan's activity is earth, and the object of his devouring is the man of earth — the carnal nature. Whenever we live in the earthly life of Adam, we are earthly and also on earth and fall into the sphere of Satan's activity, becoming the object of his devouring, drawn deeper and deeper into that negative realm.

The very fact that the Serpent is now to crawl upon his belly reveals that there was a descending from one realm to another, and man, with the Serpent in him, now grovels in the dust, trapped in the humiliating quagmire of trouble, pain, sorrow, sin, sickness, limitation, fear, and death. Moving upon his belly limits the sphere of the Serpent's activity, now he can only creep along the ground, lowered into the dust realm, confined to the lowlands of the earthy and material, restricted to expression through the man of dust. Truly he is "**the S-P-I-R-I-T that now worketh in the children of disobedience**" (**Eph. 2:2**). Because of this remarkable curse you will find Satan operative in NO OTHER REALM in God's vast universe! Satan is one with man, the energy force of human nature, the spirit of the carnal mind, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness, in the crooked thoughts, perverted desires, depraved emotions, in the illusions and delusions of the outer world of appearances, and in all the corrupt motions of the flesh.

I want to tell you where everything is — everything is right there where you are — WITHIN YOU. Everything! On the positive side — God is in you, Christ is in you your hope of glory, the word of Christ dwells in your heart by faith, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, the glory of God has come upon you and is arising upon you from within, the wonderful mind of Christ is in your mind and the Kingdom of God is within you. On the negative side — the spirit of antichrist is in you, the man of sin sits in the temple of God which is your body, the beast rages in the ravenous emotions of your soul, the image of the beast is seen in you by your outer actions, the nature of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters (peoples) is in you, and that ancient Serpent, the Devil, and Satan, is within you, the spirit that now worketh IN the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:2).

Men dream of a devil — a hideous and obscene monster in human form; a short, skinny elf in a red body suit, with impish face, horns, pointed ears, a spade beard, thin mustache, having a long forked tail and a pitchfork in

his hand. If you ask one thousand church-going professing Christians to describe for you, the Devil, would not all of them describe him in the fashion portrayed above? Or would they describe him to you as a snake? Millions of professing Christians suppose they would recognize the Devil instantly. But would they, really? I do not hesitate to tell you that the Devil of Christianity is a myth.

Jesus, on many occasions, drew the analogy of men as serpents — devils. In my mind when Jesus uttered the following parabolic phrase, He was revealing one of the most important and foundational truths of all times. **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Mat. 23:25,33).** John the Baptist used the same terminology. **"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducces come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come?" (Mat. 3:7).** Various translations render this passage: "Ye generation of vipers," "Ye off-spring of vipers," "Ye brood of snakes," "Ye serpent's brood," etc. You see, Christ and John were well aware of who and what and where the Enemy was and ever shall be.

As in Christ's day, so today, the churches are, indeed, full of devils! And they have no more desire to go to the cross than Peter did. Well does this enemy of God, enthroned in the human heart, this adversary of redemption and of all mankind, know that, in the blessed hour when the "I" is crucified, all his power and all his authority and sway in that life is broken forever. His appetite is denied, his desires are rejected, his base of operation is destroyed, and his work is abolished in every life that has become identified with Christ in the cross. Once a man has embraced fully the cross of Christ and Self has become forever dead with Him, then it is with him even as the firstborn Son in triumph declared: **"I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me, there is nothing in Me that belongs to him, he has no power over Me" (Jn. 14:30)** (Amplified). Satan has no power at all when SELF is gone. Then he has no more power in your life or mine than he had in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. How unspeakably wonderful the hour for any man when Satan shall find nothing in him upon which he can feed or lay hold, nothing upon which he can satisfy his evil desires or his corrupt nature, nothing that responds to him or corresponds to him. When Self is crucified with Christ the lust of the flesh is mortified, the lust of the eyes is dead, and the pride of life is nailed to the cross. The man of dust exists no more and from then on it is NOT I, BUT CHRIST!

The natural mind is the mind channeling the condition of the human heart. It is not the same mind that understands how to drive your car, prepare a meal, or lusts after someone of the opposite sex, that also understands the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Not at all! The promise is sure: **"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean...a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony (spiritually unresponsive) heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a (soft, pliable, responsive) heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them" (Eze. 36:25-27).** The new creation of which the Spirit speaks is blest not only with a new heart and a new spirit but with a NEW MIND as well. For, Paul says, **"Who hath known the mind of the Lord? But WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST" (I Cor. 2:16).** There is by regeneration within ourselves, beyond the realm of our conscious knowledge, a divine life, the child of God's Spirit, ever unwearied, ever growing and maturing, to gain control of our whole being, and transform us into the image of God.

There is still a fierce battle raging between these two hearts, these two spirits, these two minds, these two conditions, these two natures. This is the conflict so graphically portrayed by the Signs in GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY! Praise God, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Head and body, that blessed company of the sons of God, is disabling the Serpent, crushing the head of the Scorpion, and placing his foot determinedly upon the Dragon's head. Today, although the Kingdom of God has not yet outwardly triumphed upon this earth in all realms, although God has not yet gained a sphere wherein He can express the authority of His life in a full way, nevertheless there is a place, a small sphere, thank the Lord, where there exists the condition of God's reign, which thereby manifests God's glory, wisdom, love and power. That is the body of Christ! Today the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led members of Christ's body are the expression of God's reigning here on earth. What God desires today is to perfect and expand and intensify His reigning sphere within His people and through His people. It is through the body of Christ, the sons of God that God binds Satan and destroys his power of sin and death in men. It is through the sons of God that life, yea, incorruptible life, and blessing shall be

ministered so that all the families of the earth shall be blessed and made to live unto God. Thus His name will be honored in the whole earth, His Kingdom come, and His glorious will done. This is the commission of God's sons — God's MIGHTY LION! This is the grand conclusion of the ages-long conflict — consummated in the triumph of Leo!

In his book THE GOSPEL IN THE STARS Dr. Seiss sums it up in these descriptive words: "During these six thousand years...this subtle and snaky spirit has managed to worm himself into everything that goes to make up human life, corrupting and debasing it to his own base ends, seating himself in all the centers of influence and power, making himself the very king and god of this world. From all these places he must be dislodged, his dominion broken, his works destroyed, and he and all his effectually rooted out and put down, before the heavenly Kingdom can come in its consummation. In other words, the whole empire and influence of the Serpent must be rent to atoms, worked clean out of the realm of humanity, and so crushed as never to be able to lift up its head again. Toward this end all the dispensations and gifts of God, from the first promise of Adam until now, have been directed. Toward this end all the works and administrations of Christ to this present are framed. To this end He comes in power and great glory as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to 'put down all rule and all authority and power,' and to trample 'all enemies beneath His feet.' And here, in the first Decan of Leo, is the grand picture of that consummation. Here is Hydra, that old Serpent, whose length stretches one-third the way around the whole sphere, completely expelled from the places into which he had obtruded, fleeing now for his life, and the great Lion, with claws and jaws extended, bounding in terrific fury and seizing the foul monster's neck" — end quote.

CRATER — THE JUDGMENT OF BABYLON

The second Decan in this final Sign is CRATER — THE CUP. Of this Decan Kenneth Flemming wrote: "As a constellation, Crater is small and faint, so much so that the popular modern astronomer, Patrick Moore, writes that it is surprising to find that it is one of the original groups. The answer to this is that the forty-eight original constellations were not selected for their brilliance or size, nor were they chosen to divide up the sky, but rather they were chosen for what they depicted as signs. That is an important part of the story of the prophetic signs in the sky. Crater lies below the hind feet of Leo and seems to be resting on the body of the snake, Hydra. Indeed, the two stars at the bottom of the cup are also part of the body of the snake, making the two inseparable. In classical times the Greeks supposed that Crater was the cup of the wine-god, Bacchus; it was therefore associated with joy and gladness (revelry). In truth the very opposite is the case. Instead of Crater being a cup of joy, it is the cup of God's indignation (Rev. 14:10). It is the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath (Rev. 16:19). It is the final and dreadful cup of wrath, reserved for the devil and his angels" — end quote.

The Psalmist Asaph wrote by inspiration: "For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and He poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them" (Ps. 75:8). David, the sweet singer of Israel, also testified: "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup" (Ps. 11:6). John the Revelator has unmistakably identified for us the precise fulfillment of the prophecies concerning God's Cup of Indignation: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation..." (Rev. 14:9-10). "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath" (Rev. 16:19). "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled up to her double" (Rev. 18:4-6).

Of this "Cup of Indignation" against Mystery Babylon Dr. Seiss wrote, "And lo! here, as the second Decan of Leo, we have the very picture of that Cup, broad, deep, full to the brim, and placed directly on the body of this writhing Serpent! Nay, the same is sunk into his very substance, for the same stars which mark the bottom of the Cup are part of the body of the accursed monster, so that the curse is fastened down on him and in him as

an element of his being! Dreadful beyond all thought is the picture John gives of this Cup of unmingled wrath, but not a whit more dreadful than the picture of it in which the primeval prophets have thus inscribed upon the stars" --end quote.

The Cup of God's indignation and wrath is poured out without measure upon the RELIGIOUS SERPENT—KINGDOM OF MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, the great whore that sits upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with her defiled wine. Women in prophecy are churches. In Rev. 12:1 we find the true church of Christ described as a woman. In Rev. 14:4 we find that the virgins who follow the Lamb were not defiled with women: that is, man-made churches which are merely counterfeits of the one and only true church. And in Revelation 17 we have introduced "the great whore" which in verse five is said to be the "mother" of harlots. A mother must have offspring. This mother has "harlot" offspring. She is the "mother" of "harlots," which is but another way of expressing the fact that she has many daughters who have followed her in the ways of harlotry. And while "Babylon" is first and foremost a spirit and condition within the human heart, it also finds its expression in the outer world of visible manifestation. Ah men's actions and activities are but outward manifestations of an inward state of being. And outwardly the Roman church identifies herself as the perfect fulfillment of this prophecy by proclaiming herself to be "the mother of all churches." The daughters are harlots because they partake of the same nature as their mother, the "great whore." All, both mother and daughters, are harlots fundamentally because they are man-made institutions, whose husband is human instead of Divine. The Christ of God is the one and only lawful husband of the one and only church, the organism known as His body. But apostasy persists in substituting in place of this God-designed organism, an organization patterned after worldly institutions, chartered with the State, riding upon the back of the scarlet colored beast. All members of the organization are therefore prostituting unlawfully with their human head, who is usurping the place which belongs to Christ alone.

Under Old Testament economy God alone was King of the church and nation until Israel demanded a human king in order to be like the nations about her. Before the time of these human kings, the government was a theocracy in the truest sense: that is, the government of the state was by the immediate direction of God Himself. Great was the condescension of God to thus honor the nation by becoming its political Sovereign, performing all the functions of an earthly monarch, and receiving the customary homage paid to a temporal king. Great was the dignity lent to the nation by the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth dwelling with them first in a tabernacle, afterwards in a splendid palace, there having His table, His altar, and His ministers. Great was His condescension to tolerate their displays of external splendor and pomp, to go forth with and command the army in war, to legislate, to execute laws, and to do all things that pertain to the office of an earthly sovereign. And yet Israel was not satisfied. They wished to have another to rule over them, a human king, as the nations about them had. God granted them their desire.

But Israel "forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, and with abominations provoked they Him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not" (Deut. 32:15-17). "I have spread out My hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; a people that provoked Me to anger continually to My face" (Isa. 65:2-3). God was very lenient with them; but justice demanded judgment. Therefore, since Israel would not be in sub-mission to God as their King, He decreed that throughout the term of HIS INDIGNATION they would, as a consequence of their folly, be made to serve the kings of their enemies. They were conquered and enslaved in turn by the kings of Babylon, Persia, Assyria, Greece and Rome. The year A.D. 70 saw Israel die as a nation. From henceforth, until the end of the indignation, she was to be but a church, and that, in humiliation and disgrace, a slave in the lands of her enemies. This order prevailed unbroken for almost three centuries when, upon the raising of Christianity to be the national religion of Rome in A.D. 324, Constantine thus began to unite church and state again during a period when God had decreed that they should be separate.

Under New Testament economy the Christ of God was to be the one and only Head of His church. But the Emperor of Rome and the bishops of the church were for prostituting this church and causing her to commit fornication with the kings and governments of the earth, in that she began to be joined with them as she ought

only to have been joined with Him. God has only one church, not one thousand and one. We nowhere in the Word read of "Christ and His churches." No, no! It is always Christ and His "church." Of course this one church is of necessity divided up into many separate assemblies for the purpose of meeting together for worship, fellowship, and ministry, and these separate assemblies are called in the Word the "churches of God" and the "churches of Christ" (I Cor. 11:16; I Thes. 2:14); but the Holy Spirit gave the world but one body, one faith, one creed (Eph. 4:45), with the Christ of God the sole legislator. The many bodies, and many faiths, and many creeds, and many legislators, and many names, and many headquarters, and many structures of the present day, constitute nothing more than spiritual prostitution, they are harlots one and all, who are living apart from their one and only lawful Husband and in love with and joined out of wedlock to another.

The Roman church is the mother of all, because all are modeled after her false system. And not only are these Protestant daughters modeled after their mother as to elementary form and nature, but all, from the church of England right on down to the youngest Charismatic organization, are propagating, in varying degrees, the doctrines of their mother while, like their mother, they profess to dispense the Word of God, pure and unadulterated. They baptize like their mother, they take Communion as the members of the Roman church receive the Eucharist, they proclaim eternal damnation in hell-fire for the vast billions who have lived and died on earth without Christ, they celebrate the pagan holidays, Easter and Christmas, and keep other religious days just as does their mother. Time and space forbid a detailed discourse on all the harlot ways in which the harlot daughters follow their harlot mother. We are not unmindful that a merciful and compassionate God has used all these, even the mother, in the salvation of souls and in bringing blessings to humanity. But there is a higher walk, an undefiled way, to which all must submit who would know the full blessings and favor and glory of their sovereign Lord, and who would walk before Him acceptably and know the joy of the ultimate in accomplishment in His Kingdom. He still commands, **"Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).**

Well did George Hawtin write: "In these dread days it is of ever increasing importance that the elect should separate themselves from the Babylon of the church system. This confused harlot, drunken with the blood of saints, rich and increased with goods and having need of nothing, adorned with gold and silver and costly array, lounging in plush pews and entertained by elegant choirs, eloquent orators and super-star entertainers is the greatest deceiver and false Christ in the world. If we are to be received as sons of God, our first command and obligation is to sever all relationship with her. The effect of revelation and newly discovered truth nourishing in the heart of the believer is often lost to him, simply because he will not separate from this harlot system and come out from among them and be separate. How, you ask, can a system that is so attractive from without be so evil within? Do you not know that harlots are always unclean, no matter how beautifully they bedeck themselves? Go their way at your peril and the same rotting disease that curses them will soon be devouring you also. The promise of sonship is only to those who come out from among them. **'Be separate,' Paul says, 'and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty' (II Cor. 6:17).** Such challenging promises are not to those cushioned believers who delight themselves in plush churches and interesting programs, who keep the program afloat with gymnasiums, food, fun, and fellowship, and a hundred other fleshly notions. This promise flings down the gauntlet, challenging saints to heed the voice of Christ: Come out! Be separate! Touch not the unclean thing! To all such the promise is sure, 'I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters.'

"Beware of what men say in these evil days. Remember that Jesus warned us that there would be false prophets. False prophets are always saying, saying, but beware of what they say. Do men ask, 'Where are these false prophets' Don't look for them on the street or in the desert. The church system is full of them. You will find them standing in the pulpits Sunday and week day. They are highly thought of and highly paid. They are as sure they are right as were the prophets of Baal. They are also positive that the solitary Elijahs are wrong. As evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, these prophets with their false gospel add to all manner of delinquency. Consequently the world sinks deeper and deeper into sin and, while it sinks, these men imagine that we are in the midst of a world-wide revival. We are, but it is not a revival of faith in Christ; it is rather a revival of the very sins that caused Sodom to be devoured with unquenchable fire and that brought the flood on the world of the ungodly in the days of Noah. Let no man deceive you, for that day shall not come except there be a falling away first.' That falling away is here now. It is everywhere. It is in the government,

in the palace, in the courts of law. It is in the universities and colleges. It is in the homes, on the streets, and worst of all it is in the church system. It is in the pew and in the pulpit. It is in the hearts of the populace. The man of sin, the antichrist, is very evident in the world, but few see him or recognize him" - end quote.

The above word, however, is incomplete without this wise counsel from Ray Prinzing: "There is more than just being 'called out' however, and that is a going on to be built into HIS HOUSE, gathered unto Him. Called out bespeaks of a process of leaving realms behind, to go on. Yet once this temple is built, it says 'they go no more out', so it speaks of an arrival, entering into a state of being in permanent victory and age-abiding life. The TEMPLE is a dimension which goes beyond just being 'called out', i.e. the church. It bespeaks of gathering up all the called out, and unifying them together into a harmonious building wherein HE SHALL DWELL FOR EVER. There is a real processing that must take place before the called out becomes the temple. Once we have obeyed the calling out, then out of us needs to be purged all the ways and spirit of the thing from which we were called out, and it is one thing to come out of Babylon, and another thing to have Babylon taken out of us. Indeed, it requires a long and arduous processing, a death to the old, a stripping away of every facet of the old, until IN CHRIST, ALL THINGS BECOME NEW" - end quote.

Crater — the Cup, is the Cup of God's righteous judgment against the serpent system of Mystery Babylon the Great. Every word of prophecy will come true just as it has been written. What dreadful thoughts and feelings are awakened in the soul by the very sound of the words Mystery Babylon! They are terrible words. They bring before us at once, that vast mass of professed Christians who call themselves "the Church," but are not. Mystery Babylon is a dark and dreadful anomaly. It is neither one thing nor the other. It is not "Israel, nor the Gentiles, nor the Church of God." It is a corrupt mysterious mixture, a spiritual malformation, a hideous mutation, the masterpiece of Satan, the corrupter of the truth of God, the destroyer of the souls of men, a trap, a snare, a stumbling block by which men are made two-fold more the children of hell than before. It is the corruption of the very best thing — the body of Christ — and therefore the most vile of corruptions. It is that thing which Satan has made of professing Christianity. It is worse by far than Judaism; worse by far than the darkest of pagan religions; because it has higher light and richer privileges, makes the very highest profession, and occupies the very loftiest seat. It is without doubt that awful apostasy for which is reserved the very heaviest judgments of God — the most bitter dregs in the Cup of His righteous wrath. If the words penned by John on Patmos, which I have quoted earlier, do not say this, then I have no understanding or comprehension of language. I doubt if one Christian in ten thousand has anything like an adequate sense of the true character and inevitable doom of that system together with all the teachings, rituals, traditions, holy days, programs, promotions, and religious exercises which surround them. If they had it would solemnize their minds and hearts, and cause them to sense the urgent need to flee at once out of Babylon's clutches, and stand apart in holy separation, from Babylon's ways, that they might escape such awful judgment as is about to be executed, for "strong is the Lord that judgeth her."

Hear the Word of the Lord, ye that dwell in Babylon! "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He will render unto her a recompense. Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven..." (Jer. 51:6-9). Volumes could be written on this passage — how we have tried to heal the systems of Babylon by reformation or revival, pouring out our life to correct its religious confusion, to quicken its ministries, to change its emphasis, to reform its institutions, to infuse life into its forms and traditions. But she cannot be healed, therefore the call comes out loud and clear, "forsake her," lest ye become partakers of her plagues. Now the hour is upon us, and she shall SUDDENLY fall, saith the Lord. The religious peddlers and hucksters (merchants) of the earth shall weep, and they shall howl, they shall frantically try to revive her, but her days are numbered and great shall be the fall thereof.

In the symbology of scripture Jerusalem is the capital city of God's Kingdom, and will reign over that Kingdom for ever and ever: Babylon is the capital city of the kingdom of Babylon, which kingdom shall soon pass away. The mount Zion is the chief eminence, the highest pinnacle attainable in grace in Jerusalem: Babylon was founded upon seven mountains of shame. The true church is a woman crowned with twelve stars of divine

government, with the moon, all that pertains to the night under her feet: the false church is also a woman, with her own name and shame written on her forehead. The Head or Husband of the true woman, God's church, is the Christ: the head or husband of the false is her paramours the kings of the earth, and the numerous ecclesiastical "heads" from "pope" to "pastor". The true brings forth children unto God: the false her harlot brood. The city of God, the New Jerusalem, is to be the habitation of God forevermore: the city of Babylon becomes heaps, the habitation of bitterns and owls, the cage of every foul spirit, "and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 14:23; 34:11-17).

How precious is the truth expressed by George Warnock: "There are a lot of songs and a lot of teaching today about the new thing that God is doing and the new wine that God is bringing forth to His people. But what about the new wine-skins for the new wine? 'And no man putteth new wine into old bottles (wine-skins); else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish' (Lk. 5:37). However, it is not too difficult to discern in the midst of the joy and rejoicing of the new thing that God is doing a desperate attempt to keep the old wine-skins from bursting at the seams. Wine...Renewal...Restoration...Revival... all of this in old wine-skins. No wonder there is an attempt to strengthen the seams, and to patch the cracks in the old structures, and a warning to the sheep to follow their shepherds...because if something is not done about it, it would appear that the whole thing might crack wide open, and the new wine may be lost. Jesus has already warned us what would happen if we try to renew the old forms with the new Life of the Spirit. It can only be for a short season...the old forms will just disintegrate, and the wine is lost...

"What, then, are we going to do about it? The same thing, I would suggest, that we did before God began bringing forth the new wine. Recognize that the old forms are no longer adequate, and seek God earnestly for the new provision and the new way that He has in mind for His people. When God does a 'new thing' in the earth it is really a progressive unveiling of what He had in mind from the beginning, but it is something NEW in manifestation in the earth. We always have those that resist anything 'new'. They say God never does anything 'new' that He hasn't done before. True, we have the seed of everything that God would ever bring forth away back in time...even as far back as the Genesis. But in the outworking of His purposes there are constantly new horizons, new workings, new temples, new forms and structures, new workings of His Spirit as He leads His people out of bondage and into the fullness of New Creation Life. 'Behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth' (Isa. 42:9-10)" -- end quote.

CORVUS — THE RAVEN

Finally, we came to the third and last Decan in the house of Leo, the final figure in the great gallery and portraiture of the heavens, known as CORVUS — THE RAVEN. The raven is a scavenger bird of prey. Ravens are powerful birds, often up to two feet in length, with a massive, three-inch beak that tears flesh from dead and dying animals on which they feed. The raven that Noah released from the ark did not return because there was much dead flesh on which to feed. What a picture! Here, in the pictorial Sign of the heavens, we have the same thing. Here is Corvus, the Raven, the bird of punishment and final destruction. He doesn't kill his prey — he consumes and forever removes from the earth that which has been slain. He is God's "mop up" crew. His is the final act. And in this constellation we see Corvus grasping the body of Hydra, the Serpent, with its feet and tearing him with his beak. Not only is the head of the adversary crushed, but he is finally defeated in all realms, torn to pieces and devoured. This is already a glorious and eternal reality within all those blessed ones who have experienced the triumph of the Christ within. For these THERE IS NO DEVIL ANYMORE. But there shall yet be a fulfillment in all realms, and thus shall the inspired words of the apostle be fulfilled, "Behold, I make all things new. Write: for these wards are true and faithful. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4-5).

Here, now, these Studies on the Signs of the heavens must break off — abruptly. There is so much more that might have been said, and so much more still which I do not know enough to say. I cannot do better in closing this series than to quote the true and eloquent words of Dr. Seiss regarding Corvus — the final act in the grand drama of God's great redemptive and reconstructive program. "Blessed consummation! How should we look and pray for it, as Jesus has directed where He tells us to say, Thy Kingdom come - Thy will be done in earth

as it is in heaven!' Well might one of England's great poets cry: 'Come forth out of Thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth! Put on the visible robes of Thy imperial Majesty! Take up the unlimited sceptre which Thy almighty Father hath bequeathed Thee! For now the voice of Thy bride calls Thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed.' How cheering the hope, amidst the clash of conflicting beliefs, the strife of words, the din of war, the shouts of false joy, the yells of idolatry, the sneers of unbelief, the agonies of a dying race, and the groans of a whole creation travailing in pain together in consequence of the Serpent's malignity, that a period is coming when eternal death shall be that Serpent's portion; when peace and order and heavenliness shall stretch their bright wings over the happy sons of men; when rivers of joy proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb shall water all this vale of tears; when cherubim to cherubim shall cry, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory' when myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands of angels round about the throne shall join in the acclaim of Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain, to receive the Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Might, and Honor, and Glory, and Blessing' and when every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and upon the sea, and all things in them, shall sing, 'To Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be the Blessing and the Honor, and the Glory, and the Dominion, for the ages of the ages!'

"Yet such is our hope, given us as an anchor for our souls, both sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil, and linking us even now to those solid shores of the world to come. We have it in the written word of prophets and apostles, and the same is certified to us by these everlasting stars in their ceaseless journeyings around the pathway of the circling year. God be thanked for such a hope! God be thanked for the full and wide-sounding testimony to its certainty! God be thanked that it has come to us, and that ours is the privilege of taking it to our souls in the confidence and comfort that it shall be fulfilled!"

J. PRESTON EBY

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